

2025 Allusions, Images, Symbols: Lesson 12

Precursors

by Tim Jennings (announcement last page)

SABBATH

Read memory verse:

- 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.

Where did the spirit of fear come from if not from God? It is the infection to our spirit that sin brings. When Adam and Eve believed the lies about God and broke trust with God they ran and hid because they were afraid.

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust inciting fear and selfishness.

Thus, the sin problem at its root is an infection of our spirits with fear and selfishness.

The spirit is the animating energy, the breath of life, it is what motivates us to action.

The following is an excerpt from my book *The God Shaped Brain*, that describes some of the impact of fear:

- *Fear impairs our judgment, paralyzes our reason, and leads us down the path of selfishness. Fear comes in many sizes and shapes. At one end of the fear spectrum is the megalomaniac – the type of fear demonstrated by Hitler, Stalin, Castro, and other despots. Their rise to power was fueled by fear; fear of the Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, Capitalists, Christians and freedom itself. Such thugs of history were consumed with fear, but rather than eradicate it, they embraced it, joined their hearts to it, and became one with it. Fear became their weapon against society, splitting, dividing, conquering, and destroying. These ambassadors of evil, their hearts and minds so shaped by anti-love, created mangled societies battered by fear. And history is clear. Where fear abounds, death quickly follows.*

On the other end of the spectrum are the human “mice.” Afraid of rejection, fearful of embarrassment, terrified of criticism they abase themselves into non-thinking doormats walked on by the entire world. They never say no, never stand up, and never set boundaries because they are controlled by fear of what others might say and how others might respond or think.

In between these two extremes exists all manner of fear-ridden apparitions morphing insecurity into their own unique survival mechanism – the playground bully, the proud, arrogant, racist, bigot, and sexist. Here you’ll also find the alcoholic, drug addict, sex-addict,

and shopaholic; the religionist, cultist, and separatist; the philanderer, the liar, the cheater and fraud – all riddled with fear, each seeking some way to protect self, promote self, or advance self. But rather than surviving, rather than healing, rather than growing, all are slowly dying and destroying others in the process. Life, health and happiness are only found where love flows free. And love only flows free where the truth about God is known! The God Shaped Brain: How Changing Your View of God Transforms Your Life p. 50.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and sound mind! The only power to free us from fear is truth and love, the truth about God that wins us to trust and the love we freely receive from Him when we receive the new life, the new Spirit, the new animating energy, motivating compelling power of love that comes only from receiving Jesus Christ, not receiving His legal payment, but receiving His life such that it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me. It is the new life, the new spirit of love that enables us and empower us to overcome fear and live victoriously in trust.

SUNDAY

The lesson focuses on Daniel 2, which is the vision/prophecy of the multi-metal man. This is well known and the Bible explains it clearly and thus we won't spend a lot of time on it.

- Head of gold = Babylon
- Chest of Silver = Medio-Persia
- Belly of Brass = Greece
- Legs of Iron = Rome
- Feet of iron and clay = the nations after the fall of Rome never uniting fully again
- Rock cut out without human hands that destroys the statue and rises to a new kingdom is Jesus and His eternal kingdom

This gives a general and large overview of the nations from Daniel's day until the second coming and history has demonstrated that this vision was accurate. This prophecy and others gives us great confidence in the Bible and God and His foreknowledge. Because only one who knows the future could so accurately predict these events thousands of years before they occurred.

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on Nebuchadnezzar's production of a statue of solid gold and the demand that all worship it and those who do not do so will be thrown into the fiery furnace; and Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego's faithfulness to God.

The lesson points out that the king produced the golden idol in defiance of God because he was motivated by selfishness rather than love and trust. And selfishness is the drive of survival of the fittest actions, self-preservation, self-advancement. Thus, Nebuchadnezzar rather than trusting God and

accepting the vision, defies God and pursues a course designed to advance himself, his kingdom, his legacy.

But what makes this truly evil is not merely that the king didn't want to follow God personally (yes that was sinful), but the greater evil is his use of power, position, authority to coerce the consciences of others. He used propaganda to promote a lie and used the might of the state to threaten not just freedom but life itself. All designed to coerce people into accepting his narrative, his view, his false perspective, his fantasy, his denial of reality.

