

2020 1Q Daniel: Lesson 13

From Dust to Stars

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read memory version, “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.” (Daniel 12:3 NKJV)

What does the text mean?

What does it mean that the wise will shine like the brightness of the firmament?

Jesus is called the light of the world—light is a metaphor for truth, so what wisdom would be the wisdom that shines bright? Would it be the wisdom about God—His character, methods, principles and government? Would it be the wisdom about His design laws?

What about the idea that the righteous will be like stars forever?

When Lucifer rebelled, he wanted to set himself up above the stars of God:

For you have said in your heart:
^mI will ascend into heaven,
ⁿI will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the ^omount of the congregation
^pOn the farthest sides of the north;
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
^qI will be like the Most High.’ Isaiah 14:13,14

What might this indicate? Did Lucifer want only to rise higher than suns? Or higher than other intelligent beings, to rule over them?

Stars are bodies that give light in the darkness—thus they are metaphors for people of light, people who shine the truth in their lives, who live God’s principles in a world promoting the darkness of imperialism.

^m Ezek. 28:2; Matt. 11:23

ⁿ Dan. 8:10; 2 Thess. 2:4

^o Ezek. 28:14

^p Ps. 48:2

^q Is. 47:8; 2 Thess. 2:4

Consider these historic quotes—what do you think?

Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. [what is Baal worship?] **Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people.** In heathen Africa, in the Catholic lands of Europe and of South America, in China, in India, in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, **God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law.**—Prophets and Kings, 188, 189. [what law?]

Christ dispatches His messengers to every part of His dominion to communicate His will to His servants. He walks in the midst of His churches. He desires to sanctify, elevate, and ennable His followers. The influence of those who believe in Him will be in the world a savor of life unto life. **Christ holds the stars in His right hand, and it is His purpose to let His light shine forth through them to the world. Thus He desires to prepare His people for higher service in the church above.** He has given us a great work to do. Let us do it faithfully. Let us show forth in our lives what divine grace can do for humanity. CCh 98.3

In order to shine for God do we need to know the truth about God? Would this include the truth about God's design laws and methods?

SUNDAY

The focus of the lesson is on Michael—the question—who is Michael?

The Jehovah Witnesses teach that Michael is Jesus AND that Michael is a created being, not fully God.

Many Christian groups believe Michael is merely an archangel, no different than Gabriel—a created being—and reject the idea that Michael is Jesus.

There is a third option, that Michael is Jesus in His pre-incarnate form and that Jesus/Michael is fully God, pre-existent, with life original, unborrowed underived.

Let's examine what the Bible says and see which view is most consistent with the Bible texts?

God is infinite and lives in “unapproachable light.” 1Timothy 6:16

- Unapproachable by whom?
- Why?
- So, if God wants the closest intimacy with His creatures, what must happen?
- A member of the Godhead must leave infinity and enter linear existence

- Who is the member of the Godhead that is the go-between, the mediator, the intercessor, Jacob's ladder, the vine, the way, the gate?

Did Jesus become the connecting link between God and His creation only after sin or did God, Jesus, interact with His created beings on their level before sin?

Exodus 3:2-6 and Acts 7:30-38:

the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up." When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, **God called to him from within the bush**, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then he said, "**I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.**" At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

Judges 13:16-22:

The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, [Who brought Israel out of Egypt? Who promised the land to Abraham? Who made the covenant that He will never break? Yet, the Bible describes this Being as the angel of the Lord...note who Manoah and his wife say this is at the end...] Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, "What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?"

He replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding." [What do you think this means? Why didn't He say "Gabriel" or "Michael" if just an angel? What does a name represent in the Bible? Character, and God is infinite, so His name would represent His infinite self and is beyond finite being's understanding—does the Bible reveal anywhere that Jesus is in fact the one with a name beyond understanding? "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. **He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.**" (Rev 19:11,12)] Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched: As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground. When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD.

"We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "**We have seen God!**"

So, far do we have Biblical evidence that the term “angel of the Lord” can refer to Jesus? But what about Michael—is Michael actually Jesus in His pre-incarnate form or just another angel?

Jesus said,

“I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the **dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live...** Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all **who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out...**” John 5:28

According to Jesus whose voice raises the dead? His voice!

