



2024 1Q Psalms Lesson 10

Lessons of the Past

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

This lesson was a very sad lesson for me, it was difficult to study and is going to be difficult to teach because it is painful to realize how history is repeating itself in our very own day.

Read first paragraph,

- In numerous psalms, praise takes the form of narrating the Lord's mighty acts of salvation. These psalms are often called "salvation history psalms" or "historical psalms." Some appeal to God's people, telling them to learn from their history, particularly from their mistakes and the mistakes of their ancestors. Certain historical psalms contain a predominant hymnal note that highlights God's past wonderful deeds on behalf of God's people and that strengthen their trust in the Lord, who is able and faithful to deliver them from their present hardships. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 76).

Paul wrote:

- Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did... These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us... (1 Corinthians 10:6 & 11 NIV84).

So the lesson brings forth such an important point—we are to learn from history. So, let's do that today.

Consider Jesus' words to the religious leaders of His day, and ask what can we learn from history?

- You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. (John 5:39-40 NIV84).

What lessons are there in this historical conversation that are applicable to us today:

- Who were the people Jesus said this to? The leaders of the Jewish religion, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees.
- What are the Scriptures Jesus is referencing that these religious leaders diligently study? The Old Testament 39 books that we have in our Bible.
- Were the Jews studying the wrong Scriptures?

- Did they belong to the wrong religious organization?
- Were they worshiping as the wrong temple?
- Were they keeping the wrong Sabbath?
- Were they eating the wrong foods?
- Were they paying wrong amount of tithe?
- Were they paying the tithe in the wrong place?
- Were they wearing the wrong clothes?
- Were they friends of God?
- Were they teaching the truth?
- Or were they, despite teaching all the right doctrines enemies of God and teaching lies about God that were obstructing people from experiencing salvation?
- And who are the Jews at this time in history? God's chosen and especially blessed people, in other words God's church.
- And what does history teach us, and the Bible specifically say in Isaiah, Ezekiel and Romans about what God's specially chose people did for God?
 - "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." (Isaiah 52:5; Ezekiel 36:22; Romans 2:24 NIV84)

History teaches us that the people called and blessed by God with the Scriptures misunderstood the Bible in such a way that they lied about God, ended up worshiping such a false picture of God that when God came and stood among them, they not only hated Him and killed Him, they believed justice required them to inflict the most excruciating torture possible upon Him—just as some in our own church today teach—they blaspheme God today teaching that God's justice requires Him to torture people and then kill them.

Jesus further said,

- "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. (Matthew 23:15 NIV84)

What are we learning from history?

- These religious leaders belonged to the **right**, God ordained, organization; they studied and taught from the **right** Bible; they ate the **right** foods; they worshiped on the **right** day; and they engaged in active evangelism, mission work but when they did convert a person to their religion they make them twice the son of hell.
- What is the lesson? What do we learn from history?
- Is there something wrong with the Bible they used?
- Is there something wrong with the Sabbath they kept?
- Is there something wrong with evangelizing?
- Is there something wrong with eating a healthy diet?
- Is there something wrong with paying tithe?

- What was wrong?
- The interpretation they put on the Bible!

There are facts and there are interpretations of the facts. What we learn from history is that one can have the **right** facts, belong to the **right** organization that is set up by and called by God for a special mission, and yet, interpret the facts in a way that form false beliefs about God, so significantly that people end up hating and crucifying God, and then persecute and eliminate from their membership those who tell the truth about God, and thus corrupt the organization God set up to lighten the world for His coming.

Is it possible that these same things have happened to Christianity and to Adventism?

Did the Christian church end up interpreting Scripture in such a way that people, claiming to be Christian, claiming to be representing Jesus, went to wars with crosses on their tunic to kill the non-Christians? Did they persecute and burn at the stake Christians who didn't worship the way the persecutors believed was correct? Did they seek to silence voices of truth? Did people within the organized churches, people who called themselves Christians practice the same abusive methods as those who crucified Christ?

Does the fact the Jews did this to Jesus mean that the Jewish nation was not called by God? No, they were! Does it mean they had the wrong Bible? No, they had the right Bible.

