



The Book of James Lesson 9 4th Q 2014 One Lawgiver and Judge

Thoughts about the Title?

What comes to mind? What mental images? Doesn't the title lend itself toward presenting God as a dictator rather than Designer? Is it important what view of God's law we hold?

Here is a quotation from the book *The Great Controversy*:

In seeking to cast contempt upon the divine statutes, Satan has perverted the doctrines of the Bible, and **errors have thus become incorporated into the faith of thousands** who profess to believe the Scriptures. The **last great conflict** between truth and error is but the final struggle of the **long-standing controversy concerning the law of God**. Upon this battle we are now entering--**a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah**, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition. {GC 582.2}

What do you hear?

Before we can understand what the Bible means regarding God as Lawgiver and Judge, we must first understand the controversy over God's law.

According to the passage above it is between the law of God and the laws of humans. What is the difference between those two laws?

Listen to this:

“From **the opening of the great controversy** it has been Satan's purpose to **misrepresent God's character** and to **excite rebellion against His law**, and this work appears to be crowned with success.” PP 338

“**God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary**. He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. **The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan**, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God.” ST Jan 20, 1890

What does arbitrary mean? On a whim, without reason, because a person in power says so, what kind of law operates this way? Imposed law!

God is Creator – His laws are the laws the fabric of the cosmos is built upon – created beings, including Lucifer, cannot create reality, we can only make up rules. Thus, the character of Satan is severe, exacting, revengeful, arbitrary – this is the characteristics of imposed rules – this is the attack



on God's character and law by Satan in the beginning, suggesting God's law is no different than ours, rules made up, but God, being more powerful, is able to enforce His rules.

God's law is design law, the law of love, the protocols for life. Here is what Scripture says:

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.** Romans 13:10
- The **entire law** is summed up in a single command: "**Love** your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:14
- If you really keep the **royal law** found in Scripture, "**Love** your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. James 2:8
- 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.**" Matt 12:37-40
- In the **way of righteousness there is life**; along that path is immortality. Pr 12:28
- He who pursues **righteousness and love finds life**, prosperity and honor. Pr 21:21
- The **law** of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7

Commentary from one of the founders of our church:

- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. **For God is love, and love is life.** COL 258
- Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the outworking of a principle at war with **the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.** GC 493
- **The law of love being the foundation of the government of God**, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. GC 493
- **The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man.** "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: "Thy law is the truth"; "all thy commandments are righteousness" (Ps. 119:142, 172). And the apostle Paul declares: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). **Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author.** {RC 46.5}
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth **the great principle which is the law of life for the universe.** All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service,



a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.**

DA 21

- As the Supreme Ruler of the universe, God has ordained laws for the government not only of all living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything, whether great or small, animate or inanimate, is under fixed laws which cannot be disregarded. **There are no exceptions to this rule; for nothing that the divine hand has made has been forgotten by the divine mind.** But while everything in nature is governed by natural law, man alone, as an intelligent being, capable of understanding its requirements, is amenable to moral law. To man alone, the crowning work of his creation, God has given a conscience to realize the sacred claims of the divine law, and **a heart capable of loving it as holy, just, and good;** and of man prompt and perfect obedience is required. Yet God does not compel him to obey; he is left a free moral agent. {ST, April 15, 1886 par. 2}

What is Satan's attack on God's law?

That it is an imposed set of rules in which there is no inherent consequence for breaking, thus requiring God to sit as punisher of the sinner:

“In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. DA 761.4

Notice Satan's argument and what kind of law is it Satan presents?

If God's law is design law and not rules imposed, then why the 10 Commandments, and the ceremonial laws?

What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.²⁰ A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.

²¹ Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.

²² But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.



²³ Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. Gal 3:19-25

What does this mean?

