



2022 1Q In These Last Days: The Message of Hebrews Lesson 8: Jesus—The Mediator of the New Covenant

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “By living a perfect life...” What about this sentence, “Through His death, Jesus canceled the penalty of death that our trespasses demanded...?”

I want to commend them for not saying “Jesus **paid** the death-penalty our trespasses demanded.” Perhaps this new wording is a move in the right direction, but could you word it more accurately?

What law lens are we reading it through?

Why is death the penalty for sin? From where does the penalty of death come? What does the Bible text mean that reads, “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law?” (1 Co 15:56 NIV84).

What is the power that causes death for someone who puts a plastic bag over their head? Is it not the law of respiration—when you break that law life ceases. Sin takes us out of harmony with the law that God built life to operate upon and thus the power that results in death is the law. The law is the law of life, it doesn’t cause death, it is the breaking of the law that does. However, because the law cannot be changed to meet the sinner in sin, it is the power that causes the result.

This is different than imposed law. Imposed law like speed limits. The power that causes the penalty for speeding is not the law—it is an external enforcer who gives and citation and imposes a fine.

But in God’s government, which runs on design law, the power that causes death is the law itself, being out of harmony with it results in death. God doesn’t have to act to inflict pain, suffering or death—sin does that. God has to act to suspend the consequences to give time for people to be restored to harmony with the law.

Imagine someone jumps off the Empire State Building—the power which will cause their death is not enforced from a state agency, even if it is against the state’s law to jump off the building. The power that enforces the death penalty is the laws of gravity, physics, and health. These are design laws.

In this analogy, the human race in Adam and Eve were on the top of the Empire State Building. Satan comes flying by in the form of a flying serpent and says, “Did God say in the day you jump you will surely die? Oh, no you won’t. God knows in the day you jump you will gain the ability to fly and will be like Him so He is trying to keep you down. Look at me. I can fly and you can be even greater than me.” So they jump, and for a second they are thrilled, until they realize they are going only one way, then they are overcome with fear. At that moment God steps in and suspends them in midair and gives



them the option of having Him put them in through a window. As Paul said in Romans, “God left the sins committed beforehand unpunished (Romans 3:25). But what happens if people refuse to allow God to place them back in harmony with the law? If they say leave me alone God and they are being suspended in midair? God eventually withdraws His hand and lets them have what they insist upon, and what happens? They die, from what cause? That is the reality of the sin problem and how God uses power—always to save and heal, never as the source of death.

So, did Jesus come to cancel the penalty of sin, or to take **away the cause** of that penalty?

What did John say, “Look, the Lamb of God, who **takes away the sin** of the world! (Jn 1:29 NIV84)? Not, “the Lamb of God, who takes away the penalty for the sin of the world.”

This idea of paying penalties, or canceling penalties, or removing penalties is all based on the wrong understanding of law, of God’s government, of God’s character, of the nature and character of sin and misunderstanding reality.

Death is the unavoidable result of unremedied sin—of the condition of being out of harmony with God and His law of life. No penalty has to be paid or canceled, what has to happen is the condition which causes death has to be resolved, remedied, cured, fixed, removed—thus Jesus takes away the SIN of the world, not the penalty. But once the sin is removed, the penalty is avoided. Acts of sin do not have to be punished—that is Satan’s view, the sin condition has to be eradicated, purged, or removed.

The second paragraph, quoting from the SDA Bible Commentary, reads “In the original context this phrase described moral obedience to the will of God. The author of Hebrews uses the phrase to show that the sacrifice of Christ fulfilled the will of God in providing an acceptable atonement, which the animal sacrifices had not provided.” (Vol. 7, p. 460).

What does this mean? What makes the atonement acceptable?

What is God’s purpose in sending Jesus to be our Savior, to be our atoning sacrifice? To save from sin—okay, but what is the problem that sin caused that Jesus’ life, death and resurrection resolves? Is the problem with God or God’s law? No! The sin problem exists, occurs, functions, operates within the species human—sin changed the species and corrupted humanity with a death condition that had to be removed.

Jesus partook of our humanity, infected with this death condition and destroyed the death condition and restored God’s life condition becoming the source of salvation for all who trust and obey!

