



## 2024 Q1 Psalms Lesson 6 I Will Arise

by Tim Jennings

### SUNDAY

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The lesson points our attention to Psalms 18, let's compare the first 15 verses from the NIV to the REM version, keeping in mind the differences and what do you think of those differences.

- I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (Psalm 18:1-2 NIV84)
- I love you, O Lord; you are my strength. The Lord unites my will with his, making my resolve rock-solid: he makes me strong and heals my brokenness. God is my solid foundation; I trust him completely. He cleanses my mind, protecting me from lies; he is the source of my healing—my Savior. (Psalm 18:1-2 REM)

If you think about the reality of the sin problem and God's interventions to solve it and save you and me—what is God doing? Is God merely creating fortresses around us, places we can hide from external assault, or have many of God's faithful been physically assaulted, imprisoned, tortured and killed but their hearts and minds were fortresses; so God is healing us, recreating us, establishing us as spiritual fortresses built upon love and trust in Him so that we stand firm in face of the assaults of this world—isn't that the reality? Isn't that the true meaning of the psalm presented through various images?

- I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears. (Psalm 18:3-6 NIV84).
- I call out to the Lord—the source of goodness, love and truth—and he saves me from my enemies. The tendrils of death creep through me; the undertow of selfishness fills me with fear. The grave has hold on me and pulls me down; the chains of death have captured me. In my terminal state I call out to the Lord; I cry out to my God for healing. He hears me from where he dwells; he hears my call for help. (Psalm 18:3-6 REM)

What is the real problem that we sinners face—is it external enemies that can kill our bodies, or is it the sin condition, being dead in trespass and sin, having the infection of fear and selfishness that without remedy results in an eternal death? So, what is the Holy Spirit desiring for us to truly understand, that God is powerful and can deliver from an earthly enemy, or that God is good, a being

of infinite power but one whose character is love and who is not the source of death but of life and will heal us if we trust Him?

- The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry. Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. (Psalm 18:7-8 NIV84)
- The earthly systems shake and shudder, the foundations of the pagan high places quiver; they tremble, because God's passion to heal is fired up. The creative breath of life blew from his nostrils like smoke; the fire of truth came from his mouth, the burning flames of infinite love blazed forth from him. (Psalm 18:7-8 REM)

Is the message of Scripture focused only on God's physical power? Again the devil's know that God is powerful and it scares them. If people know God is powerful, but believe His law is like human law and believe God, in so called justice, must use His infinite power to inflict punishment for sin, will that solve the sin problem, will that result in sinners being won to trust and becoming loyal friends of God? No! The message of Scripture of course informs us that God is Creator and God is powerful—but that was never in question. Satan didn't question whether God was powerful in heaven—the question that causes rebellion and distrust of God is over whether we can trust God with the power and if we teach His law is like ours, then we always teach that God is not trustworthy, that God is the source of pain, suffering, and death inflicted as punishment for sin, and then teach theologies that function to hide us or protect us from God—think of all such theologies that have the action of hiding or protecting us from God, why? Because those who believe those theologies believe something about God that scares them and that God in some way will harm them if something isn't done to Him.

So the message of Scripture is that God's powers that shake the earth up are the powers of truth and love that overthrow the carnal powers of this world, overthrow lies, fear, and selfishness.

- He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet. He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind. He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him—the dark rain clouds of the sky. (Psalm 18:9-11 NIV84).
- He stepped down to earth from his heavenly dwelling place, he entered into darkness, establishing himself in human form. He came, swiftly flying on the wings of angels; he appeared by the power of the Spirit. Making humanity his tabernacle, he veiled his glory in darkness surrounded by amniotic fluid—a dark cloud of water. (Psalm 18:9-11 REM)

Do you see a difference? What do you think is the central theme of the Bible? What is the Holy Spirit inspiring the writers to teach about? When God comes down from heaven, does He come down to destroy or to save? I think this is a Messianic Psalm describing the plan of salvation.

- Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning. The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded. He shot his arrows and scattered the enemies, great bolts of lightning and routed them. The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of breath from your nostrils. (Psalm 18:12-15 NIV84)

- The light of truth goes forth from him—a hailstorm of fiery truth powerful like lightning. The Lord spoke truth like thunder from heaven; the Creator voiced words that burned like fire. His sends out his arrows of truth broadly across the earth—great flashes of light that only confuse those who prefer darkness. When you rebuke selfishness, O Creator God, when your nostrils breathe out your life-giving power of love, the channels of water that bring life are seen, the foundations that you built life upon are understood. (Psalm 18:12-15 NIV84)

Again, what message do you believe God wants us to understand from Scripture?

## MONDAY

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The title is Justice for the Oppressed—What is justice? Isn't it doing what is right? How do you know what is right? What defines what is right?

Doesn't the law determine what is right in any system?

Then, what law lens do we understand God's justice through—is it Roman imposed law, or Creator design law? And what difference does it make?

In our Magazine [The Lie that Deceived Angels, Infects Christianity and Delays the Second Coming of Christ](#) we have a table in the back that contrasts various words like justice through the two law lenses:

Justice in the imposed law view is: Punishing the oppressor

Justice in the design law view is: Delivering the oppressed

Which do you think is God's justice? Even for the wicked in the end? Does God use power to inflict punishment on the unrepentant oppressors and call it justice, or does God stop using power and thereby deliver the oppressors from their suffering and that is His justice?

Jump to WEDNESDAY's lesson and from the lesson we read the following:

- Some psalms beseech God **to take vengeance on individuals and nations** who intend to harm, or who have already harmed, the psalmists or their people. These psalms can sound perplexing because of their harsh language and apparent discord with the biblical principle of love for enemies (Matt. 5:44)...

However, nowhere does the psalmist suggest himself to be the agent of vengeance. Instead, **he leaves retribution solely in God's hands**. The Psalms evoke the divine covenant curses (Deut. 27:9-16) and implore God to act as He has promised.

The Psalms are prophetic proclamations about **God's impending judgment**; they are not solely the psalmist's prayers. Psalm 137 reflects the announcements of divine judgment on Babylon, as seen in the prophets. The devastation that the Babylonians brought to other nations

would turn back on them. The Psalms convey **divine warnings that evil will not go unpunished forever.**

**God's retribution is measured with justice and grace.** God's children are called to pray for those who mistreat them and even to hope for their conversion (Ps. 83:18, Jer. 29:7). (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 48).

What do you hear in these paragraphs? What law is the lesson describing God applying? Imposed law, the types of laws that creatures make up, which make God out to be the source of pain, suffering, and death. This is Satan's view of God. It is contrary to the message that is to lighten the world for Christ's return, it is an exact refutation of the message given to the Adventist church at 1888 and through the ministry of Ellen White.

We addressed psalm 137 last week, so if you would like an exploration of that psalm and didn't get to join us for class last week, you can find that discussion on our website along with the notes.

But notice the lesson uses language of retributive justice, vengeance, judgment which lead the mind to think of inflicted punishment. But consider how EGW uses these terms in the book *The Great Controversy*, specifically note the terms used, then note the description of what occurs, how the punishment happens, what God is actually doing, the actions God takes. You will note that, God uses power to heal, to protect and restore, but please notice that the justice of God, the justice of design law is the merciful delivering of the wicked from suffering, not the use of power to inflict suffering:

- 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? Because of a judicial system or because of reality, because the guilty remain infected, in rebellion, hostile, selfish, terminal in sin and God will not pretend that unhealed, unrebored, unrenewed, unrighteous people are righteous. God will not commit fraud and declare unrighteous people to be righteous as the penal legal system claims.] 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.** (The Great Controversy 541.2) [What does this mean? Do you hear retributive justice and think using power to inflict harm, pain, punishment? This would be human law, imposed law, Satan's method and if we apply it to God we misrepresent God. So, let's keep reading and see how this author applies these words to God, what law is applied in bringing about this retributive justice, how reality works.]

