



## The Book of Acts Lesson 5 3Q 2018 The Conversion of Paul

by Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

Last week I mentioned that the 10 Commandments were written on Sapphire, and I would give the basis for that idea this week:

10 Commandments Written on Sapphire:

Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up <sup>10</sup> and saw **the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself.** Exodus 24:9, 10

Note two verses later:

The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction.” Exodus 24:12

Literal reading, “**Tablets of THE stone...**”

What stone, *the* only stone referenced in the text, which was two verses before, the sapphire stone.

Now, note Numbers 15:37-39:

Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>38</sup> “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put **a blue thread in the tassels** of the corners. <sup>39</sup> And you shall have **the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments** of the Lord and do them...

What was the thread to remind them of? God’s commandments! and Why blue thread? Because the 10 Commandments were written on Sapphire, blue stone!

The Harlot of Revelation:

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, <sup>2</sup> with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

<sup>3</sup> So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup> **The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and**



pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. <sup>5</sup> And on her forehead a name *was* written:

MYSTERY,  
BABYLON THE GREAT,  
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.  
Rev 17:1-5

The Harlot of Revelation is adorned in Purple, Scarlet and Gold:

The High Priest of God wore four colors:

“They shall take the **gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread**, and the fine linen, and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, *and* scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen, artistically worked. Exodus 28: 5,6

What color does the Harlot **not** have? Blue—which means the false church rejects the law of God, which means they reject the law of love, design law and have imposed law instead.

The High Priest wore a breast plate with 12 stones—what did that represent? The peoples of the earth tied to the High Priest’s heart—and what was used to tie this symbol of the people of the earth to the High Priest’s heart?

They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, **using a blue cord**, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod. Exodus 28:28

And what does the blue cord represent? **The law of love!** God’s law of love is what binds us to Him, only His design does this.

From the book *Desire of Ages*:

**The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love** revealed in Eden, **proclaimed upon Sinai**, and in the new covenant **written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God**. If we were left to follow our own inclinations, to go just where our will would lead us, we should fall into Satan's ranks and become possessors of his attributes. Therefore God confines us to His will, which is high, and noble, and elevating. He desires that we shall patiently and wisely take up the duties of service. The yoke of service Christ Himself has borne in humanity. He said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." John 6:38. Love for God, zeal for His glory, and love for fallen humanity, brought Jesus to earth to suffer and to die. This was the controlling power of His life. This principle He bids us adopt. {DA 329.3}



The false religions of the world, including false Christianity deny God's design law of love; they don't deny the 10 Commandments but they replace the 10 Commandments with an imposed view of the law—rules enacted and enforced by a ruling authority. Thus, they teach religious obligations, ceremonies, rituals, at the expense of loving people. Thus, they are represented by the Harlot with no blue thread.

## SABBATH

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Read last paragraph, "Paul's previous actions..." If you were to pick one Apostle—and we consider there were 13—the 12, minus Judas, plus Matthias who replaced Judas, and then Paul. If you were to pick one, based on the records we have, that you would say was the most active, most persistent, most determined, most aggressive in spreading the gospel which of the 13 would you suggest?

Do you think Paul's history of persecuting Christians before he was converted contributed to his passion as an Apostle? In other words, do you think that if Paul had merely converted like James or John, without having persecuted the church first, do you think he would have been just as aggressive in sharing the gospel? Or was his own disappointment with himself a motivator, something he might have felt he needed to "undo" "disprove" "overcome" "make up for" not to in some way earn salvation, but in a way that repaired or made up for the harm he caused others?

Might Paul have thought—"I know there is nothing I can do that will in any way earn my salvation, that is only through the free remedy given to me by Jesus. But, I know my previous actions turned people away from Jesus and I want to do everything I can to bring at least as many people back to Jesus as I drove away?"

## SUNDAY

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Read first paragraph, "Paul was..." Measured by the standard of his day, what kind of education did Paul receive?

Would this be equivalent to going to seminary today? And did Paul go to a seminary that would have been considered pagan or orthodox?

