



2023 1Q Managing for the Master Till He Comes—Lesson 2 God's Covenants with Us

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SABBATH

The Title, “God’s Covenants with Us” suggests multiple covenants—how many covenants are there?

If you do an online search many Christian websites will list at least these five covenants:

1. **Noah Covenant**

The first covenant appeared after the great flood. God solemnly promises never to destroy creation again (Gen. 9:8-11).

2. **Abrahamic Covenant**

The second covenant of God is with Abraham. God chooses him and blesses him. Through him, blessings will come to nations. (Gen.12:2)

3. **Mosaic Covenant**

Abraham’s descendants, the tribe of Israel, were next to establish a covenant with God. As His set of people, the covenant expects Israel to obey the commands God gave to Moses. (Exod. 20)

4. **Davidic Covenant**

The tribe of Israel then became a great nation ruled by King David. God’s covenant with David involves David’s descendants and promises that He will build a dynasty for David. (1 Chr. 17)

5. **New Covenant**

The New Covenant is God’s own solution to men’s failures in keeping the covenants. And it is fully expressed through the Person of Jesus. He fulfilled all covenants.

Are there multiple covenants between God and humanity, or is there only one and all the various other covenants we think of, such as those listed above, are simply extensions of, or further development of, or the working out of the one covenant?

Does it make a difference if we see the covenants as multiple individual covenants or as the advancement and working out of a single covenant?

What do you think? One or multiple covenants? And does it make a difference which way we understand it, if so what is the significance?

- When we think of the sin problem and God’s solution for it, how many sin problems are there?
- How many human species have fallen into sin?
- How many solutions are there to the sin problem?



There is one human species—created in Adam—and one sin problem infecting the one human species, and one solution for that problem, Jesus Christ who is the second Adam.

This truth would suggest that there is one covenant, one plan, one remedy to the sin problem and every human who is saved is saved through the application of the same remedy provided by God through Jesus. Paul wrote:

There is **one body** and **one Spirit**, just as there is **one hope** to which God has called you. There is **one Lord, one faith, one baptism**; there is **one God** and Father of all, who is Lord of all, works through all, and is in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6 GNT).

This perspective would cause us to read the Bible as a whole, to recognize a single story being worked out through the pages of human history—the battle between Christ and Satan. God’s covenant in Genesis 3:15, the covenant of grace in which He promised to send Jesus as our Savior is the only covenant—and every other additional covenant is merely the working out, expansion, development, application of that covenant in human history.

For instance:

- the covenant to Noah was to keep open the avenue for Messiah to fulfill the promise of Genesis 3:15—it was an act of mercy, a therapeutic action of grace with a promise not to fear such a worldwide flood again
- the covenant to Abraham was the focusing down on which branch of the human family through which the Messiah would come
- the Mosaic covenant was the working through that family to keep open the avenue for Messiah to come and to infuse into human culture and education the Bible and object lessons to teach the one covenant of grace
- the Davidic covenant focuses further down the branch of the human family through whom the Genesis 3:15 promise, the covenant of grace, would be fulfilled—through Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David but it is still the same covenant, but with the added promise of successful rulership
- the new covenant is the application into the hearts and minds of people the covenant of grace through Jesus which restores God’s living law into people reconciling them to God.

If we fail to view the Word of God as a whole, if we instead break the Bible into different sin problems and different covenant solutions, then we obstruct the healing plan. We end up teaching different ways to be saved and introduce inconsistencies and confusion which obstructs the truth about God. For instance:

- the OT can be taught as the old covenant of law in which some people are saved through animal sacrifices and in the NT a new covenant of grace is introduced where others are saved through the sacrifice of Jesus.
- Or that genetics actually matter and the genetic descendants of Jacob have some different path to salvation than the rest of us and that in the future God will renew a covenant with them that



is different than the covenant with the rest of us, rather than realizing that any person saved regardless of genetics is saved through Jesus, through the only covenant—the covenant of grace.

It is Satan who wants to fragment the Scriptures into bits and pieces here a little and there a little and thereby introduce conflicting ideas, because if we accept such views it makes God out to be inconsistent and unreliable and we more easily accept the idea of an arbitrary rule-maker who needs appeasement or payment in order not to kill us.

