

THE LIE



**THAT DECEIVED
ANGELS,
INFECTS CHRISTIANITY,
AND DELAYS THE SECOND COMING
of CHRIST**

TIMOTHY R. JENNINGS, M.D.

**The Lie That Deceived Angels,
Infects Christianity, and Delays
the Second Coming of Christ**

By Timothy R. Jennings, M.D.

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Viewing the gospel through the larger landscape of a universal war that includes reconciling these “things in heaven” adds a new depth of understanding and insight into the problem of sin and God’s solution for it.

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Why Hasn't Jesus Come Back?

ON DECEMBER 31, 1993, MY FATHER UNEXPECTEDLY DIED AT THE AGE OF 57. THE NEWS HIT ME LIKE A SHOT IN THE GUT. THE LOSS OF MY FATHER MADE VERY REAL TO ME THE PAIN OF WHAT SIN HAS DONE TO GOD'S CREATION, AND IT STRENGTHENED MY DESIRE FOR HEAVEN. AS I GRIEVED, I FOUND COMFORT IN THE SURETY OF CHRIST'S RETURN AND THE PROMISED RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD—IN NOT ONLY MEETING JESUS CHRIST, BUT ALSO BEING WITH MY FATHER AGAIN.

Like the great heroes of godly faith listed in Hebrews, I longed “for a better country—a heavenly one” (11:16).

My mind also recalled the message given through the apostle Peter, that we are not only to “live holy and godly lives as [we] look forward to the day of God,” but we are also to “speed its coming!” (2 Peter 3:11, 12).

Speed its coming? I wanted to do that! But how?

My deep longing to see Jesus, for an end to all the pain, suffering, exploitation, sin, abuse, sickness, aging, corruption, evil, and death—to be freed from the burden and weight of what sin has done and is doing to God's creation (Romans 8:22)—motivated me to search for what we, God's people, can do to hasten the day of our Lord's return.

Then I recalled Jesus' promise that when the “gospel of the kingdom [is] preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

I knew that “the Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand

slowness. He is patient ... not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). But I also realized that in today's age, it is a certainty that every nation, kindred, tribe, and people group on Earth have heard about Jesus. So I rejected the idea that there is some hermit hiding in some cave in some isolated part of the world who has never heard about Jesus—and that if we could just find him and tell him about Jesus, then we could hasten the day.

Instead, I examined the history of Christianity since Jesus ascended and realized that the gospel that Jesus lived out and taught and which was practiced by the New Testament church functioned quite differently than the version that came to dominate the world.

As I studied this fascinating but tragic history, I became convinced that God had raised up the Reformation movement to call Christians back to the genuine gospel, the one that Jesus had taught, to lead the world out of the Dark Ages religion that burned people at the stake, incited wars (Crusades), and encroached upon individual liberties (Inquisition). I also realized that the Reformation isn't confined to a point in time with the correction of a few doctrinal beliefs, but that it is a progressive unfolding of truths being recovered and applied to people's lives until the end of the age.

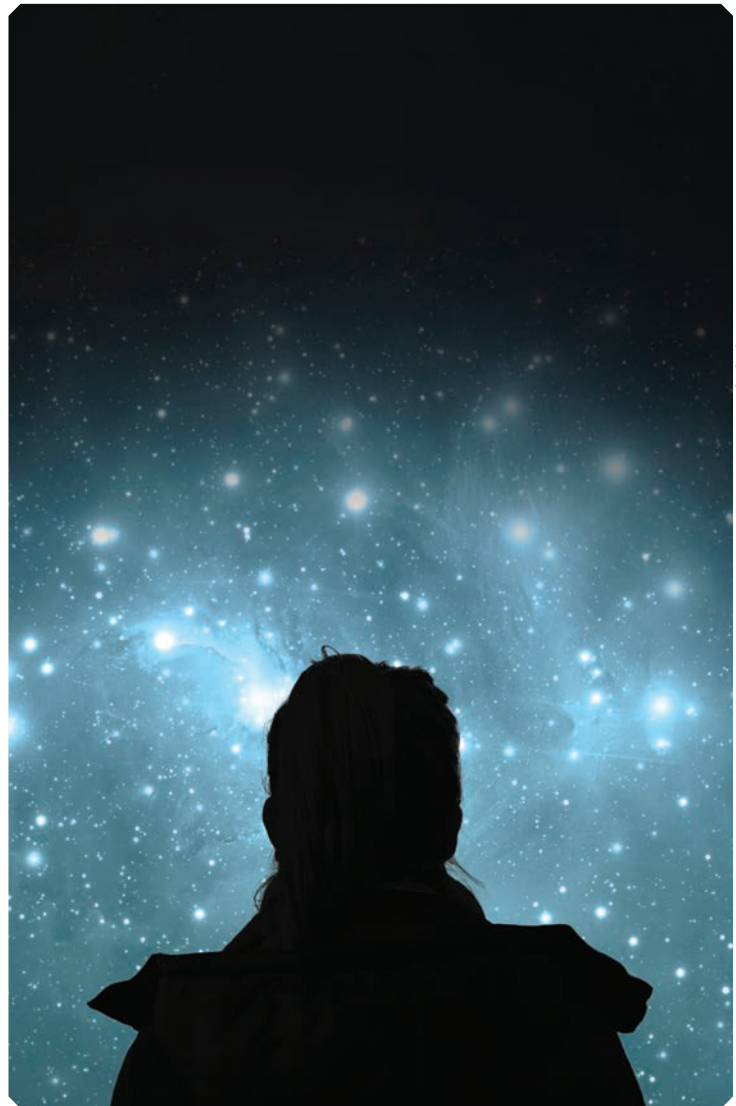
The Restoration of Jesus' Gospel in His People

I was raised in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Seventh-day Adventist Christians view themselves as a people tasked with carrying on the work started by the great Reformers, like John Wycliffe, John Huss, Jerome, William Tyndale, Martin Luther, John Knox, and John Wesley. Adventists believe, as did the Reformers, that after the Apostolic age, Christianity became corrupted with all types of falsehoods and pagan practices that obscured the true gospel and interfered with salvation. The Reformers sought to eliminate errors and return to teaching pure biblical truth.

Because the Reformation is an ongoing process of unfolding truth advancing from one generation to another, right up until Jesus comes, the members of God's church invisibleⁱ are to continue the work of the great Reformers—to themselves advance in the recovered truth *and* to present the gospel in its purest form for the purpose of hastening the second coming of Jesus. Adventists see themselves as part of this movement. The official mission statement of the Adventist Church reads:

Make disciples of Jesus Christ who live as His loving witnesses and proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels' Messages in preparation for His soon return (Matt 28:18–20, Acts 1:8, Rev 14:6–12).¹

What makes the Adventist mission unique is not the call to make disciples of Jesus—all Christians share in that mission. Nor is it the call to live out His love as witnesses to the world—Jesus said that all true Christians will demonstrate their loyalty to Him through their love for God and each other (John 13:35). And



the special message of the Adventist Church is not, “You must join our denomination in order to experience salvation” or “the Adventist Church has exclusive rights to salvation.” No, the message is not denominationalism.

What makes the Adventist message unique is that it presents the gospel in the setting of a universal war with stakes that include more than just saving humans from sin; it also includes the securing of the sinless heavenly beings in their loyalty to God so that sin will never rise again. As the apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians:

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or **things in heaven**, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross (1:19, 20, emphasis mine).

ⁱ These are Christians who are converted to Christ and are carrying out His mission, the true gospel, regardless of their denomination. Jesus said the wheat (saved) and tares (lost) grow up in the church together until the harvest. Thus, the “church invisible” is referring to those who are genuinely converted without regard to their membership in organized churches.



Viewing the gospel through the larger landscape of a universal war that includes reconciling these “things in heaven” adds a new depth of understanding and insight into the problem of sin and God’s solution for it. When we view sin and salvation in this larger universal context, we discover eternal truths that are required for us to know and embrace in order for sin and Satan to be permanently defeated; the principalities and powers of darkness destroyed; and all doubt, disaffection, and rebellion eliminated from the entire universe, thereby not only saving humanity from sin but also solidifying the loyal angels in their purity and restoring all things back to sinless perfection.

The Bible teaches that Christ’s mission, in addition to saving humans from sin, also included destroying the source and cause of all pain, suffering, and death:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might **destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil** (Hebrews 2:14, emphasis mine).

The end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father **after he has destroyed all dominion,**

authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **The last enemy to be destroyed is death** (1 Corinthians 15:24–26, emphasis mine).

In addition to saving human sinners, Christ’s plan of salvation must destroy Satan, his evil cohorts, and his power in such a way that sin itself, with all its resulting pain, suffering, and death, will be forever eliminated, never to rise again.

Then I saw **a new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will **wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away**” (Revelation 21:1–4, emphasis mine).

The Nature of the War

In order to destroy Satan, death, and the powers of darkness and to eliminate sin from His universe, God must defeat the roots of sin—the lies, the fear, and the selfishness along with the methods and principles of Satan that operate within the hearts and minds of intelligent beings. Destroying Satan without also destroying the lies he has told would not stop the spread of sin and rebellion.

And lies, fear, and selfishness cannot be defeated by the exercise of power and might. A lie cannot be defeated by simply declaring it to be false; the truth must be revealed. It is the truth that sets us free (John 8:32). Fear cannot be eliminated and love and trust restored by threatening to torture and kill those who don't love and trust. This is why the Bible teaches that God wins,

“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the LORD Almighty (Zechariah 4:6).

The Spirit is the Spirit of truth and love, not the spirit of fear (Romans 8:15); the truth destroys lies and wins us to trust, while love casts out all fear and empowers us to live victoriously (John 16:13; 1 John 4:18).

The war between Christ and Satan has always been a battle for hearts and minds, but this war did not begin in Eden; it began in heaven.

And **war broke out in heaven:** Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the

Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (Revelation 12:7–9 NKJV, emphasis mine).

And just as on Earth, the war in heaven was not a war of might and power. The Creator God, who is all-powerful, who speaks reality into existence, would win a physical war of might against any of His creatures



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as easily as dropping a stone to the ground. Thus, Lucifer's rebellion is a war of words, ideas, motives, methods, and principles that take root in hearts and minds.

In Revelation 12:7, the Greek word translated as “war” is πόλεμος (*polemos*), from which we get “polemic,” which is an argument. This shows that this cosmic war is a battle of competing ideas, concepts, beliefs, methods, motives, and principles—it is not a war of physical combat. Thus, Satan wars against heaven by sowing into hearts and minds lies about God that undermine trust in Him, incite fear, and lead to selfishness and rebellion.

We are told that Satan is the originator of lies:

You belong to your father, the devil. ... When he lies, he speaks his native language, **for he is a liar and the father of lies** (John 8:44, emphasis mine).

And the devil's primary lies in this war are about God because when we believe lies about God, our trust in Him is broken. As Paul said:

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

And Jesus said:

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



We must have the lies about God removed from our hearts and minds and come to know Him intimately and personally in order to be saved and transformed.

Believing Satan's lies breaks down love and trust, resulting in rebellion against God, thus "everything that does not come from faith [trust] is sin" (Romans 14:23).

The unique contribution of the Adventist Church to the ongoing Reformation is the expansion of the Christian understanding of the sin problem from being an exclusively human problem to a universal problem—and expanding the salvation mission of Jesus from being exclusively about saving human beings from sin to including the revelation of the truth about God and His government in order to destroy the lies of Satan and secure the unfallen heavenly beings in their loyalty. This insight exposes Satan's long-standing lie that is still operating within Christianity today—the lie that is obstructing the gospel and delaying the Second Coming.

Jesus described this larger purpose of His mission when He said,

"Now is the time for judgment on this world; now **the prince of this world will be driven out**. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all **men** to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die (John 12:31–33, emphasis mine).

The word "men" in this passage is not in the Greek manuscripts; it was added by the translators. It should read: "will draw all to myself." As such, Jesus was telling us that His mission included more than just humanity; it also included defeating the powers of darkness in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12). By revealing the truth about God and exposing Satan as a liar, Jesus drives Satan from the shadows, out into the open, and from the affections and sympathies of God's loyal angels, who knew, loved, and trusted Lucifer before his fall. In so doing, Jesus draws to Himself *all* those who love God and His methods and secures them to Himself for eternity because they are convinced by the truth itself, the truth that God is trustworthy and that Satan is a liar and fraud.



The Delay

This cosmic perspective of the sin problem and the plan of salvation has been presented by the Adventist Church for more than 150 years, yet Jesus still has not returned—why? Because there remains one foundational falsehood infecting all Christianity, including the Adventist Church, resulting in a counterfeit gospel that allows people to be cognitively converted—that is, mentally claim faith in Jesus—without being spiritually reborn.

My intention is to expose and demolish this lie and advance the eternal gospel, the eternal good news, which is about God. My motivation is not to win an argument, and I am not trying to prove one church right and another wrong. My motivation is simple: to hasten the coming of Jesus. And to do that, I believe we must advance the true

gospel, which requires the rejection of Satan's original lie.

Because of my upbringing, I am most familiar with the history of the Adventist Church, and because I want to complete the Reformation to hasten the coming of Jesus, I will use a variety of historical documents, including many from the Adventist Church, to demonstrate how one foundational lie infects all of Christianity and contrast it with the Bible's eternal good news about God.

This is not an issue of denomination; it is an issue of who we understand God to be and how we understand His character, law, and government to function. And when we reject Satan's long-standing lie, we will automatically experience the unity, the oneness, that is inherent in our faith (Ephesians 4:13).



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The Lie

**“How easy it is to make people believe a lie, and how hard it is to undo that work again!”
—Mark Twain²**



I T IS EASIER TO DECEIVE SOMEONE THAN IT IS TO CONVINCe THEM THAT THEY HAVE BEEN DECEIVED.