Did Paul's seminary training prepare him to be an Apostle of Jesus, or put obstructions in his mind to becoming an Apostle of Jesus, or neither or both? Here is a commentary from the book *Desire of Ages* regarding the quality of the schools in Christ's day:

In the days of Christ the town or city that did not provide for the religious instruction of the young was regarded as under the curse of God. Yet the **teaching had become formal. Tradition had in a great degree supplanted the Scriptures.** True education would lead the youth to "seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him." Acts 17:27. But the Jewish teachers gave their attention to **matters of ceremony. The mind was crowded with**



**material that was worthless** to the learner, and that would not be recognized in the higher school of the courts above. The **experience** which is obtained **through a personal acceptance of God's word had no place** in the educational system. Absorbed in the **round of externals**, the students found no quiet hours to spend with God. They did not hear His voice speaking to the heart. In their search after knowledge, they turned away from the Source of wisdom. The great essentials of the service of God were neglected. The **principles of the law were obscured**. That which was regarded as superior education was the **greatest hindrance** to real development. Under the training of the rabbis the powers of the youth were repressed. Their minds became cramped and narrow. {DA 69.3}

And from Friday's lesson we read, quoting from a book *Life Sketches of Paul*:

Christ had commanded his disciples to go and teach all nations; **but the previous teachings which they had received from the Jews made it difficult for them to fully comprehend the words of their Master**, and therefore they were slow to act upon them. They called themselves the children of Abraham, and regarded themselves as the heirs of divine promise. **It was not until several years after the Lord's ascension that their minds were sufficiently expanded to clearly understand the intent of Christ's words**, that they were to labor for the conversion of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. p. 38

Did God lead Israel to set up the schools of the prophets? What happened? Consider this quote regarding the advent of Christ:

**The angels from heaven did not come to the school of the prophets and sing their anthems over the Temple or synagogues**, but they went to those who were humble enough to receive the message. They sang the glad tidings of a Saviour over Bethlehem's plains while the great, the rulers, and the honorable were left in darkness because they were perfectly satisfied with their position and felt no need of a piety greater than that which they possessed. **Teachers in the schools of the prophets, the scribes and priests and rulers, were the worst persecutors of Christ**. Those who made the highest pretensions to spiritual light were the very ones who slighted and rejected and crucified Christ. {Christ Triumphant 78.4}

What about our Christians schools today and our seminaries, is it possible they could fall into the same trap? Could our Christian schools today be indoctrinating minds into traditions and views of God that actually make it harder for the students, the graduates to hear the voice of God, to understand God's principles? Is it possible that today the "worst persecutors of Christ" are theologians and religious leaders?

Now, let's not be all-or-nothing thinkers. In Christ's day, there was in the Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus—two godly men who were educated by the system. Yet, the majority of the leadership rejected Christ and instigated His crucifixion.



In Paul's case, after his conversion on the Damascus road was Paul immediately ready to be an Apostle for Jesus? What did Paul need first? He spent three years in the desert being re-educated by Jesus—why did Paul need this if he was already seminary trained? Here is one commentator's view:

Here, in the solitude of the desert, Paul had ample opportunity for quiet **study and meditation**. He calmly reviewed his past experience and made sure work of **repentance**. He sought God with all his heart, resting not until he knew for a certainty that his repentance was accepted and his sin pardoned. He longed for the assurance that Jesus would be with him in his coming ministry. **He emptied his soul of the prejudices and traditions** that had hitherto shaped his life, and **received instruction from the Source of truth. Jesus communed with him** and established him in the faith, bestowing upon him a rich measure of wisdom and grace. {*Acts of the Apostles* 125.3}

So, does this mean Christian education is a bad thing? NO! I am very thankful for my Christian education—however, it wasn't until I could throw off the false imposed law lens, the lie of penal substitution and see the truth of God as Creator and His laws as design laws that I was actually fit to write and teach. Then, with the new perspective, I have been able to access the database of Bible stories and facts and it all fell into place. So, my Christian education was a tremendous blessing, but at the same time the way it was taught to me hindered actually seeing the truth, just as Saul of Tarsus experienced.

Read second paragraph, "Paul says elsewhere..." Why is the gospel of Jesus a stumbling block to the Jews? What causes them to stumble? Is it a physical or metaphorical stumbling block? And what image does that bring to mind?

The lesson suggests the stumbling block was that Christ was hung on a tree, but didn't the Jewish leadership stumble before the crucifixion? What caused them to stumble, before the crucifixion and does Christ dying on a cross reinforce their obstacles to truth?

- How did they view Scripture?
- What law lens did they hold and practice?
- What was their understanding of sin? Do we have evidence that they believed sin was a condition of being that needed healing, or a legal problem of bad deeds that needed to be avoided, or otherwise punished?
  - Consider all their arguments with Christ about breaking the law, what was their focus?
  - What was the point of the discussion between Nicodemus and Jesus? Wasn't Nicodemus confused about the idea of being "reborn" which is describing what? A legal solution or a healing solution?
- So, what do we see in Jesus' life? Do we see legal solutions or healing ones?
- How did Jesus dying on a cross play into the Jews false understanding of reality and added to their inability to accept Christ?
  - They read the Bible declaratively instead of as evidence or a teaching too. They read it is a rule book, instead of a guide back to reality.
  - Thus the Scripture and take it as an absolute without thinking.



What do you think about the idea of someone hung on a tree being under the curse of God—does the Bible say this?

- for anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse. Dt 21:23

So, the Bible does say this—next question—is it true?

So, does this mean when people were lynched because of the color of their skin the ones being lynched were under God's curse?

So, was Jesus actually cursed by God?

Paul says the following:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." Gal 3:13

So, is this the curse of God—or does Paul say it is the curse of the law?

What law and how is it a curse and what relationship does it have to hanging on a tree?

What kind of law do you understand God's law to be?

The lie is that God's law functions no differently than human law—now under this false model, what would the curse of the law be?

- It would be broken rules require the ruling authority to inflict punishment, in this case to kill
- Thus, under the imposed law view the curse would be of God, God actually becomes angry and uses His power to inflict death—God personally inflicts the penalty, the punishment, the curse.
- Thus, in this model God is against the person hanging on the tree

In the design law model we realize that God's laws are the laws upon which life is built, and any deviation from these laws result in ruin and death. Thus to break God's law results in a curse—the curse of the law of sin and death. Consider this commentary:

Oh, that men and women would consider what is to be gained by **transgressing God's law! Under any and every circumstance, transgression is a dishonor to God and a curse to man.** 157 {Counsels for the Church 107.2}

Why is transgressing God's law a curse to man? Because it results in pain, suffering, damage, destruction, death:

- What is the curse for smoking?
- What is the curse for jabbing a pencil in your eye?



- What is the curse for cheating on your spouse—and your spouse never knows?
- What is the curse for stealing from your employer—yet not being caught?

The word curse has multiple definitions

1. the expression of a wish that misfortune, evil, doom, etc., befall a person, group, etc.
2. a formula or charm intended to cause such misfortune to another.
3. the act of reciting such a formula.
4. a profane oath; curse word.
5. an evil that has been invoked upon one.
6. the cause of evil, misfortune, or trouble.
7. something accursed.

Do you see how one's preconceived idea of law, either imposed or design law, will determine which definition they attach to the idea of a curse?

Under design law it is definition 6: the curse is the cause of evil, misfortune, or trouble. Those who hold the imposed law view say the cause is God who judicially inflicts it. We know however, the cause is the curse of the law, just as Paul says, which is pain, damage, destruction that naturally occurs when one breaks God's design law.

Thus, Christ, became sin though he knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God. 2Cor 5:21. It was in order to heal and restore, not for a legal need.

But because the Jews held to a false legal view of reality—the cross became a stumbling block to them.

## **MONDAY**

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Read first paragraph, “As Paul...” Did Jesus use coercion on Paul? Did Jesus force Paul, take away Paul's freedom, threaten Paul in some way?

No—He revealed truth to Paul that brought Paul to conviction and Paul freely chose to repent, change his heart, and accept the truth.

Do we have evidence for this?

- Did Pharaoh have miraculous evidence presented to him repeatedly, more so that Paul did? And what impact did it have on Pharaoh?
- Consider those who came to arrest Jesus, did they have the brilliance of Jesus flash before them, and also have the miracle of a restored ear? And what impact did it have on them?
- Did God use mighty power at Mt. Carmel—did the people stay loyal to God thereafter?

So, did Jesus take away Paul's freedom?



Do you see what we just did? We did not look for a declarative statement that says, “God did not take away Paul’s freedom” But we looked for evidence that after God uses such demonstrations to gain one’s attention, He still leaves people free.

This is evidence-based thinking and is much more reliable than the declarative thinking, such as “cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” and then concluding if the Bible says it we must take it as an absolute applied in all circumstances without thought. This type of non-evidence-based thinking is foundational to the penal models of salvation.

Read third paragraph, “When speaking to Saul...” What is being described here?

Why is it hard to kick against thorns? It would be similar to saying it is hard to put your hand in fire—why?

What is the lesson? What kind of law is being taught?

How does this apply to spiritual things?

When one deviates from God’s design and experiences pain from that deviation is the pain a judicial enforcement to make someone pay for their crime or a redemptive consequence to lead to repentance?

What if someone we love makes decisions that are violations of design law and are about to experience some painful consequence and we step in to prevent them from experiencing the pain—would such actions be acts of grace and mercy, or acts of harm—perhaps even cruelty?

What about a loved one with an addiction who ends up homeless because they won’t pay their bills—do we help them by giving them money? why or why not?

What did the father of the prodigal son do when his son ended up living with pigs? Why didn’t the father send his agents to buy the boy good food and put him in a hotel?

Is there **an aspect** of pain that we experience in life that is a result of our own choices and that type of pain is designed to alert us and lead us back to healthier living?