Thus, the atonement is acceptable because it accomplishes exactly what God sent Jesus to accomplish, to restore the human species back to at-one-ment with God. Jesus is the restoring agent, the unifier, cleanser, healer, reconciler and this is quite acceptable to God because it achieves what God intended for Jesus to achieve.

SUNDAY



Read first paragraph, “According to Hebrews...” Was Jesus perfect life, death and resurrection part of a different covenant or the fulfillment of the covenant promise given to Adam in Eden in Genesis 3:15—that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent’s head?

What is the New Covenant and what is the Old Covenant? Is the New Covenant actually *new* or is the writer of Hebrews introducing it to the Hebrew people who should have, but didn’t, know about it, thus it is only *new* to the Hebrew understanding?

So, when we talk about two covenants and old and new, one covenant better than the other, the better one is the original one, the one God promised Adam and the one God reaffirmed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The idea of the New Covenant being the second covenant is not about when in the history of the human race that the two covenants occurred, but when in the history of Israel the two covenants were established.

Abraham’s covenant with God was the same covenant as Genesis 3:15, the promised seed would come and provide salvation. It was at Sinai that the people established a different covenant that in their mind became the first covenant, the only one they knew about. In their history the prophets told them a different covenant would be established and that occurred when Jesus, a Jew, accomplished it. Thus to them it became known as the new covenant, but it was still the fulfillment of the original covenant in Genesis 3:15.

Consider this quote from *Faith I Live By*:

As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, [What are these two laws? If one is changeless and eternal what type of law is this? If one is provisional and temporary what kind of law is this? And why would God use a provisional and temporary law? Where do the 10 Commandments fit in? Are they eternal and changeless or are they provisional and temporary? They are an expression of the eternal and changeless law of God, but the ten commandments in that form were added as a temporary provision or tool based on the need of sinful humanity.] **so there are two covenants.** [What are the two covenants? One based on eternal law—design law, one based on imposed law—temporary provisions. Why? What was the reason for the temporary covenant? Education and protection to lead to the true covenant. What is the eternal covenant?] **The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden,** when after the Fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this covenant offered pardon, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. **It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law.** [Why is fidelity to God’s law a condition of eternal life? Because God’s law is design law—the law upon which life is built. We cannot have life without God’s law being restored as the operating protocol upon which we live.] Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation. {FLB 77.2}

This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18. **This promise pointed to Christ.** So Abraham



understood it, and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. **The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God's law.** [What does this mean? The only way to save sinners was to restore the law of life into humanity, thus the covenant or agreement that God would send Jesus to accomplish what we could not, the eradication of the death principle and the restoration of the law of life—and we, if we trust God, can receive from Him a new heart and right spirit, healing and restoration to life—His law written into our inmost being.] The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." The testimony of God concerning His faithful servant was, "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Gen. 17:1; 26:5. . . . {FLB 77.3}

The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the "second," or "new," covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. {FLB 77.4} [What does this mean? What law lens do you hear it through? The old covenant of symbols and rituals designed to teach was put into effect with the symbolic shedding of animal blood. But that system and that animal blood could not cleanse consciences or remove sin from hearts and minds, it was only a teaching tool. The promise of God, the covenant of grace was given in Eden, but Jesus didn't fulfill the promise until 2000 years ago. It was His sinless life, being tempted in all points like us, but overcoming with His human abilities and dying on the cross to destroy the infection of fear and selfishness, and restoring into humanity God's law of life, that fulfilled the promise. Another way to say this, is that Jesus' victorious life and death made effective, operational, a reality God's promise given in Eden. Thus it was ratified by the blood of Christ.]

The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant. {FLB 77.5}

There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus. The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us today. . . . Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the author and the finisher of our faith. {FLB 77.6}

Consider this quote from *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

The sacrificial offerings were ordained by God to be to man a perpetual reminder and a penitential acknowledgment of his sin and a confession of his faith in the promised Redeemer. **They were intended to impress upon the fallen race the solemn truth that it was sin that caused death.** [What were the sacrifice of animals intended to remind people of? That sin causes death—but what has happened instead? It is taught that God kills for sin, not that sin causes death. How could this happen?] **To Adam, the offering of the first sacrifice was a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which only God could give.** [What do you hear described? Whose hand killed the first sacrifice? According to this author it was Adam—yet many of the penal legal adherents point to God providing coverings of skin for Adam and Eve and suggest God killed the first animal. The Bible never says any such thing.



