



# ELIJAH MESSAGE: PART THREE

## Baal, *lex naturae*, (law of nature), and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - Part 1



'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...I will be like the Most High.' Isaiah 14:13

The central focus of Satan's attack in the great controversy was the law of God. It was over the issue of the law that Lucifer challenged God and entered into controversy with the Creator. The law of God was a moral law, a law that was "within" His creatures, within their hearts.

God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of the divine government, and there can be no government without law...{AG 40.4}

As there can be no throne without a kingdom, and there can be no kingdom without government, so there can be no government without a law. Lucifer sought to exalt his throne above the stars (angels) of God and that meant that he was elevating another law above God's law. His throne was a throne of iniquity and his law had nothing in common with God. The Psalmist writes:

Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, have fellowship with You? Psalm 94:20.



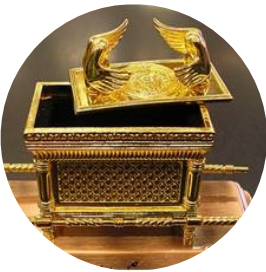
Satan's throne of iniquity devises evil by law, which means that evil is embedded in the very fabric of his law. What was the nature of Satan's law?

Consider the following quote from the Desire of Ages:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. {DA 761.4}

Mercy and God's law are inseparable. It is no coincidence that the lid of the ark of the covenant which Moses built in the desert containing the Ten Commandments was called the "mercy seat." What is the mercy seat? It is God's 'seat' or throne of mercy. Exodus 25:17-22 describe how God instructed Moses to build the mercy seat:

17 "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width. 18 And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat. 20 And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat. 21 You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. 22 And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.



The cherubim were to be made of one piece with the mercy seat, they were to face each other, and their faces were to be directed toward the mercy seat. This is highly illustrative of the position and significance Lucifer occupied in heaven before his rebellion. When Lucifer broke trust with God he turned his face away from the mercy seat and in doing that he was rejecting the concept that mercy and justice go hand in hand.

In Psalm 89:14 David states:

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face.

God's righteousness, justice, mercy and truth are intrinsically intertwined with His law of love and do not, in fact cannot, contradict each other. They are a harmonious package, as Jesus revealed in His own life and death.

Mercy being the foundation of God's law, it is not surprising therefore that from the very beginning of Satan's rebellion the focus of his attack on God had to do with the issues of justice and mercy as they relate to God's law. When talking to the Pharisees Jesus indicated that justice and mercy were precisely the weightier matters of the law:

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.



As we read earlier, "in the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy." What could have Satan meant by the statement "justice was inconsistent with mercy?" Was he saying that God's justice was indeed inconsistent with mercy? Or was he saying, according to his own opinion, that "justice" could not be consistent with mercy? If we analyze the statement "every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan" we will see that the latter is the case. At a certain point in his rebellion Satan came to see justice as the equivalent of punishment, and as he rebelled he began urging God to assume his

new concept that punishment should become central to the idea “justice.”

If we take these concepts and apply them to the passage in the Bible that clearly describes how Lucifer first sinned we will have a new understanding of what happened at the beginning of the great controversy. Let’s look at Ezekiel 28:

15 You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. 16 “By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned.

Ezekiel says that Lucifer was *perfect* in his ways until *iniquity* was found in him. The Hebrew word *perfect* in this passage is the word *tamyin’* and its primary meaning is *entire*. Lucifer was *entire*, that is, he was undivided in character until *iniquity* was found in him. Iniquity therefore must have split him within, it must have given him a dual character. This shattered character, this divided moral law, this Jekyll and Hyde split personality is found in the Garden of Eden in the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Lucifer, the serpent, became both good and evil at the same time but his good is a deception because it ultimately leads to death.

It is interesting that the Bible doesn’t come right out and say that this was the problem at the beginning of Satan’s rebellion. These nuggets of truth have to be mined as Isaiah describes in chapter 28:9-10:

Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.”

