



2021 4Q Present Truth in Deuteronomy Lesson 13 The Resurrection of Moses



To: North American Division Secretariat

Date: November 11, 2021

Subject: Southwestern Union Response to NAD Memorandum on OSHA ETS

On behalf of, and with the approval of, the executive officers of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, Oklahoma Conference, Texas Conference, Texico Conference, Southwest Region Conference, Southwestern Adventist University, and the Southwestern Union, we have prepared the following statement, which reflects our convictions and also, we believe, those of the Seventh-day Adventist members in the Southwestern Union territory.

In light of prophetic understanding, we formally request that the North American Division and the Office of General Counsel review the OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard and consider the conflicts it presents with the beliefs and practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

We strongly believe that the mandates as prescribed in the OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard violate the freedom of conscience and personal choice of our employees and members. Furthermore, it is our belief that the church should not be the enforcer of government policy, as we believe in the steadfast adherence to the Seventh-day Adventist Church principle of separation of church and state. The Southwestern Union and its entities request that the North American Division advocate on our behalf in opposing this federal government overreach and violation of church-state separation.

The aforementioned entities are prepared to present this issue to their respective executive committees for authorization to disregard the OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard. Collectively, we ask that the North American Division, and the Office of General Counsel, to provide counsel, advice and defense against penalties for such actions.

In God's Service,

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SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Time and again...” What about the wording of the idea that “it wouldn’t be grace if we deserved it”?

I find this to be very poorly worded and always want to rephrase it. Grace is the outflow of graciousness—God is gracious. Did Jesus deserve God’s grace when He grew in wisdom and stature and “favor” or “grace” with God and man?

To the degree the authors mean that we don’t have a right to God’s grace in that we have not created it, earned it as pay or salary, then of course no created being sinful or sinless deserves God’s grace.

But I wonder if they would say that Gabriel deserves God’s grace? Or would they say grace is only needed when sin happens and since Gabriel hasn’t sinned he doesn’t need any grace? Then, would God be less gracious to sinless angels than He is to sinners? Or, is it as Paul wrote that where sin abounds grace much more abounds? It isn’t that grace isn’t being poured out from God to all His creatures, because God is gracious—it is that our sin presents the situation where God’s grace is magnified, most clearly manifest.

I think unearned is a better word than unmerited or undeserved. We don’t earn grace, we don’t have a right to claim it, and neither do the sinless angels earn it; so our attitude needs to always be one of humble thankfulness!

The problem with the “undeserving” or “unmeriting” language is that it leans toward making us think of our sins instead of God’s character. We are undeserving because we have sinned, we are bad, we are no good, we are corrupt and we don’t deserve anything good. This is the way the legal model takes the mind.

But this distorts the meaning and focus; God’s grace is about God’s graciousness. We have a sin condition that we didn’t cause—Adam and Eve did. We are born with the condition. God knows this and God doesn’t blame us or hold us accountable for this condition, instead God has been intervening to cure us of the sin condition, and all His actions toward us are manifestations of grace.

Think about having a grandchild who is born HIV infected, what is your attitude toward that grandchild? Wouldn’t you do everything in your power to heal/save that child—and of course your own child also (the grandchild’s parent). This is grace, the child and grandchild don’t earn it, it is a manifestation of your love, your character. But their symptoms, whether they vomit on your carpet, or are irritable and gripe at you, or have a temper tantrum, such symptoms never change your desire to heal and save them.

The lesson asks us to read Numbers 20:1-13:

In the first month the whole Israelite community arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried.



2 Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. 3 They quarreled with Moses and said, “If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the LORD! 4 Why did you bring the LORD’s community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here? 5 Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!” [What do you notice so far? They are blaming Moses for bringing them to where they are. But who is leading them? It is a pillar of fire by day and cloud by night—it is God that is leading them, which is Jesus leading them, but they don’t like where God has led them they make Moses the target of their frustrations and accuse Moses of doing them harm. Do we see a strategy of Satan in this? False accusation. How much of this do we see in the church and the world today? So, what would cause the people to lose site of God’s very presence and turn on Moses this way? Fear—they found themselves in a situation that made them afraid. What did Adam and Eve experience as soon as they sinned? They ran and hid because they were afraid. Fear is part of the infection of sin. What casts out fear? Love. But what does fear cause one to do? Look out for self, be willing to harm others. What does the roar of a lion do? It causes fear, and fear causes people to freeze, flee, or fight. At the end of time Satan roars and people become afraid and fear impairs thinking, impairs love, causes people to become more like God’s enemy. We have a worldwide **pandemic of fear**. Almost every person on earth has been impacted by the fear pandemic, far more have been harmed by the fear pandemic than the viral pandemic. What would have prevented ancient Israel from turning on Moses? How about staying focused on God, thanking Him for His love, deliverance, constant watch care—and their love and trust for God would have made them appreciate their situation. But so many in Israel betrayed God and forgot His presence among them because of fear. So many today willing to betray God’s methods in their lives so they can feel safe. We must refocus our attention off of the things of this earth, off of the virus, global warming, inflation, politics and focus our minds on God. Recognize what is happening is that God is leading His people to the heavenly promised land, preparing us to meet Jesus and Satan is trying to distract us with anything that will cause us to be afraid and take our focus off of God.]

