



## 2024 1Q Psalms Lesson 11 Longing for God in Zion

by Tim Jennings

### SABBATH

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A sentence in the first paragraph reads,

- These psalms often praise the merits of the Lord's house and express a love for the sanctuary that can be found in other psalms, as well. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 84).

Why does the psalmist love the sanctuary? The one of the disciples said to Jesus,

- "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" (Mark 13:1 NIV84).

Do you think that is what the psalmist is referring to, he loves the magnificence of the tent sanctuary that existed in his day looking forward to Solomon's temple—or is it something else he loves about the sanctuary?

Have you ever felt a love or appreciation for the Bible? Why?

- Was it the leather binding or the onionskin paper?
- Does the Bible have the ability to save people from sin?
- Does the Bible have magic powers?
- Or does the Bible contain truth that leads us back to a trust relationship with God, and also teach us principles to live by, how to apply to our lives God's designs for our lives, and reveals the pathology that occurs when people break God's designs for life? So why do we love the Bible? Because it contains the truth about God, reveals reality, the nature and problem of sin, and God's solution for it.
- Likewise, the sanctuary system was designed to teach, not through letter symbols, but the symbols of props, costumes, ceremonies, structure, materials, layout, and action. In other words, through theater, a drama enacted and re-enacted the truths about God the sin problem and God's solution were to be taught.
- We read through letters and words, which are a different type of symbolism. But it is the truth that leads us back to reality and a trust in God and God saves, not the symbols themselves, whether OT sanctuary symbols, or Hebrews letters, or English words from the King James Bible.

So the psalmist loved the sanctuary and longed to spend time there because in its services he grew in the knowledge and wisdom of the things of God and found in His relationship with God healing for his soul.

Can we still learn lessons from studying the sanctuary system of symbols? We can if we know how to read the symbols. It is like asking, can we still learn truth, God's lessons from reading the Hebrew Bible—if we know how to read Hebrew, if we understand the meaning of what is written.

But even if people can read the language, understand the symbols, can people still read the Bible and misunderstand it and draw the wrong conclusions from its words? And can people read the sanctuary symbolism and misunderstand and draw the wrong conclusions from its symbols?

What is the key to understanding both the Bible and the sanctuary correctly?

Of course, we must have the Holy Spirit lead us, for spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and our own human wisdom and reason, unenlightened by the Holy Spirit will not comprehend or understand eternal truths. So, we absolutely acknowledge our need to humble ourselves to the leading, direction, and enlightening of the Holy Spirit.

But with our hearts humbled to the Holy Spirit, what is the key to rightly interpreting both the Scriptures and the symbolism of the sanctuary?

Here is what one Christian writer suggests, do you agree or think another key is better?

- The significance of the Jewish economy **is not yet fully comprehended**. Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols. **The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries. Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding. Far more than we do**, it is our privilege to understand these wonderful themes. We are to comprehend the deep things of God. (Christ's Object Lessons 133)

What is the key? The gospel, the good news, and the plan of salvation.

So what is the gospel, the good news, the eternal gospel that is to lighten the world? The good news that was good news in eternity past before earth was even created and will good news in eternity future? What is the good news angels in heaven needed to comprehend to settle their questions and stop Satan's rebellion from spreading among them?

The good news, the eternal gospel, is the good news about God, that God is not like Satan alleges; and what has Satan alleged about God? That God is arbitrary, severe, unforgiving and the source of inflicted punishment for sin.

How has Satan advanced these allegations? By suggesting God's laws are the types of laws that created beings make up, rather than the truth that God's laws are design laws. If we teach that God's laws function like human laws, made up rules, then we teach that sin is a legal problem and God as Sovereign, is required by law and justice to use His power to punish rule breakers. God, in Satan's view, becomes the source of death, inflicted as punishment for sin-crimes, and God, in Satan's view, needs something done to Him to propitiate His wrath so He won't hurt us. **Thus, the entire plan of salvation when taught through the penal legal view teaches us that we cannot trust God**, but that God needs something done to Him to restrain Him from acting out against us.

The eternal good news, gospel, is that God is not like Satan alleges, that God is love, that, as Isaiah 55 states, God pardons freely, without payment, that God is the source of life, that God so loved the world He sent His Son to save the world not condemn it, that God is for us (Romans 8:31), that God

is Creator and His laws are the laws of life, and it is transgressing His laws that take us out of harmony with life and results in death.

