



2024 4Q Themes in the Gospel of John Lesson 12 The Hour of Glory: The Cross and Resurrection

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

Read memory text:

- Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this **purpose** I was born and for this **purpose** I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” (John 18:37 ESV, emphasis mine).

Jesus came into the world for a purpose—what?

Remember when Peter pulled out his sword, Jesus told him to put it away and said,

- “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” (Matthew 26:53-54 NIV84).

Did Jesus go through the cross against His will or in harmony with His own will, understanding, purpose, goals, mission?

Jesus had a purpose in becoming incarnate. He came to accomplish something, what?

To eliminate sin from His universe and save humanity from sin and restore this world back to sinless perfection.

Wouldn't all Christians, regardless of denomination, regardless of how they explain the details of the atonement agree that Christ's mission, the reason He came and died was as the solution to the sin problem? Wouldn't all agree that Jesus is the answer, the way, the solution, the antidote, the divine response that the Godhead initiated to address and eliminate sin from existence?

So we ask the question, Why did Jesus have to die in order for God to save humanity and eliminate sin from the universe?

In order to accurately understand the solution we must understand the nature of the problem the solution resolves.

So, what is the problem that sin caused that the plan of salvation, Jesus incarnation, sinless life, death, and resurrection solves?

If the problem is presented as a legal problem then what will the solution be? A legal solution.

If the problem is presented as a problem with God's anger, wrath, need for justice, something going on with God, then what will the solution be? A mediatorial act to present God with something to impact, change, propitiate, assuage God's anger wrath or law.

If the problem is presented as a condition of being, something that is deadly, terminal, wrong in sinners then what will the solution be?

Let's approach this a little differently, let's present some of the atonement theories, and seek to identify based on the theory what is the problem this theory is attempting to solve. In other words, what does such a theory indicate the sin problem is?

- Traditional satisfaction theory, in which Jesus died to satisfy God's anger, wrath, or sense of justice—to satisfy God? What does this solution suggest is the problem that needed fixing?
 - God was angry and offended by sin and His sense of holiness, righteousness, and personhood needed to be satisfied. And the death of Jesus satisfies God.
 - Doesn't such a view place the sin problem with God that there is something in Him that needs fixing or resolving? That our sin changed God in some way and Jesus needed to do something to God?

But the Bible says that God doesn't change:

- "I the LORD do not change." (Malachi 3:6 NIV84).
- Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8 NIV84).

Consider these quotes as evidence that the traditional satisfaction view is trying to solve a problem in God:

- What did Christ's suffering and death actually accomplish that allowed the Father to provide the human race with salvation? ... Scripture teaches only that Christ became a 'propitiation,' a 'sin offering,' or a 'sacrifice' for sins...Essentially, this means that Christ, because he was guiltless, sin-free and in favor with God, **could offer himself up as a means of persuading God to relent of his angry wrath** against the sins of mankind... Anger against sin shows the personal side of God, for sin is a personal offense against him. **God is personally offended by sin and thus he needs to be personally appeased** in order to offer a personal forgiveness. In keeping with his divine principles, his personal nature, and the magnitude of the sins of man, **the only thing that God would allow to appease him was the suffering and death of the sinless representative of mankind, namely, Christ.** (Robert Sungenis, Founder and President of Catholic Apologetics International Publishing: Not By Faith Alone (Santa Barbara: Queenship, 1997), pp. 107-108.)
- We affirm that the atonement of Christ by which, in his obedience, he offered a perfect sacrifice, **propitiating the Father by paying for our sins** and satisfying divine justice on our behalf according to God's eternal plan, is an essential element of the Gospel. ("A Call to Evangelical Unity," Christianity Today, June 14, 1999, emphasis mine.).

When Adam and Eve sinned did God get changed? No, then the solution, why Jesus had to die is not to fix God. What about in SDA theology? Has the idea that sin changed God and that Jesus died to solve or fix God in some way entered the teachings and publications of the SDA church?

