

ADRIAN EBENS



THE MYSTERY OF
THE CROSS



Adrian Ebens, 2024

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MYSTERY OF THE CROSS

Pr. Adrian: Father, it's such a joy to be able to come together. We are gathering from all around the world. Thank you for those that have driven to be here with us; and just the sense of joy we feel for every person that has come. And for those that are joining online, watching in their living room or in their car or wherever they are; that they've chosen to join to be with us. And I pray, Father, Your Spirit would blanket every person. And as we are representatives from all around the world, that a blanket of your love would therefore reach all around the world because of the joy that we have found in You. And please, Father, help us as we look upon one of the stories of the Old Testament, that we would look through the mediation of Jesus Christ. And Lord Jesus, as we look at Your face that we would comprehend the meaning of these stories in the Old Testament. And I thank You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

I'd refer you to chapter nine of the book *At-one-ment* in terms of understanding this story. In 2014 I was actually in the homeland of my father in the Netherlands. And the group that I was with, we were in

the home of Jutta, one of our leaders in Germany, and she had given me the book *Light on the Dark Side of God*. Narelle and Tony and had shared lots of those here in Australia over the years, but I'd never actually read the book *Light on the Dark Side of God*. And while I was in the homeland of my father, and I'm reading this book, suddenly the words jumped off the page to me, and I'd never thought about this before. **Jesus on earth is the complete revelation of His Father.** It's just like, "of course, of course!" This has to be true. It was such a revelation to me. And then I thought, yes, but what about the flood? What about this? What about that? What about this? What? All the stories that started coming into my mind. But I knew it had to be true.

And so I waited until Tabernacles of 2015, over a year later, before I began to venture. Because I knew that once I publicly began to speak about God being non-violent, a ton of bricks would descend on me and I would have to run down a very narrow corridor with a whole lot of people with their knives out, trying to stab me and stop me, and prevent me from getting out the other side and proving that Jesus really is the revelation of the Father, and that the Father doesn't kill anybody. And true to my word, as soon as I began, the attacks started to come and people started to pile on.

And so you'll notice, if you follow the booklets that I have written, in 2016, I was producing a booklet nearly every week. I was just studying. My shoulder was completely cramped up. I was typing flat out. I was desperate to get answers to the stories of the Old Testament and satisfy my own mind. And at one point or a few points, I came to some stories in the Old Testament and I just said, "Lord, I can't do it. It's not possible. My mind does not allow me to read this story and say that you didn't kill these people. You did kill these people, and therefore I'm toast. I can't do it. Because I don't understand how to read this any other way than to think that you killed these people." But then I would get on my knees and say "Lord Jesus, you are the revelation of the Father. Surely you can help me to understand this. Surely." And then slowly, texts would come, texts would come.

So if any of you think that I just wrote it all out and I had it all worked out, no I didn't. I was really struggling at times to put the pieces together to make sense. And I almost gave up. And if I almost gave up and some of you feel like, "I don't understand. This is so complicated. This is so difficult." Well, it's only difficult if your pride doesn't allow you to humble yourself and recognise maybe you don't know something. Maybe you don't know, maybe you don't understand. Maybe you're completely blind and messed up in the head. If you're not allowing yourself to do that, then you're not going to make it.

And I just said, Lord, obviously I'm messed up in the head. I can't see it. And then He would start to show me things. And many people were praying. And the pieces started coming together. But in its simplest form, if you're struggling when someone throws a quote at you. They'll bring you out [a quote], you know, they brought it out like it's a grenade. They've specially waited for you to come. And when you come, they launch this grenade at you with this quote from the Spirit of Prophecy or something in the Bible. Bang! And you're like, "Oh no, I, ooh, ahh, I don't know how to answer this." And you freeze up, and you lock up and all the things you've learned, your mind locks up and has a seizure and you can't remember. And you look like a fool! Who wants to look like a fool when they're trying to defend the Scripture. You don't want to look like a fool. So it's tempting to go back to the other side, to go back to the dark side. Isn't it? When you're humiliated in front of other people....

So there's a lot of pressure to prevent people from getting through the firewall into the truth that Jesus is the full revelation of the Father.

And yet all of the time Jesus makes it very, very clear. Two immutable things I say:

1. Jesus says, **If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father.** That's the first immutable thing.
2. And the second thing: **"Thou shalt not kill" is a revelation of God's character.**

Those are the two immutable pillars upon which this whole doctrine is built.

We know that the Scripture says, well, the Spirit of Prophecy says over and over again: “the law is a transcript of the character of God, the law is a transcript of the character of God.”¹ And if it’s a transcript of His character, then the words “Thou shalt not kill” apply to God the Father. He keeps His own law. And Jesus, He says, “I have come to reveal the Father.” And we have in the booklet, *Christ’s Mission to the World*, quote after quote after quote after quote after quote telling you Jesus came to reveal the Father. This is how He reconciles us to the Father, by unlocking the bias and the lies that we have been taught and believed about the Father. Isn’t that how you reconcile two people? You come and say, actually, that’s not true. You’ve got a wrong understanding of what My Father is like, and I’m here to show you what the Father is like.

