

## The Character of God

### The balance between Justice and Mercy

(An examination of the teaching "God does not kill")

Is it an Evil Thing for God to Take Life?

Some reason that since God is love and He is not the source of evil, then He cannot take anyone's life. It is sin and Satan that takes the life, not God. Furthermore, they reason that God is not a destroyer; therefore He can not destroy His creatures by taking their lives.

Is this correct? Is it an evil thing for God to take someone's life? Is the one who takes life always considered the destroyer? Can taking someone's life be done out of love or be the most loving thing to do? Is giving life always the most loving thing to do?

Let us say for the sake of argument that the doctrine of eternal hell fire is correct. If, God forbid, you had one of your loved ones burning in hell's fire, and you had the option of taking their life, putting a stop to their misery, what would you do? What would be the most loving thing to do?

Of course we would have to be cruel to keep them alive. The most loving thing to do in a situation like this is not to maintain life, but to take life away in order to stop their misery. So in this situation, taking life is considered more loving than maintaining life.

Let us bring it closer to home, let us say we had a loved one who is sick, in misery and pain all day long, and was destined to die. Can I, as a human being, decide that the most loving thing to do is to take this life away in order to put him out of his misery?

Of course not. As a human being I have no right to do such a thing because I do not know the end from the beginning; I do not know what will happen the next day. Maybe God's will for this sick man was to be healed after all this sickness. Maybe God wanted to use this situation to perform a miracle and restore his health.

In short words, it will not be considered the most loving thing to do because I do not know the future.

On the other hand, God knows the end from the beginning; He is the only One who can say whether it is better for this man to die or to stay alive. He is the only One who can make this decision, and whatever His decision is, it will always be the most loving thing to do because God is love. That is why we should always say "not my will but thy will be done".

So as you can see, it is not always considered evil to take someone's life, but on the contrary, it could be the most loving thing.

It is the same with the doctor who operates on a man to take his cancerous kidney out. Who is the destroyer in this situation? Is it the doctor or the cancer?

Of course cancer is the destroyer, while the doctor is the one who is trying to help. Pain, agony, suffering, and sometimes death can occur while surgeons are operating with the motive to help, but never should they be considered the destroyers, unless of course the doctor did a deliberate mistake.

To consider the doctor destructive or evil for removing the cancer is wrong. The thing that is destroying that man is cancer; the thing that is destroying humanity is sin

Sin is like cancer, it brings death ([James 1:15](#)). God is the One who is trying to save us from sin/death. When a man is holding to sin, it becomes like the cancer inside the kidney, and that man is the agent through which this cancer/sin is spreading.

If sometimes God has to surgically remove that man, or that part of the spiritual body, like when He surgically removed Korah and his followers out of the camp of the Israelites, why should we consider this act cruel? Was God the destroyer, or was it sin that was in them?

Of course it was the sin/cancer that was inside that particular part of the spiritual body that destroyed man. And the act of removing that sinner was an action that love must perform.

The question might be raised: 'If this is true, then how come Jesus, who was the perfect revelation of God, never acted in such a way, in fact He said that He came to give life and not to take it'

It is true that Jesus was a perfect revelation of God, but this does not mean that He did everything that God can do. For example:

\* When Jesus was a man, did He act the role of a judge?

No "And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" [Luke 12:14](#)

Will Jesus be our judge as God? Yes

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:" [John 5:22](#)

\* When Jesus was a man, did He create anything out of nothing?

No, He performed miracles, raised the dead, but never created anything out of nothing.

As God, did Jesus create anything?

Yes, He created everything ([Heb 1:2](#))

The servant of the Lord tells us: "The Lord Jesus came to our world, not to reveal what a God could do, but what a man could do, through faith in God's power to help in every emergency." {7BC 929.6}

As you can see, Jesus was a perfect revelation of God, yet did not reveal every aspect of the role of God. He came to reveal the love of God to us, not what God can and cannot do. Yet He never denied that God can punish and kill and destroy. Here are His words "Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell;" [Luke 12:5](#) More on that later.

You see the 'God does not kill' doctrine when studied carefully teaches you that God is the Judge, but He can not execute the judgment. He is too righteous to execute His own judgments. God's law says "the wages of sin is death" but God is too righteous to execute death on the sinner, so He just leaves him and sin will do the work of destruction.