From my paraphrase:

Gal 3:19 If God promised to heal us, then what was the purpose of the law? It was added because of our sin-sick state, our darkened minds and the rapid rate at which we were destroying ourselves in order to diagnose our condition and teach us a healthier way to live until the only true cure, Jesus—the promised one—had come. God communicated this law through angels and then through Moses as an intermediary to the people. ²⁰ But an intermediary is not needed when there is only one party involved; and God and his Son Jesus are one.

Gal 3:21 Is the written law, then, somehow in opposition to the promises of God? Of course not! The written law was simply a tool to diagnose our sickness and lead us to God for healing. If the written law could somehow cure the infection of selfishness and promote life, then healing would certainly have followed the giving of the law. ²² But Scripture is clear: All humanity is infected with selfishness and is imprisoned by this terminal condition. It is by trust that we experience the only cure, the one promised—Jesus Christ, who was given to humankind as the Remedy to this terminal condition.

Gal 3:23 Before Christ came we were quarantined by the written law, restrained from continual self-destruction until Christ procured the only true cure. ²⁴ So, then, the written law was provided as a safeguard to protect us and lead us to Christ—the Great Physician, so that we might be restored to unity with God by trust in and partaking of Christ. ²⁵ Now that trust in God has been restored and we are set right in heart, mind, and character and again practice God's methods, we no longer need the law to diagnose our condition or lead us back to God.

This issue of the law in Galatians, the law that was added, was debated in our church and this is the conclusion:

I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments...In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. {1SM 233, 234}

With this clarity in mind – God's law is design law, Satan's lie is God's law is imposed rules, we can examine the lesson.



SABBATH

But the lesson gets the title from the Bible, from our memory verse, James 4:12 is cited, lets read James 4:11, 12:

NIV:

Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. ¹² There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

What do you hear? What does it mean?

My Paraphrase:

James 4:11 Brothers and sisters, don't bad-mouth each other. When you demean one another you distort God's law of love and make God's methods appear questionable. When you misrepresent God's law of love you are no longer living in harmony with it, but acting as if you have a better design for life than God. ¹² There is only one Designer of life and one Diagnostician who is able to heal our terminal condition. So who do you think you are to diagnose your neighbor as beyond healing?

Does seeing God's law as design law weaken the law? Why or why not?

There are no loopholes in Design law – it is unbiased, it makes no difference regarding race, gender, creed.

- If a rich man and poor man both jump off a building will gravity treat them different?
- If a black woman and white woman both tie a plastic bag over their head will the law of respiration treat them differently?
- If a Christian and a Jew cheat on their spouse will the law of love treat them differently?
- If a Christian or non-Christian harbor resentment, selfishness in their heart, will the result on the character, hearts, minds be different? What if the Christian does rituals, goes to confession, footwashing, communion, but harbors hatred, selfishness, and pride in the heart?

However, if the law is a set of arbitrary rules, then one can make loopholes and exceptions for various groups or persons. Our view makes God's law much stronger and uncompromising. Thus, God, through Christ had to actually fix what was wrong in humanity in order to save humanity. This is profoundly more difficult than merely paying a legal penalty.

This is from the Review and Herald Sept. 21, 1886:



The gospel of the New Testament is not the Old Testament standard lowered to meet the sinner and save him in his sins. God requires of all His subjects obedience, entire obedience to all His commandments. He demands now as ever perfect righteousness as the only title to heaven. Christ is our hope and our refuge. His righteousness is imputed only to the obedient. Let us accept it through faith, that the Father shall find in us no sin. (RH Sept. 21, 1886)! {6BC 1072.8}

How do you hear this? What would this passage mean through the imposed law lens?

