

The Fruits of the Spirit Lesson 4 1Q 2009

The Fruit of the Spirit is Peace

SABBATH

Read memory text John 14:27 – and then first paragraph, “As a champion...” thoughts?

Was Jesus referring to what the first paragraph intimates? Or was He referring to another peace, internal peace, peace with God?

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— ³⁶ a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’

³⁷ “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. MT 10:34-40

What does this text mean? How do we reconcile this text with the memory verse? Are we to seek peace with others at all costs?

What is the sword that Jesus brought? The sword of truth! And what is the sword of truth to do? Where is it wielded? When the sword of truth is brought to bear what impact does it have on those who are in error?

Does everyone who has yet to hear the truth respond positively?

Some sad events happened this week and are still ongoing. While I was studying the lesson for this week, reviewing these very scriptures I found out that a member of our church has taken it upon himself to attack our class and what we teach. He wrote a letter to the Review, also to another ministry which has been

supportive of us and said he would send a letter to our church board complaining about my theology and book, and requesting the book be removed and our class be shut down. He also posted a rant on Amazon.com against my book.

Do such rants have impact? What if the letter is false, twisted, misrepresents our position – would it have impact? The Review informed me it did not deem the letter to have merit, but the other ministry emailed me and determined it would be best to remove my book from their shelves, before actually taking the time to explore the allegations. I sent an email clarifying my position, and have had a couple email exchanges but no resolution yet.

As a class, how should we respond? How can we obtain peace with someone who practices such methods? What methods did Satan use in heaven? Was God able to secure peace with Satan?

When someone makes allegations against us what should be our first step? Hear what they say, as best we can understand their concerns and examine the evidence to see if there is any merit to their concerns.

There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. {CW 35.2}

Those who cannot impartially examine the evidences of a position that differs from theirs, are not fit to teach in any department of God's cause. 1SM 411

Maybe we should consider the criticism and investigate in light of scripture and inspiration. Bring the sword of truth to bear and evaluate what has been alleged. Here is a part of what he wrote:

I am a member of the Collegedale SDA church here in TN. I have a deep concern that I want to share with you regarding one of the books your store is selling. The book is titled "Could It Be This Simple?" and is written by Tim Jennings.

My concern is regarding what Jennings teaches in this book (although somewhat quietly, if you will), which are critically significant doctrinal positions that he teaches quite openly in the Sabbath School class that he currently runs at my church. Jennings' personal theology is essentially a Moral Influence theology. In accordance with this theological foundation, he believes that sinners do not need forgiveness from sins, and that the Ten Commandments are a "dim reflection," or "shadow," or "metaphor." Both of these positions are clearly taught in this book and they are diametrically opposed to the positions held by the vast majority of Christendom. More importantly, they are contrary to what the Bible teaches and eviscerate the Gospel of Jesus Christ...

He confuses God's offer of forgiveness to the unrepentant sinner with the repentant sinner's acceptance of God's offered forgiveness. This fundamental misunderstanding of the process of forgiveness is evident throughout this chapter. Later in the chapter he contradicts himself by stating that salvation requires forgiveness from God and repentance on the part of the sinner. This statement contains a partial truth (that salvation is possible because of God's offer of forgiveness) and an outright error (that salvation requires repentance on the part of the sinner). To say that repentance is required for salvation is a dangerous error that creates a salvation by works theology...

Jennings clearly teaches that the Ten Commandments written in stone by the very hand of God are far less than perfect aids to those seeking God's Truth. He refers to them numerous times as a "**dim reflection.**" He states that "**just studying the Ten Commandments will never reveal the fullness of God's law.**" "**Reading it in stone,**" he says, "**will never reveal its true nature.**" This is a deliberate and full force denigration of the Usefulness, Completeness, Purity, Holiness, and Sufficiency of God's law. What do the Psalmist and other Bible writers say about God's law? They describe it

in ways that are as different from how Jennings describes it as night is from day. Jennings belittles God's law because this is necessary in order to be consistent with his Moral Influence theology, specifically, the belief that there is no penalty for breaking God's law. Here Jennings is belittling the very act of God, of writing, with His own finger, the Commandments on stone. In these paragraphs, he claims that the Ten Commandments are "**only a transcript.**" By this he suggests they are not the real thing, but some secondary and ultimately ineffectual copy of the real thing. Jennings does not stop here however. He goes on to claim that the only way to fully understand God's law is to see it at work in living "**flesh,**" in an "intelligent living **being...**"

