



2019 Q3 The Least of These: Lesson 6 Worship the Creator

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

What does the title of the lesson bring to mind?

What does it mean to worship the Creator?

What would you say is the core, absolute, definable difference between the Creator and all false gods?

Is it the Sabbath? Did the Jews who crucified Christ worship the true God? Did they have the Sabbath? So, Sabbath observance doesn't differentiate those who worship the Creator from those who worship a false god—what does?

What can the Creator do that no other being can do? Create reality—space, time, matter, energy, life—and what does creation operate upon? Design laws, the laws of physics, health, the moral laws.

Created beings cannot do this, thus they always impose rules and call them laws and use coercion to inflict punishment for disobedience.

So, if you want to see the difference between Creator worship and false-god worship look to the laws of God versus the laws of the false gods and what methods are employed in how they govern.

When one breaks a design law what does justice require God to do? Provide remedy to heal and save, lest if God does nothing the law-breaker dies from breaking the law upon which life is constructed.

When one breaks an imposed law what does justice require the false god to do? To inflict punishment—so we can determine whether someone is worshipping the Creator or has a false god concept infecting their view of God by whether they teach that God, in order to be just, must inflict punishment.

While God has desired to teach men that from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself, the archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God as one who delights in their destruction. Thus the sacrifices and the ordinances designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God. {PK 685.2}

How many religions of the world teach that their god requires some offering or sacrifice be brought to the god?



In Christianity is it ever taught that God requires an offering of a sinless human sacrifice to propitiate His wrath? Yes, but the big distinction that the legal theologians make is they claim that what makes this blood payment of Jesus “Christian” and not pagan is that God Himself provides the sacrifice to propitiate Himself, whereas the pagan gods require the worshipper to bring the sacrifice.

This is a distinction without merit as both gods are gods that function on imposed law and inflict pain, suffering and death upon the sinner if not acted upon by an intermediary to offer something to the god to assuage wrath and anger.

So, the SDA church began as a group of Christians from a variety of different denominational backgrounds which came together to move people away from worshipping pagan gods and imperial/imposed god-concepts to worship the Creator—Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and fountains of water.

EGW wrote:

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}

And what did Baal require? Appeasement, offering brought to assuage wrath, because offense to the god required the god inflict punishment. This is Satan’s lie from the beginning.

Let’s examine a long quote and as we go through we will think about each section and ask what it means and whether you agree or disagree:

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.** [What kind of law is Satan describing? A law which created beings can make, a system of rules that require oversight and coercive enforcement. This is Satan’s lie about God’s law and as we look through history we see this repeats itself over and over again.] ...**God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner.** [What is the basis of this allegation? What kind of justice is this? What level of thinking? What law is this based upon? Again this is imposed law, and thus the allegation is that to not impose punishment is to not uphold the law. However, when we understand Design law, we realize that justice is not about punishment, but restoring or healing people back to harmony with the design-law.] {DA 761.4}



But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. [Different position how? Different legal position? Or different position in objective reality? Note how] Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. **There was no more that God could do to save him.** [Why? Was Jesus unwilling to give His life for Lucifer? Was Jesus unwilling to pay a "legal penalty"? Did God love Lucifer less than humans? Was God playing favorites? No! No! It was because Lucifer had destroyed in himself the capacity to respond to truth and love. He had seen, understood, and participated in God's love and rejected it. Thus he changed himself, hardened his own heart and corrupted his character. This again, is design law. Just the same way Pharaoh hardened his heart—when truth is presented a person must decide to accept or reject it, when we reject truth we harden, when more truth comes we have an opportunity to repent and be healed, but it requires humbling oneself and acknowledging where the lie was believed. If we refuse and instead reject the additional truth than we harden ourselves more until at some point we destroy the ability to respond to love and truth. This is what Lucifer did. Adam and Eve, while deceived, while infected with fear and selfishness, had not rejected truth that would win them to repentance and had not destroyed within them the faculties capable of responding to truth.] But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. **The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** [What is it man needs? Is it a legal penalty paid? No, that is what is needed if one is operating under Satan's false view of God's law. But when we understand the truth we need to be set right in heart and mind with God, meaning we need the lies removed and truth to win us to trust and love restored within the heart by the indwelling Spirit of God!] {DA 761.5}

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; **but mercy does not set aside justice.** [What does this mean? Do we view justice through imposed law or design law? What difference does it make?] **The law reveals the attributes of God's character, [which is what?]** and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. [Why? For the same reason the law of respiration cannot be changed to meet a person drowning. God's law is the protocol upon which life is actually constructed to operate.] God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. **"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."** 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1} [Which means that Christ was carrying out God's purpose to fix what sin did to humanity, set humanity back into harmony with God's law—design! Notice the next description about justice.]

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. **But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. [Notice this is Christ, as a human, using human



abilities, developing a perfect human character and then healing humans back to this perfect state. This is literal not metaphorical.] **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2} [If you see someone drowning, is it right and just to pull them from the water and administer CPR to revive them? What law are you operating under? Why, if you want them to live, must you do this? This is God's justice and what He accomplished for us through Christ.]

God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10. {DA 762.3} [How does Satan attempt to divorce mercy from justice? By an imposed law construct, which results in a split Godhead in which Christ in mercy dies to pay a legal penalty for our sins to a wrathful father who is the administrator of just punishments. Thus, justice is separated from mercy in the way we perceive and describe God—leading to theologies in which Jesus must protect us from the Father. 1. Jesus pleads His blood to the Father. 2. Jesus covers us with His blood so the Father can't see us. 3. Jesus applies His blood to our record books so the Father can't punish us for our bad deeds. 4. Jesus is our heavenly attorney to argue our case before the Father to protect us from His judgment and punishment. 5 Jesus took our place and was executed by His Father on the cross to pay for our sins. All of this is the divorcing of mercy from truth and justice by created a false caricature of the Godhead.]

By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan's charges were refuted. [How? What was the just or right thing for God to do? Fix the problem, which was accomplished through Christ developing a perfect character. What charges of Satan were refuted? That every sin must meet its punishment, that God's transgressing God's law requires punishment. No, these lies were refuted at the Cross. But Satan still gets legal theologians to teach the lie when they teach that all sins, past, present, future were put on Christ and punished by God at the Cross.] God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love. {DA 762.4}

Another deception was now to be brought forward. [History now repeats itself] Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice, **that the death of Christ abrogated the Father's law.** [What kind of law can be rescinded, changed, or abrogated? Imposed law, the kind of laws created beings make. Design law cannot be changed or abrogated. Thus Satan's allegations that began in heaven that God's law requires punishment, i.e. imposed law, now repeats itself and is accepted by the vast majority of humans, including Christians.] Had it been possible for the law to be changed or abrogated, then Christ need not have died... **It was because the law was changeless, because man could be saved only through obedience to its precepts, that Jesus was lifted up on the cross.** [Why? Because the law is the protocol of life, and only in harmony



with it is there salvation, or healing!] **Yet the very means by which Christ established the law Satan represented as destroying it.**[How? Twofold, one by declaring the law is no longer binding, which is only possible if the law were imposed rules. But, also, amongst those who claim the law is still binding, by tricking them into accepting the imposed construct, thus they claim loyalty to God's law and all the commandments, while they present it as imposed rules requiring God to inflict punishment. They, thereby misrepresent God, the Cross and God's law and ultimately practice Satan's methods of coercion as they will one day force other to worship as they do.] **Here will come the last conflict of the great controversy between Christ and Satan...** [This is where we are today in Christianity, fighting a battle over God's law, not which day of worship, but which law—imposed or Design law. We are to call people back to worship Him who made the heavens... to Designer worship.] {DA 762.5}

By substituting human law for God's law, Satan will seek to control the world... [How? Not simply by a change in rules, but a change in the entire idea of law from the law the Creator builds life upon, to imposed rules so that Christians will seek to take control of governments and enforce their beliefs upon others. Notice the next paragraph...] {DA 763.1}

Men will surely set up their laws to counterwork the laws of God. They will seek to compel the consciences of others, and in their zeal to enforce these laws they will oppress their fellow men. [Here we have it—the use of compelling power, which is always used in imposed law systems. This is how Christianity presents God today. That God, in order to be just, must punish sin, just as Satan declared in heaven, thus history repeats itself.] {DA 763.2}

The warfare against God's law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion. {DA 763.3} [Notice the paragraph, it is about developing character, character of love like Jesus, in which we sacrifice ourselves for others, present truth in love and leave others free. Or, character like the beast, where we use compelling power to coerce conformity! This is the test we all must face.]

Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be *cut off*. Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch... [Why? Mercy—God would not use His power to keep people in a place of torment, but grant them their choice to be separate from Him, the only source of life.] {DA 763.4}

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. [This is design law, not imposed penalties!] He is "alienated from the life of God." Christ says, "All they that hate Me love death." Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. **God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive**



the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that **His very presence is to them a consuming fire.** The glory of Him who is love will destroy them. {DA 764.1}

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. [What did angels not understand? God's law as design law, as an outworking of His character of love. They were confused by Satan's lies that God's law functions like human law. Thus history repeats itself as humans suffer the same confusion.] Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; **but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed,** to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe. [This is how many Christians today, including in our own church, view things; they fail to understand the truth of God's law and instead teach the same distortion that God must kill the wicked, rather than the truth that unremedied sin itself results in death!] {DA 764.2}

But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, **the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable.** Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. {DA 764.3}

And how will organizations, including churches, function if they embrace the imperial/imposed law method? They will use compelling power to coerce others. We can see these principles in the governments of the world, we see them in the church of the Dark Ages, and we must be on guard to prevent them from taking root in our church today. Consider this quote:

I was shown God's people waiting for some change to take place,--a compelling power to take hold of them. But they will be disappointed, for they are wrong. They must act; they must take hold of the work themselves, and earnestly cry to God for a true knowledge of themselves. The scenes which are passing before us are of sufficient magnitude to cause us to arouse, and urge the truth home to the hearts of all who will listen. The harvest of the earth is nearly ripe.--Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 261. {ChS 43.3}

Men are educated to look to men, and to depend on men. One man, by virtue of his position, exercises authority over others as if they were to be led by lines, this way and that, as dumb animals. God has not directed in this way. God is our chief, God is our instructor, and to him we must look. We must ask the Holy Spirit's guidance, and expect to be led and controlled by it. **The church organization is to be respected, but it is not to be made in any way a galling yoke. Men are not to assume the prerogative of God, and think to rule and coerce and oppress the souls of God's purchased possessions.** All heaven is indignant at what men, with complacency, will do to their fellow men, claiming at the same time to be representatives of Jesus Christ. They too often represent the spirit and character of Satan. {The Paulson Collection 399.4}



Do we have clarity on what it means to worship the Creator verses all false gods?

This battle between the two views of God's law has been going on since Satan started his war in heaven, all through human history. And in the SDA church in 1888 when the Holy Spirit brought the righteousness by faith message—the message that when we trust God we become the righteousness of God, just as Scripture says in 2Cor 5:21. This message was the advancing of design law, the worship of the Creator God, but it was rejected by the legal/penal theologians who have since that day taught that we do not become the righteousness of God, but are declared to be righteous even though we are not.

But, there are many voices throughout Christianity and within the SDA church who are carrying forward the truth about God. Pastor Alex Golovenko sent me this quote out of the SDA Elder's Handbook, published in 2013:

“The good news of the Gospel is that God is love. This news was in stark contrast to the pagan appeasement religions of Jesus’ time, as well as to legalistic misrepresentations of God. Even today, while many know the good news of Christ’s abundant grace, there remains a distorted image of God as a demanding tyrant and judge. The message of Jesus is—and was—that God is love, His law is love, and His grace is love. In recognition of this attribute of God’s character, the church experiences a revival of godliness. We do what we do not to earn God’s favor by merit, but because He has bestowed it upon us already.”¹

SUNDAY

The first paragraph references the Commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Why? Why did God give them this law? Because of a design law, the law of worship—we become like what we admire and worship—by beholding we are changed.

We are the highest created beings on planet earth and there is nothing on earth we can worship that will advance or develop us, anything we worship on earth degrades us. So God says to worship Him because He wants us to grow to the highest pinnacles of development possible.

Romans 1 Paul describes this when he writes that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and preferred images made with their own hands and their minds became darkened depraved and futile.

We see the same thing in the OT:

But their idols are silver and gold,
made by the hands of men.
⁵ They have mouths, but cannot speak,
eyes, but they cannot see;

¹ Elders Handbook. (2013) p.117.



⁶ they have ears, but cannot hear,
noses, but they cannot smell;
⁷ they have hands, but cannot feel,
feet, but they cannot walk;
nor can they utter a sound with their throats.

