



2023 4Q God's Mission My Mission Lesson 2 God's Mission to Us: Part 2

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

Read Memory Text:

- Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19 NIV84).

What do you think of this text? Those who don't believe that God is an infinite being of love of Three individualities united in a way we cannot fully comprehend, claim that this text is not in original manuscripts. However, this claim is disproved.

I put the references for any scholars who would like to do their own research, but:

- Early church writings attest to baptismal interrogations, in which the baptismal candidates are given an opportunity to confess their faith in connection with baptism (Kinzig and Vinzent, "Recent Research", 542; von Campenhausen, "Das Bekenntnis im Urchristentum", 228). **According to the second-century church father Tertullian, the baptismal candidate would renounce Satan and profess Christian faith in response to a set of three formal questions about belief in God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.** Hippolytus (AD 215) described the baptismal rite of the church of Rome in comparable language (Stevenson, New Eusebius, 141–43). Cyprian reports a similar practice in Rome. Similar questions are found in **Palestine, Cappadocia, and Alexandria** (compare Kinzig and Vinzent, "Recent Research," 542–43).

These confessions of faith at the entrance to church membership were interrogative or dialogical in structure. The baptismal candidate **would respond "I believe"** to questions, likely adapted from the Trinitarian baptismal formula, about God and His salvific acts (**Matt 28:19**; Didache 7.1.3; Kinzig and Vinzent, "Recent Research", 547).

By the mid-fourth century, baptismal questions were changed into a declaratory creed, the so-called Roman Creed, which emerged in connection with the Arian controversy (Kinzig and Vinzent, "Recent Research", 545–52). The oldest witness to the Roman Creed is Marcellus' letter to Julius of Rome in AD 340/41. His confession of faith needed the authority of Rome and the apostles in order to guarantee its continuing existence in the liturgy. It was called the Roman Creed partly because its text was composed and approved in Rome. In the seventh century, the first and third articles were extended to become the Apostles' Creed (Vinzent and Kinzig, "Recent Research," 559). (Hasel, F. M. (2016). (Creeds and Confessions. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, L. Wentz, E. Ritzema, & W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Lexham Press.)



- Although some scholars have denied that the trinitarian baptismal formula in the Great Commission was a part of the original text of Matthew, **there is no manuscript support for their contention...** For discussion (and refutation of the conjecture that removes this baptismal formula), see B. J. Hubbard, *The Matthean Redaction of a Primitive Apostolic Commissioning* (SBLDS 19), 163–64, 167–75; and Jane Schaberg, *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit* (SBLDS 61), 27–29. (NET commentary on Matthew 28:19).

So, historical review does not support the idea that the early church baptized only in the name of Jesus and not in the name of the Father and Holy Spirit.

More importantly, what does the Bible itself reveal?

- When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:15-17 NIV84).
- At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. (Luke 10:21 NIV84).
- To God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:1–2 NIV84).

But let’s look at the divinity of all three:

- In the beginning was the **Word**, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made**; without him nothing was made that has been made. **In him was life**, and that life was the light of men...The **Word became flesh** and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. From the fullness of **his grace** we have all received one blessing after another... No one has ever seen God, but **God the One and Only**, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known. (John 1:1-4, 14, 16, 18 NIV84).

Who was the Word that became flesh? Jesus, and Jesus was with God from the beginning and it was through Jesus that all things were made; Jesus had life in Himself, and Jesus became human and lived among us, and it is His grace that blesses us, and He is God equal to and revealing the Father to us.

As the Bible says elsewhere about Jesus:



- He is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** over all creation. For **by him all things were created**: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. **He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.** (Colossians 1:15-17 NIV84).

What does firstborn mean? It depends on context—grammatically the word itself can mean the one who is literally born into existence, like one’s firstborn child, but it also has another meaning—it means the one who holds the family authority, who receives the inheritance. In Abraham’s family, who was the biological first born son of Abraham? Ishmael, but who is considered the firstborn, the one through who received the family authority and through who the promises were to be fulfilled? Isaac. So, firstborn doesn’t necessarily refer to biological birth, the context must determine. And in Colossians Paul is clearly referring to authority.