In other words, it is sin that kills you and not God. (Keep in mind, sin is always the cause of death; however we are not dealing with the cause of the death, but with the way it is executed in certain cases.)

Well, if this is the case, if death has nothing to do with the judgments of God, why are the wicked resurrected after the 1000 years?

If it is just a matter of sin working out its consequence, then who brings the wicked back to life? They are dead; sin has worked its consequence. Why would God bring them back to life? Is it to watch them kill themselves again?

Would God resurrect them, and say 'yes it is righteous for you to be sentenced to death, but I am too righteous to carry out the sentence?'

Obviously justice is involved, and God is involved in executing the judgments against transgression.

As Paul said:

"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds:" [Romans 2:5, 6](#)

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) [Romans 3:5](#)

Sometimes it is hard for us humans to comprehend how Love could command the taking of someone's life, but to this Spirit of Prophecy said:

"The utter destruction of the people of Jericho was but a fulfillment of the commands previously given through Moses concerning the inhabitants of Canaan: "Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them." [Deuteronomy 7:2](#). "Of the cities of these people, . . . thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth." [Deuteronomy 20:16](#). To many these commands seem to be contrary to the spirit of love and mercy enjoined in other portions of the Bible, but they were in truth the dictates of infinite wisdom and goodness. ... Like the men before the Flood, the Canaanites lived only to blaspheme Heaven and defile the earth. And both love and justice demanded the prompt execution of these rebels against God and foes to man." {PP 492}

Correctly understood, we will see that it was out of both love and justice that God commanded such things. Our God is a God of love. Everything He does is always motivated by love and will be the most loving thing to do. Always remember what God said:

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." [Isaiah 55:9](#)

If we can just trust in Him, just trust that His word is true that what He does is always for the best of mankind, we will not have such doctrines.

The hard thing about this topic is you can not say "let us see what the scripture says" because everything is interpreted opposite to what it says. The basis of this doctrine is man's concept of right and wrong, love and hatred, not God's concept.

In the following section, we will have a look at what this doctrine teaches, and why the reasoning behind it is wrong.

#### What Does this Doctrine Teach?

There are different views or explanations held by those who teach this doctrine.

They all hold to the following views:

1. God can not break His commandments
2. God does not kill (6th commandment)
3. God does not command angels or His people to kill
4. God does not sin or do evil
5. God deals with the sinner by withdrawing His protection from Him and allowing calamities to come upon him. This is the only way He deals with sin for He does not and can not change
6. The cross was a perfect and complete revelation of the way God deals with sin.

Whilst they agree on all the above, yet when it comes to answering passages in the Bible or Spirit Of Prophecy that say or teach contrary to what they hold to (that God does send His angels or His people to take life...etc.), they differ in their explanation to it. Here are some of the explanations that are offered:

- "If things said to be commanded by the Lord (including Bible verses) don't line up with the words, teachings and life example of Christ, it isn't truth! If it doesn't line up with the 10 commandments, it isn't truth! If it doesn't line up with the principles of love, it isn't truth!" The Assassination of God's Character p 507. In other words, it is not inspired.
- Others do not believe that but instead try to harmonize in various ways the examples they can, and the other examples that they can not possibly harmonize, they ignore or say "well we are still studying and do not have all the answers yet". (This is the most balanced)
- Others go as far as saying that God and Satan work in cooperation. God never does any evil, but Satan does the bad work that needs to be done. In other words, Satan goes up to God and says "this man did such and such what should we do", so God weighs the situation and says "yes, probation is closed on him, go and execute my judgments on him" (This is the most bizarre idea of them all.)

In this study, we will be dealing with all the points/conclusions that these brethren come to, and see whether they are true or not. We will start with the ones they agree on, and then have a look at some of the objections and the way they answer them.

#### 1. God cannot break His commandments

One must admit that this is a correct statement. But the question is: What is behind it? What do they exactly mean by it? For example, the term "Son of God" is a correct term. But there is a difference in the understanding and meaning behind it when it comes from a true Godhead believer and when it comes from a trinitarian mind. Same terminology yet different motives/meanings behind it.

