



2022 4Q On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope—Lesson 10 The Fires of Hell

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

The lesson describes a traditional view of hell with never ending torment and in Catholic theology a place of punishment to purge sin called purgatory. Then goes on to say, “In short, a false understanding of human nature has led to terrible theological errors.”

I would suggest, it is a false understanding of human nature coupled with:

- A false understanding of God’s law
- A false understanding of the sin problem
- A false understanding of the solution for the sin problem
- And ultimately, a false understanding of God

The idea of an immortal soul is coupled with the idea that God’s law functions like human law and God must, for justice sake, punish sin. The idea that justice requires punishment is so deeply imbedded as an assumed truth that most people cannot even step back long enough to examine the question, to consider the implications and study the evidence for themselves. Many people almost immediately close off their minds at the suggestion that God doesn’t use power to inflict punishment for sin. And to support the false conclusion that He does use His power to inflict punishment for sin they will contrast that idea with other falsehoods of various kinds like—

- “well if God doesn’t punish sin, then there is no punishment for sin and you must be teaching universalism.”
- Or “if God doesn’t punish sin, then Jesus didn’t have to die for our sins and you don’t believe in substitutionary atonement.”

So, before discussing such topics, it is helpful to first define our understanding of God’s law. If we take the position that God’s law functions no differently than human law, imposed rules requiring infliction of punishment, then the mind is trapped in the lie that God must punish sin.

But if we worship God as Creator and recognize that as Creator God builds reality, space, time, energy, matter, and life, and that reality is built on the laws of reality, law of gravity, physics, health etc. Then we realize that life and health are only possible in harmony with God and His design laws for life.



Satan and humans cannot build reality, we are created beings. We can only make up rules and use force to punish rule breaking. This idea of governing is Satan's method and he infects hearts and minds with the idea that God's law works this way. And then, when it comes to understanding passages of Scripture about punishment for sin, hell etc. people project in the false belief that justice requires inflicted punishment, and since God is just God must inflict punishment. And it is falsely taught that if we don't get our just punishment put off onto someone else, then God must punish us, and then the only question is whether the *punishment* is eternal or the *punishing* is eternal—and that is determined by how we understand human nature as the lesson says.

The lesson takes the position that the eternal burning torment of the traditional view, based on the idea that man has natural immortality and sin must be punished is worse than the common SDA view (**but we realize, not the true SDA view**) in which it is taught that man is mortal and sin must be punished.

Which is worse?

In the eternal punishing view, God created human beings in Eden with natural immortality, it is true, that in that view God didn't really consider the implications, didn't anticipate the potential downside, didn't have foreknowledge to know what was going to happen, and when Adam and Eve sinned, God was heartbroken, sent His Son to die to pay the penalty, but sadly, there is nothing more He can do for the wicked. They have immortality and cannot die so their rejection of salvation results in eternal torment and it really saddens God. He never wanted this for them, He just doesn't have any other option.

In the common SDA view, which is not the true SDA view, it is correctly taught that man was made mortal, and immortality is a gift of God to the righteous. But it is falsely taught that sin requires externally inflicted punishment and because there are different levels of sin, Hitler sinned much more than a teenager who never accepted Jesus and died during a burglary, for instance, then in justice, God and the saints sit in committee and determine how much suffering must be inflicted upon each person to satisfy justice. And then God reigns down fire upon the wicked and God uses His power to perform a miracle to keep the wicked alive in the fires to ensure they suffer the proper time they deserve before God kills them.

Which view is better?

Do either of these views actually say anything good about God? In the eternal torment view, God is inept, blind, foolish, hapless, doesn't have foreknowledge or if He does and created humans with immortality knowing they would sin then God is cruel and a tyrant. And in the limited torture view, God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering, torture, and death—the one from whom we need protection. God is saying love me or else I will torture and kill you. A violation of the laws of liberty, love, and truth.

Both views undermine our ability to know and trust God.



So, what is the truth? This section on the consuming fire and eternal burning is from our Three Angel's magazine, so if you want to share this with others, you can find it there.