- Interpreted through the imposed law lens this offers false guilt, fear and false security. How?
- By suggesting that
 - Perfect performance in behavior is required
 - We are incapable
 - We need a substitute to provide a legal solution
 - Imputed righteousness is taught to be a legal application to our records in heaven
 - We go on living in sin, feeling inadequate, being taught God declares us righteous even though we are not

Imputed righteousness is often synonymous with justification by faith. Those with a legal view think this is when God declares us righteous even though we are not. They say it is an application of Christ's merits to our legal record in heaven. This is all fiction, it is all based on the false view of God's law. The truth is that the believer, the one who trusts in God receives a new heart and right spirit and are set right, or put right, or are justified with God, in there heart, mind, character here and now. Here are some quotes from one of the founders of our church:

Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul **may be kept free from sin**; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation. . . . In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. **Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.** He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. {God's Amazing Grace 181.4}

- note – “having made us righteous” NOT having “declared us righteous”

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. **By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy**



Spirit, we become like Him. The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. {God's Amazing Grace 96.4}

- Again – we are actually transformed to be righteous, not merely declared legally righteous

We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the provision of God. **We are to reflect the highest attributes of the character of God. . . . The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain through the imputed righteousness of Christ.** {OHC 364.2}

- Do you see how the idea that we are legally declared righteous obstructs people from attaining righteousness?

He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might **counteract evil, remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness.** TMK 206

- What is the workmanship of God?
- What does it mean to removing the defiling stains from that workmanship?
- The soul is cleansed through the imputed righteousness – it is literal, real, actual, in the mind, heart, character of the believer.

Notice each of these quotes is applying the imputed righteousness of Christ into the believer to bring healing and restoration of the person.

Why? Because this is how reality works.

- The only way a doctor can heal a patient is by putting the patient in harmony with the laws of health, **not by doing something to appease the laws of health, or doctoring the medical record to say the patient his healthy, even though he is not.**
- Likewise, the only way God can save sinners is by putting sinners in harmony with His design for life, His law of love.

Here is another quote:

When we look to the cross, and there behold the suffering Son of the infinite God, our hearts are moved to repentance. Jesus volunteered to meet the **highest claims of the law,**[**what does the law claim? What does it require? we will read some other quotes and come back to this one**]

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." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2} **Notice Christ developed a perfect character and this free gift is not offered to God to pay a legal penalty. This gift is offered to you and me to heal and transform us!**

But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.--RH, Apr 5, 1898. (2SM 211.) {2MCP 564.1} [why? Because this is the protocol upon which life is built. It would be like saying the laws of health require you eat]

While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. **God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.** {MB 54.2}

Christ came to this world to live the law and represent the character of God, that the delusions which Satan had brought upon the world might be dispelled. In the sermon on the mount, He who gave the law became an expositor of the law. That sermon, so full of what it means to love and obey God, is the unfolding of His character. **The law is shown to be a representation of God's character**, that man may see that he must render obedience to the law if he would become a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. **This law requires nothing short of perfect spiritual obedience.** {ST, February 24, 1898 par. 5}

What delusion has Satan brought upon the world? That God is a dictator and His law is an imposed set of rules!

Do we know what the law requires and why? So back to the quote we started with:

When we look to the cross, and there behold the suffering Son of the infinite God, our hearts are moved to repentance. Jesus volunteered to meet the **highest claims of the law**, [what does the law claim? What does it require?] that he might be **the justifier** [what does justifier mean? It means the one who sets us right. So Christ came, to develop a perfect character, in harmony with the law upon which life is built, in order to put us back in harmony with that law] of all who believe on him. We look to the cross, and see in Jesus a fully satisfied and reconciled God. [Fully satisfied and reconciled what does this mean? What satisfies a parent whose child is dying of cancer? The cancer going into remission. God is satisfied because in Christ the infection of sin is remitted and a humanity exists again as God originally designed it to be. Thus God is satisfied in a healed humanity and that humanity is reconciled to Him or



back in unity with Him] Jesus is righteousness. What fullness is expressed in these words! And when we can say individually, "The Lord is my righteousness," then we may indeed rejoice; for the atoning sacrifice seen through faith brings peace and comfort and hope to the trembling soul weighed down beneath the sense of guilt. **The law of God is the detector of sin, [which means what? The 10 commandments are a diagnostic tool to expose where we are out of harmony with God's design. Just as Paul taught]** and as the sinner is drawn to the dying Christ, he sees the grievous character of sin, and repents and **lays hold on the remedy, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.**[**The Remedy – Jesus who developed a perfect character and destroyed the lies which break trust and destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness purifying the human species in His own humanity at the Cross]** {RH, September 2, 1890 par. 6}

