



The Sanctuary Lesson 11 4Q 2013

Our Prophetic Message

This past Thursday was Thanksgiving here in the US.

Thanksgiving in the US has its tradition in the Pilgrims of Plymouth in present-day Massachusetts, who celebrated in 1621 the first American Thanksgiving.

This tradition continued throughout the colonies in various communities, called in the fall to celebrate a good harvest. These celebrations were to thank the Almighty for His blessings and called by the various local clergy up until 1682 when both church and state leaders called for the celebration of thanksgiving.

During the Revolutionary War both General George Washington and the Continental Congress had various thanksgiving celebrations to give thanks to God for events favorable to the cause of the revolution.

As President, George Washington proclaimed the first nation-wide thanksgiving celebration in America for November 26, 1789, “as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favours of Almighty God.” (Hodgson, Godfrey (2006). *A Great and Godly Adventure; The Pilgrims and the Myth of the First Thanksgiving*. New York: Public Affairs. p. 167)

Thanksgiving, currently celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November by federal legislation in 1941, has been an annual tradition in the United States by presidential proclamation since 1863 and by state legislation since the Founding Fathers of the United States.

Since we have members of our online class all over the world, I thought I would mention other countries also have annual Thanksgiving Celebration:

Canada

history similar to the US but celebrates it in October.

Liberia

West African country was colonized by free blacks (most of whom had been formerly enslaved) in 1820, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the first Thursday of November.

The Netherlands

Many of the Pilgrims who migrated to the Plymouth Plantation had resided in the city of Leiden from 1609–1620, many of whom had recorded their births, marriages and deaths at the Pieterskerk. To commemorate this, a non-denominational Thanksgiving Day service is held each year on the morning



of the American Thanksgiving Day in the Pieterskerk, a Gothic church in Leiden, to commemorate the hospitality the Pilgrims received in Leiden on their way to the New World.

Norfolk Island

In Australia, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the last Wednesday of November, similar to the pre-World War II American observance on the last Thursday of the month. This means the Norfolk Island observance is the day before or six days after the United States' observance. The holiday was brought to the island by visiting American whaling ships.

Grenada

Thanksgiving Day which is celebrated on October 25. Even though it bears the same name, and is celebrated at roughly the same time as the American and Canadian versions of Thanksgiving, this holiday is unrelated to either of those celebrations. Instead the holiday marks the anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of the island in 1983, in response to the deposition and execution of Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop.

Germany

The Harvest Thanksgiving Festival (*Erntedankfest*) is an early October, German festival. The festival has a significant religious component to it, but also, like its North American counterpart, includes large harvest dinners (consisting mostly of autumn crops) and parades.

Japan

Labor Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday in Japan. It takes place annually on November 23. The law establishing the holiday, which was adopted during the American occupation after World War II, cites it as an occasion for commemorating labor and production and giving one another thanks.

Today, would anyone like to thank God for things you are thankful for?

- I am thankful to God for Jesus Christ, for bringing us the truth about God procuring the Remedy to sin we could not procure for ourselves
- I am thankful for the way God runs His universe, truth, love and freedom
- I am thankful for the privilege of sharing the truths He has revealed to me with others
- I am thankful for Christie who shows me God's love every day
- I am thankful for being raised in the church, even though many things I was taught were presented through a legal lens, it provided me a foundation of data from which I could pull when I got old enough to think for myself
- I am thankful God created us with the ability to think
- I am thankful for you, our Ministry friends and supporters who have provided your time, energy, funds, presence, prayers to help spread this message, and because of your support we have touched tens of thousands of lives.

Anyone want to share a thanks?

Back to the Lesson



What is our prophetic message? Revelation 14:6-12 the three angels messages?

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. ⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

How do you explain the message of the first angel?

- Angel = messenger
- Flying through air = message heard around the world
- Eternal gospel = the eternal truth about God, His character, methods, principles that have been obscured by Satan’s lies
- Fear God = be in awe, admiration and respect
- Give Him glory = reveal His character of love and His methods of living in your actions, words and deeds
- The hour of His judgment = the time in human history when God can finally be judged correctly, when we have a message clear enough that people can make a correct judgment on who God is and reject the lies of Satan
- Thus, with the correct understand of God we are called back to worship the Designer and reject the dictator view of God which has infected Christianity.

Thoughts?

The Second Angel:

⁸ A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”

What does this mean? How do you understand it?