For the **Lord** himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the **voice of the archangel** and with the trumpet call of God, and the **dead in Christ will rise first.**

1Thessalonians 4:16

But even the **archangel Michael**, when he was disputing with the devil **about the body of Moses**, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Jude 9

In Daniel 10:21, Gabriel talking to Daniel, refers to Michael as “**your** prince” and in Daniel 12:1 He is called the great prince.

Who is the prince of heaven who becomes a human prince, the King of the Jews and ultimately the King of kings?

So, can we make a case that Michael, which means “who is like God?” is actually Jesus in His pre-incarnate form? But we must always ensure that we insist that Jesus/Michael is fully God, pre-existent, with life original, unborrowed, underived.

The lesson points out the Michael acts as a military leader to protect His people.

According to the Bible what kind of war are we in? 2Cor 10:3-5—this is a war for our hearts and minds and God’s weapons demolish Satan’s strongholds—what are Satan’s strongholds? Lies, fear and selfishness, and coercion in the minds and hearts of people—what demolishes lies? Truth, what demolishes fear and selfishness? Love, what demolishes a willingness to control and coerce others? Freedom and love grows!

Jesus said that He is the truth, He is the bread of heaven, the Word made flesh. It is only through the truth Jesus brings that lies are dispelled and we are won to trust and then it is through receiving Jesus into our hearts that we are healed from fear and selfishness to love.

So, yes, Michael leads the forces of truth, love and freedom to war against the forces of lies, selfishness and coercion to save all who will trust Him.

Read last paragraph, “Second, the verb...” What law lens is this described through?

If we acknowledge that “stand” in this verse connotes the idea of intercession—then at this time in history Jesus stands up for and intercedes for His people—what do we understand this to mean through design law?

We are in a war—what kind of war? A war of ideas; truth waging against lies for our minds.

The lesson refers us to Daniel 7, and in Daniel 7 a little horn power is waging war and winning against the saints until God makes an intervention, until some intercession happens and the saints come to possess the kingdom. This is describing what Daniel 12 describes. Remember Daniel 11/12 are another rendition of these global prophecies already told multiple times. So, Daniel 12 describes Michael standing up to intercede and deliver His people.

According to Daniel 7 as the little horn is waging war and winning what does the Ancient of Days intercede and do that changes the course of the war, that causes God’s people to break free? He gives judgment to the saints and then they come to possess the kingdom. (verses 21, 22)

According to Jesus where to we find the kingdom of God?

The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you. Luke 17:20-21 NIV84

This is the same process as described in 2Thes 2 when the man of sin sets himself up in God’s temple proclaiming himself to be God. What temple? The Spirit temple, thus when the man of sin displaces God in the minds of people and sets up a Satanic caricature of God in the minds of people, Michael the prince intercedes; He stands up, He gives judgment, discernment ability to the saints—how? By giving of Himself—the truth He revealed about God and the truth destroys the lies and wins us to trust and our sanctuaries are cleansed from fear and selfishness as we trust in Jesus. We come to possess the kingdom—the kingdom of love and truth—first in our hearts, minds, characters and then when Jesus comes physically.

Do we see this as a legal process or a healing process? What law lens do we use?

I thought it might be helpful to take some quotes often used by those who insist God’s law functions like human law and therefore promote a penal legal theology, and demonstrate that such quotes don’t actually mean what they say:

Jesus will appear as their advocate, to plead in their behalf before God. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” 1 John 2:1. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 9:24; 7:25. Christ In His Sanctuary 176.2 [What law lens do you read this

through? Do you bring other Bible texts to bear? Do we include Jesus speaking to His Apostles when He said “I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you...”(John 16:26,27 NIV84)? Do you include Romans 8:31-34: “If **God is for us**, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? **It is God who justifies**. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.” NIV84. Do you hear intercession? And who is interceding for us? Jesus is *also* interceding in addition to who? God! So Jesus and God are in heaven interceding for us. So, putting the Bible together we have Jesus *along with the Father as our advocate*. Is this how you read the quote above? Why or why not? Are we so infected with the legal lie that we misread these quotes to present Satan’s distorted view of God?

