

# 2024 Q1 Psalms Lesson 7

## Your Mercy Reaches Unto the Heavens

by Tim Jennings

### SABBATH

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Read memory verse:

- I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations. For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, And Your truth unto the clouds. (Psalm 57:9-10 NKJV)
- I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the people; I will sing your praise with the family of God. For your great love is the basis of life in the entire universe, and your truth — the foundation of the smallest particle of matter. (Psalm 57:9-10 REM)

Do these sound different to you? What do we understand God’s mercy to be? Is it something other than His love?

### SUNDAY

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- Psalm 136 summons God’s people to praise the Lord for His mercy as revealed in creation (Ps. 136:4-9) and in Israel’s history (Ps. 136:10-22). “Mercy” (Hebrew *chesed*, “steadfast love”) conveys God’s goodness and loyalty to His creation and to His covenant with Israel. The psalm shows that God’s immense power and magnificence are grounded in His steadfast love. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 53).

The Hebrew for mercy is the same Hebrew for steadfast love, so many other translations also translate this verse as God’s love rather than God’s mercy (NIV, GNT, NET, NRSV, ESV, NCV).

And what do we understand God’s love to be—is it merely sentiment, emotion, positive attitude? Or is it functional, operational, directional, motivational to action—and actions that are beneficial to others, giving, altruistic? Does love compel God to act in certain ways and to restrain or forbid other activities?

What does love compel a person to do when the object of that person’s love is in danger? Isn’t the one who is motivated by love compelled by love to act in ways that save, redeem, heal, relieve, deliver, and restore? Is love ever the source of harm, evil, torture, or death?

Does love sometimes act in ways, that given the situation, results in transitory pain, such as doctor setting a broken bone, or a parent cleaning dirt out of their child’s wound? Does that mean love harms?

What about the phrase, “Mercy conveys God’s goodness and loyalty to His creation and to His covenant with Israel”?

Does Israel have a covenant that is restricted to Israel? What is the covenant to Israel? Isn't it the covenant of the promised Seed, which was promised to Jacob, but before that was promised to Isaac, but before that was promised to Abraham? But wasn't that same covenantal promise previously given to Adam after the fall? So when we think of the covenant to Israel are we allowing our minds to become sectarian and restrictive, or are we seeing the larger view, the outworking of God's promise, God's covenant, to the entire human race and realizing that the Bible narrative focuses in on the branch of the human family tree through whom God's promise to the entire human race will be accomplished?

Would it be more accurate to say, "Mercy conveys God's goodness and loyalty to His creation and to His covenant with the human race that was being worked out through Israel"?

I find that far too many people somehow think the covenant to Israel is restrictive, limited, unique to the descendants of Jacob, but it is not. The promise was for the Messiah to come so that the human species would be saved from sin and the entire Earth returned to human governance—reclaimed from Satan's infection.

The covenant of grace, the promise that God would save sinners, was given immediately after Adam sinned:

- And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel (Genesis 3:15 NKJV).

This covenant contains God's promise to send Jesus, the Seed of the woman, to overcome and destroy Satan and sin and redeem humanity. The entire Old Testament is the outworking of this promise.

The promise to Abraham is the recommunication of the promise made in Eden, with the promise that it would be one of Abraham's descendants who is the fulfillment of that promise:

- In your seed **all the nations** of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice (Genesis 22:18 NKJV, emphasis mine).

And this promise was repeated to Isaac and Jacob.

There is no doubt that God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but that covenant is the same covenant that was given to Adam, but with Abraham we now have the identification of the specific branch of the human family through whom the Messiah would come.

The apostle Paul, a former Pharisee of the tribe of Benjamin and a highly trained Jewish theologian of the first century, wrote:

- You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise** (Galatians 3:26–29 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Is there some covenant to the Jews that is not to the rest of the world? Some might argue it was for the land, that Abraham was promised the land of Palestine—but that regional land was promised as part of this global covenant; Abraham’s descendants would occupy the local regional area of Palestine *until the Messiah came*, and then through the promised Seed, Jesus Christ, the full covenantal promise will be accomplished so that the meek will inherit the entire Earth. The covenantal promised land is the entire planet and it is promised to those who belong to Christ—these are the heirs of Abraham and that is the true land of inheritance.