All his Sabbath School classes are recorded and posted on the website. .. In the interest of conserving time, if you listen to the podcast for lesson 11, "The Benefits of Christ's Atoning Sacrifice," you will get a very clear picture of their core teaching on this fundamental issue. Within the first five minutes or so of this podcast you will hear a class member (who often teaches the class when Jennings is not able to) **laughing at the idea that Christ mediating on our behalf before the Father should be comforting to Christians.** Jennings does nothing to counteract this laughter for the simple reason that what the man who is laughing says is exactly what Jennings is teaching, they are in perfect agreement. Within those first few minutes you will also hear other significant distortions regarding forgiveness of sin, salvation, and justification/sanctification. And this podcast as a whole clearly delineates Jennings' Moral Influence theology.

So the allegations are that we teach:

- God's law is not imposed
- The Ten Commandments are a "shadow" or "metaphor" or "dim reflection" of God's real Law
- Deny that the sinner needs to be forgiven by God
- A salvation by works theology
- That Christ did not pay a penalty for our sins at Calvary

- There is no penalty for acts of sin
- Moral Influence Theory
- Christ is not our Mediator
- God does not judge us, we judge ourselves in the final judgment

Thoughts? Let's use the sword of the Spirit and examine these allegations. If we are in error we want to be corrected by God's truth. We have nothing to fear in examining such criticisms in light of God's word. So let's do that:

God's Law

What would you say in regard to the allegation that we teach that God's law is not imposed? What inspired evidence do you have for this?

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Romans 13:10
- The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:14
- If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. James 2:8
- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. **For God is love, and love is life.** COL 258
- Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the outworking of a principle at war with **the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.** GC 493
- **The law of love being the foundation of the government of God**, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. {GC 493.2}
- Jesus, the express image of the Father's person, the effulgence of His glory; the self-denying Redeemer, throughout His pilgrimage of love on earth, was a living representation of the character of the law of God. In His life it is made manifest that

heaven-born love, Christlike principles, underlie the laws of eternal rectitude. . . . Those principles that were made known to man in Paradise as **the great law of life** will exist unchanged in Paradise restored.--Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 48-51.

- He came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, he showed that **the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness**. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {SW, April 23, 1907 par. 5}
- 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.** {DA 21.2}

What is the law of God? The law of love! If we go back in time before earth, angels or any time, space or matter was created by God, what would exist? God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and at that time in universal history, before anything was created, did God's law of love exist? And is this law imposed, enacted, legislated, or created, or does it emanate from the character of God?

- So allegation number one – we teach the law of God is not imposed or created– Yes, why? Because God is not created, His character is not created and the law originates in God's character an expression of Himself!

What about the allegation that we teach the 10 commandments are a shadow, metaphor or dim reflection of the law of love?

- We do not teach the 10 commandments are a shadow or metaphor – they are an expression of the law of love. But they are a distilled version of the law of love. They do not represent the fullness of the law of love and they were added because of sin, because of our need.
 - The 10 Commandments are a diagnostic tool to reveal where we fall short. The commandments were given for lawbreakers not the righteous according to Scripture.
 - The 10 commandments were not always written or in existence in this form.
 - If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}
 - 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. {MB 109.2}
 - 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. {1SM 233, 234}

- Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” MT 22:37-40

Forgiveness

Could sinners experience salvation without God’s forgiveness? No! If God was unforgiving no one would be saved. Do we teach that sinners do not need forgiveness? No, we absolutely need forgiveness. But, is forgiveness alone enough? Did Christ forgive those who put Him on the Cross? Were they, because of Christ’s forgiveness, saved? No!

Salvation

What is it? What does it mean? Salvation means healing and does the Bible teach that God’s plan of salvation includes more than forgiveness?