What about in Adventism? Has the Adventist organization repeated what the Jews did 2000 years ago? Consider these words from one of the founders of the SDA church, they were written after the 1888 GC, after church leadership rejected the healing truth, the design law truth, the righteousness by faith message and instead chose, like the Jews 2000 years ago the legal way, the fallen human rules and rule enforcement through inflicted punishment way:

- On many occasions the Holy Spirit did work, but those who resisted the Spirit of God at Minneapolis were waiting for a chance to travel over the same ground again, because their spirit was the same. Afterward, when they had **evidence heaped upon evidence**, some were convicted, but those who were not softened and subdued by the Holy Spirit's working, **put their own interpretation** upon every manifestation of the grace of God, and they have lost much. They pronounced in their heart and soul and words that this manifestation of the Holy Spirit was fanaticism and delusion. They stood like a rock, the waves of mercy flowing upon and around them, but beaten back by **their hard and wicked hearts**, which resisted the Holy Spirit's working. Had this been received, it would have made them wise unto salvation; holier men, prepared to do the work of God with sanctified ability. **But all the universe of heaven witnessed the disgraceful treatment of Jesus Christ, represented by the Holy Spirit. Had Christ been before them, they would have treated him in a manner similar to that in which the Jews treated Christ.** (1888 1478.2, emphasis mine)
- An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth [that the Ten Commandments were added] lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition

manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message through Brethren [E.J.] Waggoner and [A.T.] Jones. By exciting that opposition **Satan succeeded in shutting away** from our people, in a great measure, the **special power of the Holy Spirit** that God longed to impart to them. **The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency** which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. **The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted**, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world (Selected Messages, vol. 1. pp. 233, 234, emphasis mine).

Does the Adventist Church:

- Have the wrong 66 books of Scripture?
- The wrong Bible Sabbath?
- The wrong percentage of tithes?
- The wrong historical record?

There are facts, and there are interpretations of facts. The Jews interpreted the right Bible in the wrong way and ended up rejecting and murdering Jesus.

The Adventist leadership in 1888 did the same thing with the message that was to lighten the world for Christ's second coming.

The Jews after crucifying Christ, as an organization, did not repent but doubled down on their rejection of Christ and began persecuting the Jewish members who had the truth and tried to teach the truth in their organization, thus driving them out of the organization and shutting the heavenly light out of that system.

Have we learned from that history? Has the Christian church done the same thing? In the Dark Ages did those with advancing truth get persecuted and driven out of fellowship from their church by the church leaders, who claimed to be protecting orthodoxy and stopping heresy?

What about in Adventism? Have Adventist leaders been doing the same thing—have many of them, rather than accepting the advancing light of design law, doubled down on the imposed penal/legal lies and have actively sought to expunge from fellowship members and pastors who know the truth and are sharing the light of God's design laws and character of love with the people?

What was wrong with the Jews 2000 years ago—they had a legal way of understanding Scripture—they believed God's law is imposed and that justice is punishing rule-breakers, and that dealing with sin requires a sacrifice be offered to the offended god to pay for one's sins. They interpreted the right Scriptures in the wrong way.

The SDA church's official publications have done the same thing since 1888.

Is the SDA church the wrong organization—I do not believe so—I believe it was blessed by God with truth for this time for the mission of taking an end-time message to the world to prepare the world for Christ’s second advent, just like the Jews were called to prepare the world for Christ’s first advent. However, just like the Jews had leaders who created an orthodoxy of lies, based on human law, so too in the Adventist organization there is a cadre of leaders who have promoted the penal/legal orthodoxy that is based on Satan’s lies about God’s law and those who hold to those lies specifically opposed and obstruct the final message of mercy to the world, just as EGW wrote happened at the 1888 GC.

And I believe, just like the 2000 years ago, from the Jewish people came the Apostles, who from their witness converted Gentiles to the true message, from the Adventist membership will arise non-clergy, fisherman, tax collectors, physicians, who understand the true message and will share that message where God opens doors and from their witness and great multitude of people will also leave the Babylonian system if imperial rule with its false punishing god and return to worshiping the Creator in truth and in love. But, they will not join with the SDA organization any more than the converted pagans joined with the Jewish religion—because the legal lies that dominate the system are contrary to the saving truth.