6 Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell facedown, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. [Wow, just think about this: if you were a member of that group and saw the glory of God physically appear to Moses and Aaron, even from a distance, would you still keep arguing and accusing them or would you have enough awareness to realize they are following God’s directions? What does it say about the people that they failed to recognize this? Remember those who came to arrest Christ, divinity flashed through humanity and they fell down, Peter cuts off an ear. Jesus miraculously restores the ear. And then, after the divinity is again veiled, what did they do—they arrested Him, they didn’t worship Him. What do both of these accounts reveal? Sin damages the mind, sears the conscience and burns out the faculties that recognizes and responds to truth—so that even when truth is revealed the mind twists it, devalues it, interprets in through a false lens.] 7 The LORD said to Moses, 8 “Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink.” [Since God has foreknowledge and knew Moses would strike the rock with the staff—why didn’t God tell



Moses to leave the staff behind so he wouldn't have the option of striking it? Because He did know and there remained a tiny itty bitty piece of selfishness in Moses that Satan was seeking to exploit through the outrageous behavior of the people, Jesus wanted to remove that from Moses and it required Moses to either be tempted and surrender in trust or to have it manifest and repent.]

9 So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. 10 He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" 11 Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. 12 But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough **to honor me as holy** in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."

13 These were the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the LORD and where he showed himself holy among them. (Nu 20:1–13 NIV84).

What was the problem? What did Moses do here that was the problem? Is it that he broke a rule? What does it mean he failed to honor God as holy?

Moses calls them "rebels" and strikes the rock twice—perhaps he was angry, likely he was. What kind of God would this reveal to the people?

What if Moses instead stayed patient, spoke gently to the rock and water came forth, would that have given a different witness?

In Friday's lesson, they quote from *Patriarchs and Prophets* page 418, we will start two sentences before them:

More than this, Moses and Aaron had **assumed power that belongs only to God**. The necessity for divine interposition made the occasion one of great solemnity, and the leaders of Israel should have improved it to impress the people with reverence for God and to strengthen their faith in His power and **goodness**. When they **angrily** cried, "Must **we** fetch you water out of this rock?" they put themselves in God's place, as though the power lay with themselves, men possessing human frailties and passions. Wearied with the continual murmuring and rebellion of the people, Moses had **lost sight of his Almighty Helper**, [Does this remind you of any other Bible story? What about Peter walking on the water, what happened when he lost sight of Jesus? Yes, Moses said "must we fetch you water out of the rock?" But was it as big of an assumed power grab as many suggest? Let's reread Numbers 20:7-8: "*The LORD said to Moses, 8 'Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. **You** will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink. '*" So God said to Moses, "YOU will bring water out of the rock." So when Moses said "Must we bring water out of the rock" was it possible Moses was acknowledging that God was the source because He didn't say "Must I



bring water out of the rock”? I wonder if Moses really thought he had the ability to bring water from the rock? Do you think Moses believed he had that power? To me the bigger issue wasn't the words “Must we” as God Himself said “You will bring” no, the bigger issue is God's character and Moses misrepresented God as angry when God wanted to show His patience, gentleness, mercy, graciousness. It was a form of taking the Lord's name in vain. When we don't act like Jesus it is a form of taking the Lord's name in vain—saying we are Christian—like Christ but then acting in another way misrepresents the name or character of Christ. I have been guilty of this just like Moses was here and I have had to repent, just like Moses and I think this is the bigger issue.] and without the divine strength he had been **left to mar his record by an exhibition of human weakness.** [What was the problem—the action of striking the rock or was the action a result of the problem? The problem was taking the focus off of God, of looking either to the people, the problem, the stressors, the conflict, or to self. Do we struggle with this? Do we see in society today how Satan works to take our minds off of God and get us to focus on other things?] The man who might have **stood pure, firm, and unselfish** to the close of his work had been overcome at last. **God had been dishonored before the congregation of Israel**, when He should have been magnified and exalted. PP 418.2

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “According to this text...”