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah describes this fire:

“The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: ‘Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?’” (Isaiah 33:14 NIV84)

What is being described? Hell, the torment of the third angel. But who can live in this fire? Who will spend eternity in the flames? Isaiah gives a shocking answer:

“He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil!” (33:15 NIV84)

- When God spoke to Moses from within the bush, the bush burned, but did not get consumed. (Exodus 3:2-4, Acts 7:30-36)
- When God came to Mt. Sinai, His presence was described as a “consuming fire,” but the elements did not melt. (Exodus 24:17)
- When Solomon's Temple was dedicated, the priests couldn't enter because the brightness of God's fiery glory was too great, but the Temple did not burn down. (2 Chronicles 5:14, 7:1-3)
- Lucifer, before his fall, walked among the “fiery stones” of God's presence. (Ezekiel 28:14, 16)
- God takes His throne “rivers of fire” come out from Him and billions stand in this fire without any harm. (Daniel 7:9, 10)
- Jesus, prior to His crucifixion, in a body still subject to death, was bathed in heavenly fire, yet no harm came to Him. His clothes didn't even get scorched. (Matthew 17:2)
- Hebrews tells us that “our God is a consuming fire,” (12:29) and the Song of Solomon states: “love is as strong as death its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away.” (8:6, 7 NIV84)

The lie that Satan has foisted upon us is this: the place you don't want to go, the place you don't want to be, is the place of eternal burning and consuming fire. But, as amazing as it may seem, that place is God's very presence!

The “burning sulfur” described by the third angel is from the Greek *thion* and is a form of the word *thios*. *Thios* means God, those who study *thios* study theology. Thus, *thion* is divine fire or the fire of God's glory. The righteous will spend eternity bathed in the flames of God's fiery presence. But the wicked are consumed in that eternal fire.

When Christ returns He doesn't come veiling His glory, but in the full splendor of His holy, loving, righteous self; brighter than the sun! Rivers of blazing love surging out from Him, the earth will be



bathed in His glory! (Isaiah 6:3) The righteous will be transformed by the life-giving fires of love, just like Moses was transformed after being in God's presence. He came down off the mountain with his face radiating heavenly fire, but Moses wasn't in pain. He didn't have third degree burns. His whiskers weren't even singed. But the children of Israel, unrepentant, still filled with sin and selfishness, when they saw Moses' face, they shrank back and begged him to wear a veil. They couldn't stand the heavenly light. (Exodus 34:33-35)

The fire of infinite love is painful only when the mind is not healed. The guilty conscience, the unregenerate heart that prefers lies and selfishness cannot tolerate the light of love and truth.

This is why the Bible describes that the wicked are destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:8)

But how can this be? How can a fire that doesn't burn up bushes, buildings, or faces consume the wicked in the end? What kind of fire is this?

This is the fire of love and truth that glorifies God's people while it cleanses the earth of sin.

A fire that consumes sin? What is that?

It is not the fire of combustion, which burns material substances, things made out of molecules like our homes, furniture, and books, because sin is not made out of physical matter. Sin is made out of ideas, thoughts, concepts, attitudes, and beliefs. At its core, sin is composed of two elements: lies (Satan is the "father of lies"), (John 8:44) and selfishness. Fires of combustion don't destroy ideas. Fires that burn material substances don't consume lies and selfishness.

So, what does consume a lie? The truth! And what consumes selfishness? Love! The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of both truth and love. Amazingly, when the Spirit fell at Pentecost, they all witnessed two streams of fire over each person, (Acts 2:3) yet no one got burned. The building didn't burn down. Their clothes didn't ignite. It was their hearts and minds that were cleansed by that fire – the fire of love and truth.

What happens in the mind of those who reject truth and cling to falsehood, when the truth of God comes shining through? They suffer torment of mind, anguish of heart, and suffering of psyche. And what happens to those whose hearts are filled with selfishness, when the pure, undiluted, love of God comes blazing through? The terrible suffering that unremoved sin causes.

What will it be like, on that day, for that abusive mother, for that sexually deviant father, to look into the mirror of undiluted truth and see their own selves as they really are, no self-distortion, no lies, just the plain truth? What will it be like for such a person to have full awareness of what their actions did to their child? What will it be like to have this truth sear through their mind in front of the entire universe?



There will be terrible suffering in the flames of God's love, but not inflicted as an external penalty. That suffering to come will be the unavoidable torture of soul that unremedied sin inflicts.

This is why some do suffer longer, not because God uses power to inflict punishment, but because some have more lies and selfishness in their hearts that resist and fight against the fires of truth and love.

The Bible confirms that the fire of God's presence consumes sin, not material substances. God demonstrated that the "consuming fire," which destroys the wicked, is not a fire that burns elements. In Leviticus, we read about Aaron's sons who, as priests, brought unauthorized fire before the Lord:

Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD... Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, "Come here; carry your cousins outside the camp, away from the front of the sanctuary." So they came and carried them, **still in their tunics**, outside the camp, as Moses ordered (Leviticus 10:1-5 NIV84 emphasis mine).