SUNDAY

The lesson focuses on the history of Israel as a people and their problems as lessons for us. And it is such a rich history, with so many powerful historical lessons but also object lessons for us to learn from.

The lessons mentions many, including the Exodus and settlement in Canaan—are there any lessons from that history that apply to us today?

- Slaves in Egypt symbolically represent being slaves in sin
- Moses a deliverer represents Jesus our deliverer from sin
- The people who left were not just Jews, but a mixed multitude—all those who during the 10th plague put the blood of the sacrificial lamb on their door posts. This represents those who claim Jesus as their Savior being part of those who are on their way to the heavenly Promised land.
- This group is a mixed multitude, as Jesus said, the wheat and tares grow up together until the harvest, until we enter the promised land. And in the wilderness we see all kinds of problems from people constantly rebelling against God and His plan. Likewise, we see in the history of Christianity rebellion against God, and in the history of Adventism rebellion against God.

Consider this quote, in which the author in the aftermath of 1888, compares the Adventist leaders with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram who led a rebellion against Moses during the Exodus on the way to Canaan. And our question is, can we learn from history?

- “When I purposed to leave Minneapolis, the **angel of the Lord** stood by me and said: "Not so; God has a work for you to do in this place. **The people are acting over [re-enacting] the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.** I have placed you in your proper position, **which those who are not in the light will not acknowledge; they will not heed your testimony;** [What was EGW advocating? The design law healing view of the gospel promoted by Jones and Waggoner. Righteousness by faith message—which is actual, real, genuine righteousness within the heart/mind of those who trust in Jesus. The rebuilding and healing of our characters when we trust in Jesus—the fulfillment of the day of at-one-ment metaphor, the purifying of the bride, the groom receiving His bride bringing her into unity/oneness with Him, the cleansing of the sanctuary. But church leadership rejected this healing view and chose instead to embrace the false imperial legal view of declared righteousness even though we are not. They rejected the manna and chose the fleshpots of Egypt. This, is, according to the writer a message from the angel of the Lord, which tells us this idea is like Korah saying “we can’t succeed in going into the promised land.” And church leaders who prefer the imperial law view, have been telling Adventists ever since that we can’t succeed in experiencing Christ’s righteousness, sin is too great, God can’t give us power to be victorious in our lives, in fact God is the problem who will use His power to kill you if you don’t offer Him the blood of His Son to pay for your sin crimes.] but I will be with you; My grace and power shall sustain you. **It is not you they are despising, but the messengers and the message I send to My people.** [Friends of Come and Reason around the world, realize that when you are told you are not welcome, you cannot teach your Bible class, that you cannot share the wonders of God’s love that has so transformed your life—that it is not you they are rejecting but Christ they are rejecting.] **They have shown contempt for the word of the Lord. Satan has blinded their eyes and perverted their judgment; and unless every soul shall repent of this their sin, this unsanctified independence that is doing insult to the Spirit of God, they will walk in darkness.** [By refusing the truth of God’s design law, by holding to Rome’s imperial law lie, they have blinded themselves to how reality works and live in a fantasy of confusion and contradictions mirroring this sinful world with a god who is the source of pain, suffering and death which they call justice. They are in darkness and the SDA church has been wandering in the wilderness led by blind guides for over 130 years.]—Letter 2a, 1892, pp. 4, 5. (To "Dear Nephew and Niece, Frank (F.E.) and Hattie," Nov. 5, 1892.) {3MR 191.2}

Have we learned from history or are we repeating it right now today?

The lesson also points out the problem with Israel constantly turning to Baal worship, what are the lessons we need to learn from that today? Have we learned from history or are we repeating it?

Who was Baal?

- The son of El
- The god of weather, thunder, lightning, and harvest
- The god who fought the great leviathan—the serpent
- The god who fought against Mot the god of death and in his battle with Mot died and rose again to bring new life and harvest to the land

This was the god previously confronted by Elijah at Mount Carmel—and what was wrong with this god? Baal required appeasement, payment, offerings be made to him to provide blessings.

Baal became Zeus to the Greeks, Jupiter to the Romans, Thor to the Norse people and Jesus Christ to all Christians who worship a god who requires the blood of a human sacrifice be offered to him on order for him to provide blessings.

Consider this historical quote:

- Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. **They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal.** Are we worshiping the **true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature,** [the Creator whose laws are design laws that govern nature] or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. (Faith I Live By 9).

Are we worshiping the Creator God or have we repeated the history of ancient Israel and replaced the true God with that of Baal, a god whose laws are imposed and who is required by law and justice to kill you unless he receives the blood of a sacrifice?

Consider this quote:

- While God has desired to teach men that **from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself,** the archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God as one who delights in their destruction. Thus **the sacrifices and the ordinances designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God.** At the same time, Satan has sought to arouse and strengthen the evil passions of men in order that through repeated transgression multitudes might be led on and on, far from God, and hopelessly bound with the fetters of sin. (Prophets and Kings 685).

Have we learned from history, or are we teaching, just like the ancient Jews, the lie that God's law functions like human law, and that God requires legal payment or God will kill us for our sins, and therefore, God killed Jesus so He wouldn't have to kill us, that if we don't propitiate God with the gift of His Son's blood then God's wrath will burn against us?

Don't you see how our church is repeating all the errors of the Jews, teaching the very same lies, the very same distortions, going after Baal in a more modern form, the penal legal substitutionary form?

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on God's promise to give Abraham the Promised Land—what do you think of this promise?

Is this a standalone promise? In other words, Abraham has faith in God and God rewards Him with the present of land? Or is this promise of the land part of another promise and is only being given to Abraham in conjunction with that other promise?

God's promise to Abraham that his descendants would inherit the land was part of the covenant God made with Abraham. But that covenant that God made with Abraham was simply God carrying out the covenant that He made with Adam in Eden previously.

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, that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head.

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

And this promise was repeated to Isaac:

- Live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed (Genesis 26:2–4 NKJV).

And God repeated this promise to Jacob:

- And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 28:13–14 NKJV).

There is no doubt that God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob promising that that region of land would be given to them and their descendants but that was for the purpose of fulfilling the original promise to humankind to bring the promised Messiah so that all the nations of the earth would be blessed, not just the biological descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And that promise to Abraham was a type of the ultimate promise to the entire human race, also to be received through faith like Abraham received the local promise, we become heirs to the promise—but not to a little strip of land in the Middle East, but to the entire world! How is this? Because God gave Abraham a dual promise or two promises, a local regional one to be fulfilled with the first coming of Jesus and a larger global promise to be fulfilled after the second coming of Jesus.

The Bible is filled with dual prophecies and promises:

- Joel’s prophecy about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit before the second coming of Christ (Joel 2:28–32) is also applied by Peter to the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14–21).
- Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 both start out referring to an earthly king and then transition to the fall of Lucifer.
- Jesus’ prophecy about the second coming is also blended with the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24).

In all these dual-fulfillment prophecies, there is a lesser application and a greater application—the lesser is regional; the greater is global.

The covenant with Abraham 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. And with the recommunication of the covenant to Abraham, God gives a dual-fulfillment prophecy concerning the land: 1) A smaller, local, regional promise that Abraham’s genetic descendants would inherit the land of Canaan in order to fulfill their mission to be the genetic family through whom Jesus would be born; and 2) the larger, global, spiritual fulfillment, that the true descendants of Abraham, those who are like Abraham in faith and character would inherit the entire earth!

The covenant with and promises to Abraham focus on two promised lands. The local application is the one in which Abraham’s genetic decedents are the branch of the human family through whom God accomplishes the promise of Genesis 3:15 and through whom the Messiah is born. This local regional promise to Abraham informs him that his children would inherit the land in Canaan for the purpose of fulfilling their mission of being the avenue through whom Messiah would come so that Jesus can fulfill God’s greater promise, the covenant of grace given in Genesis 3:15, and crush the serpent’s head so that the “meek will inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5)—the true Promised Land.

Abraham has two descendants of a promise—the genetic descendants who inherited Canaan in order to be the avenue for Jesus our Savior to be born and fulfill the covenant given to the entire human family in Genesis 3:15 so that ...

... the spiritual descendants of Abraham—all those who have faith like Abraham—will inherit the entire planet, the earth made new.