What do the brethren that advocate the doctrine "God does not kill" mean by saying God does not break His commandments? What do they teach regarding the law and God?

We will deal with one aspect of this statement, but will look at more in the coming points.

Regarding God and His law, these brethren teach that God is equal to His law, and He is not above it.

'Fred Wright' one of the key people in teaching this doctrine says in His book Behold your God in the chapter entitled "Magnifying The Law":

To see one is to see the other. This means that God Christ and the law are three identical entities. Between them then is no difference even though it is difficult to grasp this. There is the inclination to think of God as a Being of living power with infinite possibilities of exercising His will. We tend to see the law as being a much lesser thing merely the spoken will of the supreme ruler and certainly not something which is the expression of Himself.

The mind must be re-educated away from such ideas. The law of God is to find its true level in the thinking of those through whom the Lord will finish His work..... Therefore, to place God on a level of infinite greatness, while relegating the law to a lesser plane, is to hold a position of serious error. They must be thought of as being as holy, as great, as infinite, and as sacred as one another. 'Behold your God, p. 158. [Emphasis supplied].

The following statements are provided to support the writers view:

"The law of God is as holy as He is holy, as perfect as He is perfect. It presents to men the righteousness of God." Mount of Blessing, 54.  
"The law of God is as sacred as God Himself." {PP, 52}

"His law is a transcript of His own character, and it is the standard of all character." {COL 315}

While what the writer is saying is true – that the law should be regarded as holy, as perfect, as sacred as God Himself, yet he is wrong in his conclusion that "God Christ and the law are three identical entities".

Although the law is and should always be in such a high position, yet we can not say that God and the law are equal, or as great. By stating this, or believing that they are "identical entities" we can not say that one is higher or above the other. Thus we limit God to His law and we make Him and Christ under Their own law, which is wrong.

Following are several statements from Ellen White concerning Christ as above all law whether moral or natural. It was because He was above the moral law that He could come under it to redeem us from its just claim of eternal death. That was one of the reasons why "None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven." {PP 63}

"[God] gave his beloved Son, who was above law, and one with himself to meet the penalty which his justice demanded." ST Feb. 25, 1897.

"Christ was under no obligation to become man's sacrifice. He was above law. But he took upon him the form of a servant, and went without the camp, bearing our reproach." ST July 15, 1880.

"The Son of God came voluntarily to accomplish the work of atonement. There was no obligatory yoke upon Him, for he was independent and above all law. The angels, as God's intelligent messengers, were under the yoke of obligation; no personal sacrifice of theirs could atone for the guilt of fallen man. Christ alone was free from the claims of the law to undertake the redemption of the sinful race. He had power to lay down His life and to take it up again." 4T 120, 121.

We see clearly that Christ and God were "above all law". This means that God, Christ, and the law can not be "identical" because God and Christ are above the law. We have to understand something; the moral law (10 Commandments) is the manifestation of God's character, but it is the adaptation of God's law to fallen humanity. Not everything in the law can apply to God. For example, the law says "Honor thy father and thy mother". We know that God the Father has no beginning. Of course He does not have a father and a mother, so the 5th commandment does not/can not apply to God.

Even the 7th, 8th, and 10th commandments can not apply to God for He is not in a position where He can do these things; He is above all these things. Everything that exists is there because God has created it. He does not need to steal, or covet...etc. This is an important

principle to keep in mind. As mentioned before, the 10 Commandments as we have them are an adaptation of God' law to man in his fallen condition.

We cannot take these adopted laws and try to impose them on the God of the highest heavens.

So to say that God, Christ, and the law are identical is wrong.

## 2. God does not kill (6th commandment)

This is another aspect of the first point that we have just spoken about. Because God can not break His commandments, and the 6th commandment says "Thou shalt not kill" [Exodus 20:13](#), then God does not kill.

First of all, we have just seen that God is above all law, and thus He can do whatever is pleasing and right in His sight. Furthermore, if the understanding relayed by the brethren that this commandment means that God 'does not take life', then we are faced with a problem in Exodus 21 & 22.