So, let’s go to Numbers chapter 25, and I just want to read the first part of this story. And we can all tremble when we read the first part, and then we’ll unlock it. Numbers, chapter 25. This is after Balaam tried miserably to curse the children of Israel. He was seeking a big pay-check and honour and prestige from Balak. But there obviously was a part of Balaam that was afraid. And he still seemed to be under the influence of God, because he was willing to listen to what God asked him to say and he said it, which is kind of a strange position to be in. But determined to satisfy his customers, Balaam gave Balak the secret of how to destroy Israel, and that was to, not send in the clowns, but

¹ CG 69.2; COL 305.3, 315.1; CCh 78.5, 261.4; CT 365.2; FW 90.2; GC 434.1, 465.2, 469.2; MH 157.1; PP 52.3; 1SM 225.2, 240.3; 2SM 106.2; 4BC 1164.7; 5BC 1131.6; 6BC 1096.4; 6T 9.3; 8T 63.3, 207.1, 9T 229.2; MB 77.1; RH Feb 4, 1890 par. 1, Feb 10, 1891 par. 1, June 21, 1892 par. 6, April 30, 1895 par. 3, Aug 13, 1895 par. 4, Oct 15, 1895 par. 1, Dec 1 1895 par. 4, Dec 1 1896 Art B, par 9. Mar 9, 1897 par. 7,13, May 3, 1898 par. 12, Aug 9, 1898 par. 7, May 23, 1899 par. 5, July 25, 1899, Art A par. 10, Oct 10, 1899 par. 8, Apr 16, 1901 par. 16, Apr 22, 1902 Art A, par. 20, Mar 15, 1906 par. 18, Sep 13, 1906, par. 14, Jan 28, 1909 par. 17 and more.

send in the women and get them to bow down to their gods, to come to their party, and have a party.

And so it says in, Numbers 25, verse one.

And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. (Numbers 25:1-2)

And I just like to; this might be a bit of a jaw-dropping statement for some of you; but I would just like to say this in terms of the history of the Advent people. In the 1950s a group of delegates, a delegation came to the Seventh-day Adventist Church representing the Daughters of Babylon, representing the Protestant churches. And the Adventist leaders (I use this word loosely) had intercourse with the leaders of the daughters of Babylon. And out of that discussion, the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church bowed before the gods of Babylon. And brought a tremendous curse upon God's people, didn't they? This is why we're in the mess we're in. This is why we are a scattered group of people around the world hanging on to this final message. Because the leaders of God's people committed intercourse with the daughters of Babylon, and they have turned us to other gods.

So the question then, of course, is should we just hang them up, as it says, and notice what it says here? Verse three.

And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. (Numbers 25:3)

So when the anger of the Lord is kindled against Israel, what do you understand? Is God starting to breathe fire out of His nostrils like a dragon?

Bill: No, He turns His head.

Pr. Adrian: He turns His head, doesn't He? He turns aside. And the anger of the Lord is the grief – is the *aph* – is the grief that He feels at the fact that He has to let His children go through this terrible trial, and He

has to watch it. But how do you read? How most people read this is that God started stomping around in heaven. He got really upset. He says, "Right, you're going to pay now!" And what does He say? Verse four.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel. (Numbers 25:4)

Now when you read a verse like that, your heart starts to melt, doesn't it? It's just like: well God said it, and if God said it, it's black and white. It's in the Bible, God said. Didn't God just say kill them? Take the leaders and kill them. That's what He said. And if God said kill them that's what He meant, isn't it? "That the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away." How do we understand this passage? And it gets even worse of course. But wait, there's more.

And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor. And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who *were* weeping *before* the door of the tabernacle in the congregation. (Numbers 25:5-6)

So, why? What had alerted Moses and the people to the fact that there was a problem? The plague. This is important because the plague had started. And when the plague had started the people started to weep and go, "Oh, we're in big trouble." Remember when they had murmured and complained, and then the snakes came in? "We've sinned. We've sinned." Okay. So a plague had started. And when the plague had started, the people, terrorised, began to confess their sins. Were they truly sorry for their sins? Or were they sorry that the plague was coming and they feared they were going to die? Well, we can't know for every individual, but many of them were just simply afraid they were going to die. And they were pleading with God not to kill them, because they thought He was the one bringing the plague, didn't they? I mean, that's what you would assume in this context. It says,

And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it*, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; and he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. (Numbers 25:7-8)

I'm glad I don't have to watch the movie. So, what does it say? It says "the plague was stayed from the children of Israel." So if the plague stopped, who stopped the plague?

Lorelle: It looks like Phinehas.

Pr. Adrian: Well, okay, he did something, and then the plague stopped. But who actually stopped the plague?

Bill: Satan.

Pr. Adrian: Would Satan stop the plague? Or would he want to kill all of them?

Lorraine: He'd stop it so he could blame God.

Pr. Adrian: So the question is; well, my understanding is, that God stopped the plague. But why did He stop the plague? If He stopped the plague, then it looks like He wanted these two people thrust through the belly with a javelin pinned to the floor and killed; and then thought: "Right, okay, I'm happy now. I'm appeased. We've dealt with the transgressors."

Narelle: The people that wanted atonement. They found their atonement. It wasn't God, but they needed to see something.

Pr. Adrian: All right. Okay, you're on it. You're on it. So when the people start to experience the plague, what do they feel in their heart? They know they've been participating. They remember what they were taught. When it says "You shall not bow down yourself." Do you think Moses taught them the Ten Commandments? Do you think they kept those fresh in their mind? Did they put them to song? So "You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them. For I, the Lord thy God,

am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.” (Exodus 20:5). So did they know this? They did know this. So when the plague started, what did they feel? Guilt, condemnation. And this is the thing. When you feel guilt and condemnation and you feel terrible and you realise that what you’ve done is horrible; and now I’m in big trouble, and now I can feel the punishment. If God says, it’s okay, I forgive you. Would you believe Him? No, no Lord, it can’t be that simple. What I did is really bad, and it needs something more than that. Something really severe needs to happen in order for me to believe I could be forgiven.