As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. [What law lens? For what purpose? Legal judicial decision making or diagnosis, triage and remedial action?] Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. **Names are accepted, names rejected.** [What do names represent in the Bible? Character, what causes some characters to be accepted and some to be rejected? Is it that some people have worked hard and perfected their own characters and others haven’t? Or is it that some have trusted Jesus and opened their hearts/minds to Him for Him to recreate in them His character?] When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, **unrepented of** and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God’s remembrance. [What law lens to you read this through? If we use the human law lens then this is about historical deeds, judicial findings and expunging legal rights ultimately with execution for the wicked. But if we understand design law and that the books have the characters of people recorded therein, then we realize that sins remaining in the record “unrepented of” mean that these are sins remaining in the character, sins for which the persons have refused to let go. Understand, it is not just historical acts the refused to admit to and confess these are sinful traits of character that the sinner wants, prefers, desires, embraces, values, prefers over the methods of God. This isn’t about historic deeds or acts in ledger it is about the condition of heart/mind/character in reality. Why do such people get blotted out of the book of life? Because they have chosen to solidify in their characters the law of sin and death and are out of harmony with life. To them God’s presence would we torture and God will do that to them—**He forces no one.**] The Lord declared to Moses: “Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.” Exodus 32:33. And says the prophet Ezekiel: “When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, ... all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned.” Ezekiel 18:24. CIHS 177.1

All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; [I am pausing in mid-sentence so we can think about what is being said. The rest of this sentence will affirm our design-law understanding, but before we read it, let us see if we can figure it

out. What does it mean to truly repent—is this a legal process in books, or an actual change of heart? What does claiming the blood of Christ as our atoning sacrifice mean? Is it about red corpuscles? Or does the blood represent symbolically the sinless life of Jesus? What does atone mean? To be united as one. Did Jesus sacrifice Himself to provide a sinless life, a perfect character, to heal us and restore in us God's law/character/methods so that we can be again at one with God? Yes, this is what it means that we have been won to trust in God and have accepted Jesus as our Savior and “it is no longer I that live Christ lives in me.” This is why Jesus said we must drink His blood—in other words take His life in to be our new life. And when we do we are restored to oneness—at-one with God. This same author makes it very clear in the book *The Desire of Ages* page 762 “**The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character;** [why does the law require this? For the same reason the law of respiration requires we breathe—it is how life is built to operate] and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who **will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can “be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Romans 3:26.” Notice Christ's blood, i.e. life, becomes ours and we are built up into His perfection thus restored to oneness with God. This is not legal, it is actual. And the author said this is how God is just and the justifier—doing what is right by restoring us to real rightness or righteousness with God. Now, let's see how this author actually says it in the continuation of the sentence we are in the middle of] **as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out,** and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life. [Why are they accounted worthy of eternal life? Because we have partaken of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are restored to Christlike. From where are our sins blotted out of? From history of from our characters? And where are our characters stored/recorder in heaven? IN God's books. So, our sins our blotted out of our characters recorded in the books. So we could say our sins are blotted out of the books of heaven.] The Lord declares, by the prophet Isaiah: “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” Isaiah 43:25. Said Jesus: “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.” “Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.” Revelation 3:5; Matthew 10:32, 33....CIHS 177.2 [Why will we be denied in heaven if we deny Christ on earth? For the same reason we would be denied as being healthy in an examination room if we refused to take the remedy that would cure us.]

While Jesus is pleading for the subjects of His grace, Satan accuses them before God as transgressors. [While Jesus is *before* the Father and angels in heaven, to whom is He pleading? Well, who is listening to Satan's accusations? Is God in heaven going, “Wow, Satan

is making a really compelling argument—"Hey Son, do you have anything to say that can compete with what Satan says, because right now I think the devil is being quite persuasive. I don't want to find them guilty but right now I am at a loss to know what to do?" Of COURSE NOT! God doesn't listen to Satan and ever since the cross neither do the angels in heaven. Only humans on earth listen to him. Satan recounts our sins to discourage us; to get us give up. Continue the quote...]**The great deceiver has sought to lead them** [the subjects of His grace] **into skepticism, to cause them to lose confidence in God, to separate themselves from His love, and to break His law.** Now he points to the record of their lives, to the defects of character, the unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer, to all the sins that he has tempted them to commit, and because of these he claims them as his subjects. CIHS 179.1

Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying:[What law lens are you hearing this through? Does this say pleading to the Father? No! This is happening in heaven and God's government is open, not secretive. Jesus wants His actions to be seen by all the universe so that all doubt in God will be removed. So that God's methods in healing and restoring will be understood, so that Satan will be fully exposed. So, of course this is happening before the Father and the holy angels. But what is happening? Jesus reveals the truth about our hearts and minds—that He has healed our characters. Notice what comes next:] **I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of My hands.** [What does name represent? He knows us by our healed and restored characters because we have eaten His flesh and drank His blood, meaning we have partaking of His character thus we are part of Him—the body of Christ, written on the palms of His hands!] “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.” Psalm 51:17. **And to the accuser of His people He declares:** “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” Zechariah 3:2. [To whom is Jesus speaking? To the accuser, He isn't pleading to His Father to get a judicial ruling in our favor. Notice what comes next:] **Christ will clothe His faithful ones with His own righteousness, that He may present them to His Father** “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Ephesians 5:27. Their names stand enrolled in the book of life, and concerning them it is written: “They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.” Revelation 3:4.... CIHS 179.2 [What is described? That Jesus fixes all the damage sin has caused in our hearts and minds and perfects us so that we are capable of living in God's presence and thus He presents us to the Father. Then, having been healed and restored by Jesus' intercessory work in our hearts and minds, we can stand in the presence of God without an intercessor!]

The work of the investigative judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. [Why? Because we must be healed, restored, fixed, before coming into God's presence—why? What happens in the hearts and minds of unhealed sinners when they are exposed to infinite truth and love? Thus, we must have this work done in us before that time.] **Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated.** [What law lens are you hearing this through? What

is written in the books? Our characters, and this is describing the cleansing of the sanctuary, the removal of all residual defects in the hearts/minds/individualities of those who have trusted in Jesus so that when they arise in the resurrection of the righteous they arise sinless and perfected.] But the apostle Peter distinctly states that the sins of believers will be blotted out “when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ.” Acts 3:19, 20. When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come, and His reward will be with Him to give to every man as his work shall be. CIHS 180.2

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “the time of Michael’s...” The first paragraph states that at the end of time God’s Spirit will be withdrawn from rebellious humanity—why?

Where is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit? The hearts and minds of people—and what happens if people harden their hearts and minds against God? The Spirit is closed out or slowly withdrawn—this is the reason, because people choose evil over God.

What is the result? The restraining power of God is no longer active in the hearts of the wicked and thus evil increases upon the earth.

The Bible mentions heavenly records—what types of records are kept in heaven—in other words are there more than one type of record?

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Rev 20:12

What is recorded in the book of life? Names—which are characters, thus the judgment is reviewing the characters of people—those who have accepted Jesus and had selfishness and sin purged and righteousness written in—“I will write my law on your hearts and minds”—versus those who have rejected God’s healing and retained selfishness in their characters, thus Jesus said:

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. **For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.**” Mt 12:33-37 NIV84

But, are the records of people’s characters the only records?

I think there are also records of reality—of history—the Bible itself is a partial example of a record of history. Do we believe in heaven there will be records of history? Why?

Who was charged by Satan as being untrustworthy, unfair, arbitrary, cruel? God was charged by Satan—how is God vindicated in the end? Isn’t it by the evidence—the truth sets all who embrace the truth free from the lies, from doubt about God? So, won’t there be an eternal record of God’s actions in the Great Controversy?

And, what will we learn about all those who are lost? In reviewing the history of the lost do we learn something about God? Do we learn that God intervened over and over again in multiple ways to offer them healing, but all those lost in the end are lost because they refused every offer of salvation and there was nothing more God could have done to save them?

The best way to understand the records is to think of them as medical records—they record the reality of each person’s condition and the actions of God and His treatment team bringing healing solutions to all, but record the response of the sin-sick people some accept and are healed, others reject and remain terminal—but God is revealed to be only the source of life!

TUESDAY

The Bible describes two deaths—first and second—what is the difference between these two deaths?

- First death is described as a sleep—it is cessation of living activity, the body decays to dust, but the individuality is in a state of suspended animation—i.e. frozen in time, sleeping, waiting to be restored to a body to live again, i.e. resurrection
 - Jesus referred to this in Matthew 10:28, don’t be afraid of the one who can destroy the body but can’t destroy the soul
 - Consider metaphor of computer
 - body—hardware
 - soul—psyche—software
 - spirit-pneuma--energy
- Second death—annihilation—the destruction of the body and the individuality—eternal non-existence

Which death is the wages of sin death?

Why do we have the first death experience if the wages of sin is the second death? Grace—it is God’s grace that permitted this artificial state in which the body dies, but the individuality is retained, to permit the plan of salvation to occur so that sin could be eradicated and people saved.