And Paul clearly directs us to the fact that becoming weaned has to do with distinguishing between good and evil:

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to





need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, Hebrews 5:12-14.

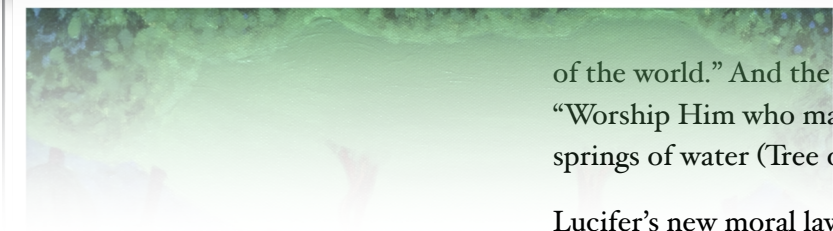
According to Paul, discerning both good and evil is what constitutes spiritual maturity. Now this is puzzling, because in the bible, good and evil appear together in the Garden of Eden through the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in Genesis 2 and 3. But we know that eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil would cause death, therefore the good of this tree is a trap, it is false, it is a deception.

What did Paul mean then? How do we discern both good and evil? It is simple: the Tree of Life is good (“there is no one good but

God” - Matthew 19:17) and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is evil (“the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” - Genesis 2:17). Spiritual maturity, therefore, is discerning between what these two trees represent. Discerning both good (Tree of Life) and evil (Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil) is what the Elijah messages are also all about. How long will we waver between two opinions? If God is God (Tree of Life) let us follow Him. If Baal is God (Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil) then let us follow him. The same goes to John’s message: “Behold the Lamb of God (Tree of Life) who takes away the sin (Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil)

of the world.” And the final Elijah, the three angels’ messages: “Worship Him who made the heavens and the earth, the sea and springs of water (Tree of Life).”

Lucifer’s new moral law was based on his new concept of merciless justice. By the abundance of his trading - the Hebrew word means



*peddling* - by promoting and selling his new ideas to the angels, he became solidified in his new views and he became filled with violence. How? Because his new idea of justice involved a reward and punishment system, and in his system both reward and punishment, no matter what form they take, are inherently violent.

Consider the following quotes from Ellen White regarding Satan's new concept of justice:

The condemning power of Satan would lead him to institute a theory of justice inconsistent with mercy. He claims to be officiating as the voice and power of God, claims that his decisions are justice, are pure and without fault. Thus he takes his position on the judgment seat and declares that his counsels are infallible.

Here his merciless justice comes in, a counterfeit of justice, abhorrent to God. {CTr II.4}



Every manifestation of God's power for his people arouses the enmity of Satan against them. Every time God works in their behalf, Satan with his angels is aroused to work with

relentless vigor to compass their ruin. He is jealous of every soul who makes Christ his strength. His object is to instigate evil, and when he has succeeded, throw all the blame upon the tempted one, presenting him before the Advocate, clothed in the black garments of sin, and endeavoring to secure to him the severest penalty. He would urge justice without mercy. Repentance he does not allow. The penalty, he argues, can never be remitted, and God be just. {RH September 22, 1896, par. 7}