Do we see anything like this being repeated throughout human history where others have taken similar actions?

The Dark Ages church used its power and position to promote propaganda, false narratives, restrict liberties, silence dissenters, fine, imprison, and execute—coerce consciences—it was the methods of lies, fear, selfishness, opposing truth, love, and liberty.

Every Communist and Nazi regimes throughout history have done and continue to do the exact same thing.

And of course, in our own life experience during COVID we experienced this, fear-induced propaganda, false narrative, silencing truth-speakers, deplatforming, fines, loss of jobs, restrictions of liberty, coercion of conscience.

We see it with the transgender lie, the propaganda and false narrative. Not merely the lies that there is no male and female or that men can become women and vice versa, but the lies that those suffering with gender confusion experience worsening mental health and higher suicide risk if gender reassignment is not done, when the exact opposite is true. The hormones given and bodily mutilations to reassign gender increase mental health problems and suicide rates.

I am not focusing on individuals who choose for themselves to deny reality and attempt to live in fantasy, the problem I am focusing upon is the one revealed by Nebuchadnezzar—not his personal rejection of the truth, but the use of power, position, and the methods of Satan to seek to force their false narrative upon others thus coercing consciences and ruining as many minds as they can.

Evil doers in our society today use the methods of the evil one, they present a false narrative that denies reality, use propaganda and coercive pressures on those who will not comply with their demands. Corporations present brainwashing propaganda as in-service and sensitivity training. If employees don't want to take it, they get fired.

If people don't use the preferred pronouns, they get fired, intimidated, attacked; if people don't want their little girls sharing bathrooms with boys, they get called names and threatened, and sometimes arrested.

And when godly people who love other people ask questions seeking godly solutions to bring healing to hearts and minds of everyone, especially these hurting, vulnerable, and confused individuals, what happens? They are silenced, publications are rejected, platforms removed, fired from jobs, and the radical godless show up with violent protests and threaten to kill those who stand for truth, just like what happened to Shadrack, Meshak, and Abednego.

I personally know professionals who have given expert medical and psychological testimony in official forums about the harm that the transgender lies and policies cause who have been attacked, their licenses threatened, they have been followed and threatened by mobs, and have had their lives threatened.

- We saw the exact same methodology with BLM; defund the police; climate change green movement.

Do we recognize the idols that the pagans, the godless, are setting up before us in society today and demanding that we bow down to lest we be cast into the fiery furnace of their making? Do we recognize the very same methods of fear-based survival of Satan's kingdom are at work in these movements? Are we like the three worthies on the plain of Dura so settled into the truth about God and His design law methods that we recognize these lies and satanic methods and choose to stand firm for truth and say no to the lies, we won't bow to this intimidation of our hearts, minds, and consciences? Do we, like the three worthies, trust God enough to be thrown into the furnace of criticism and attack?

And please don't send me emails about how I am being political and choosing one political party over another—if you think that you have missed my point. It is not about political party, but about the methods being employed. If someone uses these evil methods to promote conversion to Jesus, like the Dark Ages church claimed it was doing, I would condemn them for it. Because it is the methods that are destructive, the fear-based, denial of objective reality, plied with coercion of consciences designed to infect minds, undermine individuality, brainwash, and ultimately destroy the image of God in people that we must recognize and not surrender to.

How did the three worthies overcome the pressure to bow to the idol? Through faith or trust in God.

The Bible says:

- “The just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17 NKJV

The just are those, who having been reborn with a spirit of love and trust in God, choose to do what is right or just in governance of self and then they live by faith, by trusting God with how things turn out.

This is exactly what the three worthies did—they had hearts already renewed in love and trust to God, and therefore when the crisis came they knew what the right or just action in governance of self was. And they chose in governance of themselves to take the right or just action, which was not to bow.

But they had no control over how it would turn out thus they lived by faith, they lived by trusting God with how it would turn out. Notice what they say to the king when he gives them a second chance to bow:

- If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. **But even if he does not**, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” Daniel 3:17, 18 NIV84, emphasis mine.

They knew what God could do, but they did not know what God would do. They did not do the right thing in governance of self because they had been told by God that He would protect them from the fire; they did the right thing because it was the right thing and they trusted God with their lives, with how it turned out.