Remember what the writer of Hebrews wrote, because it agrees with our assessment. Hebrews in chapter 11, the hall of faith, tells us that the faithful of God in Bible times—Abel, Enoch, Noah, along with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who lived in the regional promised land (Hebrews 11:9)—“did not receive the things promised” (Hebrews 11:13), but that these faithful were “looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:10). “All of these people” of faith “did not receive the things promised; they saw them and welcomed them from a distance. . . . They were longing for a better country—a heavenly one” (Hebrews 11:13, 16).

Hebrews tells us that “all of these people” did not receive the things promised; note who is included on that list—Enoch, who was taken to heaven! Enoch, who has already received eternal life, a glorified body, who currently lives in heaven with Jesus, surely he has received the promise, hasn’t he? Not in its complete and fullest sense. What was Abraham promised? That his spiritual descendants would inherit the earth. This promise will not be realized until Jesus comes again, all sin and sinners are eliminated, the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, and the earth is made new to be the home of the righteous. Then the promise will be realized and we, who have faith like Abraham, will receive our inheritance of a goodly land, a beautiful home, perfect and flawless that God intended Adam and Eve to possess.

The point is that God was fulfilling his covenant to the human race through Abraham’s family tree—but the covenant is not restricted to Abraham’s genetic descendants, it is for the entire human race.

Read the bottom green question:

- How does the image of Jesus on the cross, dying as a Substitute for our sins, most powerfully reveal the great truth about God, that “His love endures forever”? (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 53).

Before we discuss this question—let’s affirm that we believe in the substitutionary nature of Christ’s sacrifice in our behalf, to save us from sin. As Paul wrote:

- God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might **become** the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Note, according to Paul in this verse, the reason for Christ’s substitutionary sacrificial death was not legal, it was not penal, it was not a payment, it was not to assuage God’s wrath or propitiate God for God was never the problem. When Adam sinned God did not get changed, God’s law did not change, the condition of Adam changed from sinless, loyal, faithful, trustworthy, to sinful, disloyal, unfaithful, untrustworthy fear ridden and selfish.

Thus Jesus became our substitute so that we might become the righteousness of God, so that we sinful humans might be cleansed from sin and restored to God’s perfect ideal for humankind.

We believe that Jesus came and voluntarily put Himself into a position that was not naturally His own for the purpose of delivering us from the position that was naturally our own—He took our place. He substituted Himself.

We should never deny this—for it is eternally true.

The question that arises is, why? Why was it required for us to become righteous? Why was it necessary for humans to be saved from sin? How did Christ's voluntary and substitutionary sacrifice achieve the righteousness of God in humanity?

If God is love and He loved the world so much He sent His Son, if God is merciful—full of mercy, if God pardons freely as Isaiah 55 says, if God does not keep a record of our wrongs as 1 Corinthians 13 says—then why couldn't God just forgive us outright without the death of Jesus?

And the answer of course is that God did forgive us outright, and it is because of God's love and forgiveness that He sent His Son to do what Jesus needed to do, because God's forgiveness extended freely from His heart does not remove sinfulness from us. And salvation, healing, requires that sinfulness in sinners be replaced with sinlessness, righteousness, purity, holiness. And once Adam sinned, every human being has been born infected with sinfulness, with fear and selfishness, with unholiness. Thus, Jesus had to partake of this humanity and merge His sinless, holy, pure, self with this damaged humanity—be tempted in all points like we are, yet with His human abilities choose holiness, righteousness, and reject the pull of sin, and ultimately take the fallen, diseased, carnal nature to the cross and kill it and rise in a new purified humanity free from the infection of fear and selfishness. This is reality, it is design law, it is restoring, cleansing, purifying and fixing the problem by removing the defect.

Thus Jesus came, as John the Baptist said, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” Jesus came to take away sin, to destroy death, to destroy the cause of death, and thereby heal this creation.

God can create a new species any time God wants. After Adam sinned, God was still free to gather some dirt together, form a new body, breathe the breath of life into that body and create a new sinless human being—but such a being would not be part of the creation He made in Eden. It would not be related to Adam and Eve, but a new, similar yet distinct, creation. Creating a brand new human would not save Adam and Eve, it would not save this creation, the one God made in Eden.