But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “**Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy** in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.” 13 These were the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the LORD and where he showed himself holy among them. (Nu 20:12–13 NIV84).

What do you think is meant that Moses didn't trust God enough or have faith in God?

Did Moses go to a golden calf for directions when the people accused him, or did he go to God?

Did Moses stop believing in God? What does this mean?

It means in carrying out the action He used is own judgment of what would be best at that moment over the expressed and specific directions God had given Him. When God doesn't give us expressed and specific directions then we ARE to use our own judgment—most decisions in life are like this: what shoes to wear, which route to take to work, how to respond to an accusation etc. But when God gives specific directions we are to follow His directions—or at least talk to Him about a change before we make a change—like David did about building the temple.

It seems there are two possibilities of what happened with Moses and even perhaps a combo of both and we can learn from this experience:



- Perhaps, it went something like this—Moses knew what God had directed, but in the moment, Moses thought—“I think speaking is insufficient. These people are unruly, they are rebels; they are not open to listen to a quiet voice; they need to be reminded of God’s power and authority; they need a stronger hand and display to remind them that if they act up they will get a spanking.” So, he chose to strike the rock twice replacing God’s direction with his own judgment of what is best. I don’t know that he thought any of this, but it is a possibility.
- But another possibility: Perhaps it was just an emotional impulse without thought at all—but that would then be a slip or loss of self-control, allowing emotions to overrule and perhaps that is what happened. When we allow emotions to overrule our judgment we are not trusting God. If we trust God then we stay calm in the face of opposition, but if we don’t trust Him with the events, the outcomes, our own safety etc. then perhaps emotions can get out of control.

What do you think of these possibilities and the lessons for us today?

The lesson asks “What had the Lord told Moses to do, but what did Moses do instead?”

Is the lesson implying that it was the failure to do the correct act that was the problem? Is it implying that we must always do the right actions as instructed or we will be in trouble?

What about David and the showbread—was David doing the right actions that were instructed by God for the use of the showbread? Was David in trouble for that, why was he not in trouble but Moses was?

In each circumstance (Moses and David), the symbolic acts are consistent with the reality of the hearts of the actors and the hearts of the actors determine the difference.

In Moses situation, his actions misrepresented God and the plan of salvation and the attitude of his heart was one of lack of faith, anger, or selfishness. Thus, God took action to discipline and therapeutically intervene to heal Moses and teach the people and all of us through history who read about it.

In David’s situation, his actions represented God beautifully and the plan of salvation as the showbread represents Jesus and those who eat obtain life and health. And David’s attitude was one of faith in God and love for his men with a desire to save his men and honor God.

We cannot look merely to the behaviors, it is the attitudes of the heart that matter.

Are there other Bible examples of people not doing what God directed but the person not being in trouble with God? Paul going to Jerusalem, Paul was warned if he went he would be bound, but Paul went anyway and lost his freedom and eventually his life.

Why wasn’t this sin for Paul? Because his motive was to honor God, to save people, to bring the gospel to the Jews, because there was no selfishness in Paul’s actions, nor rebellion against God, it wasn’t wise, but it wasn’t sinful.



I think in Paul's case God was saying to Paul—I'd prefer you didn't go there. These people will not accept the gospel, they will harm you, your ministry will be cut short. But I know how much you love them, how important it is for you and you won't be satisfied until you go and try. Just know, if you go, this is what is going to happen. In other words, God didn't tell him not to go, He warned him not to, but left it up to Paul.

Read third paragraph, "Verse 9 has Moses..." What do you think of this idea that it was more miraculous to speak to the rock that strike it? I have trouble with that idea? Are they suggesting that the rod was like a magic wand and using it would suggest a talisman and thus reduce the miracle, but if just spoke to it somehow it would be a greater miracle?

TUESDAY

The death of Moses—what do you understand about this?

What is the object lesson demonstrated by Moses not going into the promised land but instead he died, along with all those who wandered in the wilderness for 40 years?

Remember the Bible records real historic people doing real historic events, but these events are recorded to teach us more than history—they are recorded to teach us a larger reality. Many of the historic figures and events serve as object lessons for us—what about this event, what is the lesson?