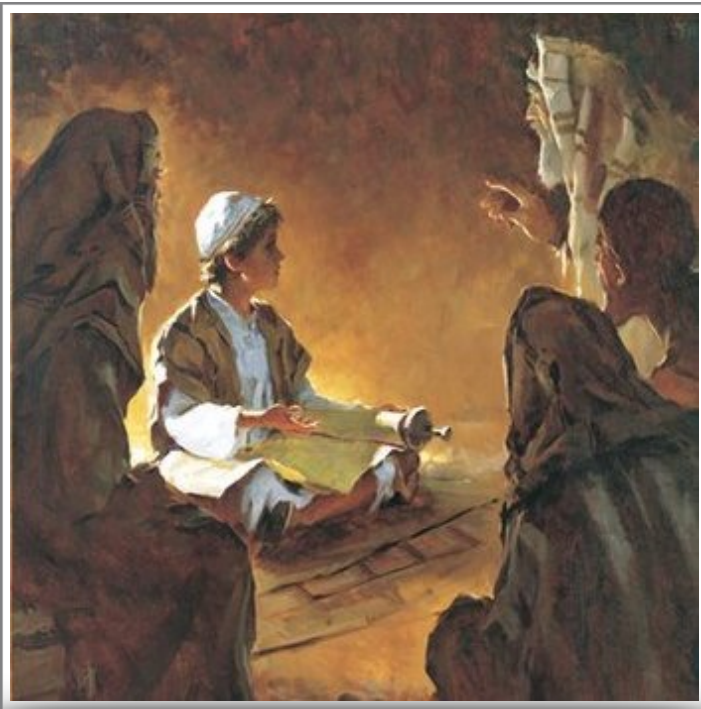
As one in holy office, he [LUCIFER] manifested an overbearing desire for justice, but it was a counterfeit of justice, which was entirely contrary to God's love and compassion and mercy. {RH September 7, 1897, par. 4}

The counterfeit justice that Satan advocates is abhorred by God. His censuring must not be imitated by any who are partakers of divine mercy and love. Guard your own soul, my brother, my sister; watch closely for the first jealous thought, the first suggestion to question or judge others. We must not

be severe with the infirmities of others, but attend zealously to our own individual case. {SW September 25, 1906, par. 10}

Christ's death proved God's administration and government to be without a flaw. Satan's charge in regard to the conflicting attributes of justice and mercy was forever settled beyond question. Every voice in heaven and out of heaven will one day testify to the justice, mercy, and exalted attributes of God. It was in order that the heavenly universe might see the conditions of the covenant of redemption that Christ bore the penalty in behalf of the human race.—Manuscript 128, 1897. {7ABC 470.1}

God's law is embodied in the Tree of Life. Ellen White connects the law of God with the Tree of Life in the following quote from the Desire of Ages:

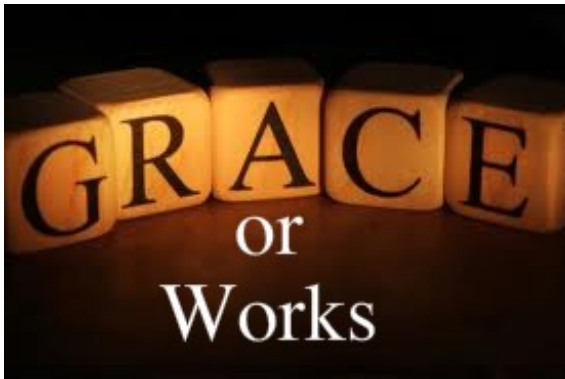


His [JESUS'] brothers, as the sons of Joseph were called, sided with the rabbis. They insisted that the traditions must be heeded, as if they were the requirements of God. They even regarded the precepts of men more highly than the word of God, and they were greatly annoyed at the clear penetration of Jesus in distinguishing between the false and the true. His strict obedience to the law of God they condemned as stubbornness. They were surprised at the knowledge and wisdom He showed in answering the rabbis. They knew that He had not received instruction from the wise men, yet they could not but see that He was an instructor to them. They recognized that His education was of a higher type than their own. But they did not discern that He had access to the tree of life, a source of knowledge of which they were ignorant. {DA 86.2}

What is Satan's law then? It is also a source of knowledge but this knowledge is a satanic knowledge. Satan's law is the moral law of Good and Evil, the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Satan's

perversion of justice is embodied in the Knowledge of Good and Evil itself. This “knowledge” is more than just a knowledge: it is a supposed “wisdom.” The Tree the serpent seduced Eve to eat from, represents an arbitrary reward and punishment system in which good deeds are rewarded and evil deeds are punished. This merit system is based on works. Notice how Paul connects the ancient satanic god Baal with a works-based religion in Romans 11:2-6:

Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 “Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life”? 4 But what does the divine response say to him? “I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” 5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.