Here is the biblical evidence for this position:

- The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land” (Genesis 12:7).

This is the regional promise for the genetic descendants to occupy Canaan for the purpose of being the branch of the human family through which the Messiah would be born.

- The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you” (Genesis 13:14–17 NIV84).

This is the larger, global, promise—that the entire earth (east, west, north, south, all points of the compass) will be given to the people of God; the earth will be made new, and those who are like Abraham in character, in faith, whose hearts have been circumcised from sin, will be heirs to this promise and inherit the earth.

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).

Jesus Himself, in John chapter 8, explicitly told the Jewish leaders of His day these very truths, that genetics did not determine who is considered an heir of Abraham and who would inherit the promise.

The dual-fulfillment promise to Abraham had two starting points and two ending points. The starting point of the global promise was in Eden, in Genesis 3:15; the starting point of the regional promise was with Abraham when he was called out of Ur. The ending point of the global is when Jesus recreates the earth and the meek inherit it; the ending point of the regional promise for the genetic people to be the avenue for the Messiah was when they crucified Christ and Jesus said to them, “Your house is left to you desolate” (Matthew 23:38 NIV84).

Jesus masterfully weaves these two covenant promises together in His prophetic description of the destruction of Jerusalem and His second coming as described in Matthew 24 and Mark 13. The destruction of Jerusalem occurs because the regional fulfillment of the promise has ended. The genetic descendants kept open the avenue, Messiah had come, but they rejected Him and now there is no

further purpose for a regional land to be occupied by them. The gospel must now go to the world. It is time for the global application, which culminates in the second coming and the meek inheriting the earth.

And the writer of Hebrews agrees with our assessment. Hebrews tells us that the faithful of God in Bible times—Abel, Enoch, Noah, along with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who lived “in the promised land” (Hebrews 11:9)—“did not receive the things promised” (Hebrews 11:13), that they 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).

The Bible says 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.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph,

- Psalm 106 also evokes the major events in Israel's history, including the Exodus, sojourn in the wilderness, and life in Canaan. It stresses the heinous sins of the fathers that culminated in the generation that was carried into exile. Thus, the psalm almost certainly was written when the nation was in Babylon, or after they had returned home, and the psalmist, inspired by the Holy Spirit, recounted for God's people these historical incidents and the lessons that the people should have learned from them. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 79).

What can we learn from this history?

Is there an object lesson for us?

They went into captivity because they worshiped false gods, because they preferred Baal to the true Creator God. And they went into Babylon.

Babylon is symbolic of the systems of imperialism. In Daniel 11 it represents the King of the North, those who believe in the God of the Bible but teach that righteousness is using power to punish those who don't. As soon as Nebuchadnezzar believed in Daniel's God he passed a law that any who spoke bad about Daniel's God were to be killed.

Babylon, of all the nations interacting with Israel in the Bible, is the first nation to make a codified system of law and order, the code of Hammurabi. Thus Babylon rightly represents a legal religious

system with a god who makes up rules like humans make up and a god who will use his power to punish rule breakers.

So, Israel is captive in Babylon and God has them set free so they can return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple and only about 50-60,000 returned, the vast majority stayed in Babylon.

And today, Revelation has a message, Babylon has fallen come out of her my people. It is time to stop judging God to be like a human dictator, to reject the imposed law lie, to worship Him who made the heaven, earth, sea and fountain of water—to come of the penal legal theological lies. But sadly, only a remnant will come out, the vast majority will stay in Babylon just like Israel did, and teach God is like a Roman dictator who makes up rules and is required by law and justice to use His power to torture and kill the wicked.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about the metaphor of Israel being God's vineyard that He tends,

Read first paragraph,

- However, in Psalm 80, God's vineyard is under His wrath (Ps. 80:12). The prophets announce the vineyard's destruction as the sign of God's judgment because the vine has turned bad (Isa. 5:1-7, Jer. 2:21). (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 80).

What law lens do you hear these words through? Is this judicial—the people broke rules so God had to inflict punishment on them for sin? Or is this design law, God judging what the problem is and diagnosing it accurately and then therapeutically judging what action is best to both discipline the people but even more important, keep open the avenue for Messiah and bring salvation to humanity?

