



2021 4Q Present Truth in Deuteronomy Lesson 6 For What Nation Is There So Great?

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

The lesson points out that the first three chapters of Deuteronomy is a history of the Lord's deliverance and what the people had been through up to that point. Then chapter four starts off with a conjunction "And now" or "So now" and in the NIV it is rendered "Hear now."

The lesson then states

That's why the first verb that appears after "So now" is *shama'*, the same verb (in the same form) as used in the beginning of the Shema prayer, and it means "hear" or "listen" or "obey"—a verb repeated all through Deuteronomy. Thus, the chapter begins: *So now, Israel, because of what I have done for you, you must obey the following....*

What do you think if this *interpretation* of what the Bible is saying?

Understand, what the lesson has written is commentary, it is opinion, it is expert theological opinion, but it is not words from God, it is to be evaluated by us, through the enlightening of by the Holy Spirit to come to our own conclusion. Just as is everything I teach—I am fallible, I share the best of my understanding, but I am not here to do your thinking for you, only stimulate you to think and consider and then conclude for yourself.

This is one of the reasons I like the SDA quarterly, because it is thought provoking—it stimulates me to think, it requires me to think and reason and investigate the evidence for myself. And thus, it is very useful for Bible study as long as I always remember the quarterly is not the Bible, it is a tool to help me study the Bible.

So, what do you think of this interpretation? How would you like this applied to your life by some person? Someone does a real kindness for you, maybe even lifesaving—a good Samaritan rescues you from a fire, a person donates bone marrow that saves you from leukemia, a person pays off your mortgage so you don't get evicted from your house. And they do this without you asking them, they just became aware of your need and did this for you. And then afterward, when things have settled down, they come to you and say, "So now, because of what I have done for you, you *must* obey and follow me...."

What do you think of this method of getting followers? What of this method to achieve obedience?

Will it work to get trustworthy and faithful followers in human relationships?



Will it work for God to get trustworthy and faithful followers? Why or why not?

It will not work because it is presented as a debt one owes and is obliged to pay back, the act of deliverance is revealed to be not an act of love, but an act of manipulation, of indenturing, of getting people in debt so they can be controlled. Thus it is a violation of liberty.

So, because I recognize design law, the law of liberty, how love functions, I immediately was cautious about this interpretation of Scripture and did what I recommend we always do, I went to the Scripture and read it to see what it says.

Hear now, O Israel, the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. (Deuteronomy 4:1 NIV84).

Do you hear God saying “because of what I have done you must now obey and follow?”

Or do you hear God describing design law—in the context of reminding them He loves them and is trustworthy? So is God saying:

Remember what I have revealed to you, what I have done for you, how I have delivered you. How nature itself is under my control. Recognize I don't need anything from you, but want to bless you and free you. So, listen, comprehend, understand, learn what I am teaching you about myself and my laws, which are how reality operates. Follow them if you want to be healthy, happy, succeed, and overcome your enemies in this world?

Which way do you think is more accurate to what God is saying in Deuteronomy?

Is God saying the same thing to us today, that we are to remember how the Lord has delivered us in the past, all that that He has done for humanity in general and also for each of us personally, and then under that umbrella of His historic acts of love, we are to learn about Him, His character, His design laws, His methods and principles and, if we want to succeed, be healthy, happy, and overcome the obstacles in this world today, then we are to live in harmony with Him and His design laws trusting Him with outcomes?

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Deuteronomy 4:2:

Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you. (Deuteronomy 4:2 NIV84).



What does this mean? Does this mean not to add or subtract from the actual words, or not to add or subtract from the instructions, commands, directions, principles, truths?

Some people get very literalistic and believe there is something magical or supernatural about the words and that to paraphrase the Scripture adding words not in the original is to disobey this directive from God. Is it?

No! If we cannot change the words of Scripture for new words then the Bible can never be translated into any language and must be read in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. But the syllables that form words are not inspired of God—it is the concepts, truths, insights, wisdom that God inspires the Bible writers to comprehend, but the words were chosen by the humans. Thus as long as the truths, the concepts, are accurately communicated it is appropriate to replace words and even add words as necessary to bring the thought over. All translations do this. In the King James Version they will italicize all the words that are added to make it more understandable. Most of the time this is helpful. Sometimes it changes the meaning in the wrong direction, like in John 12:32:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me” (John 12:32 KJV).

