



2025 God's Love and Justice Lesson 6 God's Love and Justice

by Tim Jennings

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph,

- Throughout Scripture, love and justice go together. True love requires justice, and true justice can be governed by and meted out only in love. We are not used to thinking of these two concepts together, but that is only because both love and justice have been greatly perverted by humanity. *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2025, God's Love and Justice p. 45.*

I absolutely agree that true love requires justice and justice and love go together—the question is what is justice?

Doing what is right or just? And what determines what is right or just? The law and thus a person's belief about love and justice is completely determined by their belief about the law.

Examples:

- It is right and just to punch someone in the face in a boxing match; it is unjust to do so in soccer, or in the supermarket. What makes the difference? The rules, the laws.
- It is right and just to drive 160mph on the Autobahn but unjust to do so on the US interstate—what makes the difference? The law
- George W. Bush in an address to the joint session of Congress September 20, 2001; nine days after the terrorist attack on the US, said:

“Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.”

What did the President mean by justice? Using power to inflict punishment upon the perpetrators.

Is it right and just to send law enforcement to hunt down criminals, terrorists, arrest them, bring them to trial, present evidence, and if found guilty to inflict punishment appropriate to the crime including, if the crime was sufficiently horrendous, death?

Under what law system is doing that justice?

This is human law, imposed law, Roman law, made up rules imposed by force.

Can this system of governance, using imposed rules, and imposed punishments, inflicted by external power—even if only the genuinely guilty are the only ones always found guilty and the falsely

accused innocents are always found innocent, even if it could be carried out with absolute accuracy and perfection—can such a system of governance achieve what God wants for His universe?

Well what does God want for His universe?

- 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. Hebrews 8:10 NIV84.

What law?

- Jesus replied: “ ‘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.

What law does God want to write on our hearts and minds?

Can God restore love and trust, friendship and loyalty, into hearts and minds by the use of external laws enforced through inflicted punishments?

Why or why not?

- “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty. Zechariah 4:6 NIV84

God cannot get love, trust, friendship, loyalty, devotion from His intelligent creatures by threatening them with inflicted punishments if they don’t give it.

This entire system of imposed law taught in Christianity is an infection that came through Rome, when Constantine converted Christianity Romanized, accepted the idea that God’s law functions like human law and justice is the use of punishment to kill the guilty.

Thus, people write things like this:

- I’ve always been baffled by those among us who deny the **penal substitutionary** aspect of Christ’s death, viewing it as merely a **dramatic expression of God’s love**, as opposed to a **legal payment for sin**. For them, penal substitutionary atonement goes like this: you break God’s law (sin), you face God’s wrath (death). Period. However, 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.**

Clifford Goldstein, from Cliff's Edge *Adventist Review*, December 8, 2023 article Law, Freedom, Love emphasis mine; https://adventistreview.org/cliffs-edge/law-freedom-love/?fbclid=IwAR3wAGrpMo-HQQi2KFAIHxfD47q5Aam6lZ6yJTNk-5FH7QZr66b8h_3CqX0

A couple of things to notice from this honest expression of his beliefs. He believes God's law functions like human law. He believes God's laws are made up rules and if you believe that then the only justice possible is the use of power to inflict punishment, penal-legal law enforcement through punishment. This theory is based on a lie but the people who hold don't realize they have been duped into believing Satan's lie about God's law.

The second thing to notice is that they always assert, and do so falsely, that those who reject penal substitution theology are teaching Moral Influence Theory. He alludes to this with the phrase, "viewing it as merely a **dramatic expression of God's love.**" Moral Influence Theory teaches that Jesus died merely as a way to reveal God's love and win us back to trust but there was nothing objective, no reality-based action, just subjective influence on hearts and minds.

They always assert this because they do not understand God's law and not understanding God's law, having accepted the lie that God's law functions like Roman law, they falsely believe the objective aspects are legal in nature, taking punishment. If they would accepted Design Law, that God's laws are the laws life are built to operate upon then they would realize the truth of Scripture that Jesus not only came to reveal the truth that destroy the lies of Satan and win us back to trust, but He also had to eradicate the spirit of fear and selfishness from humanity and restore the spirit of love and trust into humanity.