So what had happened is that Balaam, the prophet, who was from Mesopotamia, he had instructed the Midianites: Send your women into Israel. Get them to put all the makeup on, dress up, put their shortest skirt on, make everything nice and tight. Go into the Israelites and seduce the men. That’s what he told them. And that’s what the women did. So Zimri said, yep, this is good value. And so he’s walking there with this woman in her high heels, walking straight past Moses and just saying, I don’t care. I don’t care what you think.

And she was quite willing, she had been instructed, this is the way we destroy the Israelites. We get them to come and worship our God. Okay. So now notice, after Phinehas does this, there is something very interesting. Well, first of all, verse nine,

And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.
(Numbers 25:9)

Paul says 23,000 in one day, so the rest died the next day I guess. That’s a pretty serious plague, to die on the day of the plague. That’s a pretty serious plague.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.
(Numbers 25:10-11)

And then he says,

Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, *even* the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel. (Numbers 25:12-13)

Now most people reading that text, seeing that he had done this deed, God blesses him, gives him the priesthood forever; you're like, well, it's a done deal, isn't it? It's a done deal. God blessed him. It must have been the right thing. He didn't say, "No Phinehas. You did the wrong thing; that's not right." He didn't say, "Put up your javelin into its place," did He? He didn't say, "All those that take the javelin will die by the javelin," did He? So He blessed him. So if He blessed him, then this must be what God wants. That's a fair assumption, isn't it? It's a fair assumption.

So now the sequence of quotes that I want to read to you. And of course, Narelle alluded to this in terms of how we perceive and how we understand what is necessary. Because when bad things start to happen to us, don't we start to feel condemnation? Don't we start to feel regret? And how do we get rid of the regret? How do we get rid of that horrible feeling that's over us: "Oh no, I feel condemned." How do we get rid of the condemnation? You need atonement, don't you? Something really serious has to happen for that guilt to be lifted off you.

So now I'd like to come to the series of quotes that came to me this morning that I want to share with you. The mystery of the cross. This is a little phrase that's locked away in my filing system, the mystery of the cross. And this is the quote. Great Controversy 652.

The mystery of the cross explains all other the mysteries. (GC 652)

When we read Numbers chapter 25, and we see God talking about His fierce anger, and hanging up people and javelins going through people, and Him putting a blessing on the javelin thrower – is that a bit of a mystery? In the light of the fact that Jesus Christ is the full revelation of the character of God, isn't that a bit mysterious? Isn't that like, "I'm a bit confused here?"

Max: Well, he said “He who is innocent cast the first stone” at the woman who was doing exactly the same thing.

Pr. Adrian: Yes. Innocent. So was Phinehas innocent? Was he without sin?

The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. In the light that streams from Calvary the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive. (GC 652)

How can we turn this story in Numbers 25 into something that’s beautiful and attractive? And do it legitimately. Many people could do it, but to do it legitimately.

Now many people would say it is beautiful. I mean, we’ve all come from the background: they sinned, they broke the law of God, they deserve to die. It’s quite simple, isn’t it? Isn’t that beautiful? The transgressor shall die for their transgression. The Pharisees are always ready to say that aren’t they? But when you’re on the receiving end and you feel the guilt of your own transgression and sin, it’s not so good, is it?

Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power. While we behold the majesty of His throne, high and lifted up, we see His character in its gracious manifestations, and comprehend, as never before, the significance of that endearing title, “Our Father.” (GC 652.1)

So what this paragraph is saying, in Great Controversy, is that the process of the cross is a template for how we can understand all the stories in the Bible where violence occurs, because it says “the attributes of God, which had filled us with fear.” What are the attributes of God that have filled us with fear? His sense of appeasement. When God is angry and people start dying, that fills us with fear, doesn’t it? And many people say, well, that’s how you get holiness. How to impress people with a sense of holiness, is start killing a bunch of people, and say “If you don’t get into line, you’re going to die as well.” The greater the fear, the greater the holiness. Everyone sitting there in God’s court wetting themselves, looking for a nappy. Is that a great place to be?

Wouldn't smell very good, would it? If everyone's totally freaked out, can't say a word, can't do anything, because they're so freaked out that they're going to die.

So let's continue this sequence. How does the cross explain these stories? This is the next quote. *Testimonies to Ministers* p. 245.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

And I love that, "to be the propitiation for our sins." And what is the greatest sin that man has committed against God? Is to believe that He is a killer, that's the greatest sin of all, and that He won't forgive. He sent him to be a propitiation for our sin, to offer us, because we couldn't believe we could be forgiven until somebody died. He gave Him for us.

Here is language that expresses His mind toward a corrupt and idolatrous people.

Interesting how she phrases that.

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel?
how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?

What's Admah and Zeboim? They were two of the cities that were destroyed, like Sodom and Gomorrah. They were on the same plain. So He's saying, how can I allow you to be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed?

Mine heart is turned within me, My repentings are kindled together.

Does that mean when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, that His heart was turned within Him. Isn't that what it means?