We feel deeply thankful that some of our brethren are making an application of the truth to their own souls, through which new hopes and joys are sure to find place within the heart. A deeper Christian experience is greatly needed. The promises are sure; they stand fast forever; we must individually take them to ourselves. Christ is speaking to us in his word. May the Sun of Righteousness send **his bright beams into the chambers of the mind and into the soul temple, that the mist of doubt and uncertainty may be dispelled.** Then may the soul, all warm with the **love of God**, in earnestness and power preach Christ and him crucified. Such preaching will not be in vain, but as it was when Christ, the great teacher, was upon the earth, many will be astonished and charmed, and hearts will be melted and subdued as they contemplate his matchless love. **As the Saviour is lifted up before the people**, they will see his humiliation, his self-denial, his self-sacrifice, his goodness, his tender compassion, his sufferings to save fallen man, and **will realize that the atonement of Christ was not the cause of God's love, but the result of that love. Jesus died because God loved the world.** [note the death of Christ was in no way to do something to the Father, it was an expression of the Father's love and for purpose not the next sentence] **The channel had to be made whereby the love of God should be recognized by man, and flow into the sinner's heart in perfect harmony with truth and justice.** {RH, September 2, 1890 par. 7}

This is healing, this is restoration, this is recreation, this is God's plan of salvation, to regenerate us back into harmony with how He built life to operate, this is the gospel, this is the message to go to the world to prepare the world for Christ's return. This is design law!

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "Only someone who knows..." Do you see that those who wrote this lesson are viewing the law of God through the imposed law lens? We cannot complete our mission to prepare the world for Christ's return until we come back to worshipping him "who made the heaven, earth, seas and all that in them is." We must come back to worship the Designer.



It would be much better to say, “Only the Creator, the Designer, the One who actually constructed life is capable of identifying and fixing deviations from that design.”

Read last paragraph, “God designed that...” Is Christ capable of judging? Of course – but does He need to act in the role of judge **to determine** who is saved and lost?

You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. ¹⁶ But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. Jn 8:15,16

You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” MT 12:34-37

What is being described? Natural law – the condition of the being determines the outcome, not the decision of the judge. So, from scripture, some examples of God’s judgments:

- Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone! Hos 4:17
- He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. Rev 22:11

What is being described? God’s judgments are the diagnosis of the actual condition of the people. His judgments do not determine our destiny. It is not a court scene like we have, where evidence is presented and arguments are made, and the judge makes a determination. No, it is the diagnosing and stating of what the actual condition of each heart is. And what determines that?

Our judgment of God – Rev 14 – Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come.

Be in awe of God, and reveal His character rightly in your life, because the time has come in history for God to be judged. And how one judges God determines whether they trust Him or not, and that determines their eternal destiny.

WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph, “We see so much...” What do you say to those who see unfairness in the world? How do you respond to those who question the existence of God because He allows evil to occur?



THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “Read verse 17...” Is sin primarily behavioral? Those who operate under the false law lens, see sin as deeds, as behaviors, but when we understand God’s design law we realize that the behaviors are a manifestation, or a symptom, of a defect of heart.

As Paul says in Romans 14:23: “everything that does not come from faith is sin.”

What does this mean?

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust....

Thus when we realize God’s law is design law, the protocols upon which life is built, which is the law of love, then we realize, as Jesus taught that the behaviors are manifestations of a heart out of harmony with God’s design:

see Mt 5, adultery and murder.

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions 1-3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Nov 22, 2014: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Placerville, SDA church in Placerville, CA.

Jan 10, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

Jan 24, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Monterey Peninsula SDA Church

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, The Dalles, Oregon. For more info and to register for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.



April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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