



## The Book of Matthew Lesson 8 2Q 2016 Peter and the Rock

### SABBATH

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Read second paragraph, “The New Testament...”

a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, Titus 1:2

But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, <sup>9</sup> who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, <sup>10</sup> but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2Tim 1:8-10

Is this a reference to before God created anything, or before God created this earth?

Notice how the author of the book Education uses the phrase “before time began”?

**Then will be opened before him the course of the great conflict that had its birth before time began, and that ends only when time shall cease.** The history of the inception of sin; of fatal falsehood in its crooked working; of truth that, swerving not from its own straight lines, has met and conquered error--all will be made manifest. The veil that interposes between the visible and the invisible world will be drawn aside, and wonderful things will be revealed. {Ed 304.3}

Is this author referring to a time before God created anything, or before God created the earth? Could the Bible writers be referring to the same time?

The King James Version translates 2Tim 1:9 as:

Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus **before the world began**

The SDA Bible commentary on this passage states:

“before times eternal,” that is, before the long ages of this earth’s history. In His foreknowledge God was prepared to meet the tragedy and crisis of sin before it entered our world (see Rom. 16:25, 26; see on Matt. 25:34; 1 Cor. 2:7). Because of God’s omniscience, past, present, and



future are alike known to Him; no earthly event can surprise Him. Knowing that sin would be a personal attack by created beings against His authority, and thus against His character, God was always prepared to demonstrate His love and fairness, not only to a sinless universe, but also before those who had despised divine love. See on John 1:14; 3:16; Rom. 5:5–10.<sup>1</sup>

We are not told how linear existence works on other worlds, one event following another event in the flow of time. However, inspiration does tell us that when earth was created there is not only linear time, one event follows another, but there were measurements of time created—the Sun, Moon and Sabbath were created to measure time.

Is anyone aware of any inspired reference to the measurement of time that is not related to Earth’s Sun, Moon or Sabbath?

The point is that before time began on earth God had already conceived of a plan to save humanity—What was the plan that was conceived within the mind of God before time began?

How would you describe that plan?

The next paragraph states, “That’s why Jesus didn’t...” Do we agree that Jesus had to die, that he *must* die in order to save humanity? Yes we do agree, there was no other way to save us. But what about the last sentence in that paragraph, “His death was the only way that humanity could be saved from the penalty of transgression.”

How is this statement absolutely true, and how can it be misunderstood such that the statement becomes false?

What is the penalty of transgression? Death “the wages of sin is death” Rom 6:23

From where does that penalty arise or come? From sin itself—unremedied, unremoved sin destroys the sinner. “sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” James 1:15 “The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction” Gal 6:8

So, it is absolutely true, Jesus’ death was required to save us from sinfulness, which if unremedied results in death—why? What is sin? Sin is lawlessness. 1Jn 3:4, which means being out of harmony with God’s law. And God’s law is the design protocol upon which life is built, so it makes perfect sense that if one is out of harmony with the protocols of life then life will not continue and death occurs. If one steps out of harmony with the law of respiration and refuses to breathe—what happens—death. This is the truth of God’s Word.

So Christ’s death was needed to accomplish what?

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<sup>1</sup> Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 7, pp. 329–330). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



- Reveal truth to dispel lies and restore us to trust
- Destroy the infection of fear and selfishness (carnal nature) and develop a perfect character restoring God's law of love into humanity. This is how he destroys death, by destroying the infection of lies, fear and selfishness that breakdown trust and violate the law of life (love) and in so doing restore God's design to humanity (1John 3:8)

How can the statement above be misconstrued to teach a falsehood? When it is presented through imposed law rather than design law. Then the problem with sin is breaking the rules and getting into trouble with the ruling authority, who must use external power to inflict the death penalty. Thus, in this false law model Jesus' death is presented as the means of paying legal penalties and propitiating a wrathful deity; the penalty of transgression is taught as coming out from God not from sin. Thus God is presented as the problem that needs fixing, this undermines trust in God, doctrines are created to protect and hide us from God which obstructs the healing of heart and mind that God longs to provide us.