When God made Adam He breathed into Adam the breath of life—every other human being received life from that breath of life given to Adam. Eve was not formed out of dirt and she did not receive her own breath of life, she was formed from the living tissue of Adam's body, tissue that was already alive—an extension of that same breath of life, or live energy that God breathed into Adam. And that Greek and Hebrew word for “breath” is the same work as “spirit.” It is the internal motivational energy that invigorates and animates all of us. Because God gave Adam and Eve procreative abilities that same life breathed into Adam is shared with every single human being. But the sad reality is that Adam altered the quality of that life energy. His sin changed the motivational energy from pure love, to energy contaminated with fear and selfishness and we are all born with motivational drives of fear and selfishness.

So, what was needed? A human being that is part of Adam, part of this creation, a human being who partakes of that same life, life-energy, given to Adam in Eden, that life which is now infected with fear and selfishness so that this Savior could purify that life, could destroy the terminal condition and restore God's perfect living law of love, His protocols for life, back into this human creation.

Thus Jesus came as the second Adam, partaking of the very same human life that was given to Adam through His mother Mary, the humanity that has been damaged by sin and terminal because of Adam's fall, but because the Father for His human body was the Holy Spirit Jesus was also invigorated with spiritual purity, a life energy undefiled by sin and as a real human being, partaking of the life given to Adam, He could face temptation like every human does yet Jesus was able to choose, with His human abilities, to say no to every temptation and live a life of purity. And on the Cross Jesus destroyed death causing principle, the impure energy of fear and selfishness contaminating the life energy breathed into Adam. At the cross, Jesus destroyed the carnal terminal sin nature, and arose in a purified humanity and became the new head of humanity and He now stands in God's presence not only in His preincarnate position as the Son of God—but Jesus now stands in God's presence as the representative head of humanity—a real human being, sinless and perfect. He stands as Adam's substitute—in the place in the heavenly counsel that God designed Adam to stand. And through faith, we can each receive that same divine energy of the Holy Spirit, that takes what Christ achieved and invigorates us with a reborn spirit, new life motives, so that we become literal partakers of the divine nature as our spirits, our internal energies, motivations, drives, change from fear and selfishness to love and trust via the indwelling Holy Spirit.

So how do you answer the question:

- How does the image of Jesus on the cross, dying as a Substitute for our sins, most powerfully reveal the great truth about God, that “His love endures forever”? (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 53).

This takes us right into **MONDAY's** lesson because Christ came to fix what Adam did to the species, and because Christ fixed it, then we can partake of His victory so that “it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20) and we become partakers of the divine nature, we get new hearts and right spirits, the mind of Christ, reborn, recreated, the law written on our hearts and minds etc.

This is the true plan of salvation—and there is nothing penal legal going on, it is real, actual, literal, generational, the restoration of God's living law into you and me through the accomplishments of Jesus Christ.

So, Monday the lesson focuses our attention on Psalms 51, in which David prays for a new heart and right spirit, to be cleansed in the inner man, that is what salvation is, healing, recreating, cleansing of the sinner—not cleansing of books.

But let's read the first two paragraphs:

- King David pours out his heart before the Lord, asking for the forgiveness of sin during the spiritually darkest moments in his life (2 Samuel 12). Forgiveness is God's extraordinary gift of grace, the result of the “multitude of Your tender mercies” (Ps. 51:1, NKJV). King David appeals to God to deal with him not in accordance with what his sin deserves (Ps. 103:10) but in accordance with His divine character, namely His mercy, faithfulness, and compassion (Ps. 51:1; Exod. 34:6, 7).

Divine forgiveness involves more than a legal proclamation of innocence. It produces a profound change that reaches the most inner parts of human self (Ps. 51:6, Heb. 4:12). It brings about a new creation (Ps. 51:10, John 3:3-8). The Hebrew verb *bara*, translated “create,” depicts divine creative power (Gen. 1:1). Only God can *bara*; only God can produce a radical and lasting change in the repentant person’s heart (2 Cor. 4:6). (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 54).

There is so much that is very well said in these two paragraphs. There is no question that God’s forgiveness is a manifestation of His grace, love, mercy, and character, and that the experience forgiveness from the sinner’s perspective involves a profound change of the inmost being, a new creation, brought about by divine power. This is all well said.

But what about the idea of forgiveness involving a legal proclamation of innocence? This idea is dropped in as an assumed truth, as if “we know forgiveness is when the guilty are legally proclaimed innocent, but forgiveness also includes so much more...” It seems the lesson assumes this to be true and wants to make special emphasis of the transforming nature of forgiveness. I am glad the lesson has emphasized the healing, transforming elements, because they are the truth of forgiveness, what forgiveness actually is. But is the assumed legal innocence proclamation true—or is that a falsehood based on accepting the lie that God’s law functions like human law?