**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, can God then be the source of inflicted suffering, punishment, and death? If you understand how reality works—God’s law of love and liberty, then you recognize that the human imposed law understanding of retributive justice with inflicted pain and death is incompatible with the very next sentence from the author. It is impossible to get anything other than slavish obedience from inflicted punishment; inflicted punishments do force the will, and it is impossible to get love and trust by threatening to kill people who do not love and trust you. Thus, immediately this author is calling every person who is still capable of thinking for themselves, every person who is not blinded by the lies of Romanism and the imposed law system, to stop, think, and inquire—how can God apply retributive justice and at the same time not be forcing people? And that is only possible when we understand design law.] **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 when this lie is believed it undermines love. DA761] And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. (The Great Controversy 541.3) [But those who do not have a just conception of these qualities will either reject God or serve Him from fear, teach theologies that hide and protect them from God.]

**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."** [What are principles? Laws, protocols, standards, and in this case it is God’s character of love, which is His law of love, which is a transcript of His character. Does love seek to inflict pain and suffering to torture and punish or to deliver? 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 is justice? Doing what is just or right, and what determines what is actually just or right? The law—so it comes back to how one understands God’s law functions. Those who accept the Roman lie that God’s law is like human law believe the lie that God’s execution of justice is the infliction from God of pain and death. But, when we return to worshipping the Creator and realize His laws are design laws, such as the law of love, liberty, worship and more, we realize that God uses power to heal, to save, and when people refuse Him, then God uses power to minimize pain, minimize suffer, and to stop the torment of those who won’t allow Him to heal them—by applying the law of liberty and letting them go to reap what they have insisted upon, separation from Him and thus they die eternally and stop suffering. Thus, God’s justice is like the parent whose child is in liver failure and refuses to be healed, the parent does not seek to prolong and protract the suffering, but allows 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. Love cannot be forced and thus God cannot use might and power to make them happy.] 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 while they sought to kill Jesus. Law keepers, but the wrong law—not the wrong Sabbath day, the wrong law—the human imposed law with inflicted penalties, 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.** [Who determines their destiny? Is it a heavenly judge making a legal ruling in a heavenly court, or is the decision that of the sinner who permanently hardens their heart to the work of the Holy Spirit?] **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, God has the power to do this, to artificially keep people alive and chain them to His side. But He won't use power in this way, why? Because it would inflict torture and pain and God is the source of healing and life. Note what comes next...] (The Great Controversy 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 are they not prepared? Is it that they don't have the right blood, don't have the right legal payment, don't have the right robe to hide behind so the Father won't see their true self? Or is it that they don't have the right heart, mind, character, within them?] **Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters.** [How did it become fixed? Who fixed it there? If God "judges" their characters as fixed in sin and beyond saving, does that mean God's judgment is what makes their characters fixed in sin or is God's judgment simply 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? (The Great Controversy 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? Because God uses divine power to prevent them, to torture them, to inflict harm upon them, or is their condition incompatible with God's design for life?] 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 incompatible

with life 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 as 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.** (The Great Controversy 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 is always an expression of God's character of love and does the same thing] (The Great Controversy 543.1)

What justice is described here? What is God's retributive justice? It is God delivering the wicked in the end from torment, torture, and suffering by the application of God's law of love and liberty! God's justice is NEVER the infliction of pain, suffering, and torment—it is delivering from it.

But some get confused because they don't differentiate discipline from punishment, they don't distinguish therapy from torture, treatment from torment. Thus, they will take examples of God disciplining or therapeutically intervening and argue that God is punishing.

But when we return to worshipping God as Creator and understand God's laws as design laws, then we can discern reality and differentiate the true from the false.