Must He give up the people for whom such a provision has been made, even His only-begotten Son, the express image of Himself?

We're getting the whole package here, Father and Son.

God permits His Son to be delivered up for our offenses.

Notice what it says there. God permits. Why doesn't it say God organised, God planned, God strategized? God demanded? Even better. God demanded that he be delivered up for our offences. Why doesn't it say that? Why does it say He permitted. Because somebody else needed it. He didn't need it. Somebody else needed it. The sons of Adam needed it.

He Himself assumes toward the Sin Bearer the character of a judge, Again, why doesn't she just say God becomes the judge? Why is the language so specific? How does He assume the character of a judge? Why does it say assume? Who's doing the assuming? We're doing the assuming.

Craig: We're doing the judgment.

Pr. Adrian: Because we're doing the judging. I found this language amazing. "He assumes the character of a judge." Now notice we know this cannot be true, because if you have ever read in the Bible the term 'Everlasting Father'. Everlasting Father. Is he the Everlasting Father? Yes. So notice here,

...divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a father. (TM245.2)

Do we understand what that means?

He Himself assumes toward the Sin Bearer the character of a judge, divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a father. (TM245.2)

If God's primary identity is a father, and he divests himself of this identity, what has He just done?

Craig: Stepped down as a father.

Pr. Adrian: He's destroyed Himself. He's destroyed His character, hasn't He? Because it's not who He is. He becomes something that He is not. This is important. This is a critical statement, "divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a father." But what did we read in the previous quote? The last part:

...we see His character in its gracious manifestations, and comprehend, as never before, the significance of that endearing title "Our Father" (GC 652.1)

...talking about the cross. And yet at the cross He assumes the character of a judge divesting Himself of the endearing title "Our Father." Isn't that a bit confusing? It's confusing until we understand that we are the ones that assume that He has taken the character of a judge; because God can do nothing but assume the character of a judge when we have decided that that's the way it is. Have you ever tried to convince somebody, against their will, that you are not the person that they think you are? And once they're convinced, how easy is it to convince them that "No, that's not what I'm like." You can't convince them. They have the evidence. They know what you're like. They know you better than you know yourself. Isn't that true?

So, this was one of the key quotes that helped me unlock what was going on. Oh. Somehow He is understood to be a judge. But what did Jesus say in John 5:22? My Father judges or condemns no one. So the assumption is not made on the part of God. The assumption is made on the part of man. It's the only way we can understand this quote.

Okay, so now let's come to the next quote. This is beautiful. We first looked at this in 2017; six years ago. Oh, time flies doesn't it?

Justice and Mercy stood apart,

Ellen White is personifying the attributes of justice and mercy.

...in opposition to each other, separated by a wide gulf. The Lord, our Redeemer, clothed His divinity with humanity, and wrought out in behalf of man a character that was without spot or blemish. He planted His cross midway between heaven and earth, and made it the object of attraction which reached both ways, drawing both Justice and Mercy across the gulf.

Now, this is really interesting, in terms of, justice and mercy are separated from each other, and Jesus now is reconciling them and bringing them back together. Now, if justice and mercy are in one

person, being God Himself, and justice and mercy are separated in the mind of God, and they can't be reconciled together, what does that suggest about God?

Craig: He's got problems, He's schizophrenic.

Pr. Adrian: That He's suffering from schizophrenia. Doesn't it? He's got a problem that He can't reconcile in His own mind. His justice demands death, His mercy demands life, and He can't reconcile it in His own mind. So Jesus saves the day. Jesus saves His Father from schizophrenia. He brings it about. And of course, people would say, well, God wanted it that way, but let's keep reading and see who this justice represents. Does this justice represent God? Or does this justice represent someone else?

Justice moved from its exalted throne,

Well, you would assume that's God wouldn't you? But keep reading.

...and with all the armies of heaven approached the cross. There it saw One equal with God...

Well, I suppose God could say, He is equal with me. You could say that.

...bearing the penalty for all injustice and sin. With perfect satisfaction, Justice bowed in reverence at the cross,...

Hang on. Does God bow in reverence to anybody else? It can't be God, can it?

...saying, It is enough. (MS 94, 1899)

Who is this justice? Why does Ellen White personify justice? Why doesn't she say who this is? She doesn't say who it is. She's not told who it is. Because if she said who it was, nobody would understand. And they would say she's a false prophet. It had to be written this way in order for us in these last days, to be led by the Spirit, to put all the pieces together.

Craig: It's interesting: "There it saw One..."

Pr. Adrian: “It saw One.” It, Justice, in the neuter, not in the masculine, nor the feminine – It, Justice! We would naturally assume [it is God], but I would suggest to you that if God bows in reverence to something else, then He’s acknowledging someone greater than Himself, which is impossible. There is no one greater than the Father. He is the greatest.

Craig: We’ve got no Scripture, nothing else telling us that He bowed in reverence at the cross. We know He hid His face.

Pr. Adrian Yes, but He never bowed in reverence. She does say that God bowed His head in acknowledgement of the cross. But He didn’t bow in reverence. He bowed His head in acceptance of the cross. Okay, this is a very important statement. This is ... very, very important. Who is this Justice? And it was at this time [in 2017] we discovered a number of things.

Notice *Desire of Ages* p. 761

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...

What does that mean? They are opposed to each other? How are they opposed to each other? Mercy means: give the sinner life. Justice means: give the sinner death. They’re inconsistent. They cannot be reconciled. Satan is the one that suggested this idea.