## SUNDAY

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Read first paragraph, "Imagine what it must..." What questions would you like to have asked Jesus?

- Why did you use a serpent as an image in the wilderness to represent you?
  - Because we are dead in trespass and sin, infected with the lies of the serpent and our primary drive is fear and selfishness, which originate in the serpent. In other words, we are infected with the poison of the serpent.
  - Only Jesus, who takes up our serpent infected condition can cure it and become our Remedy
  - And Israel needed to realize that only by trust in Jesus could they be saved—that there is no legal solution, there is in objective healing of the condition of the being—which is accomplished by Jesus.
  - From EGW: "**The lifting up of the brazen serpent was to teach Israel an important lesson. They could not save themselves from the fatal effect of the poison in their wounds.** God alone was able to heal them. Yet they were **required to show their faith** in the provision which He had made. They must look in order to live. It was their faith that was acceptable with God, and by looking upon the serpent their faith was shown. **They knew that there was no virtue in the serpent itself**, but it was a symbol of Christ; and the necessity of faith in His merits was thus presented to their minds. Heretofore many had brought their offerings to God, and had felt that in so doing they made ample atonement for their sins. They did not rely upon the Redeemer to come, of whom these offerings were only a type. **The Lord would now teach them that their sacrifices, in themselves, had no more power or virtue than the serpent of brass, but were, like that, to lead their minds to Christ, the great sin offering.** {PP 430.3}
- Can we come to heaven now?
- What can we do to accelerate your plan to eliminate sin?



- Others?

Do you think the disciples asked any questions like this?

“Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.” John 21:25

When the Seven Thunders spoke, I started to write it all down, but a voice out of Heaven stopped me, saying, “Seal with silence the Seven Thunders; don’t write a word.” Rev 10:4

Do you think some answers may have been given to individuals in the past but have not been revealed generally?

Does that mean that some of us today could get answers to questions we have had...is it possible?

So, the question for the lesson—Who was Jesus? Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” You are the Messiah, the Savior, the Deliverer, the Anointed One... which means what?

Who is Jesus?

- God
- Creator
- The Go-Between connecting infinity (Infinite God) with finite creation
- Originator and Conclusion (or Beginning and End)
- Template upon which life is constructed
- Source of all energy, space, time, matter, life, truth
- Savior, Deliverer, Restorer
- God, who merged Himself with humanity and now lives in a human body

## MONDAY

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The lesson asks us to read Matthew 16:17-20. I am going to read it from the NIV and from *The Remedy* and I want you to consider which is more accurate and what evidence supports the accuracy of each?

Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.<sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.<sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”<sup>20</sup> Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

Jesus smiled and said: "Well done, Simon, son of Jonah. You did not gain this truth from humans, but from my Father in heaven.<sup>18</sup> And though you are Peter—your name meaning small



stone—it is on the solid Rock of the Son of Man that I will build my church, and hell's barricade of selfishness and lies will not stop it.<sup>19</sup> I will give you the Spirit empowering you with truth and love, which are the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind to truth and love on earth will be bound to truth and love in heaven, and whatever you loose from fear and selfishness on earth will be loosed from fear and selfishness in heaven."<sup>20</sup> Then Jesus instructed his disciples not to tell people that he was the Messiah, because it was not yet time.

How do we know whether Jesus was referring to Peter or Himself when He said “on this rock I will build my church”?

Who does Peter refer to as the rock upon whom the church is built?

Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, answered them, “Leaders of the people and elders: <sup>9</sup>if we are being questioned today about the good deed done to the lame man and how he was healed, <sup>10</sup>then you should all know, and all the people of Israel should know, that this man stands here before you completely well through the power of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth—whom you crucified and whom God raised from death. Jesus is the one of whom the scripture says: ‘The stone that you the builders despised turned out to be the most important of all.’ Acts 4:8-10

Come to the Lord, the living stone rejected by people as worthless but chosen by God as valuable. <sup>5</sup>Come as living stones, and let yourselves be used in building the spiritual temple, where you will serve as holy priests to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. For the scripture says:

“I chose a valuable stone,  
which I am placing as the cornerstone in Zion;  
and whoever believes in him will never be disappointed.”  
This stone is of great value for you that believe; but for those who do not believe:  
“The stone which the builders rejected as worthless  
turned out to be the most important of all.”  
And another scripture says:  
“This is the stone that will make people stumble,  
the rock that will make them fall.”  
They stumbled because they did not believe in the word; such was God’s will for them.  
1Pet 2:4-8 GNT

Here is 1Pet 2:4-8 from *The Remedy*:

<sup>4</sup>And as you come to Christ, who was rejected by people but was chosen by God and is precious to God because he is the living Foundation Stone of God's true temple <sup>5</sup>realize that you also are living stones—the conscious, breathing, sentient building blocks—whom God is using to



construct his eternal temple. You are a holy priesthood bringing intelligent, reasonable and loving self-sacrifice—that is in harmony with God’s character of love—through your union with Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>This is exactly what the Scripture is talking about:

"See, I will put a Stone in the Land of Promise: an especially chosen, perfect foundation Stone; and whoever trusts in him and is set in harmony with him will never be put to shame."

<sup>7</sup>For you, who know and trust God, this Stone is life's one true treasure; but to those who don't know or trust God, "This Stone was thought to be worthless, and rejected; but it is actually the one upon whom all life is built."

<sup>8</sup>"A Stone of pure love that trips up selfish human beings, and a Rock of holiness, humility and truth, over whom the sinful, proud and deceitful fall." They trip and fall because they prefer selfishness to love, and unhealed selfishness is a terminal condition—exactly as God diagnosed.

What is the basis for the idea the Peter is the stone upon which the church is built? This same passage, which denies what Peter taught himself, but also because people think concretely rather than abstractly. If people understood design law, and that what God is building is being constructed out of living beings, then one realizes that it cannot be built on the template of a sinful human being, but only on the template of God’s perfect Son.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Eph 2:19-22

## TUESDAY

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Read Mt 16:21-23:

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

<sup>22</sup> Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”

The lesson asks why is Jesus so tough on Peter? The lesson suggests Peter wasn’t trying to save Jesus but steer Jesus, thoughts?

Do you think Satan was speaking through Peter like Satan did through the serpent in Eden?

So what did Jesus mean by saying get behind him Satan? Was Jesus speaking to Peter or Satan or both?



How was Satan speaking at that moment? Was Peter aware he was speaking Satan's thoughts?

How could Satan get Peter to speak such ideas? Does it mean Satan was in Peter's mind manipulating Peter's thoughts?

No, it doesn't mean this. All selfishness is from Satan, thus, when someone has selfishness in their own heart, and from their heart their mouth speaks selfish words, they are speaking Satan's language, the language, ideas, principles that have their origin in Satan—but that doesn't mean that person is being mind controlled by Satan or demon possessed.

Read Mt 16:24-27:

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup> What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

What does this text mean? What two principles are contrasted in this text?

What is the law of life and what is the law of sin and death? The law of life is the law of love—which functions how? Selfless giving!

The law of sin and death is survival of the fittest—which functions how? By taking for self.

So, what does it mean he who seeks to save his life will lose it, but he who loses his life for Christ will find it?

What is necessary to be able to do this? Love and trust, which require we come back to a true knowledge of God, Jn 17:3...

Is the text speaking of willingness to die for one's beliefs or one's cause?

What is it speaking of?