So adding to or subtracting from the commands is not about the words but the realities of life, the responsibilities and duties of Israel in fulfilling the purpose for God in their time.

The adding and subtracting was adding Corban that allowed people to subtract their duty to their parents. It was adding a list of deeds to the Sabbath that subtracted their love for God and the freedom the Sabbath was intended to remind us of.

The lesson asks, “why would anyone want to change God’s law?”

Then they provide this quote from *Selected Messages* book 2, p. 107:

Satan has been persevering and untiring in his efforts to prosecute the **work he began in heaven, to change the law of God**. He has succeeded in making the world believe the **theory he presented in heaven before his fall, that the law of God was faulty, and needed revising**. A large part of the **professed Christian church**, by their attitude, if not by their words, show that they have accepted the same error. But if in one jot or tittle the law of God has been changed, Satan has gained on earth that which he could not gain in heaven. He has prepared his delusive snare, hoping to take captive the church and the world. But not all will be taken in the snare. **A line of distinction is being drawn between the children of obedience and the children of disobedience, the loyal and true and the disloyal and untrue. Two great parties are developed**, the worshipers of the beast and his image, and the worshipers of the true and living God. 2SM 107.2

Satan began his war in heaven over an attack on God’s law, advancing the theory that God’s law was faulty and needing revising.



What is revealed in this statement—what is the imbedded lie hidden in Satan’s attack?

That God’s law is subject to revision—in other words it is not design law, it is imposed rules.

Consider the same author describing the law angels understood in heaven when Lucifer began his rebellion:

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of... MB 109.2 [What kind of law can be in force and people are obeying it but they have not thought about it; they haven’t been told about it; they don’t even realize there is a law? Only design law can function this way. Consider Isaac Newton telling his friends his discovery about the law of gravity—don’t you think they might have said, “Law—hmmm...I never thought it was a law, it just how things work”?]

Remember this commentary on sin’s origin in heaven from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

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

What kind of law is Satan promoting? Imposed, human-like law, which requires the infliction of punishment. And what happened when heavenly intelligences accepted this idea? Rebellion, division, destruction of love!

Do you see Satan’s attack? Do you understand how Christianity has been infected with this false view of God and God’s law?

What is the final message to prepare the world for Christ’s return? The message of the 3 Angels which is the eternal good news about God—to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and fountains of water—to worship the Creator and not the dictator who imposes rules and punishes rule-breakers.

So, how is the Christian church today advancing Satan’s lie about God’s law? Through all penal legal theologies that teach God is the source of pain suffering and death inflicted to punish sin. That Jesus died to pay a legal penalty to God or our legal debt, or to pay God off for our sin. That it is righteous and just to inflict punishment for law-breaking. And therefore, leading its members to join with the state to enforce laws they believe are right upon others, even in violation of conscience. Human law is not God’s law.

We can never achieve God’s goal through Satan’s methods—we cannot achieve love, friendship, loyalty, trustworthiness by legislation, rules, rule-enforcement, in other words through more human governments.



Understand, as the world has rejected God it has fallen under Satan's influence, the hearts of people have become more corrupt, the design laws of God are rejected, and arbitrary rules and standards are elevated:

- Darkness is called light and light is called darkness
- Truth is called hate speech and hate speech is called truth
- Males are called females and females are called males
- Merit is called discrimination and discrimination is called equity
- Practices that harm are advanced as cures
- Policies that injure are presented as treatments to heal.
- And society decays, the social fabric that makes a society healthy frays and greater corruption occurs—this results in more fear, greater perversion, greater pain, suffering, sickness both physical and moral and people respond by implementing more of Satan's methods—more law, more demands, mandates, rules, coercive government and greater violations of liberty—which always destroys love, damages individual development and drives to greater rebellion, division in society and injustice and human suffering.