- Paul always speaks of people being reconciled to God (2Cor 5:19; Rom 5:10; Col. 1:20). He never refers to God being reconciled to us. **In spite of that fact**, however, we should recognize that sin affected both sides. Humanity's rebellion and sense of guilt alienated it from God, while **God was separated from humankind by His necessary hatred of and judgment on sin (His wrath). Christ's sacrificial death (propitiation) removed the barrier to reconciliation from God's side.** (Knight, George, *The Cross of Christ*, p. 74, emphasis mine.)
- Christ's self-sacrifice is pleasing to God because this sacrificial offering **took away the barrier between God and sinful man** in that **Christ fully bore God's wrath on man's sin.** Through Christ, God's wrath is not turned into love but is turned away from man and borne by Himself. (*Seventh-day Adventist Believe 27*, p. 111, emphasis mine.)

What do these two quotes describe happening? Where is the problem sin caused that these quotes claim Jesus' death address? Where is the barrier that these quotes claim Jesus' death removes?

But this is not the truth that the SDA church is supposed to be teaching. The truth that came to the church in 1888, the truth written about and promoted by EGW, but which was rejected by official leadership at 1888. Notice who she says is responsible for the barrier:

- To break **down the barrier that Satan had erected between God and man**, Christ made a full and complete sacrifice, revealing unexampled self-denial. He revealed to the world the amazing spectacle of God living in human flesh, and sacrificing Himself to save fallen men. What wonderful love! (*Signs of the Times*, September 24, 1902, Review & Herald Publishing, emphasis mine)

One view is the barrier is God's anger and wrath. The other view is that Satan did something to erect a barrier between God and man that is removed by the Revelation of Jesus' self-denial, God's love, and what His sacrifice accomplished.

So several theories have the sin problem being God, God's attitude, God's need for satisfaction, God's anger and wrath—we reject that when Adam sinned that God got changed.

But there are other theories, what do these proposed explanations teach is the problem that they are trying to solve?

- For a loving God to maintain His justice and righteousness, the atoning death of Jesus Christ became 'a moral and legal necessity.' God's 'justice requires that sin be carried to judgment. **God must therefore execute judgment** on sin and thus on the sinner. **In this execution the Son of God took our place, the sinner's place, according to God's will.** (*Seventh-day Adventist Believe 27*, p. 111, emphasis mine).

- Why did **God the Father choose** a cross to be the instrument of death? Why did He not choose to have Christ instantly beheaded or quickly run through with a spear or sword? **Was God unjust in executing judgment on Christ with a cross** when He could have done it by beheading, a noose, a sword, a gas chamber, a bolt of lightning, or a lethal injection? (Whidden, W., *Ministry Magazine*, February 2007. <http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2007/February/sinners-in-the-hands-of-god.html>, emphasis mine).
- To spare us, God poured out His wrath against the violation of His law (sin), not on the violators of His law (sinners) but on the sinless Jesus, the only way that God could “be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). **In short, rather than killing us for violating His law, the Father killed Jesus instead. ... Or, to put it crudely, the Father killed Jesus so that He wouldn’t have to kill us**” (Goldstein, C. “Law, Freedom, Love.” *Adventist Review*, online edition, Dec 8, 2023, https://adventistreview.org/cliffs-edge/law-freedom-love/?fbclid=IwAR3wAGrpMo-HQQi2KFAIHxfD47q5Aam6lZ6yJTNk-5FH7QZr66b8h_3CqX0, emphasis mine).

What is the problem these explanations are trying to fix? It is a legal one. They view the sin problem as legal, which is all predicated on the idea that God’s law functions like human law, imposed rules, and thus justice requires the infliction of proper punishment by the ruling authority in order to maintain the integrity of the law, the authority of the government, and the justice, which means punishment, for the law breaker.

But all of these theories are false, distortions, in fact are corruptions and manifestations of Satan’s attack on the truth. After the victory of Jesus at the cross Satan did not let that victory stand unchallenged, he immediately began undermining the meaning, introducing falsehoods to pervert it and ultimately use the cross to teach his own lies about God. He has done this by getting Christians to believe that God’s law functions like human law, the laws of creatures and if we accept this lie, then we believe justice is infliction of punishment, that Jesus came to take our punishment, that God’s justice is the source of that punishment and therefore God killed Jesus.