And this author correctly points out that Adam killed the first sacrifice.] It was the first time he had ever witnessed death, [This author eliminates another possibility that some penal/legal adherents might suggest. Well, sure Adam killed the first ritual sacrifice, God didn't have to confess sins on an animal and kill it like Adam. So he did the first sacrificial killing, but God killed the first animal and provided coverings to demonstrate that God would kill Jesus to provide the robe of righteousness. This author refutes that as well as Adam's sacrifice was the first death he had ever seen. There was no death in Eden before Adam's first sacrifice. Reject the lies of the penal legal theologians.] and he knew that had he been obedient to God, there would have been no death of man or beast. As he slew the innocent victim, he trembled at the thought that his sin must shed the blood of the spotless Lamb of God. **This scene gave him a deeper and more vivid sense of the greatness of his transgression, which nothing but the death of God's dear Son could expiate.** [What does this mean? Does it mean pay a legal penalty? No, it means take away the damage or result of his sin—only Jesus' death could remove the death condition and restore the life condition. What was the purpose of the sacrifice—to teach reality that sin causes death, not God, but God so loved that He would sacrifice Himself to destroy death and bring life and immortality to light.] And he marveled at the infinite goodness that would give such a ransom to save the guilty. A star of hope illumined the dark and terrible future and relieved it of its utter desolation. PP 68.1

So the old testament sacrifices were merely teaching tools to help lead us to participate in the covenant of grace. What did Satan do about this powerful object lesson?

Consider this quote from *Prophets and Kings*:

In patriarchal times the sacrificial offerings connected with divine worship constituted a perpetual reminder of the coming of a Saviour, and thus it was with the entire ritual of the sanctuary services throughout Israel's history.... [Again, what was the purpose in the sacrifices in both patriarchal times and Israel? A perpetual reminder of sin and our coming Savior to save us from sin.] PK 684.4

From the day the Lord declared to the serpent in Eden, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed" (Genesis 3:15), Satan has known that he can never hold absolute sway over the inhabitants of this world. When **Adam and his sons began to offer the ceremonial sacrifices** [what kind of sacrifices? ceremonial, no saving power in them] ordained by God as **a type** of the coming Redeemer, Satan discerned in these **a symbol** of communion between earth and heaven. During the long centuries that have followed, it has been **his constant effort to intercept this communion. Untiringly has he sought to misrepresent God and to misinterpret the rites pointing to the Saviour, and with a great majority of the members of the human family he has been successful.** PK 685.1 [God provides a ritual, an acted-out type or symbolism that is designed to enlighten, to teach, to lead, to convict of sin, to instill hope in the Messiah, to represent the link with Jesus; and Satan works to corrupt this lesson, to undermine these truths, to pervert its power to free minds from sin and guilt. How? What did Satan do?]



While God has desired to teach men that **from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself**, [What is the sacrificial system supposed to teach? That God so loved the world He sent His Son to voluntarily give Himself as the means to fix the sin problem and bring us back into eternal loving communion with God.] the **archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God as one who delights in their destruction**. [How? How could Satan take the symbolism that God had provided to teach us of His love and twist it in such a way that people think God delights in their destruction?] Thus **the sacrifices and the ordinances designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God...**PK 685.2 [How did Satan do this? By getting people to accept the lie about God's law, that it is imposed, and thus sin requires punishment and God is the ultimate punisher and the sacrifices are misinterpreted as means of paying or propitiating and offending God. This is what penal substitution theology does—it misrepresents sin as a legal problem and God as the enforcer of the universe.]

Read second paragraph, “The issue with the old...” Correct, the ceremonial, symbolic system could not cleanse from sin, it could only teach the reality of Jesus who can cleanse from sin. Is that how it is taught?

MONDAY

The second paragraph states, “The issue with the old covenant was that the people broke it.” What are your thoughts on this? What did the people do that broke it?

What is a covenant? It is an agreement—what did the people do that broke their agreement with God?