This is why God barred the way to the Tree of Life after sin—to allow the first death experience to occur—to allow sin to decay nature and degrade the physiology so the body would cease, yet God

could still work to heal hearts and minds and Jesus could come as a human to fix the problem. And this is what happened, the Bible says:

This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2Tim 1:9,10 NIV84

How did Jesus destroy death?

What is the basis of life? God is the basis or source of life. Life comes from God and extends out from God and continues in all those who maintain unity with God. Sin severs our connection with God and disconnecting ourselves from God causes injury, pain, suffering and eventual death. Jesus came to take our condition upon Himself, be tempted in every way like we are, but overcome as a human reestablishing in humanity God's perfection thus connected humanity back to God.

At the Cross Jesus destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness when He was tempted in every way just like we are, but refused to act to save self and instead gave Himself in love. In so doing, Jesus in His humanity restored God's law of love back into the species human and fixed the damage that Adam did to humanity. Thus He rose again because death (the law of sin and death) had nothing in Him, no hold, because He destroyed it.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson focuses our attention on the book of Daniel which was to be sealed until the time of the end. When did the Biblical time of the end begin?

For many Biblical scholars it began when the 1260-year prophecy ended in 1798, then the message of Daniel was unsealed and knowledge increased—knowledge about these end-time events.

THURSDAY

Why has there been a delay in the Lord's return?

Did you grow up in church singing, "Lift up the trumpets and loud let them ring, Jesus is coming again"?

Did you grow up with the expectation that Jesus was actually returning soon?

As you look around the world and see the conflict, disasters, crime, exploitation, population growth, climate threats, diseases, do you wonder, "What is God waiting for? Why hasn't Christ returned?"

All the way back in the first century, Christians were wondering why Christ had not come back. The apostle Peter told them:

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:8, 9 NIV84).

God has waited because He wants everyone who can be saved to be saved—and that requires that people know about Him and come to a repentance. This means the gospel must go to the world; as Jesus said,

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14 NIV84)

But it's been two thousand years! Surely the whole world has heard the gospel by now—right? Or has it?

Has the gospel of the kingdom of love gone to the world? Or has Christianity been tricked into taking to the world a lie, a fraud, a false gospel, one that traps the world into a system that promotes a distorted view of God? And if this is so, then is God waiting for the truth about Him to go to the world?

The apostle Paul warned us this would happen:

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—**having a form of godliness but denying its power** (2 Timothy 3:1–5 NIV84).

As sad as it is, the Bible is true again: Christianity, as practiced today, is no different than the world—child abuse rates, spouse abuse rates, pornography use, and addictions are no different in Christian homes than non-Christian homes. Why? Because a false gospel that has no power to transform lives has taken over Christianity and prevents people from experiencing the healing that God has for them!

Thus, Jesus waits. He waits for the true gospel to go to the world and prepare people to meet Him—only then will He come.

God told His friend Daniel thousands of years ago that this would happen. God revealed to His prophet exactly how this false gospel would take root in Christianity—a corrupting power would seek to change God's law (Daniel 7:25). Paul expanded on Daniel's prophecy, giving more insight into this evil infection:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and **the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he **sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God** (2 Thessalonians 2:1–4 NIV84).

Paul tells us here that before Christ returns, the evil one will counterattack the gospel of Jesus. He does this by setting himself up as God in God's temple. But what temple? Did Satan ride into heaven and knock Jesus off His throne? Of course not. Paul is speaking of the Spirit temple, the hearts and minds of believers. In other words, the Bible is telling us that Satan will get people to believe that a being with his attributes is God! Satan doesn't get the church to reject the idea of God or the belief in God; instead, he tricks the church into believing that God is like Satan in character and methods.

How could Satan make this happen? How could he get people to reject the truth about Jesus and enthrone the evil one into their hearts and minds as the one to be worshiped—all the while singing songs of praise to Jesus?

Daniel tells us it is by seeking to change God's law, and Paul reveals how he does it by the name he gives this power: "The man of lawlessness."

Satan displaces Jesus in our hearts and sets himself up as the one being worshiped *when we accept the lie that God's law functions like human law*. It is when we conceive of God's law to be like the laws humans make that Satan enthrones himself in our hearts and minds. Thus, we reject the law of God and promote a lawless view, even while claiming to believe in the Ten Commandments.

God is the Creator of all reality—space, time, energy, matter, and life. God's laws are the protocols He established, built into reality, that govern the operation of all things: the law of gravity, laws of physics, laws of health, and the moral laws—the law of love, law of liberty, law of worship, etc. Life is built to exist only in harmony with God's laws, for they are the protocols for life and health. Deviation from God's laws brings pain, suffering, destruction, and death. (For more on [God's Design Laws](#), see my blog.)

As the Bible teaches:

- The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)
- Sin when full-grown brings forth death (James 1:15)
- Those who sow to the carnal nature *from that nature* reap destruction (Galatians 6:8)

God's laws are design laws. Life only operates in harmony with them.

Human beings cannot create reality. We cannot build space, time, energy, matter, or life. Our laws are not the laws upon which reality exists. Instead, we make up rules and then enforce those rules by threats of punishment.

Christianity has embraced the system of the world in that it teaches that God's law is imposed, imperial, a system of rules that functions like human law and requires the ruling magistrate to use its power to punish rule-breakers. This idea is "lawless"—it is a denial of reality. It dethrones God from His seat as Creator and enthrones a deity that is a rule-maker—functionally no different than any other created being—thus, it enthrones Satan in the minds and hearts of all who accept the lie that God's law is like human law.

The lie of imposed laws results in a cascade of other lies—all of which distort God's character and obstruct His plan to heal and save His people. Some of these subsequent lies are:

- We are in legal trouble with God
- We are under God's death penalty
- God must use His power to kill the disobedient
- Jesus came to be killed by God to pay our legal penalty
- Jesus pleads to God in heaven, offering the Father the blood of a human sacrifice to get God not to kill us
- We need to be protected from the anger and wrath of God
- Jesus hides us or our record from God because if God saw it, He would kill us
- Jesus hides us or our record by covering us in a robe of His righteousness—or by using His blood to erase the records of our sins from the legal accounting books in heaven
- We must do certain rituals (baptism, Eucharist, communion, confession) in order to get the legal application of Jesus' blood payment made to the court of heaven
- It is right and just for God to use power to torture and/or kill people who disobey

The lie that God's law functions like human law has displaced Christ in the minds of millions of people and enthroned a deity that functions like the evil one. And they are sharing this lie about God wherever they go.

God told His friend John that at this time in human history, a message was to be proclaimed that presents the eternal gospel:

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water" (Revelation 14:6, 7 NIV84).

And what is the good news that has always been true—true in eternity past and true in eternity future? That God is *not* like Satan has portrayed Him to be! He is *not* a dictator who makes up laws that function like our laws. He is *not* the source of pain, suffering, and death. He is *not* the one from whom we need to be protected. And so, the end-time message calls us to make a judgment about God, just like Elijah called the people of his day to make a judgment about God:

How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him (1 Kings 18:21 NIV84).

It is time to choose to worship “him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” It is time to reject the dictator views of God, to reject the lie that God’s law functions like human law, and to embrace the eternal good news that God is our Creator, Savior, and Restorer! It is by embracing the truth about God that we are set free (John 8:32)—free from fear, free from guilt, free from shame. It is the truth about God that wins us to trust, and in trust we open the heart and experience the Spirit healing us, writing in our hearts God’s living law of love.

This is the healing plan I will renew with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord: I will recreate and cleanse them, and restore my law of love in their minds, and write my principles of benevolence on their hearts. I will be the God they love, admire and adore, and they will be a people who reveal my true character (Hebrews 8:10 *The Remedy*).

I invite you to worship our Creator—to reject the lie that God’s law functions like human law—and to open your heart to the Spirit of the Lord, asking God to restore in you His perfect law of love so that you can bring glory to Him by revealing His character in your life!

Only when God’s people reject the lies of Satan—instead embrace His design law and proclaim the eternal gospel about God’s character and methods of love—will Jesus come again.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

March 27,28, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at an AACC River Conference at Plano, TX. More info at <http://theriverconference.com/>

April 17,18, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Lakewood SDA church in Lakewood OH.

September 17-19 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC National Conference in Dallas, TX

October 3, 2020: Come and Reason will have a one day seminar in Chattanooga TN on Healing the Mind, Recovering from Sexual Abuse, the Impact of Digital Media on Kids and more. Details coming soon.