When will it be true that Adam and Eve are innocent? Does accepting Jesus as our sinless Savior change the history of what Adam and Eve did, or what you and I have done? Do any humans ever get to say they are in fact innocent of sin? So, if we are not in truth, in fact, in reality, innocent of sin and God proclaims that we are, what are we teaching about God? That God is bearing a false witness, God is declaring something to be true when it is in fact false.

As I understand it, there is nothing in Scripture that says we will be declared innocent. What gets declared, and this is said in a variety of ways but it all means the same thing, is that the saved sinners are:

- Healed
- Redeemed
- Recreated
- Renewed
- Reborn
- Perfected
- Restored
- Made Christlike
- Made Righteous
- Set right
- Put right
- Made Holy
- Purified
- Made Faithful

None of us ever get proclaimed or declared to be innocent, no, we all are guilty—but all the saved are also all healed, reborn, recreated, renewed, delivered, made righteous, made holy, purified, and

cleansed. This is the gospel through design law, taking what has been damaged by sin and restoring it to perfect, holy, righteousness.

In fact, it is the truth of our sickness in sin and God's saving us from it that gives us a story to tell, the song of the redeemed—if we are all declared innocent, if we have had our records erased and there is no memory of our sinfulness from which Jesus cleansed and healed us, then what will we witness about?

If you had had a terrible cancer, suffered greatly, and Jesus healed you fully into robust perfect vibrant health—would you have a story to tell? Do you need to forget your sickness or as you recall what you have been saved from do you rejoice in Jesus and what He has done for you? But what if after your healing you have your memory erased and no longer recall the sickness of the past, do you have the same appreciation for what Jesus did to heal you?

It is an eternal truth that God forgives us—but God forgives the unrepentant also, Jesus forgave those who crucified Him. The difference between the saved and the lost is not in God's attitude toward them, it is in the sinner's attitude toward God. The saved respond to God's forgiveness, are convicted in heart, won by His love, and repent and are reborn with new hearts and right spirits; whereas the wicked reject and despise God's forgiveness, harden and close their hearts, and solidify themselves in sin and selfishness.

## TUESDAY

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Read first paragraph:

- The psalmist's great affliction is related to his own and his people's sins (Ps. 130:3, 8). The people's sins are so grave that they threaten to separate the people from God forever (Ps. 130:3). Scripture speaks of the records of sins that are being kept for the Judgment Day (Dan. 7:10, Rev. 20:12) and of sinners' names being removed from the book of life (Exod. 32:32, Ps. 69:28, Rev. 13:8). (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 55).

Why would sin separate people from God? Is it that God cannot stand it and gets offended, or is it that the people in sin cannot stand holiness and flee from God's presence?

When Moses came off the mountain reflecting God's glory what did the people do? They shied away, begging him to cover his face, why? Because they could not tolerate the heavenly light. When Jesus appears at the second coming, what to the wicked plead for? For the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the presence of Jesus.

Please note, that sin cuts people off from God and **that alienation happens in the heart and mind of the sinner**. As soon as Adam and Eve sinned **they** ran and hid, but God, in love, mercy, and with forgiveness ran after them and has been pursuing sinful humanity ever since.

The Bible tells us that while we were still sinners Jesus died for us (Romans 5:8). For God so loved the world He sent His Son (John 3:16). **So sin does not cause God to pull away from us; it is unhealed, unremedied, unremoved sin in the sinner that causes the sinner to pull away and cut themselves off from God**. And eventually, when the unremedied sin destroys the faculties that

respond to love and truth and no further amount of love and truth will have any saving impact, then God let's go, He stops using His power to prevent the separation and the sinner reaps what they have sown—eternal separation from source of life and they die.

What about the idea that “Scripture speaks of the records of sins that are being kept for the Judgment Day (Dan. 7:10, Rev. 20:12)”

This is a sad misunderstanding that people draw when they read the Bible with the lie that God's law functions like human law.

The lesson cites Daniel 7:10:

- A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. (Daniel 7:10 NIV84).

Is there anything in this text that says these books are books that contain records of sin? Is there anything in the text that says this is a legal proceeding?

Some argue that the “court” being seated indicates a courtroom, a legal court with a judge and jury. And that is exactly how people read it when they go to the Bible with the Roman view of law, when they falsely believe God's government works like Rome's with imposed law and legal proceedings. But the text doesn't actually say any of that, it is all presumed and projected in.

There is another type of judgment that is not legal in nature—the judgment that is at the center of the Great Controversy, the judgment that the entire universe is required to make, the judgment that **must** occur and is **required** for the sin problem to come to an end—and that judgment is what Paul describes in Romans 3:4. And it is that judgment which is being described here in Daniel 7:10.

- 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, emphasis theirs)

The issue in the entire Great Controversy is whether God is trustworthy, did Satan tell the truth about God or did Satan lie about God? Are we safe with God when God is all powerful and all-knowing, including knowing the future before it even occurs?

So Daniel describes a time when the heavenly court is seated, but this is not a legal court, it is the heavenly royal court, and the court in which Jesus is coronated and receives His kingdom. And when Jesus, in His humanity, receives His throne then the books are opened so that the onlooking universe can see the evidence and make a right judgment about God, so that the Great Controversy can be ended. For this is hour in history for God to be judged, the hour of His judgment has come! It is the time for Satan's lies about God to be permanently rejected and God to be judged righteous!

The court in Daniel 7 is the exact same court we see in Revelation 4 & 5, and we know how Daniel and Revelation go hand in hand and complement each other.

In Revelation 4 and 5, you will find that, just as in Daniel 7, there is:



- a great assembly in heaven
- that the ancient of days has taken His throne
- he is surrounded by the 24 elders and the four living creatures
- Jesus comes and is recognized as worthy—is coronated as righteous ruler
- and a book which is sealed with seven seals is opened

Daniel 7 and Revelation 4 and 5 are describing the same event.

And what is recorded in the book with seven seals?

In my view, this is the book of God’s foreknowledge, what He foreknew would happen before He created anything including Lucifer. God recorded it all and sealed it with seven seals. Then He began to create and created recording angels to document history as it unfolded in accurate detail. At some point in time Lucifer rebels and the entire Great Controversy unfolds, Adam falls, Jesus comes and redeems humanity and then a time comes in history when a grand court is seated and the books are opened, and those books are both the books recorded by the recording angels and the book sealed with seven seals, which Jesus the Lamb opens. And as the books are compared all see that God, though He has foreknowledge, never uses that knowledge to restrict our freedom, that God didn’t manipulate, or act in any way with His use of power but that which was the outworking of love for the good of His creation. And God is judged righteous and innocent of all of Satan’s charges and Satan is judged as guilty of all sin, pain, suffering, and death.

This is the judgment of Daniel 7, and we participate in that investigative judgment as we also are called to investigate the evidence God has given at such extreme cost to Himself and make a right judgment about God, to stop worshiping the imperial Roman dictator god and return to worshiping Him who made the heavens, earth, sea, and fountains of water, to return to Creator worship which means rejecting the imposed law lies with its penal legal system and understand God’s laws as design laws.

There is another set of books mentioned in Revelation 20:12, the Great White throne Judgment, the books from which the wicked are judged according to the deeds recorded there. And what are these books? Revelation 20:12 explicitly states it is the book of life, the place in heaven where God keeps the sleeping souls, where individualities and characters are recorded. And the wicked are judged, diagnosed, by what is actually in their hearts, minds, and characters. It is not a judicial proceeding, it is an accurate diagnosis of what they have chosen to become when they refused the Remedy of Jesus Christ which, had they accepted would have removed from them all sinfulness, all fear, guilt, shame, evil, and deceit. But having rejected Jesus they have solidified themselves in sin, thus the records being a full and complete transcript of their actual individuality and character contains all the ongoing evil they still have within them.

Thus, when the judge at the end separate sheep and goats the action of the judge to separate sheep and goats does not make sheep into sheep and goats into goats, it merely and accurately distinguishes what is.

Read the second paragraph,

- The psalmist thus appeals to God’s forgiveness, which will eradicate the record of sins (Ps. 51:1, 9; Jer. 31:34; Mic. 7:19). He knows that “God is not angry by nature. His love is

everlasting. His ‘anger’ is aroused only by man’s failure to appreciate His love. . . . The purpose of His anger is not to wound, but rather to heal man; not to destroy but to save His covenant people (see Hos. 6:1, 2).”—Hans K. LaRondelle, *Deliverance in the Psalms* (Berrien Springs, MI: First Impressions, 1983), pp. 180, 181. Remarkably, it is God’s readiness to forgive sins, and not to punish them, that inspires reverence of God (Ps. 130:4, Rom. 2:4). Genuine worship is built on admiration of God’s character of love, not on fear of punishment. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 55).