The "fire of the Lord" "consumed" them, yet their bodies weren't charred and their tunics were still intact.

The third angel warns, that the wicked are tormented in "the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb" (Revelation 14:10 NIV84). It is God's very presence where the consuming fires of love and truth originate and in His presence the wicked can no longer hide from their own corrupt histories, the reality of their own wickedness.

And eventually, after all the wicked, like Nadab and Abihu, have been consumed yet their physical bodies not destroyed, when only dead bodies of the unrepentant remain, then the fires of combustion, spoken of by Peter in which the elements melt in the terrible heat consumes all that remains and the earth is recreated free of all sin a new earth, the home of the righteous (2Peter 3:12-13). But the third angel tells us will never forget:

And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever.

Smoke is what is left *after* something is burned. The smoke symbolizes the memory, the lessons learned of what unremedied sin does to sinners—it torments and destroys. This lesson will never be forgotten. The righteous will remember for all eternity that the wicked suffered and died, not at God's hand, but because of their condition and because they refused to allow God to heal them. The righteous will remember for all eternity that every person who is eternally lost is lost only because they prefer non-existence to living in a universe of love and truth.

I have just walked us through the Scripture evidence for our position, I have said the common SDA view is not the true SDA view, so to back that up, let me give you a quote from one of the founders of



the SDA church from the book *The Great Controversy* and we will unpack it and discover our view is the one consistent with the founders of the SDA church.

God has given to men a **declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin.** [what do you think that declaration is?] "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." [What do you hear? What is His method? Why will God not clear the guilty? What law lens do you see it through, imposed or design?] Exodus 34:6, 7. "All the wicked will He destroy." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Psalm 145:20; 37:38. **The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.** {GC 541.2} [What does this mean? Do you hear retributive justice and think using power to inflict harm, pain, punishment? This would be imposed law thinking. Or do you hear the power and authority of the divine government will be employed—used—to put down rebellion through design law? What is God's means, methods, power? It is the power of love, truth and freedom. Notice what is described in the following paragraphs]

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. [If this is true, then can God be the source of inflicted torture, punishment, and death? Is it possible to get free decisions, uncoerced choices, friendship, trust, loyalty, and love by threatening to kill those who don't choose what you want them to choose?] **He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence.** [What reason would God have us obey? Not fear of punishment, but appreciation of His character of love, which cannot exist if God is the source of inflicted punishment. It is Satan's view that God must punish sin because it makes God out to be the source of death and undermines love.] And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. [What are the principles of God's character? Do these principles coerce, compel, or torture?] Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** [Does love seek to inflict pain and suffering to torture and punish? But notice what is describe next as love for our enemies] **God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited.** [What does this mean? What law lens do you hear this through? What is justice? And what are God's judgments? Do you hear this legally and punitively or diagnostically and therapeutically? What is justice? Doing what is right, and what determines what is right and wrong? The law, so what law? In God's government it is God's law, which is design law, which is the law of love, which means God wants to minimize pain, minimize suffering, and heal all who will let him, but ultimately God's



law seeks to stop the torment of those who won't allow Him to heal them. Thus, God's justice is like the parent whose child with a terminal illness who refuses every intervention that would heal them, the parent does NOT seek to prolong and protract the suffering, but to allow the suffering to end. Notice what is described next.] **He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character.** [Why can't God make them happy? Because they refuse to participate in His methods, they refuse to allow Him to heal them. And happiness is the by-product of healthiness and healthiness is only possible in harmony with God's design laws for life. Thus God's method for making us happy is writing His law in our hearts and minds and freeing us from sin, which is transgression or living out of harmony with His laws.] He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. [How do they make void His law? By replacing it with a false law—imposed law. Think how sad it will be for those legal Sabbath-keepers who wouldn't enter Pilates house but sought to kill Jesus. Imposed law-keepers, worshipping the imposed law-giver and become like the god whose government is based on made up rules and inflicted punishments—the god of this fallen world. How many today are in the same situation?] While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; **but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided.** [What determines their destiny? Is it a judicial finding in a heavenly court, or the choice of the sinner to permanently harden their heart, searing their conscience, so that the work of the Holy Spirit has no impact upon them?] **Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will?** [These are rhetorical questions, meaning that God will not do this, which means He cannot be the source of inflicted punishment and death. He does not use His power to perform miracles to keep them alive, chained to His side in the fires of His presence.] {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. [Why? What does this mean?] **Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters.** [How did it become fixed? Who fixed it there? If God "judges" their characters fixed, does He make it fixed or is God's judgment the accurate diagnosis of what they have chosen to do to themselves?] Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,—every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,—could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of



praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no;** [Why not? Does God uses divine power to prevent them from being there, to inflict torture upon them, or is their condition incompatible with God's design for life? And notice the language of the author, "Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb?" Will the righteous "endure" God's presence, or thrive in God's presence? Will God's glory be oppressive to the righteous? Why do the wicked experience God's presence as torment? Does God treat the wicked differently or is it the nature and character of the wicked that respond differently to the infinite fires of love and truth that emanate from the presence of God? Notice, what this author gives as the reason.] **years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven;** but ***they*** have never trained the mind to love purity; ***they*** have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven.** [Why are they unfit? Is it that they don't have the right legal payment in record books, or is it something actually within them? Notice why they are not fit] **Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire.** [This is huge, what do they experience as torture? Purity, holiness and peace! Is this God using His power to cause pain, to inflict suffering, is there something coming out from God other than goodness, mercy, love and truth? It is their condition which experiences goodness as pain, purity as torment, holiness and suffering. The torture happens because of sin in them, not as an infliction from God!] **They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction,** that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. [What do the wicked actually want? Separation from God! Why do they want it? To be at peace, to stop their suffering; So, in this situation what is the just action for God to take, what is the merciful action for God to take? Is there a difference between justice and mercy? Notice the next sentences] **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable. [This is design law, this is justice and mercy, and justice and mercy rightly understood are always an expression of God's character of love.] {GC 543.1}

SUNDAY

Read Mark 9:47-48:

And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.' (Mark 9:47-48 NIV84).

What does this text mean? Is it literal or metaphor?

From the SDA Bible commentary:



Worm. Greek *skōlēx*, “a maggot,” or “a worm.” As Major, Manson, and Wright (*The Mission and Message of Jesus*, pg 123) comment, “The undying worm is not the symbol of a soul which cannot die, but is the symbol of corruption which cannot be purged.” In verse 43 “life” is set forth in contrast with “the fire that never shall be quenched.” In Rom. 6:23 and many other scriptures “life” stands in contrast with “death.” In John 3:16 the contrast is between “everlasting life” and “perishing.” It is obvious that Jesus here intends the same contrast. “The fire is not quenched” stands in apposition to “their worm dieth not,” and is an equivalent expression, yet it seems incongruous that maggots should pursue their work in the presence of fire. There is nothing in the word *skōlēx*, “worm,” that even remotely justifies the popular explanation equating “worm” with “soul” (see on Isa. 66:24), a fact recognized by almost all commentators, whatever they may think personally about the state of man in death. Nichol, F. D., ed. (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 5, p. 636). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

So, what is the meaning of the expression?

It is better to die to self here and rid from our lives anything that fuels selfishness, then to retain the links to selfishness and die eternally. For those who solidify themselves in selfishness will not have the worm or corruption of selfishness removed but will be consumed in the fires of love and truth.

Here is how I paraphrased this in *The Remedy*, along with a footnote:

And if you have the habit of using your eye to look at material that warps your character and sears your conscience, then cut it out. It is better to have a healed mind and enter into eternal life with one eye than have both eyes and a warped character and be cast into torment, where 'their worm of selfishness does not die, and the fire of truth and love will burn eternally.' (Mark 9:47-48 REM)

- Footnote: Their worm of selfishness does not die" is intended to say, "where they do not die to self," or "where selfishness is not removed from their character." Thus, they do not survive when all sin and selfishness is consumed by the life-giving glory of God's fiery presence.

MONDAY

The lesson states, “When qualifying fire (Matt. 18:8, Matt. 25:41, “everlasting”), it implies that the fire will not go out until it fully consumes what is being burned.”

Thoughts? This is a common error made by those who believe the fire is artificially inflicted by God as punishment. When we return to design law and the evidence of Scripture we recognize, as we have already documented in the lesson today, that the eternal fire is the fire of God’s life-giving glory. It is Satan’s fondest desire to have this fire go out, for it would mean the end of God.



But we are thankful that the fire never goes out. But we are also thankful that the fire is not harmful, it is life-giving, what is harmful is sin. And the sad fact is that most people are more afraid of the fire of God's life-giving glory that heals and restores than the sin in their life that torments and kills.

TUESDAY

The lesson is about purgatory. Because imperial/imposed-law requires punishment for wrongdoing, the church of the Dark Ages taught that sin must be punished. This led to the doctrine of purgatory, where after death, conscious souls have their sins purged through punishment. In Roman Catholic theology, entrance into heaven requires the “remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven,” for which indulgences may be given which remove “either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin,” such as an “unhealthy attachment” to sin. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, “The celebration of the Christian Mystery.” The Holy See. The Catholic Church. Retrieved 14 March 2017.)

Catholic doctrine teaches that those who die in grace, but who have not yet fulfilled the temporal punishment, due to their sin, can do so in purgatory.

One of the major doctrines that the great reformer Martin Luther rejected was the teaching that conscious souls are punished in purgatory. He disagreed with this doctrine in two ways:

- First, he did not believe in a conscious soul that could experience punishment, and instead taught that the saints sleep peacefully:
 - “It is enough for us to know that souls do not leave their bodies to be threatened by the torments and punishments of hell, but enter a prepared bedchamber in which they sleep in peace.” (Weimarer Ausgabe, 43, 360, 21–23 (to Genesis 25:7–10); also Exegetica opera latina, Vol 5–6 1833 p. 120 and the English translation: Luther’s Works, American Edition, 55 vols. (St. Louis: CPH), 4:313.)
- Second, Luther put forth a new theory designed to free people from both the fear of purgatory and the exploitation of indulgences to buy loved ones their freedom from further punishment in purgatory. He expanded Anselm’s satisfaction theory of atonement by adding inflicted punishment. Luther taught the idea that all sins by all humans from all time were placed on Christ at the cross and punished by God at the cross. Thus, for the saints, there were no unpunished sins remaining to be punished, thus there was no need for purgatory. (Paul Althaus, Die Theologie Martin Luthers, 7th ed. (1994), 179, 191-195.)

Unfortunately, the same root lie underpins both purgatory and Luther’s solution—that God’s law functions like human law and that breaking the law (an act of sin) requires inflicted punishment, and therefore Luther’s solution and penal substitution theology continue to misrepresent the sin problem to be the legal and inflicted punishment for sin coming from an authoritarian god.

The completion of the Reformation requires the rejection of this imposed law lie, in order to take the eternal gospel to the world to prepare the world for Christ’s return.



How is the SDA investigative judgment message similar to purgatory taught by the Roman church?

- Both teach that at death sinners are not prepared to enter heaven
- Both teach that actions can be done to or for the dead complete the salvation process
- The Roman church teaches the sinner is conscious and suffering to pay their unpaid legal sin-debt to complete the necessary temporal punishment for their sin
- The SDA church teaches that the legal payment for their sin was paid by Jesus at the Cross and Jesus as Mediator is in heaven applying that legal payment to legal documents to purge from the record of the saints any remaining unpaid legal debt that would be required for them to pay after the resurrection. But for those who have not surrendered to Jesus, their sins remain on the books to be punished after the thousand years.
- The Catholic view as remaining sins being punished in purgatory to purify the sinner and take them to heaven.
- The SDA view has the remaining sins of those who have not placed their trust in Jesus being punished in their body through a miracle and torture at the end of the thousand years.
- Our view is that no legal process is going on at all, only healing and restoration through the achievements of Christ. In heaven, Jesus applies His perfection to the hearts, minds, and characters of all who trust Him, so that “it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.” At death humans sleep as Scripture teaches and Luther agrees. All who die trusting in Jesus, despite not yet achieving the full healing of their hearts and minds, while asleep in Him, have His perfection applied to their individuality so that when they arise from the dead at the resurrection they arise perfected. The thief on the cross does not arise with desires to steal. Martin Luther does not arise addicted to alcohol or hating the Jews and longing to kill them. And for the living, this settling into the truth about God and His methods and being transformed to love God and others more than self, occurs in them so that they become faithful and trustworthy friends of God, who like Job, will not betray that trust even in the face of persecution and death.

The real problem with the Roman view or the penal legal Investigative Judgment view, is not the underlying idea that a further work is being accomplished by Jesus in the lives of the saved, but how that work is perverted into something penal/legal rather than healing and restorative.

Non-SDA Protestants don't have any further work at all going on. For them, everything was accomplished at the cross, all we do is accept it and then we are saved, there is certainly the doctrine of maturing, sanctifying that occurs during this life, but nothing more for God to do in the lives of the saints to actually remove sin until glorification.

We view it this way. The species human was saved in Jesus, who, as the second Adam, redeemed the species from the corruption Adam placed upon it. But, individual members of this species still must partake of Christ's victory by faith. That victory is not a legal adjustment in books, but a transformation of the person, the soul, we:



- partake of the divine nature
- have new hearts and right spirits
- receive the mind of Christ
- have the heart circumcised by the Holy Spirit
- are reborn
- have the heart of stone removed and a tender heart created within
- have the law written upon the heart and mind
- receive a new name which is a new character
- partake the flesh and blood or bread and wine which symbolize the life of Christ taken into the soul itself
- And some people experience the full healing transformation on this earth and are ready to go straight into heaven, like Enoch and Elijah. But others do not experience this full healing in their life, but die trusting Jesus with elements in heart not yet harmonized with God. For those individualities, Jesus purifies them so that when they arise in the resurrection they arise perfected in character and no longer struggling with any residual sin problem. This is the work of the cleansing of the sanctuary, His High Priestly ministry.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks “Why is there a resurrection and a judgment?”

This is a very valuable question, reasoned through it brings to light multiple truths.

- If people receive their reward at death, either paradise or hell, what is the purpose of the resurrection and judgment?
- If the SDA view of mortality of the soul is correct, why raise the wicked who are “asleep” to experience more pain and suffering that will not result in their repentance, only to kill them again?

What is the purpose of the resurrection after the 1000 years?

There are four judgments described in Scripture, if you would like to read about the other three, go to our blog on [The Four Judgments](#)

The Great White Throne Judgment is the fourth and final judgment.

I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. ... And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were **judged** according to what they had done as recorded in the books (Revelation 20:11, 12 NIV84).

What is being described? Is this a legal process? What law lens do we read Scripture through?



What is recorded in the books of life? Or should we say the book of your life? The names of people (Philippians 4:3, Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:15, 21:27). But in Scripture, names are symbolic of one's character. So, what is recorded is our actual characters, which we have developed through our judgment of God—our judgment to trust Him, to open our hearts to Him, to embrace His design laws and methods of truth, love, and liberty or not. Our judgments of God result in whether we open the heart and are reborn—or harden our hearts in selfishness. Our characters develop along whichever line our judgment decides about God, whether we trust Him and His methods or reject them. Thus, we are judged, diagnosed, based on what is the actual condition of our character.

Here's another way to say it: The books of heaven record the accurate picture of who we are in heart—they are like medical records. The records don't determine the condition; they merely record the condition.

This is exactly what Jesus taught when He said:

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

What is being described? Character—the actual condition of each heart, a diagnosis of what the reality actually is. God is the God of reality, the builder of all Creation. His laws are the protocols upon which life operates. There has never been a heavenly judicial law court like humans make; the idea that God is an arbitrary judge who is the source of inflicted punishment for sin is a lie from Satan. The fourth and final judgment is not judicial; it is the final confirmation of the accurate diagnosis of each heart and mind:

He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still (Revelation 22:11 NKJV).

So what is the purpose of resurrecting people at the end of the thousand years? To demonstrate that God's diagnosis, what is recorded in the books about the quality of character of each lost person is accurate. God does not expect us to believe simply because He says so, but because it is so. And when God raises the wicked their own actions demonstrate the accurate diagnosis of their terminal sin-state.

When the wicked are raised the final time the New Jerusalem the saints, Jesus, and His angels are on the Earth and in the city, and the gates of the New Jerusalem are open.



And what do the wicked do when they see the city? Do they come to Jesus in repentance and ask for cleansing from sin? Do they try to peacefully enter the city?

Who keeps them out of the city? They do. They do not want to come in, and what does this reveal? That even with the New Jerusalem upon the Earth those settled into sin, lies, rebellion, selfishness will not be convinced, will not repent, and there is nothing more God can do for them. Every single lost soul choose to be lost. They would rather die than live in God's universe the way God created life to operate.

And when the fires of infinite truth and love are released and flow out of the city onto the Earth, and Jesus is weeping, He has had to handle it in such a way that every single saved person can go up to Him and put an arm around Him and say, "It is okay, we know there is nothing more you could have done."

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Christian Psychiatrist Wanted: If you are a Christian psychiatrist, or know one, who is interested in coming to Liberty University to be part of our team in building a world-class scientifically sound but biblically consistent treatment program and residency program, then contact me at trjennings@liberty.edu.

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