



2021 4Q Present Truth in Deuteronomy 1 Preamble to Deuteronomy

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read memory verse:

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1John 4:8 NKJV).

What does this text mean?

What does it mean to know God? This is not knowing about, it is a personal connection with, an intimate relationship with, it is a heart bonding of two beings becoming one.

We read about this in John 17, Jesus, praying to His Father, says in verse 3:

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (Jn 17:3 NIV84).

And then goes on to say:

“Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one... My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (Jn 17:11, 20–23 NIV84).

What is Jesus praying for?

So, what does our memory verse mean?

Can a person have a cognitive knowledge of God and still not know Him?

Can a person be a preacher of Scripture and still not know God? What about those who crucified Christ? What about those who say to Jesus in the end, “Lord, Lord...”

As events unfold on planet Earth, right now today, what differentiates the children of God from the children of wickedness?



If they love God, how will they treat others? Will those who love God use the power of the state to force others or will those who love God refuse to unite with the state in compelling other people?

SUNDAY

Read the first four paragraphs, "First John 4:8..." This is well said. Congratulations Cliff Goldstein, who is the principal contributor and also editor of this quarterly. This is well said!

Is God being love something that is turned off and on depending on circumstances?

Is there a time when God is something other than love?

Is there a time when love can function without freedom?

Is there a time when love will take freedom away?

- What about discipline? If we discipline someone is that unloving? A parent putting a child in time out?
- What about a government imprisoning a convicted murderer—is that a violation of God's law of love? Why or why not?

Is there a time when justice will require God to take freedom away?

- What takes away our freedom—God or violations of God's law? How and why?

Is there a time where love will use power to inflict punishment upon people?

If God were to do this, then would people still be free?

So, what happens to the wicked in the end? How does God bring about the end of sin and sinners without taking away freedom?

Consider this commentary from the *Great Controversy*:

God has given to men a declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin. [which is what? God is love, He never stops being love, so His dealing with sin, must be an expression of love and how love functions, which means design law] "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Exodus 34:6, 7. "All the wicked will He destroy." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Psalm 145:20; 37:38. **The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.** {GC 541.2} [What do you hear? Is this a



contradiction? Is the author describing an infliction of external punishment, or the outworking of design law? What power is being employed? The author says the power and authority of the divine government—what power is that? Do you think of power like human governments or like the Creator God of love? Do you keep in mind while reading things like this other quotes like this one from *The Desire of Ages*: “God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love;** and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. **God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.**” {DA 759.1} So what power? The power of love and truth! But how can love and truth punish? Keep reading...]

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. [Can God get our love, trust, devotion, friendship by threatening us and then inflicting external punishment on people who don't give it? No! Imperial/imposed law violates the law of liberty and coercion destroys love. He can only get love by leaving people free!] He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. **And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes.** [What power is described here? The power of truth and love revealed that draw people to God. It is Satan's power of lies that get us to conceive of God as a being other than love, a dictator who inflicts pain and suffering, which undermines our ability to love and trust God. This is what penal substitution theology does.] {GC 541.3}

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** [Wait, love your enemies is the principles upon which God executes justice and punishes sin? How does that work? Consider how it is a function of love for God's enemies to be destroyed in the end. It will become obvious, but it is only a function of love if we understand it through design law! Impose law violates liberty and is not love.] **God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited.** [What does this mean? Executes justice—what is justice, doing what is right, and what is right? Is it right to give people the freedom to choose? Is it right to let people reap what they have chosen after repeated attempts to win them to love and trust? And when does God let them go to reap what they have chosen, when they are still healable/savable or when they have destroyed within themselves the faculties that respond to truth and love? And how is it good for the wicked for God to do this? Because, if God did not let the wicked go, if God held on to them despite their hardened and rebellious hearts, then God would create, by His power, a place of torment and God would never do this. Thus, for mercy, for love, for the best outcome for the wicked, He executes justice, the right thing for them and sets them free from Him the only source of life.] **He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the**



laws of His government and the justice of His character. [What are the laws of His government? Design laws and you can't force people to love you, or enjoy goodness and purity] He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; **but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided.**[decided by who? a judge in heaven or each person decides their own destiny? Who determines if a person accepts or rejects truth?] **Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will?** {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. [Why can't they enter God's presence? Is it because God doesn't want them there, God is angry and wrathful and hasn't had the price paid to Him for that unrepentant sinner? Is it because God can't handle their presence, it would offend Him, He would get angry and lash out? No, it is because of their condition!] Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become **fixed in their characters.** [Fixed by who? How did it become fixed? What law caused it to become fixed?] Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? **Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish.** What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless **streams of light flowing** upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--[what does that light look like? From where does it come? Do you integrate texts like these: "the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." (Dan 7:9-10 NIV84) "for our 'God is a consuming fire.'" (Heb 12:29 NIV84)? Is this fire harmful? Do the righteous get injured by it? Why not? What about the wicked, why do they experience pain in this fire? From where does the pain come, from the fire or from unremedied sin?] could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no;** years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction,** that they might be hidden from the



face of Him who died to redeem them. [What is being described? Do you integrate texts like “They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!” (Rev 6:16 NIV84)? What kind of law? What is the reason? Is God acting justly? He is executing justice?] **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** [Who decides the fate of the wicked? What does it mean voluntary with themselves? It is what they want, is it right and just on God’s part to grant them exclusion from heaven? What kind of law?] {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable. [Why are they lost? Who made them incurable? Is this just on God’s part? Is it an infliction that their condition does not bring upon them?]{GC 543.1}

Do you see how God’s execution of justice is an expression of His character of love and is the best that He can do for the wicked in the end?

MONDAY

The lesson points out that Isaac Newton didn’t discover gravity—everyone functioned upon it, but he discovered that gravity was a constant and was a law that nature operated upon. The lesson goes on to say, “though Newton’s contribution was in the area of natural law, the same principle holds true with moral law.”

Again, this is well said, this is absolutely right. Moral law is just like natural law in this way, design protocols upon which God has created reality to operate, and life and health are only possible in harmony with God’s design laws for life.

Here is a beautiful description from the book *Education*:

The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. **The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same--**a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will.** To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin. {Ed 99.2}

The lesson points out that God destroyed the world with a flood—we have spoken on this in detail in several lessons recently, so I won’t go over it again now, but wanted to pause and ask if anyone has a question about this?



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TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Genesis 12:1-3:

The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.

2 “I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.” (Ge 12:1–3 NIV84).

Then the lesson asks, “Today, looking back after the cross, after the death of Jesus and the spreading of the gospel, how do we understand what God was promising to do through Abram?”

When the Genesis text says God would make a great nation from Abram, what is that referring to? Was it referring to the state of Israel that exists today? What then?

What was the purpose of calling Abram and the nation his descendants were to form?

How is it all the people on the earth would be blessed through him? And would the purpose of the nation be? And what is that blessing to the world?

Here is how I paraphrased it in *The Remedy*:

The Lord had told Abram, “Leave your homeland, your relatives and your father’s house, and go to the land I will show you. 2My plan is for your descendants to become a great nation that lives out my methods, for they will be the avenue for the Messiah. I will change your character and make it a great example of my healing plan – that healing comes through trust – and you will be a blessing. 3I will bless those who bless and support you, but those who oppose you I will oppose; and the entire human race – all earthlings – will be blessed through you.”

What was the purpose of ancient Israel? To be the messengers of God, His helpers to share the knowledge of God and prepare the world for Christ’s first advent.

Because they were chosen by God for this purpose—this is why the Bible focuses our attention on them—it is all about fulfilling the promise of Genesis 3:15, the coming Messiah.



It is also why these people are specifically targeted by Satan for destruction, because Satan was working to obstruct the plan of salvation, the coming Messiah.

The lesson asks in the bottom pink section, “Today, how do we as Seventh-day Adventists see ourselves in relation to the rest of the world?”

Do we see ourselves as being called for a purpose, to fulfill a mission? What is the purpose?

Like the Jews were called to prepare the world for the first advent of Jesus, SDAs see their purpose in calling the world to prepare for the second advent of Jesus.

The SDA church shares several elements in common with ancient Israel:

- The seventh-day Sabbath
- A sanctuary message
- A health or lifestyle message
- An advent message
- The inspired record—the Word of God

What is the purpose of these common resources?

- The seventh-day Sabbath
 - An evidence of God as Creator and His laws as design laws
 - A reminder that He makes us holy—or heals us from sin
 - An opportunity to practice trusting Him each week in how we live
- A sanctuary message
 - To enlighten us to the plan of God to heal our hearts and minds and restore us to at-onement with Him
 - To encourage us, educate us in how we can participate with God and give us hope
- A health or lifestyle message
 - To help us experience the highest quality of life here and now, keeping us in the best condition for God’s cause possible
 - To enlighten us to the laws of health which are design laws and help us realize that the plan of salvation is just like this, restoring God’s law within us—it is healing us.
- An advent message
 - To give us hope and motivate us to fulfill our role in God’s cause of taking the final message of mercy to the world
 - To point us to a better world free of sin, disease, death
 - To keep us focused on our mission and protect us from getting caught up in the business or entertainment or problems of this world
- The inspired record—the Word of God
 - To provide us the evidence of God in dealing with the sin problem—who God is and how He functions leading us back to trust in Him



- To protect us from letting experience or science lead us into mysticism or godlessness

What is necessary to be ready for Jesus' return?

If someone asked you, "What is the message the SDA church has for the world?" What would you say to them?

Would you say:

"It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time a message** from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth... **The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**" Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

If so, how is this message different than the message of John Wesley who said,

"What then is the mark? Who is a Methodist, according to your own account?" I answer: A Methodist is one who has "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him;" one who "loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength. God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul; which is constantly crying out, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! My God and my all! Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!"

So, what is different about the message the SDA church has for the world and that of John Wesley or any other Christian who teaches the love of God?

Because the message of the Advent message places the sin problem in the setting of the Great Controversy over God's character and law. It is the message that takes the truth of God's love to its ultimate conclusion and application in the heart, character, methods, law and government of God—exposing and eradicating from the hearts and minds of people the imposed law lies that have infected Christianity and corrupt the views of God taught within Christianity.

Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of **self-sacrificing love**. In the light from Calvary **it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven...** {DA 19.2}

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that



sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. **In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe.** All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, **the law of life.** {DA 21.2}

The message that prepares the world for Christ's return is the truth of God's character of love, but that truth is bound up in understanding God's law. It is only by coming back to understanding love is more than emotion, more than compassion, it is a principle, a law, a functional outworking of God's very nature that reality is built upon, that we are enabled to reject Satan's imposed law lie.

It is the lie of imposed law that infected beings in heaven and broke down their love and trust in God. It is the imposed law lie that caused Adam and Eve to break trust with God in Eden. It is the imposed law lie that corrupted the church of Rome and infects the entire world so that Christians around the world teach that God must use power to inflict pain and suffering upon sinners, that Jesus died to pay a legal penalty to the Father so the Father won't kill us.

The message the SDA church was given is the completion of the Reformation, to leave the fallen worldly systems of imposed laws behind and worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and fountains of water.

In this worship, by beholding Him we are changed, we stop aligning with the kingdoms of this world, we stop trying to advance the kingdom of God through human governments, legislation, imposed rules, infliction of punishment. We instead focus our energy on love for God and living that love in how we treat others.

All the fundamental beliefs, rightly understood, are merely the extension of this truth of God's character and design law of love:

- the Sabbath is a sign or evidence of God's methods of truth presented in love leaving free;
- the message of the three angels, the first is the eternal good news about God, that He is love and His laws are design laws, it is a call to stop worshipping the imperial dictator god formed by Rome and worship Him who created, whose laws are design laws, to judge God correctly as Jesus revealed Him to be and thereby be transformed in character to live out God's law, give Him glory for the time has come for people to make a right judgment about God. With this truth we leave Babylon, the fallen system of imposed law and legal enforcement, with a punishing god that requires the blood of a human sacrifice. But if we reject the messages of the first and second angel, then we reap what we sow, our characters become like the imperial dictator god we have chosen instead of the creator and we mark ourselves as beastly, and when we come into the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb we will be burned with divine fire, the fire of God's infinite love and truth and it will be a terrible torment and the memory of the devastation that unremedied sin causes will be remembered by the righteous for all eternity.
- The cleansing of the sanctuary is the message of the cleansing of the hearts and minds of sinners to prepare us to stand in God's unveiled glory—to seal us, for the Bible says that when



He appears we shall see Him face to face for we shall be like Him. And what cleanses us—the truth about God that wins us to trust so that we open the heart to receive the Spirit reproducing the character of Christ within us.

It is all the same, our message is the message of reality, to leave behind the myths, the superstitions, the fantasies, the falsehoods that have infected so many minds, churches and theologies and embrace the truth as it is in Jesus.

WEDNESDAY

Focuses our attention on the covenant at Sinai—what do you understand happened there?

Did a legal system of salvation get started then?

When is the first time in human history that we have a written law of God? At Sinai—did the law of God begin as Sinai?

Was the law of God in existence in heaven? In what form?

Did the angels in heaven have a law to honor their mothers and fathers or sins passing down their generations?

Jesus said the Sabbath was made for man, when was the Sabbath made? So, did the angels in heaven have the Sabbath?

Did the 10 Commandments as we know them exist in heaven or were they added later?

Here are a couple of historical quotes:

The law of God existed before the creation of man or else Adam could not have sinned. After the transgression of Adam the principles of the law were not changed, but were definitely arranged and expressed to meet man in his fallen condition.⁵⁵ FLB 80.2

The angels were governed by it [the law]. Satan fell because he transgressed the principles of God's government. After Adam and Eve were created, God made known to them His law. It was not then written, but was rehearsed to them by Jehovah.⁵⁶ FLB 80.3

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would



have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

Then the lessons points out that everything God instituted at Sinai was ratified with blood, sprinkled with blood and asks what the blood signifies?

Everything in the sanctuary services, the Levitical service and ceremonial law is symbolic—nothing is literal. The tent itself, the altars, the instruments, the robes, the priests themselves, the sacrificial animals and the blood all of it, is symbolic of something else—what?

So the blood represents the blood of Jesus, and this represents what? His perfect sinless human character or life which was developed for us. Thus the sprinkling of blood is the symbolic way of saying the receiving of the righteousness or perfect sinlessness of Jesus into our hearts and minds that transform and heal us.

This is why Jesus said in John 6, unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood we have no part with Him. In the symbolic system the blood was sprinkled throughout the physical tent or temple, in the reality it is to be internalized into the Spirit temple.

The flesh and blood are symbols that were replaced with new symbols bread and wine but they symbolize the same thing what? Flesh/bread—symbolize the Word (Jesus) made flesh, and as we take in literal flesh or bread it becomes building blocks for our physical bodies, so too taking in the Word of Truth the truth becomes building blocks for our beliefs, ideas, constructs, perspectives which destroys lies and wins us to trust. In trust, we open the heart to Jesus and receive the indwelling Spirit who takes the victory of Christ and reproduces it in us, such that “it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me” this is the blood, the life or character of Christ taken in. All taught in the symbolism.

THURSDAY

Thursday is about the rebellion of the people and their refusal to trust the Lord and obey His instructions and how they were “punished” by wandering in the wilderness for 40 years until a new generation grew up.

What kind of punishment was this? It was reaping what they had chosen, they chose not to go in and God let them have what they chose.

Is there a lesson in this? What about going into the eternal promised land, what happens to those who refuse?

Have we been wandering in the wilderness? Why?



FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New Resource South Africa: *Could It Be This Simple?* is now available in Afrikaans. We want to give special thanks to Jacques van den Heever, who spent many hours proof reading and working with editors and translators to get this resource available. Thank you Jacques!

It is available as a FREE download on our website, but if you are in South Africa and would like one in print, then email Jacque at comeandreason.sa@gmail.com

There will be a small postage charge of R50 (around \$4) or you live near Somerset West you are welcome to pick one up in person.

South Africa also has some newly printed materials including tracts, meditation guides, and CIBTS. If you are interested in getting copies for yourself or to share, please email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com

God is Love Children's Book Available on Amazon! We are happy to announce that our children's book, God is Love, is now up on Amazon and is available for prime shipping!

NOTES—my notes for each class are available for download on our website under our Bible Study tab.