It is when we recognize the larger view, the idea of a sin problem that began in heaven and spread to earth and see the Bible as a single whole that things start to fall into place.

Consider now, these historical views, written by one of the founders of the SDA church regarding God's covenant with humanity. Consider if you agree or disagree, and whether this is the way it is being taught today?

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” (Ephesians 1:3-4) Before the foundations of the earth were laid, **the covenant** was made that all who were obedient, all who should through the **abundant grace** provided, **become holy in character**, and without blame before God, by appropriating that grace, should be children of God. **This covenant, made from eternity, was given to Abraham hundreds of years before Christ came.** Fundamentals of Christian Education 403

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own **purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.** 2 Timothy 1:9.

The purpose and plan of grace existed from all eternity. Before the foundation of the world it was according to the determinate counsel of God that man should be created, endowed with power to do the divine will. But the defection of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent, and yet it did not deter Him from carrying out His eternal purpose; for the Lord would establish His throne in righteousness. God knows the end from the beginning.... **Therefore redemption was not an afterthought ... but an eternal purpose to be wrought out for the blessing not only of this atom of a world but for the good of all the worlds which God has created.**

The creation of the worlds, the mystery of the gospel, are for one purpose, **to make manifest to all created intelligences, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character.** By the marvelous display of His love in giving “his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” **the glory of God is revealed to lost humanity and to the intelligences of other worlds...**



The terms of this oneness between God and man in the great covenant of redemption were arranged with Christ from all eternity. The covenant of grace was revealed to the patriarchs. The covenant made with Abraham ... was a covenant confirmed by God in Christ, the very same gospel which is preached to us.... Paul speaks of the gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, as “the revelation of the mystery, which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith” (Romans 16:25, 26, R.V.). God’s Amazing Grace 129.

This same covenant [the covenant of grace] was renewed to Abraham in the promise “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 22:18). **This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it, and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins...**

Though this covenant was made with Adam and renewed to Abraham, it could not be ratified until the death of Christ. It had existed by the promise of God since the first intimation of redemption had been given; it had been accepted by faith; **yet when ratified by Christ, it is called a new covenant. The law of God was the basis of this covenant, which was simply an arrangement for bringing men again into harmony with the divine will, placing them where they could obey God's law... The Abrahamic covenant is the covenant of grace.** “By grace are ye saved” (Ephesians 2:8). God’s Amazing Grace 133.

In the first paragraph, the lesson states, “Amazingly enough, God has made contracts (covenants) with us.” (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 14).

What do you think if this idea of God’s covenants with us, including the covenant of grace, the covenant of salvation, being a contract?

Does the idea of a contract lead your mind to think of legal things?

Are there other ways to think of contracts? What about agreements? Do agreements have to be legal in the sense of human law, or can then be actual—cause and effect—design law, how reality actually functions, but we have misunderstood because we have reinterpreted the covenant of grace, the agreement we enter with God for our salvation, through legal imposed law lenses?

This idea of a contract comes from many places, but one of them is Hebrews 11: “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV)

The word translated substance is *hypostasis* and ancient papyrus documents have been found in which this term was used for various legal contracts or agreements. Thus, for those who read the Bible with a human law lens the use of this word gives support to their idea that faith is a legal contract with God and salvation is a legal process.

It is true that saving faith is a trust transaction between the sinner and God. It is a bond of intelligent, functional understanding—a loyal, devotion, trust, and confidence in God that results in real action and real change in the sinner.



But is it a legal process or actual?

The Greek word translated as “substance” is *hypostasis*. The first part of the word (sub) is from the Greek hypo and means low or under, as in hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) or hypotension (low blood pressure). The last part of the word (stance) is from the Greek stasis and means standing. This Greek word (hypostasis) was translated into a Latin-based word (substance); the first half, sub, means low or under, as in subway or subterranean; the last half, stance, means standing.

Translated into modern English, faith is our “understanding of things hoped for.” This understanding has two meanings, both of which apply to our faith: 1) an understanding of God, and 2) an understanding with God.

