



2024 2Q The Great Controversy Lesson 4 Standing for the Truth

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

The title for the lesson, Standing for the Truth—what truth are we to be standing for?

- That there is a God in heaven who is the Creator of heaven and Earth?
 - Don't the Jews and Muslims believe that?
 - Didn't those who crucified Christ believe that?
- That Jesus is our Savior?
 - Don't all Christian groups believe that?
 - Do we have any truth for this time that we want to share with all groups, including Christians of other denominations?
- That the Bible Sabbath is Saturday?
 - Didn't the Jews who crucified Jesus believe this?
- That humans are mortal beings and eternal life originates and comes only from God?
 - Don't many other groups believe this?
 - Is this the truth that saves people?
- That Jesus is coming soon?
 - Don't most Christians believe this?
- That there is a sanctuary in heaven and Jesus is our heavenly High Priest? Ah, the unique SDA doctrine—is this the essential truth that we are to take to the world, the truth of the sanctuary in heaven and Jesus' work there?

What is the truth that we are to stand for?

What about the truth about God Himself—that God is not like Satan has made Him out to be?

- For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against **the knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV84, emphasis mine).

And what is the single most important belief that shapes, impacts, determines what we believe about God, His character, methods, principles, and trustworthiness? What we believe about God's law.

If we believe God's law functions in any way like human law, made up rules that require infliction of punishment, then we always believe things about God that are not true of God but are like Satan in some way. Those who believe God's law functions like human law will teach things like:

- God's justice is using power to inflict punishment for unpaid for sin.
- God is required by law and justice to torture and kill unrepentant sinners.
- God killed Jesus as our substitute to satisfy His wrath or to meet the demands of the law or to pay our legal penalty.
- God cannot look upon our sin without becoming angry and needs a mediator in between Him and us to propitiate His wrath.
- God is the source of death.
- God cannot forgive outright but requires a legal payment in order to forgive.
- Sin doesn't actually harm the sinner and cause death, sin is rule-breaking and gets one in legal trouble and God harms you for it.
- Jesus' must hide our record from the Father in the judgment in some way or the Father will be required to use power to kill us. So beautiful metaphors about the robe of righteousness, or the sacrificial system, or the cleansing power of Jesus' blood etc. get perverted to teach appeasement, one member of the Godhead working on another member to influence, appease, propitiate, calm-down, satisfy the anger of God.

And on the list goes, but all of these descriptions present God with attributes of Satan.

The truth we are called to take to the world, the truth we are called to stand for, is the truth about God Himself, and we get ever clearer understanding of God's true character, methods, and principles when we reject the human view of law and recognize all of God's laws are design laws—the protocols the Creator built reality to operate upon.

Read last paragraph,

- Throughout the centuries, men and women have been willing to experience martyrdom rather than give up their faith in Christ. Their sacrifice rekindles our courage. The story of their commitment to Christ renews our own commitment. This week we will look at some biblical principles that motivated the Waldenses and later Reformers, such as Huss and Jerome, to stay faithful to the Lord no matter what—even at the threat of death from the same power that killed Polycarp: Rome, but now in the papal phase. (Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2024, The Great Controversy p. 30).

Haven't you been inspired by the faithful standing for their faith—even to the point of being martyred? And it is certainly true that many faithful followers of Jesus have been persecuted and killed for their faith throughout history.

Does this mean then, that standing faithful all the way to martyrdom is a sign of being right with God? If we see people who stand by their faith all the way unto death, does that mean they are on God's side, standing for the right thing? What about those who:

- Burned to death with David Koresh?
- Strap bombs on themselves and blow themselves up in cafés or fly airplanes into buildings?

We are certainly inspired by the stories such as Stephen being stoned, Paul being beheaded, and the martyrs for Christ throughout human history—but is willingness to die good evidence that the cause the person died for is the right cause?

What is better evidence than a person’s willingness to die for the cause? The truth, the truth manifested in harmony with the design laws of God as evidenced in Scripture, science/nature, and real-life experiences.

SUNDAY

The day’s lesson is entitled *Persecuted Yet Triumphant* and focuses on the 1260 years of persecution during the Middle and Dark Ages.

Most of you have heard the details of these various Bible prophecies, the day year principle the start date for this prophecy in 538 AD and the completion date in 1798. If you haven’t and you would like these details, please read our magazine [Unmasking the Beasts of Revelation 13 & 17](#) which you can get here in the lobby, read online on our website, or if you have a US postal address can order at requests@comeandreason.com and we will ship it to you at no cost.

What I want to emphasize today, are the goals and methods of Satan’s warfare. His goal is not to kill all humans—his goal is replace God in the hearts and minds of human beings so that:

1. We worship, admire, esteem, value him and
2. We become like him in character so that he thereby replaces the image of God that we were created to bear with his own.

And the methods of Satan are:

1. Lies (John 8:44)
2. Imposed laws (Ecclesiastes 5:8; Daniel 7:25; Jeremiah 8:8)
3. Police & prosecution /accusation (Zechariah 3:1; Revelation 12:10)
4. Judicial power/rulings (Matthew 27:19-26)
5. Economics (Matthew 6:24; 27:17-21)
6. War (Daniel 7:21; Revelation 13:11)
7. Death (Hebrews 2:14)
8. Education/Indoctrination (Acts 7:21; Daniel 1:5)
9. Ownership/usurped authority/pride (Genesis 47:16, Isaiah 14:13,14)
10. Fear (Genesis 3:10)

Satan’s strategy in applying these methods follow a certain pattern:

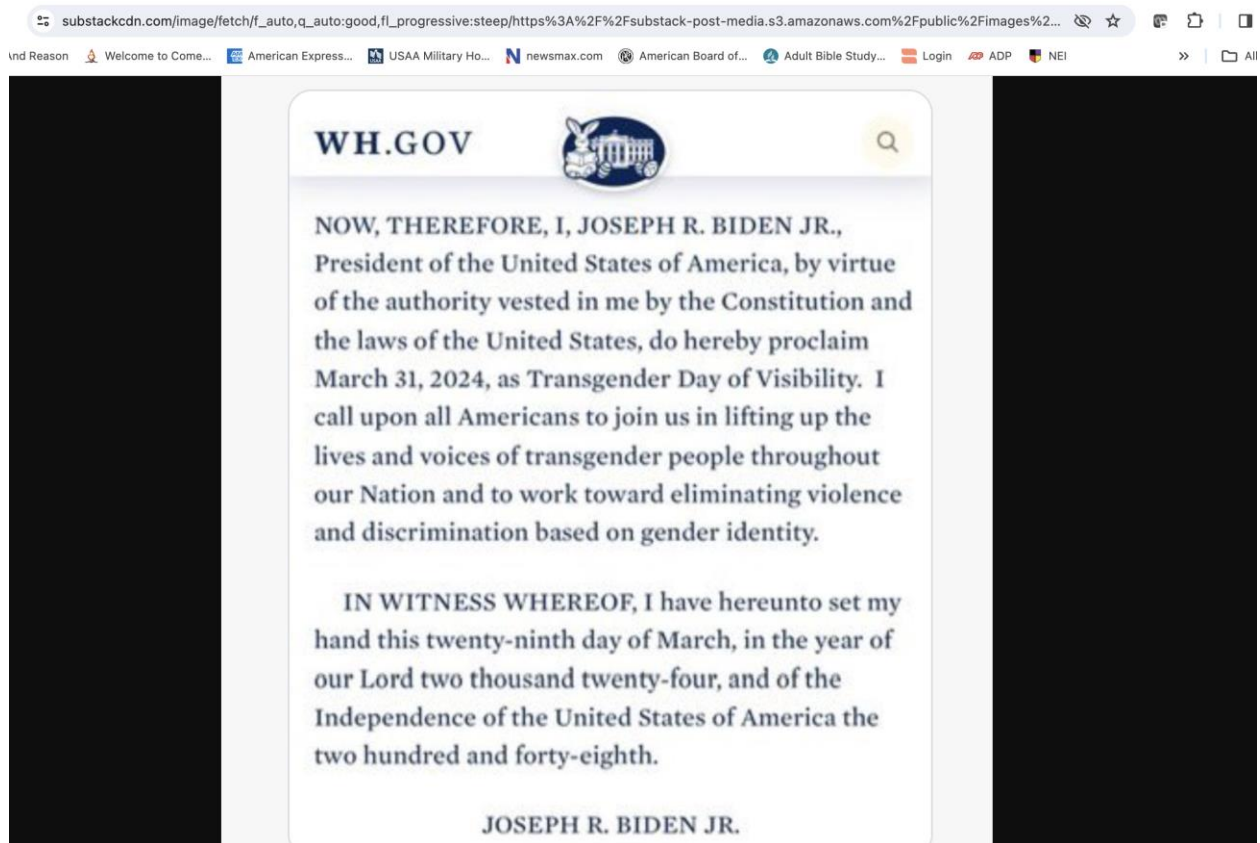
- **Deception**—Satan lied to Eve in Eden, and he approached Jesus as an angel of light. He is the father of lies and he always seeks to deceive, to lie and get us to believe his lies.
 - There are many ways Satan deceives, one of the most effective is through the evangelism of his converts, those who are true believers in his falsehoods. Through them we see many virtues—we perceive their sincerity, their devotion, their commitment, their passion, their willingness to sacrifice for their cause, sometimes their concern for others, but what we don't receive or perceive from these bearers of false gospels is the truth.
 - Just imagine the many advocates for the COVID jab, masking, lockdowns, and other harmful actions during the beastly attack on our liberties. Many true converts to the lies demonstrated real passion, real sincerity, real devotion to their cause—they wanted to save lives, many had love in their hearts mixed with fear of losing those they loved and begged and pleaded with family members to take actions they believed were life-saving. But they didn't have the truth, and those actions if taken only harmed.
- **Inducements**—bribes, offers of something to make us more or reward us in some way, typically appealing to ego, esteem, power, prestige, position. Something to introduce and inflame that lie that we can't trust God with our position, our calling, our mission, we need to act in self-interest. It is often accompanied by fear, fear of losing the opportunity if you don't act for self. He offered Eve to become like God. He offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world.
 - We saw this during COVID, get a jab and get a donut, or a free gift card or a sticker or pin identifying yourself as a morally superior person who loves others.
- **Miracles**—Eve was presented with the miracle of a talking serpent; Jesus was miraculously transported to the temple and then tempted to call upon God to perform a miracle by throwing Himself off the temple. These miracles by Satan were not illusions, not pretend, they were real. And Satan can perform certain miracles and will do so again before Christ returns.
- **Threats**—Jesus was threatened repeatedly by the Jews at the instigation of Satan, was threatened with rejection, abandonment of friends, betrayal, His reputation was tarnished, eventually threatened with death by the Jews and threatened by Pilate before Pilate finally condemned Him to death.
 - We saw this during COVID, threats to take away liberty, restrict travel, removed digital platforms, fire from jobs, lose scholarships, fines, arrest and more.
- **Physical assault, abuse, torment**—acts of real injustice and wrong.
 - We saw this during COVID pastors arrested for not closing their churches, small business shut down while the big box stores stayed open, violence against people who refused to comply.
- **Death**

We saw most of these during COVID—just think how much more intense it is going to be the next go around when Satan impersonates Jesus and performs all kinds of miracles and the world is faced

with another global ending threat that if people don't comply and following this leader we are going to die. Then the death penalty will be advanced and our only hope is Jesus returning to save us.

Satan's strategies are designed to get us to choose him and his methods over God and God's methods:

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust and incite fear and selfishness corrupting the character.
- Accepting inducements to do wrong inflames selfishness and breaks trust with God, incites fear and selfishness and corrupts the character
- Believing miracles over the truth and evidence God has given surrenders the mind to the miracle worker leading to choices that breaks the circle of love and trust inciting fear and selfishness corrupting the character
- Threats are designed to incite fear undermine trust and lead one to act selfishly (i.e., by hurting others) to protect self, after all isn't self-defense right? Then why did Jesus say we should turn the other cheek?
- But the big one which is right now being employed as we approach the final events before Christ's return, the strategy that is going to deceive all but the elect, is the perpetration of real wrong, real injustice upon innocents, which is designed by Satan to cause a real sense of outrage, righteous indignation, and a desire for justice, which tempts the righteous to embrace and practice Satan's methods to make things right, to use might and power, the power of the state and the power of force to inflict punishment upon the wrong doers. This was the temptation Jesus faced during His trial and crucifixion, injustice upon injustice, to the One who held all power. Would Jesus use power to do so-called justice by punishing the overt wrong doers or would He forgive His persecutors—those doing real evil, real wrong? And this is what is happening in the world today. Satanic forces are doing more and more injustice of all kinds and the goal is to inflame outrage in the people of God to get them to choose to embrace and join with the beastly powers of this world to use the power of the state to do justice, to punish wrong doing. But Jesus said we are to love our enemies and pray for those who abuse us that we may be children of our Father who is in heaven.
 - We saw Satan's tactic manifested on Easter when the President of the United States released the following proclamation:



This had nothing to do with blessing, benefiting, or helping people struggling with gender confusion. Don't be confused by the sophistry, subtlety, and misdirection of the evil one. This has to do with tempting righteous people by actions that offend them, so they will seek to make it right, to do justice by embracing and applying Satan's methods and thereby they change themselves from living representatives of God and His design laws of love and truth, to beings in the image of God's enemy.

We must instead recognize the truth of God's character and design laws—that we cannot make anyone righteous, or society righteous, by using imposed rules and coercive enforcement. We must recognize, as Jesus did on the Cross, that the injustice being perpetrated by evil people cannot be resolved or remedied by using the very same methods that they use. We must recognize, as Jesus did on the Cross, that those crucifiers were not actually destroying Jesus, they were destroying themselves. And likewise, we must recognize that when people do evil to us, they are not destroying our souls, they are actually destroying their own souls, warping their own characters, searing their own consciences, and hardening their own hearts—because that is how reality works. We must see through design law and know this is unavoidable and stop seeing events through imposed law where we believe it is right and just to use power to punish them for their wrongdoing. This is the only way we can prevent Satan's evil seeds from infecting our own hearts. We must have God's law of love written within us so that we, like Jesus, like Stephen, can say "Don't lay this to their account.

Father forgiven them they don't know what they are doing. They think they are doing right by seeking to destroy us, but we know that they are only destroying their own souls—and we will, just like you Father, miss them when we are in heaven with you.”

- And finally, if Satan cannot get God's people to choose his methods and become like him in character then he will inspire those who are like him and who value his methods to seek to destroy, even kill, those who refuse to be corrupted, but it will all be advanced under the guise of doing what is right, of only doing justice. The wicked always end up persecuting and seeking to kill the righteous and thereby take their influence away. And when it is led by churches and governments, it is always couched as doing something for the greater good, to stop evil, to save the nation, to save lives, or to save souls or to save the organization. As Caiaphas said, “it is better for one man to die than the nations.” (John 11:50).

Read first paragraph,

- The book of Jude was written sometime before A.D. 65 to faithful Christians who were “sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ” (Jude 1:1, NKJV). These faithful believers were urged to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, . . . who turn the grace of our God into lewdness” (Jude 1:3, 4, NKJV). This admonition meant even more to believers in the Middle Ages after pagan practices had flooded into the church and human traditions compromised the Word of God. For many centuries, people, such as the Waldenses, stood as champions for the truths of Scripture. They believed that Christ was their only mediator and the Bible their sole source of authority. “In every age there were witnesses for God—men who cherished faith in Christ as the only mediator between God and man, who held the Bible as the only rule of life, and hallowed the true Sabbath.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 61. (Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2024, *The Great Controversy* p. 32).

The lesson is focusing on how Christianity became infected with all kinds of superstitions, human traditions, and false beliefs that resulted in human beings taking the name of Jesus—calling themselves Christians, yet going on Crusades, practicing the Inquisition, burning those who believed differently at the stake and many more un-Christlike activities.

The question is how could this happen? How could these ideas get into the hearts and minds of people so that they thought it was virtuous, righteous, honoring Jesus to act in such ways?

In Isaiah chapter 58, we find the following prophecy:

- Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In (Isaiah 58:12 NKJV).

But what is the wall that has been breached? And what is the breach that we are to repair?

This imagery is taken from ancient Jerusalem, whose wall that protected it and the temple at its center was broken down when Babylon attacked Israel, sacked the city, destroyed the temple, and took the people captive. Then, after 70 years of captivity, the prophets Ezra and Nehemiah led a remnant of Israelites back to Jerusalem to not only rebuild the temple but also to repair the wall that had been breached (broken down).

In 1 Corinthians 10:6, the Bible tells us that the stories of the Old Testament were recorded as examples to us. This means that the Bible record is more than just a historical account; it is a record of real historical people, events, and places, recorded under divine inspiration to teach eternal realities. The specific lives and events recorded in Scripture were included by the inspiration of God for the purpose of advancing the plan of salvation—thus, most of the historical events have object-lesson significance to teach God’s plan to save sinners.

Israel was taken captive by Babylon:

- Babylon is symbolic of the worldly and ungodly systems and sinful methods under which the people of God are held captive and are called to leave before Jesus comes (Revelation 18:2–4).
- Jerusalem is symbolic of the people of God, of Zion, in which the righteous live and the temple of God is found.
- The temple is symbolic of God’s plan to heal and save people from sin; it is the place where sinners are restored to at-one-ment with God. In other words, the temple is symbolic of God’s work through Jesus to cleanse the spirit temple from sin and restore sinners to unity with God.
- The destruction of the temple is symbolic of the destruction of the truth about God and His plan to heal and save in the minds of people—the setting up of the abomination that causes desolation in the wing of the temple, the setting up of a false system in place of the true plan to save and heal.

The historical events of Babylon breaking down the walls of Jerusalem, destroying the temple, and taking the people captive symbolize the corrupt systems of this world (Satan’s kingdom with its methods, principles, practices, and laws) warring against the true people of God (the church) in an attempt to break down the protective wall that God has given to safeguard our hearts and minds and take the people captive, in heart and mind, to a false system of worship that is represented by Babylon. This is why the call goes out in Revelation 18 for God’s people to come out of Babylon; **it is because God’s people are being held captive in this fallen and corrupt system.**

This same truth is taught in a variety of ways in Scripture—for instance, the little horn of Daniel 7:21 and the beast of Revelation 13:7 warring against the saints and taking them captive describe the same events.

The apostle Paul describes this same breach, the same taking captive of hearts and minds, in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, where he describes the man of lawlessness setting himself up in God’s temple and

proclaiming himself to be God. Paul is describing the man of sin, the lawless one, breaching the walls of protection that God has placed around His people and entering God's temple, setting himself up as the one worshiped instead of God.

Paul wrote this passage about 20 years after Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven. Satan did not ride into heaven and set himself up there. And the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed shortly after Paul wrote this passage, so Satan did not set himself up in that temple. Therefore, Paul is not talking about either the temple in Jerusalem or the one in heaven; rather, he is talking about the Spirit temple where our Creator God is to be enthroned. It is by breaching the wall of protection God has given us that has enabled Satan to storm in and take captive the hearts and minds of people and enthrone himself as the god that billions worship today.

The question for us today is: What is the protective wall, how was it breached, and how do we rebuild it?

The Breached Wall

Isaiah adds some details that give important clues to the nature of the wall that has been breached, the wall that protects our hearts and minds:

- If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken (Isaiah 58:13,14 NKJV).

Isaiah identifies one of God's commandments in connection with the repairing of the breach. This suggests that the wall of protection may be connected to God's law. Jeremiah and the writer of Hebrews go further than Isaiah; they identify the entire law of God as pivotal to our restoration in the new covenant:

- This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the LORD. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people (Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10 NIV84).

There were two covenants because there are two kinds of law in play—God's design laws and the imposed laws that creatures make up. The old covenant was formed at Sinai when the Israelites chose a covenant of law and performance over a covenant of love and trust. In other words, the Israelites believed and practiced the idea that God's law functions like human-imposed law, rules imposed that they were to obey, and if they didn't, then their sense of justice would demand that they be punished, but if they did obey, then they believed they would earn rewards. This is the covenant that Paul exposes as false in the books of Romans and Galatians—the legal, rules-oriented, works system of law-keeping rather than faith, rather than love and trust that comes from reconciliation with God and living in harmony with how He built life to operate.

The old covenant was based on the people's false belief that God's law is imposed and that righteousness is to be found in their law-keeping, which earns either rewards or punishments meted out justly by a "just God." But as can be seen in the Jeremiah and Hebrews texts above, while God's new covenant is not legal it also has law involved, but in the new covenant, the people recognize and embrace the truth that God's laws are design laws, the laws the Creator has built reality upon and not rules like humans make up. God's laws must become the principles upon which hearts and minds operate, not merely rules to govern external behavior. Jeremiah makes clear how God's laws function:

- This is what the LORD says: "If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the **fixed laws of heaven and earth**, then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and have compassion on them" (Jeremiah 33:25, 26 NIV84, my emphasis).

God's laws are "the fixed laws" that govern heaven and earth! God's laws are the laws the Creator has built reality to operate upon, such as the laws of physics, health, and the moral laws. Created beings cannot speak reality into existence and, therefore, we make up rules that we call "laws," but our rules require external enforcement through the infliction of punishment.

This is how Satan, a created being, governs. Imposed laws with imposed punishments are how the kingdoms of this world function—and Jesus said His kingdom is *not of this world!* (John 18:36). His kingdom does not function like human kingdoms; it is not built upon made-up rules that require the infliction of external punishments. Jesus is the Creator, His kingdom is reality itself, and His laws are the laws that govern and sustain reality.

The wall of God's protection is the wall of reality, of design law, of the protocols He built reality to function upon. When we understand and appreciate God's design laws, it always causes us to worship God as Creator and to understand that sin, breaking God's design laws, is the cause of pain, suffering, and death, while God is the source of life, healing, and salvation. But when we exchange God's design laws for Satan's imposed-law system, then we exchange the truth of God's character for Satan's and teach that God is the source of torture and death, which He inflicts upon the unrepentant as "just" punishment for sin. Thus, the lawless one, the one who denies and replaces the design laws of God with made-up, imposed rules, sets himself up in God's temple (human hearts and minds) proclaiming himself to be God.

Isaiah prophesied that before Christ returns, there will be a people who repair the breach. These people will recognize the design laws of God that Jesus spoke about when He said,

- "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).

Just like the remnant of Israelites who left Babylon under the leadership of Nehemiah, this end-time remnant will leave the systems of imposed-law theology. (Remember, of all the nations that interacted

with Israel in the Bible story arc, Babylon was the first to create an imposed legal code—the code of Hammurabi. Thus, Babylon rightly represents the kingdoms of this world and the theological constructs that teach that God’s kingdom functions like human kingdoms, with made-up rules and imposed punishments.)

The end-time remnant will reject this sinful human-law view of God’s kingdom and return to worshiping God as Creator, understanding that His laws are the protocols that reality itself functions upon.

But because the prophecy connects repairing the breach, the broken wall, with the Sabbath, Seventh-day Adventists (SDA), have concluded that this prophecy means returning to worship services on the Bible Sabbath instead of Sunday. But this prophecy is much broader than a weekly day of worship! It encompasses every aspect of living, for it calls us to *delight* in the Sabbath—not merely keep it as a rule we must follow. This means that the prophecy is calling us to return to living in harmony with God’s design laws for life, of which the Bible Sabbath is symbolic, or a sign.

Consider the origins of sin. The angels who followed Satan into rebellion, into disobeying God’s law, did so *before* there was a weekly Sabbath. The sin problem did not originate over a Sabbath-versus-Sunday question, and it will not end over such a surface/superficial/shallow question. The sin problem 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* by God as a day set apart from the other days, but it became a day set apart from the other days of the week through human *legislation*. Thus, the two days represent two types of law—design law and imposed law.

The deeper issue is not the actual day, but the law and government the days represent. One of the founders of the SDA Church understood this difference, writing:

- 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.” ... 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*, p. 452, emphasis mine).

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*, p. 678, emphasis mine).

Notice here that the author did not write, “The breach was made **by the change** in the Sabbath” or that “the change of the Sabbath is the breach in the law,” but that the breach occurred “at the time” or “when” the Sabbath was changed by man. The breach in the law was not simply the changing of the Sabbath; the true breach in the law is the change in how we understand God’s law, from design law to imposed rules—the type of law that can be changed.

The changing of the Sabbath to Sunday is the evidence, the fruit, the result of the breach. It is the proof that the Christian world believes God’s law functions like human law, and, therefore, sin is rule breaking, and God’s justice is the use of His power to inflict punishment upon sinners, in which He becomes the source of pain, suffering, and death from which we need protection. In this way, Satan has successfully set himself up in God’s Spirit temple to be worshiped by billions. It is a sad fact that today, almost the entire Christian world, regardless of denomination, no longer recognizes that God’s laws are design laws.

Thus, the true repairers of the breach of Isaiah’s prophecy will be those who teach the truth that God’s laws are design laws and not imposed rules. In so doing, we call people back to worship the Creator who made the heavens, earth, sea, and fountains of water (Revelation 14:7). We teach people reality and how to cooperate with God to actually become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

And we recognize that even if we do value 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 have not left Babylon; and we are still advancing the counterfeit to God’s kingdom, just as the Jews did two thousand years ago when they had the Bible Sabbath but the wrong law and the wrong god.

So, with design law, we understand that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. We understand that it is God’s gift, promise, evidence, demonstration, revelation of His character and how His design-law government functions—how He governs. We understand that God does not use power to force His way; this is the truth of the Sabbath’s gift to us! For love exists only in an atmosphere of freedom, of which the Sabbath is a sign. God is the Creator—He has all power, and **the danger with all power is that it 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 He does NOT govern by imposed law and enforced rules.** For after six days of using His immense power to create, the Sabbath was set apart by God when He **STOPPED** using power, when He rested, when He 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 imposed law, through the use of might and power; it cannot be achieved through intimidation, threats, and inflicted punishments. In fact, when people present God as the cosmic enforcer and punisher, they advance Satan's rebellion and undermine trust in God, negating the very purpose and function of the Sabbath—a sign that God is holy and restores us to holiness when we trust Him! (Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12).

So I invite you to join me in repairing the breach in the wall by rejecting the lie that God's laws function like human law, made-up, imposed rules and by embracing the truth that God is Creator and His laws are design laws upon which all reality is built to function. Reject the lie that God is the source of pain, suffering, and death inflicted upon sinners, and instead realize that it is sin, the breaking of God's design laws for life, that brings forth death, recognizing that God is the source of life—the One whom through Jesus restores His living law into our hearts and minds (Hebrews 8:10). I implore you to realize that Babylon, that system of imposed laws, with its made-up rules and punishing god, is fallen. Hear God's call to His people to come out of that unjust, fear-inducing, fallen, and broken system and return to genuine Creator worship!

WEDNESDAY

The focus of the lesson is the Reformation—what is your understanding of the Reformation? What is being reformed?

Here is a warning written by EGW March 1, 1915, four months before her death. It is profound, it emphasizes the reformation that we need and exposes the infection that has corrupted the gospel in the SDA church and which has impaired our ability to fulfill our mission since ever since 1888.

- A great **reformation is needed** among the people of God. Many sapless and unfruitful branches are to be removed from the parent vine. Everything will be shaken that can be shaken, that that which can not be shaken may remain. (Bible Training School March 1, 1915, par. 1, emphasis mine) [Those to be removed are those who have a form of godliness without power—no spiritual fruit because they have a religion of rules with a god of imposed law and inflicted punishments—a legal religion]

The enemy has worked upon the minds of some, and has led them to do violence to our past experience by **mingling with the truth erroneous and false theories**. He has led **ministers** and teachers to weave into their doctrines some pleasing figures of **his own invention**. Every deviation from the truth as we have advocated it in the past is a departure from truth that has been witnessed by the Holy Spirit, and upon which God has placed His seal. (Bible Training School March 1, 1915, par. 2, emphasis mine) [This is exactly what happened to the SDA church at the 1888 GC, when the leadership rejected the design law truths and wove into our teachings the invention of Satan that God's laws are imposed laws and the church has ever since taught many right doctrines through the wrong law with the wrong god, the god of this age who makes up rules and imposes punishment through external power]

Truth must stand in its own order, linked only with truth. Unbelief disturbs the balance of the system of truth, and tends to destroy the whole. The mind that cherishes sentiments that tend to destroy the foundation of the faith that has made us what we are becomes confused, and **can not discern between truth and error**. (Bible Training School March 1, 1915, par. 3, emphasis mine) [Sentiment is emotional attachment to opinion. It is an unwillingness to allow new truth to replace the traditional beliefs that feel good to the person. Those who hold to imposed law have sentiment that it is correct and they don't want to give it up. They often look for authorities to tell them the answer, what does the pastor say, what do the conference officials say, what does the Biblical Research Institute say, what does the president of the General Conference say—not what is the truth. These conscientious rule-keeping people cannot discern between truth and error for they have not learned for themselves how to discern truth.]

The truths that have been substantiated by the manifest working of God are to stand fast. Let no one presume to move a pin or foundation-stone from the structure. Those who attempt to **undermine the pillars** of our faith are among those of whom the Bible says that “in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” (Bible Training School March 1, 1915, par. 4, emphasis mine) [What is a doctrine? It is a teaching, so those undermining the pillars of our faith are those who advance the teachings of devils, and what has the devil taught? That God's law is imposed and that God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering, and death as punishment for rule-breaking. All those who teach God's law is imposed rules that He enforces through imposed punishments are among the ones who are undermining the pillars, just listen to the rest of this warning and the specific emphasis she focuses upon in regard to the pillars she is talking about]

One step from the path in which God has ordained us to walk, places us where we are subject to the temptations of Satan. This is represented in the case of Adam and Eve. Outside of God's way, we may be led to believe a lie. But angels of God will commune with those **who obey His laws**. Let mind and heart be united in following in the light that God has given. Keep soul and body pure and clean and holy. When we do those things that God has commanded in His word, angels of God will act as our teachers. **Our happiness is dependent upon our living a righteous life**. (Bible Training School March 1, 1915, par. 5, emphasis mine) [What law is she referencing here? She explains in the next three paragraphs, but before we read them, can we figure it out from this one? From where does happiness come? It is a by-product of healthiness in all domains of life, and health only comes from being in harmony with the laws of health, we cannot have health in violations of the laws of health. Thus, she is already leading us to understand the undermining of the pillars of God is the replacing God's design laws with the types of laws that creatures make up, but don't take my word for it, here is what she wrote.]

We are subject to certain laws, even as the plants are subject to law. Every tree will bear its appointed fruit. Disobedience to **the laws that govern our being** results in sickness and suffering and death. (Bible Training School March 1, 1915, par. 6, emphasis mine) [What

kind of laws are plants subject to, made up rules, or design laws? What kind of laws govern our being? Can she be more clear? Well she doesn't leave it there.]

The soul is also subject to laws, and a disregard of these laws, by the wresting and misinterpretation of scripture, will result in the sickness and death of the soul. Those following in a path of error lose from the heart the genuine peace of Christ, and become like the troubled sea, casting up mire and dirt. (Bible Training School March 1, 1915, par. 7, emphasis mine) [What kind of laws is the soul subject to? The same type, design laws, the protocols God built souls to exist and operate upon. Following a path of error that destroys the soul is the disregarding God's design laws and replacing them with the imposed law lies that Rome brought into Christianity, the wine of Babylon, the lie that God's law works like human law and those who believe this believe lies about the sin problem, God's character, the plan of salvation and teach all kinds of things that interfere with God's true plan to heal the heart, mind, soul and thus they are sick of mind and soul. They live in fear, fear of someone finding out about their sin, fear of some sin not being erased from the books, fear of standing in the judgment without an intercessor, fear of what God would do to them if it wasn't for Jesus protecting them from Him and on and on the fears go, all fruit of Satan's lies about God's law taught in Christianity.]

Spiritual life is the result of the action of the soul in obedience to the word and in harmony with the laws of God. Let the soul be regulated by the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." "This do, and thou shalt live." (Bible Training School March 1, 1915, par. 8, emphasis mine). [This is design law—the law of worship, by beholding we are changed, the law of exertion, the law of love, the law of liberty, the law of truth! We are restored as we embrace the truth and are won to trust in God and in that trust relationship we open the heart and experience the indwelling Spirit that heals the brokenness, takes away the guilt, shame, fear, and gives us new desires and as we choose those new desires we receive divine power to carry them out and we are transformed to mature into those who possess the mind of Christ!]

This is a call to repair the breach in the wall that protects our hearts and minds and to establish Jesus, our Creator and Savior and Sustainer back onto the throne in our Spirit temples!

THURSDAY

Read the first two paragraphs,

- What was it that cheered the faithful Waldenses during the horrible persecutions they faced? What gave Huss and Jerome, Tyndale, Latimer, and the martyrs of the Middle Ages courage to face the flames and the sword? Faith in the promises of God. They believed Christ's promise: "Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19). They found His strength sufficient for life's greatest trials. They even found joy through fellowship with Christ in His sufferings. And their faithfulness was a powerful witness to the world.

They looked beyond what was to what will be. They knew that, through the resurrection of Christ, death was a defeated foe. For these courageous men and women, the stranglehold of death was broken. They clung to the promises of God's Word and came away victorious. (Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2024, The Great Controversy p. 35).

Didn't the persecuting Roman church also believe that Christ defeated death? So, was the belief that Christ defeated death the defining belief that separated the persecuted from the persecutors?

And wasn't the Roman church, while physically persecuting and executing people in various horrible ways, actually threatening something worse? Wasn't the Roman church threatening eternal torture, damnation, in hell?

So what gave them hope, that Christ defeated death, or that Christ was NOT the kind of God who acted like the church leaders who were persecuting them were acting? That they knew God's love personally and had experienced God's grace in their heart and mind, and their personal connection with God through Jesus Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit gave them courage, peace, confidence, and ability to stay faithful—not merely the belief in a right doctrine.

Their victory was through Jesus as in trust in Him they died to fear and selfishness and were reborn into a life of love and trust in a personal Savior that they could surrender their souls to. It wasn't faith in correct doctrines, such as mortality of the soul, or Jesus' victory over death, or the Sabbath, or any other doctrine—our doctrines only have saving value to the degree they connect us with Jesus Christ and help us enter into actual living harmony with Him. Their victory came through their faith and trust in Jesus!

TUESDAY

Any questions or areas of interest from Tuesday's lesson?

The lesson focuses on the persecutions by the Roman church during the Middle and Dark Ages.

Who do you understand is represented by the first beast of Revelation 13?

It has been taught by many Protestants that the first beast of Revelation 13 represents the Roman church, the papacy. But this is only partially true.

If you recall, the first beast of Revelation 13 has 7 heads and 10 horns, and one of the heads was wounded and that wounded head was healed. And that wounded head is believed to represent the Roman church—but there are six other heads. So how does the entire beast represent the Roman church, what are the other six heads?

- The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while (Revelation 17:9,10).

- Hills = high places or places of worship (Leviticus 26:30; 1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 16:4).
- Seven false systems of worship
- The head is where one thinks, reasons, worships and determines what is best
- The heads direct the use of the various powers (horns)

Five have fallen at the time John wrote this in the first century:

1. Paganism
2. Godlessness
3. Eastern mysticism
4. Islam
5. Judaism

One is and One is to come later:

6. Christianity which became Romanism
7. False Protestantism (the Protestantism of imposed law that will join with the end-time beast and use the power of the state to pursue “justice”)

So, the beast with seven heads is a chameleon beast that uses the ten powers of Satan to persecute the saints. In some places and times in history—like when Israel was taken captive by Babylon—the beast was controlled by the pagan head, in communist lands the same ten powers are wielded by the godless head to persecute the saints, in Islamic lands the same ten powers are wielded by the Islamic head to oppose and persecute the saints, and in the Middle and Dark Ages Europe it was the Roman church that controlled the ten powers to persecute the saints.

During the Old Testament times the Bible story arc focuses our attention, through the lives and events recorded, on the fulfillment of the promise of Genesis 3:15, the coming Messiah. This is why we focus on Abraham’s children, through Isaac not Ishmael, and Isaac’s children through Jacob not Esau, and then narrow down all the way to the tribe of Judah. It explains why the Bible doesn’t say much about other people groups in the world because the entire focus of the Bible is the plan of salvation and that centers on Jesus, the promised Messiah.

Likewise, after Jesus’ incarnation, sinless life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection and ascension, the Bible story arc focuses on those who carry the gospel forward, who take the true plan of salvation. Thus, Bible prophecies, like Revelation 13 that reach into the future focus on the events in the world where God’s people are advancing the gospel and Satan’s power is opposing them. So, Revelation 13 focuses on those who are advancing the gospel on earth moving us toward the final events on the planet.

From where does our courage to stand come? It comes only from our faith relationship with Jesus Christ!

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New Bookmark: Friends with Jesus is now available. If you have a US Postal address and would like some to share, just email your requests to Requests@ComeandReason.com and we will send them at no cost.

MAGAZINE: The Lie that Deceived Angels, Infects Christianity, and Delays the Second Coming of Christ, is now available! <https://comeandreason.com/lie-that-deceived-angels/>