- In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. John 3:3
- Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live! Eze 18:31,32
- I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Eze 36:26
- No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Romans 2:29 (DT 10:16, 30:6).
- Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Ps 51:10
- 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. Heb 8:10

- Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2
- Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2Co 5:17

Do we need forgiveness? Absolutely, do we need more? Absolutely!
 Is this a salvation by sinful human works theology? Absolutely not!
 Do we have a cooperative role with God in our salvation?

- While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the **divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part.** His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}
- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does**

not dishonor the human understanding, but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus.** . . . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

So the balance is as follows:

- The Remedy to sin was fully achieved by Christ and no one else.
- We can do nothing to add to what Christ has done to save mankind, but, each person now must choose to open their heart in trust to receive from the Holy Spirit the benefit of Christ's victory in their life.
- When we do this a supernatural transformation of character, desire, motive, and attitude takes place.
- In this process there is a daily, ongoing, and constant cooperative work of the individual with the Divine in which the person chooses to continue to follow the direction of the Heavenly Physician until they are one day fully healed and set free to be self-controlled beings operating on the law of love, which has been fully restored into the heart. (Heb 8:10).

Penalty for Sin

Is there a penalty for sin? Yes, what does the Bible teach is that penalty?

- but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die. Gen 2:17
- For the wages of sin is death, Romans 6:23
- sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:15

What is the penalty? Is it sleep in the grave? Is it suffering in hell for all eternity? Is it torture at God's hands? What is the penalty? Death- eternal death.

Why is death the penalty for sin? What is the basis of life already discussed? Love, the law of love, and if we are out of harmony with

the law of love, what happens without restoration? Death! Does the Bible teach that the wages of sin is inflicted by God? No! Do we teach that there is a penalty for sin? Absolutely! Do we teach God is the source of that penalty? No! We teach that sin destroys and God heals!

Did it cost God and Christ an infinite price to redeem mankind? Yes! Why? Because God demanded a blood payment so God would forgive? Or because the only way to overcome sin and reverse sin's impact on humanity was through Christ's life, death and resurrection?

Did Christ have to die in order for mankind to be saved? Yes! Why? Because God demanded blood? No, because it was the only way to restore mankind back into harmony with the law of love. It was the only way to reconcile man to God!

Moral Influence Theory

What is Moral Influence Theory (MIT)? A theory that basically states the only problem with sin is that we don't know God and therefore Christ came to reveal the truth about God, which would morally influence us to return to God. There was no other purpose in Christ's life, death and resurrection than to reveal truth to win us back to trust.

Is this our position? What answer would you give to demonstrate we do not promote the MIT?

Imagine you have bacterial endocarditis (infection inside the heart)

- Man claims to have a cure – Osama Bin Laden would you trust Osama to give you a cure?
- Father is physician you trust but has no remedy?
- Will trust heal you? Will you get well without trust?
 - We aren't saved by faith/trust, we are saved by Grace, by God's working, God's healing power, but we don't experience God's healing grace if we don't trust Him.

- If you have no trust but have a remedy – will you get well?
- If you have trust but no remedy will you get well?
 - This would be the MIT – revealing truth to win us to trust, but providing no remedy – a theory rightly rejected

We need both, the trust to accept the remedy and a real remedy. Christ came and revealed truth to restore trust and also procured a real remedy!

From my blog of April 24, 2009:

Heb 2:14, 2Tim 1:10 and 1John 3:8 [sum] up the reasons Christ came to earth and died.

Heb 2:14 – By His death Christ destroys him who holds the power of death that is the devil –

What is the devil's power of death? John 17:3 – “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 keep us from knowing Him. What then is the “Gospel” in the passage? What destroys lies about God? The truth about God as revealed by Jesus, thus it is the Good News about God, as revealed by Christ, that destroys the devil's power of death.

2 Tim 1:10: Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

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 (survival of the fittest). 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 – “The law of the Lord is Perfect Reviving the Soul” i.e. The kingdom of Love, emanating from the God of Love is Life and destroys death.

1John 3:8 The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.