Once a person believes a lie and has incorporated it into their thinking—built a framework of understanding upon it; explained history and world events through it; written, preached, and taught that lie to others—it is a most difficult task to lead them back to the truth, for the self doesn't want to admit it has been wrong.

For example, as late as the twentieth century, doctors prescribed tobacco to treat a variety of medical illnesses, including ulcers, polyps, lesions, headaches, and even respiratory problems.³ You might have seen magazine advertisements from the 1950s and 60s with images of a doctor smoking a cigarette with a caption that read, "More doctors smoke Camels," a popular brand of cigarettes in those days.

Doctors who believed tobacco smoke was beneficial and had prescribed smoking to their patients, and who themselves smoked, were the most resistant to accepting the overwhelming scientific evidence that tobacco harms, causing cancer and cardiovascular disease and shortening the lifespan. No doctor wants to believe that they have been so wrong, that they are capable of believing lies, that they are harming their patients or themselves. Likewise, no Christian wants to believe that they believe a lie and that they are taking to the world a false gospel that harms people.

But Jesus Himself told us that this would, indeed, be the state of some who call themselves Christian:

Not everyone who says to **me**, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to **me** on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy **in your name**, and **in your name** drive out demons and perform many miracles?" Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" (Matthew 7:21–23, emphasis mine).

These "Christians" are active in doing what they think is "gospel work," but our Savior calls them "evildoers." Why? Because they don't know the real Jesus, His character of love, His methods, and how His kingdom truly functions.

Paul warned that those claiming faith in God would be in this very state at the end of time:

But mark this: There will be terrible times **in the last days**. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—**having a form of godliness but denying its power**. Have nothing to do with them (2 Timothy 3:1–5, emphasis mine).

Paul is not describing the godless, the atheist, or the agnostic. He is describing those with "a form of godliness," which can be referring only to people who self-identify as Christians—those who claim God-likeness. He tells us that just before the second coming of Jesus, there will be a form of Christian religion that is powerless to change lives to be like Jesus.

And, sadly, that is exactly what we find today.

Multiple studies document that within Christian homes, the rates of spousal and child abuse, alcohol and drug addiction, pornography use, and teen pregnancy are no different than those in non-Christian homes.⁴ Truly a form of godliness with no power!

But how can this be? Shouldn't those who have accepted Jesus as their Savior, who call themselves Christian, abuse their families far less than people who have not accepted Jesus?

Why is this happening within the church?

Because there is a counterfeit Christianity, one that is built upon a single lie. And just as a counterfeit dollar bill has no buying power, counterfeit Christianity has no saving, healing, transforming power—a form of godliness without power!

And Jesus delays His return because He doesn't want anyone to be lost. He wants all to be saved, so He waits for a people who will rise up to take to the world the true gospel, the everlasting gospel—the eternal good news about God that was good news in eternity past and will be good news for all eternity future. And to do that, those Christians represented by the five wise virgins (Matthew 25) must wake up and "trim their lamps" so that their light shines with greater brightness; the faithful of God must wake up and eliminate from their teachings Satan's original lie that began the rebellion in heaven so that our message lightens the world with the true gospel. We must present God in His eternal glory as our Creator—then we will hasten the day of Jesus' return!

Exposing Satan's Lie

Satan's original lie perverts and corrupts all our thinking about God, twists our understanding of good, turns justice into injustice and righteousness into unrighteousness, creates a form of godliness with no power, turns friends into enemies, and undermines the kingdom of God. Here is Satan's lie:

God's law functions like human law—with made-up, arbitrary, and imposed rules that require external legal enforcement.

As long as this lie is believed by Christians, every single Bible teaching is corrupted, God's character is misrepresented, the plan of salvation is obstructed, and the second coming of Christ is delayed by the very people claiming to advance it.

Thus, the most important question to ask when seeking the true gospel is:

How does God's law actually function?

How one answers this question *determines* how one understands God and His character, methods, and government. It *determines* whether we are worshiping the Creator who built reality—or whether we are worshiping a creature, a being we call God but whose abilities, methods, character, and government are nothing more than what a creature can establish. This is Satan's goal, to replace the truth about God in the hearts and minds of intelligent beings with a counterfeit god, whether Satan himself or any idol of worship who possesses and practices the methods of Satan.

If we conclude that God's law functions no differently than human law—with made-up rules—then we automatically conclude that God, in order to be just, must use His power to inflict punishment for rule-breaking. Our understanding of who God is, His character, His methods, His principles, His government, His trustworthiness, the sin problem, and God's solution for it (the plan of salvation) is corrupted.

By getting people to believe that God's law functions like human law, Satan argues,

There is nothing wrong with sin—it doesn't actually cause anyone harm; the problem is with God, who will use His power to kill you because you sin by breaking His made-up rules. God is the actual source of harm. If we could only do something to God, propitiate His anger and wrath, pay Him with something, then we could live forever in sin because sin doesn't harm. God harms you for it.

If we believe that God's law functions like human law, then we teach that sin is a legal problem, one of breaking rules, and that justice requires the infliction of punishment by the rule-giver. In this legal way of seeing things, God is presented as the source of death, which



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He is required “by law” to inflict upon rule-breakers as punishment for sin. This human-law view makes God the one from whom we must be protected—His wrath must be propitiated, His anger assuaged, His “just” punishment taken—if not by the sinner, then by something or someone else.

It is also falsely taught that if God doesn't use His power to inflict punishment for sin, then there is no



justice. This imposed-law system misrepresents God's justice to be the appropriate infliction of punishment, which results in the lie that someone must be punished for our sin-crimes, and that Jesus came to take our place in order to be punished by God for those sins.

As a result, in this human-like, imposed-law legal system, justice means God *punishes* an innocent for the sins of the guilty. But this is contrary to Scripture, which teaches that it is wicked to punish the innocent for the sins of the guilty:

Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin (Deuteronomy 24:16 NKJV).

The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. ... The wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself (Ezekiel 18:20 NKJV; see also 2 Kings 14:6 and 2 Chronicles 25:4).

But many within Christianity, having accepted the lie that justice requires inflicted punishment, have then falsely taught that salvation is being saved *not from sin itself* but from the legal punishment that God must inflict for sin.

George MacDonald, the famous nineteenth-century Congregationalist theologian and author, recognized this very problem. He wrote:

The Lord never came to deliver men from the consequences of their sins while those sins yet

remained. ... Yet, feeling nothing of the dread hatefulness of their sin, men have constantly taken this word that the Lord came to deliver us from our sins to mean that he came to save them from the punishment of their sins.

This idea has terribly corrupted the preaching of the Gospel. The message of the Good News has not been truly communicated. Unable to believe in the forgiveness of the Father in heaven, imagining him not at liberty to forgive, or incapable of forgiving forthright; not really believing him God who is fully our Savior, but a God bound—either in his own nature or by a law above him and compulsory upon him—to exact some recompense or satisfaction for sin, a multitude of religious teachers have taught their fellow men that Jesus came to bear our punishment and save us from hell. But in that they have misrepresented his true mission.⁵

The lie that God's law functions like human law leads to the lie that God cannot freely pardon, cannot forgive sin outright, because the law demands sin be punished through the external infliction of pain and death. But this type of justice is a worldly, earthly, sinful, corrupt, human-devised justice. This type of justice is artificial, counterfeit, fake, made-up, arbitrary, mythical, unreal, and it is all based on the lie that God's law functions no differently than human law.

This type of law and justice does not represent the law and justice of God.

What God and His Law Are Really Like

The Bible teaches that God and His ways are not like ours:

Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for **he will freely pardon**. “For **my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways**,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:7–9, emphasis mine).

God’s ways are not our ways, because God’s law is not like our law.

God freely pardons—but sin-sick humans demand punishment. Jesus pointed out this contrast between human law and God’s law:

You have heard that it was said, “Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth ...” But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:38, 44, 45).

Our laws are made-up rules that require the infliction of punishment. But God is the Creator, the Builder of reality, and His laws are the protocols upon which reality is constructed to operate. God’s laws are the functional principles upon which all things exist and which sustain all things. Life, health, and happiness are possible only when we are in harmony with the laws our Creator built life to function upon. These include the laws of physics, gravity, health, and the moral laws—the laws that govern the healthy operations of our hearts, minds, and relationships. Life exists, thrives, and grows only when it is in harmony with these protocols.

Just as pouring water into an engine that is designed to run on gasoline breaks the design parameters by placing the engine out of harmony with the laws of physics and, therefore, causes it to stop functioning, so also breaking God’s laws for life causes us to suffer, break down, and die.

God’s laws, how things work, the protocols of life, originate in His character of love. When God spoke the universe into existence, He designed it to operate in harmony with Himself. And God is love (1 John 4:16). Thus, the greatest of all God’s laws is the law of love (Matthew 22:37–39).



God’s law of love is not restricted to compassion or emotional tenderness; it is a design principle upon which life is constructed to function. It is a living law. It is the principle of giving, of other-centeredness; it is “not self-seeking” (1 Corinthians 13:5); it is other-centered, beneficent, selfless:

This is how we know what love is: Christ **gave** his life for us. We too, then, ought to **give** our lives for our brothers and sisters! (1 John 3:16 GNT, emphasis mine).



God’s justice, then, is doing what is right, and it is right for love to save the one who is sin-sick and dying, which requires God to destroy sin, which is the cause of pain, suffering, and death. God’s justice, therefore, is like the “just” or “right” actions of a physician who uses all of his abilities to destroy and eradicate disease and restore the sick patient back into harmony with the laws of health. God works with all His power to destroy and eradicate sin and restore sinners back into harmony with His design laws for life—to put His

living law of love back into our hearts and minds (Hebrews 2:14; 8:10).

This was the mission of Jesus Christ, God in human form, who revealed in His actions the eternal good news about God—that God is love and in love gave Himself freely and, thereby, “destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light” (2 Timothy 1:10). We know this only because God has revealed and accomplished it through Jesus, the ultimate expression of His love.

But Paul tells us that this truth about God's divine nature is also seen in what God has made:

For since the creation of the world **God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature**—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse (Romans 1:20, emphasis mine).

God is love. His character and nature are love. And when He built reality, He built all things to operate in harmony with Himself. The law of love is the law of life for the universe. Everything that lives gives. Cease to give and one dies. Life on Earth, God's cosmic lesson book (1 Corinthians 4:9) requires the simultaneous existence of diverse, interdependent life-forms that give to each other.

We see this law in action with every breath we take: We give away carbon dioxide to the plants, and the plants give oxygen back to us. This is but one of the never-ending circles of giving upon which the Creator built life to operate. If you choose to be a lawbreaker and transgress the law by tying a plastic bag over your head in order to selfishly hoard your carbon dioxide for yourself, then you experience the wages of that choice, the violation of breaking away from the law of life, which is death. This death is the "penalty" for law-breaking, but it is *not* inflicted by God as a judicial punishment; it is the unavoidable consequence of being out of harmony with the law of life, the law that God built life to exist upon. Thus, when the Bible speaks of God's moral law, it teaches that death, the punishment for sin, does not come out from God as an infliction, like that which human law demands, but comes out from sin itself.

The Scripture is clear: Life, not death, comes from God!

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

Sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death (James 1:15).

The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life (Galatians 6:8).

Understanding God's law as design law, the protocols upon which He built reality to operate, makes clear Paul's statement that the "sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law" (1 Corinthians 15:56).

Tying a plastic bag over one's head breaks the law of respiration and results in the sting of death. But what gives that law-breaking the power to kill is the law of respiration itself; the law that life is built upon cannot be changed to accommodate a person who violates it. As long as the bag remains tied over the head, no legal declaration will change the outcome. To save such a person, one must put them back in harmony with the law by removing the bag.

This is how it also works with God's moral design laws. Breaking God's design laws for life results in the unavoidable outcome of death, unless the Creator intervenes to save, heal, and restore us back to harmony with Himself and His law. This is what we know as the plan of salvation, in which God, through the work of Jesus, restores His living law of life into our hearts and minds:



GOD IS LOVE. HIS CHARACTER AND NATURE ARE LOVE. AND WHEN HE BUILT REALITY, HE BUILT ALL THINGS TO OPERATE IN HARMONY WITH HIMSELF.



This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people (Hebrews 8:10).

We are living beings, and God's law is a living law that all the saved have restored into their inmost being. God's law is what reality is built upon. Life exists

only in harmony with God and His design laws for life. To break God's law is to take oneself out of harmony with God and life and cause one's own death.

Thus, to actually finish the work that God has called His church to do, to take the eternal gospel to the world and hasten the coming of Christ, we must purge the lie that God's law functions like human law from all of our doctrines, teachings, and materials and return to worshipping God as Creator.

The Church Corrupted

**“Prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit.”
—The Prophet Jeremiah (8:10 NET)**



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO EXPLORE THE PARABLES OF
JESUS THROUGH THE LENS OF DESIGN LAW.**



THE LIE ABOUT GOD'S LAW ORIGINATED IN HEAVEN, SPREAD TO HUMANITY IN EDEN, AND CORRUPTED THE GOSPEL GIVEN TO THE JEWS, BUT IT WAS CORRECTED BY JESUS, WHO LIVED OUT GOD'S LAW OF LOVE PERFECTLY. ALL OF JESUS' PARABLES TAUGHT THE TRUE KINGDOM OF GOD—THE DESIGN-LAW METHODS AND PRINCIPLES.

The apostles accepted and taught the uncorrupted gospel truth as Jesus demonstrated it. Paul, prior to his conversion, used the methods of imposed law—including the use of the capital punishment power of the state—believing that justice required the use of force to punish sinners, but he changed his methods after he met Jesus on the road to Damascus and was converted. It was then that he was renamed Paul, demonstrating he had been recreated, justified (set right in heart, methods, and motives with God), and wrote that “every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind” (Romans 14:5), meaning Christians should present the truth in love and leave others free to decide for themselves.

Paul then began teaching that it is from sin itself that we reap destruction, not as a punishment inflicted by God (Romans 1:18–32; 6:23; Galatians 6:8).

The New Testament church believed and practiced these principles of God's living law of love and did not seek political power, to get new governors in Palestine or new senators in Rome to enforce their beliefs, nor did they retaliate and punish those who were persecuting them. Instead, they lived out God's love, and as a result, the gospel spread like wildfire across the Roman Empire despite the severe persecution instigated by Satan.

Therefore, Satan cleverly changed his tactics from trying to physically destroy believers in Jesus to infecting their hearts and minds with a misunderstanding of what Jesus did and how God's kingdom works. He introduced into the Christian church his original lie that had deceived the angels, the lie that God's law is imposed rules that require Him to inflict penalties for law-breaking.

Eusebius, the first church historian, wrote:

With the Roman Empire monarchy had come on earth as the image of the monarchy in heaven.⁶

How could Christians ever think such a thing, that the Roman Empire was made in the image of God's government in heaven? Because they accepted the lie that God's law functions like Roman law, that God, as Sovereign, makes up rules that justice requires He enforce through judicial oversight and the infliction of punishments—just like Rome

and all the other kingdoms of this fallen world have always done.

This lie about God's law has infected every branch of Christianity. Thomas Lindsay, in his book *A History of the Reformation*, documents this historical reality:

The great men who built up the Western Church were almost all trained Roman lawyers. Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, Gregory the Great (whose writings form the bridge between the Latin Fathers and the Schoolmen) were all men whose early training had been that of a Roman lawyer—a training which moulded and shaped all their thinking, whether theological or ecclesiastical. They instinctively regarded all questions as a great Roman lawyer would. They had the lawyer's craving for exact definitions. They had the lawyer's idea that the primary duty laid upon them was to enforce obedience to authority, whether that authority expressed itself in external institutions or in the precise definitions of the correct ways of thinking about spiritual truths.

No branch of Western Christendom has been able to free itself from the spell cast upon it by these Roman lawyers of the early centuries of the Christian Church (emphasis mine).⁷

All of Christianity became infected with the lie that God's law functions like human law, with God being presented as a punishing judge rather than a healing physician. Christianity became Romanized, a system of imperial laws enforced through external punishments, and the Bible began to be taught as a legal system of rules and enforcement.

Once this lie was accepted by her leaders, the church concluded that, just like human law is arbitrary and can be changed, God's law is also subject to change. And the Roman church began making changes to God's law: They deleted the second commandment, split the tenth into two, and changed the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first.⁸ These changes are the fruit, the result, the confirming evidence, the mark, that the church accepted the lie that God's law functions like human law.

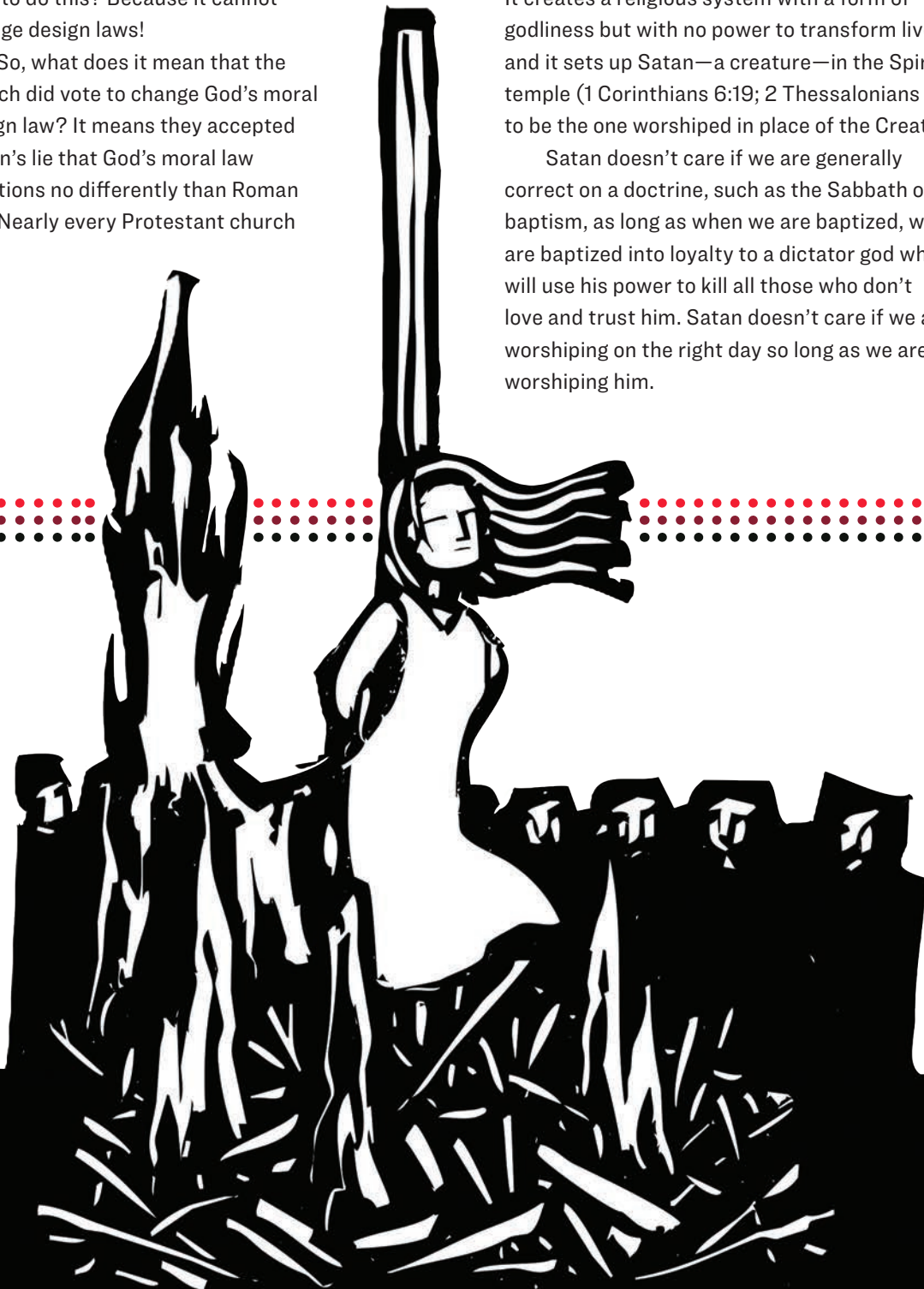
Think about it: What church committee would ever vote that their members are not required to breathe on excessive pollution days? It would be like the Dark Ages church voting that any of their members who took the Eucharist would have gravity reduced by two-thirds for the next 24 hours. Just think how convenient it would have been for the workers who built all those great cathedrals had they been able to make a rule to reduce the effects of gravity. So why didn't the church vote to do this? Because it cannot change design laws!

So, what does it mean that the church did vote to change God's moral design law? It means they accepted Satan's lie that God's moral law functions no differently than Roman law. Nearly every Protestant church

still accepts this lie! And this single lie corrupts every doctrine taught. Even if the doctrine is factually right, it is corrupted to teach lies about God that undermine trust and obstruct the eternal gospel.

To teach even correct doctrines, such as Jesus is Lord, through the imposed-law lie, misrepresents God and creates a legal fiction of a punishing god who is the source of pain, suffering, and death inflicted for rule-breaking. It creates a religious system with a form of godliness but with no power to transform lives, and it sets up Satan—a creature—in the Spirit temple (1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Thessalonians 2:4) to be the one worshiped in place of the Creator.

Satan doesn't care if we are generally correct on a doctrine, such as the Sabbath or baptism, as long as when we are baptized, we are baptized into loyalty to a dictator god who will use his power to kill all those who don't love and trust him. Satan doesn't care if we are worshiping on the right day so long as we are worshiping him.



The Attempt to Reverse the Corruption

Early Adventists, who saw themselves as reformers, believed it was their mission to complete the Reformation by calling people back to the worship of the Creator, and that required the rejection of the Romanization of Christianity, the idea that God's law functions like Roman law. These Adventist reformers taught that Lucifer used the lie that God's law is imposed and that "justice" requires God to punish sin to first deceive the angels in heaven:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice (emphasis mine).⁹

Thus, according to Adventist reformers, Satan's lie in the beginning was that God's law is the kind of law that requires Him to inflict punishment. In other words, this lie claims that God's law is the same type of law that sinful created beings make up. Again, to believe God's law is made up of imposed rules causes one to also believe that God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering, and death as the just punishment for sin. This causes the gospel to be perverted into the teaching that salvation requires something be done to God to protect us from receiving His just punishment, rather than something being done to us

to heal us from sin and restore us to unity with heaven.

The early Adventists also described just how subtle Satan's lies had to be in order to deceive sinless angels:

God could employ only such means as were consistent with truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to **falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government, claiming that God was not just in imposing laws upon the angels; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself.**

argue that since it was Satan the deceiver who claimed that "God was not just in imposing laws upon the angels," the opposite must be true—that God does indeed do that. But far from supporting this conclusion, the author of this quote is demonstrating the subtlety of the satanic deception that deceived sinless angels by presenting Satan's plan to trick people into accepting one lie while rejecting another.

Consider someone telling you the following lie about one of your close friends, a friend you are certain is always just in all of his actions: "John is not just in beating his wife." Knowing that your friend is always just,

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GOD'S GOVERNMENT IS JUST, HIS LAW PERFECT.

It was therefore necessary to demonstrate before the inhabitants of Heaven, and of all the worlds, that God's government is just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper and his real object must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works (emphasis mine).¹⁰

Those who believe the lie that God's law functions as Roman law will

you immediately recognize the allegation that "John is not just" is a lie. So, in order to reject the lie that John is not just, you conclude, "No—John must be just in beating his wife." Thus, in rejecting the one lie, you accept and promote the other lie—the lie that John is beating his wife! *Both* insinuations are false, and *both* must be rejected. It is false to say God is not just, *and* it is also false to say God imposes laws and inflicts pain and death as punishments for breaking them.

But sadly, many fail to recognize the second lie; therefore, they claim God is just to impose laws and use His power to inflict punishments upon sinners. They don't realize that they are presenting Satan's original lie about God and, thereby, are undermining God's law and government and obstructing the eternal gospel.

Some might doubt that the angels could be deceived like this. They may argue that these were brilliant, sinless beings who lived in a sinless heaven and, as such, wouldn't be duped so easily by a lie. But that is the point. The angels in heaven had never heard a lie, much less a double lie. Moreover, the lie was being told by their beloved and trusted leader and friend, Lucifer. They were not prepared to even consider that they were being deceived.

But unlike those angels, we have the evidence of human history as recorded in Scripture and the life of Jesus, the living Word, the truth embodied that reveals God's true nature, character, and methods. We must reject the lie that God is not just; He is always just! Yet we also must reject the embedded lie that God imposes made-up laws on His creatures. Instead, God creates reality, and His laws are the protocols reality functions upon.

Furthermore, angels in heaven did not have an imposed list of rules to obey that required God to police and punish them. Adventist reformers understood this:

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8 (emphasis mine).¹¹

What kind of law can be in operation when beings are living in harmony with it but haven't been informed about it or even thought of it?

This can be only design law—the protocols reality functions upon. Consider Isaac Newton discovering, not creating, the law of gravity and then telling his friends, "Hey, I have discovered the law of gravity." As he describes that law to them, can't you envision them saying, "Wow, gravity is a law? I never thought of that; it is just how things work"?

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**GOD CREATES
 REALITY, AND
 HIS LAWS ARE
 THE PROTOCOLS
 REALITY
 FUNCTIONS
 UPON.**

This is exactly how God's moral design law functions and how the angels before Lucifer's rebellion lived. They lived in harmony with God's law, the protocols that life, health, and happiness are built upon—love, truth, and freedom. There were no rules written on stone in heaven! The Adventist reformers taught that God's laws are constants that never change:

There is no such thing as weakening or strengthening the law of Jehovah. As it has been, so it is. It always has been, and always will be, holy, just, and good, complete in itself. It cannot be repealed or changed. To "honor" or "dishonor" it is but the speech of men (emphasis mine).¹²

This is design law, encompassing the laws of physics and health—and the moral laws. They cannot be weakened or strengthened or abridged or amended, for they are the protocols reality operates upon. This is how Adventist reformers presented God's eternal law:

The transgression of the physical law is the transgression of God's law. Our Creator is Jesus Christ. He is the Author of our being. He has created the human structure. **He is the Author of physical laws as He is the Author of the moral law.** And the human being who is careless and reckless of the habits and practices that concern his physical life and health sins against God (emphasis mine).¹³

The same power that upholds nature is working also in man. **The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws** that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, **are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same—a **life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral,** is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin (emphasis mine).¹⁴

By coming to dwell with us, **Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels.** He was the Word of God—God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name"—"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth"—"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed

and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. **It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love.** In the light from Calvary **it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven;** that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto (emphasis mine).¹⁵

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. **In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe.** All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, **the law of life** (emphasis mine).¹⁶



The Adventist reformers saw their mission as finishing the Reformation by presenting the three angels' messages of Revelation chapter 14. But they understood that this special message would become the eternal gospel *only when it is presented through design law*. If the three angels' messages are presented through imposed law, then the Adventist Church may have correct doctrines, but they'd still have the wrong god—and her people would still be trapped worshipping an imperial dictator who makes up rules and uses his power to inflict punishment on rule-breakers. The Adventist reformers wrote:

Men and women cannot violate natural law by indulging depraved appetite and lustful passions, and not violate the law of God. Therefore He has permitted the light of health reform to shine upon us,



that we may see our sin in violating the **laws** which He has **established in our being**. **All our enjoyment or suffering may be traced to obedience or transgression of natural law**. Our gracious heavenly Father sees the deplorable condition of men who, some knowingly but many ignorantly, are living in violation of the laws that He has established. And in love and pity to the race, He causes the light to shine upon health reform. He **publishes His law** and the penalty that will follow the transgression of it, that all may learn and be careful to live in harmony with **natural law**. He proclaims His law so distinctly and makes it so prominent that it is like a city set on a hill. All accountable beings can understand it if they will. ... **To make plain natural law, and urge the obedience of it, is the work that accompanies the third angel's message to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord** (emphasis mine).¹⁷