Thus, the key to understanding the gospel and therefore correctly understanding the sanctuary symbolism is returning to Creator worship, the eternal good news about God by understanding His law is design law and rejecting the penal/legal lies that infect Christianity. **As long as we retain the lie in our hearts and minds that God's law functions like human law then we will misconstrue all the symbolism of this beautiful system and end up doing just like the Jews, rejecting and crucifying Christ.**

Consider this quote, this describes what happens when one thinks through the human law lens:

- 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.” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 685)

So if we want to understand the symbolism correctly, we must understand the gospel correctly, and the gospel is the good news about God that He is Creator, His laws are design laws and Jesus died to save us from sin, to cleanse us, restore us, renew and recreate us, not to save us from God or God's inflicted punishment.

## **SUNDAY**

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The lesson points our attention to Psalm 84, let's read it from The Remedy:

- How I love your sanctuary—your dwelling place—O Creator God! My inmost self desperately craves your presence—to be in the courts where you dwell; my heart, my body—my entire being cries out for the God of life. (Psalm 84:1-2 REM)

Why does the psalmist crave God's presence? Have you ever been in a very smoke filled or pollution filled environment? Did you crave fresh clean air?

Many years ago we traveled in Beijing China, and the pollution was so thick you could see a brown fog in the air, our eyes turned red and watered, our throats burned, we pulled our shirts up over our noses to try and filter the air. We craved fresh clean air.

Do you think the psalmist is craving God's presence because he realizes how polluted this world is with fear, selfishness, guilt, shame, cruelty, hate, conflict, bitterness, resentment, sickness, disease, and all types of suffering, and he longs for peace, joy, love, health and wellness for mind, body, and spirit—the purity of God's presence?

Do you crave for God's presence like the psalmist? The faithful described in Hebrews had this attitude, Hebrews 11 says about them,

- They were longing for a better country—a heavenly one (Hebrews 11:16 NIV84).

But what if we believe that God, instead of being the source of pure love, truth, forgiveness, goodness, mercy, kindness, patience, understanding, redemption, the one who sets us right, fixes what is wrong, purifies what is contaminated, cleanses what is dirty, heals what is broken—is instead a police officer in the sky watching to record every wrong or a judge waiting add up and inflict the proper amount of pain and suffering that justice requires—if this is how we see God, do we long for His presence? Or do we long for a mediator to hide us from Him, to protect us from Him?

So, how do we read the symbolism of the sanctuary, do we read it through the key of the eternal gospel, the good news about God, or have we been Romanized, and believe God's law functions like human law and believe Jesus' mediatorial work is to do something to God to protect us from Him?

We won't long for God's presence as long as we believe the lie that God's law functions like human law and God is the one from whom we need protection.

- Even the sparrow has a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may care for her young—near your altar, O Creator and Sustainer of all, my King and my God. Oh what health and happiness for those who live in your house—lives of constant love and praise for you. (Psalm 84:3-4 REM)

What do you hear in these verses? Where is our true home? Where is the only place we are truly safe? Where is the only place where we can find health and happiness? And they have health and happiness because they live lives in harmony with God, His character and design laws of love, rather than living lives in fear and selfishness which destroy peace, health, and life.

- What health and happiness for those whose strength comes from you—who set their hearts on finding you. As they pass through life's valley of sorrows, you make it a place of renewal with life-giving springs; the rains become refreshing pools. They gain strength with each victory in life, until they appear before God in Zion. (Psalm 84:5-7 REM)

What is the lesson here? Is this magic? Is the psalmist saying if you keep the right rules God uses divine power to miraculously give you rewards—do good and get blessed to bad and get cursed? Or are there design laws involved?

What about the law of worship, by beholding we are changed, we become like the God we admire and worship. By worshiping the true God we experience maturity of character, peace with God, we experience resolution of guilt, shame and fear, and are infused with love, trust and admiration for our Creator God. As we worship God as Creator, as Jesus revealed Him to be, we calm our fear circuits, reduce inflammatory cascades in our bodies, gain wisdom into the physical laws of health, make healthier choices in how we treat our bodies, we forgive rather than resent, we avoid many conflicts, and all of this results in better mental, physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual health.

The trials, difficulties, and heartaches of life, drive us to our knees to a deeper and more intimate connection with God, to surrendering ourselves to Him and learning by experience to trust God with

how things turn out. Thus we advance from victory to victory until we are ultimately glorified at the second coming and spend eternity with God in glory. This is not magic, it is not a rule-keeping reward and punishment system, it is reality, living, through trust in Jesus, in harmony with God and His design laws for life.

- O Lord, Mighty Creator God, hear my prayer; listen to me, O God who Jacob trusted. Take notice of our shield—the king; look favorably upon your anointed one. Better is one day spent in the courts where you dwell than a thousand away from you; I would rather stand at the entrance to the house of my God than live in comfort in the tents of the wicked. (Psalm 84:8-10 REM)

What do you hear?

Health, happiness, wellness, and eternal life are only possible in harmony with God and His design for life. To stand in God's presence means we have been restored to harmony with God, to true health, wellness, and life. But a thousand years away from God is a thousand years of suffering in sickness, fear, guilt, shame, conflict, fighting to survive against threats on every side, it is a living hell. Better for one day of true health, happiness, peace, joy, and life than 1000 days of hell.

- For the Lord God is our life-giving sun and our protective shield, providing continual grace to transform us to his glorious ideal; he will withhold nothing that is good from those who choose to live in harmony with his design. O Creator God, healthy and happy is the person who trusts in you. (Psalm 84:11-12 REM).

What do you hear? Do you see the reality of our Creator God, His goodness, how life is built by Him to operate and that breaking trust with Him, going our own way causes all the problems, all the pain, suffering, and ultimately death?

## MONDAY

The lesson points our attention to Psalm 122, let's compare the NIV with REM and then consider some of the conclusions from the lesson.

- I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." Our feet are standing in your gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together. That is where the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, to praise the name of the LORD according to the statute given to Israel. (Psalm 122:1-4 NIV84).

This is a traditional and standard rendering, what do you hear? Is there a message for you and me in this psalm? Are you inspired by a closely compacted city, or knowing the various tribes went there to praise God? Here is how I paraphrased it for the Remedy, understanding God's design law and that the Holy Spirit inspires the eternal truth to save sinners:

- I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the Lord's temple." And now we are here, standing at your gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is a city designed as a place of unity and loving fellowship. This is where the people gather—the people who love God—to praise and celebrate the character of God acting out his plan of healing, as given to Israel. (Psalm 122:1-4 REM).

Rather than a closely compacted city, the message is that God wants us to be closely united in love, as Ephesians states there is a unity inherent in our faith. Thus, God's plan of salvation, which was symbolically taught through the rituals contained in the system at Jerusalem brings us into the intimate bonds of love and trust so that we are one as Jesus and the Father are one (John 17).

Questions about these two versions? Any concerns with the Remedy paraphrase?

- There the thrones for judgment stand, the thrones of the house of David. (Psalm 122:5 NIV84).

What is the message you hear in this translation? Do you hear something judicial? This is certainly a legitimate linguistic translation, but not the only one. Consider thee Remedy:

- There, the descendants of David set their thrones to govern the people. (Psalm 122:5 REM).

Do you hear "thrones of judgment" and "govern" the same? The law lens used makes a difference, judicial judgment is only one narrow element of human governments. Jerusalem was designed to teach a larger reality, and God's system was not intended to teach human law, but was intended to teach restoration from sin to life. Thus governing from Jerusalem was supposed to model of how God governs His entire universe.

And in the Jewish legal system set up by God through Moses, the entire system was designed for the pardoning and setting free of the sinner, the criminal. There was no governmental prosecutor like we have, symbolically teaching that in God's government He keeps no record of wrongs, just like 1 Corinthians 13 teaches. No one in God's government brings charges against the sinner, it is Satan that is the accuser of the brethren, yet how often is it presented that God reviews the books, God

determines guilt and innocence, God decides the punishment, God inflicts the punishment, and God needs a payment made to legally not punish? This is all satanic, it is a lie, it contradicts the teachings of Scripture because it is based on the lie that God's law functions like human law.

The entire Sanhedrin, and High Priest, who were the most highly trained theologians and lawyers of that system, were all supposed to function the role of defense attorneys, they were supposed to fight for the freeing of the accused. They are to represent Jesus our High Priest and all the saints who are battling for the salvation of every soul. But their argument was not to the Sanhedrin itself, it was to the accuser, who was the person wronged and they stand in the place of Satan, the accuser, they represent the people who refuse to forgive freely, the people who want to make others pay, the people who have accepted Satan's version of law and justice and rejected Jesus' teachings that we are to love our enemies, forgive those who mistreat us, and pray for those who spitefully abuse us, just like He did on the cross and Stephen did when he was being stoned. This person bringing charges represents the people who are still operating and functioning under Satan's system of imposed law and inflicted punishments and believe it is right and just to punish someone for their wrong. We have many of these people in our church and leadership today advancing accusations and teaching that God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering, and death, when the entire Jewish system was to teach the opposite.

- Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May those who love you be secure. May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels." For the sake of my brothers and friends, I will say, "Peace be within you." For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your prosperity. (Psalm 122:6-9 NIV84).
- Pray for the success of Jerusalem, that those who love this city be healthy and happy; that there will be restoration to godliness within its walls—that trust and friendship will be its fortress. For all my family and friends, I say, "May complete healing and restoration occur within you." In harmony with the purpose of God's temple, I will seek your eternal welfare. (Psalm 122: 6-9 REM).

Can one have peace while being out of harmony with God and God's designs for life? So real peace comes through restoring sinners back to unity with God, through removing from our hearts and minds our fear, selfishness, guilt, shame, bad habits, evil desires etc. It is only by experiencing the work of the Holy Spirit within us that we can have peace with God. There is no real peace in claiming legal pardon and adjustment in record books while we remain unrighteous in heart and mind.

Read second paragraph,

- Praying for the peace of Jerusalem invokes God's blessings upon the city and its inhabitants, and it unites the worshipers, causing peace to spread among them (Ps. 122:8). Jerusalem could be the city of peace only if peace existed between God and His people, and among God's children themselves. Thus, prayer for the peace of Jerusalem conveys an appeal to God's people to live in peace with God and one another. In Jerusalem's peace, the people will prosper (Ps. 147:12-14). (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 86).

Does praying for the peace of Jerusalem invoke God's blessings upon the city and its inhabitants? Hmmm.... Is that what history has revealed?

If we this psalm to refer the city of Jerusalem in the Middle East, rather than its symbolical significance as representation of the New Jerusalem, isn't it trust that millions of people have prayed through history for the peace of Jerusalem and today there are millions praying for the peace of Jerusalem—and what does history reveal to us about that city?

Is there any city with less peace in the world than Jerusalem? And why do you think that it is this way? It is because the people who are praying for peace have rejected the design laws of God and by worshiping an imperial dictator whose laws are made up rules requiring external enforcement, they become like that false god, and then believe it is right and just to make up rules and enforce them on others and use the power of arms to punish and even kill those who are not keeping the rules they believe are the right rules. They believe that if they don't enforce the rules as they understand them, then they are being disobedient to their office, their position, their duties and responsibilities, and thus they will be guilty of sin and thus they are required by law to use their office, power, position, to seek to enforce, fight, and defeat those parties who teach differently than they do. "The land was given to us it is ours, no it was given to us it is our, God has told us to do this, no He has told us to do this. You are a rebel no you are a rebel, you are a heretic, no you are an infidel" and on it goes. And believing God punishes, it is only right and just they seek to punish. So praying for the peace of Jerusalem doesn't bring God's blessing when people are praying to a false god who looks like Satan in character, instead they become like that false god and perpetrate all types of crimes in the name of doing justice and rush home to keep the Sabbath or whatever other holy day they value in the name of their god.

Can God bring peace through imposing made up laws upon people and then using might and power to punish people who break His rules and refuse to love Him? In fact, if God were to do this, what happens in the hearts of people? More rebellion, more distrust, less peace.

So, when we pray for peace, how does God answer our prayer, what action does God take, where is God at work to bring peace?

God's system is not external, not imposed, not through coercion, force, or punishment. As Jesus said, the kingdom of God is within you.

- God brings peace by removing the cause of division, by removing sin, fear, and selfishness from the hearts and minds of people
- God brings peace by love casting out fear, by truth eradicating lies, by grace purging guilt and shame, by mercy, kindness, and forgiveness cleansing hearts from cruelty, bitterness and a desire for revenge, by eliminating prejudice with fellowship, by turning enemies into friends.

This is the New Covenant when God writes His living law upon our hearts and minds so that we are no longer controlled by fear and selfishness but live lives of love and trust.

## **TUESDAY**

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Read first paragraph,



- Psalm 87 is a hymn celebrating Zion as God's specially chosen and beloved city. The foundation of God's temple is on Mount Zion (Ps. 2:6, Ps. 15:1). At the end of time, Zion will rise above all mountains, signifying the Lord's sovereign supremacy over the whole world (Ps. 99:2, Isa. 2:2, Mic. 4:1). Psalm 87 refers to Zion as "mountains" to highlight its majesty (Ps. 133:3). God loves the gates of Zion "more than all the dwellings of Jacob" (Ps. 87:2, NKJV), expressing the superiority of Zion over all other places in Israel that were special gathering places of God's people in the past, such as Shiloh and Bethel. Thus, the psalm affirms that true worship of God is in His chosen place and in His prescribed way. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 87).

What do you think of the idea that God loves the gates of Jerusalem? What does this mean?

In Revelation 21, in the description of the New Jerusalem, there are 12 gates, three on each side of the city, and on the gates are written the 12 tribes of Israel—what do you think this suggests?

The 12 tribes camped around the sanctuary three on each side, and the Levites camped in between, the Levites represent the priesthood of believers who minister the gospel of God from the sanctuary to the people in the four corners of the earth, symbolized by the 12 tribes. So, having gates to the New Jerusalem with the names of the 12 tribes would symbolize what? That God has people from every corner of the globe, from all nations, kindreds, tribes and languages saved.

So, God loves the gates because they simultaneously represent the way into the city, which is Jesus, but also that people from all over the world will find salvation through what Jesus has accomplished.

Let's read Psalm 87 from The Remedy:

- The Lord founded his plan of salvation in the hills set apart for his sanctuary. He loves the gates that lead to the restoration and healing of his children more than any other place in the world. Glorious things are told about you, O city of our Creator God: "I will include Egypt and Babylon among those who know me; also people from Philistia, Tyre and Ethiopia have been reborn to become citizens of Zion." Of the New Jerusalem it will be said, "These were reborn to become her citizens," and the Creator God himself will establish her. The Lord will record the individualities of the saved in his heavenly registry, noting, "This one was reborn to live there." Songs from those who are reborn will say, "Life is found only in you." (Psalm 87:1-7 REM)

What do you think of the last sentence in the first paragraph which reads:

- Thus, the psalm affirms that true worship of God is in His chosen place and in His prescribed way.

Hmmm....could this be misunderstood and end up teaching superstitious things? Like we have to travel to a certain place in order to worship God? Or that one physical location is more holy than another physical location? Or some objects have some supernatural holiness to them, relics of various kinds? Or that rituals and ceremonies make a difference in salvation?

Do they—or is God all about reality, and the rituals, ceremonies, places, props, that God has set apart for use in the past were all designed to lead back to reality and once one enters into reality the props and ceremonies have served their purpose. What God cares about is truth, and if we use ceremonies, rituals, places, even those established by God for holy use, in such a way that we misrepresent God then this is what God doesn't like—for lies about Him obstruct His ability to heal His children. And this is what the Jews did, they took their blessings, their rituals, ceremonies, props, stage, costumes, script—ure and made it legal, made it rules oriented, and ended up hiding the truth away from people, and teaching superstition from the very tools God gave them to teach reality. So, Jesus said to the woman at the well, when she asked where one should worship:

- "Believe me, dear woman, the place where one worships God is not important; it is the condition of the heart of the worshiper that matters. Very soon, you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship a confusing tradition of rituals that does not enlighten the mind and have no ability to heal the worshiper; we worship the Creator God, and our minds are enlightened and healed by him because all he asks of us is sensible and reasonable. The plan to heal humanity from the infection of selfishness and sin is provided through the Jews. The time has now come that all true worshipers will worship the Father with an intelligent and reasonable understanding of who he is, respecting, admiring and loving the truth about his nature, character, and methods. These understanding worshipers are the kind the Father seeks. God is intelligent and reasonable, and his worshipers must worship him intelligently and reasonably, appreciating and valuing the truth of God's methods and principles." (John 4:21-24 REM).

Thoughts? Do you see how the penal legal lies obstruct the type of worshipers God wants? It makes people into superstitious religionists with closed minds who live in fear worrying if they did the right ritual in the right way on the right day etc.

## WEDNESDAY

The lesson focuses on the distress in the world around us, described in psalm 46, and asks the question—

- How do we learn to have peace and to trust God amid a world that, indeed, has so much turmoil?

What have you found that helps you find peace in the middle of the stressors of this world?

- Did you struggle to find peace when COVID mandates were being forced upon people?
- Are you struggling to find peace with the climate scam that is constantly being bombarded upon us?
- Are you struggling to find peace with the artificial inflation which makes meeting ends much harder?
- Are you struggling to find peace with the ugliness in the media, the constant attacks against this person or that person?
- Are you struggling to find peace with the reports of wars and rumors of wars?

What is the answer?

Satan is like a roaring lion, and the lion's roar incites fear—and what does fear lead to?

Fear leads to selfishness, a willingness to hurt others in order to protect self.

Fear impairs thinking, makes one freeze, impairs problems solving, and increases the willingness to surrender to voices of authority and follow rules in order to feel safe—not be safe, but feel safe.

Fear impairs relationships, causes people to be more controlling for fear of rejection, loss or injury.

Fear impairs spiritual growth, fear of God causes people to either rebel against God and reject Him altogether or to create theologies designed to hide and protect us from God like:

- Penal substitutionary theology in which we have someone pay God for us with the blood of a human sacrifice so he won't have to kill us
- Misstating the beautiful metaphor of the robe of righteousness to teach it somehow covers over our sinfulness so the Father can't see it
- Having Jesus, Mary, and the saints pleading to God in our behalf because He needs to be persuaded
- Having Jesus erase the records of history so the Father won't punish us for it

So how do we find peace with God in the face of Satan's end time assault?

Consider these words of Jesus and what He describes as the source of our peace, He ends by saying He told His disciples this so that they would have peace in the face of trouble in this world:

- “I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. “Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. In that day you will ask in my name. **I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you** because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.”

“You believe at last!” Jesus answered. “But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. **I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace.** In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:20-33 NIV84).

What did Jesus say would be the basis of our peace? The truth about the Father, that He is just like Jesus, that there is no need for Jesus to pray the Father for us, that the Father Himself loves us. That, as Paul later wrote, “If God is for you who can be against you...” (Romans 8:31).

We find peace when we are won back to love and trust with the Father through all that Jesus has revealed, then we open the heart and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit sent by the Father, just as the Father sent us His Son. And the Holy Spirit takes the victory of Christ and reproduces it in us so that it is no longer our old sinful selves living, but Christ living in us. We are reborn, we die to fear and live to love God and others. And we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ for we have been restored to unity with God for God lives in us!

## **THURSDAY**

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Read second paragraph,

- God’s children can be discouraged by the success of the wicked and, perhaps, tempted to follow their ways (Ps. 73:2-13, Ps. 94:3). The utmost stability of Mount Zion cannot secure those who depart from the Lord. The people are still given freedom to “put forth their hands unto iniquity” (Ps. 125:3) and “turn aside unto their crooked ways” (Ps. 125:5). The Lord is just and will judge the individuals who remain in rebellion along with other unrepentant sinners. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 89).

What does this sentence seem to be saying? “The Lord is just and will judge the individuals who remain in rebellion along with other unrepentant sinners?”

What law lens do you hear it through? If we have the human law model, what does this sentence mean?

If we have the design law model, what does this sentence mean?

The lesson points our attention to psalm 125, let's compare these five verses from the NIV with REM:

- Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people both now and forevermore. (Psalm 125:1-2 NIV84)
- Those who trust in the Lord are a stronghold of love—like Mount Zion; they cannot be shaken but will endure forever. As the mountains surround and protect Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds and protects his people both now and forevermore. (Psalm 125:1-2 REM)

What does it actually mean to be strong in the Lord? To be strong for God's kingdom? Is one strong in God's kingdom by putting a cross on a tunic and going on the crusades, or by singing hymns of praise while burning at the stake?

- The scepter of the wicked will not remain over the land allotted to the righteous, for then the righteous might use their hands to do evil. (Psalm 125:3 NIV84).
- The power of selfishness will not rule over the righteous, for the godly will not choose to do wrong. (Psalm 125:3 REM)

What does a scepter represent? Ruling power, and what rules the wicked? Fear and selfishness, thus the rendering the power of selfishness will not rule over the righteous. Do you think this is an accurate rendering that fear and selfishness will not have power over the righteous, or is it more accurate to move the focus outside of the heart and mind of the believer and teach that evil people will not have power to hurt the righteous? What has history shown? Haven't wicked people had power to physically hurt the righteous? But where has wickedness lost its power? In the hearts and minds of the righteous!

- Do good, O LORD, to those who are good, to those who are upright in heart. But those who turn to crooked ways the LORD will banish with the evildoers. Peace be upon Israel. (Psalm 125:4-5 NIV84).
- Do good, O Lord, to those who love good, to those whose hearts are in tune with you. But for all who cling to selfishness, the Lord will let them go, along with all who prefer evil. Health and salvation to all, who with God, overcome. (Psalm 125:4-5 REM).