Stephen did the same thing. He spoke the truth in front of the Jewish leadership. He did the right thing in governance of himself as he was moved by the Holy Spirit and he trusted God with his life—and in that case God did not intervene to protect and Stephen was stoned. And as a result of that death, when heaven is opened to Stephen and he sees Jesus’ face and asks God to forgive his murderers, Saul is convicted and ultimately converted and writes much of the New Testament. And the witness of Stephen and Paul impact the lives of billions.

What do you think Stephen would say, if when we get to heaven we were to ask him, “Are you disappointed that God didn’t intervene to save you like He did the three worthies?”

I think he will smile and happily say, “Of course not. I trusted Jesus with my life. Jesus surrendered and sacrificed everything to save me. I am so happy that I could speak the truth and stand for God because I loved those people and want them to know the joy and love and happiness that comes only from reconciliation with God. And God knew that my death at that moment would have the greatest impact for good, for reaching more people for His kingdom than if I would have given a thousand more sermons. So, no I am not disappointed, because I trust Jesus fully.”

What prepared the three worthies to stand faithful under the threat of death?

Wasn’t it their earlier trials when they stood faithful over their dietary choices, for the same reason—because they did not want to give any honor or credit to the false gods of Babylon, because they wanted to bring glory to God? And having chosen then to do what was right in governance of self and trust God with the outcome, and seeing the blessings, the positive outcome of not only being healthier and wiser than all the others and experience greater peace with God, but also experiencing the outcome, the elevation to positions of authority, how God worked in that case, their faith grew stronger.

Thus Jesus said,

- “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.” Luke 16:10 NIV84

This is about character, and character is formed by the choices we make, the methods we prefer and practice, and our characters become solidified under pressure. Do we lie, cheat, connive, manipulate, stay quiet, go along to get along, compromise, to ensure we don’t come under scrutiny, to avoid rejection, conflict, or loss? Do we solidify into our characters the principles of fear and me-first survival motivations or the principles of truth, love, and trust, willing to sacrifice self to stand for what is right?

This is exactly why I point out the corrupt methods used in society today—because those methods are constantly putting people in positions designed to get them to compromise their principles on small things, to get them to be comfortable with dishonesty, with surrendering their individuality and autonomy to others, to go along to get along, so that when the larger things come, billions will not only go along with the beast, the liar, the fraud, the evil methods of coercion, they will think what they are doing right—after all they will argue, we are only trying to save lives.

This world is rapidly heading for the final events that lead to Jesus’ return, and the methods of imperialism, governmental control and coercion of conscience are going to come around again and the deception, the premise, the propaganda, the narrative, the reason to bow, to go along, to compromise principle will be so compelling that the entire world other than the very elect will go along.

TUESDAY

And TUESDAY’s lesson transitions from the image set up by Nebuchadnezzar to the image of the beast set up in Revelation 13.

If you haven’t read our magazine [Unmasking the Beasts of Revelation 13 & 17](#) I encourage you to do so as I go into great detail with decoding of the Bible symbols unpacking and unmasking the beasts so you can see how things are unfolding and will continue to unfold.

But in overview how the events in Daniel are related to Revelation.

Babylon was a real nation that took the people of God physically captive and then used various pressures, inducements and promises of success initially, but later coercion in an attempt to replace Yahweh worship with the worship of false gods. Babylon destroyed the wall around the temple, raided the temple in Jerusalem and took the people captive. Eventually, the captivity came to an end and God called the people to leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall and the temple returning to worshipping the true creator God.

In Revelation, Babylon is symbolic of the power that takes the people of God captive. This power uses inducements, various promises, but eventually coercive pressure to force false worship. This system defiles the spirit temple and takes the people captive in heart, mind, method, and motive; and at this

time in history the people of God, who have been captive in Babylon are called to leave Babylon and restore the protective wall thereby returning to the worship of our Creator God of love. Let's make this very plain and clear:

Babylon, in the Bible story arc, of all the nations that interacted with Israel, is the first nation to make a legal code, an imposed law system, the Code of Hammurabi. Babylon took the people captive physically and then used imposed laws, like bow down to the golden idol or be thrown in the fiery furnace, to promote their beliefs. Even after the deliverance of the three worthies from the fiery furnace and Nebuchadnezzar recognizes Yahweh as the true God of heaven, what method does he use?

- “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore **I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble**, for no other god can save in this way.” Daniel 3:28-29 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Babylon, therefore, rightly represents the ungodly powers that invade, break down the protect wall, desecrate the temple of God, and take the people captive. But this is a spiritual, not physical, war, so we need to translate these object lessons into the reality transpiring today.

- The temple in Jerusalem represents the spirit temple, the temple where God writes His law, our hearts and minds, where Jesus said His sacrificial blood was to be applied, “unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no part with me.” We are a temple for the indwelling Holy Spirit. And our hearts and minds have been damaged by sin, but more than this, our beliefs about God have been invaded, infected, distorted, by the imposed law lies of Babylon, which became Rome, imperial law with external law enforcement.
- The wall of protection that protects the temple, our hearts and minds, is the law of God. And God's law is a living law, it is the design law of God upon which life is built to operate—the laws of truth, love, liberty, worship, and many more.
- This wall was broken down when the beastly power replaced the truth that God's laws are design laws with the lie that God's laws function no differently than human laws, imposed rules, Roman imperial law and the church Romanized, teaching that God's laws are like Rome's and require the law-giver to use power to inflict punishment upon rule breakers.
- That lie, when believed, changes our understanding of who God is, what the sin problem is, what the solution is, and actively undermines our ability to love and trust God, for in that model is He the source of inflicted torture and death as punishment for sin. Then through the law of worship, by beholding we are changed, our hearts and minds are corrupted with more fear and selfishness, leading to the penal legal and coercive methods of the Dark Ages church, all of which contaminates, defiles, corrupts the Spirit temple—the abomination that brings desolation!
- This power, also described as the little horn power, wars against the saints and is defeating them until judgment is given to the saints, until the saints are enabled to judge truly, accurately,

that God is not like this. That God's laws are not like human laws, and God does not function like a Roman Caesar. When the truth about God, which is all predicated upon the truth that His laws are design laws, is restored into our hearts and minds, then we are empowered to flee Babylon, flee the false systems of imperialism, coercions of conscience, and return to worshiping God as Creator.

- Then, when we are restored to trust and open the heart the Holy Spirit brings the blood (life) of Christ and cleanses us from all sin, renewing us with a new animating energy, a new motive to action, a new governing power—in other words a new law. The law of sin and death, the law of fear and selfishness, is replaced with the living law of truth, love, trust and freedom—which is the pure Spirit of God. The Spirit temple is being cleansed and we repair the breach in the wall, we embrace and teach the truth about God's design laws and reject the Roman infection of imposed law and our hearts and minds are again protected from the invasion of this worldly philosophy and evil system.
- And then as events unfold before, and threats to our mortal lives are made, and the powers of this world use all types of evil methods—propaganda, restrictions of liberties, economic pressure, coercion of conscience—all focused on a righteous and good goal of saving lives or saving the planet or feeding the hungry or promoting equality of all people, we will recognize the false system. We will not bow, will not give our hearts, minds, votes, money, resources, support to advancing these methods. We will, like the three worthies, stand for truth, stand for what is right, and trust God with how things turn out. As Revelation says about those who are ready to be translated without seeing death:
- They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Revelation 12:11 NIV84.

The blood of the Lamb is symbolic of the life of Jesus, the animating spirit, life, energy of Christ, which is love and trust based on truth, which is the word of their testimony. These are they who give the testimony of Jesus—the same testimony Jesus gave about His Father—that Jesus and the Father are one. These people know the Father is not like Satan alleges, that the Father is exactly like Jesus and doesn't need something done to Him to get Him to forgive and be gracious. These people have been reborn with a spirit of love and trust and thus they are no longer controlled by fear and selfishness, thus they do not shrink back and compromise with their employer, their family, their state, to protect themselves. They do not shrink even from death threats, they trust God with everything—their fame, their name, reputation, professional license, property, fortune, family, and lives.