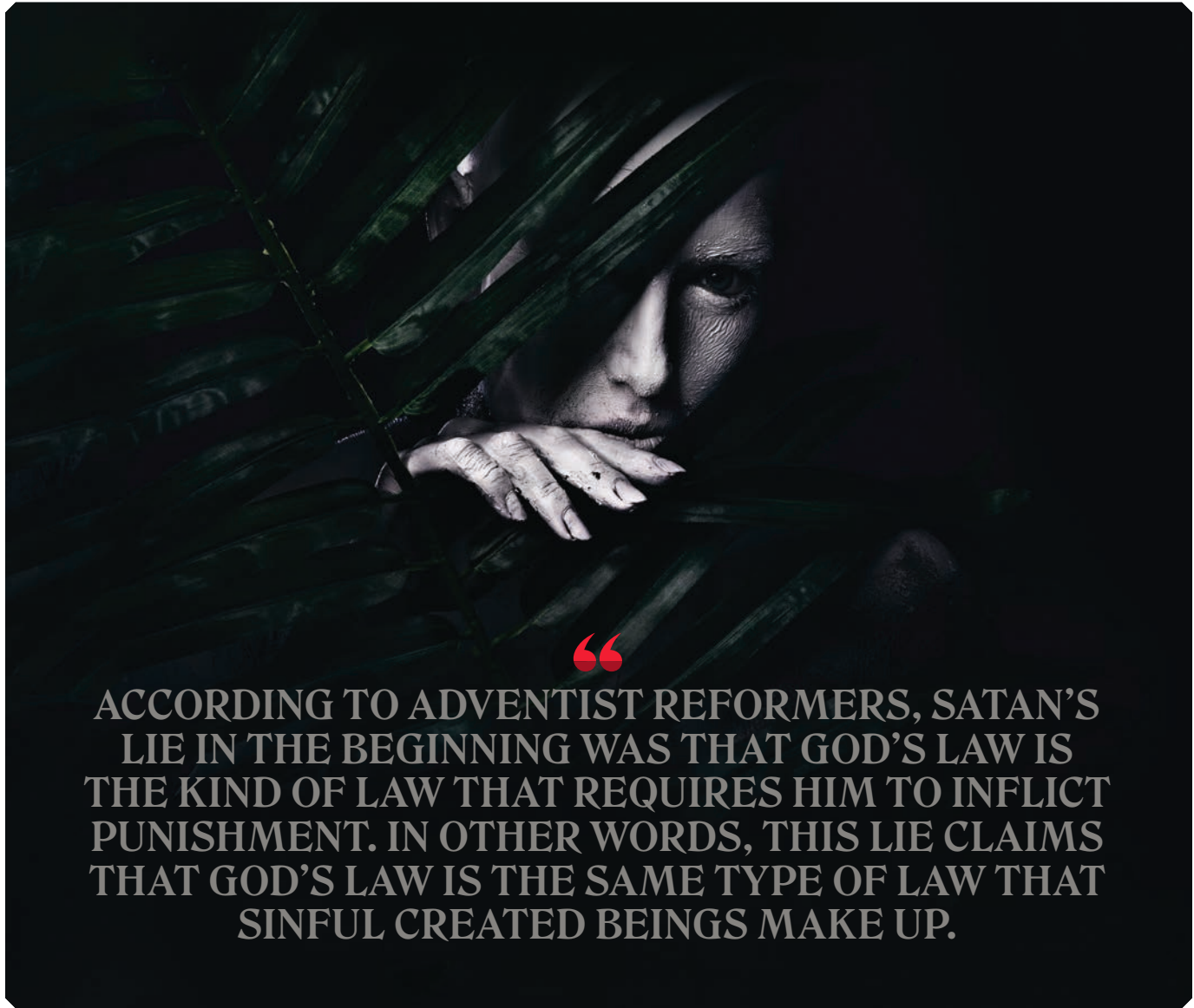
According to the Adventist reformers, Christians are to call people to worship God as Creator, the One who made the heavens, earth, sea, and fountains of water, but this requires we return to understanding His law as design law.

But sadly, these reformers, like the reformers in every previous age, met stern opposition from legalists in their midst.

At the 1888 Seventh-day Adventist General Conference session in Minneapolis, Adventist reformers presented the truth that God's kingdom is based upon design law. As such, they presented the truth that the law in Galatians that was added included the Ten Commandments and that through Christ, believers are healed and transformed to *become* righteous:

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might **become** the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21, emphasis mine).

However, the legalists in their midst opposed the reformers and taught that the added law in Galatians refers only to the ceremonial law. They insisted that the Ten Commandments are both imposed and eternal and that righteousness by faith is being legally *declared* righteous even while one remains unrighteous. They taught that this legal declaration was based upon God accepting the legal payment of Jesus' blood to the sinner's heavenly account. Thus, the Adventist leadership, instead



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ACCORDING TO ADVENTIST REFORMERS, SATAN’S LIE IN THE BEGINNING WAS THAT GOD’S LAW IS THE KIND OF LAW THAT REQUIRES HIM TO INFLICT PUNISHMENT. IN OTHER WORDS, THIS LIE CLAIMS THAT GOD’S LAW IS THE SAME TYPE OF LAW THAT SINFUL CREATED BEINGS MAKE UP.

of rejecting the Romanization of Christianity when given the chance in 1888, affirmed the Roman view of God’s law just as every other Protestant church has done. It is this lie about God’s law that has prevented the true gospel from going to the world and now delays the second coming of our Savior.

Ellen G. White, one of the most influential founders of the Adventist Church, in the aftermath of that tragic 1888 meeting, wrote the following about which law is the law that Paul in Galatians says was added:

I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: **Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments.** ... “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). **In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law** (emphasis mine).¹⁸

The written law was added specifically for the need of sinful humans. Angels in heaven did not have a law to honor their mothers and fathers—because they are not procreative beings and don’t have mothers and fathers. They did not have a law that sins would pass down three and four generations—because they don’t have children. They did not have a law to not commit adultery—because they do not marry (Matthew 22:30). The Ten Commandments are but a codification of the eternal design law of love *specifically tailored* for the need of *sinful* human beings. Adam and Eve in Eden did not have a law to honor their mother, or that their sins, which they didn’t yet have, would pass down to their sinless children had they remained faithful and followed God’s instructions for them to be fruitful and multiply before they sinned (Genesis 1:28).

God wrote the Ten Commandments on stone at Sinai because, ever since Adam and Eve sinned, the living law of love was no longer written in the hearts and minds of people. The written law was not given to introduce a human-style legal government with parameters for a legal salvation. It was given as a hedge of protection and as a diagnostic instrument to convict us of our terminal sin condition and lead us to Christ so that He would heal us—for Him to restore His living law within us so that we are brought back into harmony with the protocols God built life to operate upon.

Paul wrote,

We know that the law is good **if one uses it properly**. We also know that **law is made not for the righteous** but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me (1 Timothy 1:8–11, emphasis mine).

The written law works like an MRI; the Ten Commandments are a diagnostic instrument graciously given to us by God to expose the sin-sickness in us. MRIs are not made for healthy people, and the Ten Commandments were not written for the righteous, as Paul wrote elsewhere,

I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet” (Romans 7:7).

Paul, prior to his conversion, thought legally about God’s law; he thought that sin was rule-breaking and that righteousness was good behavior despite having bad desires. It was when he realized that the tenth commandment taught that sin is an issue of the heart—that to be righteous means we don’t even have the desire to commit adultery, murder, steal, bear false witness, or covet. Paul realized through the diagnostic efficacy of the written law that all his legal, behavioral religion was worthless **because law-keeping cannot cure hearts and minds of sin and selfishness**. Paul, prior to his conversion, had a form of godliness, a legal religion, but without any power to overcome sin.

We can understand this diagnostic function of the law and why God gave it simply by paraphrasing what Paul wrote to Timothy about the law and replacing the word “law” with “MRI”:

We know that the MRI is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the MRI is made not for healthy people but for those who are sick and diseased, the suffering, the ill, and all those who are dying, and for all activities that are contrary to the principles of healthy living that conform to the model of health that the blessed God has entrusted to me.

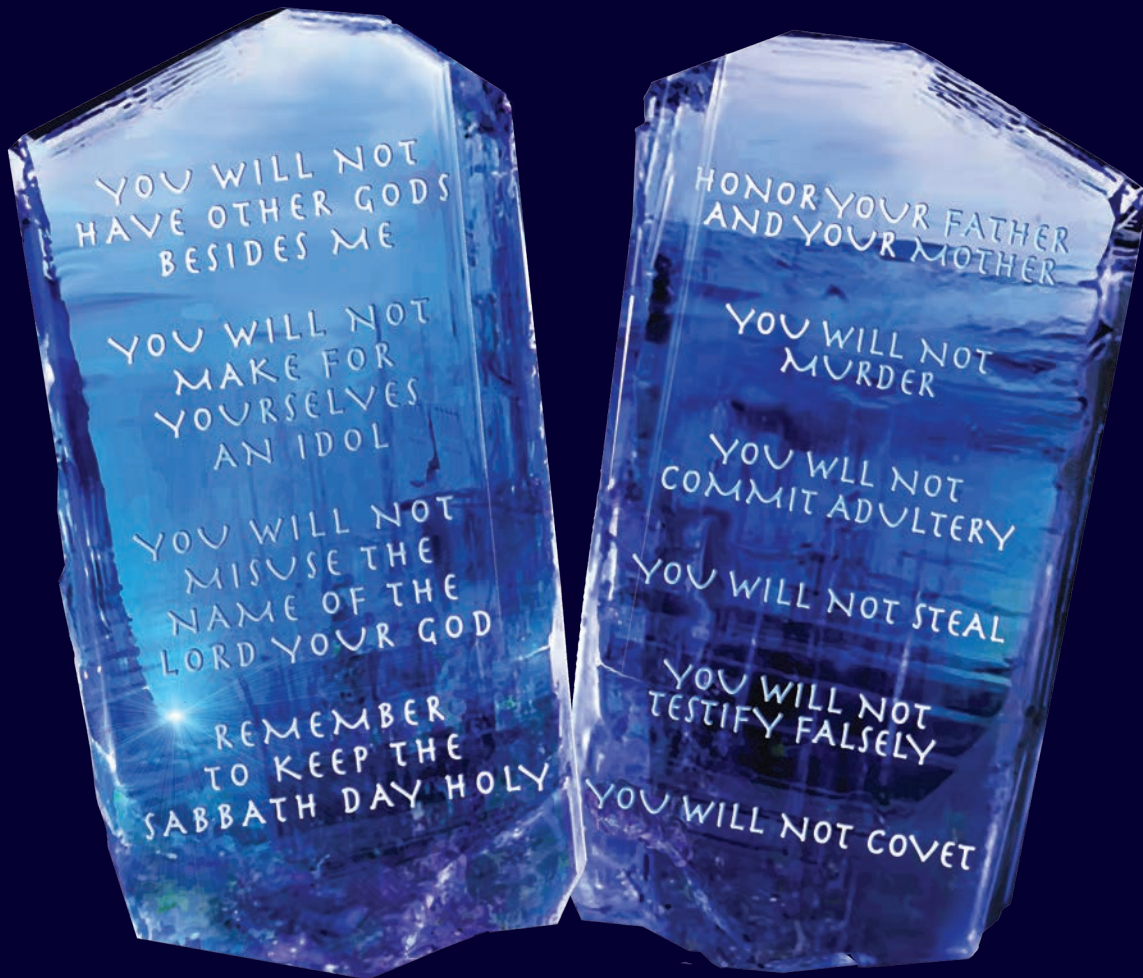
Like a loving parent, God has given us rules (Ten Commandments) to protect us and lead us to acknowledge our sin-sick terminal diagnosis so that we will go to Jesus, our heavenly physician, for healing—that is, to be made righteous.

The Adventist reformers sought to finish the work by presenting the truth about God as Creator and His laws as design laws. But this truth was resisted by the legalists in 1888. Thus, the Adventist Church leadership, by rejecting the truth that God’s law is design law and choosing in its place Romanism, the lie that God’s law is imposed, halted the ongoing work of the Reformation. The power of the Holy Spirit was resisted, and the light of the eternal gospel did not go to the world. The legalists in the church developed a religious form of godliness but without the power of God, a form that dominates the Adventist Church to this day. The Adventist reformers took note of this sad rejection of the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 1888:

An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth [that the Ten Commandments were added] lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord’s message through Brethren [E.J.] Waggoner and [A.T.] Jones. By exciting that opposition **Satan succeeded in shutting away** from our people, in a great measure, the **special power of the Holy Spirit** that God longed to impart to them. **The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency** which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The **light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted**, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world (emphasis mine).¹⁹

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LIKE A LOVING PARENT, GOD HAS GIVEN US RULES (TEN COMMANDMENTS) TO PROTECT US AND LEAD US TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR SIN-SICK TERMINAL DIAGNOSIS SO THAT WE WILL GO TO JESUS, OUR HEAVENLY PHYSICIAN, FOR HEALING— THAT IS, TO BE MADE RIGHTEOUS.





Nearly all Christianity, as we will see in the next section, has rejected God's design law and accepted the Roman view of law, teaching sin as a legal problem and the punishment for it as legally required and externally inflicted by God. This entire system of legal theology is from Satan! It has been his lie from the opening of the controversy in heaven.