And do you read God's wrath as His active use of power to inflict harm, or God's stopping His use of power that was restraining the damage that sin and rebellion would cause?

Consider the following from an Adventist Reformer whose message was rejected by the legalistic leadership in 1888. Notice how these quotes describe God's judgment and wrath:

- "How great is the long - suffering of God toward the wicked! The idolatrous Philistines and backsliding Israel had alike enjoyed the gifts of His providence. Ten thousand unnoticed mercies were silently falling in the pathway of ungrateful, rebellious men. Every blessing spoke to them of the Giver, but they were indifferent to His love. The forbearance of God was very great toward the children of men; **but when they stubbornly persisted in their impenitence, He removed from them His protecting hand.** They refused to listen to the voice of God in His created works, and in the warnings, counsels, and reproofs of His word, and thus **He was forced to speak to them through judgments.**" (Patriarchs and Prophets 587)

- The Jews had forged their own fetters; they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown. Says the prophet: “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;” “for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.” Hosea 13:9; 14:1. **Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will.** (The Great Controversy 35)
- We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. **It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan.** The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, **that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression;** but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, **to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest.** The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, **and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan.** (The Great Controversy 36)

What have we learned from history? That we are making the same errors the Jews made by believing in a legal god who is the source of inflicted penalties.

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph,

- The Lord's faithfulness to His people leads the psalmist to affirm the nothingness of idols and to the unique supremacy of the Lord in the world (Ps. 135:15-18). Reliance on idols renders their worshipers as hopeless and powerless as their idols are (Ps. 135:18). The psalm demonstrates that God is to be praised as both Creator and Savior of His people. This is wonderfully conveyed in the two complementary versions of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue (Exod. 20:8-11, Deut. 5:12-15). Because God's power in creation and history is unparalleled in the world, God's people should always rely on Him and worship Him alone. As our Creator and our Redeemer, He alone should be worshiped, and worship of anything else, or anyone else, is idolatry. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 81).

The lesson does a good job of describing the design law of worship, by beholding we are changed, to worship a false god damages the minds and hearts of those who worship them.

But the lesson also says this,

- This is wonderfully conveyed in the two complementary versions of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue (Exod. 20:8-11, Deut. 5:12-15). Because God's power in creation and history is unparalleled in the world, God's people should always rely on Him and worship Him alone. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 81).

Is there a subtle misunderstanding written here? The Sabbath is associated with Creation week in Exodus 20, but is what makes the Sabbath holy according to the commandment that God used power to create or something else? The point of the Sabbath is not that God is powerful, the devils believe that and tremble, the reason given right in the commandment is that yes, God is the Creator and therefore powerful, but on the Sabbath our Creator God **STOPPED using power, that HE RESTED!!!!**

There was never a question as to who has the power, the Bible says that the devils believe that and it scares them. So teaching that the Sabbath memorializes God as powerful doesn't really answer any questions or provide any evidence that in any way refutes Satan's lies and resolves the rebellion. But **God RESTING**, God ceasing His use of power in the face of Satan's rebellion—in other words God giving evidence that yes, He is the Creator, but more than that that God built reality to operate upon design law, so He just created an entire new world all operating upon design law, and God shared pro-creative power with a new intelligent creation and gave that creation dominion to govern—and then God ceased the use of His power, He refused to use power to inflict punishment upon Satan and his rebels, and instead God left all His intelligent beings free to decide for themselves. This is what the Sabbath reveals, but when we have an imperial dictator god whose laws function like human laws, then we refocus away from the truth to power, because we want a powerful god who can punish our enemies, just like the Jews 2000 years ago wanted, a god that would punish the Romans.

But the truth is God gave evidence by the use of His power that He is the Creator, and then God rested and this reveals the most important truth of all, the true character of our Creator, truth, presented in love, while leaving His intelligent beings free—and this is why the Sabbath is holy because it sets apart the character of our God from all the false gods. Yet sadly the Jews had the right weekly Sabbath, but the wrong god, so they killed the Creator and got Him off the cross in order to keep the day, legally, for they didn't want to get punished. And sadly, many Adventists do the exact same thing, teach the Sabbath as an arbitrary test of obedience, rather than evidence of God's character and design laws of life.