Consider the following, written by EG White, February 26, 1914, a little more than a year before she died:

Had Israel taken heed to the messages of the prophets emphasizing the value of “the great things” of God's law, they would have been spared the humiliation that followed. It was because they persisted in **turning aside from his law** that God was compelled to allow their enemies to take them captive. [What law? Imposed rules, or God's design law given through all Scripture? Remember over and again the prophetic message of justice was loving people, not rule-keeping?] “My people are destroyed for **lack of knowledge**,” was his message to them through Hosea. “Because thou hast **rejected knowledge**, I will also reject thee, ... seeing thou hast forgotten **the law of thy God**.” Hosea 4:6. [What knowledge had they rejected? Creator worship whose law is design law of love, truth, freedom and they preferred pagan gods with imposed laws instead. So God would teach them reality, cause and effect, which is design law. Note what comes next] **In trial and affliction they were to learn lessons** that under circumstances more favorable they had refused to learn. RH February 26, 1914, par. 1 [If a child refuses to learn by the favorable circumstances of instruction not to touch a hot stove, then the child eventually learns through the trial of touching the stove and the affliction of getting burned.]

In every age, transgression of God's law has been accompanied by the same result. [What is the result of transgressing God's law? Why?] In the days of Noah, when every precept of this law was set aside, **iniquity became so deep and widespread** that God could no longer bear with it...” [Why? Because God lost patience? He really isn't infinite in love, mercy, grace? Or He could no longer bear with it because to bear any more would mean the loss of Noah the last family that would work with God to bring the Messiah and thus God would lose humanity?] In the time of Abraham, the people of Sodom openly defied God and **his law; and**



there followed the same wickedness, the same corruption, the same unbridled indulgence, that had marked the antediluvian world... The time preceding the downfall of the northern kingdom was one of **similar disobedience and of similar wickedness.** [What happens when people reject God's design law? Why does this happen?] **God's law was counted as a thing of naught, and this opened the floodgates of iniquity upon Israel...** "RH February 26, 1914, par. 2 [What would happen in a society if it was taught there are no laws of health. You can eat and drink anything, never exercise, put any drug or as much alcohol as you want into your body and it has zero impact on your health. If society lived this way what would happen? A floodgate of health problems, disability, sickness, and corruption of the species. The same is true when God's moral law, the principles of love, truth, liberty are rejected.]

And as it was then so it is today. Men boast of the wonderful progress and enlightenment of the age, but God sees the earth filled with guilt and violence. **Men declare that the law of God has been abrogated, that the Bible is not authentic; and as a result, a tide of evil,** such as has seldom been seen since the days of Noah and the days of apostate Israel, is sweeping over the world. [Do we live in a world where belief in God is denied, where the institutions of society declare there is no God, that we evolved from lower life forms, where the leaders of industry are also godless? What is the result of rejecting the knowledge of God?] **Lawlessness, dissipation, extravagance, and corruption are coming in upon us as an overwhelming flood. Nobility of soul, gentleness, piety, are bartered away to gratify the lust for forbidden things. The taking of human life is a matter of daily occurrence. The terrible record of crime daily committed for the sake of gain is enough to chill the blood and fill the soul with horror.** [Are we seeing this ins the world today?] "Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." RH February 26, 1914, par. 3

The time is right upon us when there will be sorrow in the world that no human balm can heal. [Are we living in this time? What is the cause of the sorrow? Rejecting of God and God's design laws. Why can't human medications, treatments, laws, interventions heal it?] **The Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the world.** [Why? Where is the dwelling place of the Spirit of God on earth? The Spirit Temple, the hearts and minds of people. And what happens when billions reject God and prefer the lies of Satan, the evolutionary worldview? The Spirit of God is withdrawn as we choose to reject God. And what is the result?] **Disasters by sea and land follow one another in quick succession.** How frequently we hear of earthquakes and tornadoes, of destruction by fire and flood, with great loss of life and property. **Apparently these calamities are capricious outbreaks of seemingly disorganized, unregulated forces, but in them God's purpose may be read. They are one of the means by which he seeks to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger.** RH February 26, 1914, par. 4 [Why do the calamities come? Why does God allow it? To wake the sleeping saints, the five wise virgins to understand the hour in which we live. To shine their light of godly character, methods, principles in standing for truth, loving our enemies, praying for those who persecute, while leaving others free. Of refusing to bow the knee to the imperial systems of this world, refusing



to go along with imposed mandates that coerce the consciences of people under the guise of saving live.]

“As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.... Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” RH February 26, 1914, par. 5

The prophecies of judgment delivered by Amos and Hosea were **tempered with prophecies of future glory**. According to Hosea, the children of Israel were to “abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward,” the prophet continued, “shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and **shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.**” RH February 26, 1914, par. 6 [God doesn’t just warn of tragedy, He encourages with the promise of deliverance to His faithful! But when is the prophecy to be fulfilled, upon which people is it applicable? Consider what this author says.]

This prophecy is to reach its complete fulfillment in the gathering out from all nations of a people prepared for the second coming of Christ. The remnant of Israel is symbolized by a woman, representing the **Lord's chosen church on the earth**. [It is not about genetics—it never has been. It is always about character, about having faith like Abraham to be reconciled to God in trust and through that faith/trust receive the indwelling Spirit who takes the righteousness of Christ and reproduces it us.] “Behold,” he says, “I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. [What does this mean? Wilderness is away from the kingdoms of the world, it is out of Babylon—leaving the systems and methods of this world behind and returning to the garden—to worshipping the Creator whose laws are design laws.] And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be **at that day**, [when? At the time of the final generation that is alive when Jesus comes again!] saith the Lord, that thou shalt **call me Ishi** [“My husband,” margin]; and shalt call me **no more Baali** [“My lord,” margin]. For I will **take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth**, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.” RH February 26, 1914, par. 7 [We will call God “My husband” meaning the lover of our souls. We will be restored to at-one-ment—the two shall be one. We will be united in love and we will no longer call God “my lord” meaning master. We will be friends and not servants. This means we come back to worship God as Creator and reject the false Baalim dictator god of imposed rules, which means we return to Design Law worship and reject the human-law lie of Satan, the kingdoms of the world, and penal substitution theology.]

In the last days of this earth's history, God's covenant with his commandment-keeping people is to be renewed. [What is the covenant? Writing His design law for life into our hearts and minds!] “In that day I will make a covenant...and I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in



mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord. RH February 26, 1914, par. 8 [What is life eternal? Knowing God—being united in heart and mind. Having His design law of love written into our hearts and minds. Consider the law that binds a man and woman together in marriage? Is this law human law? No! It is God’s law of love, the binding of hearts together cannot be done by force, by legislation, by rule, by external authority. God is saying He will heal our hearts, take away our fear, and unite Himself with us in eternal love and trust if we will unite with Him!]

“And it shall come to pass **in that day**, [What day? The time right before the second coming of Christ. Today, our day right now!] I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; [What does this mean? The corn is the Word, the Truth revealed in Christ, the wine is the blood or sinless life of Christ which revealed and lived out perfectly the living law of love and the oil is the Spirit of truth and love that applies into our hearts the Truth and Love of Christ, which is the righteousness of Christ, which is the law of God.] and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were **not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.**” Hosea 2:14-23. RH February 26, 1914, par. 9 [What is described? The application of the righteousness of Christ into all willing human hearts upon the earth to prepare us for Christ’s return.]

“**In that day**, [what day? the time just prior to the second coming—our day!] ... **the remnant** of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, ... shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.” Isaiah 10:20. From “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” there will be those who will gladly respond to the message, “**Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.**” [What will happen in this people who are the remnant, who are reconciled to God, who have the covenant of God’s law restored in them?] **They will turn from every idol that binds them to this earth, and will “worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”** [They reject the imposed law lies and all the pagan views of God that fill the earth and return to worship the Creator, Designer and Builder of reality!] **They will free themselves from every entanglement, and will stand before the world as monuments of God's mercy.** [We are God’s evidence, God’s witnesses, God’s revelation as we are the living monuments of God’s living law of love! Like Job, God will say, “Look universe, consider my friends, they are perfect and righteous in all their ways! They have trusted me and my living law if restored with them.] **Obedient to every divine requirement, they will be recognized by angels and by men as those that “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”** [This is our privilege, to receive Christ, to be reconciled to God, to have His living law written into our hearts, to have fear and selfishness purged, to have our Spirit Temples cleansed, to be lights in the darkness, to love our enemies and pray for them that would abuse us, to reject the imposed laws of this world, to say no to human justice, and to live in harmony with our Creator God of love.] Revelation 14:6, 7, 12. RH February 26, 1914, par. 10



What was God's goal for Israel? What did He want to accomplish through them beyond being the bloodline for the Messiah?