For this reason, the Adventist reformers saw that the eternal gospel had to leave the legal religion behind:

I tell you, God is testing us now, just now. **The whole earth is to be lightened with the glory of God. That light** is shining now, and how hard it has been for proud hearts to accept of Jesus as their personal Saviour; how hard to get out of **the rut of a legal religion**; how hard for them to grasp the rich, free gift of Christ. **Those who have not accepted this offering will not understand anything in regard to that light which fills the whole earth with its glory.** Let every heart now seek the Lord. Let self be crucified, for rich and glorious blessings are awaiting all who shall maintain contrition of soul. With them Jesus can abide;



they will let nothing interpose between their souls and God (emphasis mine).²⁰

There are many who will be lost because they depend on legal religion, or mere repentance for sin. But repentance for sin alone cannot work the salvation of any soul (emphasis mine).²¹

The Adventist reformers also understood that the Romanization of Christianity causes many to view God in a false light:

Many conceive of the **Christian's God as a being whose attribute is stern justice—one who is a severe judge**, a harsh, exacting creditor. The Creator has been **pictured as a being** who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, **that He may visit judgment upon them.** In the minds of thousands, love and sympathy and tenderness are associated with the character of Christ, while **God is regarded as the law-giver, inflexible,**

arbitrary, devoid of sympathy for the beings He has made.

Never was there a greater error. Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love. It is from Him that we receive every good gift. He is the source of life, of wisdom, and of joy. **Look at the wonderful and beautiful things of nature.** Think of their marvelous adaptation to the needs and happiness, not only of man, but of all living creatures. The sunshine and the rain, that gladden and refresh the earth,

of God. He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, that **men might lose the true views of God's character, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth.** He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. **The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was pictured as one who could take



ANGELS COULD NOT FULLY PORTRAY THE CHARACTER OF GOD, BUT CHRIST, WHO WAS A LIVING IMPERSONATION OF GOD, COULD NOT FAIL TO ACCOMPLISH THE WORK.

the hills and seas and plains, all speak to us of the Creator's love (emphasis mine).²²

When we look to nature, our minds are drawn to the laws of nature, the design protocols for life, and away from the Roman lie. Satan's lies about God's law pervert how people understand God, and Christ came to reveal the truth about the Father in order to restore us to trust in God:

Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne

pleasure in the sufferings of His creatures. **The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God.** Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent Him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make**

Himself visible and familiar to their eyes. That men might have salvation He came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature (emphasis mine).²³

Jesus, the Word made flesh, God in humanity, revealed the truth about the Father and demonstrated in His life and all His teachings that God's kingdom is not of this world, that God's government is not of this world, that God's law is not of this world, and that God does not run His universe like a Roman dictator!



Who Leads the Church: Creature or Creator?

The Adventist reformers knew that if the church embraced the lie that God's law does function like Roman law, with artificially imposed rules, then it would teach what Satan alleged, that sin must be punished by external power. But to believe that makes God out to be the one from whom pain, suffering, and death originate and the one from whom we need protection. To worship such a god, according to the Adventist reformers, is to worship a creature and not the Creator:

The great controversy [is] between Christ, the Prince of life, the Author of our salvation, and Satan, the prince of evil, the author of sin, the first transgressor of God's holy law. Satan's enmity against Christ has been manifested against His followers. **The same hatred of the principles of God's law, the same policy of deception, by which error is made to appear as truth, by which human laws are substituted for the law of God, and men are led to worship the creature rather than the Creator,** may be traced in all the history of the past. **Satan's efforts to misrepresent the character of God, to cause men to cherish a false conception of the Creator,** and thus to regard Him with fear and hate rather than with love, his endeavors to set aside the divine law, leading the people to think themselves free from its requirements, and his persecution of those who dare to resist his deceptions, have been steadfastly pursued in all ages. They may be traced in the history of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, of martyrs and reformers (emphasis mine).²⁴



WHEN WE WORSHIP A GOD WHOSE LAWS ARE MADE-UP RULES THAT REQUIRE JUDICIAL ENFORCEMENT THROUGH INFLICTED PUNISHMENTS, WE ARE WORSHIPING A CREATURE AND NOT THE CREATOR.

The Creator builds reality; His creatures cannot do that. We creatures cannot speak into existence energy, time, matter, and life—so we make up rules that we call “laws” and then enforce them with inflicted punishments. Thus, when we worship a god whose laws are made-up rules that require judicial enforcement through inflicted punishments, *we are worshiping a creature and not the Creator.* And

that is Satan's goal! Satan is the one who counterfeits Christ; “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). It is Satan's goal to replace Jesus in our hearts and minds as the one we worship. He does this by replacing how we understand God's law, and thus, how we understand God's character.

Imposed law, the kind of law creatures make, requires that law-

breaking be punished; thus, God is presented as an arbitrary judge and punisher of sinners. Adventist reformers taught that part of Christ's mission to our world was to demonstrate that God is not like Satan has alleged Him to be—that God is not an arbitrary judge condemning and punishing sinners:

Christ came to our world to become our sacrifice. He came





where he proposed to work out his principles of rebellion, the battle had to be fought, that all might behold the real nature and results of disobedience to God's great moral standard. **He represented God in a false light, clothing him with his own attributes. Christ came to represent the Father in his true character. He showed that he was not an arbitrary judge, ready to bring judgments upon men, and delighting in condemning and punishing them for their evil deeds.** The Lord proclaimed his character to Moses in the mount. "And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty" (emphasis mine).²⁵

to discover to our eyes the gems of truth, to place them in a **new setting**—the frame-work of truth. ... Through the sacrificial offerings of the Jewish dispensation, we are pointed forward to Christ, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. When Christ came, it was to engage in the conflict with the enemy of God and man, on this earth, in the sight of the universe of heaven. But why was it necessary to wage the warfare in the sight of other worlds?—It was because Satan had been an exalted angel, and when he fell, he induced many angels to join him in his revolt against God's government. **He worked in the minds of the angels as he works in the minds of men today.** He made a pretension of loyalty to God, and yet **he argued that angels should not be under law.** He inculcated his ideas, his rebellion and enmity, and **hatred of God's law originated in the minds of the angels in heaven** through his influence. **He caused the fall of man through the same temptations with which he had caused the fall of angels;** and in the world

The central issue in this war of words that Lucifer started in heaven is who we understand God to be. Is God trustworthy? Does God deserve our loyal love and worship? And what we believe about God is *determined* by what we believe about His law. If we accept Satan's lie that God's law functions no differently than the laws sinful humans make—a list of rules that requires judicial oversight and enforcement—then we will *always* conclude that God is like Satan in character and is the source of inflicted pain, suffering, and death as punishment for sin.

However, the Bible is clear that death does not come from God as punishment for sin, but, in fact, it is Satan who holds the power of death and that Christ came to destroy the evil one and his power:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might **destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil** (Hebrews 2:14, emphasis mine).

Life comes from God:

Christ Jesus ... has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10).

God is not the source of death—He is the source of life! Jesus opens the grave and overcomes death:

I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave (Revelation 1:18 NLT).

When the church replaces the truth of God's design law with human imposed law, it causes people to worship the god who is the source of inflicted death and call that "justice"—but that god is the impersonator of Christ, the enemy of life, the evil one himself.

This has been Lucifer's goal from the beginning. When he, a creature, a created being, began his rebellion in heaven, he was seeking to win to himself the loyalty, devotion, and worship that only our Creator merits. Satan wants to replace God in the hearts and minds of all intelligent beings as the one whom we admire, love, and adore—the one whom we become like. Satan wants to make human beings, who are created to be image bearers of our Creator, into image bearers of demons.

One of God's design laws is the law of worship, which teaches that by beholding we are changed:

We all, with unveiled faces reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, which is from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18 NET).

In psychiatry, this is known as modeling. We change neurobiologically, psychologically, and characterologically to become like that which we admire and worship. If we

worship a dictator god, a rule-maker and enforcer, a being who requires payment to bless and blood sacrifice to forgive, then we become like that god and we end up going on religious crusades, burning people at the stake, and abusing our own families—functioning exactly like the unconverted world because we are worshiping the prince of this world, the imperial dictator who is the source of death.

But if we worship God as Jesus revealed Him to be, then we are reborn with new hearts, have the living law of love written into our inmost being, and live victorious, Christlike lives that reveal our love for God and others.

The completion of the Reformation requires more than just correcting wrong doctrines. It *requires* that we set everything on a foundation of Creator worship. This *requires* that we reject the Romanization of God's law and return to teaching that God's law is design law. The Adventist reformers believed the great sin of the Christian world is the rejection of God's law, and we do that when we replace God's design law with imposed human law.

The great sin of the Jews was their rejection of Christ; **the great sin of the Christian world would be their rejection of the law of God, the foundation of His government in heaven and earth** (emphasis mine).²⁶

How we understand God's law determines how we understand everything in Scripture, from God's character to the sin problem, from the plan of salvation to the gospel message. The Adventist reformers believed that the final issue in this long-standing conflict with Satan, which precedes the coming of Christ, centers on this question:

The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the **long-standing controversy concerning the law of God**. Upon this battle we are now entering—a **battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah**, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition (emphasis mine).²⁷

The final issue in this war is over how we understand God's law and thus, how we understand God's character and government to function. If the church is to finish the Reformation and hasten the day of our Lord, it must reject the Roman idea of law and return to worshipping the Creator.



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Between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah will come the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. Upon this battle we are now entering—a **battle not between rival churches** contending for the supremacy, but between the religion of the Bible and the religions of fable and tradition (emphasis mine).²⁸

The final conflict is not a battle between rival churches! It is over the laws of men versus the precepts of God. What kind of laws do men enact? Imposed-law, made-up rules. But God's law is design law, the laws that sustain the operations of life itself. The final conflict will be over this issue.

Yet sadly, far too many Christians are caught up in denominational fighting when the real issue is over whether we are worshiping the Creator or a creature.

Evidence of the Imposed-Law Lie in Christianity

“As any doctor can tell you, the most crucial step toward healing is having the right diagnosis. If the disease is precisely identified, a good resolution is far more likely. Conversely, a bad diagnosis usually means a bad outcome, no matter how skilled the physician.”

—Andrew Weil, M.D.



CORRECTLY UNDERSTANDING THE PLAN OF SALVATION, WHICH IS THE TREATMENT FOR THE SIN PROBLEM, REQUIRES THAT WE ACCURATELY DIAGNOSE WHAT THE SIN PROBLEM IS. IF THE DIAGNOSIS IS WRONG, THEN THE TREATMENT IS USUALLY WRONG.

What is the problem that sin caused that the plan of salvation is designed to fix? What we believe about God's law determines how we answer this question.

If one believes that God's law functions like human law, then one believes the problem of sin is a legal problem with God and His government, that humanity became legally condemned to death and that justice requires humanity's execution by a "just" God.

But in this legal fiction, it is also taught that God loves us, so He sent His Son to take our place and thereby, take our legal punishment by being executed by the Father instead of the Father executing us.

In this scenario, "the blood of Jesus" becomes the legal payment that we must offer to God to resolve our legal debt in order to be forgiven, legally declared righteous, and granted eternal life. But notice in this scenario where the blood of Jesus is doing its work, where it is being applied and having its effect: It is working upon God and His law to get Him to grant pardon or forgiveness. In other words, the sacrifice is being offered to a deity to get a blessing—this is paganism!

But think about the actual problem that sin caused that God needed to fix through Christ. When Adam sinned, did God get changed? No! He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He changes not. Did God's law get changed? No! God's law is eternal and perfect. Adam's sin *did not change* God nor His law.

So, what changed? The condition of Adam and Eve changed. They were changed from holy, loving beings into sinful, fear-ridden, selfish beings. Therefore, however one describes the plan of salvation, the place where change must occur, where its saving effect must be applied in order to save sinners from sin, is not upon God nor upon God's law, but upon humanity. This is reality; it is design law; it is actually healing, fixing, restoring that which is damaged by sin back into purity and holiness.

The penal/legal view of salvation is built upon the lie that God's law functions like human law and therefore, it perverts God's healing plan into a system of legal adjustment that has a form of godliness without power to transform. It results in doctrines being taught that

make God out to be the one from whom we need to be protected. It makes God out to be the source of death rather than life, a punisher rather than a deliverer. And via the law of worship, if you worship such a god, then you will model yourself like that punishing being and end up becoming a punisher rather than a deliverer.

The following is documentation from across various Christian denominations demonstrating that no branch of Christianity has been able to free itself from the Roman imposed-law lie and how this lie warps the gospel and misrepresents God:

Roman Catholic

What did Christ's suffering and death actually accomplish that allowed the Father to provide the human race with salvation? Did Christ take within himself the sin and guilt of mankind and suffer the specific punishment for that sin and guilt, as Protestants contend? The answer is no. ... Christ did not take upon himself the entire punishment required of man for sin. Rather, Scripture teaches only that Christ became a "propitiation," a "sin offering," or a "sacrifice" for sins. ... Essentially, this means that Christ, because he was guiltless, sin-free and in favor with God, could **offer himself up as a means of persuading God to relent of his angry wrath against the sins of mankind.** Sin destroys God's creation. God, who is a passionate and sensitive being, is angry against man for harming the creation. Anger against sin shows the personal side of God, for sin is a personal offense against him. We must not picture God as an unemotional courtroom judge who is personally unharmed by the sin of the offender brought before him. **God is personally offended by sin and thus he needs to be personally appeased in order to offer a personal forgiveness.** In keeping with his divine principles, his personal nature, and the magnitude of the sins of man, the only thing that God would allow to appease him was the suffering and death of the sinless representative of mankind, namely, Christ (emphasis mine).²⁹

Notice that according to this Catholic view, the problem is in God and that something needs to be done in order to appease, to change, God.