## **TUESDAY**

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The lesson points our attention to Psalm 82, let's compare the NIV and REM

- God presides in the great assembly; he gives judgment among the “gods” (Psalm 82:1 NIV84)
- God takes a stand against the assembly of false gods; he presents his diagnosis regarding all pagan gods. (Psalm 82:1 REM)

Does your version read similarly? Am I just making things up, or does the Hebrew allow for a wide range of interpretations?

Consider these two versions:



- God presides in the heavenly council; in the assembly of the gods he gives his decision (Psalm 82:1 GNT)

Well that seems a little confusing—are there many gods in heaven where God presides? Is it like Greek mythology with Zeus managing a bunch of lesser gods and demi-gods?

- God stands in the assembly of El; in the midst of the gods he renders judgment. (Psalm 82:1 NET).

And the NET has this explanation:

- The phrase אֲדַת־אֱלֹהִים ('adat 'el, “assembly of El”) appears only here in the OT. (1) Some understand “El” to refer to God himself. In this case he is pictured presiding over his own heavenly assembly. (2) Others take אֲדַת as a superlative here (“God stands in the great assembly”), as in Pss 36:6 and 80:10. (3) The present translation assumes this is a reference to the Canaanite high god El, who presided over the Canaanite divine assembly. (See Isa 14:13, where El’s assembly is called “the stars of El.”) In the Ugaritic myths the phrase 'dt 'ilm refers to the “assembly of the gods,” who congregate in King Kirtu’s house, where Baal asks El to bless Kirtu’s house. If the Canaanite divine assembly is referred to here in Ps 82:1, then the psalm must be understood as a bold polemic against Canaanite religion. Israel’s God invades El’s assembly, denounces its gods as failing to uphold justice, and announces their coming demise.

The present translation assumes that the Hebrew term אֱלֹהִים ('elohim, “gods”) here refers to the pagan gods who supposedly comprise El’s assembly according to Canaanite religion. Those who reject the polemical view of the psalm prefer to see the referent as human judges or rulers (אֱלֹהִים sometimes refers to officials appointed by God, see Exod 21:6; 22:8–9; Ps 45:6) or as angelic beings (אֱלֹהִים sometimes refers to angelic beings, see Gen 3:5; Ps 8:5). (The NET Bible First Edition)

The Remedy takes the position similar to the NET that this is God’s indictment of the false gods of this world with their imposed law systems that always render injustice under the guise of justice.

- God presides in the great assembly; he gives judgment among the “gods”: “How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked? (Psalm 82:1-2 NIV84)
- God takes a stand against the assembly of false gods; he presents his diagnosis regarding all pagan gods. He says, "When will you stop using a list of rules to govern? When will you stop protecting selfishness with your legal system? (Psalm 82:1-2 REM).

Imposed law systems with legal oversight and inflicted punishments never provide justice—someone is always getting misjudged, innocents punished, guilty set free, corrupt judges, abuse of power and on and on. And this corrupt system of imposed laws was incorporated into Christianity through Rome and it is taught that God’s system works this way and God’s justice is for God to punish an innocent



person and declare the guilty innocent. And the blind guides who are leading the blind don't even realize how unjust this is—they, with all sincerity, declare such actions to be just.

- Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. (Psalm 82:3-4 NIV84)
- Do what is actually right, healthy, and loving for all people; protect the poor and the fatherless; do what is right to the poor and oppressed — what heals and restores. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the power of selfishness. (Psalm 82:3-4 REM)

Here we see the justice of design law, the justice of God is delivering the oppressed, not the infliction of punishment on the oppressors.

- “They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. (Psalm 82:5 NIV84)
- These false gods don't understand reality; they don't understand my design-laws—how I built life to function; they operate in the darkness of a rule-enforcement system and the world is crumbling all around them. Psalm 82:5 REM)

Do you see the world crumbling all around us as governments try and pass more laws, use more force, to bring order? But as more laws are passed do you see that things are getting better or worse? Consider some of the laws:

- Laws that define more than 27 different gender identities—does this bring more unity, harmony, clarity, stability or contribute to confusion, division, and the crumbling of society?
- Laws that declare intoxicating substances as legal are not the same as making them healthy—and the data now shows that in Colorado where marijuana is now legal, mental health disorders are 35% higher than the national average, why? Because our laws do not change God's laws and violations of God's laws, including the laws of health, always damage.
- Laws that tell you what light bulbs, appliances, and straws you must use? Do these things actually have any bearing upon reality—no, they are all based off lies designed to trick people into going along with force that enslaves the masses and takes buying power from the masses to enrich the elite titans of industry, thereby making the wealthier wealthier and the poorer poorer—but they do it in a way that they not only steal wealth, and take away freedom, but the blind masses believe they are improving themselves and saving the planet. If you would like more data on this read our blogs [God's Promises and Climate Change Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)
- “I said, ‘You are “gods”; you are all sons of the Most High.’ But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler.” (Psalm 82:6-7 NIV84)
- I say to you, fallen angels pretending to be gods, "Even though you are all children of the Most High, you will die like mortals; your life will end like that of any ordinary ruler." (Psalm 82:6-7 REM).

All the false gods of this world are proxies for Satan and his fallen angels and we are either worshipping God or one of Satan's proxies.

- Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance. (Psalm 82:8 NIV84)
- Rise up, O God, and diagnose the earth, for the entire world belongs to you. (Psalm 82:8 REM)

Is there a difference when you hear judge and diagnose? When the king at the end separates the sheep from the goats, does the judgment of the king make a sheep a sheep and a goat a goat? It is not the judgment of the judge that determines the outcome as happens in human courts, it is the condition of the people, goats are goats and sheep are sheep and God's judgment in the end is simply accurate diagnosis of who partook of the Remedy provided by Jesus and was reborn and restored into godliness and who did not.

## THURSDAY

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The Title of the lesson is The Lord's Judgment and the Sanctuary

And the question that defines how the Bible is interpreted and taught is relevant here again—and that is what law lens does one hold when they read the Bible. Sadly, the authors again reveal that they have accepted Romanism, the lie that God's law functions like imposed human law that requires legal enforcement and thus they interpret the beautiful sanctuary message in a false legal light that obstructs the healing power God intended it to provide us.

Let me show you, the first paragraph reads:

- The Lord's judgment is closely related to the sanctuary. The sanctuary was the environment where the psalmist's understanding of the problem of evil was transformed (Ps. 73:17-20). The sanctuary was designated as the place of divine judgment as indicated by the judgment of Urim (Num. 27:21) and by the breastplate of judgment of the high priest (Exod. 28:15, 28-30). Accordingly, many psalms depict God on His throne in the sanctuary ready to judge the world for its sin and evil. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 49).

The lesson points to Exodus 28:15 & 30 to support this view, so let's read these verses:

- “You shall make **the breastplate of judgment**... And you shall put in the **breastplate of judgment** the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD. So Aaron shall **bear the judgment** of the children of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually. (Exodus 28:15 & 30 NKJV).

What law lens do you read these verses through? The lesson clearly reads them through imposed law and believes judgment means something judicial. But judgment can also mean discernment, decision-making, determining the right and the wrong action to take, not judging someone else legally. And it is

in fact the exercise of discernment, wise decision-making type of judgment that is intended here for that is how Urim and Thummim were used. Urim and Thummim were not used judicially! And most other translations translate it this way. Here is the NET:

- “You are to make a **breastpiece for use in making decisions**... You are to put the Urim and the Thummim into the **breastpiece of decision**; and they are to be over Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the LORD. Aaron is to **bear the decisions** of the Israelites over his heart before the LORD continually. (Exodus 28:15 & 30 NET)

And the NET commentary on these verses reads:

- The Urim and the Thummim were two objects intended for determining the divine will... or “judgment” (KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV). The term is *מִשְׁפָּט* (mishpat), the same word that describes the breastpiece that held the two objects. Here it is translated “decisions” since the Urim and Thummim contained in the breastpiece represented the means by which the LORD made decisions for the Israelites. The high priest bore the responsibility of discerning the divine will on matters of national importance.

And here is commentary on Urim and Thummim from the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

- At the right and left of the breastplate were two large stones of great brilliancy. These were known as the Urim and Thummim. **By them the will of God was made known through the high priest.** When questions were brought for decision before the Lord, a halo of light encircling the precious stone at the right was a token of the divine consent or approval, while a cloud shadowing the stone at the left was an evidence of denial or disapprobation. (Patriarchs and Prophets 351, emphasis mine).

So, the idea that the High Priest was acting in a judicial manner is not supported by the breastplate and Urim and Thummim, but the idea that the High Priest acted to discern, make wise decisions to lead the people is supported. This is design law, truth being unfolded and revealed and people seeking to understand the truth and follow the truth where it leads. This is the purpose of the Sanctuary, to reveal truth, the truth about God and the plan of salvation to lead people out of sin, out of alienation, out of fear, selfishness and death, back into unity, at-one-ment with God.

That requires accurate diagnosis of what is wrong and the application of the remedy from God that heals and restores. That is the message of the sanctuary. I can tell you with confidence, there is nothing penal legal going on in the sanctuary—there is something real, actual, in harmony with God’s kingdom and design law going on and that is the removal of lies, fear, selfishness, from hearts and minds and restoring in people Christlikeness.

The lesson states,

- At the sanctuary, the plan of salvation was revealed... the Bible presents sin as a violation of God’s moral law. God’s holiness means that He loves justice and righteousness. Likewise,

God's people should pursue justice and righteousness and should worship God in His holiness. To do that, they must keep God's law, which is an expression of His holiness... Yet, the "God-Who-Forgives" takes vengeance upon the wicked deeds of unrepentant people (Ps. 99:8, NKJV). The practical implications of the sanctuary being the place of divine judgment are seen in the constant awareness of God's holiness and demands for righteous living according to God's covenantal requirements. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 49).

Thoughts? What do you hear in this description? Do you hear design law or the Roman infection of human law?

## SABBATH

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Read the third paragraph,

- Yes, the Lord is long-suffering and holds His wrath in His great forbearance, not wanting anyone to perish but to repent and change their ways (2 Pet. 3:9-15). And though God's proper time for His intervention does not always coincide with human expectations, the day of God's judgment is coming (Ps. 96:13, Ps. 98:9). We just need to trust in Him, and in His promises, until that day comes. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 44).

How we understand three words in this paragraph significantly impact what we understand this paragraph to mean, particularly what we understand about God and the sin problem and God's solution for it.

Those three words are:

- Wrath
- Intervention
- Judgment

And what determines how we understand these words? What law lens we read the Bible through.

Did anyone read my blog for this week, **God's Wrath Versus Satan's Wrath—What's the Difference?**

The Bible says,

Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having **great wrath**, because he knows that he has a short time (Revelation 12:12 NKJV, emphasis mine).

So what is the difference between Satan's wrath and God's wrath?

- Do we understand wrath to be the same functionally regardless of who the agent of that wrath is?
- Do we see God and Satan acting in similar ways, using similar powers, and causing similar outcomes?
- Do we differentiate God's wrath and Satan's wrath only by motive—for instance, saying that God acts in justice whereas Satan acts in selfishness, but they both use power to inflict harm?

There is certainly one similarity, and that is the *result* when people are not shielded, protected, or delivered from either Satan's or God's wrath. The result of experiencing the full wrath of either being is bad, not good.

But does the result of experiencing unrestrained wrath from either God or Satan mean that Satan's wrath and God's wrath are manifestations of the same power, methods, and actions? Absolutely not! In fact, the wrath of God and that of Satan are exact opposites. God's wrath functions exactly the opposite of how Satan's wrath functions, and we can only understand this if we understand reality, which is to understand God's design law.

### **A Creature's Wrath**

If we view the world through Satan's system of government, that of a creature who cannot create reality so, instead, makes up rules that are enforced through external punishments, then we understand wrath to be the use of power to punish—to inflict harm upon those whom one is wrathful toward. This is Satan's wrath, and it comes out as a result of satanic power.

Throughout human history, God has been shielding us from Satan's wrath, his evil use of power.

And God's active use of His power to protect us from what sin does and from Satan's wrath is God's interventions or intercessions. His first intervention or intercession was immediately after Adam and Eve sinned in Genesis 3 where God put enmity between sinful humans and Satan—meaning God intervenes in human hearts by His Spirit to convict of sin, to put a longing, a desire for love, truth, and heaven, to cause us to be unsatisfied with sin and this world—a conviction to seek our Creator.

God also intervenes to hold back the four winds of strife (Revelation 7:1); He restrains Satan and the principalities of darkness (Revelation 12:7; Colossians 2:15); and He has been sending angel armies to shield us (2 Kings 6:17–20).

And God intervened with what sin naturally does to the sinner—separates from God and causes death, by sending Jesus to be sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). In other words, God intervened with our sin condition to destroy the sin and open a path of eternal life for all who are restored to trust in Him.

We see God’s interventions happening all throughout Scripture to hold at bay Satan’s power, Satan’s wrath.

Satan’s wrath is the use of power to cause harm!

But God’s wrath is the opposite—it is when He *stops using power to protect us*. God is the Creator, the builder of reality whose laws are the template of health and life. Breaking His laws directly causes us harm, and God, in harmony with His character of love, must expend His power, His energy, His resources, to hold at bay the harm that results from breaking His design-laws and to impart the healing solution. While Satan uses power to injure, God uses power to heal, restore, recreate, renew, and rebuild.

God’s wrath occurs when He respects the choices of rebellious people and gives them what they have insisted upon—freedom from Him, His design laws for life, and His merciful healing power and presence.

This is exactly what Paul describes in Romans:

The **wrath of God is being revealed** from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men **who suppress the truth by their wickedness**, since what may be **known about God** is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world **God’s invisible qualities**—his eternal power and divine nature—have been **clearly seen**, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse (Romans 1:18–20 NIV84).

Paul then goes on to explicitly state three times and describe with outcome-based evidence that God’s wrath is letting people go to reap what they have chosen when they break away from His protective care. In verses 24, 26, and 28, Paul says that God *gave them up*, or *let them go*, or *handed them over* to what they insisted upon—and the only outcome from breaking away from the Creator and Sustainer of life and health is ruin and death.

The scholarly commentary *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, published by Intervarsity Press, explains these verses beautifully:

In some sense, **God’s wrath is built into** the very structure of created reality. In rejecting God’s structure and establishing our own, in violating God’s intention for the creation and substituting our own intentions, **we cause or own disintegration**.

The human condition, which Paul describes in Romans 1:18–32, **is not something caused by God**. The phrase “revealed from heaven” (where “heaven” is a typical Jewish substitute word for “God”) does not depict some kind of divine intervention, but rather the **inevitability of human debasement which results when God’s will, built into the created order, is violated**. Since the created order has its origin in God, Paul can say that the wrath of God is now (constantly) being revealed “from heaven.” It is revealed in the fact that the rejection of

God's truth (Rom 1:18–20), that is, the truth about God's nature and will, leads to futile thinking (Rom 1:21–22), idolatry (Rom 1:23), perversion of God-intended sexuality (Rom 1:24–27) and relational-moral brokenness (Rom 1:28–32).

The expression “God gave them over” (or “handed them over”), which appears three times in this passage (Rom 1:24, 26, 28), supports the idea that the sinful perversion of human existence, though resulting from human decisions, **is to be understood ultimately as God's punishment which we, in freedom, bring upon ourselves.**

In light of these reflections, **the common notion that God punishes or blesses in direct proportion to our sinful or good deeds cannot be maintained.** ... God loves us with an everlasting love. **But the rejection of that love separates us from its life-giving power. The result is disintegration and death** (p. 543).

God is the God of reality—and His wrath is the exact opposite of Satan's; yet, sadly, billions believe that God's wrath is functionally no different than Satan's. Billions have been led to believe that God's wrath is when He uses His power to inflict pain, suffering, and torture upon His children. This is a lie! And this lie is the fruit, the unavoidable result, of believing another lie—that God's law functions like human law; that is, imposed rules. If one believes that any part of God's law is like human law, made up rules, then one **always** believes that God must use power to inflict punishment for rule-breaking, for if there is no punishment in this artificial system, then there is no “justice.”

But God is calling people to reject this lie, to stop teaching others that He functions like a creature, and to return to worshipping Him as Creator—the One who speaks reality into existence and whose laws are design laws that all reality operates upon.

We have defined wrath and interventions, what about Judgment—what does this word mean, how do you hear it?

If we accept the lie that God's law functions like human law what does judgment mean?

Does judgment mean something different when we worship God as Creator, understanding His laws are design laws?

Yes, in fact in Scripture, in addition to the human judicial judgment we see when Pilate judged Jesus, there are four godly judgment types, or uses of the word to mean something quite different:

1. In Eden Adam and Eve had to make a judgment; at Mt. Carmel the people were called by Elijah to make a judgment; Paul in Romans 3:4 wrote:

“Let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: “That You may be justified in Your words, and may overcome when **You are judged.**” (Romans 3:4 NKJV, emphasis mine).



The first type of judgment, is our judgment of God, deciding for ourselves whether to believe or reject Satan's lies about God. Sadly, far too many believe Satan's lies about God's law and thus judge God to be like Satan in character, the source of pain, suffering, and death inflicted as punishment for sin. This is why Revelation 14 tells us before Christ returns a special message is to go to the entire world calling people back to worship of the Creator—for the time in human history has come for people to make a right judgment about God. Sadly, however, is that the SDA church leadership, having rejected the message of design law brought to it in 1888 and instead embracing the imperial Roman view of law, has taught that the hour of God's judgment is judicial, tribunal, punitive, and misrepresents God and His kingdom.

2. The second judgment is God's diagnostic and therapeutic judgments—through history. These include in our hearts and minds and also globally, His judgments as to what is therapeutically necessary to fulfill the plan of salvation, to bring the promised Messiah of Genesis 3:15. These types of judgments are not judicial, i.e. required by law to punish sin, but therapeutic required by reality to destroy sin and heal God's creation. Such actions as the Flood, God's judgment that this was needed to preserve the human line through whom Messiah would be born, for without Jesus being born as our Savior no human being could be saved from sin. And all those who died in the Flood died the first/sleep death and will rise in one of two resurrections—thus the action was not a judicial one.
3. The third judgment happens during the 1000 years when the righteous in heaven examine the history of the Great Controversy, including how Lucifer and one third of the angels rebelled in heaven. And the righteous will make a judgment in their mind about these events and God's actions and the righteous will judge that all sin, all rebellion, all evil, all pain, suffering, destruction, death 100% come from Satan and none of it is because God failed in any way. We will judge that every single human not in heaven is not there because of their own choice and that there was nothing more God could do to save any one of them.
4. The fourth judgment is the Great White Throne 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).

Surely this judgment must be judicial ... right? No, it isn't.

What is recorded in the books of 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 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).

If you would like to read more check out our blog on the [Four Judgments](#) or read our magazine [The Final Message of Mercy to the World: The Three Angels](#).