Did He want to reveal the principles of life lived out upon the earth—to contrast the difference in the two antagonistic principles?

What is God wanting from His people today, from this generation on earth? Does He want a people who have surrendered to Him and who have His law written upon their hearts so that they live out His design laws in their lives in contrast to the imposed law methods of this world?

Is that what Revelation 12:17 means:

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.
(Revelation 12:17 NIV84).

Does obeying the commandments mean keeping a list of rules or living in harmony with God's design laws—having the law written upon the heart and mind? And holding to the testimony of Jesus, does that mean belonging to an organization that possesses the writings of dead prophets, or that the living people cling to or hold to the same testimony about God that Jesus gave—"If you have seen me you have seen the Father?" Thus this group of people reject the imposed law lie of a penal legal theology and live out God's design laws and present the same testimony about God as Jesus did.

This is the purpose of God's people on earth today—to reveal His character, to live out His living law of love, to give the testimony Jesus gave about His Father, to call people back to Creator worship and in the face of threat, opposition, hostility, rejection to have faith in Jesus, trust Him with the future, with the outcome, to keep our eyes on Christ and not be overwhelmed by the raging storms the devil is bringing.

This is the second message of the three angels—to come out of Babylon that fallen system of imposed and contradictory rules. We must stop seeking to get justice through human law. We must stop seeking to enforce what we believe is right through human governments. We must stop seeking to compel and coerce others to live by our moral standards. We must love God and others as Jesus has loved us—present the truth in love and leave others free.

MONDAY

The lesson focuses our attention on the apostasy at Baal Peor. This was when the Midianites paid Balaam to curse Israel, but Balaam blessed Israel repeatedly, and eventually counseled the Midian kings to seduce Israel into worshipping Baal.

The strategy they employed was to send seductive women into the camp of Israel under the guise of friendship and seduce the men. Then Balaam, who was considered a prophet, invited the people to a



pagan festival. At the pagan festival the senses were bombarded with music, dancing and alcohol, eventually leading the people to engage in promiscuous lewd sensual behavior, followed by worshipping Baal and offering sacrifices to Baal.

This was followed by pagan rituals being brought back into the camp of Israel.

God responds by sending a plague and Moses instructed that the leaders of Israel that participated in the pagan worship must be put to death by the members of their own tribe. As the people were repenting before the tabernacle, one leader brought a Midianite prostitute into the camp and Phineas, the son of Eleazer the High Priest, ran a javelin through them both and the plague was halted. Then God instructed the people, through Moses, to war against the Midianites and eradicate them—which they did.

What are your thoughts about these events?

What is the context of what is happening?

The overarching context is God working to fulfill His promise of Genesis 3:15, that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head. In other words, God is working to bring Jesus, the Messiah, without whom no human being could be saved. God had already revealed that it was through Abraham's descendants that the Messiah would come—but not all of them, not through Ishmael, it was through Isaac, and not through Esau, but through Jacob.

So the Bible focuses our attention on the plan of salvation, on the people through whom God is working to bring salvation to humanity. And Satan is actively fighting to stop God's plan. We see this repeatedly throughout the Bible record. At this point in history Satan stirs up the Midianites to try and destroy the people of God, if not literally by killing them, then by corrupting their minds and hearts and hardening them all so that none would be righteous and willing to work with God to be the conduit for the Messiah.

So God intervenes, makes a diagnostic judgment of what is happening and then makes a therapeutic judgment of what is needed to stop the assault on the hearts and minds of the people and keep open the avenue for Messiah.

This is what is transpiring.

We must remember all those who were put to "death" were put to "sleep" or first death, which is the death from which there is a resurrection. This is not the "punishment" from sin "death" that happens at the end of the 1000 years. So, it would be a mistake to equate these deaths with punishment for sin—it has another purpose, which is the therapeutic intervention to provide Jesus to save humanity. And there is also an object lesson application, but that is not the primary purpose, that would be a bonus application of the events.



TUESDAY

Read Deuteronomy 4:3,4:

You saw with your own eyes what the LORD did at Baal Peor. The LORD your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor, but all of you who held fast to the LORD your God are still alive today. (Deuteronomy 4:3–4 NIV84).