This line of thinking presents God as the source and inflictor of death, but the Bible teaches that Jesus’ victory at the cross was for the purpose of destroying death:

- Christ Jesus, who has **destroyed death** and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Timothy 1:19 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- For he [Jesus] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be **destroyed is death**. (1 Corinthians 15:25-26 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might **destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil**—and **free those** who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15, emphasis mine).

Notice the Bible teaches that Jesus’ death, which is the solution for the sin problem, destroys death and the devil who holds the power of death. But the common theologies, including those that have

dominated the SDA church since 1888 teach that God holds the power of death not Satan and that God wields the power of death as just punishment for sin. This is a lie.

What is the problem that sin caused that the plan of salvation fixes?

Sin separates from the source of life and causes death and the plan of salvation destroys death and brings life and immortality to light by removing the breach, the infection, the fear, selfishness and distrust and reconnecting living beings to God the source of life.

But how can Jesus free us from the fear of death if we teach that death comes out from God as just punishment?

If God is the source of death inflicted as punishment for sin, how can Jesus destroy death, doesn't the power of death continue to reside/originate in God who can wield it if sin ever presents again in the future? Haven't you even heard this taught by some, the idea that when this is all done if anyone ever sins again Jesus won't have to die, God will simply kill them on the spot.

But these lies about God, His law, the meaning and purpose of the cross did not catch God by surprise—He foresaw it all and forewarned us:

- Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet **we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.** (Isaiah 53:4, emphasis mine).
- “Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of **lawlessness** is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he **sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.**” (2Thessalonians 2:4, emphasis mine).

What temple? The spirit temple—and how did Satan do this? By getting Christians to exchange the truth that God's laws are design laws for the lie that God's laws function no differently than human laws, imposed rules that require legal enforcement. This was the Romanization of Christianity, the moving away from a reality based Creator God worship to a fantasy based creature worship in which the god is now viewed as the source of pain, suffering, and death from whom we need protection through mediation and payment of various kinds.

When we believe the lie that God's law is imposed, we believe the sin problem is penal legal and Jesus came to take our punishment and God is the legal authority who enforces the law through punishment, the minimum being death, and it is falsely taught that God is the source of death. Satan in character, method, motive, and function replaces God and is being worshiped in the spirit temple in the place of God. And people teach that God killed Jesus for justice sake.

The SDA founders were focused on completing the Reformation, on advancing the unfolding truth, on carrying the final message of mercy to the world, on restoring the purity of the gospel as Jesus revealed it and God blessed those Bible students with the truth about design law, but that truth was rejected by the legalists in the camp just as the legalistic Jews rejected it when Jesus presented it. Just

as the legalist fought against Paul when he presented the truth about design law. Just as the legalists through all Christian history have done.

Once Constantine converted and the church Romanized the idea of Roman law, imposed law, canon law became orthodoxy and no branch of Christianity has freed itself from this imposed law lie and all still teach that God's justice is the use of power to inflict punishment.

But what is the truth? What is the true problem that sin caused and that Jesus fixes so that God both saves humanity and also eliminates sin from His universe?

1. Jesus revealed the truth, which exposed Satan as liar, secured the unfallen universe & wins humans to trust
 - “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” Colossians 1:19-20
2. Destroyed Satan and His power
 - “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil.” Hebrews 2:14
3. Destroyed the infection of selfishness and cured humankind
 - “Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2Timothy 1:10

How did Jesus destroy death?

- What is the basis of life?
 - God – the life emanating from God flows out to all in unity with Him and who continue to live in harmony with His design
 - What happens if one breaks this design?
 - One severs the connection with the source of life and dying they die
 - Death is the natural outcome of selfishness
 - In order to destroy death Jesus had to remove, eliminate, eradicate from the species human the death causing principle and restore the life causing principle into humanity.
 - He did this by becoming human, partaking of the life descended from Adam, the life now terminal, infected, corrupted, the purged that corruption and restored perfection, love, life.
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- Adam formed from dust
 - Eve from Adam's side
 - You and me from sinful mother and father
 - Jesus in none of these ways

- But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Galatians 4:4-5
- The Holy Spirit was His Father. Matthew 1:18
- Jesus was “tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin.” Hebrews 2:14
- And each one of us “is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.” James 1:14

Did Jesus experience the internal temptation to save Himself? Yes in Gethsemane.

Why did Jesus have to die?

- God formed Adam out of the dirt, and then breathed into Adam the breath of life, this is the *pneuma*, which is translated spirit. It is the animating life energy that originates only in God.
- When Adam sinned he changed the animating motivating energy from love and trust to fear and selfishness. His own spirit, his own energy, his own motivation, his own natural inclinations, desires, and drives, the power that moved him to action was changed from love and trust to fear and selfishness and this drives Adam to run and hide from God.

And Adam and Eve were given procreative abilities to share their life—the breath of life breathed into Adam and corrupted by Adam. They only had that life to share and that life is now infected with fear and selfishness—it is the only life, the only spirit, the only animating energy they have to pass on. Thus they have children born in sin conceived in iniquity (Psalm 51:5). We are not born legally guilty, we are born infected with a terminal condition. This condition is incompatible with life. It motivates, natural drives, one to distrust, to seek to advance and protect self, to flee from God, to cut oneself off from God and His life giving presence. In fact, it is antagonistic to God and life. It is the law of sin and death, the survival of the fittest motivation and drive.

Jesus came and partook of this very life. The very same life breathed into Adam and passed down through the generations, through David and through Mary (Romans 1:3; Galatians 4:4).

But the Father for His humanity was the Holy Spirit who came upon Mary and Jesus’ humanity was conceived within her. Thus Jesus is born with a humanity that is capable of being tempted in all points like we are, yet He lived without sin. He could experience the internal fear, the emotional anguish, the internal temptation to act in selfishness and flee from death—as is seen in Gethsemane. But Jesus was born with a holy spirit, with a pure animating energy He received from the Holy Spirit and thus Jesus as a human grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. He lived a sinless life. He never developed a bad habit, and while He could be tempted in ways Adam in Eden was not, He overcame every temptation by the exercise of His human brain in choosing always YES the spirit of love and trust and always choosing NO to the spirit of fear and selfishness. At the cross Jesus destroyed death, the spirit of fear and selfishness that Adam brought into the race and rose again in a

humanity that was descended from Adam yet one which was purified, purged, perfected, and restored to God's original intention when He created Adam.

Thus Jesus became the second Adam, the source of salvation for all who trust Him.

- 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 5:8-9 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Jesus was tempted in all points like us and as a human learned by experience humble submission, surrender to His Father's will, which He Himself said "not my will by thy will be done" at the height of His greatest temptation in Gethsemane. And although He was always sinless, Bible perfection is maturity of character, and Jesus as a human had to overcome where Adam failed. Jesus had to use His human abilities to develop a perfect sinless human character in love and trust to His Father and thereby destroy the infection of fear and selfishness. It was only by doing this that Jesus could eradicate sin from humanity, reveal the truth to destroy lies, and secure the universe unfallen in its loyalty.

So Paul writes:

- For God has **not given us a spirit of fear**, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV).

God did not give us the spirit of fear we inherited that spirit from Adam. Through Jesus Christ God restores in us the spirit of power and love and sound mind, self-control.

With all of this in mind, let's unpack the Romans 8:1-15 and see how Paul describes this exact reality, how we are infected with a spirit of fear and selfishness and Jesus came to destroy that animating power, energy, life, spirit from humanity and restore in us the spirit of love and trust. And as we go through you will see how the penal legal fraud has a form of godliness but denies the power, denies the animating presence of God and keeps people trapped in cycles of fear and selfishness while claiming legal solutions to a lethal condition.

- Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. **[Why is there no condemnation? If you believe God's law functions like human law, then you read this to mean that Jesus paid the legal price to God or God's law by dying in our place and therefore there is no legal condemnation and we are legally pardoned or set free. But when we return to design law we realize that we are actually dying of a terminal condition, the life we inherited from Adam is corrupt, and Paul in this very passage describes how this life is enmity to God, in hostility or rebellion to God, and incapable of pleasing God, for the spirit of fear and selfishness causes us to flee from God and seek to protect ourselves. This animating power, energy, spirit, is the survival of the fittest principle that every single human since Adam is born with by having received this spirit from both their father and mother. Paul describes how all nature groans under this law of sin and death, the survival drives that only**

destroy and naturally result in death unless removed and replaced by the law of the Spirit of life. And thus we have no condemnation because our being, our hearts and minds, have been freed from the control of fear, we have a new animating energy a new spirit of love and trust—and Paul describes this in the following verses. But the penal theories teach people to claim legal pardon and removal of legal condemnation through the fiction of legal adjustment while leaving people dying of this terminal sin condition.] For what the **law was powerless** to do in that it was **weakened by the sinful nature**, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order **that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us**, who do not **live** according to the sinful nature but **according to the Spirit**. [The written law is external, it is outside of our hearts and minds. It has no power, no animating energy, no capacity to fix, restore, heal, recreate, regenerate. It can only expose, diagnose, communicate, reveal that we are dead in trespass and sin, that we are sick in heart and mind. Our sinful nature is the life of fear and selfishness and it is incapable of animating, empowering, motivating to love and trust. Our animating spirit of fear and selfishness cannot cause us, inspire us, motivate us, empower us to live love. It can only cause us to live in fear and selfishness. Thus living out God's law is impossible because our nature is weakened, damaged, infected, animated by fear and selfishness. This is why Jesus came to condemn all deviations from His design that cause pain, suffering and death, and restore the law of life back into the species human and into the hearts of all who trust Him and are reborn to live by the animating power of the Spirit.] Those who live according to the sinful nature have their **minds set** on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their **minds set** on what the Spirit desires. [Both the converted and unconverted have a sinful nature, a spirit of fear and selfishness. It is the only life, spirit, animating energy that we can be born with. But the unconverted set their minds on gratifying, living, defending, and promoting self of responding to and growing in the spirit of fear and selfishness. They do not die to self. They do not surrender self to Jesus and do not receive the Holy Spirit. They are not reborn. But the converted, while they still have the animating spirit of fear and selfishness inherited from Adam, have been won to love and trust and have surrendered self to Jesus. They have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit and receive through trust a new animating power, and they choose set their minds on living to love God and others.] The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; [The mind of fear and selfishness is the mind empowered, controlled, driven, animated by the spirit of fear and selfishness and this is the law of sin and death. Fear and selfishness sever God's design law of life, break the law of love and trust, sever our connection with God the source of life. The only outcome without replacement with the spirit of life, is ruin and death. But the mind who has surrendered self, who has died to the spirit of fear and selfishness, receives a new animating energy, spirit, life, power, the Holy Spirit who brings the life of Jesus and their mind is now empowered, inspired, directed, controlled by the Spirit of life.] the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. [Our natural mind animated and controlled by the spirit of fear and selfishness is hostile to God and incapable of submitting to God's law of truth, love, and freedom. Fear and selfishness drives, causes, manifests, leads to, inspires, only actions that lead away from God. Just as Adam and Eve ran from God as soon as they sinned. The only power they had at that point was the power of the spirit of fear and selfishness. And without rebirth, without the

indwelling Holy Spirit, the only animating power we have is fear and selfishness and thus we are incapable in our natural self of surrendering to God. This is why even repentance is a gift of God. When we have a desire to leave the life of sin, that is the Holy Spirit working upon us to woo, call, instill a desire for life. All we can do is choose the truth and surrender the infection of fear and selfishness and receive the free gift of a new life, a new spirit to indwell and empower us.] Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. [Because they are living out the survival drives of fear and selfishness which runs away from God, counter to how God built live to operate and is the cause of all pain, suffering, and death.]