THURSDAY

The lesson focuses on the Mark of the Beast

- The book of Revelation is clear: we either worship the Creator or the beast and its image. And because the seventh-day Sabbath is the foundational sign—going back to Eden itself (see Gen. 2:1–3)—of God as Creator, it should not be surprising that, in an issue about worshiping the

Creator, the Sabbath would be central. Also, it is no coincidence that the beast power is the same power that claims to have changed the Sabbath commandment from the biblical day to Sunday, which has no sanction in the Bible. With this background in mind, the idea of Sabbath and Sunday being involved in the issue of worship—again, either the Creator (see Rev. 14:6, 7) or the beast—makes good sense. And we have in the New Testament a precursor to the issue of the seventh-day Sabbath versus human law. *Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2025*, Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy, p. 101.

Let's read the last two paragraphs,

- In Matthew 12, after Jesus healed on the Sabbath the man with a withered hand (Matt. 12:9–13), how did the religious leaders respond? “But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus” (Matt. 12:14, NIV). Death because of the seventh-day Sabbath? In John 5:1–16, after another miraculous healing on the seventh day, the leaders “persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath” (John 5:16, NKJV).

Death because of human tradition (nothing in the Bible forbade healing on Sabbath, just as nothing in the Bible has put Sunday in place of Sabbath) versus the seventh-day Sabbath? Though the specific issue here with Jesus isn't the same as in final events, it's close enough: human law versus God's, and, in both, the contested law centers on the biblical Sabbath. *Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2025*, Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy, p. 101.

The lesson really does a good job here of describing the issue about the Sabbath and the mark of the beast at the end of time, what do you hear being described here and how is the Sabbath involved?

What was Jesus being called out for? Was it because of the wrong day of the week He was worshipping upon? No, it was for breaking their made up human rules.

What was Jesus doing on Sabbath? Healing, which is an outworking of what type of law? Design law, restoring people to harmony with the laws of health, the laws upon which the Creator built life to operate. But the legalistic leaders did not worship a god whose laws were design laws, they worshiped an imperial dictator who made up rules and inflicted punishment for rule-breaking. Thus, they became like that false god they worshiped, and made up more rules and when Jesus was seen to be breaking their rules, justice, in their beastly way of seeing things, required infliction of punishment, thus they wanted to kill Jesus.

The lesson rightly points out in the last paragraph,

- Though the specific issue here with Jesus isn't the same as in final events, it's close enough: **human law versus God's**, and, in both, the contested law centers on the biblical Sabbath.

This is exactly correct, human law versus God's. The Jews who crucified Christ had the right day of the week, but they still had the wrong law, because they promoted the Sabbath as an imposed law, an

imperial law, a made up rule that required external rule enforcement, rather than the truth that it is an expression and evidence of design law.

Later, Christianity Romanized and accepted the lie that God's law functions no differently than Roman law, imposed rules, believed then, that just like human laws can be changed so too can God's laws be changed. Believing that the church on Earth operated with the authority of Jesus and believing the lie that God's law functions like human law, they changed the Sabbath to Sunday and began calling Sunday the Lord's day instead of the Bible day of the Lord, which is the seventh day Sabbath.

The Reformation came along and began correcting the distortions of imperialism and paganism that entered the church through Rome and eventually Reformers recovered the truth that the Sabbath of the Bible is Friday sunset to Saturday sunset and not Sunday. However, many have continued to fall into the same trap of the Jews who crucified Christ, having the right Sabbath day, but continuing to present it through the lie that God's law functions like human law, imposed rules that require imposed punishments. Thus, the Sabbath, when presented this way continues to promote the legal Roman view of a pagan god who requires something done to him to pay for our sin and that justice is the use of external power to inflict punishment upon rule breakers.

The final message of mercy to the world is call to return to worshiping God as Creator, which requires rejecting the Romanization of Christianity, the lie that God's law functions like human law, and realize that all of God's laws are design laws.

But this is very hard for many, who have been so indoctrinated into the imposed law system of seeing things, to understand. When I was in Australia last fall, I spoke with an Adventist pastor about the Sabbath issue. We both agreed that the Bible Sabbath is Saturday, no question about this. The question we discussed was what makes it holy? Why is the Sabbath holy?

What our different views boiled down to was that the pastor took the position that the Sabbath is holy because God declared it to be holy. It was made holy by God's executive action as Sovereign of the Universe at the end of creation week to set it apart by His declared word.

What do you think of this position? What kind of law would this be? Imposed, the same type of law that Caesar uses.