Eastern Orthodox

Since Adam had fallen under the curse, and through him all people also who proceed from him, therefore **the sentence of God** concerning this could in no way be annihilated; and therefore Christ was for us a curse, through being hung upon the tree of the cross, so as to offer Himself **as a sacrifice to His Father**, to annihilate **the sentence of God** by the superabundant worth of the sacrifice (emphasis mine).³⁰

While in many ways the Eastern Orthodox Church, having broken away from Rome, places less emphasis on legal elements and a greater emphasis on God’s love for sinners, and while they also reject the Protestant penal substitution theology as an explanation of the atonement, it is not fully free of the lie that God’s law functions like human law. As the quote above documents, within the Eastern Orthodox Church tradition, we find legal explanations with a sentence imposed by God and the sacrifice of Jesus being offered to God.

Methodist

The sufferings of Christ are an atonement for sin by substitution, in the sense that they were intentionally endured for sinners under **judicial condemnation**, and for

the sake of their forgiveness. They are an atonement for sin in the sense that they render its forgiveness consistent with the divine justice. They provide for such consistency, in the sense that justice none the less fulfills its rectoral office in the interest of moral

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THE FATHER IS PRESENTED AS THE ONE WHO HAS THE PROBLEM, THE ONE WHO NEEDS SOMETHING DONE TO HIM TO CHANGE HIM.

government. Such office of justice is so fulfilled in the sense that, in granting forgiveness only on the ground of such a substitution in atonement, the honor and authority of the divine Ruler, together with the rights and interests of his subjects, are equally maintained as by the **infliction of merited penalty upon sin** (emphasis mine).³¹

God is presented as the source of judicially inflicted penalties, but this is how a creature functions, not the Creator.

Reformation Theology

Jesus Christ took upon himself the **punishment** that the sins of his people deserved. In other words, the Reformers understood that the atonement was a **satisfaction by means of punishment** (emphasis mine).³²

God is presented as needing someone to be punished in order for Him to be satisfied.

Evangelical

We affirm that the atonement of Christ by which, in his obedience, he offered a perfect sacrifice, **propitiating the Father by paying for our sins** and satisfying divine justice on our behalf according to God’s eternal plan, is an essential element of the Gospel (emphasis mine).³³

The Father is presented as the one who has the problem, the one who needs something done to Him to change Him.

Pentecostal

The word “propitiation” properly signifies the **turning away of wrath by a sacrifice**. Thus it signifies **appeasement**. ... According to Leon Morris: “The consistent Bible view is that the sin of man has incurred the wrath of God. That wrath is averted only by Christ’s atoning offering.



From this standpoint his **saving work is properly called propitiation**” (emphasis mine).³⁴

God is presented as having an anger-control problem that needs fixing by the blood of a sacrifice.

Seventh-day Adventist

For a loving God to maintain His justice and righteousness, the atoning death of Jesus Christ became “a moral and legal necessity.” God’s justice requires that sin be carried to judgment. **God must therefore execute judgment** on sin and thus on the sinner. **In this execution the Son of God took our place, the sinner’s place, according to God’s will** (emphasis mine).³⁵

Why did **God the Father choose** a cross to be the instrument of death? Why did He not choose to have Christ instantly beheaded or quickly run through with a spear or sword? Was **God unjust in executing judgment on Christ with a cross** when He could have done it by a beheading, a noose, a sword, a gas chamber, a bolt of lightning, or a lethal injection? (emphasis mine).³⁶

One of the fundamental problems of the Moral Influence Theory is that it rejects the substitutionary nature of Christ’s death. The idea that **God had to kill the innocent** instead of the guilty in order to save us is considered a violation of justice (emphasis mine).³⁷



It should be noted here that this previous quote utilizes a strategy commonly employed by those who hold to the penal/legal view—making the assertion that those who reject their view are teaching the Moral Influence Theory (MIT). However, we reject MIT because it is an incomplete explanation of the atonement. In our next section, we give a comprehensive explanation of why Christ had to die. The important point to note in the above quote is that the lie that God’s law functions like human law leads to the teaching that God kills the innocent and calls it justice.

The Hebrew wording in both Leviticus 9:24 and 10:2 was the same: “and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed ...” (9:24, NKJV). Consumed what? In the first case, the offering; in the other, the sinners. What a powerful representation of the plan of salvation. **At the Cross, the “fire from God,” the wrath of God, “consumed” the offering, and that was Jesus** (emphasis mine).³⁸

To spare us, God poured out His wrath against the violation of His law (sin), not on the violators of His law (sinners) but on the sinless Jesus, the only way that God could “be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). **In short, rather than killing us for violating His law, the Father killed Jesus instead. ... Or, to put it crudely, the Father killed Jesus so that He wouldn’t have to kill us** (emphasis mine).³⁹

These quotes provide plain evidence that the official Adventist Church leadership continues to reject the Adventist reformers’ message of design law.

When one accepts the lie that God’s law functions like human law, then one falsely teaches that God is the source of death as inflicted punishment and that He was the actual killer of Jesus. Nearly every Christian denomination teaches this view. But this position directly contradicts what Scripture reveals.

What Actually Happened at the Cross

In Scripture, we find that God gave Jesus as a gift to humanity to save us from sin (John 3:16), not to save us from His punishment (John 1:29), and that at the cross, God did not lay a hand upon Jesus (Matthew 27:46) but that it was evil men at the instigation of Satan who tortured and killed God's Son. But the lie about God's law misrepresents God to be in Satan's role as the killer of His Son—an idea that the many quotes above support.

God was not taken by surprise when the Christian church began to teach that Jesus was punished, struck, and afflicted by Him. God foreknew it would be misunderstood in this way and, in fact, prophesied this through Isaiah:

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet **we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted** (53:4, emphasis mine).

Jesus took up the infirmity of our terminal sin condition in order to overcome and cure it, but God foreknew that we would misunderstand, that we would accept the Roman imposed-law lie and teach that God was the One who struck Jesus, that God is the One from whom death originates and who inflicted death on His own Son as punishment for sin. But Jesus said to those who would later crucify Him:

You belong to your **father, the devil**, and you want to carry out your **father's desire. He was a murderer** from the beginning (John 8:44, emphasis mine).

And Hebrews tells us,

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might **destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil** (2:14, emphasis mine).

According to Jesus and Hebrews, death originates and comes out from Satan, the one who tempts us to break away from God and His design laws for life. Yet, when we accept Satan's lie that God's law functions like human law, we teach that God is the source of death, even that God killed His own Son, and we call that—the

killing of an innocent to falsely claim that the guilty are now innocent—justice. However, in God's kingdom, sinners are never declared innocent; instead, the saved are recognized by God as healed, renewed, recreated, reborn, restored to righteousness!

The Adventist reformers rejected the view that God killed Jesus and taught, in agreement with Scripture, that it was Satan who murdered Jesus:

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. **He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings** (emphasis mine).⁴⁰

We said, God is doing all this; God is killing him, punishing him, to satisfy his wrath, in order to let us off. That is the pagan conception of sacrifice. The Christian idea of sacrifice is this. Let us note the contrast. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That is the Christian idea. Yes, sir. Indifference keeps, hatred keeps, selfishness keeps. ... But love, and love only, sacrifices, gives freely, gives itself, gives without counting the cost; gives because it is love. That is sacrifice, whether it is the sacrifice of bulls and goats, or of him who is the Lamb of God. It is the sacrifice that is revealed throughout the entire Bible. **But the pagan idea of sacrifice is just the opposite. It is that some god is always offended, always angry, and his wrath must be propitiated in some way** (emphasis mine).⁴¹

While God has desired to teach men that **from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself**, the **archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God as one who delights in their destruction**. Thus the sacrifices and the ordinances designed of Heaven to reveal divine love **have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God** (emphasis mine).⁴²

The Adventist reformers taught that this lie about God’s law originated in heaven, caused the fall of Adam and Eve, and prevented the Jews from accepting Jesus as Messiah because they believed that sin requires God to punish:

It was generally believed by the Jews **that sin is punished in this life**. Every affliction was regarded as **the penalty of some wrongdoing**, either of the sufferer himself or of his parents. It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God’s law, but this truth had become perverted.

Satan, the author of sin and all its results, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God—as punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin. Hence one upon whom some great affliction or calamity had fallen had the additional burden of being regarded as a great sinner.

Thus the way was prepared for the Jews to reject Jesus. He who “hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows” **was looked upon by the Jews as “stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;”** and they hid their faces from Him. Isaiah 53:4, 3.

God had given a lesson designed to prevent this. The history of Job had shown

that suffering is inflicted by Satan and is overruled by God for purposes of mercy. But Israel did not understand the lesson. The same error for which God had reproved the friends of Job was repeated by the Jews in their rejection of Christ (emphasis mine).⁴³

The Adventist reformers took the position that Satan is the author of sin and “all of its results,” which includes death. But, most Christian churches, including today’s Adventist Church, while often rejecting the lie that sickness is inflicted by God as a temporal punishment for sin, continue to believe the lie that death proceeds from God as just punishment for sin.

Why do they continue to teach this lie? Because they accept the lie that God’s law functions like human law, that justice requires the infliction of punishment.

The belief that God is a punishing god is the inevitable and unavoidable result of believing the lie that God’s law functions like human law. Whenever Roman imposed law replaces God’s design law in people’s thinking, it blinds them so severely to the light of the eternal gospel that even when they acknowledge what the Bible teaches, they turn right around to deny the Bible and replace its truth with their own false, made-up theories.

Paul **always** speaks of people being reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:19; Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:20). He **never** refers to God being reconciled to us. **In spite of that fact**, however, we should recognize that sin affected both sides. Humanity’s rebellion and sense of guilt alienated it from God, while **God was separated from humankind by His necessary hatred of and judgment on sin (His wrath). Christ’s sacrificial death (propitiation) removed the barrier to reconciliation from God’s side”** (emphasis mine).⁴⁴

This is so sad! The author rightly recognizes that the Bible *only* and *always* speaks of sinners being reconciled to God and *never* teaches that God is reconciled to us, which means the change that brings salvation is a change in sinners, not in God. Yet the lie that God’s law functions like human law so contaminates the understanding of those who believe, as this author does, that they reject Scripture and advance their own Roman explanation that misrepresents God’s character and government.

This is a false gospel, with a false god, who is nothing more than a creature, a being who, in the same way that all sinful creatures do, makes up rules and inflicts punishments for rule-breaking.



THE BELIEF THAT GOD IS A PUNISHING GOD IS THE INEVITABLE AND UNAVOIDABLE RESULT OF BELIEVING THE LIE THAT GOD’S LAW FUNCTIONS LIKE HUMAN LAW.



The Gospel in Reality

Biblical reconciliation occurs only when sinners are changed—restored to harmony with God:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!** All this is from God, who **reconciled us to himself** through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was **reconciling the world to himself** in Christ, **not counting men's sins against them.** And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:17–21, emphasis mine).

Becoming a new creation is not a legal declaration; it is a divine recreation, healing, cleansing, renewal. It is the function of God's power restoring in the living being His design law as the basis of our thoughts and actions. We are brought out of fear and selfishness into the unity of love and trust with God.



The false imposed-law legal system teaches the opposite of what Scripture reveals; it teaches that God *does* count men's sins against them and that something must be done to God to remove His anger and wrath.

However, under design law, our acts of sin don't have to be counted; only the condition of the heart and mind needs to be assessed and addressed.

Just consider someone who is dying of pneumonia. They will have all kinds of symptoms—cough, fever, chills. While there are medical records to document the extent of the disease, there is no need to keep track of the number of times a person coughs, vomits, or has a fever. There is no requirement to inflict a legal punishment for their symptoms. They have a condition that is breaking the laws of health and, without remedy, will result in their death. The only requirement is to eliminate the infection and restore them to harmony with the laws of health. And when that happens, the symptoms resolve and go away.

That is what God is doing through Christ within the framework of His moral design law; He is eliminating from hearts and minds the infection of sin, fear, selfishness, distrust, lies, and perversions and is restoring in us His living law of love. And when that happens, we live righteous lives!

The Adventist reformers rejected the legal imposed-law view and advanced a healing message that calls people back to worshiping the Creator, whose laws are design laws. When we do this, we realize that God is not the executioner any more than a doctor executes a non-compliant patient for refusing to take medicine for their terminal sickness. God doesn't have to execute because unremedied sin destroys and kills by its very nature. This is what the Adventist reformers taught but what the legalists who hold to the Roman-law view reject:

God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejecters of His mercy to themselves, **to reap that which they have sown.** Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is **a seed sown, which yields its unfailing harvest.** The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from



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the malice and enmity of Satan. The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God's hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty (emphasis mine).⁴⁵

God's saving, healing, and protective power will one day be withdrawn from the persistently rebellious, and they will reap what they have chosen, just like Paul wrote in Galatians 6:8: "The one who sows to please his sinful nature, **from that nature will reap destruction**" (emphasis mine). God uses power to heal and save, but when people accept the imposed-law lie, they teach that God is the executioner, the author of inflicted death. The Adventist reformers taught the opposite,

that the punishment for sin comes from sin itself:

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. **By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death** (emphasis mine).⁴⁶

The unrepentant will reap destruction when God ceases to use His power to mercifully hold at bay what violations of His design law naturally do to people.



But sadly, Christianity continues to teach God's government functions like all sinful human governments. It is this lie about God's law, with the subsequent fraudulent penal/legal system of salvation, that creates a form of godliness with no power:

In Romans 3 **justification does not mean "to make righteous," but rather "to declare righteous."** ...

The ground of justification is, as Paul points out, Christ's death (Rom. 5:9; 3:24, 25). The means by which it becomes effective for the individual is faith (Rom. 5:1; 3:25; Gal. 2:16, 20; Phil 3:9). Although **people do have a legal relationship to God**, it is also true that that relationship is much more than just a legal one. God's love for humanity impels Him to give people what they do not deserve (grace) ...

Interestingly enough, **His [God's] legal practices are just the opposite of the instructions He gave for human judges**, who were to "justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked" (Deut. 25:1, KJV). Anyone who "justifies the wicked," we read in Proverbs, and "condemns the righteous" is "an abomination to the LORD" (Prov. 17:15).