- Angel = messenger, which is to follow the first
- The second message cannot be effectively given, until the first is given. So what happens if we have never given the first, but an imperial, distorted view of the first message? How has the first message been distorted?
 - Having accepted the false law construct, the judgment is not seen about us coming to the right judgment about God, but about God sitting in judgment of us to determine guilt and innocence and proper punishments
 - Worship the Creator is distilled down and interpreted to mean the single act of going to church on Saturday. And this is distorted to promote Satan’s view of God, when it is taught that the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience. In other words, when it is taught there is no logical reason for the Sabbath, the only reason is because God commands us to do it takes the Sabbath, designed by God to reveal His character of love, and twists it to promote Satan’s lie that God is arbitrary.
 - From the lesson



- WEDNESDAY last paragraph, “The Sabbath is the central issue in the conflict over God’s commandments. As with no other commandment, the designated day of worship is suited for a test of loyalty because it cannot be deduced by logical reasoning. **We keep it only because God has commanded us to do so.**”
- Dictionary definition of arbitrary:
 - based on or determined by individual preference or convenience rather than by necessity or the intrinsic nature of something
 - existing or coming about seemingly at random or by chance or as a capricious and unreasonable act of will
 - marked by or resulting from the unrestrained and often tyrannical exercise of power
 - not restrained or limited in the exercise of power : ruling by absolute authority
- Do you hear the lesson is suggesting that the Sabbath is arbitrary, there is no reason, it is not intrinsic, but only an external command by absolute authority

What was the historic SDA view?

Let it be made plain that the way of God's commandments is the way of life. God has established the laws of nature, but His laws are not arbitrary exactions. Every "Thou shalt not," whether in physical or in moral law, implies a promise. If we obey it, blessing will attend our steps. **God never forces us to do right**, but He seeks to save us from the evil and lead us to the good. {MH 114.2}

Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. **Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne 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 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. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Therefore he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their



minds as clothed **with the attributes of the prince of evil himself--as arbitrary**, severe, and unforgiving--that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. . . . {HP 8.2}

The law of Jehovah, dating back to creation, was comprised in the two great principles, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." These two great principles embrace the first four commandments, showing the duty of man to God, and the last six, showing the duty of man to his fellow-man. **The principles were more explicitly stated to man after the fall, and worded to meet the case of fallen intelligences. This was necessary in consequence of the minds of men being blinded by transgression.** {RH, May 6, 1875 par. 13}

The apostle gives us the true definition of sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law." **The largest class of Christ's professed ambassadors are blind guides. They lead the people away from the path of safety by representing the requirements and prohibitions of the ancient law of Jehovah as arbitrary and severe.** {Con 75.2}

Christ came to our world to become our sacrifice. He came to discover to our eyes the gems of truth, to place them in a new setting,--the frame-work of truth... 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; [He inculcated his ideas about God's law into the minds of angels and he caused the fall of man through the same temptations, what is his idea about God's law? "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...DA761**] and in the world 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." {ST, November 18, 1889 par. 6}



Why has the second message of the three angels been ineffective in calling people out of a confused system of beliefs? Because the first angel's message has not been presented in its right light.

- We have not presented God's character correctly
- We have not presented the good news about God
- We have not presented the truth about God's law
- We have continued to promote an arbitrary law by an arbitrary god
- Thus, we have merely taken people trapped in a imposed legal religious system and transferred them to a different system of imposed arbitrary rules, but still they are trapped under the oppression of worshipping a dictator god.
- Babylon the Great = confused Christianity, speaking with thousands of different voices, ideas, doctrines, arguing. Currently there are 34,000 different Christian groups, yes, Christianity is a confused mess, just like Babel after the languages were confused. Further, Babylon represents the confusion that happens when we have imposed law. Think about earthly governments and how things get so confused with arbitrary law, with rules made up and externally enforced. Thus, Babylon represents a manmade religious system, the Imperial Roman law structure projected upon God and heaven, and manifests in the form of penal substitution theology, and other dictator views of God.

Before we go on to the third angel's message, I received an email from an online listener regarding the investigative judgment and the idea of God being judged rather than God sitting in judgment of us.

I am starting to realize that while it's true *most* of Revelation needs to be taken as symbolic of something else, I think mostly everyone can agree that from a biblical and logical standpoint, it is not *all* symbolic (2nd coming included for instance) and thus requires careful analysis to see what is what. I am also realizing that the pre-advent judgment is not *exclusively* about us judging God to be trustworthy or not. Relationships always go two ways. For those seeking to put away sin, there should be no fear in realizing we too will be judged by unfallen beings and God as trustworthy or not, based on our actions. This reality provides assurance that one day sin will forever be a thing of the past. Reinterpreting the Bible to say it is all about us judging God ignores the other side of the relationship coin.

Thoughts?