And by *spirit* I mean the life giving principle that motivates to action and animates our being. When God breathed into Adam the breath, spirit, of life Adam became a living soul. That animating energy, spirit, was the spirit of love and trust. But when Adam and Eve sinned, they corrupted their spirits with fear and selfishness—this spirit is out of harmony with the very protocols, principles design, energy, life that God built all life to operate upon.

Adam and Eve would have died then if God didn't intercede and suspend the consequences by creating an artificial bubble of reality around Earth in which His natural life-giving glory is veiled. This Earth is currently shielded from the full glory of God that was bathing it before Adam and Eve sinned and which will bath it again in the new Earth as described in Revelation.

God gave Adam and Eve the ability to share their life—their spirit, their breath of life, their *pneuma* as the Greek renders it, and procreate children in their image. But having corrupted their spirits with fear and selfishness the only life, the only spirit, they had to share was one of fear and selfishness.

Thus the Bible teaches,

- 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, emphasis mine

Thus we are all born in sin conceived in iniquity (Psalm 51:5). We are not born legally guilty, we are born lethally terminal with a condition that without intervention and remedy causes suffering and death.

To save the species human this infection of fear and selfishness must be removed and the spirit of love and trust must be restored.

Understand, the spirit of fear and selfishness is an unclean spirit, or as some translations render it an evil spirit. The Greek translated evil in some versions and unclean in other versions is *akathartos*.

- “Those troubled by evil (*akathartos*) spirits (*pneuma*) were cured” (Luke 6:18 NIV84).

The when Jesus cleansed the lepers He told them:

- “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed (*katharizo*). Luke 17:14 NIV84.

Kathartos is the root for Cathartic = purge or cleanse

Akathartos = uncleansed or unclean, like amoral means without morals

So Adam and Eve corrupted their spirits, made them unclean with fear and selfishness. Someone had to come and clean things up, their spirit temples were defiled, unclean, and the sanctuary, the temple had to be cleansed.

Jesus came and became a real human being descended from Adam, through David, through Mary and through that human connection He partook of the breath of life, the spirit of life, breathed into Adam.

God breathed one breath of life into Adam—every other human being shares that same breath of life. Eve was taken from living tissue. She was not made from mud and did not have a separate breath of life breathed into her. And all of us are descended from that same life, that same spirit, which is unclean, infected with fear and selfishness.

Jesus, through Mary, partook of that very life. For it is the only way God could save the humanity He created in Eden. God could have formed a new human from more dirt and breathed into that body a new breath of life and created a new person but that person would not be related to Adam, would not be part of the creation God created in Eden, but a completely different creation.

The only way to save the humanity created in Eden was for Jesus to partake of that life and replace the spirit of fear and selfishness with a spirit of love and trust.

And because the Father to Jesus’ humanity was the Holy Spirit, Jesus had a holy, sinless, clean, pure, undefiled, uncontaminated spirit. In other words, through the Holy Spirit a sinless, pure, undefiled,

spirit was the animating energy that joined with the living ovum that Mary donated and that living ovum carried the unclean life, the unclean spirit of fear and selfishness.

Thus in the humanity of Jesus He partook of our humanity, was tempted in all points like we are, and we are tempted by our own evil desires or feelings that come from our spirit of fear and selfishness (James 1:14), but Jesus had another spirit, the spirit of love and trust and in Jesus these two antagonistic energies, motives, drives, spirits were at war.

And Jesus always chose to only act upon the spirit of love and trust. Despite being tempted by fear and selfishness, as evidenced by His human emotions tempting Him in Gethsemane, He said no to that corrupt spirit and yes only to the spirit of love and trust and at the cross He exterminated, destroyed, purged, cleansed humanity from the infection of fear and selfishness and rose in a restored, healed, cleansed, purified humanity and thus became the second Adam, and as Hebrews says,

- During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he **offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears** [this is Jesus in His humanity battling against the spirit of fear and selfishness He inherited from Mary. He rejects that fear, that anxiety, that distress, and chooses only the path of love and trust] to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he **learned obedience from what he suffered** [As a human He had to choose with His human brain what spirit He would act upon, that of love and trust or fear and selfishness. By choosing love and trust He crucified the spirit of fear and selfishness and that caused Him to suffer, but in doing so His humanity learned, wired into His brain, the principles of love and trust and developed a mature sinless character] and, once **made perfect**, [Wasn't He always perfect? He was always sinless because though being born with the inherited spirit of fear and selfishness, He always chose to identify with and act upon only the spirit of love and trust. So He was always sinless. But Bible perfection is maturity of character and character cannot be created, it must be developed by the freewill choices of the individual. Jesus came, picked up humanity damaged by the infection of fear and selfishness and was tempted in all points like we are, but chose always only the spirit of love and trust and thus He learned, He developed a pure, holy, mature, sinless human character and purged, cleansed, humanity by destroying the infection of fear and selfishness at the cross. And then He became our source of salvation because He had achieved the Remedy to our terminal fear and selfishness sin-sick state] he **became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him** [He only became the source of our salvation by completing the mission of curing the condition] and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek. [The high priest who ministers the remedy into the hearts and minds of all who trust Him. Hebrews 5:7-10 NIV84, emphasis mine.

And none of this is penal-legal, it is actual, it is objective, it is what the reality of our condition requires in order to purge sinfulness from the species and restore holiness.

Consider this commentary from the book *The Desire of Ages*

- The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. [Why does the law require this? For the same reason the law of respiration requires that we breathe. It is the law of love that life is built upon. Life does not exist outside of the protocols of God’s design laws.] He cannot meet the claims of God’s holy law. [We cannot produce a sinless spirit of love and trust and develop a sinless mature character] But Christ, coming to the earth as man, [Jesus became a real human descended from Adam. He partook of our nature] lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. [He is the new head of humanity. The second Adam. The species human was saved, cleansed, redeemed, restored to perfection, made holy, justified, made right, put right in the person of Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus the species human lives eternally—even if no other individual human were saved. But praise God, what Jesus did not only saved the species in His own personhood, but simultaneously provides the remedy, the cure, the means for every individual to be redeemed, to be healed, saved, cleansed, restored to righteousness.] Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. [Not through a legal payment.] More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, [This is real salvation, it is healing, restoring, cleansing, renewing, recreating, and there is nothing penal legal going.] a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can “be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Romans 3:26. Desire of Ages p. 762, emphasis mine.

Now compare directly, back to back, the two paragraphs, one from Clifford Goldstein published in the *Review* and this one from EGW, both are explaining how God can be just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus and quote that verse from Romans 3:26 to support their position:

- I’ve always been baffled by those among us who deny the **penal substitutionary** aspect of Christ’s death, viewing it as merely a **dramatic expression of God’s love**, as opposed to a **legal payment for sin**. For them, penal substitutionary atonement goes like this: you break God’s law (sin), you face God’s wrath (death). Period. However, 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.** Clifford Goldstein, from Cliff’s Edge *Adventist Review*, December 8, 2023 article Law, Freedom, Love emphasis mine; https://adventistreview.org/cliffs-edge/law-freedom-love/?fbclid=IwAR3wAGrpMo-HQQi2KFAIHxfD47q5Aam6lZ6yJTNk-5FH7QZr66b8h_3CqX0
- The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God’s holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the

attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can “be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Romans 3:26. Desire of Ages p. 762, emphasis mine

Do you see the infection of Roman imposed law into our church and theology? The penal legal theory of atonement is a lie built on a lie about God’s law and we cannot finish the work of sharing the final message of mercy, the message of the three angels as long as we are misrepresenting God as the source of pain, suffering, and death. We must return to worshiping God as Creator and this is only done when we understand that His laws are design laws and not imposed rules.

So we read from the Bible about God’s justice, which is based on design law, and it is always about delivering the oppressed not punishing the oppressor. Human justice is about punishing the wrongdoer, God’s justice is about healing and restoration by eliminating the cause of injustice, eliminating the spirit of fear and selfishness.