...and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned.

Why did Satan say this? Because he wanted to destroy the law of God. To say that the law was inconsistent. You’ve got to get rid of your ridiculous law, because now you’ve got this problem. Then he says,

Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;

What does that tell you about God’s character? If Satan is urging that every sin should be punished. What then was God’s character? If he’s having to urge this, then God obviously wasn’t doing it. Was he? Which means God wasn’t punishing every sin. Why would Satan have to urge

this? Satan is the one that said “every sin must be punished.” And therefore, what does that do to mercy, if every sin must be punished?

Max: Justice without mercy is revenge.

Pr. Adrian: Yes. And when God exalted His Son and made Him equal with Himself, who felt aggrieved by this? Satan. Satan felt that justice needed to be served. And the only way for God to make amends for His error in exalting His Son and making Him equal with Himself, was to kill His Son. That was the only thing that Satan would accept. He was a murderer from the beginning. Jesus said, John 8:44.

...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 exalted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed;

Imagine that, when man sinned Satan was doing a big jig and a big dance. What a lovely fellow!

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...

And why was Satan banished from heaven? Why was it impossible for Satan to come back to heaven?

Rhonda: Because the angels had rejected him and what he believed in.

Bill: And he wouldn't seek forgiveness.

Pr. Adrian: He wouldn't seek forgiveness, because he didn't believe in it. And of course...

Bill: He could have been forgiven.

Pr. Adrian: He could have been forgiven.

Bill: All of them could have been.

Pr. Adrian: But they didn't believe it, did they? So when you do not believe you can be forgiven, there is no more forgiveness of sin. It's

impossible to be forgiven if you don't believe you can be forgiven. And this is the difference between nearly half of the angels and a third of the angels. Because *Spirit of Prophecy, Volume One*, page 20-21 says nearly half of the angels were with Lucifer, but a third of them went with Lucifer, and the rest of them went back to God. They believed God could forgive. The rest of them did not. And this is the prison of Satan. The prison cage of Satan is the sense of condemnation that you cannot be forgiven. And that's what every one of us feels when judgments start to fall upon men and we know that we have sinned, we are in the prison of Satan because he's screaming into our ear: "You cannot be forgiven." And we believe it. And we also believe every sin must be punished. Therefore, the only way for us to live, and for us to be relieved of our sin, is that somebody has to die in order for us to live. This is what Satan has taught us.

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)

So Satan was the one that demanded that every sin should be punished. Satan was the one that said that mercy was inconsistent with justice.

So, this is a fascinating statement. When God destroys Satan at the end of the thousand years, what punishment does Satan receive?

Satan will be judged by his own idea of justice. It was his plea that every sin should meet its punishment.

We just read that in the *Desire of Ages*.

If God remitted the punishment, he said, He was not a God of truth and justice. Satan will meet the judgement which he said God should exercise. (MS 111, 1897)

Isn't that amazing?

Craig: It is.

Pr. Adrian: Why will Satan... Why will a fire come forth from the midst of Satan and burn him up and destroy him? Because that's what Satan demanded. Satan's own lies trap him and leave him to receive; as Jesus says in Matthew seven: "As you judge so shall you be judged, and with what measure you made it to others, so it will be measured back to you." (Matthew 7:2). Why will Satan suffer the longest? Because he has judged more than anybody else in the universe. He has condemned, he has judged, he has sought and planned the destruction of billions of people. That's why he will suffer the most. Because he judged the most without mercy, and therefore he will receive judgment without mercy. As it says, particularly of Babylon, poured out into the cup of his indignation, without mixture, meaning without mercy. Why? Because God gives to every man, to every angel, that which they have determined. And my heart says that's fair. That's completely fair, isn't it? That everybody receives what they have judged themselves. What goes around comes around. So when Satan is destroyed, it's not God's idea of justice that destroys him. It's Satan's idea of justice that destroys him. And all those that are destroyed with Satan have taken Satan's ideas of justice, and they have sat with Satan, and therefore they will receive the justice which they believe God should exercise. But none of this is God's character. It is their character. They receive what they have asked for. And we know this from the story in the wilderness, they kept saying: "God is going to take us. He's going to destroy us. He's going to kill us all. You brought us out into the wilderness to kill us." And He says: "As you have spoken in my ear, so I will do to you. Your carcasses will rot in the wilderness. (Num 14:28) Because that's what you believed." But did God do this to them? No. He simply hid His face and allowed to fall upon them that which they had determined that God would do. So He doesn't disappoint people. He gives to them that which they believe. They die thinking God is killing them. He lets them die thinking that because nothing could convince them otherwise, nothing could convince them that this wasn't who He was.

Now here's the point. If Satan believes that every sin must be punished. If Satan says that mercy is inconsistent with justice. Then what about man? *Great Controversy*, page 505.

God declares: "I will put enmity." This enmity is not naturally entertained. When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil, and he was in harmony, and not at variance, with Satan.

What does that mean? It means that he believes what Satan believes. He believes that every sin must be punished. He believes that mercy is inconsistent with justice. He believes that in order for sin to be forgiven, somebody has to die. We learnt this from Satan. How then can God save us, except to give to us what we believe? That's why he had to deliver up His only begotten Son. Because we believe, like Satan did, that every sin must be punished, and that mercy is inconsistent with justice, and that the only way justice will be satisfied and bow in reverence before the throne, is for somebody to die. The cross was required.