In this view, the Sabbath is holy not because of some inherent aspect of its creation, not something built into the Sabbath by God's actions that objectively sets it apart, but because God used His Sovereign right as Creator and Ruler to make an edict, a ruling, a proclamation, a declared statement.

This method is the type of authority, methods, mode, and law used by created beings, the use of position, of office, of power, to set something apart arbitrarily because the ruler said so, not because it is so.

And this type of law requires external infliction of punishment to enforce it. If there is nothing inherent built into it, then breaking the rule has no consequence therefore justice requires the

authorities to inflict punishment for rule-breaking. So, this way of presenting the Sabbath actually perpetuates Satan's view of God and God's government.

My view of the Great Controversy, the war between God and Satan, is not over who has power but over whether we can trust God with His power. Satan first undermined trust in God by alleging God governs through the use of made-up rules and externally inflicted punishments for rule-breaking. In other words, Satan alleged that God's laws function no differently than a creature's law, and, therefore, God ultimately functions like a creature, imposing rules and using power to punish rule breakers. This means that we don't have real freedom, we have freedom only as long as we do what God says—love me or I will torture and kill you. This way of presenting God's love is a violation of the design law of liberty and destroys love and incites rebellion.

So the Sabbath is a great test case—are all of God's laws truly design laws, protocols built into reality, or are some of His laws arbitrary, simply made-up rules imposed by God by His declaring it to be so?

The pastor who took the position that God's declaration makes it holy referenced creation week and God's setting apart the seventh day:

- By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. Genesis 2:2, 3 NIV84.

The pastor's interpretation of this passage is that God's actions are the actions of a ruler imposing a difference by His word or authority.

But consider the following text in the very narrative of creation, when God made another declaration:

- The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Genesis 2:18 NIV84.

Was it good for man to be alone *until* the Lord said this? Was it only when the Lord said it was not good that it became not good? Or did the Lord say it because there was something missing and He had not quite completed His creative work yet—and it was, in reality, not good to leave it uncompleted? Did God's declaration make it so, or was it already so, and thus God, who always speaks truth, declared it to be so?

The issue I am disentangling is this: Which comes first—reality, the way things are, or God's verbal description, or declaration, of the way things are? In regard to the Sabbath, was it holy the moment God created it? Was there something about its creation, something built into it or associated with it by creation, that objectively set it apart from all other days—and God's verbal statement about it announced the reality of what was already true, or was it that God's verbal description made it so?

Those who operate upon the human-law model automatically think that God's verbal statements are legal edicts that make it so. Whereas those who see God's law as design law understand His

statements are announcements of truth, descriptions of the way things actually are because they are actually that way.

At the Second Coming, when Jesus separates the “sheep” from the “goats,” does His action, His judgment, His proclamation, make some into sheep and some into goats, or is He separating them based on reality, on who they have chosen to become? (Matthew 25:31–33). Jesus’ statement of recognition that one is in the sheep camp and one is in the goat camp doesn’t cause it to be so, He states it because it is so.

And this is true of God’s law. God’s laws are design law, the protocols reality is built upon, emanating from His being, sustaining all things. God’s verbal description of His law does not establish it. He states it because it is the way things are, as He created reality to exist and operate.

So is the Sabbath holy because God said so, declared it holy, or did God declare it holy because it was holy?

The Bible says God blessed and sanctified the Sabbath day—what does that mean? Does it mean that God blessed it by legal declaration, making an imposed law that requires external enforcement through inflicted punishments? If that is what God did, then that would not have been a blessing but a curse, for that is the way Satan’s kingdom works; that would have sustained Satan’s charges against the government of God rather than refute them. No, God did not make a legal rule, an imposed law.

God blessed and sanctified the Sabbath by action, conduct, and creation—by reality. The Sabbath was made, created, built into time by the God who controls space and time, whose laws are the basis of the operations of all reality. And the Sabbath was made in the context of a war against God’s rulership. The Sabbath was set apart from the other six days *not* when God used power but when **He *stopped* using power, when He *rested*, when He *refused* to enforce law by the use of power and, instead, left all His creatures free to think and decide for themselves!**

The Sabbath was created at the end of the creation week of this planet and is invested, made, created, and built by God with the revelation of truth, love, and freedom—when God refused to use external power to punish Lucifer, to force Satan to comply, when God refused to operate in the way of a creature. Thus, the Sabbath is holy, made and created as a sign, evidence, revelation, and demonstration of God’s character of love and design-law methods. It exists because God exists and because God is love—and love exists only in freedom.