What was the devil’s work? To misrepresent God, initially by lies, but then by co-opting mankind, who was created in God’s image to reveal God’s character, and replace God’s law of love with Satan’s law of selfishness (survival of the fittest) in the heart of man. Christ took our infirmity, condition, sinfulness upon Himself in order to heal, fix, resolve and resolve the sin problem. He did this by perfectly restoring God’s character of love back into the species human. In His human brain Christ lived God’s law of love perfectly revealing the true character of God that Adam was created to reveal. Thus He destroyed the devil’s work.

The life of Christ is to be revealed in humanity. Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; but Satan has **labored [worked]** to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image. Lift Him Up 48.

Mediation

Is Christ our mediator? Yes, to do what? Which way is He facing? Does the Father need Christ to plead to Him in order to persuade the Father to act in ways that will be for us?

If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus,

who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Romans 8:31-34

“Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. ²⁷ No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. John 16:25-27

Is mediation for human beings only, or for angels as well?

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ 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. Col 1:19,20

What does this mean? First God was in the Son carrying out the Father’s purpose for salvation and reconciliation. No need for the Son to plead to the Father if the Father is in the Son carry out the work. Secondly, the unfallen universe is reconciled to Christ as the cross!

“While we rejoice that there are worlds which have never fallen, these worlds render praise, and honor, and glory to Jesus Christ for the plan of redemption to save the fallen sons of Adam, as well as to confirm themselves in their position and character of purity. The arm that raised the human family from the ruin which Satan had brought upon the race through his temptations, is the arm which has preserved the inhabitants of other worlds from sin. Every world throughout immensity engages the care and support of the Father and the Son; and this care is constantly exercised for fallen humanity. Christ is **mediating** in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by his **mediatorial** work. Are not these themes of sufficient magnitude and importance to

engage our thoughts, and call forth our gratitude and adoration to God?" {RH, January 11, 1881 par. 4}

Do we believe in mediation? Absolutely! Christ is God's envoy, ambassador, mediator, representative, conduit to the entire universe and mankind carrying out God's love and plans for His Creation!

Judgment

Who is being judged? Who was the one accused?

From my blog June 12, 2009 responding to a question about Revelation 14:7:

In order to understand Revelation 14:7 we must first understand the Biblical meaning of several of the words.

Fear in this context is referring to those who will bring God glory, so it is the experience of the saved not the lost. In this case fear is to be understood as **awe, admiration, reverence, amazement, wonderment** with God's awesomeness. Fear in this context is not to be understood as terror, dread or anxiety, because the Bible teaches that God is love and perfect love casts out all fear. These people who bring glory to God will know Him and His love and thus not be afraid.

Glory refers to God's character. In Exodus 33 and 34 God put Moses in the cleft of the rock and had His glory pass before Moses and what was described was not light, fire, or power, but God's character of love. Therefore, in this context those who bring glory to God are those who reveal God's character in their lives. Why is this important? What was the war in heaven, initiated by Lucifer, all about? It is and always has been about Lucifer's allegation that God could not be trusted. How did Satan spread his rebellion to earth? By deceiving our first parents in regard to God's trustworthiness.

We are fighting a war over the knowledge of God! Jesus said in John 17:3 that life eternal is “knowing God.” When we know God, are in unity with God, we have life. This is why Satan attacks God’s character because if he can get us to believe lies about God, our connection with God is severed and unless this situation is remedied we will die an eternal death. Paul in Romans chapter one tells us that when we reject the truth about God our minds become darkened, depraved, and foolish. Hebrews tells us that the new covenant experience is when God writes His law on our hearts and minds. When that happens no one will need to say to his brother “know the Lord for all will know me.” (8:10-12). And in Romans 3:4 Paul tells us that God is the One on trial, the One accused, and the One who will be proved innocent:

- God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. Romans 3:4 KJV
- May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “That You may be justified in Your words, And prevail when You are judged.” NASB
- Certainly not! God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, “You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.” GNT
- No! God will continue to be true even when every person is false. As the Scriptures say: “So you will be shown to be right when you speak, and you will win your case.” NCV

Satan lied about God and humanity believed those lies severing our connection with God. Christ came to restore that connection and reverse the damage sin caused humanity. At the end of time, God is calling for a people who know Him, who have rejected the lies Satan has told about Him, who have judged God to be trustworthy, and have thus open their hearts to Him and experience His healing power. Such people will be transformed to live lives of love, revealing God’s character in

their lives, thus bringing glory to God! As such they are powerful witnesses to the world and universe of God's character of love, His methods and principles.

The Investigative Judgment

There are several texts that refer to the same event – Daniel 8:14, Daniel 7:9-14,21,22, Malachi 3:1-4, and the parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25. Each of these passages gives insight into the investigative judgment. My description here will not be comprehensive as entire books can be written on this subject. I instead will highlight issues pertinent to your question.

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

In Daniel 7 we are given more insight, but what is being described? Because of a preconceived idea that sin and its solution is a legal problem, some commentators have suggested this text is describing a judicial proceeding in heaven in which God is the great Judge who sits down to pronounce judgment upon all mankind, but this passage of Scripture does not actually say that, instead we have to read into the Scripture to come to that conclusion. If we take a more straightforward approach and ask what is being described in the context of the passage another idea emerges

“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened....“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was

given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Daniel 7:9,10,13,14

Traditionally, because of the assumption that we are in legal trouble with God, most commentators read a legal meaning into the above passage. They see the word “**court**” as a place of judicial rulings, a **courtroom**. But what is being described is not a judicial proceeding. Instead what is described is a **Royal Court!** It is the Royal Court of the universe which is holding the Coronation of Christ! Some are uncomfortable with this conclusion and rest their entire position on the Hebrew word “*diyn*,” which is translated “court,” claiming this Hebrew word refers to a judicial proceeding. I refer them to ***The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*** published in 1980 by Moody Press, which says:

This word, with its derived noun *diyn* is nearly identical in meaning with *šaphat* {shaw-fat} (q.v.) and its derived noun *mišhpāt* {mish-pawt} (q.v.). It appears only twenty-three times, a fraction of the times *šaphat* and *mišhpāt* appear. Of the twenty-three appearances, five are in parallel with *šaphat* (Jer 5:28; 22:16; Prov 31:8; Ps 7:8 [H 9]); 9:8 [H 9]) and twice more it is associated in the text with *mišhpāt* (Ps 72:2; Jer 21:12). Thus nearly a third of its occurrences show how closely the idea of *diyn* was identified or associated with the root *šaphat*. The verb also occurs in Ugaritic and in parallel with *tp* (the cognate of *šaphat*) (Fisher, RSP, vol. I, p. 166). Likewise a similar—nearly identical as far as it goes—list of terms is associated with *diyn*, demonstrating the near identity of meaning: with *mêyšhar* {may-shawr} “uprightness,” “equity” (Ps 96:10; cf. Ps 75:2); and with *gaša* (Ps 54:1 [H 3]; cf. Ps 72:4). As with *šaphat* it represents God’s government as both among his people (Israel) and among all peoples (Ps 135:14 “people”; Ps 7:8 [H 9] “peoples” cf Ps 72:2; Ps 9:8 [H 9]). As far as the small number of occurrences allows a test, the range of meanings is exactly the same: to govern, in the whole range of activities of government: legislative, executive, judicial, or

otherwise. See the discussion of *šhaphat* and *mišhpat*. The difference between the terms is simply that *diyyn* is poetic, probably also an archaic and more elegant term. Of the twenty-three occurrences, only one is outside the Protestant grouping of poetical and poetical-prophetic literature. The exception is the single passive form—a Niphal participle (II Sam 19:9 [H 10]). The chief theological significance of this word is that apparently like *šhaphat* it embodies the idea of government, in whatever realm, in all its aspects.[1]

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

Daniel 7:21,22 gives insight:

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

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

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

Which translation is more accurate? The Hebrew word translated "pronounced" actually means "to give" or "to impart" and thus the KJV would be more accurate in this context. Why do the saints of God need judgment (another word for **discernment**) imparted to them? The Daniel text tells us the horn warred against the saints and was defeating them. What kind of warfare was going on?