Could it be that they broke the agreement by taking responsibility for something that was not theirs to do?

In the covenant agreement with God that saves sinners from sin? What is God's responsibility in the covenant and what is ours?

Whose responsibility is it to:

- Overcome sin?
- Live a sinless life?
- Crush the serpents head, thereby destroying him who holds the power of death that is the devil (Heb 2:14)?
- Destroy death and bring life and immortality to light (2Tim 1:10)?
- Reveal the truth about God perfectly (John 17:4, 6)?
- Destroy the devil's work (1John 3:8)?
- Be the connecting link between sinners and God?
- Reconcile all things whether in heaven or earth to God?



- Write God's law fully, completely and perfectly into the living temple of a human heart and mind?
- Heal and restore all sinners who trust God?

What is the responsibility of human sinners in the covenant?

- To trust God to do all of this, open our hearts, and humbly listen, be instructed and choose what He convicts us in our lives to do—i.e. follow and cooperate with His treatment plan for our life.

But what did the Israelites take responsibility for? For keeping the law, for living in harmony with the 10 Commandments etc.

So their failure wasn't merely in breaking rules, it was in misunderstanding the entire problem and what God would do and what they needed to do.

TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "The Greek..." I like this—I agree—Jesus is the one who accomplishes God's purpose in saving the species human. He did this singly, alone, without any aide, assistance, strength, support from other humans to in some way enable Him to accomplish this. He became a real human and redeemed Adam's fall.

Jesus fulfilled God's purpose in both saving humanity from sin, but also in having humanity fulfill God's intention for our creation before human sin. God's intention were many for humanity:

- to be friends with God
- to be the pinnacle of creation
- to share in godly attributes of dominion—leadership and creation—having children
 - Some may wonder why Jesus didn't marry and have children. Because Jesus came to restore God's creation to sinlessness. Jesus as God creates and He creates sinless beings. Jesus could not as a human pro-create sinless beings because His partner would be a sinner and thus He would reveal a falsehood, that God's plan for humans was to procreate sinners. When God creates it is flawless and God's intention for Adam and Eve in Eden was to have sinless children. Jesus could not participate in that aspect of the human experience because no sinless woman existed.
- to reveal truths about God in their living out God's laws in their leadership of love and their having children

Jesus restores humanity back into unity, friendship, with God so that human beings can live in harmony with God and fulfill God's purposes for our creation.

And He simultaneously made available salvation for all other human beings who choose it.



Read third paragraph, “Christ’s death makes the institution...” I really liked the first two paragraphs we just read, but I am not as thrilled about this one. When they say “it satisfies the claims of the first covenant” are they referring to the old covenant at Sinai? But didn’t we already determine there has only been one covenant in reality, the covenant of grace, and the old covenant so-called is the Israelites is not the covenant of grace? And at Sinai the people took responsibilities to fulfill or accomplish that which was never theirs to accomplish as part of the agreement with God?

So, I don’t understand what they mean by the idea that Jesus, by fulfilling the claims of the first covenant He is able to institute the second covenant? Does that make sense to anyone?

What legal obligations did Jesus take upon Himself? They declare this, but what are these legal obligations?

What does the law of God require?

What law lens do we answer through?

Imposed law—it requires punishment, penalty, legal adjustments.

Design law—it requires restoration to the protocols for life.

So there is an aspect of fulfilling what the law requires, but it is not legal in the common meaning of that term. The legal aspects come from Satan’s lies about God’s law being imposed.

So here are some quotes from EGW—consider what she is describing that the law requires, these are just a small sampling:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, **and developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.--RH, Apr 5, 1898. (2SM 211.) {2MCP 564.1}

The divine law requires us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. Without the exercise of this love, the highest profession of faith is mere hypocrisy. . . . {A New Life NL 32.1}



While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, [they pursued a legal righteousness] if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. **God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires...** {MB 54.2}

What does God's law require? Healing, the restoration of God's living law of love into the species. So Christ is the guarantor of this perfect, sinless humanity, the One through whom God accomplished His purpose of perfecting the species human and eradicating the infection of sin.

WEDNESDAY

Read fourth paragraph, "The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been,—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents,—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized" (Steps to Christ 62).