The issue that we must face at this point is **how God can break the rules that He set forth for human judges**. It is that type of problem, Morris

claims, that troubles Paul in Romans 3. How can God be righteous if He forgives people who have no right to be forgiven? **One would expect a just God to punish those who deserved it. That is what justice means.** But in the past, Paul claims in verse 25, God did not invariably punish sin. Sinners went on living.

"Now," Morris suggests, "you can argue that this shows God to be merciful, or compassionate, or kind, or forbearing, or loving. **But you cannot argue that it shows him to be just.**" Because God had not always punished sinners, some would be tempted to doubt His justice (emphasis mine).⁴⁷

Under what type of law does "justice" mean punishing those who deserve it? That is sinful human's imposed law! This is the lie that the ongoing work of the Reformation is supposed to eliminate.

The legal view creates a form of godliness—that is, a legal religion—with no power because it replaces the truth about God with a false god who is like Satan in character, a being who is the source of pain, suffering, and death, and who must be propitiated, appeased, and paid off by a blood sacrifice in order not to use his power to kill. In other words, it makes the focus on doing something to God rather than cooperating with God for our healing and transformation.



The Legal View: A Powerless Christianity

As already noted, proponents of the imposed-law legal view teach the lie that “justification does not mean ‘to make righteous,’ but rather ‘to declare righteous.’”

This creates a false gospel with no power to save. This counterfeit gospel is why so many in the church continue to struggle with sin that they never seem to overcome and why so many leave in discouragement and frustration.

The following analogy will demonstrate the problem of the Romanization of Christianity with its penal/legal system of salvation.

Loving parents will make up and impose various rules to safeguard and manage their small, immature, and self-focused children. One common rule they set is that their children must brush their teeth regularly. Loving parents do not make these rules in order to create a legal system that requires judicial oversight and punitive enforcement. Rather, they do so because they understand God’s design laws, the laws of health. In this case, they are “obeying” the second law of thermodynamics, that if you don’t put energy into a system, that system will decay. Because they want their children to be healthy, they make a rule for their children to protect them until they grow up and can internalize the principles of healthy living that the rule was based upon.

When those children do grow up, they reflect back and are thankful for loving parents who made up such rules to protect them in their immaturity. As mature adults, they will continue to brush their teeth not because of the parents’ rules, but because they themselves have come to understand the design-law principles and gladly choose to live in

harmony with them.

But now let us consider the case of a child who is raised in a legalistic home in which there were appropriate rules, like brushing one’s teeth, but they never learned the true reasons for the rule. The only reason the child ever understood was that if they didn’t brush their teeth, then they would get into trouble with their parents and receive an inflicted punishment.

When that child finally moves out on their own, what is likely to happen? They say, “Yay! I’m free from all those rules. I no longer have to brush my teeth.” So they don’t. At first, they may even be a little anxious

their church, the pastor, who knows how to help people who have gone off into “wild living” and stopped brushing their teeth and are now suffering.

The child visits with their pastor, who tells them that Jesus came to Earth and brushed His teeth perfectly—and flossed too! He never had even the slightest tooth decay. The child is told that if they accept the obedient tooth brushing of Jesus as their substitute, then in heaven Jesus will go to His Father and plead His perfection in their behalf.

The pastor tells the young person that when God examines their heavenly dental record, now that they

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and look around in fear to see if some punishment occurs, but after several days of not brushing and no one punishing them, they conclude, “I knew it! I knew those rules were ridiculous. I am so glad to be free!”

But some months later, they find themselves suffering in terrible pain from tooth decay. They call their parents distraught, and in pain, they confess, “I am so sorry. You raised me better than this, but I have stopped brushing my teeth. I should have listened to you, but I didn’t, and now I am hurting. Mom and Dad, I don’t know what to do. Can you help me? Or is it too late?”

The parents respond with compassion and empathy and instruct their child that there is an expert in

have accepted Jesus, God will not be aware of their disobedience in failing to brush or their dental decay. Instead, God will see only the perfect record of Jesus’ teeth, which has overwritten their record of decay.

God, having heard the pleas from His Son, examined the confessing young person’s record, and finding only the perfect dental record of Jesus, will then declare that the child’s teeth are perfectly healthy even though they are still full of rot. The child is told that they must simply believe that God has declared it to be so. So, the child claims to believe it, *but they leave in just as much pain and with just as much disease and decay as when they arrived—and they continue to get worse!*

The Parable Explained

This is the fraud of the penal/legal theologies, which are fully predicated upon Satan's foundational lie that God's law functions like human law. Those doctrines claim we are *declared* to be righteous rather than the truth that we *become* righteous.

This doesn't mean that everyone who came to the faith under this lie cannot be changed. God is gracious, and millions have simply ignored the legal lies because they just didn't make sense and, instead, they fixed their eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) and surrendered their lives in trust to Him, experiencing the genuine rebirth of a new heart and right spirit to become the righteousness of God. These saints live lives to bring glory to God by loving Him and others more than self, despite not yet resolving the legal ideas from their past. Salvation is about the actual restoration of God's living law of love into the heart, not about the ability to answer questions correctly on a Bible doctrines test.

God's kingdom is the kingdom of reality, of becoming righteous, and becoming righteous is healing and empowering; it results in victorious living and unity of people. People who have *become* righteous do not abuse their families; instead, they give glory to God by living out His righteous character and are lights to the world demonstrating the difference between God's kingdom, which transforms the heart, and earthly governments that merely punish behavior. Thus, the righteous, in giving glory to God in how they live, are calling people to make a right judgment about God—and to stop worshiping (modeling) the dictator god and start worshiping

(modeling) the Creator.

But this truth is denied when people replace God's design law with human law and teach that justification is not actually putting people right with God, not making them righteous, but merely declaring them to be legally righteous when they are still unrighteous.

Not only does this make God out to be a fraud, a trickster, a being who declares things to be different than they actually are, but it also leaves people helpless and powerless, victims of Satan and sin, claiming legal pardon while they continue to suffer in their terminal sin condition.

God is the God of reality, the Creator, Builder, Sustainer, and

reckon—recognize—that Abraham was justified, set right, put right, righteous (Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6). Why? Because that which was wrong, Abraham's sinful heart that was filled with fear and selfishness and did not trust God, was changed to a heart that trusted God. This is actual justification—and once the heart is set right in trust, then the sinner daily walks in trust with Jesus, who heals, matures, and restores them to full righteousness—sanctification.

God *never* declares someone to be righteous when they remain unrighteous, when they remain in rebellion against Him. God is the God of reality; He sets people right with Himself; He restores us to trust;

He gives us new hearts and right spirits; He gives us a new life, the mind of Christ; He writes His law upon our hearts and minds; He removes the dead, stony heart and puts

in a living, tender heart. This is reality.

The penal/legal view is a fantasy religion based on the lie that God's law functions like human law, and it creates a form of godliness with no power. As such, it has prevented the church from hastening Christ's return by obstructing the true gospel that actually transforms lives.

The final message of mercy to the world is the message of the truth about God's character of love, which is understood only when we reject the lie that God's law functions like human law and we return to worshiping God as Creator, whose law is design law. When the church finally embraces and teaches this message, then and only then will it be able to speed Christ's coming!

“ THE FINAL MESSAGE OF MERCY TO THE WORLD IS THE MESSAGE OF THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD'S CHARACTER OF LOVE.

Healer. God is not the god of fantasy, falsehood, make-believe—that is the domain of the father of lies. The penal-substitutionary view teaches a god that operates in fantasy, claiming people are righteous when they are not righteous.

This is not what Scripture teaches. In Scripture, we are told that because of Adam's sin, we are all born infected with the sin condition that we did not choose (Psalm 51:5). The natural state of the sinful heart is enmity toward God, distrust of God, hostility toward God (Romans 8:7). But the Bible tells us Abraham trusted God and that after Abraham's heart was changed from the natural state of enmity and distrust to one of trust in God, *then and only then* did God declare, account, or



Why Did Jesus Have to Die if Not for Legal Reasons?



**“For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”
—The Apostle Paul
(Romans 5:10)**

MANY WHO HAVE BEEN RAISED IN THE IMPOSED LEGAL MODEL OF SALVATION STRUGGLE TO UNDERSTAND WHY JESUS WOULD HAVE HAD TO DIE AS OUR SUBSTITUTE IF IT WASN’T TO PAY A LEGAL PENALTY. IN FACT, BECAUSE LEGALITY IS THE ONLY REASON THEY HAVE EVER CONSIDERED, WHEN THEY HEAR THAT JESUS DID NOT HAVE TO DIE TO PAY A LEGAL PENALTY, THEY OFTEN CONCLUDE THAT THOSE WHO REJECT PENAL-SUBSTITUTION THEOLOGY TEACH CHRIST’S DEATH WAS NOT NECESSARY FOR OUR SALVATION OR THAT THEY TEACH MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY, AN ATONEMENT MODEL THAT POSTULATES JESUS’ DEATH WAS ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF REVEALING TRUTH TO WIN US TO TRUST.

Both of these conclusions are false.

If I said that Jesus did not have to die in order for textile manufacturers to be able to dye cloth, which is true, it is not the same thing as saying Jesus didn’t have to die for our salvation. So, taking away the false legal reason for Christ’s death is not the same thing as saying Christ’s death was unnecessary—or that we could be saved without Jesus’ sacrifice in our behalf.

So let me say it plainly: The salvation of human sinners is possible only because Jesus became a real human being, lived sinlessly, and voluntarily sacrificed Himself to die as our human substitute.

But none of that was because of legal reasons! It was because of reality. Jesus’ sacrifice was the only means whereby God could fix what sin did to humanity.

God is the Creator, and His laws are the laws upon

which reality operates. Life and health are possible only when in harmony with God and His design protocols for life. To transgress the law takes one out of harmony with God, His laws, and life itself. The only possible outcome, without God’s intervention, is death.

The plan of salvation is God’s work, achieved through Jesus Christ, to eliminate the death-causing principle and restore the life-causing principle, God’s perfect law, back into humanity (Hebrews 8:10), while simultaneously revealing the truth to destroy Satan’s lies and secure the unfallen beings in their loyalty (Colossians 1:20). This saving work was accomplished in the person of Jesus. He became a real human being, took up a humanity damaged and infected with death by Adam’s sin, and purged the sickness, destroyed death, and brought life and immortality to light (2 Timothy 1:10).

What Jesus had to accomplish in order to eliminate death and restore humanity to life was:

- He had to be fully human, taking upon Himself the humanity that God created in Eden and which Adam corrupted with sin (John 1:1, 14; Romans 1:3). If Jesus had come in a different humanity, then He would not have saved this humanity.
- He had to experience temptation in all the ways we do but also overcome all temptation using only His human abilities, thereby developing a new, sinless humanity (Hebrews 4:15).

The Bible says that we are tempted not only by external sources but also by our own desires or feelings (James 1:14). As a human, Jesus experienced temptation from outside Himself (Matthew 4:1), but He also had a humanity that could

experience fatigue, hunger, pain, and emotional anguish that tempted Him to avoid the cross. In Gethsemane, He cried out in overwhelming emotional distress as the humanity of which He partook tempted Him to save Himself (Mark 14:32–35). But with each temptation, Jesus said no to selfishness; by trust in His Father, He surrendered Himself in love (John 10:17, 18). In the humanity of Jesus, by the purposeful choice of Jesus, God’s perfect love was restored and lived out in humanity, developing a sinless, holy human character. At the cross, Jesus destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness and arose with a purified humanity cleansed and renewed in holiness. He now offers His “blood,” which is symbolic of His life (Leviticus 17:11; John 6:53, 54), His victory, to us and, by faith, we receive the Holy Spirit, who takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it in us (John 16:14, 15); thus, we can say with Paul, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). We become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4 NKJV). This is not about a legal payment—it is actual accomplishment, restoring what Adam corrupted.

- He had to choose to develop a sinless human character, for while God can create sinless beings (angels, Adam

and Eve in Eden), character is developed by the choices of the intelligent being. After Adam sinned, no human being could develop a perfect, mature, sinless, righteous human character. Thus, Jesus had to become human and develop a perfect, sinless, mature, and righteous character—and then He became the source of salvation (Hebrews 5:8, 9).

- He had to confront Satan and Satan’s power and destroy them. “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he



AT THE CROSS, JESUS DESTROYED THE INFECTION OF FEAR AND SELFISHNESS AND AROSE WITH A PURIFIED HUMANITY CLEANSED AND RENEWED IN HOLINESS.

might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14).

What is the devil’s power of death? John 17:3 says, “This is life eternal: that they might know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” If life eternal is knowing God, then eternal death is not knowing God. What, then, is Satan’s power of death? The lies he tells about God that we believe—the lies that keep us from knowing Him! What destroys lies about God? The truth about God as revealed by Jesus; thus, it is the good news, the gospel, about God, as revealed by Christ, that destroys the devil’s power of death.



- “Christ Jesus ... has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10). How did Jesus’ death destroy death? The law of love is the law of life, the law upon which all life in the universe was designed to operate. Death comes as the natural result of breaking the law of love, just like death comes as the natural result of breaking the law of respiration by tying a plastic bag over your head. Christ destroyed death by perfectly restoring the law of love, the basis for life, into mankind and overcoming the inherent infection of fear and selfishness. He did this when, in His humanity, He chose to surrender His life in love rather than use His power to save Himself. Thus, in Christ, love overcame the infection of selfishness. The good news is the reality of God’s character and methods of love upon which life is built. As the Bible says: “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul” (Psalm 19:7). “There is now

no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the **law of the Spirit of life** set me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1, 2, emphasis mine). The kingdom of love, emanating from the God of love, is life and destroys death.

- “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work” (1 John 3:8). Satan has worked through his lies and corrupt principles to destroy the image of God in man and place his image, his corrupt character, where God’s should be. Satan wants to occupy the seat in God’s Spirit temple, the heart, where God is to dwell. Jesus, by becoming human, living a sinless life, and dying His voluntary death rather than giving in to the temptation to save himself, destroyed from His humanity the infection of fear and selfishness that Adam brought into the species, and He restored the image of God into humanity.