The grain of wheat that preserves its own life can produce no fruit. It abides alone. Christ could, if He chose, save Himself from death. But should He do this, He must abide alone. He could bring no sons and daughters to God. Only by yielding up His life could He impart life to humanity. Only by falling into the ground to die could He become the seed of that vast harvest, -the great multitude that out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, are redeemed to God. {DA 623.4}



With this truth Christ connects the lesson of self-sacrifice that all should learn: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." **All who would bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ must first fall into the ground and die. The life must be cast into the furrow of the world's need. Self-love, self-interest, must perish. And the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation.** The husbandman preserves his grain by casting it away. So in human life. **To give is to live.** The life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man. Those who for Christ's sake sacrifice their life in this world will keep it unto life eternal. {DA 623.5}

**The life spent on self is like the grain that is eaten. It disappears, but there is no increase.** A man may gather all he can for self; he may live and think and plan for self; but his life passes away, and he has nothing. **The law of self-serving is the law of self-destruction.** {DA 624.1}

What type of law is being described in this passage? Is this the law of God that was violated by Satan? Does this passage teach that the law of self-serving is the law of God-destruction? No! But that is what almost all the world believes, that if you sin God will destroy you, and they claim it is only just. All such teachings are an infection, showing the serpents venom of lies about God still cloud the mind!

## WEDNESDAY

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The lesson is about the transfiguration when Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus, read second paragraph, "How fascinating..." What does it mean they spoke about His decease?

What do you think they discussed?

Don't you think they were discussing the completion of Jesus' mission to planet earth, which was to culminate in His death that weekend in Jerusalem?

Why do you think of all the beings God could have sent to encourage Jesus, Moses and Elijah were chosen?

- They are both human, and would remind Jesus of His victory, what it would achieve
- Symbolically, Moses represents the humans that are saved in the resurrection and Elijah those who are translated without seeing death
- But, Moses and Elijah also remind Jesus, by their presence, that He wins. They are only there in heaven because Jesus wins—if Jesus would have failed they would not have been in heaven. So, they are reminders of the fact that no matter how bad it gets, Jesus will win.
- But why not Enoch, rather than Elijah? What else was specifically helpful that Moses and Elijah could share with Jesus—from their experience on earth?
  - Did both Moses and Elijah have confrontations with Satan's forces?
  - Did both Moses and Elijah stand up to Satan's forces for the benefit of the people enslaved by sin?



- And did both Moses and Elijah, at some point, get overwhelmed with human emotion and slip up?
- So, could they also share from their experience that no matter how bad the emotions get, don't let the emotions take control, trust the Father!
- Was such a testimony something that angels could share?
- Could Moses and Elijah also share incredible thankfulness and love for their salvation, for being forgiven, for the healing they had received because of what Jesus was doing? Would this be encouraging to Jesus?

## THURSDAY

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This is the story of the religious leaders asking Peter whether Jesus paid the temple tax. Peter answered poorly and said yes, which validated the wrong conception the religious leaders were trying to teach about Jesus.

Read second paragraph, “Ellen G. White writes...” How did Jesus handle Peter’s misrepresentation?

Read next paragraph, “We can learn much...” In this case, once Peter made his statement what options were available?

Would the truth of who Jesus was had been better served to start a dispute over paying the temple tax, or would that question have diverted people’s attention away from what really mattered?

Do we ever get caught up into arguing over theological points that are nothing but distractions from what really matters?

What do you think really matters? The truth about God—it is always about the truth about God—His character, methods of truth, love and freedom!

The temple tax would have distracted from that truth, so Jesus took the action of paying it, in a way that demonstrated He was no mere human, which allowed the issue to fade away. If He didn't pay it after Peter said He would then allegations and arguments over who pays the tax etc. would arise diverting attention, having paid it as He did would diminish His enemies (Satan primarily) from wanting to draw attention to it as the miracle would cause many to think more deeply about who Jesus is. Thus, Jesus handled it to let it fade away and not be a distraction to His real mission.