What does a wilderness represent symbolically? It is a place without water—what does water symbolize in the Bible—i.e. the water of life? It symbolizes God's love, which is the principle of life, what life operates upon.

So a wilderness represents a place devoid of God's love and in fact a place where only from the Rock, who is Jesus, do we find the water of life, or God's love. The wilderness then represents this world of sin—a place where God's love doesn't flow except through Jesus the connecting link between God and us.

What does the Promised Land represent? The New Earth—and who gets to cross over into the New Earth, the real promised land? Those who have had God's love restored in them; those who have had God's law written in their hearts and minds; those who are attached like branches to the Vine Jesus and have Jesus love flow through them.

So why didn't Moses go over to the earthly promised land with Israel? Because the people needed to be taught the truth:

- God is love and the source of life
- God is not angry at them—God is angry at sin which separates them from Him
- He is the source of life and only those restored to love and trust have life



- Moses' actions revealed a breakdown of trust and thus he could not go over to the theatrical promised land because without trust there is no reconnection with God who pours His love/life into our hearts.

But what did the resurrection of Moses reveal? By resurrecting Moses it is demonstrated that Moses did in fact have a healed heart and that bad deeds don't keep one out of heaven, unhealed hearts do. The bad action misrepresented God, and God revealed to Moses a hidden microdot of vulnerability in need of full and complete healing, which Moses received.

After Moses' mistake, after allowing anger to take control of him and acting out of impulse instead of faith, after God pronounced the therapeutic consequence for Moses and the object lesson for the people, **Moses had to choose**, trust God, repent, accept God's will, or rebel, protest, complain, get angry at God, list the long list of good deeds Moses had done for God, the many sacrifices and try to justify self.

Moses' response to God's intervention is evidence that Moses accepted he needed this last little therapeutic intervention. I suspect when we meet Moses in heaven and ask him about it, he will say to us. "Jesus was so good to me there. I really needed that. I didn't realize how my feelings of irritation and frustration over the many years of the people complaining had eroded some of my love for them and undermined my trust in God and I lost site of the bigger picture for a moment. I am so glad God didn't ignore that. I never wanted to be irritable or angry with the people. I love them all so much I would have gladly given my life for them."

So, Moses dies, Read third paragraph SABBATH's lesson, "As Ellen G. White expressed it: 'Moses knew...'" thoughts?

No earthly friend would be permitted to minister to him in his last hours...do you think he was COVID positive?

Of course he wasn't, but is it a torment of soul, to die alone? I recently attended a funeral of a lovely Christian woman, someone who loved our class and the family described the precious memories of their last moments with her.

I have patients who were forbidden to be with family members dying in hospice care. Others, whose family members were hospitalized and no members of the family could stay with them. What we as a society have done in denying families the ability to be with their loved ones as they leave this world is not God's will; it is not in harmony with the principles of heaven; it is not the outworking of love. It is the outworking of fear and selfishness.

Notice EGW states that Moses' severest "trial was his separation from the people of his care and love."

Yes, even the godless in our society recognize the destructiveness of isolation, of separation from loved ones. Our physical and mental health is damaged from social isolation. The immune system is



undermined and we become more susceptible to infections when we are socially isolated. Our risk for post surgical complications increases when we are socially isolated. Our pain levels are higher when we are socially isolated. Depression and suicide rates increase when we are socially isolated. Oh, the damage we have done to people because we have allowed fear to direct our decision making instead of love.

WEDNESDAY

The death of Moses: what death did Moses die—first or second?

Is the first death the death that is the punishment for sin? Do the righteous die the first death? Are they being punished for their sin?

Why is there a first death? Because of sin, AND because of God's grace—God working to destroy sin and save sinners.

Consider the options, what would history look like if there was no first death? Consider the amount of suffering that would take place in our world of sin if people could be tortured—but couldn't die the first death? Or, consider the hopeless state of things if people could die but every death is the second eternal death?

Understand, the first death, as painful as it is to us to lose loved ones into the sleep death, the first death, it is a mercy, a part of God's grace, for the working out of the plan of salvation. God is not the cause of death, even the first death, but God's grace has permitted it to exist, for the body to wear down and cease functioning, while the soul—the individuality of the person (like software on your computer) is stored securely on the heavenly servers, called the Lamb's book of life. So that when Jesus returns, as Paul wrote in Thessalonians, he “will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.”