You, however, are **controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit**, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. [When we surrender our natural life, the spirit of fear we inherited from Adam in trust to Jesus we receive a new animating energy, the Spirit of love and trust. This is reality. The life we were born with is dead in trespass and sin. We must receive a new life from Jesus in order to have eternal life because our natural life inherited from Adam is the spirit of fear. We must have a new spirit of Christ, the life of Christ. And if we do not receive this new spirit of Christ we are not saved. And we cannot receive the spirit of Christ by claiming legal payments be applied to our books in heaven. This is why the penal legal theologies are so corrupt. They teach a form of godliness but they deny the animating power that recreates people into godliness. We must receive the spirit of Christ so that we can say what Paul said, “it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.” Gal 2:20] But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the **Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you**, he who raised Christ from the dead **will also give life** to your mortal bodies through his **Spirit, who lives in you**. [The sin problem is a real problem of being. Adam corrupted the spirit, the life given to him in Eden with fear and selfishness. This is a terminal condition. The only way to save humanity was to partake of this life, become a real human being, face the temptations this condition brings, and destroy the infection of fear and selfishness and replace it with a spirit of love and trust. Jesus did this in His person and offers us the free gift of His Spirit. We can partake of a new animating energy, the pure love of Christ that we can receive through trust and thus we can say no to the spirit of fear and yes to the spirit of love.] Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but **if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live**, because those who are **led by the Spirit of God are sons of God**. For you did not **receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear**, but you received the Spirit of sonship. (Romans 8:1-15 NIV84, emphasis mine). [This is reality—it is recreation, transformation, through receiving a new animating energy, a new life, a new spirit operating and functioning with us. The spirit of fear does not come from God, it came from Adam and it must be replaced with the spirit of love and trust that comes from Jesus. And when we surrender self in trust and receive this new life, the indwelling Holy Spirit who takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it in us, our heavenly records are cleansed because God’s records are the records of reality. And the reality is we were born in sin and conceived in iniquity. We were all born with only a spirit of fear and selfishness, and that spirit causes us to act hostilely to God and out of harmony with Him and His design laws. In other words, to sin. Thus we must be reborn and receive a new life, a new

animating energy, a new spirit, the spirit of Christ, of love and trust. And our heavenly records document that change and we are now children of God. And from that moment we live to love God and others and grow in godliness.”]

Notice how Peter describes this very process of living a new spiritual life, a life animated by love and trust and how this causes us to live and suffer like Jesus because we are confronting and putting to death the spirit of fear and selfishness we inherited from Adam.

- Therefore, since **Christ suffered in his body**, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because **he who has suffered in his body is done with sin**. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. (1 Peter 4:1–2 NIV84).

The spirit of fear we inherited from Adam leads us to live selfishly and sin. The spirit of love and trust we receive from Christ leads us to say no to the spirit of fear and selfishness and this causes the old self to suffer, but when we say yes to the spirit of love and no to the spirit of fear and selfishness we are done with sin.

Do you see how the infection of the imposed law lie into Christianity has completely corrupted the gospel and caused a form of Christianity that is without power—a penal legal form?

Jesus is waiting for the gospel, the eternal good news about Him, His character, His design law methods of truth, love, and freedom, the true plan to heal and restore sinners to go to the world and then the end will come.

SUNDAY

The lesson asks what is the truth?

It points to the discussion between Jesus and Pilate when Pilate dismissed Jesus by asking “What is truth?” In other words, Pilate was not seeking truth, but dismissing truth, basically saying everyone has their own version of the truth, who can know what truth is.

Has this attitude toward truth gone away, or is it still prominent today?

Have you heard it expressed in ideas like, “That’s your truth not my truth”?

What is the problem with this expression?

It is not about truth at all, but just like Pilate it is a means to avoid the truth.

What is truth—it is reality, that simple. And Satan is the father of lies and as such his positions are all overthrown and exposed by truth, by reality. Thus Satan seeks to divert minds away from truth, away from reality, and replace reality, replace truth with anything else.

What kinds of strategies does Satan use to divert minds away from truth, away from reality?