WORKS

The remnant that did not bow down to Baal were a remnant according to the election of grace. The system of works is Satan’s (Baal) moral law, which Satan believed was the true wisdom, the ideal system of keeping order in the universe - as opposed to God’s law of love and mercy. In fact Satan believed that love and mercy were foolish and weak. How do we know this? 1 Corinthians 2 states:

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling



block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.



God's wisdom became foolishness to Lucifer, who is the ruler of this world. Lucifer came to perceive agape love as weak and ineffectual. It is his version of "wisdom" that dominates the world, the wisdom that power, might, force and violence are better than love, meekness, humility and unselfishness. God's wisdom is His love which He poured out on the cross and which is as strong as death (Songs of Solomon 8:6).

Satan's merciless system of morality was and still is the basis for all heathen cults. Baal-worship entailed precisely this counterfeit of justice, which, as it happens, is also mankind's default because since our parents ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Satan's wisdom (worldly wisdom) we have all inherited this dualistic moral make-up.

By deviating from God's mercy, which is His grace, Lucifer fell away from God Himself. What had filled him "within" before he sinned was the image of God - God's mercy and love. Now he "became filled with violence within" - through a Pavlovian system of reward and punishment embedded in a dual moral law. Satan in effect removed our identity as free agents and made us all into automatons who react to positive and negative stimuli - he programmed us, conditioned us to respond to reward and punishment in either positive or negative ways. Our responses to the stimuli of this system is what constitutes the lower case "sin." "The" capital "S" Sin is to think that God operates by the same reward and punishment system as Satan.

God operates solely by the Tree of Life principle, which is His law of agape love. God has ever been trying to save humanity from the violence and cruelty of Satan's moral law of reward and punishment. He could see that Satan's law would lead the human race into a desperate position if they didn't accept His grace; and

yet as a freedom-giving Father His hands were tied when they chose to distance themselves from Him and His statutes of mercy.

Throughout the Scriptures the tension between worship of the true God and the false gods always boils down to the great controversy between the two laws.

### Leviticus:

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the Lord your God. <sup>3</sup> According to the doings of the land of Egypt,

where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. <sup>4</sup> You shall observe

My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord your God. <sup>5</sup> You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord, Leviticus 18:1-5



### 2 Kings:

<sup>13</sup> Yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets." <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the Lord their God. <sup>15</sup> And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which

He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the Lord had



charged them that they should not do like them. 16 So they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, made for themselves a molded image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. 17 And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight

of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. 18 Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone, 2 Kings 17:13-18.

And the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandment which He wrote for you, you shall be careful to observe forever; you shall not fear other gods, 2 Kings 17:37.

God goes so far as to state that it is by His laws that His people are His, a nation before Him:

## Jeremiah:

“If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever,” Jeremiah 31:36.

# Jurisdiction

By choosing to follow Satan's laws the people fell under his jurisdiction and suffered the penalties of his law. God's law is a shelter and only safe haven from the jurisdiction of the Destroyer.

God gave a clear command: According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. What were the "doings" of the land of Egypt and Canaan? Their "doings" were their ordinances and their laws. And what were their ordinances and laws? They were Satan's moral law of Good and Evil, his perversion of justice.

Elijah's message is still the same today: how long will you waver between two opinions? If God is God, worship Him. If Baal, worship him. If we believe God is agape love then we are worshipping the true God Jesus revealed. If we believe God is a God of Good and Evil then we are in effect worshipping Satan.



**BOOK:**

**God On Trial: Have We Been Lied To? Is God a Killer?**

A study of the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The study of the two trees is a must in order to discern the true God from the false one.

**In our next issue: Part Four**

*Lex naturae part 2*