First, our faith is built upon truth, our understanding (comprehension) of reality—the reality of God’s existence, His character, goodness, trustworthiness, methods, design laws, and also what sin is, our terminal condition, our inability to save or heal ourselves, and what God has provided for us through Christ. With this understanding of reality Satan’s lies are displaced and we are won to trust in God.

Second, now that we comprehend God’s trustworthiness and the beauty of His character, and our terminal sin-condition, we eagerly enter into an *understanding* (agreement) with God. This understanding with God is a covenant transaction—not a legal transaction. It is like the marriage covenant. When two people get married (as God designed, not as the state legally encodes), they commit to be faithful, loyal, and devoted to one another, forsaking all previous and all other potential love-interests. They commit to go to each other and work together through difficulties, to overcome obstacles together, and not to betray the best interests of the other.

As sinners, we’re unable to promise our spouses that we will never make mistakes; rather, we promise that when we do make mistakes, we will work through them together—that despite such mistakes, we will stay faithful, honest, loyal; own up to our own shortcomings; repent when we are wrong; and seek to do better.

The covenant of marriage is symbolic of our faith relationship with God, which is the agreement known as the covenant of grace. In the covenant of grace, we have the *understanding* that God is love, that He so loved the world that He gave His only Son not to condemn the world but to be the remedy that cures our terminal condition (John 3:16, 17). We have the *understanding* that we cannot save or heal ourselves, so we enter into an *understanding* with God. We go to God and say:

“God, because of all you have done through Jesus, all the evidence you have revealed about your trustworthiness, I am won over to you. I trust you and surrender myself to you, and I know that you will heal my heart and mind from sin. Going forward, I will honor you by cooperating with you and following your instructions. I know you are always faithful to me, Lord; now I choose to be faithful to you too. I give you my heart, my mind, my soul, and my strength. In the life I now live, I will live to honor and bring glory to you. In good times and in



bad, it is you, Lord, that I cling to; it is you that I will faithfully run to; it is you that I will always seek, for you and I are now ‘one’ just as you and Jesus are one” (John 17:20–23).

In this marriage-like covenant of faith, Jesus is the groom and we are the bride. The faithful bride is not a sinless people, but they are sinners who have “died” to the old me-first life of sin and have been “reborn” into a new life of love, with hearts being transformed and renewed because they have entered into a covenant relationship with Jesus in which they maintain their connection to Him. They stay faithful; they do not turn away from Him when they are hurt, frustrated, angry, assaulted, threatened, tempted. Instead, they remain faithful when trials, tribulation, and shortcomings occur; they always run straight to Jesus, faithfully seeking Him in every problem, even their failures. These are the ones described as being pure brides, dressed in white, who did not betray their faith, their covenant relationship, by going after other gods (i.e., other solutions to their sin problem).

This is the agreement, the contract, the covenant we are to have with God. This is not a legal contract, it is an actual union of intelligent beings into a faith relationship where each agrees to be faithful to the other.

The lesson sites another promise from God, given after the Flood, we are very familiar with the promise never to destroy the entire world by water, and the sign of the rainbow. But God gave another promise after the Flood:

“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease” (Genesis 8:22 NIV 84).

What do you think of this promise? Do you believe it to be true? Is there any implication for us today if we believe this promise?

What about the worldwide climate change messaging going on? Is the message of climate change in harmony with this promise or does it contradict it?

Do the political powers of this world that constantly harp climate disaster and use it to advance various policies do so from a biblical or godless worldview?

What is the impact upon people of the messaging and ideas of climate change? Does that message inspire with hope, does it reduce fear, does it bring people together in love, does it result in greater freedom and liberty in society, or more fear, more conflict, greater restrictions of liberty, coercion, and control?

- **We are not facing a global climate disaster—we are facing a global spiritual disaster.**
- We are not facing man-made global warming—we are facing man-made global coldness of heart; Jesus said, “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12 NIV84)



Satan blinds people to reality by getting them to focus on something emotional as a distraction to what is really happening:

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4 NIV 84).

Look at the various philosophies dominating the world all rooted in godless evolutionism, the denial of God, the Bible, and the principles of Christianity.

- Global warming or climate change is a godless philosophy coming from those who deny what the Bible teaches about God and the future of this planet. It will incite fear and cause people to surrender liberty and take actions that actually hurt humanity.
- Worldly economics as we discussed last week, Capitalism versus Socialism—deny that God is the owner and we are His stewards. As long as Christianity is the primary belief system and people recognize that God is the owner and we are His stewards, then Socialism could make no headway because the root of Socialism is that the state is the owner of everything and we are the agents of the state. So, all the various socialist movements have focused on advancing godless evolutionism in our schools and society in order to destroy Christianity.
- All Critical Theories are based in godless evolutionism and socialism in which economic differences are replaced with identity power differences, so called oppressed and oppressors. But the goal is to destroy Christian values and principles. The goal is to destroy families and have children raised, indoctrinated by the state, to be loyal party members, to efface and destroy the image of God in people. This is why we see the assault on marriage, male-female identity, and the corrosive teaching to little children in public schools ideas that parents oppose and without parental consent.

Satan’s end-time push is active and aggressive. The purpose and goal is to increase chaos, disorder, confusion, uncertainty, and fear so that people, longing for security and safety will accept a totalitarian ruler who uses force to restore order.

The Christian fights against this with the divine weapons given to us by God. With truth, presented in love, while leaving others free:

- we do not use coercion
- we do not use propaganda
- we do not restrict liberties
- we do not mandate others do what we say
- we do not collude with and support philosophies and systems based in godlessness
- we discern the difference between the godless green movement that leads people away from Jesus, away from fulfilling our responsibility to be good stewards of the Earth and have dominion over it; and instead we actively seek to develop the Earth to make it every more human friendly in ways that are not destructive and abusive.



- we value people more than the planet and realize that no matter how well we do as God’s stewards this planet is being destroyed and replaced with a new one.

Do we remember God’s promise after the flood that seasons will continue until Jesus comes, or do we reject biblical truth and accept the religion of the green?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph,

The Death of Christ on Calvary made salvation possible for every person who has ever lived or who will ever live. Unlike the promise of the seasons, salvation is not unilateral—it is not given to everyone, regardless of what they do. The belief that everyone will be saved is called “universalism.” (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 15).

Without the sinless life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ no human being could be saved from sin. Jesus’ coming as a human and dying as our Savior is an absolute requirement for salvation.

But why? Why did Jesus have to die to save sinners? Couldn’t God just forgive us and save us?

What is the problem that sin caused that the plan of salvation was designed to fix?

When Adam sinned:

- Did God get changed?
- Did God’s law get changed?
- Did the condition of humankind get changed?
- Then where must the work of Christ occur to save humankind?

And what must be applied to save sinners?

“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil.” (Hebrews 2:14 NIV84)

What is Satan’s power?

- Lies—Satan is the father of lies. John 8:44
- Life eternal is knowing God. John 17:3
 - Eternal death is not knowing God.
 - Satan’s power is the lies he tells about God, that if we believe will keep us from knowing Him.
 - Christ revealed the truth which destroys the lies and wins us back to trust.



The first healing element Christ had to bring in order to break Satan's power and save humankind was the truth. "you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" John 8:32

Why is this the first step in saving human sinners? Because without restored trust no one would open their heart to God and allow Him to save them. Without restored trust we would all remain in fear, selfishness, and rebellion against God.

But while revealing truth to restore trust is an absolute requirement to save sinners, is it enough, or is something more than the revelation of truth and restored trust needed?

If you were dying of a terminal condition and your father was a wonderful trustworthy, loving doctor, and your father had a remedy that would cure your condition, but you believe lies about your father, and you believe he will kill you if he gets close to you. What is required in order for you to experience healing or to be saved from your terminal condition? The truth must destroy the lies so that you are won back to trust and allow your father to apply the remedy to you.

But what if you have a wonderful, trustworthy, loving physician father who you do love and trust completely, but your father has no remedy to your condition. Will your trust result in your healing or being saved from your condition if he doesn't have a remedy?

We need both. We need the truth that destroys lies and restores us to trust and we need an actual remedy that heals our condition. We could not provide either, so Jesus reveals the truth, and as a human Jesus destroyed the death causing principle that Adam brought into humanity and restored in humanity the life-causing principle, thereby becoming the second Adam and the source of salvation for all who obey Him.

"Christ Jesus, who has **destroyed death** and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Timothy 1:10 NIV84)

"Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, **once made perfect**, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him." (Hebrews 5:9, 10 NIV84)

Wasn't Jesus always perfect? **He was always sinless!** Bible perfection is about character, and character cannot be created; it must be developed by the choices of the individual agent. Jesus became a real human, was tempted in every way just like we are but without sin, and overcame every temptation by living out God's perfect design law and methods of love and thereby, in His humanity, in His human brain, developed a perfect human character, He became the source of salvation or healing.

In order to destroy death, Christ had to restore humanity back into harmony with the law of love—the law of life.

- He revealed truth, which exposed Satan as liar, secured the unfallen universe, and won humanity back to trust:



- He destroyed Satan and his power.
- He destroyed the infection of selfishness and cured humankind.
- “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.” 1 John 3:8

Satan has worked to efface the image of God in humanity and put Satan’s image where God’s should be. In Jesus God’s image was perfectly restored into the species human.

Now, because of Jesus, we can have the lies about God removed and be restored back to trust in God. And in that trust relationship we open our hearts and the Spirit enters and takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it in us. Jesus taught this in symbol when He said:

“I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:53-54 NIV84)

Flesh—is symbolic of the Word of Truth. Jesus is the Word made Flesh. And as we take in food it becomes the substance that builds our bodies. Likewise when we take in the truth the truth becomes the building blocks of our understanding, concepts, beliefs, and mindset. The Flesh was replaced with the symbol of Bread—the truth destroys lies and wins to trust.

And having partaken the flesh, the bread, the truth and been restored to trust, we then partake the blood—the life is in the blood—we, via the Holy Spirit, receive the life of Christ, a new heart and right spirit, we get new desires and new motives, “... it is no longer I that lives but Christ lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20 NIV84). Or as Peter says We become “partakers of the divine nature.” (2 Peter 1:4 NIV84).

This is why Christ had to die to save sinners. Christ saved the species human in His person, and revealed truth to win us to trust and procured the remedy, a sinless human character that He gives to us when we open our hearts and invite Him in.

And simultaneously, the revelation of the truth, solidified the loyal angels in their loyalty.

“God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” Colossians 1:19, 20

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on Israel as a chosen people. For what? What was God’s purpose in choosing Israel? What were they chosen for?

Did God choose Israel for salvation while neglecting or rejecting all the other peoples of the world for salvation?



God's call to Israel was not for them to receive exclusive salvation, but for them to be the branch of the human family tree through whom the Messiah would come, and as such be His helpers, His assistants, to take the truth, the gospel to the world so that all humans could be saved.

Did Israel fulfill their purpose? Well, God intervened over and over again to protect a remnant through whom Messiah would come, for without Jesus no human could be saved. So, that branch of the human family had enough faithful people last to fulfill the purpose of Jesus being born into the world.

But what about them embracing their mission, accepting the gospel commission, accepting what God has provided in Jesus and sharing the truth about God with the world?

Jesus had already told them that their genetics made no difference, their claim to be children of Abraham by biological descent was irrelevant because they embraced Satan's character and were therefore considered children of Satan.

Right before His crucifixion, Jesus did something more. He exposed and condemned their false version of Judaism. There was a true version of grace which Jesus lived out which was love and truth that included everyone, Roman, Samaritan, Jew. And then there was the false version which excluded everyone except those who adhered to these false leaders' legal system of rules. In Matthew 23 Jesus eviscerates their false system and makes it clear that in rejecting Him, the fulfillment of the Genesis 3:15 covenant of grace, their entire system is left devoid of any saving grace:

13 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

15 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

16 "Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' 17 You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? 18 You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.' 19 You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20 Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. 21 And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. 22 And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it.

23 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. 24 You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

25 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.



27 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. 28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

29 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. 30 And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ 31 So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!

33 “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? 34 Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. 35 And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.