⁸ **Those who make them will be like them,
and so will all who trust in them.** Ps 115:4-8 NIV84

The lesson talks about how Israel fell into idolatry over and over again—what about when Jesus came upon the earth? Have you ever wondered why Jesus waited so long into human history to come the first time? What was finally achieved by the time Jesus came? That the people given the script, the blueprint, were finally *appearing* to keep it. From an external behavioral perspective they were following the blueprint from God, no longer worshipping idols.

And how did they treat Jesus? And what would the angels and onlooking universe and us learn by seeing this? It isn't about following a script of religious rules, but about healing the heart.

Man looks on the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the heart! 1Sam 16:7

How is this truth another evidence of the tension between imposed law versus design law?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Throughout the Bible...” Why? Why does God give us reasons to worship Him?

What does God want from us? Our love, trust, loyalty, devotion—how can these be obtained? Can you get this with threats of punishment?

So what are the reasons we have to worship God?

Read fourth paragraph, “God’s justice is...” How do you describe God’s justice? How do we define it? What is the measure of it? How is God’s justice different than human justice?

What law lens do you see justice through?

What questions come to mind that seem to make God’s justice hard to understand?

Read last paragraph, “Second, God’s justice...” Is being just or dispensing justice or acting justly different in any measurable way from doing right, dispensing righteousness or acting rightly?

What do you think the lesson is trying to say by separating justice and righteousness?



Hebrews 5 says that infant milk is repentance from acts that lead to death, in other words focusing on the dos and don'ts and those at such a state are not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness—why not?

What is the teaching about righteousness that the penal legal camp is not acquainted with? Righteousness by faith, 2Cor 5:21, we become the righteousness of God. But the penal legal camp teaches we don't become righteous, we are declared to be righteous even though we are not!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "During the better times..." Is there a relationship with working hard to be religious and not actually being on God's team?

What of this quote:

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for his fellow men. A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. **The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies.** {MB 123.1}

The Pharisees were of this class. They came forth from their religious services, not humbled with a sense of their own weakness, not grateful for the great privileges that God had given them. They came forth filled with spiritual pride, and their theme was, "Myself, my feelings, my knowledge, my ways." Their own attainments became the standard by which they judged others. Putting on the robes of self-dignity, they mounted the judgment seat to criticize and condemn. {MB 123.2}

What is the underlying problem here? It is substituting design law with imperial law which leads to rule oriented thinking—let's examine this further in Wednesday lesson.

WEDNESDAY

The titled for the day's lesson is The Way to Worship.

What is the result of worship? We become like the God we worship and thus the result of true worship is we become like the true God in how we live, how we relate toward others, which results in the methods we practice in society.



So, we do justice to the poor and the needy—which is what? It seeks to restore them to autonomy, to people of self-sufficiency, to give them opportunity for growth, development, advancement as human beings and in particular into godliness of character.

What do we not do? We do not add burdens or obstacles to people's lives that make it harder for them, Jesus said:

“And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them. Luke 11:46 NIV84

What is Jesus criticizing? He is NOT criticizing living in harmony with design law. He is criticizing covering over design law with imperialism and lists of rules, even if intended to help live in harmony with design law, because once this focus occurs it obscures the truth about God and obstructs trust in God.

From the book *Halakhah: The Rabbinical Idea of Law*:

Throughout Deuteronomy the people are implored “to follow the mitzvah which God has commanded”—that is, the whole of God's instructions. In the hands of the rabbis, however, the term gains a more **concrete** meaning: mitzvah is a particular instance of halakhic-legal obligation. The rabbis held that the Torah is comprised of 613 individual *mitzvah*, each a foundational source of the law. p. 18

We can see the rabbis' halakhic consciousness at work in their analysis of the Torah's first mitzvah. The opening chapter in Genesis records, “God blessed [Adam and Eve] and said to them ‘Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it.’” (1:28) ON its face, this instruction does not explain what (if any) specific action is called for. Indeed, it has been reasonably interpreted as a poetic description of things to come, or a charge or blessing to humankind generally. The rabbis, however, understand it as a specific mitzvah that generates a legal duty incumbent [upon] ever individual (male) Jew. To satisfy the legal requirement, the Mishnah rules that each male must sire at least two children. The Mishnah then presents a debate: in one view (held by students of the first-century mishnaic sage, Shammai), two male children are required; in the other (held by students of Shammai's frequent interlocutor, Hillel), the requirement is for one male and one female (m.Yevamot 6:6)... p. 19

Having assumed a legal framework, the Talmud—an elaborate commentary on the Mishnah compiled in the centuries following the Mishnah's dissemination—investigates numerous derivative questions. What happens if the children themselves cannot reproduce—do they “count” toward fulfilling the halakhic obligation? What if the children die—must the father have more? If the deceased children lived long enough to have children of their own, do these grandchildren count in lieu of the deceased parents (b.Yevamot 63a)? p. 19

What if the child is the product of an illicit relationship (e.g., incest or adultery)? What in if the children develop reproductive deficiencies? p. 20



Another example: though the biblical text prohibits *melakhah*—typically translated as “work” or “labor”—on Shabbat, it provides limited guidance as to what exactly this phrase means. The Mishnah, for its part, presents thirty-nine base categories of prohibited activities, one of which is writing (m.Shabbat 12:1-6). Here we learn that while a person who writes only one letter is exempt, one who writes two letters is liable for violating Shabbat. Use of ink, dye, or permanent liquids generates liability; while colored water or etching in the dirt do not. Writing with the hand is a problem; writing with the foot, mouth, or elbow is not. Cases even more unusual than these are also taken under consideration, for example writing one letter on the ceiling and another on the floor, or two single letters on separate pieces of paper that are later put together. In the modern era, halakhists discussed whether it is permitted to piece together a puzzle on Shabbat (potentially problematic since it creates an intelligible picture) or to play Scrabble (generally okay, but in the Deluxe Edition the board’s grooves hold the letters in place more permanently and may thereby produce a “writing”).

Do you see, regardless of the sincerity of the people involved, such a focus on legalism, on the right rules, on imperial law, results in obstructing God’s plan, it turns the mind to self and away from God and His design law for life?

How do church leaders do this?

Do we do this with behaviorally focused religion rather than heart transforming truth?

What about Sabbath keeping rules, do we add burdens to people’s lives increasing guilt and making it harder for people to experience God’s healing in their lives?

Why is the Sabbath to be called a delight? Can you force people to enjoy things? So what kind of law is being described?

It is all about heart attitude and heart change, which is design law, healing!

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “As we will see...” Was it only Jesus that faced criticism from religious leaders, or has that been true throughout human history?

- Who opposed Moses? Aaron and Miriam
- Who opposed Elijah?
- Who opposed the Apostles?
- Who opposed the Reformers?
- What about today?

Why do religious leaders so often find themselves working against God and God’s people?



Is the type of law they operate upon involved?

When you believe God's law is imposed/imperial then what must one do with law-breakers? Inflict punishment, set rules, enforce compliance...but when God's law is design law, we educate and set healthy boundaries, but we leave people free and reap the results.

The lesson points us to Matthew 23, let's read it from *The Remedy*:

This is the chapter in which Jesus gives a long list of woes—how is this often heard? Have you ever heard it as a long list of threats from God—woe to you because one day God will make you pay for the wrongs you have done? That way of hearing the passage comes from the imperial law lens. *The Remedy* is through design law, see if you notice the difference:

Then Jesus said to the people and to his disciples: ² "The theology professors, church lawyers and pastors sit in the instructor's seat, like Moses, and know the history,³ so listen carefully to all they teach. But think for yourselves and don't follow their example, for they don't understand the true meaning of what they teach, as evidenced by their failure to live in harmony with it.⁴ They create man-made rules that discourage, exhaust and weigh people down with religious ritual, fear, and guilt. They control people this way and refuse to relieve these false burdens.

⁵ "All their actions are designed for effect—to be seen—and they yearn to create a sense of admiration and respect for themselves: They make prayer beads and carry them for display, and wear special clothing meant to mark them as distinct;⁶ they love to be recognized and honored wherever they go, and especially they seek the highest exaltation in church.⁷ They also love any attention they can get when people stop them in the shops or restaurants and call them Professor, Doctor, or Pastor.

⁸ "But don't let people idolize you, for you are all equals—learning the truth from the same Teacher.⁹ And be sure you don't surrender your thinking to religious leaders—like young children do to their fathers—for you have one Father in heaven and you must surrender yourselves only to him.¹⁰ Nor are you to claim to be the final authority on truth—determining what is right and wrong—like teachers are to their students, for you have the One true Teacher, the Messiah.¹¹ So those who are truly the greatest will give the most of themselves in helping others.¹² For whoever promotes self will destroy self, but whoever humbles self will experience healing and exaltation.

¹³ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! Your false teachings obstruct people from being healed and entering God's kingdom of love. You certainly are not healed and do not enter into salvation, but worse still, you actively work to prevent others, who want to be saved, from being healed.¹⁴ Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You con widows from their homes, yet



you make public displays of praying long prayers. Unhealed you choose to remain! Your suffering will be most severe.

¹⁵ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You go around the world trying to convert one person, and when you do, you indoctrinate them so deeply into your false penal system that they become twice as much the child of lies and selfishness as you are.

¹⁶ "Misery is yours, you irrational and unthinking teachers! Unbelievably, you say: 'If anyone swears by the temple, it doesn't count; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, then they are bound by the oath.'¹⁷ You make no sense at all! Think about it: Which is truly most important—the gold, or the temple that makes the gold holy?¹⁸ Another of your sayings is: 'If anyone swears by the altar, it doesn't count; but if anyone swears by the gift on the altar then they are bound by the oath.'¹⁹ You don't understand the simplest truths! Think about it: Which is truly most important—the gift, or the altar that makes the gift holy?²⁰ Don't you get it? The one who swears by the altar swears by it and everything on it.²¹ And whoever swears by the temple, swears by it and by the One whose dwelling place it is.²² And oaths sworn before heaven are promises made before God's throne; and the One who sits on it knows the true intent of the heart.

²³ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You keep rules, such as proudly paying a pre-tax tithe and even giving a tenth of the herbs in your garden, but you fail to do what actually matters—to live in harmony with God's Law, which is his design for life. You fail to 'do what is right because it is right.' You are not merciful but judgmental and critical, and you cannot be trusted to protect those struggling with sin. You should have lived lives of love for others, without neglecting the simple instructions of God.²⁴ You are truly irrational and unthinking teachers! You are so focused on keeping the rules—such as dietary laws—that you fail to understand that their purpose is to promote health. You're so confused that you actually think it would be a virtue to die of starvation rather than eat something not on the 'approved' list.

²⁵ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You work so hard to make yourselves look good on the outside, but the inside—the heart—is full of selfishness, arrogance, and greed.²⁶ You truly don't understand anything about God's kingdom! The mind, the character, the heart—they all must be cleansed first, and then the outside will also be clean.

²⁷ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You are like highly polished burial vaults: they look beautiful on the outside, but inside are nothing but the bones of the dead, and everything that defiles.²⁸ You are just like that. On the outside you appear to people as good and righteous, but on the inside you are full of lies, selfishness, and evil. You are great counterfeits!



²⁹ "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You go to great lengths to give praise and honor to God's spokespersons and church leaders of the past.³⁰ You say, 'If we would have lived back then, we would never have rejected God's spokespersons or joined those who killed them.'³¹ By such claims you condemn yourselves, because you acknowledge such actions are wrong, yet by your actions today you reveal you are the true descendants of those who murdered God's spokespersons. You're just like them³² and your sins pile on top of the sins of your forefathers!

³³ "You slippery serpents! You brood of venomous vipers! You think you can cure yourselves with your own snake oil?³⁴ It's because of your false remedy—your penal legal trickery—that I am sending my spokespersons, instructors and Bible scholars, some of whom you will attack, kill, and crucify; others you will beat—some physically, some verbally—right in church, running them out of town with beatings and the most vicious gossip.³⁵ The pure and holy lives that have been sacrificed through history—from Abel, all the way through to Zechariah the son of Berekiah, who was murdered right in church, at the altar—testify the truth to you.³⁶ But the sad truth is that this generation will reject all this evidence.

³⁷ "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you sick and hard-hearted people who have rejected the Remedy, killed God's spokespersons, and stoned those sent to you with the cure! How my heart has longed to pull you to safety, like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me.³⁸ Look around: I leave your house to you abandoned without Remedy, and infected without cure.³⁹ For I tell you plainly, when you see me next, you will say: 'He is the One sent by God to reveal God's true character and provide the Remedy.'"

FRIDAY

Discuss questions 1 and 3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!! January 17-19, 2020, in Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport) we will have a Come and Reason Ministries: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

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.

August 9, 10, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Akron, OH, SDA Church.

September 13,14, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Gentlebrook Intermediary Care Facility, Hartville, OH.

September 21, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown Delaware.

October 9-12, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

November 15-17, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

January 17-19, 2020: The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See events.comeandreason.com for more details and to sign up.