



## Jeremiah 4Q 2015 Lesson 7 The Crisis Continues

### SABBATH

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Read memory text: “But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I *am* the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the Lord.” Jer 9:24 NKJV

What do you understand this text to be saying?

Does it resonate with an end time prophecy for an end time people? “Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come...” Rev 14:7

Could this text give insight and enlighten us as to what Rev 14:7 means?

What is the Jeremiah text telling us is necessary in order to glorify God? And what is to be the basis for our glories? The knowledge of God—can a person glorify God if they don’t actually know Him? Will this be an issue at the end of time to which Revelation points?

So, what is the Jeremiah text telling us about God, that we are supposed to know and be the basis of our glorying in Him?

From the SDA Bible Commentary on Jeremiah 9:24:

The truly wise ascribe praise to God alone, never to self (see on v. 23). The knowledge of God is the only true ground for glorying (see 1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17). That man alone is truly wise in whose heart such knowledge is treasured, for it is life eternal (John 17:3). **This knowledge has an intellectual aspect involving the understanding. Man’s relationship to God has a reasonable and intelligent basis. It is no blind discipleship.** Man is to serve God with all the mind (Matt. 22:37). **But knowing God goes beyond a merely theoretical understanding. It is an experimental knowledge. It is practical.** It manifests itself in walking in God’s ways (see Job 22:21; Jer. 22:16).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1977). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 4, p. 398). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



This is well said—the knowledge of God includes knowing God’s character, methods, design. It is an intelligent appreciation of and participation in God’s ways of doing things. This is the integrative evidence-based approach. If our understanding of God has no applicable and practical aspect then there is something wrong with our understanding.

So, the commentary, is describing Design law, not imposed law.

With this in mind, let’s unpack the further descriptors of God in the passage: “That I *am* the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.”

- Lovingkindness—what is this describing? Agape love, God is love!
  - The law of love—as Jesus said God provides the sun and rain to all people without regard. God’s love and truth is poured out from heaven upon all humanity, as is the Remedy for sin—it is up to us to partake.
- What about Judgment—what is this referring to?
  - the Hebrew is *mishpat* and is the same Hebrew is used in Jer 5:4: “Therefore I said, “Surely these *are* poor. They are foolish; For they do not know the way of the LORD, The judgment of their God.” NKJV
    - Then I thought, “These are only the poor and ignorant. They behave foolishly; they don’t know what their God requires, what the LORD wants them to do. Jer 5:4 GNB
    - Then I said, “These are only the poor, they have no sense; for they do not know the way of the LORD, the law of their God. Jer 5:4NRSV
  - What is the word “judgment” referring to in our memory passage? God’s design law. It is saying we cannot glorify in God unless we know God’s character of love, and also His design law of love upon which life is built to operate
- Righteousness—means what? Doing what is right, knowing, in this context, that God always does the right thing, which is an expression of His character of love and in harmony with His law of love!

The problem we face is that these texts get translated and interpreted through the false law lens, the imposed law lens and thus all types of legal connotations, based on sinful human beings ways of making laws, gets projected onto God.

Here is our memory text from *The Message*:



“If you brag, brag of this and this only: That you understand and know me. I’m God, and I act in loyal love. I do what’s right and set things right and fair, and delight in those who do the same things. These are my trademarks.” God’s Decree.”

Doesn’t this sound a lot different than the typical judicial way of reading it? This is the message we are to be taking about God and the end of earth’s history—because the hour in which God’s character is being judged has come!

Read second paragraph, “Imagine what would...” Why would the crisis have been averted?

The lesson suggests the door to salvation had not been closed, what closes the door do salvation? Who closes the door to salvation?

Does God have a time on a celestial calendar and He is counting down to it and when we reach that time He shuts down opportunity? Or, is it that events transpire on earth that bring a crisis and each person either embraces truth and is transformed or rejects it and is hardened?

## **SUNDAY**

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Read first paragraph, “In Jeremiah 9...” What do you understand the lesson is trying to say? What are they saying about God? What kind of God are they describing?

Let’s first evaluate their assertions—when God says something He does it—is this an absolute truth, or does God say something, but if circumstances change, God adapts and changes?

- Did God tell Jonah that He was going to destroy Nineveh? Did God give Jonah any caveats that needed to be met to avert the action?
- Did God tell Moses He was going to destroy Israel and start over with him? Did God tell Moses any caveats that needed to be met in order to avert the action?
- Why does God say things and then change based on what happens? God speaks in the way that is most effective to bring about God’s purposes—to heal, save, reveal truth etc.

So, is the statement by the authors “when God says something He does it,” a completely accurate description of God? What is wrong with what they have said? They have made God out to be arbitrary and dictatorial, rigid, inflexible...

Now, let’s be fair, I think the authors are trying to make God out to be reliable, dependable, constant, predictable, a God who never changes, the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. The problem is that



they focus on behavior rather than character. If they focus on God's character and methods then we find the solid Rock, the reliable, never changing gracious God of love, truth and freedom, but love changes its ACTIONS based on the needs of the situations.

When we view God's law as functioning like our own, then we make these errors of creating a dictator, rigid god.

How does the lesson make God's judgments sound? Do they sound like punishments inflicted? I find this sounding a lot like level one speech, the idea that right and wrong is determined by reward and punishment. At this level a ruler establishes the right to rule by displays of power. So the authors are describing a powerful God who can punish.

Notice the huge difference in how EGW describes these events in the next paragraph:

“The cross is a **revelation to our dull senses** of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God. **Every departure from the right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him.** When there came upon Israel the **calamities that were the sure result of separation from God,—subjugation by their enemies, cruelty, and death,**--it is said that "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." "In all their affliction He was afflicted: . . . and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old." Judges 10:16; Isaiah 63:9. {Ed 263.1}

Notice—the judgments of God as described by EGW are not inflictions to punish, but setting them free to experience what they have persistently chosen, separation from Him. And when one separates from God, the source of life, when one deviates from the law upon which life is constructed, the only result is pain, suffering and death.

Read bottom pink section: “What does the Cross tell us about the loving-kindness, the justice, and righteousness of God?”

- God so loved the world...His love is manifest is His giving His life for us
- Justice—is doing what is right—and thus Christ did what was right, He perfectly revealed God's character, developed a perfect human character, rejected the temptations of fear and selfishness and cured the human sin condition—all in harmony with the law upon which life is designed
- Righteousness—the perfection of God's character and methods lived out by Christ (in the Greek Justice and Righteousness are the same)



## MONDAY

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Read first paragraph, “As we have seen...” The lesson says the people were steeped in paganism, idolatry, and false teachings.

- Who were the people who were steeped in paganism, idolatry and false teaching? They were God’s chosen, the church on earth at that time.
- Is it possible Christianity today is steeped in paganism and idolatry?
- What do you understand the essence of paganism and idolatry to be?

Idolatry and paganism, at its essence is worshipping a lie—a false view of God:

**Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal.** Are we worshipping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshipping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

What are the elements that have been accepted by Christians, that actually cause Christianity to teach a false view of God, and thus lead people into paganism?

- 1. God’s law is imposed—thus God must inflict punishment, and requires appeasement or payment
  - Yesterday I was speaking with a man who has studied God’s word and taught others his entire life, a good man, I believe one like Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea. Yet this professor told me that the ransom metaphor of Scripture means that Satan laid legal claims to planet earth and a payment had to be made to free earth from Satan’s possession. And when asked to whom, he said to God.
  - Satan’s claim is a lie and it is based on a lie.
    - When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his own purpose of deception. **Satan's dominion was that wrested from Adam, but Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator. His was not an independent rule. The earth is God's, and He has**



- committed all things to His Son. Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King.** Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." Daniel 4:17. Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits. {DA 129.4}
- If Christ remained the rightful king, then did any legal action have to be taken to legally obtain rights to earth? No! This entire idea is based on the false law infection.
  - What does the Ransom metaphor actually mean? Ransom is the price necessary to free someone held in bondage. What holds us in bondage? The lies about God we believe and our carnal natures. Then what is the price necessary to free us? The truth about God and a new nature, both of which Christ achieved. And who is this price provided (i.e. paid) to? You and me!
- 2. Pursuit of government support (i.e. systems of the world) for religious institutions and beliefs
    - Satan tempted Christ by offering Him the power and authority of the earthly governments
    - The church is tempted in the same way, to join with the governments of earth, and they have accepted this temptation and rather than saying, as Jesus did, "my kingdom is not of this earth" have sought to get governmental authority and practice the methods of earthly governments—in two ways:
      - one, by joining with them to pass laws in the land enforcing legal religion
      - two, by in their doctrines teaching God's government functions and operates like earthly governments—so even those churches who promote separation of church and state still fall into this trap IF they teach God's law operates like man's law!
  - 3. I found this quote in the book, *The Great Controversy*: "**The theory of the immortality of the soul was one of those false doctrines that Rome, borrowing from paganism, incorporated into the religion of Christendom.** {GC88 549.3}
    - Do you agree?
    - How does immortality of the soul lead one to pagan god concepts?
    - First it colludes with Satan's lie in Eden, "you will not surely die." and makes God out to be a liar
    - Second—what kind of being would God be if immortality of the soul is true?
      - Naïve—He didn't think about the awful things that could happen if humans rebelled



- Incapable—God didn't have the ability to know what humans would do
  - Cruel and sadistic—God did know they would rebel but made them immortal anyway knowing billions would suffer eternally
  - The doctrine of immortality of the soul leads people to conceive of God in a light other than love, a cruel tyrant who is unworthy of our love and trust—and thus create theologies designed to protect us from God
- 4. Any theology that requires appeasement, propitiation, or any other action be taken to influence or persuade, or enable, or permit God to forgive and save and/or not lash out with judgment and punishment. Here are three quotes from one of the founders of the SDA church, teaching this idea:
    - With intense interest he [Satan] watched the sacrifices offered by Adam and his sons. In these ceremonies he discerned a symbol of communion between earth and heaven. **He set himself to intercept this communion. He misrepresented God, and misinterpreted the rites that pointed to the Saviour.** Men were led to fear God as one who delighted in their destruction. **The sacrifices that should have revealed His love were offered only to appease His wrath.** {DA 115.1}
    - Determined to keep the people in deception, the priests of Baal continue to offer sacrifices to their gods and to call upon them night and day to refresh the earth. **With costly offerings the priests attempt to appease the anger of their gods;** {PK 124.2}
    - Speaking of the Dark Ages this author writes of Christians:
      - They were taught not only to look to the pope as their mediator, but to trust to works of their own to atone for sin. Long pilgrimages, acts of penance, the worship of relics, the erection of churches, shrines, and altars, the payment of large sums to the church,—these and many similar **acts were enjoined to appease the wrath of God or to secure his favor; as if God were like men, to be angered at trifles, or pacified by gifts or acts of penance!** {GC88 56.1}  
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Do you see at the root of every pagan system is a god who must be appeased, propitiated, paid off, an angry, revengeful god whose law operates like those of sinful beings?

The lesson emphasizes the point that pagan gods cannot create and the true God is the Creator God—absolutely true—how can we apply this knowledge? By understanding the protocols upon which creation operates, i.e. realizing God's laws are never imposed rules, but always the laws that life is built upon!



When we use the fact God is Creator to appeal only to power, we revert to level one thinking and incite fear of God instead of bringing people back to love and trust in God.

## TUESDAY

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Read second paragraph, “The inhabitants...” What does “undeserving” mean and what does it not mean?

- It means they didn’t possess healthiness or goodness in and of themselves
- It does not mean they are worthless worms
- It does not mean that if they were loyal to God, observed His laws and followed the rules then they would be deserving—this is a great falsehood that many Christians buy into
- All our righteousness is filthy rags (Isa 64:6)
- All have sinned and fall short of God’s glory Rom 3:23

God doesn’t give up because they are still healable, not because they are good. God only gives up and lets go when we are beyond healing, i.e. when we have destroyed the faculties that respond to love and truth.

The last paragraph states, “Old Testament, New Testament—in the end, the message of God is the same to all of us: we are sinners, we have done wrong, we deserve punishment.”

I can’t say this more emphatically—THIS IS PAGANISM, THIS IS IDOLATRY, this is the infection of the beastly system into Christianity. It is a perversion, a distortion, a corruption of reality that in the end represents God with the attributes of Satan—but it is subtle. One can only discern the difference between the truth and the lie if one understands God’s character and law of love. Without this, then one doesn’t understand God’s methods and when reading Scripture or other Christian writings will read through human law lens and misunderstand.

I want to expose how Christian writings get misunderstood and used to present the pagan view of God, and from the same author show how the writings used to support the pagan view of God, actually mean something else entirely:

From one of the founders of the SDA church we read some quotations that are used to promote the pagan view:

- God has given in His word decisive evidence **that He will punish the transgressors of His law. Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary.** The death of the spotless Son of God



testifies that "the wages of sin is death," **that every violation of God's law must receive its just retribution.** Christ the sinless became sin for man. He bore the guilt of transgression, and **the hiding of His Father's face, until His heart was broken and His life crushed out.** [What God did is stated here for those who have insight to understand] All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed. In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin. [The penalty of sin, not of God—what does sin do?] **And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgression....** {Darkness Before Dawn 16.4}

- The history of Israel was to be placed on record for the instruction and warning of coming generations. **Men of all future time must see the God of heaven as an impartial ruler, in no case justifying sin.** But few realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin. **Men flatter themselves that God is too good to punish the transgressor.** But in the light of Bible history it is evident that God's goodness and **His love engage Him to deal with sin as an evil fatal to the peace and happiness of the universe.** {PP 420.2} [what do you hear? why is sin fatal to the peace and happiness of the universe? why must God deal with it?]

We see in God's universe (i.e. under God's rulership/government/the way He has constructed His kingdom—reality to work) there is a punishment for sin—the question is what does it mean and what method does God use? Are God's ways like human governments and God uses power to inflict punishment or something else entirely?

So from the very same author of the previous two quotes, we read:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.** {DA 761.4}

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



David had neglected the duty of punishing the crime of Amnon, and because of the unfaithfulness of the king and father and the impenitence of the son, **the Lord permitted events to take their natural course, and did not restrain Absalom.** When parents or rulers neglect the duty of punishing iniquity, **God Himself will take the case in hand. His restraining power will be in a measure removed from the agencies of evil, so that a train of circumstances will arise which will punish sin with sin.** {PP 728.1} [Wow—did you hear that? How does God punish sin? By setting people who choose to sin, which is separation from Him, to have what they have chosen and thus they are punished by sin. This is exactly what Scripture teaches, “the wages of sin is death,” “sin when full grown brings forth death” “the one who sows to the carnal nature, from that nature reaps destructions”]

As Paul thus approaches Corinth, **how striking the contrast to the close of a former journey,** when Saul, "**breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,**" drew near to Damascus! How widely different the appearance, purposes, and spirit of Saul and Paul! Then he was **intrusted with the sword of secular power,** he was the agent of the Sanhedrim, the Jewish inquisitor, the exterminator of heretics, seeking victims to imprison, to scourge, or to stone. Filled with pride, he rode toward Damascus, with servants at his command to convey his prisoners to Jerusalem. Now he journeys on foot, with no outward tokens of rank or power, and no officers of justice to do his bidding. **The utmost that he can do to punish those who disregard his authority, is to separate them from a society whose members are everywhere regarded as ignorant and degraded.** His enemies declare that his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. Yet the apostle is not so powerless as he is represented. He bears a commission from the King of kings. All Heaven is enlisted to sustain him. His weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to overthrow the strongholds of sin and Satan. {Sketches from the Life of Paul 185.1}

**The world is soon to be left by the angel of mercy, and the seven last plagues are to be poured out.** Sin, shame, sorrow, and darkness are on every side; but God still holds out to the souls of men the precious privilege of exchanging darkness for light, error for truth, sin for righteousness. **But God's patience and mercy will not always wait.** Let not one soul think **that he can hide from God's wrath behind a lie,** for God will strip from the soul the refuge of lies. **The bolts of God's wrath are soon to fall, and when He shall begin to punish the transgressors,** there will be no period of respite until the end. **The storm of God's wrath is gathering,** and those only will stand who are sanctified through the truth in the love of God. They shall be hid with Christ in God till the desolation shall be overpast. He shall come forth to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity, {TM 182}



Wow, again this sounds like some direct infliction—if one is reading this through the lens of sinful human law. But if one knows God, His character and methods, then one realizes reality doesn't work the way human law works, so notice how this same author describes the method, mechanism by which this occurs:

**"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, reproveth, 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."**

Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

This description is in perfect harmony with Revelation chapter 7, when the angels let loose the winds of strife they have been restraining and calamities occur.

We, as Christians, have presented such a distorted picture of God to the world that millions have either rejected Him, or live in fear of His return.

It is time to come back to the truth—yes there is a punishment for sin that can only be avoided through Jesus—why? Because reality cannot be set aside to allow a person out of harmony with God's design for life to live in health, it simply isn't possible.

The great problem many have is they have never understood the truth about God's law and character and live in the darkness of human law constructs.



## WEDNESDAY

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Read last sentence of first paragraph, “The gospel provision, which would eventually come through the sacrifice of Jesus, would be enough to forgive all their sins and restore the people.”

What is meant by the idea that the provision would be enough to forgive all their sins?

It sounds quantitative—i.e. the sacrifice is sufficient to provide pardon for all the bad deeds?

Was the problem that God was unable to forgive without the death of Christ? No! “God so loved the world...” God forgave before Christ came, but we were still alienated in our hearts, minds, and state of being. We didn’t know or trust God and we didn’t operate in harmony with Him. Thus Christ came to reveal the truth to win us back to trust, and provide us a new humanity in perfect harmony with how God built life to exist. We, through Christ, don’t get new legal documents, we get new hearts and right spirits, we become partakers of the divine nature!

## THURSDAY

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Read first paragraph, “As we saw yesterday...” What is the punishment for spilling innocent blood?

How do we understand it?

Is sin a crime that must be punished? Or is sin a condition of being that if unremedied destroys, thus bringing its own punishment.

The legal way of seeing it is what leads so many young Christians to engage in sin.

America, the nation in which more than 82%<sup>2</sup> of people identify themselves as Christian, has the highest rate of teen pregnancy and abortion than any westernized country in the world.

- 34% of American teenage girls will get pregnant before the age of 20.
- Teen pregnancy in the United States is ten times that of Japan where less than three percent of the population is Christian,
- Four times that of France and Germany, and nearly twice that of Great Britain.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Baylor University Survey, p. 6 <http://www.baylor.edu/mediacommunications/news.php?action=story&story=41678>

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007," *Surveillance Summaries*, Vol. 58, No. SS-4 (June 6, 2008)



Why? When preparing to do a lecture on human sexuality to a group of Christian HS students I asked them to write down any question they had and turn it in anonymously. This question appeared more than once: “If I love my girlfriend very much, and she loves me, and God will forgive us for having premarital sex, what is wrong with premarital sex?”

The student understands correctly there is no problem with God forgiving, and there never was and never will be—but the student fails miserably in understanding the reality of God’s law and the nature of sin.

It would be like asking if God will forgive me for jabbing myself in the eye with a pencil, what’s wrong with jabbing myself in the eye with a pencil. Think about it—is the problem with such behavior, or smoking, drugs, or any other violation of God’s law a problem with getting God to forgive? No! The problem is the damage it does to us!

Second paragraph states, “How fascinating that the priests and the prophets, the ones who were supposed to be the spiritual leaders, had to be rebuked and challenged by mere ‘elders’ and ‘regular people’ who came forward in defense of Jeremiah.”

Has such a problem been true throughout human history?

- In the days of Christ did the spiritual leaders need rebuke by the common people—remember the man born blind?
- In the days of the Apostles—did they have to rebuke the spiritual leaders?
- In the Dark Ages?
- What about today?

## **FRIDAY**

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Read and discuss the questions



#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

*The God-Shaped Brain* is now available in Korean and is available at this website:  
[http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book\\_detail.nhn?bid=9519886](http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886)

*The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase*– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

**The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.**

**January 9, 2016:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.

**January 29-30, 2016:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

**February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.**

**March 11-12, 2016:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

**April 1-2, 2016:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.