Thus, because of Satan’s lies and deceptions, God found it necessary to declare the reality of the sacredness, holiness, and blessedness of the Sabbath day, for in six days God created but on the seventh day *He rested!* The Sabbath day is special, distinct, set apart *but* not because of God’s declaration; it is so because of God’s action in its creation—for it reveals the glory and holiness of God. The Sabbath is not holy because God declares it holy; no, He declares it holy because it is holy!

God does not choose might and power as the attributes He glories in. No, God glories in His character of love. The Bible doesn't say "God is power" even though He is all-powerful; the Bible says that "God is love"! (1 John 4:8).

God has demonstrated that the attribute He prefers to be known by is not power, but His kindness, love, mercy, gentleness, and self-sacrificing character. When God showed Moses His glory, He said,

- "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Exodus 34:6, 7 NIV84.

On days one to six of creation, we learn that God is powerful and the Creator, but day seven is set apart by Him as the day He reveals His character of love, the day He says is His day because it is the day He rested.

The Sabbath is set apart by God's investing it with His character when He refused to use power to put down a rebellion. And God created the Sabbath for humans; He foreknew we would be caught up in a war for our hearts and minds, a war in which might and power would be viewed as being right. But God says to His faithful through history, *"Remember the Sabbath—remember that I rested; remember that even though I am the Creator, I don't use my power to force, to coerce, to punish; I give you real freedom, so each week remember the freedom you have when you return to love and trust in me, for it is by trusting me, loving me, and choosing my methods of truth, love, and freedom, all invested in the Sabbath, that remove your fear, cleanse your guilt, give you new hearts and right spirits, and make you a holy people who represent Me. So Remember I am the God that sanctifies you and makes you holy as you return to worship me and trust as your Creator and stop worshiping the false dictator god who makes up rules and is the source of inflicted punishment."*

WEDNESDAY

The lesson focuses on the early church's persecution. Any thoughts or questions?

This history uncovers various tactics and methods of Satan, and let's review history and see these methods used in various places.

Satan is the father of lies—so deception will always be employed by Satan and his followers.

Satan used deception, in all of its various forms, on the angels in heaven and on Adam and Eve in Eden. This was the only tool he had in sinless spaces. When I say the only tool, I mean in sinless spaces Satan could not make up his own laws and create his own government. He could not use economic pressure, threats against their possessions, family, friends, or any coercive force, no physical might could be brought to bear. Fear was not known and he could not intimidate them. He could only misrepresent, trick, deceive, mislead, through various tools, flattery, inuendo, and distorted communication, not just words, but his voice, tone, body language, and in Eden a miracle of a talking

snake. But it was only deception, nothing more that I can think of? Can you think of another tool Satan could use in sinless spaces?

Yes, it is true that Satan exploited the sinless angels' love, trust, and affection for him to advance his evil agenda, but there was nothing wrong with love, trust, affection, and friendship, those attributes did not cause the angels to rebel with Lucifer; it was his lies and selfishness that exploited their love and trust.

But in this world of sin, Satan has other tools to promote his false system, his evil empire, his assault on hearts and minds, his campaign to destroy truth, love, and righteousness. And the Bible is a record of this battle between the prince of darkness and originator of evil and the King of kings and Lord of lords.

In Old Testament times, Satan continued to use lies and deception adding in all kinds of false worship, intended to corrupt minds, and harden hearts closing people off from the God and His Holy Spirit. This was for the purpose of severing humanity fully and permanently from God. While humanity fell into sin, we were not fully cut off from God because of Jesus, the Lamb of God slain from the foundations of the world. In other words, because of Jesus' commitment and promise given in Genesis 3:15, that He would come and destroy the serpent and his evil empire and save humanity from sin, this world has remained connected to heaven through Jesus.

Satan sought to cut that tie, because without Jesus and His direct connection to us, His interventions, humanity could not be saved. If Jesus was not born in Bethlehem as a real human being, part of this species, and then if He did not live a sinless life and die a voluntary substitutionary death, no human could be saved. So throughout the Old Testament we find the focus on Satan seeking to destroy the avenue (branch of the human family) through whom Jesus would be born and God working to protect and keep open that avenue.