The lesson asks, “What is the difference between those who fell into sin and those who didn’t?”

Is there an object lesson for those of us living today?

Is Satan working to try and seduce the people of God today? How? What methods is he using?

What is the core of all pagan worship? It is the false law construct, imposed law, imposed rules, inflicted punishments for sin, appeasement etc.

Do we see these lies taught throughout Christianity?

And what happens in the minds and hearts of people who believe God functions this way?

What happens in the way they treat others?

Does Satan also attack God’s people today through sensualism, worldliness, seduction, addictions?

The lesson states that the people must make a choice, to cling to God or not.

What does it mean to cling to God?

Does this remind you of Elijah—“If Baal is god worship him, but if Yahweh is God worship Him”?

Do we have a similar message today? Are we calling people to decide whom they will worship? Is this not the message of the three angels?

WEDNESDAY

Read Deuteronomy 4:5-9:

See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. 6 Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” 7 What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is



near us whenever we pray to him? 8 And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

9 Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. (Deuteronomy 4:5–9 Niv84).

What is the message here? What law lens do we understand this through? Was this a message of rule-keeping, or of faithfulness and trust, of living out the principles of God first and foremost in heart, and secondarily through the theatrical system to reveal the larger plan to the people and any who came to study—such as later the Queen of Sheba?

What are the two truths that made Israel special, or great?

Being close to God and having His law.

What is the application of this to us today?

Immanuel—God with us. We are great as we open ourselves to God and have Him dwell in our hearts. We are great as we commune and walk with God and have His living law of love written upon our hearts so that we live out His principles.

God has already come down to us because we couldn't go up to Him. God has already provided the evidence of His trustworthiness. He has provided the Remedy to the sin problem. He has provided Jesus. He has provided His Spirit. All we have to do is choose to trust Him, open the heart to Him and He enters into fellowship with us, healing, renewing, regenerating, recreating, cleansing our hearts and minds from lies, fear and selfishness, writing His design law of love into us and we begin to live out His law.

Thus we are made great by being living temples in which God dwells by His Spirit and through that Spirit we become living conduits of God's law, God's truth, God's character in the world. We become lamps that give heavenly light in how we live and how we treat others by living out the law of God in the methods we apply to ourselves in how we treat others. We present truth, in love and leave others free. We don't align with the pagan systems of this world, with the imposed law systems to compel and coerce consciences. We don't give in to fear to the survival drives but we trust our lives to Jesus to protect and watch over.

THURSDAY

The lesson points out that when we are close to God and have His law in our lives that we have wisdom and understanding.

What is godly wisdom and how is it different from the wisdom of the world?



The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. 14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?"

But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:10–16 NIV84).

Read second paragraph, "At first glance..." What is the wisdom that comes from keeping God's commands?

So, were the Pharisees who wanted Jesus off the cross in order to obey the Sabbath command wise? Why not?

Is there a way of obeying the commands that obstructs wisdom, that blinds the mind, that hardens the heart? How is that?

What is the obedience that results in wisdom?

The Greek for obey or obedience is:

5218 ὑπακοή [*hupakoe* /hoop·ak·o·ay/] n f. From 5219; TDNT 1:224; TDNTA 34; GK 5633.¹

The first part is hypo, as in hypoglycemia, or hypotension and means under, or low, or lowly, and the second half is akoe from which we get acoustic and means to listen, to hear. It means a humble willingness to listen, to learn, to be lead out of lies, misunderstanding, old habits, preconceived ideas, false beliefs and into better and more accurate understanding of reality, not just in comprehension but in practice. We listen, comprehend, trust, and apply to our lives what we understand.

In that choice to listen, think, comprehend, agree and apply we are united with God and we are empowered to carry out the will of God when we choose to follow what He has directed. In this process we are changed, our hearts are circumcised—we have cut out the attachments to the world, our characters are transformed, our neural pathways are rewired. This is growing up in Christ, receiving the mind of Christ, being sanctified.

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



So an obedient person is one who eagerly listens for the voice of God and has the desire to hear, to understand, and to fulfill God's instructions and therefore chooses to do so to the best of their ability. It is not about perfect performance, it is about heart attitude.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason Property update: The renovation project is out to get contractor bids.

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