- Defend the poor and fatherless; **Do justice to the afflicted and needy.** Psalms 82:3
- Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil and learn to do right. **See that justice is done — help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows.** Isaiah 1:16-17 GNT
- **The Lord longs to be gracious** to you; he rises to show you **compassion.** **The Lord is a God of justice.** Isaiah 30:18 NIV
- This is what the Lord says to the dynasty of David: ‘Give **justice** each morning to the people you judge! **Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors.**’ Jeremiah 21:12 NLT
- Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will **freely pardon.** “**For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,**” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are **my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.**” Isaiah 55:7-9
- Describing the justice system of the OT, Ben Carson writes: “They focused on reparation to the victim rather than punishment or fines levied on the perpetrator...” Ben Carson *America the Beautiful*: Zondervan, 2012, p. 29.
- “**We are not** to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. **The sinner brings the punishment upon himself.** His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. **Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character,** and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, **cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.**” E.G. White, 1890’s, *1 Selected Messages*, p. 235

Read the second paragraph,

- These texts explicitly declare that God loves justice (Ps. 33:5, Isa. 61:8). In Scripture, the ideas of love and justice are inextricably linked. God’s love and God’s righteousness go together, and He is deeply concerned **that righteousness and justice be done in this world**. *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2025*, God’s Love and Justice p. 45, emphasis mine.

What do you think of this paragraph?

Why do you think they wrote, “righteousness and justice be done”? Are they suggesting these are two separate attributes?

Do you hear righteousness and justice the same or differently? In God are they different? Is God righteous and also just, or is God’s righteousness actually justice?

Consider Romans 3:25-26:

- God presented him as a **sacrifice of atonement**, through faith in his blood. He did this to **demonstrate his justice**, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to **demonstrate his justice** at the present time, so as to be **just** and the one who **justifies** those who have faith in Jesus. Romans 3:25, 26 NIV84, emphasis mine

Now compare this to the GNT:

- God offered him, so that by his **blood [margin sacrificial death]** he should become the **means by which people’s sins are forgiven** through their faith in him. God did this in order to **demonstrate that he is righteous**. In the past he was patient and overlooked people’s sins; but in the present time he deals with their sins, in order to **demonstrate his righteousness**. In this way God shows that he **himself is righteous** and that he **puts right** everyone who believes in Jesus. Romans 3:25, 26 GNT, emphasis mine

These two versions are translated from the same Greek—do they read the same? Do you hear them the same?

Both are linguistically honest for the word translated justice and righteousness is the exact same Greek word and can be translated to either English word. Because to do the just thing is to do the right thing and to be right is to be righteous and righteousness is the outworking or doing with is right or just and thus it is justice.

But do we hear these words, *Justice* and *Righteousness*, the same? No, Justice connotes a legal context, implies punishment, whereas righteousness connotes character qualities and connotes restoration and healing.

Those who believe God's law functions like human law will translate the Greek with preference to *Justice* whereas those who prefer God's character of love and design law will translate it as *Righteousness*.

Here is my paraphrase from the Remedy, which is based on Design Law understanding:

- God presented Jesus as **the way and the means of restoration**. Now, through the trust established by the evidence of God's character revealed when Christ died, we may partake of the Remedy procured by Christ. God did this to **demonstrate that he is right and good** — because in his forbearance he suspended, for a time, the ultimate consequence of us being out of harmony with his design for life — yet he has been falsely accused of being unfair. He did it to **demonstrate at the present time how right and good he is**, so that he would also be seen as being **right** when he **heals those who trust in Jesus**. Romans 3:25, 26 REM, emphasis mine.

MONDAY

The lesson cites twice Psalm 92:15, which reads:

- This shows that the LORD is just, that there is no wrong in my protector. Psalm 92:15 GNT.

But what shows that the Lord is just? We have to read the previous verses, which were not referenced. But let's look at those verses:

I will read it from the Remedy, but you can read it in any version and this is what it says, but perhaps not quite as clearly:

- It is good to give thanks to the Lord and sing praise to your character of love, O Creator God, to live out your love in the morning and your never-changing truth in the evening, to have hearts in perfect harmony with you, like the music of the strings and the melody of the harp. All your works, O Lord, fill me with happiness; I sing for joy at the universe you have created. How magnificent are all your works, O Lord, how infinite are your thoughts! Psalm 92:1-5 REM
- Wicked and brutal people do not know, the foolish do not realize, that though the selfish may spring up like grass and evildoers may attain fame and fortune—having rejected the remedy and embraced selfishness, they will die eternally. But you, O Creator God, will be exalted in the hearts of the righteous forever. Unavoidably, your enemies, O Lord, unavoidably, your enemies—those who oppose truth and love—will perish; all the persistently selfish will be severed from you, the source of life. You have given me life and strength like that of a wild ox; the pure oil of your Spirit you have poured upon me. I see clearly the terminal condition of those who oppose me; I understand the selfish motives of those who rise up against me. Psalm 92:6-11 REM