Why is the condition of eternal life perfect obedience to the law of God? For the same reason that the condition of temporal life harmony with the law of respiration—both laws are laws upon which life is built. To break the law of respiration results in death. To break God's eternal law, the law of love, is to break the protocols life is built upon and results in death.

What about the idea that the happiness of the entire universe would be in peril if life was granted on any condition short of perfect harmony with God's law? Why?

What is required for safety in the hereafter? That all intelligent beings love God and others more than self, that all are safe neighbors. Can this be achieved through having an angel with a flaming sword on every street corner to enforce the law? No, it is only possible when the law of love is written permanently into every heart such that every being would rather die than break God's law of love.

How will other beings in heaven, like the angels, know who of us are safe to bring to heaven?

I have heard some speculate that this is the purpose of the investigative judgment, to give angels an opportunity to review the records of their future neighbors in order to take away their anxieties and concerns about having us there.

What are your thoughts about this? Why is this not necessary, and in fact, would appeal to the legal view of things?



God is the God of reality—what is it that destroys the wicked? Sin, and when are the wicked destroyed by sin? When they are exposed to God’s life-giving glory, the infinite fires of truth and love. What do the wicked experience when they are exposed to God’s life-giving glory? Horrible pain and anguish—and from where does the pain and anguish they experience originate? Is the suffering being inflicted by God? Is it something coming out from God? Who else is standing in the very same fires—the righteous and do those fires cause any suffering on the righteous? No—the fires are not harmful, they are truth and love. But what does truth and love do to the wicked? It causes them to no longer be able to avoid their own sinful condition, they experience themselves in contrast to God’s sinless perfection and they suffer from unremedied sin.

And what do they do then? They beg for the mountains to fall on them and hide them, they flee, they surrender their lives and no longer want to live. They self-terminate just like Judas did.

Thus, those who would be poor neighbors in heaven become self-evident as their terminal condition cannot be hidden in the presence of God’s life-giving glory. So there is no need for a pre-advent record review on part of the angels in order for them to feel comfortable with those of us brought there.

The bottom green section states, “Christ has satisfied the demands of the covenant” what are those demands?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “The first covenant document...” Why was the law written by God on tablets of stone? Because God’s law of love was no longer written on the hearts of human beings!

And what are some of God’s purposes in writing it on stone?

- A diagnostic instrument to expose sin in us
- A protective hedge for our childhood
- A promise of what we will look like when God heals us—we will then have no other gods before Him etc.
- But could it also be an object lesson—that our hearts are stony and stone cannot live or love and the legal rules along with the stony religious hearts that cherish their rules must be removed and tender hearts that love God and people must be recreated within?

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws” (Eze 36:26–27 NIV84).

Read second paragraph, “But in the new covenant...” So is the issue about rule-keeping or about motive of the heart? The last paragraph states “True obedience comes from the heart as an expression of love.”



And when the Holy Spirit is in the heart the motive is right (Spirit of love) and a person grows in understanding of the truth so that over time the behaviors come into greater harmony with design law, with how reality actually works and functions. So an immature person with right motives may still engage in behaviors that are not as God designed (unhealthy life practices for instance) but as they continue to love God and grow their minds gain insight and discernment and wisdom and the mature in their understanding of reality and their behaviors naturally change to live out what they now understand to be best.

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, “The closer you come to Jesus....” read first question.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sabbath February 19 the Courthouse is NOT available. We will meet at the normal time at Bake Crafters and after class we will have a potluck and then discussion.

Building Update:

- Building inspector approved our plans and drawings without requiring an architect sign off saving us \$20,000-\$30,000 and months of time
- Both building inspector and fire marshal approved the renovations
- Rough in begins February 7

Materials in Australia: Simon and Maani Harrison have a Facebook group in Australia and have the following Come and Reason resources available in Australia:

- The Remedy New Testament
- The Remedy Psalms
- *Could It Be This Simple?*
- The Heavenly Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment for the Modern World
- First set of tracts

You can email Simon at australia@comeandreason.com

Materials in South Africa: Jacques van den Heever has materials available in South Africa you can email him at comeandreason.sa@gmail.com