Rhonda: And that was even for the angels too, wasn't it?

Pr. Adrian: Colossians 1:20 "To reconcile, I say things in heaven as well as on earth." Because when Jesus died; it says on the same page, *Desire of Ages* p. 761, that Satan's mask or Satan's shroud was torn away. The angels finally saw what Satan was, and he fell as lightning from heaven. He could no longer go into the heavenly court, as there was no more sympathy for him in heaven. His plans were revealed to them and they no longer entertained his ideas. They knew that God was a God of mercy, and that God's justice; and justice is to do the right thing; God's justice was to show mercy. The right thing to do is to show mercy. And this is what God did.

There exists naturally no enmity between sinful man and the originator of sin. Both became evil through apostasy. The apostate is never at rest, except as he obtains sympathy and support by inducing others to follow his example. For this reason fallen angels and wicked men unite in desperate companionship.

Are the kings of the earth in desperate companionship with Satan? Well, if they were the ones that decided to kill up to half of the world's population over the next few years, isn't that desperate companionship with Satan?

Had not God specially interposed, Satan and man would have entered into an alliance against Heaven; and instead of cherishing enmity against Satan, the whole human family would have been united in opposition to God. (GC 505.2).

So the carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to the law of God. The carnal mind says, show no mercy. Have you ever heard that song? Show no mercy. As a young person, we used to play that all the time. Show no mercy. This is Satan. This is Satan's mind. So, of course, the only way that God could rescue us was to deliver up His Son. To assume the character of a judge, what does God have to do?

It reminds me, in some ways, of the story of the man that became convinced that he had ingested an egg that contained a serpent, and that serpent was within him, and was going to take over his mind and control him. And he was absolutely convinced that he was going to die and that he was possessed and controlled. And so he's like this, and [then] this doctor said, "I know what I'm going to do." And he gave him something that made him throw up, and he threw up. And then he threw this little object into the [vomit]. And he said, "See, there it is. You're free." And he was free, he was set free. His mind was freed from the deception, that the dragon had control of him. And it was violent. It was horrible. It was terrible. He had to throw up. It was terrible. He felt awful. But he got that thing out of him. So God has had to meet us where we are. It's the same with a person with dementia. Have you ever tried to reason with a person with dementia? Have you ever tried to convince them that they're wrong about something? You can't. You can't convince them. You have to go along. And it feels kind of weird that you have to go along with their nonsense, because they're not living in reality. And how do you stay in a relationship with someone if you continually oppose them and tell them that they're wrong? It's going to get quite heated, isn't it? So the only way to stay in a relationship with them is to allow them to believe that you agree with them. Aren't all of us demented? How does God get along with us?

Rhonda: He goes along with us.

Pr. Adrian: He has to. Yes. What did your [Lorelle's] mum do when you were small, and you were having dreams about lions in the room? She opened the window. She shewed the lions out. Closed the window. "They're gone now." Ahhh. Now I can go to sleep. God has to deal with us where we are. He has to meet us in our childish illusions. And the illusion that God demands death, that God – His mercy is inconsistent with justice. These are all Satan's ideas that we have believed and ingested, and God has to meet us where we are. And that's why He had to deliver up His Son for us. He had to assume the character of a judge in order to get us to throw this idea up. And spew it out. And for us to believe that we were forgiven. Because we thought, this is it, we're doomed, we're – you know – the dragon's got me, I'm done.

Lorelle: And then I guess He has to wait till we are adults. For me, I can understand I didn't have lions in the room that night, now. But back then, even a year later, if you tried to convince me, I would have said, No they were real.

Pr. Adrian: Yes. We're under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father, that we come of age. And then we can understand. In this message we are invited to come into manhood and womanhood and to understand the truth of childish foolishness and the lies that we have believed about the character of our Father.

So now let's come to this process. *Desire of Ages* p. 686

He went a little distance from them—not so far but that they could both see and hear Him—and fell prostrate upon the ground. He felt that by sin He was being separated from His Father. The gulf was so broad, so black, so deep, that His spirit shuddered before it. This agony He must not exert His divine power to escape.

Why must he not exert His divine power to escape this?

Craig: Because He must go through it for us.

Pr. Adrian: He must go through it for us. It must be seen that He was smashed to pieces for us to believe that God would forgive us.

As man He must suffer the consequences of man's sin.

Why must He? Because Satan said, every sin must be punished, not God. Satan.

As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression.
(DA 686.3)

What is the wrath of God against transgression? Bill mentioned this before.

Deuteronomy 31:17 (NKJV). Then my anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will also forsake them...

Why did Jesus say, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?' Because we needed to hear those words. We needed to know that God smashed Him. In order for us to get the serpent's egg out of us to cause us to throw up, and believe that we could be forgiven. God assumed the character of a judge. Jesus assumed the position of one that was forsaken – God-forsaken! We had to see that he was God-forsaken.

...and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured.

Was Jesus devoured on the cross? Yes, He was.

And many evils and troubles shall befall them...

Did many evils? He had to be whipped. He had to be beaten. He had to be slapped. He had to be mocked. Every evil thing had to be heaped upon Him before we would believe that God would forgive us. How sick is that? And yet God did it. God was willing to do this to save us in our delusion. Don't the attributes of God that appear terrifying now become beautiful and attractive? Don't we see the loving Father meeting us in our demented, deluded state and helping us to throw up from the dragon that is within us. It's beautiful, isn't it?