When Jesus was born, Satan sought to have baby Jesus murdered as a baby before Jesus could, as a human, complete His mission of living sinlessly, developing a sinless human character, eradicating the infection of fear and selfishness from the humanity He assumed thereby destroying the carnal nature and restoring in humanity the sinless spirit of love and trust, God's living law perfectly restored into humanity by Christ's sinless life and sacrificial death. But Satan failed in murdering Jesus as a baby.

Later Jesus is tempted and we see Satan's methods revealed:

- Deception, presenting as an angel from heaven and misquoting Scripture
- When deception didn't work then Satan moves on to inducements, offering an alternate way to achieve the goal that pays well and avoids pain and suffering—just worship me and I will give you all this. But this was also laced with deception because it really wasn't his to give. But now the deception has an offered positive pay off.
- When deception and inducements don't work, then Satan resorts to increasing externally inflicted injuries and harms to cause pain and suffering of various kinds—in other words making life hard for the righteous.

Name Calling and Character Assassination

- But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons” Matthew 12:24 NIV84.
- “You are demon-possessed,” the crowd answered John 7:20 NIV 84.
- The Jews answered him, “Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?” John 8:48 NIV84.
- At this the Jews exclaimed, “Now we know that you are demon-possessed!” John 8:52 NIV84.

Accusing the Righteous of the Evil That They Are Doing

- Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?” Matthew 26:65, 66 NIV84.

Twisting Words and Perjury

- Finally two came forward and declared, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days’” Matthew 26:60, 61 NIV84.

Intimidation via Sanctions and Restricting Liberties

- His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue John 9:22 NIV84.

Rejection and Mob Violence

- All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff Luke 4:28–30 NIV84.

Betrayal Under the Guise of Blessing

- Judas went straight to Jesus and said, “Peace be with you, Teacher,” and kissed him Matthew 26:49 GNT.

Shouting Down Voices of Truth to Silence, Intimidate, and Incite Riots

- When they heard this, **they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”** **Soon the whole city was in an uproar.** The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater. Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. But when they realized he was a Jew, **they all shouted in unison for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”** Acts 19:28–34 NIV84.

Mocking and Physical Abuse

- They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him Mark 15:17–20 NIV84).

Refusing to Listen and Murdering Voices of Truth

- At this they **covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices**, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and **began to stone him**. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep Acts 7:57–60 NIV84.

Do you see how these methods are design to hurt, emotions, relationships, finances, livelihood, health, and life? All intended to inflame fear and increase the survival of the fittest drive, urgent need to protect self, leading to compromising truth and giving into the pressure. Did we see essentially all of these methods used during COVID?

The only protection is truth, love, and freedom in a surrendered trust relationship with God, just like the three worthies, doing what is right in governance of self and trusting God with how things turn out.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason Ministries Will Be Attending the General Conference July 3-13. We will have a booth in the Exhibit Hall giving our materials away! Please pray God will bless this endeavor. Due to this we will have a modified class schedule as follows:

- **June 28:** 10-11 a.m. SS Class Lesson 2 in Exodus Study Guide
- **June 28:** 11:05-12:05 SS Class Lesson 3 in Exodus Study Guide
- **June 28:** No Q&A
- **July 5:** No SS Class and the building will not be open
- **July 12:** SS class will meet at normal time in the building but **NO POTLUCK**

Dr. Jennings Speaking:

September 24-27, 2025, Nashville TN: Dr. Jennings will speak at the conference American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel. On September 24 he will present a talk on Drug-free Treatments for Depression and on September 26 he will present a talk on dementia prevention. For more information visit the AACC event website at <https://worldconference.net/>

October 10-11, 2025 Bydgoszcz, Poland: Dr. Jennings will be the keynote speaker for the Impact Congress presented by the West Polish Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. For more information contact:

Patrycja Niewolik-Stüpp

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Mission, Health and Women Director

West Polish Conference | Trans-European Division

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October 16-18, 2025, Newbold College England: Dr. Jennings will be they keynote speaker for the college's week of spiritual emphasis. For more information contact:

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