- Fantasy, fiction, myth, mystery, fable, make-believe
 - Godless evolution
 - Impose law views of God
 - All false religions
 - Anything that denies objective reality—almost everything taught by woke culture is fiction, fantasy, make believe and requires the suspension of reason and the denial of facts and evidence.
- Authority, proclamation, claims without evidence
 - This was used by the church of the Dark Ages and also by communism, fascism, and wokeism
- Faith without evidence
 - All movements use faith, but the godless and evil movements have people place their faith in anything other than the true God—faith in a cause, a person, a belief, a country, a lie and teach that faith is believing without evidence
- Love, devotion, conviction, strong feelings
 - Satan will use love, but when Satan uses it it is always love for something or someone that is divorced from truth. The Bible teaches that love rejoices with the truth. But Satan cannot abide the truth, so will use love to promote falsehoods, either false ideas, or false practices
 - Love for a person that causes an individual to not speak healing truth in order to avoid upsetting that person. This is manifested in society by political correct speech. The lie that is wrong to say anything someone else might find offensive. It doesn't matter if what is spoken is true and done in love, the lie suggests that if someone will be offended then love wouldn't speak it. Thus in various parts of the world those who advance this lie have passed laws that make it hate speech to speak truth, such as it is a crime to pass out *The Great Controversy* because it exposes the Dark Ages church as abusive, or promoting godly marriage is hate speech against the LGBTQ community.
 - Devotion to wrong causes
 - Devotion to good causes by using evil methods
 - Feelings of various kinds, but especially fear—this is how Satan motivated the world to abuse the liberties and violate the consciences of their neighbors during COVID. It is how various Christians justified and participated in such ungodly methods. And the reason church leaders failed to side with righteousness, the reason so many sided with the states to coerce. It is because they believe the lie that God's law functions like human law. As such they do not understand how reality works. Instead, they need to be told what is right and wrong, what the answers are. They are the infants spoken of in Hebrews 5, still on milk, still on the elementary teachings, not acquainted with righteousness. They may have good motives, they may want only to help, to bless, to

protect, but they cannot be trusted to lead any more than you would trust your 6 year old loving child to lead. Not because they are actively in heart in rebellion, but because they are immature and easily deceived. They are like someone in a math class who wants to do really good and doesn't want to make any mistakes so they go to the text book find the key and memorize all the correct answers. And when the question is asked what is $2 + 2$ they answer correctly "4" But when asked why, they say "Because the text book said so." These are many of our leaders. They know many right answers, but when asked why is that the right answer they say, "Because the Bible says so." But when the child who knows the right answer to the math problem because they memorized the key is faced with a problem that is not in the textbook, they cannot answer it, because they have never learned the principles of math, they don't know how reality works, they only know the example questions. This is how many Christian leaders are. They read the Bible to find the answers to the example questions and memorize those answers—and those answers may very well be the right answers. But they don't know design law, they don't know the principles of God, they don't know why it is right or wrong, and thus when a new problem arises, like should we cooperate with governments and pressure our students, employees, and patients to take an experimental injection with no safety data, or should we provide a letter supporting conscientious objection—they went to the Bible, the textbook but they couldn't find anything about vaccines, injections, or experimental medicines and so they could not solve the problem because they have never learned the principles of God. This is why Paul taught that every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind. We are not to surrender our thinking to church leaders. The mature are those who have developed by practice the ability to discern the right from the wrong (Hebrews 5:14).

- Miracles, signs, wonders
 - These can be faked, the truth cannot
- Shock and Awe
 - Intimidation which can either incite fear or just awe which shuts down thinking
- Loyalty to people or causes

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on how Pilate left Jesus and went out to dialogue with the people to try and persuade them to release Jesus because he didn't find Jesus worthy of death. But we know how that turned out. They threatened to accuse him to Caesar that he was supporting someone claiming to have kingly authority.

But, what do you think would have happened if Pilate would have stopped, stayed with Jesus, and asked the following:

Jesus, I don't find anything in you worthy of death nor supporting the charges against you. I am in a pickle here. I would like to release you. Can you give me any insight or advise on what I can say to the crowd that will get them to back down and stop demanding you be crucified?"

What do you think Jesus would have said?

Is there a hint of what Jesus might have said, in these words?

- Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” (John 19:11 NIV84).

Might Jesus have said what He said to Peter,

- “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” (Matthew 26:53-54 NIV84).

Or do you think Jesus might have repeated the words He said to John the Baptist when John protested baptizing Jesus,

- Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” (Matthew 3:15 NIV84).

Remember what Jesus said to James and John when they asked to sit on the right and left side in His kingdom?

- “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” (Mark 10:38).

Didn’t Jesus have to go through these experiences in order to reveal the truth and destroy the cause of death?

TUESDAY

It Is Finished—what was finished?

Was the entire plan of salvation finished?

What was finished?

The revelation of truth which exposes the lies of Satan and the destruction of death and restoration of life into humanity.

In other words, the procurement of the remedy which when applied will eliminate sin from the universe and ultimately bring the final end of all pain, suffering, sin, death, and rebellion.

But it still needs application.

If you have never read it I recommend the chapter in the book *The Desire of Ages* entitled “It Is Finished.” One of the best ever written on this subject by anyone.

And it is all about design law, how lies break the circle of love and trust, how the truth about God’s law must be revealed. How the use of might and power to eliminate Satan would not resolve the sin problem but would spread fear and rebellion. That what God wants is our love, trust, loyalty, friendship, devotion and this cannot be achieved through imposed law and inflicted punishments, but only by design law of truth, love, and freedom.

It is an incredible chapter and well worth the read. Questions about what was finished?

WEDNESDAY

The Empty Tomb—praise God Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light—how?

Consider this quote,

- Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. **The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb.** Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God. (The Desire of Ages 753, emphasis mine).

How did Jesus experience this? Because He partook of our humanity, the life inherited from Adam and could be tempted in all points like us, because that life is the life of fear and thus Jesus could experience fear and did.

But Jesus never gave in to fear. Despite the fear, the temptations, the inability to see through the tomb, Jesus trusted His Father—in other words Jesus lived by faith and won by faith, as all humans must. So this author goes on to write:

- Amid the awful darkness, apparently forsaken of God, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. In those dreadful hours **He had relied upon the evidence of His Father's acceptance heretofore given Him.** He was **acquainted with the character of His Father;** He understood His justice, His mercy, and His great love. By **faith He rested in Him** whom it had ever been His joy to obey. And as in submission He committed Himself to God, **the sense of the loss of His Father's favor was withdrawn. By faith, Christ was victor.** (The Desire of Ages 756, emphasis mine).

Christ overcame as a human who lived in trust based on evidence, experience, truth, reality of who God is.

But the question is, if Jesus could not see through the portals of the tomb, what was the basis of these comments:

- For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will **be three days and three nights** in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:40 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and **on the third day be raised to life**. (Matthew 16:21 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and on the **third day he will be raised to life**.” And the disciples were filled with grief. (Matthew 17:22–23 NIV84, emphasis mine).

If you believe the commentary that on the cross Jesus could not see through the portals of the tomb, then what do we make of these Bible verses?

One option is to believe the commentary is wrong, it is just that person’s view of things, but since the Bible is our standard of faith, not a commentary, and it clearly teaches Jesus did accurately predict His death and resurrection that He must have been able to see through the portals of the tomb.

However, I believe this conclusion would be wrong. I believe both the Bible and the commentary are true—how? Because Jesus did not make His description and prediction on His death and resurrection by looking through time and seeing through special prophecy future events. No, He made His prediction based on knowing how design law works. He understood the nature and character of sin, that sin causes death, that humankind is infected with the spirit of fear that must be eliminated and removed and when it is and the spirit of love and trust is restored, the spirit of life that emanates from God, then the natural result is life, resurrection. So He predicts not based on prophetic view through time, but on the knowledge of design law and reality.

Just as everyone of you can predict what will happen if I let go of a pen—it will fall, even though that is a future event, you can predict it accurately because you understand the law of gravity. Thus Jesus knew exactly what He came to do and what would happen when He succeeded.

THURSDAY

Jesus despite being crucified is still concerned with others and ensures that His mother is cared for.

What does this teach us about God?