Bill: And the love of Christ.

Pr. Adrian: The love of Christ, that He was willing.

Bill: He asked for it.

Pr. Adrian: That He was asking His Father, let Me do this for Our children. Isn't it beautiful?

Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that he might redeem us from the condemnation of the law.

Because Satan had said, every sin must be punished.

The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation.

Why did all the darkness appear? It says in the *Desire of Ages* that lightning bolts seemed to be striking the cross. (DA 754.3) Why? Because we had to see that all of the condemnation upon ourselves was put upon somebody else. This was the only way we could believe that we could be relieved.

Rhonda: So we had to see the condemnation of God, thinking that it was God.

Pr. Adrian: Yes. Because we thought, that's what God thought towards us. And we had to see what we thought that God thought towards us, put on somebody else, before we could believe that we could be forgiven. What lengths God has gone to, to save us.

All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face.

He was not allowed to see the Father's reconciling face, because if He did, we would not believe we could be forgiven. He had to be cut off. He was cut off for our sakes.

The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man.

Not throughout the millennia, not throughout the millions of years of eternity, will we ever understand what Christ went through. We will spend the rest of eternity trying to understand the cross. And what a joy that will be.

So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.
(DA 753.1)

And let's remember, he had a bit of physical pain!

Christ had to become our substitute and surety. The emphasis on the word "our." Not God's. But our substitute, which we had determined because we were under the influence of Satan. And every man that comes to the cross as a sinner, comes to the cross with the mind of Satan. You do not come to the cross with the mind of Christ. You come to the cross as a sinner under the control of Satan himself. But even Satan, justice is drawn. Justice is drawn. Your sense of justice draws you to the cross. You cannot help but be drawn to it. "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Myself." That is the mystery of the cross, beautifully expressed.

And that's the end of the quotes. So let's come back to Numbers 25. Christ was slain from the foundation of the world. So we read in verse one it says, Numbers 25,

And Israel abode in Shittim. (Numbers 25:1)

I just love the play on words there in English. It sounds so good, doesn't it? They were really in the toilet bowl, weren't they? It just appeals to my, you know... it's just like, it's perfect?

Lorelle: Wasn't the wood that they used for [the sanctuary] shittim wood?

Pr. Adrian: Acacia wood. The other word for it [shittim wood] is acacia. We've blinged it up.

...and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. (Numbers 25:1)

How much of Israel. People. That's many of them, isn't it? A majority were involved in this. So when the plague begins to fall and people begin to die, there is a sense of condemnation on the whole assembly. There is a feeling of excommunication from God. So when they're feeling this, how does God convince them that they can be forgiven? They have the mindset every sin must be punished, so there must be punishment of sin. So when God says, in verse four:

And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel. (Numbers 25:4)

Why did God have to deliver up these men? Because it was the only way that Israel could believe they could be forgiven. God would have been willing to forgive these men. But Israel wasn't.

Lorelle: But even hanging up those people, it wasn't enough until Phinehas did what he did.

Pr. Adrian: So it was the beginning process, wasn't it. Deal with the leaders. And of course we know the reason for all the ills in Australia, is because our political leaders, isn't it? They are responsible for all the evil in Australia, aren't they?

Craig: Everything we do. Yes.

Pr. Adrian: Everything we do, they are responsible for. Hang them up!

Craig: Well, until they get out of power.

Pr. Adrian: Well, vote them out. Get rid of them. Isn't that human nature: to blame, to blame the leaders? Make them accountable. We need a substitute. Every sin must be punished. Somebody must die to pay for our transgression.

Evelyn: In the Australian, Victorian bushfires, the woman fire-brigade leader, she was hounded because she was the leader.

Pr. Adrian: Yes, all the sins of Australia brought about these fires, and suddenly the leader of the fire department is responsible for everything! How ridiculous!

Craig: She's meant to save us.

Pr. Adrian: She's meant to save us. So you have to crucify the leader in order to get atonement. You've got to blame somebody else. That's what happens.

So, these men had to be offered up. But when Zimri comes in and he's drunk, he comes in. And it's quite interesting that, I've said this before, that the word Zimri means musical, and the word Cosby, the woman means falsehood, false music. So he comes waltzing in with his music on his shoulder, and he's playing Def Leppard or AC/DC as he comes walking in – false music. He's playing the music, he's completely drunk. And all the people go, "This is it. This is it! We can put all of our sin on this man, and we will be absolved of our sin and our guilt and it will all be relieved of us. We have found ourselves a substitute. Someone that epitomises evil and sin, and we can relieve ourselves and put it all on him." So, of course Phinehas runs the javelin through them and the people go, "Okay, we're good now." So God stops the plague, because they believe now that everything's all right. But the only way they could believe everything was all right is for every sin to be punished. And Zimri becomes the representative, in a negative sense, he becomes one of the thieves on the cross beside Christ. Because, as we said yesterday, it wasn't only for atonement. It's not just the guilty that must die, but it's the innocent that must die. And remember we said yesterday, because Adam in the beginning said, "You! The woman whom You gave to be with me!" God was innocent in the person of Jesus, and the woman was guilty. So the guilty must die and the innocent must die.

Okay. So, what is Phinehas offered? He's offered an everlasting priesthood. Who has the everlasting priesthood? Christ. So in the case of Phinehas, he kills somebody else and makes them the victim. And then, because he stops the plague, he's elevated to eternal priesthood. And the people say, "Yes, you're our priest. You stopped the plague.