Jesus also claimed to be God, one with the Father:

- “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, **I am!**” (John 8:58)
- I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30)

The Apostles recognized Jesus as God:

- Thomas said to him, “My Lord and **my God!**” (John 20:28)
- We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his **Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God** and eternal life. (1John 5:20)

Jesus taught there was a third member of the Godhead called the Comforter, Counselor or Spirit:

- “If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Counselor** to be with you forever—the **Spirit** of truth. The world cannot accept **him**, because it neither sees **him** nor knows **him**. But you know **him**, for he lives with you and will be in you. (John 14:15-17)
- But the **Counselor, the Holy Spirit**, whom the **Father** will send in **my** name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26)
- “When the **Counselor** comes, whom I will send to you from the **Father**, the **Spirit** of truth who goes out from the **Father**, **he** will testify about **me**. (John 15:26)

The Old Testament teaches God is a plurality, not a singularity:

- Then God said, “Let us make man in **our** image, in **our** likeness... (Genesis 1:26)
- Even the text quoted by Jews and Muslims that “God is one” teaches a plurality, not a singularity:
 - Hear, O Israel: The **LORD** our **God** is one **LORD**: (Deuteronomy 6:4)
 - Notice the passage in English uses “Lord” and “God”. The reading of this passage with the Hebrew names for “Lord” and “God” would go like this: “Hear, O Israel: **Yahweh** our **Elohim**, **Yahweh** is **One**.”



- What is interesting is that the word *Elohim* in Hebrew is plural and is the same word used for God in Genesis 1:26. Thus an accurate English reading might go like this: “**The One is more than One yet is One**”
- In Hebrew there are two words for one, *Yacheed* and *Echad*. The first indicates singular unity as in one and only, the second indicates compound unity, as the oneness of two or more. In this text *Echad* is used along with the plural name of God *Elohim* indicating the oneness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament also provides texts in which all members of the Godhead are referenced:

- And now the Sovereign **Lord [Father]** has sent **me [Son]**, with his **Spirit [Holy Spirit]**. This is what the Lord says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: (Isaiah 48:16,17)
- “Here is **my [Father] servant [Son]**, whom **I [Father]** uphold, **my [Father] chosen one [Son]** in whom **I [Father]** delight; **I [Father]** will put my **Spirit [Holy Spirit]** on **him [Son]** and **he [Son]** will bring justice to the nations. (Isaiah 42:1)

The Bible gives strong evidence for the plurality of our One God, supporting the idea that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are a perfect unity of three separate individualities.

But, for me all the above evidence is not what is most compelling. The most compelling evidence for me that God exists in plurality rather than singularity is the nature and character of God Himself.

The Bible says, “God is love.” 1John 4:8. Further the Bible teaches that this love is “not self seeking.” 1Corinthians 13:5. Love is outward moving, other-centered. Therefore, God, being love, could not be love in isolation because love requires an object to pour itself upon. Love is other-centered! **God’s nature and character of love, rightly understood, is the most powerful argument for the plurality of God** and we see this in the Old Testament texts above as the Father is delighting in the Son and the Son rejoicing in the Father and the Spirit loving them both.

Therefore, when God created us in His image He created “**them male and female**” and the “**two shall become one**” united in a triune relationship – husband, wife and God indwelling their hearts via His Spirit!

Those who seek to destroy the truth about the plurality of the Godhead seek to destroy the truth about God’s character of love and, in so doing, place an obstacle to the only healing remedy for sin: God’s “perfect love [that] casts out all fear.”

If Jesus is not fully and equally God, then we do not learn from Jesus about God, we learn that God was willing to sacrifice a subordinate to protect Himself.

Amongst the founders of the SDA church there was great debate regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. Some saw Christ as the offspring of God and, as such, He was not a “created” being, but was of the same “substance” as the Father, yet still not equal to the Father for the Son arose from the Father. This idea goes back millennia and is sometimes referred to as Arian theology.



But, Ellen G. White opposed this theology and came out strongly in favor of the Bible position above. Here are a few of her quotes:

- **Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father,—one in nature, in character, in purpose,—**the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace” (Isa. 9:6). His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).—Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 34. (7ABC 437.2)
The Jews had never before heard such words from human lips, and a convicting influence attended them; for it seemed that divinity flashed through humanity as Jesus said, “I and my Father are one.” The words of Christ were full of deep meaning as **he put forth the claim that he and the Father were of one substance, possessing the same attributes.**—The Signs of the Times, Nov. 27, 1893, p. 54. (7ABC 437.3)
- “In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). **It is not physical life that is here specified, but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God.** The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But **the life of Christ was unborrowed.** No one can take this life from Him. “I lay it down of myself” (John 10: 18), He said. **In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived.** This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Saviour. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). This is the open fountain of life for the world. (1 Selected Messages 296)
- In describing to His disciples the office work of the **Holy Spirit**, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The **Holy Spirit** was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the **Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.** It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. (The Desire of Ages 671)
- **There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those** who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ. (Evangelism, p. 615)



So, for me personally, I find the evidence overwhelming for the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—from Scripture, historical records of the early church, from EGWs writings, from how relationships work where more than one individual can become one with another.

But, I don't believe it is directly a salvation question—it becomes a question, like all issues of theology do, if our conclusions lead us to replace the truth of God with a false God, if we replace the methods of God with the methods of this world, if we practice in our characters the authoritarian principles of Satan. So, I believe there will be people in heaven who have believed what I believe about the Godhead, but there will be people in heaven who have believed an Arian view that Jesus came later and there is no Holy Spirit. But everyone in heaven will believe God is love, and will have His living law of love, truth, and liberty restored within them and have the character of Christ.

SUNDAY

Any questions about the Trinity and the gospel commission?

MONDAY

The lesson title is “Making Disciples” –what is a disciple? They are pupils, students of another. Disciples of Christ would be students of His.

In Luke, written by the physician Luke, Jesus is often called Teacher and historically those who were teachers were called doctors. We have doctoral degrees for various professions and eventually physicians were called doctors. And the students of a physician are called either interns or residents so in my paraphrase of Luke I use the term interns when referring to the disciples to emphasize the learning aspect of what they were to be doing. As in Luke 12:22:

- Then turning to his interns, Jesus said: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about how the future will turn out, about where your next meal will come from, or with what to clothe your body. (Luke 12:22 REM)

What does it mean to be a student/intern/disciple of Jesus?

Is being a disciple of Jesus determined by which church one belongs?

What about whose Bible class one attends or which theology professor one had?

- I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are



quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? (1 Corinthians 1:10-13 NIV84)

What about today—someone says, “I follow Luther; I follow Calvin; I follow Wesley; I follow White; I follow the Pope?” Or within a denomination, do we say “I follow Maxwell; I follow Batchelor; I follow Jennings.” Is Christ divided?

If we are all disciples of Christ, why are there so many divisions within Christianity? Is it because we have separate Scripture from God’s other lesson books, nature/science, and life’s experiences? Is it because we have accepted the view that God’s law is amendable and changeable and therefore it is all about finding the right rules, rituals, ceremonies, procedures, doctrinal beliefs, creeds to adhere to? That our salvation is not truly in Jesus, but in our right thinking, our right procedure of Christianity?

How do we tell who is following Christ and who is not—more importantly, how can we tell if we are following Christ or not?

- “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35 NIV84).

What does this mean? Is this love observable? Is it measurable? Does it have real world impact, or is it merely an internal emotional state that no one else can know?

If it is only internal emotional state how could all people know we are Christ’s disciples by our love? It must be something actionable, observable—what does it look like? How does love function?

Some years ago I was consulted to see a man admitted to the ICU after a suicide attempt. After introductions, I asked him, “Tell me, what’s going on in your life that brought you to the point that you tried to take your own life?”

He said, “My wife is leaving me; and I love her so much I don’t want her to leave. I told her that if she left me I would kill myself. If she leaves me I want her to regret it and know how much she hurt me.”

I asked him, “So your goal is to die and punish your wife?” He said, “No I want her to come back to me because I love her so much.”

He says he loves her; he is so committed to his declarations of love that he is willing to put his life on the line, but does he in reality love her? Are his actions the actions of love? No!

Love seeks to do what is in the best interest of others, not self. This man’s behavior was not focused on what was good for his wife, her best interests. He showed no interest in understanding her, discovering why she wanted to leave—could it be because he manipulated, controlled and emotionally



abused her? He was only interested in getting for himself, actually taking away her liberty under emotional manipulation.

So, our first step in being disciples of Christ is that we must be converted, our self-centered, me-first motives must be replaced with love for God and others. We must have the desire, the intent, the motivation to bless, uplift, and benefit other people because we want what is best for them. Without this change of heart, we might make action that is objectively beneficial—like give a donation that helps build an orphanage, but if our motive is so that we can get a tax write off rather than love, then we are not disciples of Jesus. Disciples of Christ love God and others. So, the first step is to be reborn with a new heart.

But, one can be an immature disciple of Jesus, be a person who has been converted, has the motive to bless others, and takes actions with all good will to be a blessing, but the actions harm another. An example would be the doctors who treated George Washington when he had pneumonia—they bled him and leached him to get out the evil humors, and thereby destroyed his immune system contributing to his death. Their intention was love, to help, to protect, to heal, but their actions harmed.

We can still recognize that their motivation was to bless even though the action was harmful—but this gives a good example of how love must move past compassionate, altruistic desire, and intention to be truly healing and beneficial.

What must be coupled with love in order for it to become powerful for good?

Truth, those doctors didn't have the truth about infections and the immune system, and despite their love, the falsehood they were operating under impaired their ability to **BE** a blessing to others.

Jesus is the source of both our new hearts of love and the truth—and who is it that makes Jesus' love and truth functional and real inside of us? It is the Holy Spirit—who is described in Scripture as the Spirit of truth and love.

Remember in Eden, Adam and Eve had pure love for God and each other, but the lies they believed broke the circle of love and trust and resulted in fear and selfishness—the carnal, me-first, survival of the fittest drives that cause anti-love, or sin.

Thus, to be powerful, the disciples of Jesus we must be reborn with hearts that love God and others, but we must also be lovers of truth, be individuals who hunger and thirst for truth, who long to comprehend and apply the truth to our own lives at the earliest possible moment that we are capable of doing so.

Then when love is coupled with truth, we are able to become mighty agents for good, true disciples Jesus. And the most important truth that we must know is the truth about God's character—**which is determined by how we understand God's law**. If we understand God's law to be imperial, imposed, made up rules, then we introduce falsehood into our hearts and minds that will cause us to take actions, that even if our intent is to bless, will cause harm.



I had a woman who was suffering from depression and she was a Christian, married to a Christian husband and she belonged to a tradition that taught women are to be subordinate to their husbands and husbands are to rule over them. So in her marriage her individuality was constantly submersed under that of her husband's, and as is predictable when a design law is violated, she suffered, and eventually she became depressed. When she became my patient, I began to teach her about the law of liberty, of thinking for herself, of giving her husband respect and allowing him to have his own views, perspectives, ideas, but that she was not required to agree until she was fully persuaded in her own mind of the truth. As she began thinking and acting for herself in harmony with the truth to fulfill what she understood God would have her do her depression lifted. But in the middle of one our sessions her husband actually barged into my office with his Bible in his hand, forcefully laid it on my desk and said, "Will you tell my wife that the Bible says that a wife is supposed to submit to the leadership of her husband!?"

Prior to his entry she was sitting up, making eye contact, smiling. But as he said this, her head dropped, her shoulders rolled in and her hands went between her knees and she looked fearful and hopeless.

What do you think I said? I quoted Ephesians 5:25...

Fortunately, for this family the husband had a good heart and was seeking to love his wife, but he was also a victim of the lies about God and believed God's law functioned like human law and was practicing the worldly methods of rulership and not God's methods of loving leadership. When I pointed this out to him he began attending marital therapy and began applying God's law of liberty to his own self in how he treated his wife and their marriage healed and her depression resolved.

The point here is that even with good motives, if one believes lies about God and His law and methods, they can take actions that harm rather than heal.

I think Paul was referring to this in 1 Corinthians chapter three:

- If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15 NIV84).

The actions of these workers are to build up, are to bless, or to help, thus their actions suggest they have converted hearts and thus they will be saved. However, there is an objective difference between gold, silver, costly stones—which are symbols of righteousness and used in the building of the temple, and wood, hay, or straw which are burned up in fire.

This suggest some people who had love in their hearts built upon the reality of God's kingdom, they understood God's character and His design laws, while others who had come to love God and people,



were not freed of the imposed law lies and tried to build for God's kingdom using the methods of this world. What they built will be lost because they built on the wrong foundation, but they themselves will be saved because their hearts were motivated by love.

So I paraphrased it this way:

- One can build on this foundation using pure, holy and costly materials, or using ordinary, common and cheap materials, but ultimately, the work will reveal itself for what it is, because the day on which Christ returns will bring everything into the light of truth. On that day, the quality of a person's character-building will be revealed by the fiery glory of God's presence—for only those whose characters are in harmony with God's character will be able to stand in the fiery presence of his life-giving glory. And if those whom the builders have worked to build up in Christ survive, the builders will be rewarded with happiness and joy. If, however, the builder's work is burned up, the builder will suffer great sorrow and loss: the builder will be saved, but only as one whose misunderstandings, errors, misconceptions and mistakes are consumed in the fire of God's truth and love. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15 REM).

So with this in mind, how do we identify who are disciples of Jesus? Wouldn't it be those who love others and work for the benefit of others?

But who are the mature disciples of Jesus, the wise ones, the faithful servant who hears "Well done" from Jesus, the ones who celebrate in the end?

They are the ones who not only have hearts that love God and others, but who have loved the truth and **grown in the truth** (not know all truth—only God knows all truth) of God's character, design law methods and have built using the methods and principles of God.

So, some thought problems on how love functions when combined with truth:

If your friend is hungry because they have a serious drug problem, won't work, has been arrested multiple times for shoplifting in order to fund their addiction, and then they ask you for money for food, what does love do in that situation?

If you're hiking with your spouse and she falls and breaks a leg, and you need to splint her leg, but doing so will cause more pain, would it be an act of love to splint the leg? Would it be loving to have surgery even if that caused pain? And when it is time for physical therapy and your spouse cries from the pain, is it an act of love to do her exercises for her?

What if it is not a broken leg, but a broken heart—she has been traumatized in the past and is hurting—is it an act of love to focus merely on relieving her pain, or does love focus on the truth, on healing the emotional wound even if the work to heal it is painful? What if she gets angry and accuses you of attacking her—is it love to accept the accusation and apologize for trying to help?



Once there is brokenness, there are no pain-free options. The path of love is to bring healing, even though the healing interventions are painful. Unfortunately, many wounded people focus merely on the immediate experience and instead of seeking to heal, seek to relieve the pain or discomfort and, thus, actually harm. And many of the helpers focus on the other person's response, their discomfort level as the measure of whether what they are doing is right or not and thus allow the injured, the wounded, to direct the actions of those seeking to heal.

But genuine godly love becomes powerful and healing only when it is united with the truth, only when it applies the truth, God's design laws and operates in harmony with reality.

So, when we seek to make disciples for Jesus does it require us to do more than teach them a Creed, more than attestation to a list of Fundamental Beliefs, more than participation in a ceremonial event, more than joining a denomination and sending in the proper tithe?

Making disciples of Jesus requires that we first know Jesus for ourselves, love Him as our Savior, know the truth of His character and methods, and then we have something to share and teach others. We invite people to know Jesus as their Savior, but we also invite them into a community of believers who love Jesus and who are also lovers of the truth, seeking to better understand God, God's methods, principles, design laws, will, and purpose and live God's calling in their lives.

TUESDAY

And that takes us right into TUESDAY's lesson which is about the eternal gospel. What is the eternal good news, the news that has been good throughout all eternity, both eternity past and eternity future?

How would you describe the eternal gospel, good news, to someone?

Let's read the first paragraph in Tuesday's lesson:

- This is the only place in Scripture in which the words "eternal" and "gospel" are connected. The gospel is the good news of grace offered to all through Jesus Christ. He came into our world to show us "grace and truth" (John 1:14). He lived a sinless life and died on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice to bear the penalty of our sins (Isa. 53:4, 5; 1 Pet. 3:18). He rose to life, returned to heaven, was exalted by the Father, and today intercedes for us in the heavenly sanctuary (Rev. 1:18, Acts 2:33, Heb. 7:25). He will soon fulfill His greatest promise—to return in majesty and glory and, ultimately, after the millennium to establish God's kingdom on earth (John 14:1–4, Acts 1:11, Rev. 21:1–4). These are all essential realities of the eternal gospel. (Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2023, God's Mission My Mission p. 17).

Thoughts? There is good news described in this paragraph—it is certainly good news that Jesus is for us, that God's grace is manifest to us to save us from sin, that Jesus came to reveal the truth and save us, to bear the penalty of our sins—that expression isn't terrible, it didn't say the penalty of God



inflicted as punishment for sin, but the penalty for our sins could mean the penalty that sin brings, pain, suffering, death etc.

But, is our salvation in Jesus the good news that is eternally true? Was this the good news the angels needed when Lucifer started his war in heaven? Did the angels need to hear about a future event in which Jesus would become human and give his life for humans who didn't even exist yet in order for them to resist what Lucifer was doing in heaven? Was that the good news the angels needed?

But Colossians 1:18 tells us that some aspect of what Jesus did at the Cross was good news for the heavenly beings.

The unfallen angels didn't need a Savior to die to pay their sin debt; but they did need the gospel, the good news, what good news?

What did Lucifer do in heaven that caused 1/3 of the angels to rebel? He lied about God, and lies believed break the circle of love and trust. Thus, the eternal good news is the good news about the Eternal One, the good news about God that is always true, that God is not the kind of being Satan alleges. That God is not arbitrary, that God's law is not made up rules, that God is love and His law is an expression of His character, the protocols upon which life is built.

It is incredible good news to realize God is not the source of inflicted pain, suffering, and death as punishment for sin—He never was and never will be. Thus, the eternal good news is tied with the call to worship our Creator, Him who made the heavens, earth, sea, and fountains of water.

What about the idea of Jesus interceding for us in the heavenly sanctuary? What does that mean? Have you heard this presented in a way that was not good news, but actually taught bad news?

Read last paragraph,

- “The proclamation of the judgment [Rev. 14:6, 7] is an announcement of Christ's second coming as at hand. And this proclamation is called the everlasting gospel. Thus the preaching of Christ's second coming, the announcement of its nearness, is shown to be an essential part of the gospel message.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 227, 228. (Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2023, *God's Mission My Mission* p. 17).

This is referring to the 3 Angels' messages,

- Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the **eternal gospel** to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of **his judgment** has come. **Worship him who made** the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” (Revelation 14:6-7 NIV84).



What does this mean? How is this judgment connected with the eternal gospel and the announcement of Christ's soon return?

Which judgment is it?

What law model are we reading through? For those who have Romanized Christianity and replaced God's design law with imposed human law, then they read this as a legal proceeding, with the heavenly magistrate reviewing legal records and determining guilt and innocence.

There are so many problems with that view it is mind boggling that so many believe it—but just to bullet point a few of the problems:

- It misdiagnosis sin as a legal problem
- It replaces God's law with human law
- It mischaracterizes God as the source of death as inflicted punishment for sin
- It has God acting a con, working to erase records and pretend that things that are one way when they are in reality another way
- It places God in the role of punishing the innocent and declaring the guilty innocent
- It has a god that requires something be done to protect us from him and we thus have an intercessor pleading our case to protect us from that god
- It creates distrust in god and trust in another—the intercessor, the mechanism, means, mode to appease, propitiate, or assuage the god, the law, our behavior, something other than actual love and trust for the punishing god

But when we return to design law, we recognize that the war in heaven began when Satan lied about God and caused angels to distrust God. It spread to Earth when Satan lied about God and Adam and Eve believed those lies and broke trust with God and infected themselves with fear and selfishness. And it resolves by the truth about God replacing the lies and winning us back to trust. Thus, the final movements are when the truth of God is accepted by the jury pool, you and me, and we stop judging God to be like a Roman Caesar and judge Him to be Creator. This requires we reject the Roman view of God's law and again worship Him who made the heaven, earth, sea and fountains of water by returning to design law understanding of reality.

So the good news is about God, when we accept the good news about God we judge Him to be like Jesus revealed and we reject all the Roman penal legal lies and we stop worshiping a creature and worship the Creator, and in that worship we open the heart in trust and receive the indwelling Spirit, we become like Him, sealed and settled into the truth that we cannot be moved, and thus Jesus comes to take us home!

This is what Paul meant when he wrote:

- Let God be proven true, and every human being shown up as a liar, just as it is written: “so that you will be justified in your words and will prevail when you are judged.” (Romans 3:4 NET).



WEDNESDAY

Who are God's people? They are the ones who are like God—the ones who know God, trust God, and have God's law written upon their hearts and minds.

Is this determined by denomination? What determines this?

For what purpose did God call the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

- To be the avenue for the birth of the Messiah
- To evangelize the world and tell people about the coming Messiah, thus bringing people back to faith in God and the coming Messiah

How did they do?

What interfered with their effectiveness in carrying out that mission?

For what purpose has God called Christians?

- To evangelize the world with the truth about Himself as revealed in Christ and the plan of salvation—how we can be reconciled to God and delivered from sin and thus prepare the world for the second advent of the Messiah

How is the Christian world doing?

What interferes with our ability to be effective in fulfilling this mission?

THURSDAY

What are the three fields we are called to witness in?

- To the people closest to us (family and friends)
- To our local communities who share our language and culture
- The world at large, foreigners

How can we be more effective in any or all of these fields?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

JOIN DR. JENNINGS TREATMENT TEAM

Dr. Jennings is now in his new position as Medical Director of Honey Lake Clinic in Greenville, Florida. See their website at <https://www.honeylake.clinic/>

Honey Lake Clinic is the only Christ-centered residential psychiatric treatment program in the country. We have two campuses—adult and female adolescent (Dr. Jennings is Medical Director of the Adult Campus). The program takes a holistic approach to treatment integrating the best of modern neuroscience with biblical principles (design laws) to bring healing to mind, body, soul, and spirit.

As you likely know, the need for such whole-person Christian mental health care is huge and therefore we are expanding our services to be able to treat more people. But in order to do that, **we need more staff**—staff who are both professionally competent and licensed but who are also committed Christians who have the vision to integrate Christ and Christian principles into treating the whole person.

If you are interested in becoming part of the treatment team at Honey Lake Clinic and working with Dr. Jennings, see the jobs posted below and contact Honey Lake for more details. (LCSWs should also apply). If you are interested in any of the positions below email HR@honeylakeclinic.com

Psychiatry Mental Health Nurse Practitioner- Advance Practice Nurse Practitioner

- Able to empathically and compassionately interview patients presenting with a MH issue using the organization's comprehensive psychiatric evaluation
- Able to elicit medical histories and assess for medical causes of the MH issues or for comorbid medical issues that are a result of the MH disorder and/or exacerbate the MH disorder
- Utilization of interview, assessment and diagnostics in comprehensive treatment of dual diagnosis patients
- Able to assess for level of detox and use standard CIWA and COWS for withdrawal severity and then initiate detox treatment
- Able to prescribe initial psychiatric and detox medications, monitor and document results and side effects, and perform follow-up medication management within accepted standard of care guidelines.
- Familiarity with ASAM or LOCUS for assignment of levels of care

Adult Program Clinical Director

- Masters in mental health counseling, psychology or social work required. Other graduate degrees that lead to MHC, MSW or MFT licensure are acceptable.
- Florida Licensure (LMHC, LCSW or LMFT) active and in good standing, is required.
- Experience providing therapy to adults with mental health and substance diagnoses 2 years post-licensure is required.
- Supervisory experience, minimum of 2 years is required, post-licensure is preferred.



- Experience in Clinical Supervision and Program Management, 2 years post-licensure is preferred.

Licensed Therapist

- Masters in mental health counseling, psychology or social work required. Other graduate degrees that lead to MHC, MSW or MFT licensure are acceptable.
- Licensure is required
- EMDR with other trauma modalities is preferred.
- Experience with adults with mental health and/or substance diagnoses is preferred.

Individual Therapist- Registered Intern

- Masters in mental health counseling, psychology or social work required. Other graduate degrees that lead to MHC, MSW or MFT licensure are acceptable.
- EMDR with other trauma modalities is preferred.
- Experience with adults with mental health and/or substance diagnoses is preferred.

The God Shaped Heart, has just been released in German in Germany, *Herz voll Gott*, published by the Adventist publishing house in Germany.

NEW Pamphlet: The Book of Job and the Last Days: A Cosmic Overview—7 Truths to Prepare for Christ's Return is now available. You can order your FREE copies at https://comeandreason.com.3dcartstores.com/The-Book-of-Job-and-the-Last-Days-A-Cosmic-Overview_p_56.html