

What is God's Strange Act?

An Angry and Wrathful God

After reading some passages in the Bible many people doubt that being saved and going to heaven would actually be a good thing.

Gen 6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

Deut 29:23 And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:

Isa 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

Psa 78:47-51 He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost. (48) He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. (49) He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them. (50) He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence; (51) And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham:

Rev 14:9-11 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, (10) The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: (11) And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

These are only a small sample of the texts that talk about the fierce anger of the Lord and the millions upon millions of people that appear to have been slaughtered by God after He apparently could not hold back His fierce anger anymore. Add to this puzzle the instruction that God gave to Moses when Israel gathered at Mount Sinai.

Ex 19:12-13 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: (13) There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

What was the reason given for this instruction?

Exo 19:18-22 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. (19) And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. (20) And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. (21) And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. (22) And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.

The uninformed reader would not find it too hard to come to the conclusion that God has an anger

management problem and needs to put measures in place to save people from His own volatile nature that can explode and destroy people if they are not careful. How do we reconcile these biblical accounts with statements such as these?

Exo 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

Jer 31:3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

These two sets of texts appear to be in total conflict with each other. Is it important to resolve this conflict? If we don't then we will live with the constant fear of a vengeful God ready to burst forth and kill us or we will mentally kill Him by choosing to believe that God does not exist. Conversely, we may think that because God is love He will simply save everyone. Is this a case of out of the frying pan and into the fire? While it is completely understandable to deny the existence of an inconsistent, tyrannical God, are we sure that we are reading things correctly, and could we be missing part of the story?

God's Thoughts Not Our Thoughts

It is self-evident that we can only draw conclusions from the information that we have before us. It is a natural weakness for humanity to draw conclusions before we have sufficient information. As the wise man Solomon tells us:

Pro 18:13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

Pro 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

This question requires patience to put the pieces together carefully. As the prophet Isaiah wrote:

Isa 55:7-9 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (8) For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. (9) For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Before we can assess the character of God fairly we must confess that we have inherited a natural disposition to hate Him. Therefore His thoughts and manner of dealing with us often seem mysterious and confusing.

Rom 8:6-7 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (7) Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

1 Cor 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The carnal or natural man takes the words of God, twists them and turns them against Him. He does this because his heart is at war with God and His commandments. Remember that Satan commenced his war with God through a process of seeking to improve and help His government.

The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. PP 42

When Adam and Eve accepted the words of Satan through the serpent they inherited his natural enmity towards God. This is why they hid from Him in the garden when He came to them. We see this enmity towards God manifested in the natural mistrust of human government. The default attitude is that

government wishes to hurt you. While in many cases this is certainly true it is also true that nations foster this expectation in its children and often end up prophesying the characteristics of its future leaders.

God's Strange Act?

One way that people have tried to resolve the tension between a loving and a vengeful God is to suggest that God is typically loving in nature, but in very extreme circumstances He will change for a brief moment in order to restore harmony to the Universe. This is referred to as His strange work. It is a work that appears strange to an otherwise loving God. On the other hand such a work seems very natural to us. Enduring suffering from another person for a time and then lashing out in fury and wrath to destroy them is perfectly normal for humanity and is not strange at all.

So does God do something strange for Himself, but it would be very natural for us? Does He become like men in order to deal with His enemies? This in itself is strange. Christ calls Satan a murderer from the beginning, (John 8:44). Does God have the final word by becoming the murderer in the end? Once a man kills another man he is considered a murderer till the end of His life. Having once engaged in the act of murder, it becomes a part of his character. He may repent and be sorry and ask forgiveness and change his ways, but he still murdered, and therefore is known as a man who murdered. How does this impact the eternal God, the One who never dies? If God is personally responsible for the deaths of millions and millions of people then by definition He is a murderer; it becomes part of His character and personality. Once having raised the knife or lighting fire on men's bodies, His character is changed into that of a killer. How can it be said that the last enemy to be conquered is death if death sits upon the throne? Does not death then triumph? As the saved inhabitants of the Universe behold a picture of God as one who raises His mighty arm against His enemies to personally kill them, could He decide to do it again in the future? And if death in the person of God reigns upon the throne then in beholding such a God would we not be transformed into the same image? Does this not come to the very centre of the human dilemma; we die because we behold death in the God we believe in? Think it through carefully.

By Beholding We Are Changed

2 Cor 3:18 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.

What do we behold when we look into the eyes of the Lord by faith? Do we see death in His Person? Do we see a sword in His hand raised to slay the rebellious? Then in beholding this, we shall do likewise. Like the Israelites in the wilderness who believed God wanted to kill them, we also die because we believe in a God of death and destruction. Have we not inherited this from our first parents? How did they interpret these words?

Gen 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Do we read this to mean that "If you touch my tree I will kill you!" or could this possibly be read this way:

In choosing to take an action outside of my will, you believe that I do not have your best interest at heart, and as I am your only life, (Deut 30:20; Col 3:4), in turning from me you are turning towards death.

The wise man expressed it this way:

Pro 8:36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

In twisting the words of God in the garden to mean that God will kill the transgressor, man enthroned

death and crowned its author Satan with the rulership of the Universe. Every time we attribute the desire to kill to God, we ensure our own destruction for by beholding we are changed. This is exactly what happened to Israel.

Num 14:2-3 And all the **children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!** (3) And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

Num 14:27-29 How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. (28) **Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you:** (29) **Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness;** and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,

Every sinner carries the knowledge in himself that he is worthy of death.

Rom 1:28-32 **And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind,** to do those things which are not convenient; (29) Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, (30) Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, (31) Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: (32) **Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death,** not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Deep down inside we know that as sinners we are worthy of death, and our often self-destructive lives reveal this. Yet, in our rebellious minds we attribute death to a work that God does.

James 1:14-15 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. (15) Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and **sin**, when it is finished, **bringeth forth death.**

Instead of accepting that it is our sin that brings death, we choose rather to believe that God brings forth death and therefore can form a grudge against Him and become reprobate in our minds. In refusing to accept that death is completely his own doing, man shifts the work of destruction from himself to God. This kind of thinking actually creates in our minds a false god, a false idol. Thus we enthrone in our minds this idol and pass this idolatry to the next generation so they also can worship death and die. God is the author of life only. Satan is the author of death.

John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning,...

Psa 4:2 How long, O you sons of men, Will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness And seek falsehood? (NKJV)

1 John 1:5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself. Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest. COL 84

God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of

God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. GC 36

The Time of Jacob's Trouble

Now that we have provided an overview of this subject, let us now consider some details of this in Scripture. Let us carefully consider the Bible text that speaks of God's strange act during the time of Jacob's trouble just before the Second Coming of Christ.

Isa 28:21 For the LORD shall **rise up** as in mount **Perazim**, he shall be **wroth** as in the valley of **Gibeon**, that he may do his work, his **strange work**; and bring to pass his act, his **strange act**.

The context for this passage relates to the time when Christ shall cease His work of intercession in the Heavenly Sanctuary.

God's judgments will be visited upon those who are seeking to oppress and destroy His people. His long forbearance with the wicked emboldens men in transgression, but their punishment is nonetheless certain and terrible because it is long delayed. "**The Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act.**" Isaiah 28:21. To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Ezekiel 33:11. The Lord is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, . . . forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Yet He will "by no means clear the guilty." "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked." Exodus 34:6, 7; Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord's reluctance to execute justice. The nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God's account, will finally drink the cup of wrath unmixed with mercy. **When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark** (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out. GC 627

We note that the rising up of the Lord in Isa 28:21 is a rising up to defend His people against those who wish to destroy them. This point is also mentioned in Daniel 12.

Dan 12:1 And at that time **shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people**: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

So this strange work that is performed relates to Christ's standing up in a work of protection for His people. What else can we learn of this time when Jesus ceases His work of intercession?

Then I saw that Jesus would not leave the most holy place until every case was decided either for salvation or destruction, and that the wrath of God could not come until Jesus had finished His work in the most holy place, laid off His priestly attire, and clothed Himself with the garments of vengeance. Then Jesus will step out from between the Father and man, and God will keep silence no longer, but pour out His wrath on those who have rejected His truth. **I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead were separate and distinct, one following the other**, also that Michael had not stood up, and that the time of trouble, such as never was, had not yet commenced. The nations are now getting angry, but **when our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and then the seven last plagues will be poured out.**

I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues. These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us,

the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay [37] the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. **This was the time of Jacob's trouble.** EW 36,37

When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. **The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended.** The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. **The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one.** Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old. {GC 614.1}

When Jesus leaves the Sanctuary, the four angels that hold back the four winds, release them. This gives Satan total control over the wicked which allows Satan to plunge the world into one great final trouble. We note carefully what is the process by which God's patience or long suffering is ended: "The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent." GC 614

The Sword of the Lord

The last drops of the Spirit of God are finally withdrawn after continual rejection and resistance. The Spirit symbolised by water is dried up in the wicked, and the soul is completely parched. It is highly significant that the word for *sword* in the Old Testament also means *drought*.

Joshua 5:13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his **sword drawn in his hand:** and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?

Chereb, kheh'-reb

From H2717; **drought**; also a cutting instrument (from its destructive effect), as a knife, sword, or other sharp implement: - axe, dagger, knife, mattock, sword, tool.

The Sword of the Lord is the Word of God.

Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, **and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:**

Rev 1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: **and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword:** and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

Isa 66:16 **For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh:** and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

2 Cor 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, **we do not war after the flesh:** (4) (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) (5) **Casting down imaginations,** and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;**

Heb 4:12 **For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword,** piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

All heaven bent low to behold and to adore the wisdom of matchless, incomprehensible love. Lost in wonder, the apostles exclaimed, "Herein is love." They grasped the imparted gift. And what followed? **The sword of the Spirit, newly edged with power and bathed in the lightnings of heaven,** cut its way through unbelief. Thousands were converted in a day. {AA 38.1}

Our Lord Jesus does not use a physical sword. His Word is sharper than any two edged sword. He uses His Word to cut through unbelief with tender love, and with the same Word He can reluctantly withdraw His Spirit after prolonged and determined resistance, and the soul immediately dries up, hardens and is parched. Without protection from Satan the soul is totally demon possessed to be used according to Satan's will. Jesus sent a warning to Israel by His cursing of the fig tree.

Christ uttered against it a **withering curse**. "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever," He said. The next morning, as the Saviour and His disciples were again on their way to the city, **the blasted branches and drooping leaves attracted their attention**. "Master," said Peter, "behold, **the fig tree which Thou cursedst is withered away**." {DA 582.1}

Christ's act in cursing the fig tree had astonished the disciples. It seemed to them unlike His ways and works. Often they had heard Him declare that He came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. They remembered His words, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke 9:56. His wonderful works had been done to restore, never to destroy. The disciples had known Him only as the Restorer, the Healer. This act stood alone. What was its purpose? they questioned. {DA 582.2}

God "delighteth in mercy." "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Micah 7:18; Ezekiel 33:11. To Him the work of destruction and the denunciation of judgment is a "strange work." Isaiah 28:21. **But it is in mercy and love that He lifts the veil from the future, and reveals to men the results of a course of sin**. {DA 582.3}

The cursing of the fig tree was an acted parable. That barren tree, flaunting its pretentious foliage in the very face of Christ, was a symbol of the Jewish nation. The Saviour desired to make plain to His disciples the cause and the certainty of Israel's doom. For this purpose He invested the tree with moral qualities, and made it the expositor of divine truth. {DA 582.4}

The curse upon the fig tree was the complete removal of water from it. This was a parable showing what was about to happen to the nation of Israel. By the command or word of God, the ministering spirits or holy angels that watched over the nation were withdrawn. The Spirit of Christ departed creating a terrible drought or sword in the souls of the men of Israel.

Many times, like Nicodemus, when Christ speaks of spiritual things we are tempted to think of earthly things. Christ does not wield a physical sword but rather a spiritual one and with a simple command a whole nation was dried up of the Spirit and left desolate. Here is that sword in action:

Matt 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

In that instant, the heavenly host immediately withdrew. The spiritual muscles and sinews of the nation were instantly parched and the spiritual annihilation of that nation was complete as Satan took full control of its inhabitants who rejected the Messiah. When Jesus left the temple, the spiritual slaughter of the nation was complete. Through Christ's standing in the gap and His death on the cross, it would be another 40 years before the physical slaughter would follow. The invisible seed would bare its visible fruit with devastating results. As we have been told, the destruction of Jerusalem is an example of the end of the world.

As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old. {GC 614.1}

What is helpful about the passage in Isaiah 28:21 is that the actions of standing up and of being wroth are given with Old Testament examples.

the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim,
he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon,

Mount Perazim

The story of Mount Perazim is found in Second Samuel.

2 Sam 5:17-21 But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold. (18) The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. (19) And David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand. (20) And David came to **Baalperazim**, [H1188 – plural of possessor of breaches] and David smote them there, and said, **The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baalperazim.** (21) And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.

When the Philistines heard that David was made King they determined to destroy him and Israel. David turned to the Lord for help, and we are told that the Lord broke forth upon the enemies of David as a breach or gap in the waters. This is the reason it was called Baalperazim or possessor of the breaches. The dividing of the waters at the Red Sea was also a breach created from Israel's deliverance.

Brown, Driver and Briggs Definition:

Perazim = "breaches"

1) a mountain in Palestine

1a) possibly the same as 'Baal-perazim' which was the scene of a victory of David over the Philistines located in the valley of Rephaim, south of Jerusalem, on the road to Bethlehem.

Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon: rupture, **breach of a wall.** – I Kings 11:27, a metaphor taken from besiegers who rush into a city through breaches in the wall in great numbers and with great violence.

The breach in the waters is the withdrawal of the Spirit of God. When God withdraws His Spirit it creates a gap in the hedge of protection. When the Philistines heard the sound like thunder through the tops of the mulberry trees it put them into a terror.

2 Sam 5:24 And let it be, when thou hearest the **sound** [H6963 – to call, voice, thunder, yell] of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

The same word is used here:

Psa 18:13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his **voice**; [H6963] hail stones and coals of fire.

All sense of valour departed, and great fear took hold of them. Caleb and Joshua in their day also knew that a breach had been created with the Canaanites when they said:

Num 14:9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: **their defence is departed** from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.

Since David placed his complete trust in the Lord, the angels of the Lord encamped about him and his men and delivered them. It was impossible for Satan to break through the wall of defence. We know that Satan had total control of the Philistines because there was a breach in the waters, and whatever there was of the Spirit of God that had remained with them was now gone. The Captain of the Lord's host had spoken

the Word for the angels to depart from protecting the Philistines. The thunder in the tops of the trees terrified them and caused great confusion.

A breach in waters is also an allusion to birth. The seeds that the Philistines had sown were now going to give birth through the breaking of the waters.

Gen 38:29 And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez.

The Bible says that David smote the Philistines. But it was never the Lord's original intention for Israel to use the sword.

The Lord had never commanded them to 'go up and fight.' **It was not His purpose that they should gain the land by warfare**, but by strict obedience to His commands. PP 392

Once Israel took the sword, the Lord still worked with them despite this failure. The Lord did not cast off Abraham when he took Hagar as his second wife even though it caused great problems down to this very day. David was not able to build the house of God because he was a man of blood, but God still worked with him because He knew this practice had been inherited from the days of Abraham when he saved his nephew Lot.

1 Chron 22:8 But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.

The victory of David was partly a punishment of sin with sin.

God Himself will take the case in hand. His restraining power will be in a measure removed from the agencies of evil, so that a train of circumstances will arise which will punish sin with sin. {PP 728.1}

It would be a mistake to assume that when a person is given divine aid that it validates all his actions. David was threatened with extermination by the Philistines and the Lord stood up to help him; yet, it was not until Christ came to this earth that the sword was removed from the true Church of God when Christ stated:

Matt 26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Centuries of Israelite history made it hard for the disciples to understand Christ's teaching. When He spoke of the spiritual they often thought of the physical.

Luke 22:36-38 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. (37) For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. (38) And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

Jesus said it is enough, meaning that we have had enough of that line of thinking. For more on the subject of the sword and Israel see the booklet *Serpent Revealed in Canaan Conquest*.

The key point about Perazim is there was a breach of the waters indicating a withdrawal of the Spirit of God by the command of God. This results in a drought or sword in the soul. Israel also experienced this breach of the Spirit of God due to their sins. On one occasion they were saved because Moses stood in that gap.

Psa 106:23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them, [because of Golden Calf – Broke Commandments] had not Moses his chosen stood [H5975] before him in the breach,[H6556 Perets] to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.

The collective apostasy by Israel around the Golden Calf caused a breach in the Spirit which prepared the way for Satan to be able to take complete control of all those involved in the apostasy. The only thing that stood between these people and death was the pleading of Moses on their behalf. In asking the Lord to continue to protect them when they no longer deserved it was an incredible mercy. They had insulted Him, rejected Him and chosen another master in the worship of the golden idol. They were telling the Lord we want to serve this god and not you. He might have respected their request and left but they all would have died. The Spirit of Christ in Moses pled for their lives. It is not that the Lord needs convincing, but mercy that is not requested is not perceived as being needed and therefore not appreciated.

The Lord is seeking for men and women to allow the Spirit of Christ to dwell in them to intercede before Him for mercy. When we sense the need for mercy and ask then He will give it because He is so merciful. But if there is no one asking, then sadly He must command His angels to no longer protect them and allow Satan to take full control, thus causing complete destruction.

What Causes the Breach or Gap in the Wall?

Isa 30:8-14 Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: (9) That this is a [1] rebellious people, [2] lying children, [3] children that **will not hear the law of the LORD:** (10) [4] Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, **Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:** (11) Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. (12) Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, [5] Because ye **despise this word**, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: (13) Therefore this **iniquity** shall be to you as a **breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.** (14) And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water *withal* out of the pit.

Eze 22:25-31 There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; [1] they have **devoured souls; they have taken the treasure** and precious things; they have **made her many widows** in the midst thereof. (26) [2] Her priests have **violated my law**, and have [3] **profaned mine holy things:** they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and [4] have **hid their eyes from my sabbaths**, and I am profaned among them. (27) [5] Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get **dishonest gain**. (28) And [6] her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and **divining lies** unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. (29) [7] The people of the land **have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy:** yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. (30) **And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it:** but I found none. (31) **Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.**

These are the key points that create a gap in the wall:

1. Taking advantage of people for personal gain
2. Violating the Law, rebellion
3. Profaning holy things, mixing sacred and common
4. Hiding their eyes from the Sabbaths
5. Leaders are involved in dishonest gain
6. Prophetic leaders tell lies
7. Oppress the poor and needy

The Law of God provides a hedge of protection for God's people. When people violate the commandments of God they create a breach in the wall. The call to the worship of the Lord of the Sabbath is a key part of repairing the breach.

Isa 58:12-14 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; **and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.** (13) If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

The process of how the breach occurs is carefully explained as follows:

I was shown that the time was in the near future that these whom God had warned and reprov'd and given great light but they would not correct their ways and follow the light, He would remove from them that heavenly protection which had preserved them from Satan's cruel power; the Lord would surely leave them to themselves to follow the judgment and counsels of their own wisdom; they would be simply left to themselves, and the protection of God be withdrawn from them, and they would not be shielded from the workings of Satan; that none of finite judgment and foresight can have any power to conceive of the care God has exercised through His angels over the children of men in their travels, in their own houses, in their eating and drinking. Wherever they are, His eye is upon them. They are preserved from a thousand dangers, all to them unseen. Satan has laid snares, but the Lord is constantly at work to save His people from them.

But [from] those who have no sense of the goodness and mercy of God, [those] who refuse His merciful warnings, who reject His counsels to reach the highest standard of Bible requirements, who do despite to the Spirit of grace, the Lord would remove His protecting power. I was shown that Satan would entangle and then destroy, if he could, the souls he had tempted. **God will bear long, but there is a bound to His mercy, a line which marks His mercy and His justice.**

I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way: They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reprov's, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them . [A breach created] It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey. And storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, if he is not restrained, we shall see more terrible manifestations of his power than we have ever dreamed of. 14MR 3

This is the process that was followed with the plagues of Egypt.

Psa 78:43-50 How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan: (44) And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink. (45) He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them. (46) He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust. (47) He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost. (48) He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. (49) **He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.** (50) He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but **gave their life over** to the pestilence; [destroying]

We note carefully verse 49 above. It says that God *sent* evil angels among them. Note the Hebrew word for *sending*:

H4917 mish-lakh'-ath

Feminine of H4916; a mission, that is, (abstractly and favorable) **release**, or (concretely and unfavorable) an army: - discharge, sending.

The Anger and Wrath of God

So this verse can be read as the Lord releasing evil angels among them. This is exactly what the breach does. The Spirit of God withdraws and evil angels are released to do their work unhindered. Notice the definition of anger, wrath and indignation in the verses above:

Anger = releasing evil angels among them

Anger = not sparing their soul from death

Anger = giving them over to pestilence or destruction. (Rom 1:24,26,28).

We remember that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways. Is it possible that we have interpreted God's anger as we would be angry when people reject us and treat us badly? Look at the Hebrew meaning of the word for anger in Ps 78:49:

H639 *af*

From H599; properly the **nose or nostril**; hence the face, and occasionally a person; also (**from the rapid breathing in passion**) ire: - **anger** (-gry), + before, countenance, face, + forbearing, forehead, + [**long-**]**suffering**, nose, nostril, snout, X worthy, wrath.

The word for anger means *nose* or *nostril* in the sense of rapid breathing from intensity of feeling. This can be either anger or grief in the form of long suffering. This same word is used as follows:

Exo 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, **long**[H750] **suffering**,[H639] and abundant in goodness and truth,

Can you imagine our dear heavenly Father coming to the point where He knows the time has come to let the people have their own will? As He issues the command His breath in His nostrils increases in the grief of knowing that these people are going to suffer at the hands of Satan and his angels. Yet, He must respect their choice and allow them to have the master they have chosen.

As we come back to Isaiah 28:21 we get the same thought expressed through the word *wroth*.

Isa 28:21 For the LORD shall **rise up** as in mount **Perazim**, he shall be **wroth** [H7264] as in the valley of **Gibeon**, that he may do his work, his **strange work**; and bring to pass his act, his **strange act**.

[H7264] Wroth *râgaz*

A primitive root; **to quiver** (with any violent emotion, **especially anger or fear**): - be afraid, stand in awe, disquiet, fall out, fret, move, provoke, quake, rage, shake, tremble, trouble, be wroth.

Gensenius Hebrew Lexicon: moved, disturbed, to be moved with grief

The word *wroth* can mean either *angry* or *fearful*. The context determines the meaning which in this case depends on how well the person is known. The "wroth" or wrath that God felt can be seen in the life of Jesus when He overlooked Jerusalem and exclaimed "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem." Ellen White describes the scene:

Divine pity marked the countenance of the Son of God as He cast one lingering look upon the temple and then upon His hearers. In a voice choked by deep anguish of heart and bitter tears He exclaimed, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often

would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" **This is the separation struggle. In the lamentation of Christ the very heart of God is pouring itself forth. It is the mysterious farewell of the long-suffering love of the Deity.** {DA 620.1}

The Majesty of heaven in tears! the Son of the infinite God troubled in spirit, bowed down with anguish! The scene filled all heaven with wonder. That scene reveals to us the exceeding sinfulness of sin; it shows how hard a task it is, even for Infinite Power, to save the guilty from the consequences of transgressing the law of God. GC 22

This is the *wroth* or *quivering* of God as manifested in His Son. It is not a God quivering with vengeful rage but a heartbroken Father bowed down with grief. (Hosea 11:8). The Hebrew word for *wroth* allows the reader to determine what is the quivering of God. The Son of God reveals that it is the quivering of grief and anguish for the lost.

Just before Christ declared the temple desolate, he covered a list of sins that show that Israel had created a breach.

Points at Issue that Created the Breach

Ezek 22:25-31	Matt 23
1. Taking advantage of people for personal gain	Mat 23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.
2. Violating the Law	Mat 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law , judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.
3. Profaning holy things. Mixing sacred and common	Mat 23:16-20 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! (17) Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? ... (19) Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? (20) Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.
4. Hiding their eyes from the Sabbaths	Matt 23:4. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne , and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.
5. Leaders are involved in dishonest gain	Mat 23:16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!
6. Prophetic leaders tell lies	Mat 23:28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.
7. Oppress the poor and needy	Mat 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses , and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Note carefully how Jesus dealt with the Jewish nation. He is the supreme revelation of the Father.

John 14:6-10 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (7) **If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also:** and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. (8) Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. (9) Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? **he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;** and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? (10) Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Jesus bore evidence of His divine authority. He taught, He warned, and He pleaded with the leaders and the people, and finally He sorrowfully gave them up. This is the pattern of how our Father deals with rebellious sinners.

Men cannot with impunity reject the warning which God in mercy sends them. A message was sent from heaven to the world in Noah's day, and their salvation depended upon the manner in which they treated that message. **Because they rejected the warning, the Spirit of God was withdrawn from the sinful race,** [breach was made] **and they perished in the waters of the Flood.** In the time of Abraham, mercy ceased to plead with **the guilty inhabitants of Sodom,** [breach was made] and all but Lot with his wife and two daughters were consumed by the fire sent down from heaven. **So in the days of Christ.** The Son of God declared to the unbelieving Jews of that generation: "**Your house is left unto you desolate.**" Matthew 23:38. Looking down to the last days, the same Infinite Power declares, concerning those who "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved": "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. **As they reject the teachings of His word, God withdraws His Spirit and leaves them to the deceptions which they love.** GC 431

Jesus Stands in the Gap Upon the Cross

In all these events the process is the same. We must consider the events of the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world as the same process. The most amazing thing is that after Jesus wielded the sword of His Word and pronounced their house desolate, He stood in the gap and climbed the hill to the cross.

Christ was to take the wrath of God, which in justice should fall upon man. {Confrontation 19.3}

Christ's heart was pierced by a far sharper pain than that caused by the nails driven into His hands and feet. He was bearing the sins of the whole world, **enduring our punishment--the wrath of God against transgression. His trial involved the fierce temptation of thinking that He was forsaken by God. His soul was tortured by the pressure of great darkness,** lest He should swerve from His uprightness during the terrible ordeal. {3SM 132.2}

Christ had inspired Moses to stand in the gap, plead for Israel and offer to take their place. Now at His first Advent He did just that. If Israel would have accepted Christ's death upon His cross they would not have been hung upon crosses forty years later and died in their sins. Imagine that! Even after there was a breach created Christ stood in that breach and took the punishment so that all who would turn to Him could still escape the destruction that would come when Satan was given full control. What amazing love is that!

As we behold the torture of Christ upon the cross we see a man left to the "mercy" of Satan. Upon the cross the serpent is revealed in his violent, merciless and destructive character. We see the breach open upon Christ when He cried:

Matt 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

We see the spiritual sword of the Father used upon His Son when He withdrew His Spirit from Him. Jesus reveals that moment.

John 19:28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, **I thirst.**

His thirst was more than physical, it was also a spiritual thirst and David records the experience of Christ at this moment.

Psalm 42:1-4 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. (2) My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? (3) My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? (4) When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

When the Father withdrew His Spirit then Satan pressed His fiery darts like hail into His mind.

His trial involved the fierce temptation of thinking that He was forsaken by God. His soul was tortured by the pressure of great darkness, 3SM 132

Satan tortured His mind and body to the utmost limit; yet, Christ never yielded His trust in His Father. All the weapons of hell could not overcome the Son of God. We note that it is Satan's fury unleashed upon Christ that brings about His death. The Father allowed the breach to fall upon His Son. Christ stood in the breach and took the full force of Satan's fury on our behalf. Hallelujah what a Saviour!

Gibeon

Isa 28:21 For the LORD shall **rise up** as in mount **Perazim**, he shall be **wroth** as in the valley of **Gibeon**, that he may do his work, his **strange** work; and bring to pass his act, his **strange** act.

The story of Gibeon is recorded as follows:

Josh 10:5-13 **Therefore the five kings of the Amorites**, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it. (6) And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us. (7) So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour. (8) And the LORD said unto Joshua, **Fear them not: for I have delivered [given] them into thine hand**; there shall not a man of them stand before thee. (9) Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night. (10) And the LORD **discomfited** [disturbed] them before Israel, **and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Bethhoron, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.** (11) **And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.** (12) Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. (13) And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.

By the time of Joshua the Amorites had well and truly filled the cup of their iniquity. God had already removed His protection from them. Abraham was told about the future of the Amorites:

Of the Amorites the Lord said: "In the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of

the Amorites is not yet full." Although this nation was conspicuous because of its idolatry and corruption, it had not yet filled up the cup of its iniquity, and God would not give command for its utter destruction. The people were to see the divine power manifested in a marked manner, that they might be left without excuse. The compassionate Creator was willing to bear with their iniquity until the fourth generation. Then, if no change was seen for the better, His judgments were to fall upon them. {5T 208.1}

With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps an account with all nations. While His mercy is tendered with calls to repentance, this account will remain open; **but when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath commences. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. There is no more pleading of mercy in their behalf.** {5T 208.2}

The Power of God

In order to understand the story of Gibeon correctly, we must read it in the light of the Cross of Christ. The death of Christ reveals what happens to someone when they are in the midst of a breach in the wall of God's protection. The booklet *Calvary in Egypt* details how the plagues in Egypt were a revelation of the Cross of Christ. The sufferings of the Egyptians revealed the sufferings of Christ in giving them up to the vengeance of Satan. Here is a summary of those events.

The 10 Plagues	The Cross of Christ
1. The serpent rod lifted up and the smiting of the water turning it to blood	The sweating of blood in the garden. His betrayal by Judas and men who came with staves to take him. Luke 22:44; Matt 26:49
2. The Frogs	Represents the lies that were told at the trial of Christ to secure his conviction. Matt 26:60
3. The Lice	The sentence of death by Caiaphas. Isa 51:6 Matt 26:65
4. The Stinging Flies	The taunting words during his trial. The mocking and the spitting and insults heaped upon Christ. Matt 27:30
5. The Cattle	The bull represents the sacrificial animal going to its death. John 19:16; Matt 27:31
6. The Boils	The bodily suffering and crucifixion of Christ. Matt 27:35, John 19:18
7. The Hail	The battering of the first fruits according to Ex 9:31; 1 Cor 15:23
8. The Locusts	The gnawing and stripping down of Christ – the green tree. The insults and mockery of Christ on the cross. Matt 27:39-44; Luke 23:31
9. The Darkness	Christ's darkest hours. From the 6 th to 9 th hour. Then "My God my God why have you forsaken me." Matt 27:45, 46
10. The Firstborn	The Firstborn is slain. Matt 27:50. Col 1:15-18

All power comes from God.

Psa 62:11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that **power belongeth unto God**. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

Rom 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. **For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.**

Acts 17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

God taught Moses an important lesson in regard to this when He called him to ministry:

Exo 4:2-5 And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. (3) And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. (4) And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put

forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: (5) That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

A rod or staff is a symbol of power. In kingly terms this is called a sceptre. Christ, the Son of God, has a sceptre.

Heb 1:8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

Christ is also referred to as this sceptre.

Num 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

Christ is the power of God (1 Cor 1:24), and is at the right hand of God (Heb 1:3). He is referred to as God's right hand or what we would call "His right hand man."

Exo 15:6 Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

God tells Moses that he will represent God, and Aaron will be his spokesman. (Ex 4:16)

When Moses released the rod and it fell to the ground, the power that is in Christ became serpent-like. Christ is the power of God. When God said to Satan "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power;" (Job 1:12) God was dropping His rod to the ground. The rod is Christ who is compelled by Satan to serve his own purpose even as Satan inspired the Roman soldiers to compel Christ to carry the cross to the hill of Calvary, and nailed Him to that cross. The power to nail Him came from God but the decision and will to do it came from Satan.

Satan is granted the ability to use God's power to destroy when people turn away from God's commandments. Christ is the power of God, and when Christ's power is used by Satan to destroy, He is tortured and crucified in His character in order for His power to be used this way. The rod turns into a serpent and the blessed hand that gives life is turned to leprosy to bring death.

The Bible reveals that God gave Egypt for the ransom of Israel, a symbol of the ransom of Christ for us.

Isa 43:3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom.

The Lord did not wish to hand over the Amorites to destruction. He desired to show them mercy; yet, when the Amorite kings determined to destroy Israel, the Lord, after four generations and more of pleading, began to quiver in grief at the thought that He must hand them over to the destroyer.

Hail and Fire

Joshua 10:11 And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that **the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah**, and they died: they were **more which died with hailstones** than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

What are these great hailstones from heaven? Notice the parallel thought in these verses:

Psa 78:47-49 He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycomore trees with frost. (48) **He gave up their cattle also to the hail**, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. (49) **He cast upon them the fierceness**

of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.

The descent of the hail is parallel to the sending or releasing of evil angels. We note with interest the mention of hail in Psalms 18. This psalm speaks directly to the death of Christ on the Cross.

Christ was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." By wicked hands he was taken and crucified. Speaking of his death, the psalmist writes: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled: the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies." [Psalms 18:4-11] {RH, July 17, 1900 par. 11}

The psalm continues:

Psa 18:12-19 **At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. (13) The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire.** (14) Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. (15) Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. (16) He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. (17) He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. (18) They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. (19) He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

This Psalm is also recorded in Second Samuel 22 and was written after David had defeated all his enemies. As we noted this psalm speaks of the death of Christ. We summarise as follows:

1. The earth shook and trembled
2. The foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken because He was wroth – grieved. [H2734]
3. A smoke went out of the Lord's nostrils
4. Fire came out of His mouth and devoured
5. Coals were kindled by it
6. He bowed the heavens and came down
7. Darkness was at His feet
8. He rode upon the cherubs and flew
9. He made darkness His secret place
10. Round about him were dark waters and thick clouds
11. From before the brightness the thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire
12. The Lord thundered with His voice evidenced by hail stones and coals of fire
13. He sent out arrows and lightning
14. The channels of water were seen
15. The foundations of the world were discovered.

All these points are a revelation of the Cross of Christ and how the Father came down and witnessed the event. It would be a good thing to examine each point in the light of the Cross. We will focus on a few of them. Notice point 12.

Psa 18:13 The LORD thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice, hailstones and coals

of fire.

We see that the voice or Word of the Lord is expressed as hailstones and coals of fire. See this thought again in Jeremiah:

Jer 5:14 Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, **I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.**

So the Word of God is represented as fire and the people as wood, and the Word of God devoured them. Again we see this in Revelation:

Rev 11:3-5 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. (5) And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

Where were the coals of fire during the death of Christ?

Song 8:6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

Rom 12:19-21 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (20) Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing **thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.** (21) Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 Kings 18:38-39 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. (39) And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

1 Pet 4:12-13 Beloved, think it not strange concerning **the fiery trial** which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: (13) But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of **Christ's sufferings**; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

The foundations of the world were discovered in the death of Christ. Before the foundation of the world in the counsel of peace between Father and Son, (Zech 6:13) the Word of the Lord determined that the Son would be the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. That Word was manifested in the flesh upon the Cross. This fire was multi layered.

1. It came from the grief and sorrow of the separation between Father and Son.
2. The Cross of Christ was the Father's gift of love to the world. Father and Son were heaping coals of fire upon the heads of the entire human race. In the revelation of the Cross, we have seen the love of God and it burns up and consumes our sin when we believe.
3. The sense of human sinfulness upon Christ and His love for His Father's law caused Him intense sorrow.
4. Lastly, the darts hurled by Satan sought to convince Christ that He was lost, and there was no hope.

How Was Christ Struck With Hail on the Cross?

As Christ bore our sins upon the cross, His love for the Law of His Father caused Him deep sorrow at the thought of men breaking His Father's commandments. This experience is revealed in the plagues of Egypt:

Exo 9:31 And the flax and the barley was smitten: [with hail, Isa 53:4 "smitten of God"]] for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was balled. [in bud]

Barley is the crop waved as the first-fruits in the Jewish festal calendar, and Christ is our first-fruits.

1 Cor 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

The battering of the first-fruits is the battering of Christ upon the Cross. Hail is water that is frozen hard. The man under the condemnation of the Law will sense the stinging conviction of his sin. On another layer the fallen angels were once ministering spirits bringing the water of life, but their hearts were hardened through transgression and their accusations against the sinner fall like hail from the sky. Remember the parallel of hail with the evil angels.

1. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, ...
2. by sending evil angels among them. Psa 78:48-49

So if we carefully consider the Cross we can begin to understand what took place in Gibeon. Firstly, let's summarise the experience of Christ:

1. Christ stood in the breach of humanity.
2. A breach means a withdrawal of the Spirit of God. "forsaken"
3. Christ indicated this withdrawal with the words "I thirst."
4. Without God's protection Satan was free to torture and attempt to kill Christ physically. "We esteemed Him smitten of God."
5. The spiritual suffering of Christ came from the sense of man's sin upon Him and the resulting separation from His Father.
6. It was the terror of that separation that caused His death.
7. The physical torture would have been the cause of His death if He had no love for the law of His Father. The intense sorrow of the Son consumed Him like a fire before His physical torture could end His life.

Now we will draw a comparison with the Amorites.

1. The Amorites were in a breach because their cup of iniquity was full.
2. The Spirit of God was withdrawn from them. They are forsaken.
3. Jesus was still giving them physical power to live even though they denied His spiritual character. Christ was still intimately connected to them.
4. Without protection from God, Satan was free to do as he wished with them.
5. Joshua 10:10 says the Lord discomfited them. In other words He let His Word convict them of their sin. This conviction of sin troubled them and put them to flight. This is the spiritual hail and fire of God as the Bible tells us.
6. Satan, realising he could not use the Amorites to destroy Israel because they were seized with fear, destroyed them in a violent rage physically. Yet, the power to do this work was granted to Satan by God. The rod was allowed to fall to the ground and become a serpent. Satan sent the physical hail.
7. The use of Christ's power by Satan to destroy caused Christ grief and the physical manifestation of the hailstones were a revelation of the sufferings of Christ upon the cross.

We must remember the pattern of God's wrath as revealed on the Cross. The Word of God discomfited Christ as He bore our sins, and Satan was battering His mind with doubts while at the same time attempting to kill Him physically. He did this using the Roman soldiers and the leaders of Israel. These people were given power from Christ; yet, their minds were controlled by Satan.

Jesus revealed the fire and hail of God when he cleansed the temple in Jerusalem.

With a zeal and severity He has never before manifested, He overthrows the tables of the money-changers. The coin falls, ringing sharply upon the marble pavement. None presume to question His authority. None dare stop to gather up their ill-gotten gain. Jesus does not smite them with the whip of cords, but in His hand that simple scourge seems terrible as a flaming sword. Officers of the temple, speculating priests, brokers and cattle traders, with their sheep and oxen, rush from the place, with the one thought of escaping from the condemnation of His presence. {DA 158.2}

A panic sweeps over the multitude, who feel the overshadowing of His divinity. Cries of terror escape from hundreds of blanched lips. Even the disciples tremble. They are awestruck by the words and manner of Jesus, so unlike His usual demeanor. DA 159

We see the power of Christ is used destructively against the inanimate objects. He overthrows the tables and destroys their trade. The cord in His hand is a symbol of judgment and has the effect of a flaming sword. The sword is His Word, and that Word pierces through the wicked souls of men causing them to tremble with terror. Yet, He does not smite them physically. Christ cleansed the temple spiritually with the fire of conviction. Forty years later Satan was allowed the destroy the physical temple and Jerusalem by sending in the Roman soldiers and burning the temple and slaughtering the inhabitants.

The Jews had forged their own fetters; they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown. Says the prophet: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;" "for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Hosea 13:9; 14:1. Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. The horrible cruelties enacted in the [36] destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control. GC 35,36

So when the Lord discomfited the Amorites, He was making one final effort to reach them and encourage them to confess their sins; yet, they remained in rebellion, stiffened their necks, and gave Satan full control to destroy them physically.

We notice that Satan will often use a physical object to mask a spiritual truth. When Christ spoke about bread representing His body, the Roman Church takes the emblem and claims to turn it into the real body of Christ. Satan took the spiritual hail of God's Word and made it physical in order to mask the truth of what God was doing. Note again the pattern in Jerusalem:

Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. GC 35

Here is the principle step by step:

1. God's Word is like hail and fire convicting men of sin. This conviction is revealed in the goodness of God and His gifts to humanity and also from a sense of guilt within the soul for transgression.
2. The human soul persistently refuses the pleadings of the Spirit.
3. God reluctantly withdraws His Spirit which causes a drought in the soul.
4. Satan takes full control.
5. Satan physically brings about their destruction as he is allowed to use the physical power of God according to his own will.
6. Satan masks his work of destruction to cause others to believe it is God who physically destroyed.

See again how inspiration describes it

The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God's hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty. {GC 36.1}

As we read the Scripture masked by Satan's cruelty, we do not see a Father making a last effort to save but an angry God set on vengeance, death and destruction. If we read this story and are left with the thought that God personally destroyed the Amorites then we seat death on the throne in our minds and Satan achieves his goal of bringing death to those who worship such a God of death and destruction.

The Triumph of Light Over Darkness

We repeat the critical point concerning the human reality of imitating the God they worship. If God is 99% love and 1% vengeful destroyer then He is 100% vengeful destroyer. One percent of black will colour the 99% white. Any display of power by our Father to kill and destroy will ensure that this principle will be repeated in those who worship Him. We are commanded to imitate Christ in everything He does feature by feature.

Study Christ. Study His character, feature by feature. He is our Pattern that we are required to copy in our lives and our characters, else we fail to represent Jesus, but present to the world a spurious copy. Do not imitate any man, for men are defective in habits, in speech, in manners, in character. I present before you the Man Christ Jesus. 3SM 170

We have a work before us which requires the closest diligence and the strictest watchfulness, united with unceasing prayer, or we shall be unable to overcome the defects in our characters and to copy the divine Pattern. We should all study to imitate the life of Christ. 4T 135

If we believe that Christ drew a physical sword before Joshua and used it to slay the Canaanites and if we believe that Christ Himself drowns people and He burns them with fire then we will do exactly these things for Christ is our pattern in ALL things not just in some things. The only way for death to be defeated completely is to ensure that when we behold Christ and His Father that we see no darkness and death in them at all.

Darkness and death are equivalent thoughts in Scripture.

Job 28:3 He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection: the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death

Psa 107:14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

The Scripture tells us:

1 John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

There is no darkness and death in our Father and Lord Jesus. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. So the question for us to consider is this. Do we see death in the character of God? Do we worship death in the actions we attribute to our Father and Lord Jesus? Now is the time to see the great light and come out of this darkness that attributes death and destruction to God. This is the last message of mercy to the world. It is a revelation of God's character of Love.

Isa 9:2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Isa 60:1-3 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. (2) For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. (3) And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

The Spirit of Prophecy clearly tell us what this light is found in Isaiah 60:

He causes "the light to shine out of darkness." 2 Corinthians 4:6. When "the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep," "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light; and there was light." Genesis 1:2, 3. So in the night of spiritual darkness, God's word goes forth, "Let there be light." To His people He says, "**Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.**" Isaiah 60:1.

"Behold," says the Scripture, "the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, **and His glory shall be seen upon thee.**" Isaiah 60:2.

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth.** COL 415

The Sun and the Moon Stand Still.

Joshua 10:12 Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

The standing still of the Sun and the Moon are also references to the Cross of Christ.

One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought. Says the prophet, beholding Christ in His glory: "He had bright beams coming out of His side: and there was the hiding of His power." Habakkuk 3:4, GC 674.

If we read further in Habakkuk chapter three we read:

Hab 3:11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear.

The Hebrew name of Jesus is Joshua. When Joshua the leader of Israel commanded the Sun and Moon to stand still, he was reflecting the work of Christ in commanding the Sun and Moon to be still when He died upon the cross. All creation bowed before this act of amazing love. At the same time, the serpent has been revealed as the destroyer. Upon the pole or rod is revealed the destroying serpent. Truly we can say:

Psa 18:12 At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire.

The standing still of the Sun and Moon allowed the light from the Sun to continue for a whole day. This means that there was complete daylight for a 24 hour period which symbolises the complete defeat of darkness by Christ through the Cross. In Heaven there will be no night, indicating that the darkness of death has been completely defeated. As Satan has tried to conceal the love of God in the death of His Son through his torture and physical crucifixion of Christ, so also in the story of Gibeon Satan has tried to conceal the symbolised story of the Cross with an angry and wrathful God that crushes the heads of the wicked with physical stones. Now is the time to arise and shine and come into the light of God's loving character.

God's Strange Act

With all these thoughts in mind we are now ready to examine the meaning of God's strange act.

Isa 28:21 For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his **strange** work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.

The first use of the word strange is given the following meaning Hebrew:

Strong's: [H2114] zûr

A primitive root; **to turn aside** (especially for lodging); hence to be a foreigner, strange, profane; specifically (active participle) to commit adultery: - (come from) another (man, place), fanner, go away, (e-) strange (-r, thing, woman).

Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon: **To turn aside. To depart. To turn from the way.** To be a stranger.

The strange work of God is not that He personally raises His fist and smashes His enemies. The strange work is that He turns aside and allows a breach to be made in His Spirit. He allows Himself to become a stranger according to the desire of the sinner.

The second word for strange is a different Hebrew word. It gives the sense of something foreign.

Strong's: [H5237] nokrîy

From H5235 (second form); strange, in a variety of degrees and applications (foreign, non-relative, adulterous, different, wonderful): - alien, foreigner, outlandish, strange (-r, woman).

It is completely foreign for the Lord to turn aside and become a stranger to His children. After years of reaching out to a group of people He finally withdraws His Spirit. This action causes Him to quiver in grief and sorrow as we saw in the life of Christ when He lamented over Jerusalem. He wanted to gather them as a hen gathers her chickens, but they refused.

Whatever we understand the Bible to teach we must harmonize what we know of the character of God in the light of its perfect revelation in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus continually had difficulty expressing spiritual truths to people because they continued to lock onto the physical and would not progress into its deeper meaning.

Who is the God that sits upon the throne of our hearts? Is the God you serve a person who is personally responsible for the death of millions of people. Has violence become a part of the God you worship? If death currently sits upon the throne then death will be eternal for God is eternal.

If God is love, mercy, and grace, and His justice is revealed in allowing His subjects to receive the fruits of their own hands then, indeed, the last enemy to be conquered is death. When the last message of mercy concerning the Character of God is revealed, death will be removed from the throne of the Universe in our minds and we will serve Him without fear.

Luke 1:74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

1 Cor 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

2 Tim 1:7 God has not given us a spirit of fear