37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’” (Matthew 23:13-39 NIV84).

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about tithe and tithing. What do you understand the tithe to be? Is tithe the same as offerings? What is the difference?

Is tithing a legal requirement?

Is tithing a practice of trustworthy partnership?

Is tithe a measure of our righteousness, our faithfulness to God?

Did those who demanded Christ be crucified pay tithe? Even on the herbs in their garden.

The fact that the betrayers of God paid tithe does not mean that tithe is not part of a healthy relationship with God, only that it cannot be used as a measure of our relationship with God.

What is the purpose of the tithe? What is it to be used for? For advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To whom is the tithe to be given?

If you lived 1000 years ago, during the Dark Ages, to whom would you pay your tithe? Would you be advancing the gospel by giving it to the Roman Church?



What about today? Would God have His tithe given to institutions or organizations that are misrepresenting Him, especially if there are other organizations that are advancing the true gospel?

Do we have a responsibility to evaluate where we pay our tithe, or should we blindly pay it to the organization of our upbringing?

One of the founders of the SDA church wrote this:

“There are ministers' wives... who have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers, giving Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that they receive nothing for their labors because their husbands receive wages. I tell them to go forward and all such decisions will be revised. The Word says, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." Luke 10:7. When any such decision as this is made, I will, **in the name of the Lord**, protest. **I will feel it my duty to create a fund from my tithe money to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, and this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers, hunting for souls, fishing for souls.**{DG 106.1}

It has been presented to me for years [by whom?] that my tithe was to be appropriated by myself to aid the white and colored ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient [income to] properly to support their families... {2MR 99.3}

I have myself appropriated my tithe to the most needy cases brought to my notice. I have been instructed to do this, and as the money is not withheld from the Lord's treasury, [wait, it wasn't being given to the organized church, yet was not withheld from the Lord's treasury, why?] it is not a matter that should be commented upon, for it will necessitate my making known these matters, which I do not desire to do, because it is not best. {2MR 99.5}

Some cases have been kept before me for years, and I have supplied their needs from the tithe, *as God has instructed me to do*. And if any person shall say to me, Sister White, will you appropriate my tithe where you know it is most needed, I shall say, Yes, I will; and I have done so... {2MR 100.1}

Did you notice that this person believed that her tithe was to go directly to people who were not funded by the institution, but who were promoting the true gospel message, she was 1) acting at God's direction and 2) the money was going into God's treasury, i.e. storehouse.

What do you think?

I think the gospel would advance much more rapidly if every person took seriously the responsibility of where they place their tithe. This would require of them to study and determine what is the true gospel of Jesus Christ, and then examine where they are placing their tithe and decide, is that organization advancing the true gospel, not just in the list of right doctrinal beliefs, but in the methods



they practice in how they run their organizations and how they treat others?

If people did this, it would change the people giving tithes to become more effective in their own lives and the gospel would lighten the world!

THURSDAY

The lesson asks us to read Matthew 6:25-33, but let's include verse 34:

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own”
(Matthew 6:25-34 NIV84).

Where is Christ focusing the attention?

Where does our modern world focus our attention?

Did you know the various social justice movements actively reject this passage of Jesus? In fact, they argue that scripture is designed to keep people oppressed, to advantage oppressors. That people should not trust God with their lives, that they should not be at peace and seek God's solution for this only perpetuates poverty and exploitation. Instead, people should rise up and demand what is theirs by right, take what has been denied them by the powerful and use any means they can to do social justice, if that means going into stores owned by the wealthy and stealing, that is only the proper redistribution of wealth to the oppressed.

Jesus focuses upon our hearts, minds, characters, and eternal life, not the specifics of this temporal world, but eternity. Jesus Himself had no possessions, no earthly pomp or wealth, yet Jesus is supreme over all.

Do you see how the philosophies and movements of this world are designed to cause envy, jealousy, dissatisfaction, distrust in God, division and hostility?



We have a better message a message of Jesus, of our Creator God of love, who is coming back to restore all things to perfection and who will provide eternal life for all who trust Him.

Just as Jesus said for those who trust Him, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33 NIV84).