And the very next verses of Scripture, after Jesus deals with the temple tax are:

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

<sup>2</sup> He called a little child and had him stand among them. <sup>3</sup> And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup>



Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.  
MT 18:1-4 NIV

What quality about the little child Jesus is emphasizing? Humbleness, which functionally means what? Do small children, typically have teachable minds, minds that don't trust themselves, but want to learn? When a child colors in a book, or draws a picture, or does almost anything what do they want to do? They want to show mommy or daddy or both? Why? Because the child doesn't know whether it is good or not until someone tells them. A child born into the world doesn't know left from right, up or down, that the sky is blue and the grass is green. They must be told everything, thus all children look outside themselves for answers. They are not arrogant thinking they know everything, but ignorant and humble willing to allow that others know more and thus are teachable.

What is the Bible word for a humble willingness to listen and learn?

Obedience—the Greek [*hupakoe* /hoop·ak·o·ay/] *hypo*, under, *akoe*, from which we get acoustical or acoustic, means to listen, so Bible obedience is a humble willingness to listen, to learn, to be teachable by truth and evidence, like children who are eager to learn!

Bible obedience is not primarily about performance, but a willingness to learn, improve and develop based on advancing truth.

This is why the wicked who are lost perish “because they did not love the truth and thus be saved.”  
1Thes 2:10

Is this how you understand greatness? Do we teach in Christianity that the great in heaven are those with minds that are capable of learning, and are eager to understand and follow the truth?

Do we see why Jesus didn't pick any theologians to be members of the 12 Apostles? They viewed themselves the teachers and experts and were no longer open to be taught—they were disobedient. But Jesus did choose a physician—along with fishermen, and a tax collector. Why? All of them could be taught.

Even today there is a big difference in the educational philosophy of theologians and physicians. Physicians are educated that truth is unfolding and that our conclusions need to be based upon evidence and thus we are taught to give up beliefs that prove false and move forward with new beliefs as evidence is revealed.

Many religionists however are indoctrinated into a belief system that obstructs learning—how? Because God never changes, they merge that reality with the idea that their ideas about God and theology should never change, thus too often people get stuck in their theological constructs believing that changing their ideas would somehow deny their faith in God.



## FRIDAY

In the middle of the lesson it states, “Why didn’t Jesus simply hand Peter the money and tell him to pay it rather than perform such an amazing feat in order to solve what was a relatively small problem? The text doesn’t say. However, as the lesson said, it does show us the incredible power of God, which should not be surprising to us. After all, we see evidence of his incredible power all the time. our mere existence, much less than that of the visible cosmos, is an amazing manifestation of the power of our God.”

What is the emphasis? God’s power—what level of moral development needs to be reassured God is powerful?

This is level one thinking—the most basic level. This is where God started with the slaves of Egypt—by 10 plagues to show who was more powerful.

But, in heaven did Satan ever allege God had no power or that Satan had more power than God?

Power was never the question—it was the character of the One who wields the power that has been questioned.

Further, can God get what He wants by using power? Why not?

Because power incites fear, and fear incites selfishness and undermines love and trust.

The only way to overcome fear and selfishness is with love and truth, that is why Jesus stopped using power to perform miracles when the crowds grew.

Read and discuss questions



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

*The God-Shaped Brain* is now available in Korean and is available at this website:  
[http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book\\_detail.nhn?bid=9519886](http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886)

*The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

**The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

**May 18-20:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at *The Struggle Is Real* Conference at Seacoast Church in Charleston SC, for more info and to register click this link <http://www.2016summit.net>

**Thursday, June 9 at 1:30 PM Eastern Time** Dr. Jennings will appear on the *Lifestyle Magazine* show, “Healing The Mind” that he recorded previously. It is scheduled to air on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). Keep in mind that TBN can preempt the show at their discretion.

**October 14-16:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

**October 19, 20:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

**October 21, 22:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa.