



2024 1Q Psalms Lesson 13

Wait on the Lord

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

The first paragraph recounts the Lord's leading in diverse situations and then concludes with this sentence,

- If there is a final word that we can draw from the Psalms, it should be "wait on the Lord." (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 100).

What does it mean to wait on the Lord?

There is a song from 1982 by a Christian group called Petra entitle *More Power to Ya* and the lyrics are:

*You say you've been feeling weaker, weaker by the day
You say you can't make the joy of your salvation stay
But good things come to them that wait
Not to those who hesitate
So hurry up and wait upon the Lord*

*More power to ya
When you're standing on His word
When you're trusting with your whole heart in the message you have heard
More power to ya
When we're all in one accord
They that wait upon the Lord, they shall renew, they shall renew their strength*

(Written by: Bob Hartman; Album: Petra - More Power To Ya, 1982)

What does it mean to wait upon the Lord?

Read second paragraph,

- Waiting on the Lord is not an idle and desperate biding of one's time. Instead, waiting on the Lord is an act full of trust and faith, a trust and faith revealed in action. Waiting on the Lord transforms our gloomy evenings with the expectancy of the bright morning (Ps. 30:5, Ps. 143:8). It strengthens our hearts with renewed hope and peace. It motivates us to work harder, bringing in the sheaves of plentiful harvest from the Lord's mission fields (Ps. 126:6, Matt. 9:36-38). Waiting on the Lord will never put us to shame but will be richly rewarded

because the Lord is faithful to all His promises (Ps. 37:7-11, 18, 34; Ps. 71:1; Ps. 119:137, 138). (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 100).

I would agree waiting on the Lord has a double meaning—it does mean waiting on the Lord to lead, but then actively working for the Lord. If we don't have a new direction to go, then we stay active in the duties we currently know the Lord has given us to fulfill—and we seek to fulfill them in accordance with His will, by applying His methods to our actions and solutions.

But what of the idea “It [waiting on the Lord which is trust and faith] motivates us to work harder, bringing in the sheaves of plentiful harvest from the Lord’s mission fields”?

What does it mean to bring sheaves into the harvest?

- Does it mean converting someone to a creed, a system of fundamental beliefs, to join a specific organization?
- How many sides are there in the war between Christ and Satan?
- When Jesus said,
- “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. (Matthew 7:13-14 NIV84).

What did Jesus mean? Jesus’ meaning is quite simple and straightforward when one returns to worshipping God as Creator and recognizes His laws are design laws. It becomes confusing when people think through human law. On any subject there is one truth—but an infinite number of lies. Consider the color of the sky on a clear day—there is an objective truth to the wavelength of light we see reflected back, and that can be measured with a light meter and we can give the nanometer wavelength of light we are seeing. But people are free to reject that truth—but once they reject the truth what is left for them to replace it with? Falsehood, lies, and it doesn't matter what they choose in its place, if they reject the truth they will rest their mind upon lies. Their way to eternal life is only through the door of truth—and on all issues there is one truth, one reality, one way God created things to work, God’s design laws that govern reality, but there are a multitude of counterfeits.

For instance, there is one Savior, Jesus Christ—but there are a multitude of false gods, it doesn't matter which false god someone worships, they all lead to the same place, destruction of the image of God within the person and the establishment of the character of God’s enemy within the individual’s spirit temple. And it doesn't matter whether one worships Jesus, or Joshua, or Yashua, or Jehovah, Yahweh, El-Shaddai, Michael, the Lamb of God, or any other nomenclature as long as one attributes to Jesus the truth that He revealed Himself and the Father to be. For it is by beholding that we are changed, we become like the God we admire and worship.

The only way for us to have salvation, for us to be restored to righteousness is to receive the righteousness of Jesus Christ by recognizing Him in truth, accepting Him, trusting Him, opening our hearts to Him, adoring, admiring, esteeming, worshipping, loving Him and actively listening to Him

seeking to know every day more of Him, His methods, principles, plans and choosing to carry out in our lives what we know is His will for our lives.

Consider this historical quote, from EG White whose message of Design Law and real restoration to righteousness was rejected by the legalistic leadership of the SDA church in 1888, those who continue to teach the penal/legal lies about salvation:

- Are we so insensible as a peculiar people, a holy nation, to the inexpressible love that God has manifested for us? **Salvation is not to be baptized, not to have our names upon the church books, not to preach the truth. But it is a living union with Jesus Christ, to be renewed in heart, doing the works of Christ in faith and labor of love, in patience, meekness, and hope.** Every soul united to Christ will be a living missionary to all around him. He will labor for those near and those afar off. He will have no sectional feeling, no interest merely to build up one branch of the work over which he presides, and there let his zeal end. All will work with interest to make every branch strong. There will be no self-love, no selfish interest. The cause is one, the truth a great whole. (4LtMs, Lt 55, 1886, par. 22).

Do you agree with this statement? What is the truth presented? Are we saved by joining a denomination? Do we bring people into salvation by getting them to agree with our doctrines? Do people become saved when they join your church? Why do so many churches seem to think proper evangelism is getting people to join their organization? Is it?

What is evangelism as Jesus would have us do it? What does it mean to bring in the sheaves?

Does it mean converting people to doctrinal systems, or bringing people out of the world of fear, selfishness, and sin, and into oneness with Jesus where they experience a new heart and right spirit to love God and others more than self, where they can live lives of ever-advancing development of character in the truth and love of God, practicing His methods in how they treat others?

WEDNESDAY

The title is Waiting in God's Sabbath Rest

What does this mean? How do we wait in God's Sabbath rest?

Does it mean making a list of prohibited and authorized behaviors to do on the Sabbath day? Does it mean going to church on the seventh day Sabbath?

Someone posted this question for our Q&A time and I thought it fit with our lesson, so I am reading it here:

- I'm visiting family in Brazil. It's miserable hot, and there is a pool with refreshing water created by God, but it is off limits, on the day celebrating creation of said water. This is one

of many examples, another being we must take a shower before sunset, even though I'm going to get hot and sweaty from deep frying in the kitchen. But then Isaiah 58:13,14 comes up, where we are told not to do our pleasure. Please help me reconcile this to reason with people here! Please define, "one's pleasure" in the above verses, because this is what is being used against me. I think I'm working it out as I'm writing this question—if I'm aligned with God's design laws, His pleasures are my pleasures. I would still like your input, please.

How would you answer her? Have you ever had such concerns? Before we unpack this, let me say that I believe the people who make up these irrational rules do so from the sincerest of hearts. They do so not because they want to be disobedient to God, but because they want to be obedient to God; they want to honor God; they want to do what is right not what is wrong. Very similarly to the doctors who bled and leached George Washington when he had pneumonia—those doctors wanted to do everything to help, to save, to bless, to cure, but because they believed wrongs things about sickness, microbiology, immune system, and the laws of health their actions, done with the best of motives, the motives of love to save, were ultimately harmful.

My understanding of what those doctors did was the wrong thing from the right motive, thus their hearts were not acting on evil, they were not sinning, but they were also not advancing godly health practices. Likewise, there are millions who keep Sabbath as described above, they are doing from a heart that loves God and wants to do what is right to honor God and their hearts are not sinning, they are not doing evil—but because of their ignorance, their made up rules burden the Sabbath with needly exactions, and do not advance the kingdom of God, but obstruct it, especially in the hearts of people who are thinking rather than following rules.

In the aftermath of the 1888 GC, when EG White and others Reformers were advancing the design law truth of God's law, but the legalistic leaders rejected that view and instead clung to the imposed law lie that God's laws function like human laws, and retained a legal/penal explanation of the sin problem and the plan of salvation, she wrote the following. It was written in 1889 and published in the Signs January 20, 1890:

- Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God. He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, that **men might lose the true views of God's character**, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth. He had caused **truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** [Satan infected the minds of people with the lie that God's law functions like human law, and that resulted in more rules, more restrictions, ideas of law-keeping, of legality, punishment from God. The idea that God's justice is inflicting punishment and therefore God is a severe, exacting, rule-enforcer who only punishes as long as we deserve, one who is pleased when sin gets its full and just dues in the form of torture upon the unrepentant.] He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings

of his creatures. **The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God.** Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes.** [What is set right and keep right if we used Latin terms? Justify and sanctify, the only way to win us back to trust, to set our hearts and minds right with God again was to reveal the truth of who He is and how His law and government actually work. As long as we believe the lies we will not be won back to trust. And then in trust we receive the objective victory of Jesus, the new heart and right spirit that He accomplished as our human substitute.] That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature. (Signs of the Times January 20, 1890, par. 6, emphasis mine).

Is the final issue in the war between Christ and Satan a test over which day one attends weekly worship services?

- If a person absolutely insists on worshipping on the Bible Sabbath does that mean they will go to heaven, is Sabbath keeping the key to salvation?
- Those who crucified Christ 2000 years ago wanted Him off the Cross by sunset why? So they could keep the Bible Sabbath – does that mean they had the seal of God?
- Does Satan care if a group of people worships on Sabbath as long as they worship him?
 - Who did Jesus Himself say was the father of the Jewish leadership, those Sabbath keepers who crucified Him?
- “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire” (John 8:44 NIV84).
 - So we have people keeping the Bible Sabbath who are, according to Jesus, children of Satan.
 - Doesn’t that mean, to the degree the Sabbath is involved in end-time events, or any events in human history, it must be more than simply the day of the week one avoids work or attends worship services?

So what is the importance of the Bible Sabbath? If we present it as a law like humans make up, a rule that we are required to obey—are we advancing the gospel, the truth of God’s kingdom, or are we advance Satan’s lie and working against God’s kingdom?

This is not a question about what day of the week is the Sabbath, every serious Bible student knows that the Bible Sabbath is Saturday, the days the Jews still observe every week without fail since long before the time of Jesus. The questions before us, are:

- What is the purpose of the Sabbath?
- How are we to understand and experience it?

- What impact does the Sabbath have upon who we understand God to be and our relationship with Him?
- What role does the Sabbath have for human beings today?
- Is there a Great Controversy function for the Sabbath—is it important as we approach the second coming of Christ?
- Thus, how do we rest in God’s Sabbath?

Jesus said,

- The Sabbath was **made** for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath. (Mark 2:27,28, emphasis mine)

What does this mean? Is this saying the Sabbath is a rule you must obey, or that it is a gift for you to enjoy and be blessed by?

How is the Sabbath a gift? What is its purpose for God’s creation?

Was there a Sabbath in heaven before Earth was created? Is there any evidence of this?

- If the Sabbath was made it had a beginning
- The Bible tells us it was made at the end of creation week and that it was made for human beings
- And the Sabbath is measured by the rotation of the earth in relationship to the Sun that didn’t exist until creation week.
- So, the evidence supports the idea that the Sabbath was not in heaven when the angels rebelled but was specifically made for man
- For what purpose?

And as we consider the purpose of the Sabbath in the setting of the universal war that began in heaven, consider this historical quote:

- **The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God.** Upon this battle we are now entering,—a battle **between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition.** (The Great Controversy 582).

Did the angels that followed Satan in heaven disobey God’s law? Yes, but there was no Sabbath in heaven—the issue in the controversy did not originate over a Sabbath versus Sunday question and it ultimately won’t end over that superficial question. It will end over what these two days represent—they are signs or pennants or marks or emblems of two types of law and therefore two types of government and ultimately two different gods.

The Sabbath was *created* as a day set apart by God; Sunday was not *created* as a day set apart from the other days by God, but became a day set apart from the other days of the week by human legislation. Thus, the two days represent two types of law—design law and imposed law.

The issue is not the actual day, but the law and government the days represent, consider this historical quote:

- The prophet thus points out the ordinance which has been forsaken: “Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, **The repairer of the breach**, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and **call the Sabbath a delight**, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.” Verses 12-14. This prophecy also applies in our time. **The breach was made in the law of God when the Sabbath was changed by the Roman power.** But the time has come for that divine institution to be restored. The breach is to be repaired and the foundation of many generations to be raised up. (The Great Controversy 452, emphasis mine).

Notice the author didn’t write, “The breach was made **by the change** in the Sabbath, but **when the Sabbath** was changed.” The breach in the law was changing how we understand God’s law from design law to believing that God’s law is imposed rules that can be changed. The changing of the Sabbath to Sunday is the evidence, the fruit, the result of the breach and the true breach is no longer recognizing that God’s are design laws.

Thus the repairers of the breach are those who teach the truth that God’s laws are design laws and not imposed rules, and in so doing we call people back to worship the Creator who made the heavens, earth, sea and fountains of water. We teach people reality and how to cooperate with God to become the righteousness of God.

But if we accept the right day of the week as the Bible Sabbath yet continue to believe the lie that God’s law functions like human law, we have not repaired the breach, we have not left the Roman system of worship, we are still advancing the counterfeit to God’s kingdom, just as the Jews did 2000 years ago who had the right Bible Sabbath but the wrong law and the wrong god.

Consider the Bible image of being a repairer of the breach, this is referencing the walls that surrounded Jerusalem that were broken down at the time Babylon conquered Israel and were rebuilt when the remnant came out of Babylon and returned to Jerusalem.

At the center of Jerusalem was the temple, thus the walls were symbolic of what kept enemies out of the temple of God.

The most important part of the temple was the most holy place, where the ark of the covenant was kept. The most holy place was symbolic of the New Jerusalem.

- The most holy place was in the shape of cube
- The New Jerusalem is in the shape of a cube
- The most holy place was covered in gold
- The New Jerusalem is paved in gold
- The most holy place is where God's shekinah presence gave light
- The New Jerusalem will not need a sun to light it because God's glory will give it its light

And the New Jerusalem is called the Bride of Christ, it is composed of the living stones who are being shaped and cleansed to be built into a temple for the Lord. And there is a protective hedge God has given us to keep the enemy of God out of our hearts and minds, out of our spirit temples, but there has been a breach in that protective hedge that has let the enemy come in and take up residence in the temple.

Babylon has taken captive the hearts and minds of many people who believe in God so a message goes forward to leave Babylon, to come out of Babylon.

Paul describes this in 2 Thessalonians where he says the man of sin sets himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God. The man of sin did this by making a breach in the protective hedge and thus entering into the hearts and minds of people.

And what is the breach, the lie that God's law functions like human law, and God is then depicted as one who is the source of inflicted pain and suffering and death. And the man of sin is set up in our spirit temple being worshiped as God. The temple needs cleansing, and how do we do that, by repairing the breach, by returning to worshiping Him who is Creator, Him who made the heavens, earth, sea, and fountains of water, by judging God correctly and stop judging Him to be a cosmic judge and inflictor of pain and suffering. And what causes us to do that? By repairing the breach in the law, by recognizing ALL of God's laws are design laws. We are the repairers of the breach if we do this and the Sabbath is a sign of this, but the change in the day of worship is only the results of believing God's law functions like human law. To return to seventh-day Sabbath worship while still believing God's law functions like human law DOES NOT REPAIR the breach in the law, in fact, it can turn people into law keeping crucifiers of the Lord of the Sabbath.

Consider this historical quote from the book *Prophets and Kings*:

- The spiritual restoration of which the work carried forward in Nehemiah's day was a symbol, is outlined in the words of Isaiah: "They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities." "They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isaiah 61:4; 58:12. (Prophets and Kings 677)

The prophet here describes a people who, in a time of general departure from truth and righteousness, are **seeking to restore the principles** that are the foundation of the kingdom of God. **They are repairers of a breach that has been made in God's law**—the wall that He has placed around His chosen ones for their protection, and obedience to whose precepts of justice, truth, and purity is to be their perpetual safeguard. (Prophets and Kings 677, emphasis mine)

In words of unmistakable meaning the prophet points out the specific work of this remnant people who build the wall. “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” Isaiah 58:13, 14. (Prophets and Kings 678)

In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law **at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired.** God's remnant people, **standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform** and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to co-operate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in. (Prophets and Kings 678, emphasis mine)

So with design law we understand that the Sabbath is God's gift, promise, evidence, demonstration, of God's character and how His design law government functions—how He governs. God is the Creator—He has all power, and **the danger with all power is that in can intimidate, it can cause fear, it can damage individuality, it can undermine love, it can shut down thinking, it can lead to mindless pawns and drones doing what the powerful sovereign says or else—so God created the Sabbath, a revelation, demonstration, evidence that God does NOT govern by imposed law and enforced rules,** for after six days of using immense power to create, the Sabbath is set apart by God when He **STOPPED** using power, when God rested, when God created a time for His creatures to think and consider and come to their own conclusions without the threat of punishment being inflicted by Him. Thus the Sabbath is a memorial to God as Creator and His design laws that all reality is built upon. For what God wants from His intelligent creatures is our love, trust, loyalty, devotion, and friendship and that can never be achieved through human law, through he use of might and power, it cannot be achieved through intimidation, through threats, through inflicted punishments. In fact, when people present God like this they advance Satan's rebellion and undermine trust in God and negate the very purpose and function of the Sabbath—a sign that God is holy and makes us holy!

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph,

- What, then, about waiting for God? The notion of waiting on the Lord is found not only in the Psalms but abounds all through the Bible. The operative word in all this is perseverance. Perseverance is our supreme commitment of refusing to succumb to fear of disappointment that somehow God will not come through for us. God's devoted child waits, knowing with certainty that God is faithful and those who wait on Him can trust that if we leave our situation to Him, we can be sure that He will work it out for our best, even if at the time we don't necessarily see it that way. (Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2024, Psalms p. 101).

Would anyone like to share where by waiting on the Lord, rather than acting on impulse or initial emotional reaction to a situation, God opened doors and resolved problems for you in ways that would not have happened if you didn't wait on the Lord?

When this ministry was first founded back in 2010, there were several pastors who objected to what we teach and sent out a letter through the community alleging I was teaching heresy and that people shouldn't listen to what I teach. Of course I was hurt, and I was tempted to retaliate by writing my own letter and going on a publicity campaign to protest what these pastors had written, for of course I did not believe in represented the truth. But before I acted I spent a lot of time in prayer because I recognized I was angry, my motives were not those of love, but I wanted to embarrass and humiliate those pastors. Thankfully, God worked upon my heart and I did not choose to make a public campaign of attacking those pastors, but instead trusted God with what would happen and simply focused on advancing the truth as I understand it and God has blessed with the continued growth and reach of this ministry, bringing more people to our team, helping develop more resources, opening more avenues to share and this continues to this day.

But this paragraph also triggered my mind to inquire, yes we are to wait on the Lord, but what is the Lord waiting for? Is the Lord waiting for something?

Consider this historical quote—do you agree Jesus is waiting for this?

- Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. (Christ's Object Lessons 69).

Is Jesus waiting for this? Have you heard this in the past and been frightened, made fearful, anxious, insecure?

- What does this mean?
- Is Christ waiting for this?
- Why does He have to wait, why doesn't He just use His divine power to make it happen?

- If Christ is waiting for the development of His character in His people, does that mean this is part of salvation?
- Can people be saved without this? Or is this the very essence of what it means to be saved?
- Are people saved from sin or are they saved in sin?
- Do we teach that Jesus removes sin from us and cleanses us, or do we teach that Jesus applies His blood to our account and covers over our sin in some way, either in the records in heaven, or by a robe of righteousness that covers our sin?

The true message of our Creator God is that God, through Christ, has made provision to cleanse every single heart and mind from sin, to restore sinners to true righteousness, to purify us, to purge fear and selfishness from us, to cleanse our Spirit temples to make us white as snow in heart, mind, character. But Satan's counterfeit has infected Christianity and the SDA church and has obstructed the truth with the penal lies that Jesus died to pay our penalty, often to the Father, but certainly applied in the heavenly legal system, and we need to have that legal payment made to our account so that we can be covered by the blood, or covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness so that God will declare us legally righteous while we are still unrighteous. It is a trick, a deceit, a Ponzi scheme, to get people to have faith in something that has no power to heal or save. Consider these historical quotes again from EGW who was one of the Reformers advancing the design law truth, this is what we are supposed to be teaching:

- **The righteousness of God never covers a soul all polluted with sin.** John says, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Will you let Him take it away? You cannot bear your own sin. Christ says He will take your sin if you lay hold of the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. (Sermons and Talks vol 1, p. 237.2)
- We are to be representatives of Christ, as Christ was a representative of the Father. We want to be able to attract souls to Jesus, to point them to the Lamb of Calvary, who taketh away the sin of the world. **Christ does not clothe sin with His righteousness, but He removes the sin, and in its place He imputes His own righteousness.** When your sin is cleansed, the righteousness of Christ goes before you, and the glory of the Lord is your rearward. Your influence will then be decidedly on the side of Christ; for instead of making self a center, you will make Christ a center, and will feel that you are a guardian of sacred trusts. – (Signs of the Times April 4, 1892, par. 2)

How does this author describe Jesus' work? From where is Jesus removing sin? The truth of God for you and me is a healing transforming message, but this incredible, transformational, truth is obstructed by the penal/legal theologies based on the lie that God's law functions like our law.

When you hear words like "character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people" what law lens do you understand such words through? If you think God's law functions like human law then what does perfect mean? Does it mean perfect performance, perfect behavior, perfect rule-keeping? And do such ideas bring peace or greater anxiety and fear? And does that lead to teaching that the statement "character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people" means to have Christ's

character reproduced in our legal documents in the courts of heaven during the judgment, but that such reproduction doesn't happen in us, we are declared, based on the merits of Jesus to be legally righteous in the judgment while we remain unrighteous in reality here on earth? Do you see, how the legal view actually interferes with what God is working to achieve—God wants to reproduce Jesus in every heart and mind, to cleanse us from all sin, but the legal view puts up barriers in our hearts and minds and shifts our faith or trust away from God to the mechanics, payments, legal adjustments, mediations being done to God so God won't find us guilty and kill us.

But if we understand God's law as design law then what do such words mean?

When we return to worshipping God as Creator, we realize that the basis for life in God's universe is God and the law upon which He constructed life to operate. We realize that we sinners must be restored to unity with God. And we read Jesus' words about being perfect in their full context, allowing Jesus to inform us of what He meant:

- You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect** (Matthew 5:43–48 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Jesus Himself describes what being perfect means: to love everyone, consistently and reliably, just like the sun and the rain treat everyone exactly the same. But it is understood that this is only possible by first being restored to a love and trust relationship with God, as Jesus said multiple times:

- "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments (Matthew 22:37–40 NIV84).

And how does God's love get restored into our hearts so that we can be perfect? It is by trust—that is, faith—in God. Thus, as the apostle Paul wrote:

- Everything that does not come from faith is sin (Romans 14:23).

And how is trust restored so we open the heart to receive the new heart and right spirit, to allow God to write His law upon our hearts and minds? By the gospel, which is the good news about God that wins us back to trust.

Bible perfection is not about deeds or tasks; it is about love and trust, about maturity of character. Speaking of Jesus, Hebrews states:

- During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, **once made perfect**, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him (Hebrews 5:7–9 NIV84, emphasis mine)

But wasn't Jesus always perfect? Jesus was certainly always sinless, but Bible perfection isn't about sinlessness. Adam and Eve in Eden were sinless, but they were not perfected. Bible perfection is about maturity of character, which is about coming into a love and trust relationship with God so deeply that nothing can shake us from it. The "perfect" are those who remain faithful, loyal, and true to God in their heart's devotion no matter what. They might have questions, they might misunderstand, they might be confused about why things are going the way they are; they might cry out like Jesus did, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:45 NIV84), but also just like Jesus, they still trust God and won't break trust with Him.

There are examples of people who achieved such perfection—they were not sinless beings, but they were sinners who had come to love and trust God so fully that nothing could shake them from their faithfulness to Him—thus, they were described by God as being "perfect."

- Job: no trial, hardship, or theological lies by compassionate friends could cause him to break trust with God
- Daniel: He would rather be thrown into the lion's den than betray God.
- Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego: They would rather be thrown into a fiery furnace than betray God.

These "perfect" people were not sinless; they were settled into such faithful loyalty to God that nothing could shake them from it. They would not compromise love for God and others in order to advantage or protect themselves.

Those who have been perfected in their loyalty to Jesus will not compromise their faith in Him in order to hold on to their assets, whether those assets are personal wealth or institutional wealth. They will not compromise the principles of God's kingdom to hold on to their church properties, hospitals, schools, clinics, or publishing houses. They will stay faithful to Jesus even if, like Daniel, they end up captives of a godless power and are thrown into a lion's den.

This is exactly how the Bible describes the righteous people who are ready for translation, the true last generation:

- They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death (Revelation 12:11 NIV84).

The perfect, those who are ready to meet Jesus when He returns in the clouds, are not those with perfect deeds or tasks, but those whose hearts have been restored to **perfect trust** in God. They are settled in their relationship with God so deeply that nothing can shake them from it. No trial, no

tribulation, no temptation, no lie, no pain, no loss, no attack will cause them to break faith with God. They are sealed to God in heart, in mind, in soul—and they trust God with their future.

MONDAY

The lesson is entitled the Peace of a Weaned Child and references psalm 131, which reads from the NIV as:

- My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore. (Psalm 131:1-3 NIV84).

What does this psalm say to you? What is the message you hear? Does it suggest, don't think, don't ask questions, don't try and comprehend the things of God, that is pride and arrogance, instead, if God said it, you should believe it for that is all there is to it, be content like a weaned child to be seen and not heard, to believe what those in authority tell you, especially God?

I think some could use it that way, but it would be a gross distortion of Bible truth—for such a message is not from God, for elsewhere God has said:

- “Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. (Isaiah 1:18 NIV84).
- We should each firmly make up our own minds. (Romans 14:5 GNT).

But perhaps a better place to look is Hebrews 5-6:

- We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! **Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.** But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have **trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.** Therefore let us leave the **elementary teachings** about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of **repentance from acts that lead to death...** (Hebrews 5:11-6:1 NIV84).

The immature, the children, the infants on milk are the ones who are still focused on the rules, the imposed law, the dos and don'ts, the acts of sin—and that is the imposed law view. Children view right and wrong as determined by either the authority, mommy said, daddy said, the pastor said, God said, or the rules, the law says. Children never think from cause to effect, children don't understand

how reality works, they only focus on being good and obedient children which means keeping the rules of the one in charge. But such an approach to life, according to Hebrews, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.

In 1888 the SDA church faced this very question, a crisis occurred, would the leadership accept the advancing light and move beyond the rules God gave for the children, to understand the reality behind the rules? But sadly, the leadership rejected the truth that God's laws are design laws and any made up rules are just like the rules parents make for their children, loving expressions of design law for the purpose of protecting the infants, immature, childlike from harm until they can mature and come to love God's design laws and freely choose to harmonize with them. And, today, the SDA church, instead of teaching the truth for this time, obstructs the truth for this time by the penal legal lies that come from teaching God's law functions like human law, made up rules. And Hebrews says, those who see things this way are not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness, which is exactly what we see from the legalistic leadership of the church who have replaced true transformation, genuinely becoming righteous as 2 Cor 5:21 says happens to those who trust Jesus, with the lie that we are legally declared righteous while we remain unrighteous.

The SDA organization stands in a very similar position to the Jewish nation 2000 years ago. The Jewish people had been blessed with the inspired writings, the truth that taught of the coming Messiah, but the system had been corrupted with legalism, rules, human law so severely that the very teaching tools God inspired were used to obstruct the truth. The truth was still contained in the Scriptures, but the people could not find the truth when they allowed the theology professors to explain the Scriptures to them. They needed to read the Scriptures for themselves and compare those Scriptures, as Jesus taught them, with God's revelations in nature—i.e. design law, how reality works.

Likewise, I believe within the records of the SDA organization there are truths that are for this time, but the membership by and large has not seen, read, understood, or appreciated these truths because the leadership to a great degree since 1888 has rejected the true meaning of the message and replaced it with a penal/legal counterfeit. Thus, if members want to find the truth for this time they need to stop listening to the theology professors and pastors and start studying the inspired record for themselves and harmonizing that record with God's revelations in nature and experience, just as Jesus taught us to do.

That is what the mature that Hebrews describes do, they have moved past the rules to reality, the mature know God as a friend and grow in the knowledge of the things of God, most importantly God's design laws and methods.

So, I paraphrase Psalm 131 this way:

- Lord, I am no better than anyone else; I see all human beings as equal before your eyes. I do not exercise my strength outside your will for my life or pursue positions beyond what you have equipped me to fulfill. Instead, I am content and at peace—like a weaned child no

longer crying for mother's milk; like a weaned child, I am content and at peace. O people of God, trust the Lord both now and forevermore. (Psalm 131:1-3 REM).

But if we are to become mature thinkers who can discern the right from the wrong, who have moved past the childlike ways of thinking and acting, who like Paul in 1 Corinthians wrote:

- When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. (1 Corinthians 13:11 NIV84).

Then what about what Jesus said,

- "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3 NIV84)

What does this mean? How are we to be like little children but not be like little children?

Jesus clarified in the next verse:

- Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:4 NIV84).

Children are lovers of truth, they are eager to learn, they are sponges of knowledge, they will accept new truth, but are also vulnerable to lies, that is where we are not to be like children, we are to be eager to accept new truth, love to grow in the truth, but we are to develop discernment skills so we stop believing just because a person in authority says so.

TUESDAY

The lesson points our attention to Psalm 126, it is a short six verse psalm so let's compare the NIV with the REM:

- When the LORD brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. (Psalm 126:1-3 NIV84).
- When the Lord turned around the backsliding of Zion, we were like people whose dreams of health came true. Then our mouths were filled with laughter and we shouted for joy; then it was said among the unhealed, "The Creator God has done an incredible work of transformation for them." The Creator has done an incredible work of transformation in us; Oh, how happy we are! (Psalm 126:1-3 REM).

Do you see the difference—the Remedy focuses on the larger reality that the Scriptures are designed to teach, that the entire human race is captive in sin and that our health and happiness are only found when returned to unity with God, when set free from fear, selfishness, guilt, shame and sin to live in harmony with God in truth, love, and freedom.

- Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like streams in the Negev. Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him. (Psalm 126:4-6 NIV84).
- Restore our health and well-being, O Lord, just as streams bring life to the desert. Those who break the stony heart to sow the seeds of truth will reap a joyful harvest. Those who go through life with tender hearts, carrying seeds of truth to sow, will come home filled with joy, bringing in an abundant harvest. (Psalm 126:4-6 REM).

Again, what is the ultimate truth that God is trying to communicate to us? Is it temporal fortunes or is it eternal spiritual health and wellness? What does it profit a man to gain the entire world but lose his soul? What does it mean to sow in tears? It means that we are falling on the Rock Jesus Christ, having our hard hearts broken and then sowing in seeds of truth—just like Peter did after denying Jesus, he went out weeping and sowed in the truth and returned with joy.

So, when we experience difficult times, how will these insights help us? Are all painful experiences due to God working to break up our stony hearts? No! Job was perfect and righteous and his trials were not meant for his conversion or removing defects of character, sometimes bad things happen to good people. But there is a category of life experiences that are painful which are designed to discipline us, teach us, help us mature and develop in godliness. How do we tell the difference?

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, which is a quote from *The Desire of Ages*:

- “Over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Christ had proclaimed in triumph, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life.’ These words could be spoken only by the Deity. All created beings live by the will and power of God. **They are dependent recipients of the life of God.** From the highest seraph to the humblest animate being, all are replenished from the Source of life. Only He who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death.” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 785, emphasis mine).

What does this paragraph mean?

What does it mean that all created beings are dependent recipients of the life of God?

What does sin do? Does sin get us in legal trouble, or does sin cut us off from God, separate us from the source of life? And what happens if we are fully and completely disconnected from God—death—and why does death come to those who are completely cut off from God? Is it inflicted by God or the unavoidable outcome since life only originates and comes from God?

Then what type of law is this? Design law—and yet the world has accepted the wine of Babylon, the Romanization of Christianity that God’s law functions like human law and death is an infliction by God rather than the wages of sin as the Bible teaches.

FRIDAY

The Lord God of heaven will not send upon the world His judgments for disobedience and transgression **until He has sent His watchmen to give the warning**. He will not close up the period of probation until **the message shall be more distinctly proclaimed. The law of God is to be magnified; its claims must be presented in their true, sacred character**, that the people may be brought to decide for or against the truth. Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness. The **message of Christ's righteousness** is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel. 6T 19.1