Does this mean that all painful events in life are a result of bad choices on our part or some sin we are involved in? No! Absolutely not! We can experience pain from random events in a world of sin, from human and satanic enemies. Consider the life of Job and Jesus.

## TUESDAY

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Read first paragraph, “When he realized...” Does the fact Paul asked the question indicate contrition, an expression of unconditional willingness to let Jesus guide in his life from then on?





hmmm... After Pharaoh was confronted with some of the miraculous plague that exposed the impotence of an Egyptian god, Pharaoh said to Moses:

“This time I have sinned; the Lord is in the right, and my people and I are in the wrong. <sup>28</sup>Pray to the Lord! We have had enough of this thunder and hail! I promise to let you go; you don’t have to stay here any longer.” Ex 9:27,28

Did Pharaoh’s statement “indicate contrition, an expression of unconditional willingness to let God guide in his life from then on?”

I don’t find Paul asking the question to be evidence of his contrition and trust in Jesus, but the application of the truth and doing what he was instructed to do after he asked the question that was the evidence.

## WEDNESDAY

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After Paul’s conversion did Paul become quickly accepted as a leader of the new church?

Did Paul have opposition within the church community to his leadership? Why?

Paul had a reputation—was Paul’s reputation of being an enemy of the church reasonable for church members to hold?

Did it take time for Paul to develop a new reputation, for his ministry to become accepted?

Why? Are there lessons for us today?

In addition to Paul’s need to be re-educated by Christ, could the need of the church to move past Paul’s bad reputation and have a cooling off period also be a reason for Paul’s 3 years in the desert?

If we have people who oppose us in the church, what lesson can we take from Paul?

Present the truth in love, leaving people free and go where God opens doors, trusting God with the outcomes!

## THURSDAY

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Read third paragraph, “Such resistance...” Was faith in God ever supposed to be based upon ceremonies? Or were ceremonies designed to express faith, and to teach an object lesson of a larger reality?

What validity did the OT sacrificial system ever have?



What was it valid for?

Was the OT sacrificial system, instituted by God through angels and Moses, ever a valid means of salvation? In other words, could people be saved by the animal sacrifices?

This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. <sup>10</sup> They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order. Heb 9:9-10

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. <sup>2</sup> If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. <sup>3</sup> But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, <sup>4</sup> because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Heb 10:1-4

So, were the ceremonies, the sacrifices ever a valid means of salvation? Then what were they valid to do? To teach the real plan of salvation.

What made them invalid? When they were used to teach paganism—which is what? The idea that blood sacrifice is necessary to pay a legal penalty or assuage wrath, or appease a god, or in any way to do something to the deity.

Read bottom paragraph, “During the fifteen days...” What kind of god does a person worship if they will kill people who don’t believe like they do?

Do you realize that the god worshipped by those Jews who were seeking to kill Christians is the same god worshipped by:

- the Taliban who kill people who don’t believe as they do
- the Catholics of the Dark Ages who burned people at the stake
- the Puritans who burned so-called witches
- the Protestants who murdered Catholics
- the Hindus who kill Muslims

Only the true God leads people to love your enemies and who leaves people free to have a different view. Why? Because of design law—we don’t need to kill people who refuse remedy for a terminal condition.

The bottom line lie in all these false systems is a god who has imposed law and that justice requires the infliction of death upon the wrongdoer.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Check our website for new chapters of *The Remedy* the Psalms will be going up slowly as they are completed and edited. When an entire book of the Old Testament is complete then it will be added to the app and when you update the app you will get the new book. Thank you for your prayers and support as I work on this project.



**The Remedy APP:** Thanks to all of you, our supporters, The Remedy App is now available for free for Android and Apple devices but *The Remedy* is now available on a multi-Bible app. My Bible App by developer Denys Dolganenko at mybible.zone This app has hundreds of resources available, can compare different Bible versions on the same screen and it is FREE! The Icon for the My Bible App at left.

**NEW TV PROGRAM: Each Tuesday watch our new TV Program—The Dr. Tim Jennings Show on WBTN.TV Network.** God to TimJenningsMD.com for more info.

**New Video Blogs**—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Thursday.

**September 14,15, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

**September 27-29, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Mega National Conference of the American Association of Christian Counselors in Dallas, TX

**September 30-Oct 2, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

**October 19, 20, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar at Camelback SDA church, in Phoenix, AZ.

**November 9,10 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

**December 1, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing an Aging Brain seminar in Dallas, TX. Organized by the Arlington SDA church.

**January 4-6, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking for the Florida Conference of SDA Women's Convention in Orlando, FL.

**February 2-3, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

*In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church*  
**Mental Health Matters** *Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing*

### **The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018**

What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia.

### **Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018**

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.



**The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018**

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

**Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018**

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

**The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018**

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!