My response:

Yes, relationships do go two ways, but the way one understands the two sides of "judgment" goes back to how one sees God's law. Imposed law, i.e. human law projected back onto God, which came through the little horn power, and has infected Christianity, including Adventism, sees judgment as you have described. God and heavenly beings "judging" us based on our "actions." I believe this is completely false.

When we see God's law as the design protocol for life, then we realize our actions (As Jesus taught in MT 5 regarding adultery and murder) are merely symptoms, or the outworking of sin



in the heart. Another way to say it is, when the character is deviant from God's design the automatic outcome is to sin behaviorally. Thus, the actions are "symptoms" to reveal the condition of the heart. The non-divine beings can observe the actions to understand how things go in the heart. But, God Himself doesn't look on the outward appearance, He looks on the heart. And He "judges" the secret intents of the heart, in the same way a doctor, who examines and MRI and looks inside the person "judges" what He sees. God accurately diagnosis what the actual condition of each heart is. And our actual heart condition is determined by whether we trust God and open the heart to the working of the Spirit, which is determined by our judgment of Him.

So, the idea that God judges us based on our actions, is an artifact of the Roman infection of Christianity, and is needed for the babes in Christ, who, according to Paul focus on the actions and are not acquainted with righteousness:

¹¹ We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because **you are slow to learn.** ¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, **being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.** ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, **not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death,** (Heb 5:11-6:1)

Notice, the children, the spiritual infants, are focused on "acts that lead to death" in other words on being judged by their acts, or actions. This is not righteousness, not even acquainted with righteousness. This is childishness. This is like an adult brushing their teeth because mommy has a rule and if I don't I will get judged bad by mommy. This is penal theology, God has rules and He must judge us if we don't do right.

Christianity is filled with children, who as children needed the rules to help them, but who have never grown up to understand what righteousness really is. What is happening is that people find themselves at different levels of development, intellectually, morally, relationally and God wants to reach them all, so God has used language for the children, the babies, but sadly, many of the children never grow up and continue to believe God's baby talk is what He wants for all eternity. This is where penal models of atonement and judgment and punishment arise. Have you read Kohlberg's moral development stages, which do a good job of describing normal human development, and give some insight into the mindset different people view the Bible through:

KOHLBERG'S STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

A. PREMORAL OR PRECONVENTIONAL STAGES:

Behavior motivated by anticipation of pleasure or pain.



STAGE 1: PUNISHMENT AND OBEDIENCE:

Avoidance of physical punishment and deference to power. The immediate physical consequences of an action determine its goodness or badness.

The atrocities carried out by soldiers during the holocaust who were simply "carrying out orders" under threat of punishment, illustrate that adults as well as children may function at stage one level.

- Israel as it left Egypt – slave mentality

STAGE 2: INSTRUMENTAL EXCHANGE:

Marketplace exchange of favors or blows. "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." Justice is: "Do unto others as they do unto you." Eye for an eye mentality. Wrong doing must be punished.

Vengeance is considered a moral duty.

- Israel at Sinai, God tries to advance them one step into maturity,
- But sadly much of the Middle East still operates on this childlike level

B. CONVENTIONAL MORALITY:

Acceptance of the rules and standards of one's group.

STAGE 3: INTERPERSONAL CONFORMITY:

Right is conformity to the behavioral expectations of one's society or peers. Individuals act to gain approval of others.

Good behavior is that which pleases or helps others within the group. "Everybody is doing it." One earns approval by being conventionally "respectable" and "nice."

Sin is a breach of the expectations of the social order.

Retribution, however, at this stage is collective. Individual vengeance is not allowed. Forgiveness is preferable to revenge. Punishment is mainly for deterrence. Failure to punish is "unfair." "If he can get away with it, why can't I?"

- Israel after the time of the judges. Their request for kings, "everybody is doing it" So they turned away from God and tried to conform to the world around them – this led to the 70 years to teach them not to be like the nations around them, which helped them go to the next level

STAGE 4: LAW AND ORDER:

Respect for rules, laws and properly constituted authority. Defense of the given social and institutional order for it's own sake.



"Justice" normally refers to criminal or forensic justice. Justice demands that the wrongdoer be punished, that he "pay his debt to society," and that law abiders be rewarded. "A good day's pay for a good day's work."

Injustice is failing to reward work or punish demerit.

Authority figures are seldom questioned. "He must be right. He's the Pope (or the President, or the Judge, or God)."

- Israel at the time of Christ, a legalistic system of rules that must be kept for the rules sake.

STAGE 4 ½:

Between the conventional stages and the post-conventional Levels 5 and 6, there is a transitional stage. College-age students that have come to see conventional morality as relative and arbitrary, but have not yet discovered universal ethical principles, may drop into a hedonistic ethic of "do your own thing." This was well noted in the hippie culture of the 1960's. Disrespect for conventional morality was especially infuriating to the Stage 4 mentality, and indeed was calculated to be so.

C. POSTCONVENTIONAL OR PRINCIPLED MORALITY:

Ethical principles

STAGE 5: PRIOR RIGHTS AND SOCIAL CONTRACT:

Moral action in a specific situation is not defined by reference to a checklist of rules, but from logical application of universal, abstract, moral principles. Individuals have natural or inalienable rights and liberties that are prior to society and must be protected by society. Retributive justice is repudiated.

The statement, "Justice demands punishment," which is a self-evident truism to the Stage 4 mind, is just as self-evidently nonsense at Stage 5. Retributive punishment is neither rational nor just, because it does not promote the rights and welfare of the individual. Only legal sanctions that fulfill that purpose are imposed-- protection of future victims, deterrence, and rehabilitation.

The freedom of the individual should be limited by society only when it infringes upon someone else's freedom.

- What Jesus tried to teach them, no need to punish the woman caught in adultery
- All humans are valuable, even the lepers, tax collectors and prostitutes

STAGE 6: UNIVERSAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES:

An individual who reaches this stage acts out of universal principles based upon the equality and worth of all human beings.



Persons are never means to an end, but are ends in themselves. Having rights means more than individual liberties.

This is the "Golden Rule" model. A list of rules inscribed in stone is no longer necessary.

At this level, God is understood to say what is right because it is right; His sayings are not right, just because it is God who said them.

Persons at this level have accepted God's invitation to "come and let us reason together".

- Jesus lived this level
- The New Testament church lived this level and the Apostles taught this, thus the law is the law of love, and that the written law was useful only to diagnose and not given for the righteous but for the wicked. The law is written on the heart, new covenant
- This is the level our class seeks to achieve

THE FOLLOWING ARE OBSERVATIONS THAT WERE MADE BY KOHLBERG

1. STAGE DEVELOPMENT IS INVARIANT.

One must progress through the stages in order, and one cannot get to a higher stage without passing through the stage immediately preceding it.

2. IN STAGE DEVELOPMENT, SUBJECTS CANNOT COMPREHEND MORAL REASONING AT A STAGE MORE THAN ONE STAGE BEYOND THEIR OWN.

3. IN STAGE DEVELOPMENT, MOVEMENT THROUGH THE STAGES IS EFFECTED WHEN COGNITIVE DISEQUILIBRIUM IS CREATED, THAT IS, WHEN A PERSON'S COGNITIVE OUTLOOK IS NOT ADEQUATE TO COPE WITH A GIVEN MORAL DILEMMA.

4. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE FOR A HUMAN BEING TO BE PHYSICALLY MATURE BUT NOT MORALLY MATURE.

5. KOHLBERG BELIEVED THAT ONLY ABOUT 25% OF PERSONS EVER GROW TO LEVEL SIX, THE MAJORITY REMAINING AT LEVEL FOUR.

The Bible enjoins principles of modesty, humility, and wise stewardship of the money. Application of these principles might preclude the purchase of expensive jewelry, furs, flashy cars, or other items primarily for show. A person functioning at level six would have no problem applying these principles. Persons functioning at a level four on the other hand, might make rules about "jewelry" (in a church for instance) or red dresses, or cosmetics. But they might not even notice a flashy car or the lady who wears a new dress every single week. Those things aren't on the list. If Kohlberg's observation is true, then level 6 thinkers would be in the minority. They might even be misunderstood and persecuted by a level 4 majority (Christ being the primary example).

STAGE THEORY AND THE ATONEMENT

Level 1: Man sinned and offended God. God responded with angry vengeance taking the life of Jesus.



Level 2: God somehow struck a bargain with the Devil, a market place exchange of Christ's life, paid as a ransom to the Devil, in trade for the devil's releasing his hostages. In the popular version, Satan found out too late that God had conned him, when Christ rose from the dead.

Level 3-4: The Law must be kept. Man broke the Law. Someone had to pay the penalty. "The wages of sin is death." Jesus paid that penalty. The integrity of the Law was maintained.

There is an aspect of truth on the law must be kept when the law is understood as the law life is built upon.

Level 5-6: He demonstrated that separation from God is death. ("Why have you forsaken me?") Since we separate ourselves from Him, not He from us, He is not our executioner. He allowed Satan to play out his hand, exposing his selfish character for all both man and angels to see, and thus erasing all sympathy for the accusations of the fallen foe. God's character was vindicated.

Level 7: Atonement becomes at-one-ment. God did what it took to win our love and trust, destroy the infection of sin and restore us to unity with Him again. Neither God, nor His law, defined as the eternal principles upon which He bases His government, change, but our understanding of His law changes, and God speaks to us at each level of our understanding. It is a mistake to cling to expressions appropriate to an earlier age of understanding, regardless of how valid and useful they were in their own context, when more appropriate expressions exist.

Where are you on this moral hierarchy? Where do you experience the majority of church leadership to be? Have we taken the first and second angel's messages to the world?

The message of the third angel can only be effectively given when the first two angel's messages are given in their right light:

⁹ A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, ¹⁰ he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." ¹² This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.

Thoughts?

Angel = messenger

Loud voice = heard all over the world

Worships = values the doctrines, adheres to the principles, practices the methods of the beast, regardless of denomination



Beast and image = a merger of religious and political powers, particularly the merger of religious rhetoric with human law constructs, creating a dictator god and political religious organization that will use coercive tactics

Mark = that which distinguishes one as a follower of the beast system

Forehead = true believer in the penal legal god who must punish

Hand = practitioner of those coercive methods even though one doesn't believe

God's anger and wrath = God letting go His restraining hand and allowing unremedied sin to take its full toll

Burning sulfur = God's life giving glory, the Greek *thion*, neutered form of *thios*, which means divine, or God, and which is the basis of "theology" the study of God. Thus, the burning sulfur is God's fiery presence, the fire of truth and love which consumes sin, seen in Ezek 28, the fiery stones Lucifer walked amongst before his fall, or Daniel 7 when the ancient of days took his seat. And the text explicitly states this fire takes place in "the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb."

Smoke = Is what is left behind after something is burned up. Thus it symbolizes the history of the lives and choices of the lost, the memory of what they chose and did which is remembered by the saved forever and ever. We never forget the lessons taught us through this battle between Christ and Satan, and why the wicked are lost in the end – by their own choices.

Forever = eternity, the end of the wicked is eternal, and we will remember for all eternity, never forgetting

No rest = the mind is never at peace or rest in deviation from God's design, and they never enter the eternal rest, or reunion with God

Keep the commandments = live the law of love

Faithful to Jesus = represent God rightly and tell the truth about God's character

My paraphrase of the Three Angel's Messages:

Rev 14:6 Then I saw another messenger flying in midair, and he had the eternal good news about God's character of love to proclaim to everyone living on earth, to every nation, tribe, language and people, which represents a movement of people who arise to proclaim the truth about God's character of love throughout the world. 7 He said in a clear resounding voice, "Be in awe of God, and glorify him by living his methods of love, because the hour has come for everyone to make a judgment about God and worship the Designer, Creator and Builder who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and springs of water, which all operate upon his law of love."

Rev 14:8 Then I saw a second messenger follow the first proclaiming throughout the world, "Don't trust Babylon the Great, a symbolic description of religions that misrepresent God; it is fallen into the lies about God and intoxicates the world with its pagan views of God, maddening them with its adulterous idea that God coerces and must inflict punishment if not properly appeased."

Rev 14:9 A third messenger followed them and proclaimed in a voice heard throughout the world, "If anyone gives worth and honor to the beastly system of coercion by choosing the methods of the beast and thus marking themselves as loyal in heart by embracing the character



of the beast or marking themselves as loyal in deed by practicing his methods, 10 they will reap the full fury of unremedied sin when God let's go his protective hand. They will experience immeasurable torment of mind and burning anguish of heart when they stand in God's fiery presence and are bathed in unquenchable fire of truth and love, all in the very presence of Jesus and the holy angels. 11 And the memory of their suffering and the lesson of their self-destructive choices will never be forgotten throughout all eternity future. There will be no peace of mind, day or night for those who prefer the methods of the beast and model after him, nor for any who choose to mark themselves as followers of the beast." 12 This requires patient endurance on the part of the healed who live God's methods of love and remain true to Jesus.

Thoughts?

Is there any wonder why the church has not fulfilled its prophetic mission? We cannot fulfill the mission until we come back to the truth about God, reject the dictator view of God, which is promoted in:

- the imposed law model
- penal substitution theology
- God must punish sin
- Sabbath is a test of obedience without reason just because God said so
- Judgment is God sitting in judgment determine who will be saved and ordering punishments
- God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death
- All sin must be punished and God will inflict it

All these presentations continue to confuse the world and misrepresent God and obstruct the message of the three angels from doing its work in preparing the world for Christ's return.

SUNDAY

The lesson talks about the terrible persecution that is to occur during the 1260 year period

The time frame for this is historically said to be from 538 CE, when Justinian's general, Belisarius defeated the last of the Arian nations, the Ostrogoths, drove them out of Rome and turned over the city to the Bishop of Rome.

1260 years later, would be 1798, and that year, the French general Berthier, enters Rome, declares it a Republic, takes the pope captive, exiles him to France where the pope dies a prisoner.

Because of this prophecy, and the history of the Dark Ages, and the physical persecution such as burning at the stake, crusades, inquisition, many have concluded that the war against the saints is/was a physical war.

Thoughts?



Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
MT 5:27,28

What was He saying about the physical acts of sin? They are a result of heart defects. Is this true only for adultery? What did Jesus say about murder?

Then would the actions of the church in the Dark Ages, when it persecuted physically, **be the actual war** against the saints, **or the symptoms**, the outworking, **the result of the real war** going on in the hearts and minds of men?

Remember the law of worship, or modeling, by beholding we become changed? We become like the God we worship. Therefore, **the reason the church persecuted others and violated human rights, was because it had been infected with lies about God. It had accepted a change in God’s law as imposed and imposed laws require imposed punishments.** It falsely viewed God’s government as a government like Imperial Rome, made up of imposed rules requiring the ruling authority to police the laws and punish law breakers. Therefore, as “God’s church on earth”, it naturally practiced those methods.

But the real war, was not a physical war, it was a war of ideas, of beliefs, of concepts about God. And while political powers have come along to restrain the physical persecution of religious institutions, the churches, all of them, remain infected with the lies about God and His law. (2Cor 10:3-5)

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Fear could be...” thoughts?

I agree that fear can be understood in two ways. I also agree that if someone is in the middle of an orgy at the foot of Sinai worshipping a golden calf and God’s thundering incites fear, that fear may result in one stepping back and rethinking one’s position.

But, in the context of the three angels, is it appropriate to suggest that God is calling for people to experience “terror”?

Absolutely NOT! This is a result of the distortion to God’s character which has infected Christianity.

Remember, the people specifically called upon in the first angel’s message to fear God are the same ones called upon to give Him glory, meaning to reveal Him in their character, so others can see the truth about God and make a right judgment about Him. This means they are called upon to reveal God’s love in their lives. And perfect love casts out all fear! Perfect love does not cast out awe, admiration and respect for God, it enhances it. But perfect love does cast out terror of God! So, if they



were going around showing terror or dread about God, their witness would lead people to make the WRONG judgment about God, and perhaps reject God and conclude God doesn't exist.

Thus, Revelation's call to fear God is NOT the call to be in terror but a call to reveal our awe, admiration and love for our God of love!

But the lesson rightly points out, there is something to fear – what? The lesson suggests it is God, but what is your answer? Unremedied sin!

But Satan is such a good liar he has far too many more afraid of God who is trying to heal them, than sin which is destroying them! Think about it, which do we need to fear more – Ebola, or a doctor with a remedy for Ebola? What do we need to fear more, sin, or God who has the remedy for sin?

Read bottom pink section “We know...” thoughts?

What does this imply to you?

Does this imply God is your friend, someone safe to go to with sin in your life? Or does it imply that God will hurt you?

This idea corrupts how we present the gospel and bring people to Christ.

In NT times when they preached and the Holy Spirit convicted people they were baptized then, meaning they were brought immediately into relationship with Christ and the church as new babes in Christ.

We don't do this today – why? Because when someone is convicted by the Holy Spirit to accept Jesus, we believe God is too just, or too Holy to tolerate sinners coming into the church without first getting themselves cleaned up from sin. Or perhaps, it is the idea the church needs to be protected from sinners, so we must put them through indoctrination classes, but even worse – they must quit smoking before baptism, they must quit working on Sabbath before baptism, they must stop using alcohol before baptism etc. etc.

In other words, they must clean up sin in their lives BEFORE we allow them baptism. But, where does the power to overcome sin in the life originate? In Christ, thus this legal model causes us to put burdens on people, make them feel pressure to perform, makes them feel they are not good enough to come to Christ, make them feel underserving of His love, make them feel God is intolerant of them in their sick state, distorts their idea of God and His single desire to deliver, heal and save them.

When did the lepers come to Christ, before or after they were healed of leprosy? What is leprosy symbolic of in Scripture? Sin! Naaman in OT times was a leper, and was instructed to do what? Go and baptize himself in the Jordan 7 times – as a leper. Symbolically, go as a sinner to Christ, be immersed by the Holy Spirit (baptized) and in that immersion you will be cleansed from sin.



When we realize sin is a condition, with which we are born, and God has a healing remedy we go to Him, in our sin-sick condition and are immersed in His love, truth, power, presence and it is this experience which purges the lies, purifies the heart, removes the selfishness, writes in the love and cleanses and heals us.

But, when we have a penal legal system, we have rules which must be met first. We have behaviors we must change first. We have lists of beliefs we must adhere to first, or God cannot accept us while we smoke, drink, work on Sabbath etc.

Is it any wonder the three angels messages have not done their work to call people out of Babylon?

Lest anyone get confused and think I am suggesting that there is not place or need for a change in behavior let me state it clearly. We must experience a change in behavior, but only after we come to Christ and experience His healing power in our hearts and minds. Anything else is a false remedy.

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, “God reacts to the rage of the nations ...” thoughts?

Before we talk about God’s power, let’s talk about Satan’s wrath or methods of attack.

When you study Scripture, have you observed that Satan attacks in a certain pattern? Can you describe the pattern?

The best place to see his tactics is in the life of Christ.

How did Satan first attack Christ?

- By subtle deception and appeal to carnal weakness
 - Hunger was used to incite doubt and tempt him to use his power for self interest (lust of the flesh)
 - Ego, or pride, was used to tempt him to prove Himself (pride of life)
 - Greed or gain was used to tempt him to save self (lust of the eyes)
- Then when this didn’t work, Satan worked through family, brothers tempted him to use his power to prove self
- Then when this didn’t work, his disciples tempted him to use his power to destroy his enemies
- Then the religious leadership was used in attempts to trick him with theological tricks and legal entanglements
- Then, when none of the subtle temptations worked, Satan moved on to coercion, pressure, threat, with physical attack, mockery, humiliation, betrayal, rejection, and ultimately execution

Likewise, Satan’s methods are the same against us. We are tempted first through our own carnal weakness:



- Lust of the flesh (addictions, sensual pleasures, gluttony etc)
- Lust of the eyes (money, stocks, cars, etc.)
- Pride of life (need to be first, head elder, pastor of largest church, first in sales, first in class, gold medals etc.)
- When this doesn't work he hits us with all kinds of subtle lies (evolutionism, theistic evolution, legal theologies, humanism, eastern philosophies, etc.)
- He attacks us through family and friends who ridicule, reject, betray for our beliefs and following his methods. (You're a legalist for not eating meat. You're rigid for....)
- He attacks us from religious leaders (you teach contrary to church beliefs...)
- Then, one day, when none of this works, Revelation predicts there will come again actual physical persecution to incite fear, inflame or desire to save self, and tempt us to deny God, and practice Satan's survival of the fittest principle and betray what we believe in order to save self.

What is God's power to defeat Satan and his attacks?

- Truth, love and freedom
- Truth destroys lies
- Love destroys selfishness
- Freedom destroys coercion
- Prayer and Bible study keeps one humble and connected to God
- Fellowship with believers keeps one encouraged and connected to community, which destroys fear of isolation and abandonment
- Trusting God with outcomes destroys fear about the future

Read next paragraph, "Revelation 11:17,18 gives..." thoughts?

What is the lesson suggesting? How do you hear it? Does this cause one to feel safe with God or become terrified of Him?

Does it sound like a threat, do it my way or else I will pour plagues out upon you? Can love exist under threat? Is God love? Then can God be threatening to inflict pain and suffering on those who won't love Him?

What then do we make of this?

Let's read Revelation 11:16-18

And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.



¹⁸ The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great— and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

Thoughts?

So, we have what it says, the critical question is what does it mean? What are God’s methods for destroying the earth?

Revelation 7:1-3 gives a clue:

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, **holding back the four winds** of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice **to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea:** ³ “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”

Notice these four angels are doing something, what are they **ACTIVELY** doing? Holding back the four winds and it says later they have power to do something, what? To harm the land and sea. What do you think their power is? To let go that which they are restraining or hold back, which is Satan and his forces.

Thus, the harm does not come out from God, the plagues are not inflictions from God, but are God’s restraining hand letting go and Satan gaining more and more freedom to use his power on earth.

Why, does God let go? Why is His presence withdrawn from the earth? What is the dwelling place of God’s Spirit on earth? The heart of men. And what happens as billions of people harden their hearts and close their hearts to God? Where does the Spirit go, slowly withdrawn, and thus the four winds are slowly loosed.

This is exactly what historic Adventism taught, before penal substitution infected our theology. Here is from EGW:

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

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



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

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I want to tell you another thing. **The vials of God's wrath and the sprinkling of them, are already coming. What is the matter that we do not discern it? [What is the matter? I believe the problem is we have accepted Satan's view of God's law, the wine of Babylon, that God's law is imposed, that sin must be punished, and thus we view Satan's behavior as God's behavior] It is because the light of truth does not affect the heart. The Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the world.**

You hear of calamities by land and by sea, and they are constantly increasing. What is the matter? The Spirit of God is taken away from those who have the lives of men in their hands, and Satan is coming in to control them, because they give themselves to his control. Those who profess to be the children of God do not place themselves under the guardianship of the heavenly angels, and **as Satan is a destroyer,** he works through those men and they make mistakes, and they will get drunk, and because of intemperance, many times bring these terrible calamities upon us.

And see the storms and tempests! Satan is working in the atmosphere; he is poisoning the atmosphere, and here we are dependent upon God for our lives—our present and eternal life. And being in the position that we are, **we need to be wide-awake,** wholly devoted, wholly converted, wholly consecrated to God. But we seem to sit as though we were paralyzed. **God of heaven, wake us up!** *Sermons and Talks Volume 2, p. 69.3; Manuscript 1, 1890; SM book 2, p. 52*

As I said last week, the 10 virgins, the church is asleep, and what puts the church to sleep? The wine of Babylon, which is the false doctrine of penal substitution, God's law being imposed and God in order to be just must inflict punishment. Thus, we falsely teach God inflicts the plagues. We need to wake up!

Here is my paraphrase of Revelation 11:16-18:

Rev 11:16 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on thrones before God, humbled themselves in awe and admiration, 17 and said: "We are thankful to you, Lord God Almighty, who lives today and who has always existed, because you have unveiled your great power and begun to reign in truth and love. 18 The nations of the selfish world lived in anger, and you have let them reap what they have chosen. The time for accurately diagnosing those who sleep in the grave has come, and for rewarding your spokespersons the prophets and your saints and all those who revere your character of love, both small and great, and for the destruction of those who destroy the earth."



WEDNESDAY

In the second paragraph it states, “The final test will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men.” What do you understand this to be?

One view has taken this idea and boiled it down to one test, which day one worships upon. Is this what it boils down to? Is it only about the day of week one attends services?

Or, is it actually about THE commandments of God versus THE commandments of men?

What is the difference between the commandments of God and men?

What are God’s commands?

- Love the Lord your God with all your heart and neighbor as yourself
- According to Jesus “All law” how much? “All” law hangs on these.
- So every commandment of God, regardless of which one, is an expression of love.
- Thus God’s law is the law of love, which functions as the principle of giving
- This is a natural law, the design protocol for life and deviations are incompatible with life
- Justice requires healing and deliverance of the oppressed

What are the commandments or law of men?

- Survival of the fittest, which is fear based, threaten and coerce with
- Imposed rules
- Legal requirements
- Justice requires infliction of punishment

Sabbath, originated in Eden, at the end of six days of God delivering and providing incredible evidence of His nature, character, methods and principles, which were summed up in His closing arguments about His government, the Sabbath. I rest my case. Universe, you’ve heard the arguments against me. You’ve seen the evidence, the mini-theater I have just created, showing my creative power, that all life originates with me. Yet, I don’t hoard power and have given dominion to Adam and procreative ability to humanity. Consider all I have revealed to you, take 24 hours aside, think for yourselves, no pressure, no coercion, I rest my case!

The Sabbath, created in the midst of a war over God’s right to rule, is invested, created, built, by God, upon God’s very methods – truth, presented in love, leaving intelligent beings free to think for themselves, no threat, no coercion, no pressure. Thus the Sabbath was CREATED holy, and stands as evidence of God’s government, methods and character.

The fact the Sabbath exists proves Satan a liar. If Satan were right and God was selfish and used power to threaten and coerce, then there would be no Sabbath, God would have merely executed Satan and told the other beings to get in line or He would kill them too.



Thus, the Sabbath stands as a sign, a signpost, a billboard, a declaration point, an evidence of God's law of love embodied in time, by our creator to remind us of God's methods of love and liberty. Its holiness is created within the day itself and because its existence is evidence of God's methods it cannot be supplanted by any other day.

No other day was created on the 7th day. On day 1-6 we learn that God has power, it is only on day seven we learn the character of the one who wields the power.

Sunday, or any other day of the week, provide evidence of God's power, but not God's character of love. Thus, these two days of worship are SYMBOLIC or representative of two methods of governing.

God's law- the method of love, truth and freedom or man's law, arbitrary rules chosen and enforced upon threat of punishment. So, when we take the Sabbath and claim there is no logical reason, just God commands us, we pervert the very purpose and meaning of the Sabbath and make the Sabbath support Satan's argument. So people can worship on the "right" day, but still crucify the Lord of the Sabbath. This is what is happening within Adventism today.

Real Sabbath observance occurs in the heart and character, by people who practice God's methods.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The second and third..." thoughts?

From our study today, why will people who reject God partake the seven last plagues?

FRIDAY

Discuss questions 1 and 3