All human beings born since Adam have been born with a terminal sin condition that we did not choose. We are all born in sin, conceived in iniquity (Psalm 51:5). This is not our fault; we are not born legally guilty. We do not stand under legal condemnation. Rather, we are born terminal, dead in trespass and sin (Ephesians 2:1), like being born HIV positive. When a baby is born HIV positive, what did the baby do wrong? Nothing! The baby is not legally guilty or legally condemned, but the baby still has a condition that, without remedy, will result in symptoms and eventual death.

We have a condition, a heart sickness, that we did not choose and that, without remedy, will always result in our ruin and eventual death. Jesus came and took up our condition and cured humanity of it and now offers us His life—metaphorically, His blood—a new heart and right spirit so that we can die to the life of fear and selfishness and live a new life of love and trust.

Biblical condemnation is not a legal condemnation; it is a diagnostic condemnation, the condemnation that comes from the terminal sin condition for all those who reject the remedy that Jesus freely offers.

Notice how Jesus explained this to Nicodemus, yet also how the church has perverted the truth through legalism:

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

whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed (John 3:16–20).

Oswald Chambers, an early twentieth-century Baptist evangelist and author of *My Utmost for His Highest*, understood this and wrote:

The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man's sin, but that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race through one man. But it also says that another **Man took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away—** an infinitely more profound revelation. ...

Sin is something I am born with and cannot touch—only God touches sin through redemption. It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race from the possibility of damnation through the





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heredity of sin. **God nowhere holds a person responsible for having the heredity of sin, and does not condemn anyone because of it.** Condemnation comes when I realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver me from this heredity of sin, and **yet I refuse to let Him do so.** From that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation. **“This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light” (John 3:19)** (emphasis mine).⁴⁸

God loved us so much that despite Adam's sin, despite our terminal sin condition, He sent Jesus to overcome in our behalf, to become “sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus came to cure humanity from the sin condition, or as John the Baptist said, to take “away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Jesus became a real human being to provide all that is needed for salvation from sin. This is why “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1, 2).

Whoever is reconciled in trust to be at-one with Jesus receives, via the Holy Spirit, a new heart; the living design law of God is reproduced within them; they live new lives of love and trust and are set free from the law of fear, selfishness, sin, and death. But all those who refuse to trust in Jesus *stand condemned already* because they refuse the remedy that would cure their terminal sin condition. Thus, Jesus' verdict is that light, truth, and love have come into the world but that infected, terminal men loved darkness, lies, sin, and selfishness more.

The lost are condemned not for having the terminal sin condition but for rejecting the free Remedy—Jesus Christ!

And this condemnation is not legally investigated or declared by a judge; it is the objective reality of what is. When, at the end of time, Jesus separates the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:31, 32), His action does not make sheep into sheep and goats into goats; they are what they are. Jesus simply acts upon the reality of what is. In the end, all humanity will be identified as being in one of two camps: those who have been reborn in heart and mind, partaken of Jesus' life such that the old, sinful self has died, and become new beings in Christ—and those who have rejected Jesus and remained sinful, selfish, terminal, even while some claim legal pardon.

For the righteous, for those who have allowed Jesus to heal and restore them, "The King will say ... 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the

creation of the world'" (Matthew 25:34).

That kingdom was described by John like this:

I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and first earth—that had been marred by Satan's rebellion—were no more, and the vast oceans were gone. I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. It was prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband—symbolic of the city filled with the beautiful, healed people of God. And I heard a voice from the throne say, "Now God will live with people and govern from planet earth. They are his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will tenderly wipe every tear from their eyes; and there will be no more death, or sorrow, or heartache, or sickness, or suffering or pain, for the old, sinful order of things, in which good and evil operated together, is gone forever" (Revelation 21:1–4 REM).

This is our future. This is what God longs to bring about. But He is waiting for His people, the body of Christ on Earth, the church, to reject the lie—the lie that His law is imposed—and return to worshiping Him as Creator.

I encourage you to join us in rejecting the lie and resetting all your Christian beliefs into the beautiful, grand picture of design law. Help us lighten the world with the eternal gospel and hasten the day Jesus comes to take us home.

Even so, come Lord Jesus.

**TO JOIN IN OUR MISSION, PLEASE VISIT
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Addendum A:

Design Law and Imposed Law

Keyword Comparisons

Design Law

- Protocols life is built upon
- Violations = inherent damage
- God must heal
- Problem = sin in man
- Christ died to remedy man and destroy sin

Justification Setting man's heart right with God

Judgment by God Diagnosis, therapeutic interventions, pronouncement of natural result

Forgiveness The experience of God freely forgiving *and* the sinner repenting, resulting in actual reconciliation

Salvation The experience of trusting God and accepting Jesus into the heart, which results in healing and restoration to God's original ideal

Atonement Being at-one with God

Satisfaction God being satisfied with Christ perfectly completing His mission to reveal the truth and provide the Remedy, which restores humans back into God's perfect ideal

Justice Delivering the oppressed

Vengeance Healing the damage caused by sin; i.e., destroying sin and its results

Wrath Letting one go to reap the natural results of one's choice

Anger God's rage at sin and outrage at the damage caused to the object of His love (like a doctor angry at disease but never the sick patient) and the letting go to receive what a non-compliant patient chooses

Heavenly Records The exact transcript of each individual's character (like medical records) documenting the true heart condition of each person—and the history of the Remedy offered and either applied or rejected with its results

Ransom The price to free one held in bondage. What holds us in bondage? Satan's lies about God that we believe and our carnal/fallen nature. What is the price to set us free? Truth that destroys lies and a new nature. Christ provides both, the truth that destroys lies and a new nature that He developed as a human being. This is metaphorically taught as bread/flesh and wine/blood. The bread/flesh is the truth, the Word made flesh, that we ingest into our minds that destroys lies and wins to trust. The wine/blood is the life of Christ (the life is in the blood) that we receive by opening our hearts in trust, so that it is no longer I who live but Christ living in me. Thus, the payment was made to *us* to restore trust and cure the terminal sin condition.

Imposed Law

- Arbitrary rules
- Violations = external punishment
- God must inflict punishment
- Problem = wrath in God
- Christ died to appease God and pay a legal penalty

Declaring man legally right with God

Legal finding and determination of arbitrarily imposed punishment

Legal pardon because of a legal payment

Legally accepting Jesus' blood payment and having "pardon" entered into heaven's record books

Appeasement, paying a legal penalty

God receiving legal payment of His Son's blood to "satisfy" His demand for retribution

Punishing the oppressor

Punishing sinners for their crimes

Infliction of external pain, suffering, and punishment

God's outrage at how He has been treated, His incensed and hostile response to violations of His law and disrespect toward Him, and the infliction of punishment for such disobedient behavior

A legal tally of every sin committed, confessed, and pardoned as the blood of Jesus is applied to the transcript

The price to free one held in bondage. What holds us in bondage? Satan or God's imperial/imposed law. What is the price to set us free? The blood of Christ. (Every sin *must* be punished, urged Satan. Christ became sin, thus His blood payment is required at the demand of the law.) The payment of Christ's death was made by God, to Satan, or to the just demands of His law (when viewed as imperial/imposed, because it demands justice/death when broken).

Addendum B:

Sabbath Versus Sunday

Many Adventists have been taught that the final issue in the cosmic conflict over God's law will be over the weekly Sabbath. But this issue, like all others, depends on our understanding of how God's law functions.

Does God's law function like the laws the Creator makes, those protocols upon which reality is built to operate—laws of physics, health, moral laws—or does it function no differently than the rules made up and imposed by sinful beings, by mere creatures? Made-up rules require judicial oversight and infliction of punishment; conversely, violations of design law result in ruin and death unless the violators are healed by the Creator (Romans 6:23; James 1:15; Galatians 6:8).

The Jews had the Bible Sabbath, but they understood it through imposed law and, thus, they ended up using the power of the state to crucify Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, and get Him off the cross by sunset in order to keep the right day of the week. Thus, obedience to the Sabbath does not make one a friend of God. To be a friend of God requires the heart be renewed, to have His living law of love written upon the heart and mind (Hebrews 8:10). Then one moves away from legal observances and into holy living—all week long—not just one day in seven.

The weekly Sabbath is a gift from God to human beings (Genesis 2:2, 3; Mark 2:27, 28) and stands as an eternal sign of our Creator and His design-law methods.

The Sabbath was created by God in the midst of Satan's rebellion, when God presented the truth that He is the Creator by creating a new world; and that He is love by building the entire ecosystem to operate on interdependent love/giving, by sharing creative power with His newly formed creatures (Adam and Eve), and by giving them dominion to govern. Then, *after* giving this evidence of His selflessness by sharing His power and abilities, and despite having infinite creative power, **God rested!** He set apart the seventh day as a day when *He ceased using power!* He did not force compliance. God did not make Lucifer bow down, but He left all of His intelligent creatures free to think and decide for themselves whom they would believe.

The weekly Sabbath day is a gift from God, built into time, that reveals, is evidence of, how God's kingdom functions—on design law! God presents truth in love and leaves all free to decide for themselves. True Sabbath-keepers remember the Sabbath—not only when it was created but also what God did on the Sabbath. Since He rested and gave freedom to all His creatures on this day, they live out the living law of God in all they do, all week long.

The Rise of Sunday-Keeping

Sunday became a day set apart for worship by human legislation and law. Thus, it stands as a mark of Romanism, of imperial law, of the penal/legal systems of theology.

Satan corrupts the gospel and the Sabbath by infecting our minds with the lie that God's law functions like human law, and then Sabbath keeping becomes legal and Sabbath-breaking becomes a crime that must be punished by inflicted death from God. Thus, legal-minded Sabbath-keepers end up becoming enemies of God, just like those Sabbath-keeping Jews who crucified Jesus and wanted Him off the cross so they could keep the Bible Sabbath.

The issue of Sabbath versus Sunday is not a question of which day of the week one attends church—one can worship God any day of the week. The Sabbath question isn't a question of which day of the week is the Bible Sabbath; all serious Christians admit that the Jews today still observe the same Sabbath that Jesus did, which is Saturday, and all recognize that Jesus died on Good Friday and rose on Sunday morning, resting in the tomb on the Sabbath, which sits between the two. (See Luke 23:56.)

The significance of these two days of worship is the two types of governments they represent. Sabbath, which became a special day by an act of creation, represents the kingdom of God, which is founded upon design law—whereas Sunday, which became a special day by legislation, represents the kingdom of Satan, which is built upon imposed laws with inflicted punishments.

The historic two days of worship within Christianity—Sabbath and Sunday—stand as two banners, signs, flags, marks, or pennants, that represent two divergent systems of governing. Just as the U.S. flag, the Stars and Stripes, is a symbol or sign of the United States

of America, so these two days of worship are signs of two different systems of governing. However, the flag is not the *reality* for which it stands. The flag is only a *symbol* of the United States. A person can wave the flag of America while being an enemy of America. During World War II, German soldiers donned American uniforms with the U.S. flag and infiltrated American lines to sow discord and disrupt the American war effort. Just because someone waves the flag doesn't mean that they support what the flag actually stands for.

Likewise, Sabbath and Sunday are signs of two different systems of governing. The ultimate issue is not about the days we worship on today but about the gods of those days. Whom are we worshiping? Are we worshiping the Creator, whose laws are design laws, or are we worshiping a creature who makes up rules and punishes rule breakers? Thus, true Sabbath-keepers remember the Sabbath all week long and apply God's design laws of truth, love, and liberty to how they live and treat others, while those who would use power to persecute and punish people who believe differently are beastly in character, regardless of what day they worship on—just like the Jews who crucified Christ.

I invite you to reject the imperial-law lie that makes God appear to be an arbitrary dictator and the source of inflicted pain, suffering, and death; and embrace the truth that God is Creator, His law is love, and His design laws are the protocols upon which all life is designed to operate. Embrace the seventh-day Sabbath as a gift designed by God for all human beings to experience health, peace, joy, rest, healing, and growth, as every day of the week *we remember the Sabbath to keep ourselves holy* by practicing the methods of God—presenting truth in love, while leaving others free!

Addendum C:

Explaining Hard Bible Passages Through Design Law

If you are new to the design-law perspective, then I am sure you have many questions—and, perhaps, as many objections. You likely recall multiple Bible texts that you have been told teach that God does punish sin—perhaps stories like God throwing Adam and Eve out of Eden and cursing the ground, the Flood, Sodom, the firstborn of Egypt, and many more. You may remember Bible texts that speak about God’s wrath and believe I am being selective, picking and choosing only those portions that seem to support my view while ignoring other portions. If so, then use the QR codes below to go to the topic or question of interest for an in-depth review and explanation.

God’s Wrath



The Flood



Hell



Sword of God



Atonement



Grace



God’s Design Laws



Uzzah



She Bears
and Stones



The Three
Angels’ Messages



The Death Penalty in
Old Testament Times



The Law
of Liberty



The Law
of Worship



Growing Up
in Christ



Justification
by Faith



The Four
Judgments



The Wedding of Christ to His Bride—
Cleansing of the Church/Sanctuary



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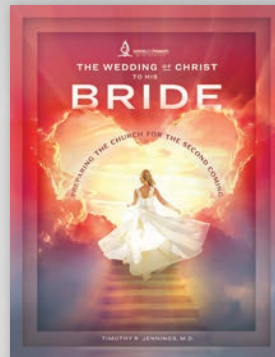
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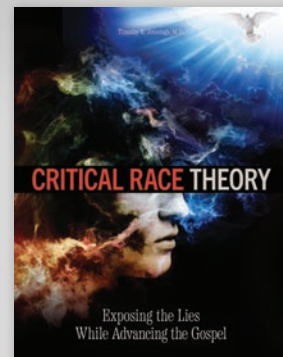
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