You saved us.” But isn’t that how Christianity sees Christ? God’s wrath was brought down upon His Son. He took it Himself. And then He was raised from the dead. Give Him an everlasting priesthood. Make Him the one to intercede between us.

So, in the story of Numbers 25, we see the whole process of penal substitution. The whole mind process of man is played out in this story. God assumes towards man the character of a judge divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a Father. And as we said, what does it say? Verse 13,

And he shall have it, and his seed after him, *even* the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement **for** the children of Israel. (Numbers 25:13)

The only way that Israel could believe they could be forgiven was for a representative to die in their place. And Phinehas as the priest, as the mediator, he mediated this peace by sacrificing Zimri and Cosby. And they were destroyed, and peace came back to Israel.

But still it wasn’t enough. And the counterpart to Numbers 25 is Numbers 31. And what happens in Numbers 31? Because who was the instigator of this whole party? Who invited them to the party? Balaam invited them, and the Midianites. And so they had to kill the Midianites. And I’m not going to read through the story now. You can read it later. But, not only did the guilty have to suffer, so they killed all the men; and then they come back and said, “Okay, we’ve done the job. We sorted the Midianites out.” And when they come back, Moses is really angry. And he says, why have you kept the women alive? And then he says, “Kill all the women that have known a man.” And basically, well, if all the men are gone and all the women have known a man are gone, what are you going to do with the women that haven’t known a man? Well, you keep them for yourself. Won’t you? How wonderful. And then he says, “Kill all the male children.” Are those children guilty? They are innocent. So the male children of Midian become the representative of Christ on the cross. Don’t they? And though they are the relatives, okay they’ve got four generations of sin. I said this yesterday. But relatively

speaking, what part did they play in seducing Israel? Nothing. Zero. They had nothing to do with it. They were completely innocent of the guilt of this transgression, and yet they were put to death. And so in the death of the leaders of Israel, of Zimri and Cosby, in the death of the Midianite men, and women who had known a man, you have the two thieves on either side of the cross, and in the middle you have the Midianite children, the innocent. And this completes the atonement. And Israel becomes satisfied now that God will forgive them.

Can you see it in this perspective? Can you see the issue of atonement and how man needs this understanding? And that God is forced, every time that He allows someone to die. God, because He says, "I don't want sacrifice an offering. I don't want this, but you want it." Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. This is what Satan says, and man has embraced this. And God has to meet us where we are and give to us what we believe, in order for us to believe that God would forgive us.

And what about the angels that [originally] went with Satan in heaven? [And then returned]. The 16% that [originally] went with Satan and believed him. Who had to die for them? No-one! Because they simply believed God. They spoke to the rock. No rock had to be struck. They only had to speak to the rock, and they were forgiven of what they had done.

So, I hope we've applied eye salve, to say that we can see that the issue of atonement and what man believes in harmony with Satan, why these people needed to die. **The mystery of the cross explains every other mystery, all the stories of the Old Testament. Because every time violence occurs and people die, it's because some form of atonement is required and man needs this atonement.** We see this, as we said yesterday, in the death of the firstborn in Egypt. I think I was mentioning this yesterday, or did we mention it only at the table? I think I mentioned in the sermon yesterday about I will repeat this, that the death of the firstborn in Egypt was the only thing that allowed Pharaoh, who represents Satan, to release the children of Israel. The only thing that releases us from the captivity of Satan is the death of the firstborn,

because that's what's programmed into our DNA. That's what we understand. Pharaoh, exalted, moves from his throne. He's drawn to the cross, and he bows in reverence before the cross, in the death of his own son. As well as the death of all the firstborn of Egypt. And as we said yesterday, the adults obviously guilty, the children innocent. The death of the guilty and the innocent is what's required to release the human mind from the control of Satan. And to believe that you can be forgiven. Is that beautiful?

...So, back to the principle of atonement, and particularly those last two stories were very troubling to me. The word atonement occurs in both of those stories. They're both stories of atonement and how man is satisfied through the death of a substitute. That is why God had to allow these things to happen, so that we could believe we could be forgiven. All right. Shall we pray?

Father, we thank You for the eye salve. You said that Laodicea needed eye salve. And I pray that those listening and those that will listen, will discern in these thoughts a key to unlock the violence, much of the violence of the Old Testament. Lord, help us to continually be relieved of the need for condemnation, both of ourselves and of others. We thank You that through the cross of Christ, that You met us in our demented state, and You opened a door in our mind to believe that we could be forgiven according to our own understanding. Thank You for all that You have gone through, and Lord Jesus that You were willing to do this for us to go through unspeakable horror just so that we could believe that You would forgive us. We want to take hold of this today, and to believe and to know that there is no darkness in You at all. That You are light and light only. We thank You in Jesus' name. Amen.

MYSTERY OF THE CROSS

Is it possible that man, in his fallen condition has completely misunderstood the Cross? Have we been blinded to its true meaning?

Is it's God's justice that demands death, the One who is the source of life? Can sweet and bitter water flow from the same fountain?

Does not the Prophet Isaiah tell us that men reject Christ but that they would say He was smitten of God and afflicted?

This presentation invites you to look at things from another perspective, that will reveal our Heavenly Father as manifesting such unfathomable love, that will cause the Cross to indeed draw all men to Christ, and from Christ to the Father.