There is much in this paragraph that we can appreciate, that God wants worship based on admiration and love not on fear—in fact if people are worshipping God out of fear what does that reveal and what happens to them if that doesn’t change? It reveals they don’t truly know God, but have some falsehoods about God still operating in their hearts, and if it doesn’t change they get harmed by it, physically and spiritually. Fear activates fear inflammatory cascades in the body causing health problems, and fear leads to distrust and rebellion, or submission and loss of individuality, mindless slaves. That is why the Bible teaches that perfect love casts out all fear.

Just to clarify, we mean fear as in terror, being afraid, not the old English definition of awe, admiration, and reverence, we are always to grow in awe, admiration, and reverence for God while we have no fear.

What of the sentence, “The psalmist thus appeals to God’s forgiveness, which will eradicate the record of sins”?

Does God erase the records, history, facts? If so, how can we still read about David in the Bible, haven’t those records been erased? Will there be no Bibles in heaven?

What about when David and Bathsheba are talking with Uriah and Solomon comes up and says hello mother? Hmmm...will they know how Solomon became their child? Will Uriah be aware?

Sin does not happen in record books and it doesn’t get erased from record books. Sin happens in hearts and minds and God cleanses hearts and minds from sin, not books. The penal legal model cheats people from genuine salvation by getting them to find security in a legal adjustment in books rather than actual healing of their hearts and minds.

What do you think of this sentence? “His ‘anger’ is aroused only by man’s failure to appreciate His love”?

This sentence could easily be misconstrued—let’s understand that the author meant it in the best light, that of a parent who is angry at disease that harms their child, but not at the child. So God’s anger is toward sin, not the child who is sinful, thus God’s anger is aroused when sin prevents people from appreciating God’s love.

But this choice of language could be easily misunderstood and confusing when discussing love, because love is relational and in this context it is being suggested that God gets angry when we don’t appreciate His love. I have had many female patients, wives, come to see me after their husbands got angry and beat them because they didn’t appreciate their love. Are we suggesting that if we don’t appreciate God’s love that God gets angry and His anger must be vented, and if we don’t love Him by accepting Jesus, then He will vent that anger on us? If so, are we presenting a god who functions no differently than a self-centered narcissistic and abusive husband?

Sadly, I have seen God presented in this way more than one. But this is a lie, God is never the source of inflicted harm, suffering, or death. God's anger is at the sin and situation, because He knows that those who don't appreciate His love will suffer terribly from unremedied sin and die eternally.

## WEDNESDAY

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The lesson points our attention to Psalm 113, let's compare the NIV and REM:

- Praise the LORD. Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD. Let the name of the LORD be praised, both now and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the LORD is to be praised. (Psalm 113:1-3 NIV84).
- Praise the Lord. Give praise, all who speak the truth about God; shine brightly, revealing the character and methods of the Lord. Let God's character of love be praised, both now and forevermore. Throughout all creation—from east to west—God's character of love is praiseworthy. (Psalm 113:1-3 REM).

In the Remedy, I attempted to bring forth the meaning in the setting of the GC. Who are the servants of the Lord? All throughout Scripture the servants of God are His prophets, which are not primarily prognosticators, but are the people who go out to others with a message from God for the people, they are God's spokespersons. And what does it mean to praise God? Does it not mean to reveal the truth about Him? Can we truly praise God if we are misrepresenting Him? So in this context I paraphrased the true message that we are to praise God by speaking the truth about Him, being bright lights of truth that reveal His true character—why? What does a name mean in the Bible context? It means their character, thus those who praise the name of God are elevating, praising, and magnifying the true character of God.

- The LORD is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens. Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? (Psalm 113:4-6 NIV84).
- The Creator is supreme — greater than all nations; his glory is higher than the heavens. Who is like our Creator God, the infinite One who sits enthroned high above our reality, who must bend down from infinity to look upon the heavens and the earth? (Psalm 113:4-6 REM)

My view elevates God as Creator as the One who sits above and outside of our linear plane of existence, sustaining all things and thus is beyond all of us, and is outside of time itself. This becomes important in understanding the plan of salvation and what God is seeking to fix, heal, resolve—not primarily temporal or earthly things, but God wants to restore His creation to harmony with the rest of the universe, free it from sin. This difference is noted in the following verses and how they are interpreted differently:

- He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people. He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the LORD. (Psalm 113:7-9 NIV84).
- He raises from dust those dying in sin and exalts those who need healing from decay; he seats them upon thrones, with his royal family redeemed from the earth. He makes the barren place home—a happy motherland filled with his children. Praise the Lord. (Psalm 113:7-9 REM).

I think the true message inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the message of the plan of salvation from sin and the restoration of the Earth to God's home for human beings—as Jesus said, the meek will inherit the earth. I think that when we see the message of Scripture as primarily about this sinful plane of existence and delivering from earthly problems, we find promises that are unreliable, some people are delivered, but many righteous are not. But when we realize the true message of Scripture, every single righteous person is delivered.

## THURSDAY

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The lesson focuses our attention on Psalm 103, let's compare the NIV and REM:

- Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. (Psalm 103:1 NIV84).
- Praise the Lord, O my soul; with all that is within me, praise his perfect character of love! (Psalm 103:1 REM).

Do you hear these differently? Is my paraphrase leading away from the true meaning, or does the holy name of God mean His perfect character of love?

- Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103:2-5 NIV84).
- Praise the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all he does to heal us: He forgives all our deviations from his design-law for life and provides the remedy to our sin-sickness, delivering us from eternal death and enveloping us in his love and tender mercies; he fills and adorns us with his goodness and gives us new life—a rebirth—to soar free like an eagle. (Psalm 103:2-5 REM).

What do you think of these two versions? As you compare the Remedy with the NIV, do you think the Remedy introduces ideas that are not in the NIV, or does the Remedy simply make the true meaning clearer? What do you think the true message of Scripture is, about satisfying the earthly desires of our youth, or about being reborn into God's heavenly family?

- The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. (Psalm 103:6 NIV84).
- The Lord does what is right—restores his creation to harmony with his design, healing those who are crushed by sin and selfishness. (Psalm 103:6 REM).

When you hear “justice” what do you think? What is justice for the oppressed? The Remedy understands justice through design law, doing what is right, which is restoring creation back to God's design for life. Notice a difference in the following verses:

- He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those

who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:7-12 NIV84)

- He made known his ways to Moses, his methods to the people of Israel: The Lord is merciful and gracious; he is infinite in love, holding on as long as there is hope—yet he will not strive for all eternity to win our hearts; he will not hold back forever letting us go our own rebellious way. He doesn't lay on us what our terminal sin-condition rightly deserves or leave us to rot in character, as our selfishness would naturally do. As high as heaven is above the earth, so mighty is his love to heal those who revere him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes the infection of fear and selfishness from us. (Psalm 113:7-12 REM).

Do you see how design law helps us understand the reality of what is happening, how God is always love, always gracious, always merciful, and that God in mercy will not allow the unrighteous to suffer forever, but stops pursuing when there is no longer any hope of cure. And what is God actually removing from sinners—Is God, in the plan of salvation, removing deeds from sinners, changing historical facts, removing records of deeds, or is God removing the sin, sinfulness, fear, selfishness, distrust and rebellion from our hearts and minds. In other words, removing the carnal nature from us and restoring in us the divine nature.

- As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. (Psalm 103:13-18 NIV84).
- As a father tenderly pours love upon his children, so the Lord tenderly pours his love upon those who revere him; for he knows how we are made, and he realizes we are descended from one man who was formed from mud. For human life is like grass: we blossom like flowers in the field, then the winds of time blow and the flower is gone, and where it grew no one remembers. But from eternity past to eternity future, the love of the Lord flows out to those who revere him—his righteous remedy healing all generations who participate in his treatment plan and live in harmony with his design protocols for life. (Psalm 103:13-18 REM).

Does it help you understand the meaning more clearly to shift away from “keep his covenant and obey his presents” to “who participate in his treatment plan and live in harmony with his design protocols for life”?

- The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will. Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the LORD, O my soul. (Psalm 103:19-22 NIV84)
- The Creator God has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom of love governs over all creation. Praise the Lord, you loyal angels of God—you mighty beings who do his bidding, who carry out his commands. Praise the Lord, all who live in heaven—you who live devoted to doing his will. Praise the Lord, everything he has created, throughout his entire domain. Praise the Lord, O my soul. (Psalm 103:19-22 REM)