- Those with hearts healed to love will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow mighty in godliness like the cedars of Lebanon; rooted in God's kingdom of love and truth, they will live in the dwelling place of our God. Though old, they stay healthy and bear much fruit; they retain their vitality and remain vibrant, proclaiming, "The Lord is perfect and righteous; he is my source of life, health and happiness, and there is nothing evil in him." Psalm 92:12-15
REM

What law is in operation in this Psalm? And what do the wicked not know? And how is it God's justice is done?

The lesson asks the following at the bottom of the page,

- Why does such a good God allow for so much of the evil that is in this world? *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2025, God's Love and Justice p. 46.*

Can evil, rebellion, sin, be eradicated by the use of might and power? If it could, why didn't God use might and power in the beginning?

Can God get love, trust, loyalty and devotion by using might and power?

What is the only way for God to get loving, loyal, understanding friends? By truth, love, and freedom.

And this is why the Sabbath is so important, why it is such a wonderful gift God has given to humans. God created the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy, sanctified, when *He* rested; when God refused to use power to punish Satan and his followers; when God refused to force compliance; when God refused to use the justice of creatures, the justice of fallen sinful beings, but instead practiced and enshrined the law and justice of God—truth, love, and freedom. God presented the truth, built the law of love into the operations of all life, and then refused to use power to force His way but rested, stopped using power, and enshrined this method, this living law of love and liberty into the weekly Sabbath, which is built into time and cannot be removed from the operations of reality.

And He gives this to us not as a rule, not as an imposed law that we are required to keep or else we get into legal trouble and face inflicted punishment—that idea is Satan's lie intended to corrupt minds and cheat people from the blessing of the Sabbath. No, God gave humanity the Sabbath as a gift, it was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. It is a gift of truth, of evidence, of reality, of God's living law built into time, and those who Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy are only able to do so as they surrender to God, internalize and embrace the living law of God and have the new heart and right spirit of God, a holy spirit of truth, love, and freedom written into their identity and they practice God's law in how they live. They always leave others free, never coerce conscience, never use imperial law to seek to force people to comply.

Thus, evil exists in the world because God can only win and make the universe secure by truth, presented in love, while leaving others free. People must freely choose what spirit they prefer and they will develop their character in harmony with the spirit they prefer. Will they choose the spirit of love

and trust, or fear and selfishness. This is the ultimate question and the Sabbath is a sign post, a marker, a memorial, a weekly event that reveals the Spirit of truth and love and gives us an opportunity to say no to the spirit of fear and selfishness and rest in trust with God knowing that God will not use His power to coerce, to inflict punishment, but leaves all beings free. And some use their freedom to hurt others and ultimately destroy themselves.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph,

- In Malachi 3:6, God declares, “ ‘I am the Lord, I do not change’ ” (NKJV). While some read this part of the verse and take it to mean that God does not change in any way whatsoever, the rest of the verse and its immediate context shows that the changelessness of God affirmed here is God’s moral changelessness. The rest of the verse indicates that God may change relationally, for God says: “ ‘Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.’ ” And in the very next verse, God proclaims to His people, “ ‘Return to Me, and I will return to you’ ” (Mal. 3:7, NKJV). *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2025*, God’s Love and Justice p. 47.

I agree with the lesson that when the Bible speaks of God being changeless, being the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow it is speaking of His character, His methods, principles, that God is love and God is truth and God is good, righteous, faithful, trustworthy, and moral and this never changes.

But can anyone think of one obvious and reality-based change that God has experienced? Did God experience a change when Jesus became human? Not a change in character, morality, but a change in being. Jesus became a real physical human being, and Jesus gave up some of His divine abilities to achieve this, such as omnipresence, the ability to be everywhere at once. This is why He told His disciples that He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who would not speak on His own but only what He hears. The Holy Spirit is Jesus’s representative on Earth and is working in the hearts and minds of people to bring the pleas and love of Jesus to people. It is Jesus standing at the door of hearts knocking through His representative the Holy Spirit.

So isn’t this a change that occurred in their being because there was no change in their character?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph,

- Can God “repent”? If so, what would that mean? We have seen that God’s character never changes. However, some biblical texts speak of God as “repenting” or “relenting.” At least for humans, repentance involves recognition that one has done something wrong. How, then, can

some biblical passages depict God as “repenting”? *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2025*, God’s Love and Justice p. 48.

Genesis 6:6

- And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. Genesis 6:6 KJV

But all modern versions render it differently:

- And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. Genesis 6:6 NKJV
- The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. Genesis 6:6 NIV84
- The LORD regretted that he had made humankind on the earth, and he was highly offended. Genesis 6:6 NET
- The Lord grieved at their suffering, and his heart ached over humanity’s terminal condition. He also grieved at the action his love must take in order to slow the spread of sin and to keep open the avenue for the Messiah to come and save the human species. Genesis 6:6 REM

What about God relenting from what He said He would do? What does this say about God?

What does love that seeks to heal and restore do with people who are fickle, unreliable, inconsistent, follow the prescription for a while but then go back into destructive living?

Does a loving person have to adapt, bring a variety of different interventions to bear that are designed to influence people to choose for themselves the path of life and reject the path of death?

So does God change, or because God’s character of love, goodness, faithfulness, truth never changes He constantly changes His interventions, approach, actions to meet the needs of His sick children?

But what might children think if they see one child getting one consequence and another child getting a different consequence? Might children think God is unfair?

Might an older brother who stayed and worked hard on the farm think it is unfair for a younger brother who left home for the party lifestyle to get a celebration and restoration when he finally comes home?

Why would the older brother think this is unfair? Because he focuses on imposed law, and rule-keeping is supposed to be rewarded, but rule-breaking, disobedience, disrespect, is supposed to be punished. The younger brother disrespected the father, didn’t obey the father’s wishes, and therefore, according to the imposed law view, he deserved punishment.

But the design law reality is that the younger brother had finally given up his disease, rejected sickness, and came home to receive the remedy, the cure, to be healed. How happy all mature people should be when a sick person accepts healing, when a sinner accepts Jesus.

THURSDAY

Read the second paragraph,

- Matthew 5 describes God's love as perfect love. Imperfect love is the love that loves only those who love you. But God loves even those who hate Him, even those who position themselves as His enemies. His love is complete and, therefore, perfect. *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2025*, God's Love and Justice p. 49.

God loves His enemies, those who reject Him. Does that mean God loves Satan? Does God love the people who reject Him and are eternally lost?

In His heart, yes, God's attitude is one of love toward those who reject Him. But functionally His love cannot enter them because they close their hearts and reject Him, thus He cannot in function love them, connect to them in love because they close their hearts and minds to Him.

And what about God's justice do to those He loves but who reject Him?

How does love function in the end with the destruction of the wicked?

Does the law lens one uses impact the answer?

Very simply, if you have an adult child that you love and who is choosing to break the laws of health, say they have an addiction and they refuse rehab, refuse all pleas from you, and the envoys, intercessors, representatives that you send, and they have suffered various consequences, their body is getting sicker, but no matter what you try to do to save them, they refuse treatment, they choose their addiction—what is the only loving action you can take? What is the only just action you can take?

When we understand God's laws are the laws that life is built upon, the only loving action God can take is to let those who prefer sin and refuse to repent go, and that is also the only just action God can take. And when the source of life let's go, what is the outcome? Death, separation from God results in death. God does not have to use power to inflict death, God must use, and has been using, power to hold death at bay and give people the opportunity for repentance.

EGW describes it beautifully in *The Great Controversy*:

- God has given to men a **declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin.** [what do you think that declaration is?] "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering

and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." [What do you hear? What is His method? Why will God not clear the guilty? What law lens do you see it through, imposed or design?] Exodus 34:6, 7. "All the wicked will He destroy." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Psalm 145:20; 37:38. **The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.** (The Great Controversy 541.2) [What does this mean? Do you hear retributive justice and think using power to inflict harm, pain, punishment? This would be human law, imposed law, Satan's view. So, let's keep reading and see how this author applies these words to God, what law is applied in bringing about this retributive justice, how it works exactly.]

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. [If this is true, can God then be the source of inflicted suffering, punishment and death? If you understand how reality works, you recognize that the human imposed law understanding of retributive justice with inflicted pain and death is incompatible with this very next statement. It is impossible to get anything other than slavish obedience from inflicted punishment; inflicted punishments do force the will, and it is impossible to get love and trust by threatening to kill people who do not love and trust you. Thus, immediately this author is calling every person who is still capable of thinking for themselves, every person who is not blinded by the lies of Romanism and the imposed law system, to stop, think, and inquire—how can God apply retributive justice and at the same time not be forcing people? And that is only possible when we understand design law.] **He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence.** [What reason would God have us obey? Not fear of punishment, but appreciation of His character of love, which cannot exist if God is the source of inflicted punishment. It is Satan's view that God must punish sin because it undermines love. DA761] And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. (The Great Controversy 541.3)

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. [What are the principles of God's character? Do these principles coerce, compel, or torture?] Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** [Does love seek to inflict pain and suffering to torture and punish? But notice what is describe next as love for our enemies] **God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited.** [What is justice? Doing what is just or right, and what determines what is actually just or right? The law—so it comes back to how one understands God's law functions. Those who accept the Roman lie that God's law is like human law believe the lie that God's execution of justice is the infliction from God of pain and death. But, when we return to worshipping the Creator and realize His laws are design laws,

such as the law of love, liberty, worship and more, we realize that God uses power to heal, to save, and when people refuse Him, then God uses power to minimize pain, minimize suffer, and to stop the torment of those who won't allow Him to heal them. Thus, God's justice is like the parent whose child is in liver failure and refuses to be healed, the parent does not seek to prolong and protract the suffering, but allows the suffering to end. Notice what is described next.] **He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character.** [Why can't God make them happy? Because they refuse to participate in His methods, they refuse to allow Him to heal them. Love cannot be forced and thus God cannot use might and power to make them happy.] He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. [How do they make void His law? By replacing it with a false law—imposed law. Think how sad it will be for those legal Sabbath keepers who wouldn't enter Pilates house while they sought to kill Jesus. Law keepers, but the wrong law, how many today are in the same situation?] While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; **but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided.** [Who determines their destiny? Is it a heavenly judge making a legal ruling in a heavenly court, or the decision that of the sinner who permanently hardens their heart to the work of the Holy Spirit?] **Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will?** [These are rhetorical questions, meaning that God will not do this, God has the power to do this, to artificially keep people alive and chain them to His side. But He won't use power in this way, why? Because it would inflict torture and pain and God is the source of healing and life. Note what comes next...] (The Great Controversy 541.4)

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. [Why are they not prepared? Is it that they don't have the right blood, don't have the right legal payment, don't have the right robe to hide behind so the Father won't see their true self? Or is it that they don't have the right heart, mind, character, within them?] **Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters.** [How did it become fixed? Who fixed it there? If God "judges" their characters as fixed in sin and beyond saving, does that mean God's judgment is what makes their characters fixed in sin or is God's judgment simply the accurate diagnosis of what they have chosen to do to themselves?] Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? (The Great Controversy 542.1)

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,— every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,—could those whose hearts are filled with

hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; [Why not? Because God uses divine power to prevent them, to torture them, to inflict harm upon them, or is their condition incompatible with God's design for life?] years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven;** but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. [Why are they unfit? Is it that they don't have the right legal payment in record books, or is it something actually incompatible with life within them? Notice why they are not fit] Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. [This is huge, what do they experience as torture? Purity, holiness and peace! Is this God using His power to cause pain, to inflict suffering, is there something coming out from God other than goodness, mercy, love and truth? It is their condition which experiences goodness as pain, purity as torment, holiness as suffering. The torture happens because of sin in them, not as an infliction from God!] They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction,** that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. **[What do the wicked actually want? Separation from God! Why do they want it? To be at peace, to stop their suffering; So, in this situation what is the just action for God to take, what is the merciful action for God to take? Is there a difference between justice and mercy? Notice the next sentences] The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** (The Great Controversy 542.2)

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable. [This is design law, this is justice and mercy, and justice and mercy rightly understood is always an expression of God's character of love and does the same thing] (The Great Controversy 543.1)