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 Cor 10:3-5

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Many have a very difficult time with this truth, because certain Bible passages are misunderstood, such as:

- As I judged your fathers in the desert of the land of Egypt, so I will judge you, declares the Sovereign Lord.
Ezekiel 20:36
- You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. Romans 14:10
- For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. 2 Cor 5:10
- Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. 1Peter 1:17
- And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Revelation 20:12

Traditionally, these texts are interpreted to mean that God's judgment *determines* our destiny, either saved or lost, in the form of an arbitrary decision on His part. But this is not the case. God's judgment is merely the accurate diagnosis of our condition, either healed and restored to Christlikeness or incurable. An example of God's judgment is found in Hosea 4:17:

Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone!

What is God's judgment in this case? Ephraim cannot be separated from his idols, so leave him the way he is. What determines our eternal destiny is not God's judgment upon us, but our judgment of God, which in turn makes us either fit or unfit for living in God's system of other-centered love. If we judge God trustworthy, then we open our heart and His Spirit

heals us from sin. If, instead, we accept Satan's lies and judge God as untrustworthy, then we keep our heart closed and eventually move ourselves beyond His healing reach. One day all will stand in God's presence and their true condition will be revealed – this is God's judgment. Jesus describes this reality:

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” Matthew 12:33-37

It is our very condition that determines our eternal destiny. We cannot make ourselves good. We can only be made good by the power of God working in us. And what determines whether God's power is experienced within our hearts and minds? Whether we trust God and open our heart to Him or not.

This reality is stated beautifully in the book *The Great Controversy*:

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declares the **verdict that the wicked are incurable**. They have no disposition to submit to divine authority. Their will has been exercised in revolt; and when life is ended, it is too late to turn the current of their thoughts in the opposite direction, too late to turn from transgression to obedience, from hatred to love. GC 543.1

Does God's verdict make the wicked incurable or does God's verdict merely pronounce the reality that already exists in the hearts and minds of the lost – that they are incurable?

We do not need to fear God who is trying to save and heal us; we need to fear sin, which if unremedied, destroys us!

Thoughts?

Any suggestions on how, in our own church, to experience peace with someone who misrepresents in this way?

SUNDAY

Read memory verse at the top and then first two paragraphs, "To have..." thoughts?

Who is the "we" that was reconciled to God once and for all at the Cross? Each individual person or the human species of which we are a part? Does it make a difference?

What does it mean to be justified? When you justify the margins on a document what have you done? When mankind sinned what was out of harmony that needed to be put right with God? Was God changed by Adam's sin or mankind? Then what needed to be set right or put right, God or man? Justify means to put man back right with God – in what way?

How did Christ accomplish this?

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

Is this justifying mankind? How?

MONDAY

Read dark section at top, “Come to me all you..” what does it mean to yoke up with Christ? Is it not the same so the EGW passages we read earlier about cooperation between the human and divine?

TUESDAY

Read second to last paragraph “Why do you think...” – thoughts?

What is peace of the world? Does the world actually give peace? What does Christ give us that provides peace?

Security for the future – we don’t need to worry about outcomes. When we trust Him He has our future in His hands, not just eternal future, but temporal futures as well.

How much of your stress and worry comes from worrying about the future?

Have you ever watched a football game? Have you ever experienced stress, anxiety, worry, uncertainty? Have you ever watched a game that was recorded and you already knew the final score before watching? Did you have the same stress and anxiety and worry or was their peace? What made the difference? Can we, in a trust relationship with God, know our future is secure?

WEDNESDAY

Read top dark section – thoughts? Is it possible to leave at peace with all men? Physically? Spiritually? Relationally? Emotionally?

Do we as Christians ever go to court? Use physical force? What if a grandparent has Alzheimer’s and is confused, hallucinating, combative and dangerous, believing people are invading and has a

gun? Should we go to court to get custody? Should we use force to provide protective care? Other examples?

Read first paragraph, "Strange as it..." thoughts? Why is it so difficult to have peace at home? What causes the conflict? How can we avoid it?

If we love in our homes does that mean we always give in and go along with the other? Does love ever say no? Does love ever raise its voice and shout? Does love discipline? What is the focus of love? Doing what is actually in the eternal best interest of the other, whether they understand or not!

THURSDAY

Read top dark section – thoughts? What if you reach out to someone you have wronged but they won't even meet with you, speak with you or communicate with you? How should we approach such a situation?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2