So, Moses died the first death, the sleep death, the death where his body stopped functioning, but his soul, his psyche, his individuality, was safe and secure with Jesus in heaven. And at some point, we are not given a date, Jesus came to the Earth downloaded the software/soul/psych/individuality of Moses into a reanimated and glorified body and Moses rose from the dead.

This is our hope. Because of Jesus' victory we have the hope of eternal life, if we, like Moses, surrender in trust to Jesus and allow Him to heal our hearts and minds.

How was Moses able to be resurrected and taken to heaven before Jesus came to earth and won the victory over Satan, sin and death in our behalf? Because God lives outside of time and is not restricted to a linear existence. Once Jesus left infinity and entered into our linear existence being born as a babe in Bethlehem and procured the Remedy in our timeline, God who lives outside of time could access what Jesus has achieved and apply it anywhere in time because God lives outside of time. The point being is that Enoch, Moses, Elijah were all saved by Jesus in the exact same way we are.



Read last paragraph, “But how could Christ...” When did Moses come under the power of Satan? This is an interesting question or concept.

All nature groans under the power of sin—the power of sin is the defects and damage that has occurred on earth because of sin, it is the survival of the fittest drive, the decay, randomness, chaos and erosion that happens because we are separated from God’s life-giving glory. We are all born with a terminal condition of fear and selfishness. So, in that sense we are under the power of sin, the power of the carnal nature. But because of God’s grace, God intervenes in human hearts via the Holy Spirit to limit the power of temptation, the power of those drives so that no person is tempted beyond that which they are able. King Darius had Gabriel dispatched to limit the power of the temptation and leave Darius free to choose which action he wanted to take.

But when we choose to reject truth, to reject known revelation, to reject God’s will, we place ourselves in harmony with Satan and allow Satan’s power to gain a foothold in our hearts. Our longings for the evil, the addiction, the next gossip morsel, the next angry word, to retaliate, to hate the perceived enemy etc. grows in our heart. We are not lost, we are not cast off, but we are weakened and we must repent and seek God who will enter our hearts and heal us and then we must choose to say no to the next temptation so that we grow in godly strength.

The sin of Moses did not put Moses into legal trouble, it was a manifestation of the condition of sinfulness into which he was born and would be similar to an occult malignancy, evidence of sin, fear, selfishness still not fully eliminated.

When the author states, “he was death’s lawful captive” that is quite right, not Satan’s lawful captive, but death’s lawful captive. Death is not an intelligence; death doesn’t make accusations; death doesn’t prosecute a case in court; death is a condition, a state of being separated from God who is the source of life. Death is the natural result from breaking God’s design law of life and cutting oneself off from the channel of blessing. Tying a plastic bag over one’s head causes a death condition, at that point we can say, the merits of tying a plastic bag over your head is that you become death’s lawful captive. It is lawful for death to ensue for those who tie a plastic bag over their head.

Because of Jesus taking this death condition and eradicating it and restoring God’s eternal life condition in humanity, Moses through trust received from Jesus a new life, a new heart and right spirit that Moses did NOT develop or achieve, Jesus did. Moses partook of this by trust or faith.

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “How long Moses...” thoughts? Isn’t this a wonderful point? Again an example of God’s grace. What would heaven be like if those who die the first death are in heaven conscious and awake while their little children remain on earth to struggle, suffer, be exploited, abused, enslaved, molested? How many times in history has this happened?



Would heaven be a place of comfort to watch this?

Consider Moses—if you were Moses and you fell asleep in the first death—when would you want Jesus to resurrect you—immediately so you could watch the people you knew personally, your own grandchildren, struggle, suffer, rebel, kill and be killed in war. Or would you want to wait a few centuries until at least the people you see suffering and struggling are not those you knew personally?

Read fourth paragraph, “Without the hope...” What difference does it make in your life to know that Jesus rose again and that we will also?

In our world today do we remember this?

What does it profit a man to gain the entire world and lose his soul? What is the point of this question?

What if we reworded it this way: “What does it profit a man to gain a few decades of life and lose his soul?” The three worthies on the plan of Dura, bow down or go into the fiery furnace—what is the temptation? Save your life, give yourselves a few more years of life, but at what cost?

What was the temptation for the Reformers at the stake?

What is the temptation with COVID? To act in ways that violate God’s design laws in how we treat others so that we can have a few more years of life.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New Roku channel: Come and Reason has just opened a Roku channel and you can find it in Roku by searching for Come and Reason. For those with Roku you can now watch our programs on your TV full screen.

Property update: Renovations have started:

