

MM Q&A, 20th February 2021 – The Covenants and the Character of God

C = Congregation

A = Adrian

Father in heaven, we just thank You for the rain. We've had a lot of rain. I pray that more rain comes up this way where the dams are. And we just pray that You would guide us and lead us. Guide us in the questions so that we can get clear answers of things that we're not clear about. We thank You in Jesus name, amen.

Question 1

C: I sometimes relate to some of the people that are new in the faith, and perhaps maybe discussing how the covenants lead to a better understanding or a clearer understanding of the character of God?

A: Read chapter 21 of Agape. [Laughter]

C: That's one of my favourites! The video was really good.

A: So yes, very good question Tony. How do the covenants help us to understand the character of God?

C: Why is it essential to have the correct understanding, the non-dispensational view of the covenants to get to the character of God?

A: When we say non-dispensational view of the covenants, what do we mean by non-dispensational? Let's deal with that question. What does dispensational mean? It means that God's operations before the cross with humanity are different to His operations with humanity after the cross. They were dispensed with. Or dispensation means what He is dispensing. What He dispensed in the Old Testament is different to what He's dispensing in the new covenant – dispensational, different dispensations.

C: I'll just pick up on that, what you just gave a phrase was the reason why Ellen White actually used the word dispensations, and some people think that we're going against that. So there is an old dispensation, and there is a new dispensation. But dispensationalism is to do away with the old with the new.

A: What essentially dispensationalism does is it says that God operates differently in the Old Testament than He does in the New Testament. That's what it says. And as some people teach, that Christianity did not begin until Christ came to the earth; there was no Christianity before Christ came to the earth. The difficulty we have with that is, as soon as you say that, you have given up your belief in the first angel's message. Because the first angel has what kind of gospel?

C: Everlasting gospel.

A: An everlasting gospel means that God is relating to humanity the same all the way through, all the way through; everlasting covenant; everlasting gospel. What are some other texts that we can look at this? Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to day, and for ever". Malachi 3:5, "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." So this is important that God relates to us.

Another text that we can look at is Hebrews 4:2. These are all great texts. Hebrews chapter 3 is telling

us all about God is relating to the Hebrews in the Old Testament, and then in chapter 4 we have an admonition, chapter 4:1-2, “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them...”. Who is the “them”?

C: In the Old Testament.

A: So, was the gospel preached to the people in the Old Testament, or was the promise of the gospel preached to them in the Old Testament? Do you understand the difference? They say it's the promise of the gospel; they entered into a round of ceremonies and rituals that predicted something that would come long after they were dead. And they did all these things and rituals in order to show the plan of salvation which they could only hope for by faith, but could not actually benefit in any of it. This is what is taught.

C: Is that what Adventists believe?

A: It's a bit like the Trinity. There's a lot of confusion on this subject, as to what Adventists believe. There's a mixture.

C: In a Sabbath School lesson it was leaning more towards the post 1888 view, quite refreshingly so. But as Adrian says, there seems to be a confusion. Because Desmond Ford, I think, brought in a more dispensational idea didn't he? So, that sort of polluted it. But in the lesson you'll find those gems of the 1888 concept of the covenants there.

A: Just as people talk say they believe that Jesus is the Son of God, they believe that the gospel is everlasting; but they don't actually believe that the gospel is everlasting. It's the same problem occurring. Yes, we believe Jesus is the begotten Son, but they don't actually believe He is the begotten Son. The same with the covenants. It's the same problem that we have here.

Galatians 3:8 is another important text when looking at this subject, “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

So, God preached the gospel to Abraham. [Looking at Live Chat: Thank you Don. Don has reminded us, Isaiah 24:5, “The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.” “To me”, Don says, “the everlasting covenant is knowing, accepting, believing, living by the most important ingredients of all, God's unselfish love.” Yes, amen!]

So, why is it so important to show that God does not change? It is so important to understand this because of the revelation of God's character that we see in the person of Jesus Christ when He comes to this earth. Which means that what we see in Jesus, is exactly the same as what Jesus has been all along. This is an important point to really get clear. God hasn't changed.

C: Adventists believe that Jesus was God in the Old Testament, so why would He change in the New Testament.

A: We see a good text for that, Lorraine, is 1st Corinthians 10:4, speaking of the children of Israel that went through the Red Sea, “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”

So Christ led them through the Old Testament; Christ was in the pillar of the cloud; Christ was in the

fire; Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever; which means that when Jesus spoke in John 17:4, He spoke these words to His Father; very important that we don't miss this word, "I have glorified Thee...", where did He glorify God? "...on earth". What's He referring to? His life here on earth. He completed His work; "I have glorified You on earth...". And I don't know if we've got any of the booklets here? Christ's mission to the world. Yes, we have. Christ mission to the world. Let me read you a few statements; like this one:

"Christ exalted the character of God attributing to Him the praise and giving to Him the credit of the whole purpose of His own mission on earth..." Whole purpose! What was it? "...to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In His prayer just before His crucifixion He declared, 'I have manifested Thy name', that's verse 6 of chapter 17, 'I have glorified Thee on earth', which we just read. Now she interprets what this means. 'I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.' When the object of His mission was attained, the revelation of God to the world, the Son of God announced that His work was accomplished and that the character of the Father was made manifest." Signs of the Times, January 20, 1890.

This means that what Jesus revealed... This is where the covenants are so important. What Jesus revealed in those three and a half years, or 33 years, either way, is exactly who Jesus is throughout the whole Bible. There is no change in the character all the way through. This is part of why understanding the covenants is important; a consistency of the revelation of God's character.

C: And His methodology. And the blame rests really with us. Because He tried to say it to us the right way, we didn't get it. So He had to go on a wilderness experience with us to help us to grasp some other concepts. And to learn that our ways don't work.

A: Exactly. So, one of the reasons why we have difficulty with this dispensational view of saying that the Old Testament is a period of a dispensation of law (where obey and live, disobey and die), and New Testament is a period of grace, the problem with this is many, but let's have a look at 2nd Corinthians chapter 3, and we'll look at verse 12-14, "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ."

If there's one verse in the Bible that's telling you you need to read the Old Testament through the person of Jesus Christ, this is the verse. If you read the Old Testament without reading it through the life of Jesus Christ, you have a veil over your eyes, and you can't see the character of God. His glory is veiled to you if you don't read it through the life of Jesus Christ. And this is what so many people are doing. They are reading the Old Testament outside of the mediatorial life of Jesus Christ. And when I say mediatorial, the life of Christ on earth is your mediatorial understanding of how to approach God. It's not just Him standing there interceding for you.

This is a big point we're making here. His life is a mediation to God. His life mediates to you who God is, and how you should understand Him, and how you should approach Him; "No man comes to the Father except through Me". You cannot come to the Father except through the first four books in the New Testament. That's the only way you can come to God. If you have any other understanding of God's character other than what's revealed in those four books, you'll be shot through. What am I referring to? I'm referring to the line that was put around mount Sinai. Anyone who tried to climb up that mountain other than through the mediator, would be shot through and put to death. Because anybody who believes in a God other than the one of Jesus Christ, believes in a God of death. This is what God is trying to teach them. He's trying to teach them these things. So, this text is very important.

So much of our reading of the Old Testament is veiled; we're not reading it through the life of Christ, okay?

So, another thing about the covenants. We come to one of the heights of the 1888-message, Romans 5:20.

[Reading comments from the Live Chat: Yes! Tony is saying, "This is why we give out New Testaments now." People can't handle the Old Testament, because they've got the veil over their eyes.]

Romans 5:20, "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

Now, I want to use this text, I want to apply it to some Old Testament passages to help us understand how this works. So, when the law enters, what happens? Sin abounds. The offence is caused to abound. When Christ comes closer to us through His law, we actually get a greater awareness of our sinfulness; sin becomes more apparent to us. And this work, when we start to see how sinful we are, what does it do to your pride?

C: Humbles you, doesn't it?

C: It can do two things. We can either rise up in resistance, or we can become humble.

A: You can only do one of two things, can't you? You either rise up and resist, and the rock will crush you. Or, you fall on the rock, and be broken. They are the only two options that come to you. Paul puts it this way, in 2nd Corinthians chapter 3:6, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth..."

So, when the law enters, the law is like the letter, isn't it? The law kills! Because it shows you your sinfulness. It shows you... I mean Romans 3:19, it says, let's read it... just remember this point, the letter kills, and the Spirit gives life. So let's read Romans chapter 3 verse 19, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

This is the letter killing. What is being killed?

C: The old man. Human nature.

A: The old man! Human nature is being crucified in the recognition "Oh, I'm an evil person. I'm a bad person. I'm not living the character of God. I'm not as righteous as I thought I was." It is a miracle of God's grace for the human soul to do this. The human soul has the ability to blind itself to its own sinfulness. When you begin to see your own sinfulness, it is because God is working in your heart. The Spirit of God has entered into your heart, and it is killing your old man. This is the gospel. This is the way that the gospel works; the letter kills and the Spirit gives life.

Now, when you understand that the gospel is the same all the way through, then you're ready, in Christ, to read texts like Deuteronomy 32:39. How do you read? Deuteronomy 32:39, "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal:"

This text is brought to me many times, using what I call red fire engine logic. You know what fire engine logic is, don't you? Fire engines are red; my car is red; my car is a fire engine! It's what I call fire engine logic, okay? You say God doesn't kill, this text says God kills; therefore you're wrong! That's fire engine logic. It's ignoring data; it's ignoring information.

So, how do we understand this text? “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive...”

C: So, when we come in the proximity to the Lord, we are killed... [A: It kills our old man.] ...inside of us. [A: Yes, it's the inner man.]

C: Carnal mind is at enmity with the law of God. So when the law comes to the old man, he wants to run and hide or... [A: Like Adam. When God came to Adam, Adam ran and hid.]

A: Now notice, it doesn't say “I kill some, and I make alive some”. No, “I kill AND I make alive”, which means that what He killed, He is making alive. Do you see that? That's a really important point. What He killed, He made alive.

C: And what He's killing is our self-righteousness idea of ourselves.

A: That's what He's killing, absolutely! And it's beautiful; it's miraculous! It's a beautiful thing that He kills the old man inside of us. This is “Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound”; “Oh no, man, I'm really bad.” Praise God! You're beginning to see; you're seeing that you're wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. That is you being killed.

C: And then you extend that mercy to others, because he that is forgiven much, loves much. So when a person doesn't love much, really they haven't experienced forgiveness much. And so, they're harsh on everyone else. ... I was just thinking, I'm not sure it was Waggoner or Jones that talked about the law being like a sword, and if you don't handle it carefully it can cut you to pieces. So it's a very gracious way even to apply it to somebody else.

A: The important thing to do is to allow it to cut you to pieces to begin with.

C: Well yeah. I think he was meaning it the way to apply it to somebody else. I think it was Waggoner in Galatians where he says, you know, do you read the law to someone who is in jail? You only make him more miserable and tell him where he is.

A: Yeah. ... Do you see how this is important how you read? The other way that people read this is, “Well, in the Old Testament, it was obey and live, disobey and die. God says, ‘I kill, I make alive. I'm completely arbitrary about what I do.’” But even the second part of this text tells you, “I kill and I make alive, which is, I wound and I heal.” That's a parallel statement. So, His killing and making alive is His wounding our carnal selves, and then healing us. This is a gospel statement; this is the everlasting gospel that is being preached here.

C: I've put in my Bible, I kill what? We don't ask the right question, so we never get the right answer.

A: What do I kill? Yeah, He kills human sinfulness. This is what He does. Evidence of this is that this is not the only place where this phrase is used. Hannah makes reference to this in 1st Samuel chapter 2. But this is the song of Hannah; this is a song of jubilation; this is a song of thanksgiving to God because she has given birth to a child.

We read from verse 1-8, “ And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children

is waxed feeble. The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory...”.

Do you see what she's saying? Through Hannah's experience of being in a house with another woman, and the other woman producing children, and she couldn't produce children, it killed her! She was in agony of soul and spirit. And then finally, God heard her prayer. She brought forth a child. And now she is raised up; now she is healed. She was killed, AND she was made alive. So this is a gospel statement that is being made here. So, here we see the application of the two covenants: killed is the old covenant; made alive is the new covenant. Both covenants are operating in the life of Hannah.

So, when people bring to you, see, God says “I kill”. But it's in connection with “AND I make alive”; “the thing I'm killing, I'm making alive; the thing I'm wounding, I'm healing.”

C: It's like the potter; he has to break it before he can remould the clay.

A: Did we make the connection as to why the covenants are important? It reveals the character of God. It's consistent all the way through, and how the covenants are actually working in people's lives. A lot more we could say but...

C: Jeff Wilson did a great paper on the covenants and the character of God. He keeps revising it, to try to make it simple. It's very very well done.

Question 2

C: Numbers 15:32, penalty for violating the Sabbath. Why did God actually say to stone a man?

A: Numbers 15:32-35, “And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.

There's a parallel one to that. Come to Leviticus chapter 24. The question is, do we read that with a veil over our face, or do we read it through Christ? How did Christ deal with the stoning situation? “He that is without sin, let him first cast a stone at her.” And what did He write in the sand?

C: Their sins.

A: He wrote out the part of the law that refers to their sins. Because Ellen White says the reason they left is that they feared He would expose them. Which means He wasn't exposing them with what He wrote, but what He wrote related directly to their sin. So the law entered; it caused the sin to abound. They could have repented, but they chose to leave instead. That's how Jesus deals with the stoning. This is really important to understand this point. Because remember the first work of the law is to cause sin to abound.

So, let's have a look at Leviticus 24. There's a man that blasphemes God; the other one is picking up sticks. Leviticus 24:10-16, “And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian...” Aha that's an interesting piece of detail. [C: Egyptians stoned.] So this guy was a half cast; he was

half foreigner. That's interesting. went out among the children of Israel: and this son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp; And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:) And they put him in ward, that the mind of the LORD might be shewed them. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death.”

And then you've got verse 17, “And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death.”

C: So, go and kill him, but anyone who kills him is going to be put to death.

A: So, what does that mean? It means as soon as you kill one person, they're all gone. Because as soon as one man kills another man, he has to be killed; and the one that killed him must be killed; they're all gonna die.

C: So, there's a mirror there, hoping that they would respond in mercy.

A: Hoping that they would respond in mercy. So, this is the point we need to understand. When the law enters, the first thing that the law does is show your sinfulness. So what the law is telling them is what they want to do! They wanted to kill him. God is reflecting back to them what they are thinking.

C: That's the difficulty. As we read, it says “as the Lord commanded them to do”. That's what people underline.

A: Yes, “as the Lord commanded them to do”. Okay, “Moses, stand aside, I'm going to wipe them out”, Exodus 32:9-10. Why did Moses disobey God's command? Did he disobey? God said stand aside. He didn't stand aside. That's disobedience, isn't it?

C: Moses believed God was always merciful. He couldn't do it.

A: Moses seemed to understand something. This is the principle that people find very difficult. It's very difficult to understand that God would seem to command things that don't reflect His character.

C: And that's the bottom line, that phrase! There are examples in the Bible where God appears to command things that goes against His character; appears to command things.

C: “Divesting Himself of the attributes of a Father...”

A: Have a look at John 2:19, “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

That's an imperative! In the Greek, that's imperative; that's a command. Destroy this temple! Was He telling them to kill Him?

C: We read it as a question, “IF you destroy this temple...”. But we've added a word, and we're not allowed to add words to the Scripture. Again our own preconceived ideas come to...

A: So, Jesus is telling them to kill Him, but it's through the analogy of the temple; “destroy this temple, in three days I'll raise it up.”

C: It's almost a threat.

C: I struggle with that language too, yeah.

A: Wasn't this the statement that ended up getting Jesus killed?

C: Yes, but they baited Him with it.

A: But they twisted it. They said, this man said He is able to destroy this temple. Now, this is the atonement principle! They were guilty of trying to kill Him, but they actually twisted it, and they put it back on Him; they projected it back onto Him. He was the one that said, he [they] would destroy this temple. So they flipped it back onto Him, you see.

But this is what we need to understand. Because of the derangement of human nature, when God first comes to us, He can do nothing but look like us. "You thought that I was altogether such a one as yourselves", Psalms 50 verse 21. "My thoughts are higher than your thoughts; My ways are higher than your ways." This is the problem. This is why there is this mirroring principle. And this is why understanding the covenants is so important. Because when someone is in the old covenant, God is going to look like them, not like God. God will look like us, when you're in the old covenant. This is very important to understand. James 1:23. He can do nothing but look like us, because we are the ones that are judging who God is; we are the ones who are deciding what His character is like; we are the ones that are determining it ourselves.

James 1:23-25, "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass [Glass, if you are reading KJV, is a mirror]: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

So who is the hearer of the word? What is the word? What word?

C: Christ.

A: Christ is the word; the word of God. So, when you hear in the Old Testament, this man picks up sticks on the Sabbath, and God instructs them and tells them, "put him to death", who is God reflecting? When we're reading the word, we think according to man's understanding. This man did the wrong thing, he deserves to die. This is man's thinking. This is man's understanding. And God is trying to bring this to their attention. He's trying to teach them, "this is how you think! This is how you operate!" This is causing sin to abound, so that He can cause grace to much more abound.

Otherwise if God had said, "this man picks up sticks", and He says, "Kill him", then Jesus is a liar; automatically He's a liar! Because Jesus says all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, except what? The blasphemy against the holy Spirit. If this thing in the Old Testament is God Himself saying "this man is picking up sticks"; he's grabbed; he's put in ward; God says "kill him"; they kill him; there is no offer of mercy; there is no pardon granted; there's no opportunity for him to repent; then Jesus is a liar! There's no gospel. Jesus HAS TO be lying, if God killed this man.

C: He is reflecting back to them a black and white lifestyle that they chose; living under the letter of the law; will go and kill a man. He was hoping that they would go, "Oh, where have we gone? We're killing another man for just breaking the Sabbath!"

A: He's just picking up sticks! Isn't there anyone that's going to beg for mercy? Isn't there anyone

that's going to appeal? Isn't there anyone that's going to beg for him?

C: Not even his own mother?! It's like, just kill him. I struggle with the concept of testing and mirroring back.

A: There's no other way for God to deal with us than to show us our sinfulness. He cannot; He cannot do anything, but show us the sinful problem that we have in our hearts. And the problem for God is that... wouldn't it be so wonderful, and Jesus did try this, I remind you; Jesus did try this direct method, "Why do you go about to kill me?" What did they say? "You have a devil! Who goes about to kill you?" That's what happens when God is direct with us! We say that He has a devil, and we accuse Him of blasphemy!

So He can't do that! He can only agree with His adversary while He is with us in the way, and try to show us the problem of our sinfulness. This is ALL that God can do with us, because we are His enemies; by nature, we hate Him. This is what people don't accept. "Oh, I love God". I'm sorry, the Bible disagrees with you. "There is none righteous. There is none that seeketh after God." No one who seeks after God. "The carnal mind IS enmity against God, not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be."

So God can only show us our sinfulness with a knowledge that there is a different way of seeing a situation. So when God in Leviticus chapter 24 is saying, "Oh by the way, if anyone kills anyone, let him be put to death", they should have gone, "Oh hang on a minute, if I kill this guy then I'm going to be killed." But nobody thought about it, because this man was an Egyptian. And "Egyptians are foul; and they are scum; and they need to be wiped off." So they had their motivation to kill him. So they did kill him, in the name of God.

C: You get a little insight to Old Testament-thinking through the Islamic type of fundamentalist black and white. No mercy. It's very interesting, you know, I reckon when we get to heaven, we're just going to marvel how God could just work through the cracks so slowly with us, to be able to open our eyes to see it doesn't work that way; you're going to destroy yourself with that method. If we don't have mercy, we're finished.

A: Yeah, exactly! So, this is what I'm saying. Jesus says in the New Testament, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men. This man was not given an opportunity; he was just cut down; bang! [C: For some law said. But they desired that law, that system.]

So now, I want to read to you Ezekiel 20:25. [C: "Judgements that were not good". Jeff showed me that text. It was like a whole light bulb went on in my experience. It was a missing link that text.] The Spirit of Prophecy tells you what they are. [Looking at Live Chat: Welcome everyone online. Welcome Randy! "Jesus is the pure and perfect mirror that reflects the intent of our heart." Exactly! The word of God discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, dividing as even the bone and the marrow. It's able to discern what's in our hearts.]

Okay, so, Ezekiel 20:25, "Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good..." When does God give us things that are not good?

C: When we ask for them. When we demand them actually. Even when we ask, He tries to hold back! Isn't God good?

A: "...gave them statutes which were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." So, in Spirit of Prophecy Volume 2 I think it is... the word I think is "annexed penalties". Beautiful! Spirit of Prophecy Volume 1. Here it is, page 265: "The Lord said of the children of Israel, "Because they

had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my Sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols, wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." Because of continual disobedience, the Lord annexed penalties to the transgression of his law, which were not good for the transgressor, or whereby he should not live in his rebellion."

What does that tell you? That all of the death penalties connected to the Torah are annexed; they've been added on because of continual disobedience. And they are not good!

C: We use sin to punish sin.

A: We use sin to punish sin. And this is what brings us to the 2nd commandment. And I know we're adding layer upon layer, and this is where the mind starts to go ... But try, try.

Exodus 20:4, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them:..."

To serve any god other than the God of creation is inviting you to the worship of a merciless God. The God of Jesus Christ is the only God of mercy that exists in the universe. Every other god is a god of vengeance; a god of tyranny; a god of violence and death. And God here is pleading with people, "if you bow down to any other god than Me, you will kill yourself". This is what He's saying.

Verse 5, "I the LORD thy God...", the word "am" is supplied, "I the LORD thy God..." I would suggest becomes "...a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;"

So, what is it that killed the man that picked up sticks? It was the iniquity of Israel that desires to kill and to destroy those who break the rules. It was that iniquity, the desire to kill, that God visited upon this man because of his rebellion; because of his resistance to God. So this man, his sin was punished with sin; because God "visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me".

Obviously for this man to go out and pick up sticks on the Sabbath, he had some problem going on in his heart, didn't he? He was resisting God. There's no way after standing at mount Sinai, if he was there hearing God speak, there's no way he could have missed that, and all the commandments that Moses gave. So he was rebelling, and so his rebellion was punished with sin, which was man's way of dealing with transgressors.

C: That is what Paul means, he "handed them over to Satan", in that regard. They've cut themselves so much from God that now they're in Satan's domain.

A: There was no one in that camp, except maybe Moses, who had any conception of a God of mercy; there was no one else. [C: A horrible thought, isn't it?] There was no one that could save this man. There was no one to stand in the gap for him; no one! Because no one believed in a God of mercy.

C: And that wasn't just them living in Egypt. That is for all their lives, for all their generations. That's not just an Egyptian issue.

A: No, it's not just an Egyptian issue; it's a human issue. Because the worship of any god other than the God of Jesus Christ is a God of death; is a god of punishment, destruction and death. And if you worship that god, God is forced to visit your idolatry back upon you by allowing you to suffer the

consequences of your own decisions.

C: "For all have drunken of her wine..." [A: All have drunken of her wine and become drunk.]

C: And even with the pacifists, so-called pacifist religion, karma will come back and get you. That's not how God works. He restrains as much as He can the choices that will come and get us. And He intervenes to stop those choices from getting us, until finally we beat Him off with a stick.

A: Yep, exactly! Let me give you a very real example of this. The people that dis-fellowshipped me from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, they pray to God, don't they? Didn't God tell them to disfellowship me? Of course He told them to disfellowship me. Because that's what they believe. What else is He going to tell them, other than what they already believe? Does God actually talk to them? Do you understand what I'm saying? People pray to God, and they get the answer that they're looking for. "I heard the voice of God speak to me. This man needs to be dealt with." So God spoke to them, God told them "Get rid of him."

C: Which god?

A: This is the question. This is what we're asking. Which god told them to get rid of me? Well, letters came from the general conference, from the division, from the union, from the conference. All of those letters to the local church was, "he must go". "If he was not a malefactor we would not have delivered him unto you." God told them to do it.

C: It's the same god that is directing them to have some for female ordination and some against. There is confusion. That god; a confusion-god.

A: Aren't the people who believe in women's ordination believing that God is telling them that they must fight for women's ordination? Isn't God telling them to do this?

C: Well, I'd like to know when? Because he speaks to them at the General Conference, and that's when God speaks to His church. [A: Apparently. He's told them three times, and still...] And yet there's a division. So who's listening to what god?

A: Who is listening to God? This is the question about when people talk to God, and they think that God speaks to them. Here, let me give you an example. Numbers chapter 13.

C: I just listened to a prominent lady pastor in our division saying we prayed to God for an answer for Coronavirus, and He sent us the vaccine.

A: There you go! So God told them [C: ...what they wanted to hear.] This is what the Bible is telling us. It's mirroring back how we think and we operate. We pray to God... It's like Abraham... It says in the Spirit of Prophecy that Abraham prayed to God, and when he got up from his knees, he was convinced he needed to go to war and save his nephew. God told him, because God agrees with us, when we want what we want, doesn't He? God always agrees with us! And the Torah is reflecting this in the Bible; it's reflecting how God is forced to agree with us.

Numbers 13, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them."

Whose idea was it to send spies into the land of Canaan? [C: It wasn't the Lord's.] Well, here it is! [C: But in another place it says He let them.] Deuteronomy chapter 1:20.

C: Well this is like I think what the Catholic Church does. They all get together in this room to elect their elders; elect their pastors after prayer. They don't question it, because they prayed about it, and God directed it.

C: This is constructive reality.

C: That's happening today, more and more. God told them.

A: Anyone who's been to any Adventist Conference sessions, you know that some of those are manipulated; we know that people are stacking votes; we know this! But they're all praying, and they're all asking God. But we know, don't we? Does anybody believe that God is actually directing a lot of the activity that's happening? Does anybody actually believe this? You're in fairyland if you believe that.

C: We are opening a can of worms.

C: What we are opening is the intent of our hearts.

A: God will give you the desires of your heart. God gives you the desires of your heart. This is His wrath, to give you the desires of your heart. [C: And His wrath is interpreted as grief...] As grief. He is in sorrow. What can He do? What does a parent do with a child that's a methamphetamine-addict, and demanding of their parent, and the parent is trying to stop them from doing something? The child is going to reason away to make it look like the parent agrees with them that it's good for them to take this substance, aren't they? And this must be reflected in the Scripture. It must reflect human nature.

Deuteronomy 1:21, "Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come. And the saying pleased me well...", that's Moses, "...and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe:"

So, whose idea was it to go and search out the land? It was their idea! But God is saying, "Okay, send out men, do this." It wasn't God's idea! It was their idea. God is simply giving to them what they want. And all of these principles have to be reflected in the Scripture to show what human nature is like.

C: This goes absolutely against the fact that is saying God is in control... [A: God is not in control.] ...and that everything that happens is because God allows. It goes completely against that.

A: Because control is force! Control is manipulation! God does not use force. God can guide things. If God was in control, everybody would be saved. But the majority will be lost. So He's not in control.

C: So this goes against the sovereignty of God concept, where human will can frustrate the plans of God. I've struggled with that all my life, "God is sovereign! Ultimately He will win!"

A: The objectives that God seeks to achieve, He will obtain them. But it will cost Him tremendously to obtain them, because of the free choice of human beings to frustrate His purposes. We are going to see the loss of billions of people because of this. That's costing Him! That's not someone in control. That's someone in a great tussle, in a great conflict, in a great controversy with His enemy. But love will win! Yes, it will win, but at great cost. If someone's in control, there is no cost; there's no cost when you're in control. You squash the enemy; you destroy that which is in your way; and you make sure that nobody comes anywhere near what you're in control of. Where is the Bible text that says God is in control?

C: It's a saying that we say. [A: We do. We say it.] It's a traditional saying that we say.

A: Now, God has ways, and He has means, and He has abilities, and He has incredible foresight, and ability to see the future, and He has power, and He has all of these things. But this idea of control is actually a picture of God that is a mirror of who we are, but it's not who God really is. Because we are control freaks; we are tyrannical; we seek to destroy those who hurt us. And we project all that unto God. Because, as it says in James chapter one, the hearer of the word and not the doer, he reads the word of God, and he sees himself. Everybody knows that when you watch a movie, you always typically identify with the main character of the movie. God is the main character of this movie [Lifting up the Bible], and you're always identifying with the main character; and thinking how He's going to handle situations, how He's going to deal with it. And the book is written just in such a way that God can look like you, if you want.

C: I've come across Adventists in that they say, yeah, God kills; that's His right, because He made us; and that He is good after all, and He is God.

A: "He is God; He has every right!" But that's what Hitler said; that's what Mussolini said, "I'm the leader, I'm the fuhrer, I have the right to kill you. I'm untouchable." But this is human thinking about the character of God. "God has every right to do whatever He wants." [C: Above the law that He actually creates.] Why do we have governments that do whatever they want? [C: They're above the law.] And why are they above the law? Because that's what we all believe, isn't it? Those that are in power they have the right to do whatever they want.

It's like the video I saw yesterday of Mark Zuckerberg, the leader of facebook. In his private discussions with his own staff, he's talking about, "We need to be careful about this vaccine; it could change your DNA; and that's not really a good thing." But publicly he's saying, "No, there's no problem; we're saying yes; no, this doesn't change your DNA." So, when he's talking to Fauchi, yes, there's no problem; but inwardly, it's something else. Because there's rules for them, and then there's rules for us.

So, we can't blame these men for being like this. All they are doing is revealing human nature; of what we all believe by nature. We all believe this. [C: We're easy to sell out.] Of course we are easy to sell out. [C: "But for the grace of God."] And this is the point. So, we shouldn't condemn these people for doing these things. Because anyone that's had a position of power has always been tempted to make things different for us than for everybody else. Everybody's tempted to do it. Because you're in power; you can control; you can short-cut. Everyone's tempted to do it. And everyone that says they're not, is lying.

C: The mitigation factor in all this is corporate repentance. When we see these things they are but the sins of what a natural man should do. You know, we have a saying as adults, "Let them alone; they're kids; they're just doing what kids do." When it comes to adulthood, we're a bit less tolerant of those things, when really, they're just a reflection of what we would do in that situation.

A: So, this is a vital principle about the mirror, how God has to deal with children that are actually inwardly hostile towards Him. I want to give you another example that I've been working on in the book of Jonah. This is quite profound really. [C: Are you going to let out a little bit about your new book?] Yes. [C: Thank you.] Just how God works with humanity.

Jonah chapter 3, verse 1-5: "And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."

So they repented. Is there any provision in this? Is there any provision in here that Jonah said if you repent God will relent? [C: No.] There's nothing. All it says, in 40 days, everything's going to be overthrown. Okay? So what happens? Of course they repent. In chapter 4 verse 1, what happens?

Jonah 4:1 “But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.”

A: “I knew You were going to do this!” Why is Jonah angry?

C: Because he's saying it didn't happen.

C: Maybe he is blood-thirst for vengeance and punishment.

A: What did Jonah want? He wanted them to die! Why did he want them to die? Have you read the history of the Assyrians, and what they did to the Israelites? They skinned them alive, and impaled them. Do you think Jonah was cognizant of this history? “These are the people that destroyed my people; not only killed them, but killed them slowly; very slowly. Do you understand why Jonah would just, “Oh thank God! They're gonna get it; they're gonna take it in the neck now! Finally they're going to die.” And then God doesn't kill them. Like, “Why did You let them off the hook?”

C: When you think about that, that adds a whole lot of backstory to why he was cranky. [A: I'm not condemning Jonah at all.] No, because I have self-righteously condemned Jonah.

A: “How dare you be displeased?” Did Jonah have to listen to the screams of those that were being flayed? You don't know, do you? He might have only read about it. I don't know. I haven't studied close enough the history. But he was aware of what happened to his people, and what the Ninevites did to him; to his family and to his friends. And so, he wanted them to die. Natural human tendency.

But what did God say? I want you to look at the word; “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” That's all that God said. Look at the word “overthrown”. What is it in the Hebrew? This is where it gets really fun.

C: Oh, to turn back. It's an interesting word. To turn back, or to turn around, I think. Is that correct?

A: Yes, that's one of the meanings of the word. Let's have a look at Jonah chapter 3...

C: Well, then that means that the people were correct, and believed God. But Jonah's expression was incorrect maybe?

A: It says, to overturn, to overthrow, to turn, to turn over, to change, to transform. [C: So there was hope in that message.] This word overthrow is actually used in reference to God when He's talking about the children of Israel, “How can I make you like Sodom and Gomorrah? My heart is overthrown within Me. I'm in great grief.” This word is also used to mean to convert someone.

So, when God says, “In 40 days I'm going to convert these people”, if Jonah had understood that that's what God was going to do, would he have delivered this message? [C: Probably not!] No, he wouldn't. So, it was given in a way that it can be understood in two ways.

Now, just think about this. “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” What is Jonah thinking with the word Nineveh? He's thinking of the buildings; he's thinking of the infrastructure; he's

thinking of all the people in it; the physical realm. When God is talking about Nineveh, what is He talking about? The spiritual! The souls of the people; that's what He's talking about. "I'm going to transform the souls of these people in 40 days." But if God had said that to Jonah, Jonah never would have gone; he never would have done it. He didn't even want to go.

C: Maybe he did it begrudgingly, and then he resented it.

C: But that only happened, because they were repenting.

A: Because the only language that the human soul understands is... [Smash! Hitting the fist into the palm]. That's all we understand in the flesh. God couldn't speak to them, "Look, I forgive you for all the evil that you've done." "Forgive me for what? Well, that's very big of you. Thank you God."

What they need, what the human soul needs to hear is, "Because of your evil, I'm going to destroy you." That's something that makes sense to us. It's a language we understand; it's something that we grasp; and it moves us; and it motivates us. As a 17 year old, my reason to turn to God was because I didn't want to die in hell. That's why I turned to God. Not because I loved Him. Because I didn't want to die. It's the same for the Ninevites. Then I came to love God afterwards. [C: That's all right too.] And that's okay! In fact, it's probably the only way that God's gonna save most of us, is through that process.

But what I'm saying to you is that God, in order to reach the Ninevites, He gave a statement that allowed Jonah to mirror it and make him think that God was going to wipe them all out, when God was actually saying, "I can see these people, that if I send them a message, they're actually going to repent within 40 days." He could see that.

C: The context proves it; they believed God. They believed.

A: Because, wasn't His Spirit working on their hearts? Didn't He know what they were thinking? He knew what they were thinking. He understood what was in their hearts. He wasn't caught off by surprise. He didn't suddenly relent, and decide, "Oh I've changed My mind. I'm not going to kill them now." He did exactly what He intended to do. He overturned their hearts, and they repented. And then it revealed that Jonah was the one that also had to change, and be changed.

C: The elder brother in the prodigal son...

C: What happened later? It all turned back. [A: Yeah, of course.] Unfortunately, right. That's interesting, because why doesn't this happen today with the whole world? It doesn't happen.

A: The truth is that it's about to happen. It's going to happen, because when the fourth angel's message comes out, there's going to be a great revival. And there's going to be hundreds of thousands of people that come into this message, like what happened in the time of Nineveh.

The truth of this story is that never amongst God's people has a repentance and contrition of sin ever been recorded anything like what happened in Nineveh. It is the pagans, it is the worldlings that have manifested the greatest repentance! Over a hundred thousand people in this city! That's a large city for those days. And they repented. You don't see this happening amongst God's people. Why? Because they're rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. "They're not like these filthy pagans. They don't need to repent like this." We do not see this repentance occurring within Israel. We see elements of it, in the time of Nehemiah. There's a repentance that was taking place amongst God's people at that time. But not the same as this.

C: Don't you think today, a similar thing, that people who are not... [Not audible], people who don't know the Bible, they're standing up for what is truth; and they're fighting; feeling for those who would

be experiencing the difficulties that are coming, if the vaccine is adopted; and they're standing up for what they think is unfair; putting their life and careers on the line...

A: We have a beautiful man that lives four doors up from us, who's just started coming to our meetings. He's only been a Christian for eight months. He's read the Bible for himself. He's already worked out that the Sabbath is correct. He can see that the Trinity is false. Who taught him this? The Spirit of God! He listens to the arguments we present, he says, "I didn't think it was that complex!" [Laughter] He hasn't had to come out of that type of darkness. He's been in a different type of darkness, but he hasn't come out of this darkness that we've all been inoculated in in our false understanding of God.

C: Does it mean that we've got a good darkness and a bad darkness?

A: They're just a different darkness. So, I hope that that explains a little bit more. The law enters that the offence might abound. God can do nothing but agree with His adversary. This is why the story of Solomon. You know the story of the two prostitutes, and they both had sons. And one of them was lying. So, what does Solomon do? "Get me a sword and cut the child in half." Did Solomon want to cut the child in half? No, he didn't want to cut the child in half. But he was mirroring the heart of the one who claimed to be the mother. She would say, "Let it be as the king said", because that's what she's thinking. "If I can't have my child, why should you have yours?" And then God gave it to the one... This is how God works. Solomon reflects the character of God. So we say, "Well, Solomon commanded that the child be killed. We see here that God commanded the man to be stoned. That's God's character!" It's to reveal the character of the individual. That's what this is designed to do; to see what is in their hearts.

Does that answer that question? All right. Well, how long have we been going?

C: I did say to answer the covenants in a few minutes. [Laughter]

A: So we've been going for an hour and a half.

C: That's just wonderful. We serve a God that doesn't change. And if anything this message has told me, if we are honest, we are the greatest enemy of ourselves. We're the ones that we have to fear. Our choices, our desires, our motives... You know, you tremble at what's inside you. And then, we thank God for His mercy, that He patiently allows us not to reap completely what we sow; not to completely crash when we go over a cliff. You just rejoice, you know. It's just beautiful.

A: That just helped me so much with the story of Jonah. Like, oh, God was saying one thing, but He said it in such a way that Jonah could still understand it the way he understood it; He caused sin to abound. It's just like the story of the Canaanite woman that was asking Jesus to heal her daughter. The disciples are like, "Send her away." And He's saying, "I'm not sent to the lost sheep, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; it's not right to give the children's food to dogs." And then He turns around and heals her! WHAT? Jonah would have said, "You called her a dog, and then You turn around and heal her?", you know, like, what?

This is God speaking in a way that all it does is to create confirmation bias. But God wants that confirmation bias to occur so you can see your own sinfulness, and repent of it. No other way He can work. He can only agree with His adversary while He's in the way. He can't do anything else.

C: As we repent, He can change us. [A: Yes, it's the only way.] It's the necessary process.

C: "God be merciful to me a sinner", is the only language that's left for the saved.

C: You know what I discovered too, even repentance is a gift of God!

C: Yes you have to ask. Sometimes you're so rebellious in your heart you don't even want to repent.

You have to say, "God I need to repent, but I don't want to. Send that to me." Willing to be made willing, I think, she expresses in her writings.

A: Amen, amen... I hope that was a blessing. Thank you for those of you online. Let's kneel, and pray:

Father in heaven, we thank You that we can search the Scriptures. You have said that none but those that have fortified their minds with the truths of the Scripture can go through this last great conflict. Thank You for telling us to compare Scripture with Scripture, and the wonderful, wonderful rules of William Miller; that all the Scripture should be in harmony. Not that we cling to some Scripture and ignore others, but that all of the Scripture must fit together; it all must make sense. Thank You Lord Jesus for revealing the character of the Father. Thank You for the wonderful gospel plan; the old and the new covenants working in tandem to bring us to repentance. Forgive us Lord for the ways that we have acted, for the ways that we have misunderstood, for the ways we read the Bible, in a way that is false. Help us to see how You work with us, and how You are wise in Your dealing with us. And help us to understand this mirror principle, and what it means. If we are willing, we can understand this, and it will make sense. And I thank You in Jesus name, amen.