In [Exodus 20:1](#) we see that God is the One who is speaking "And God spake all these words, saying...." This talk by God Himself continues, and in Vs 18 we read that the Israelites were afraid and requested that Moses speak to them and not God "lest we die" they said. And in Vs 22 we read "And the LORD said unto Moses...." Again we have the same God speaking to Moses, and in the next chapter [Exodus 21:1](#) we read "Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them." Still the same God speaking. In this chapter, God gives them the 'judgments' and here are some of them:

\* He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. Vs 12

\* And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. Vs 15

\* And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. Vs 16

\* And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death. Vs 17

Ok, so here is the problem we will face. If the 6th commandment means 'God does not take life' then how come in the very next chapter, in the same talk that He made from Mount Sinai, He gave commandments that in certain instances, His people were required to execute the punishment of death on the offender?

To this, the writer of the book 'Behold your God' says in the chapter entitled "An Eye for an Eye" on p 377 that there are 3 ways/options which God was facing. He starts by listing the two extreme ends:

1. Firstly, there is God's way which does not use force to put down rebellion, no violence, no use of the sword and therefore no killing. There is only the perfect keeping of the law, the return of good for evil, going the second mile,...etc which required faith from the Israelites. But obviously they did not have such faith.

2. "The third and worst way is man left entirely to himself. In this way the system is to love those who love you but to hit as hard as you can, those who first hurt you; to return multiplied evils for evil; to destroy your enemy as cruelly and as revengefully as possible;"

3. "When God was not able to hold them safely in the first, then He worked to save them from this last and worst. This is why the second or middle situation exists. What God is really saying in this situation is this "Very well, you have made your decision to take the sword and thereby depart from My ways. I cannot change your decision. You made it and it stands. But I can save you from the worst effects of that choice if you will accept and respect the advice I now give you. Do not be wanton and revengeful killers. Exact only an equal payment for what has been taken from you. Let there be no more than one eye for one eye, and one tooth for one tooth. Meanwhile, I will ever seek to win you back to the way of faith and obedience, back to the pathway where there is no killing or revenge but only the manifestation of my character of love"

After this, the writer concludes:

"If the relationship between these three ways can be clearly discerned, and if it can be recognized that only the first of them is God's way, then it will be seen that there is not a single story in the Old Testament to prove that God destroys. Satan destroys and man destroys but

never God. He is the Saviour who is only working to restore and to heal. He knows no other work than that. The whole history of His dealings with ancient Israel, rightly understood, testifies to this."

The three ways that the writer has mentioned are true, and yes, God's 'perfect' will was for His people to abide in His law and never to sin. Unfortunately what happened was not His perfect will, no one is denying that, but just because it was not God's 'perfect' will, does not mean that it was not His will and He did not command such things (wars...etc).

To illustrate their point, the brethren use the example of Israel's first king (1 Samuel 8 – 10) and rightly show from it that God did not really want His people to have any human king. He was their king. God warned them against having a king and what would happen to them (chapter 8). Then in chapters 9 & 10 He gives them a king. So what is drawn from this story is that God's plan was for the Israelites not to have a king other than Him, but because they wanted one, He gave them the best advice on which one should be their king.

That is all good and well. But the questions that we should ask ourselves are 'Did God set up the king or did He not? Did He give them advice or a command on who was to be their king? Can we say that it is not God who sets up kings?'

Of course it was God who set up the king, He commanded Samuel to anoint Saul as their king. God did not advise the Israelites that Saul would be their best option and they said yes, not at all, He commanded Samuel to anoint Saul; the Bible tells us in 1 Samuel 10 24 "And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen...". In the same manner, it was God who commanded Saul to smite the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15: 1 – 3), and Nahash the Ammonite (1 Samuel 11:6, 7).

This was also the case as God through the young prophet anointed Jehu as a king and commanded him to smite the house of Ahab. (2 Kings 9: 6, 7)

The Bible tells us: "he (God) removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:" Daniel 2: 20, 21

Just because it was not God's ultimate will that Israel should have a king other than Himself does not mean that God did not set up their kings and did not command who should be the king.

In the same sense, we can ask, was it God's perfect will that Adam and Eve should sin and thus there will be a need for the plan of redemption? Was it God's first or perfect plan that Christ should come and die on the cross?

No, when God created Adam and Eve His plan for them was not to sin, fall, and be cast out of Eden. God planted "a garden especially for them.....This beautiful garden was to be their home, their special residence." {3SG 34.1}

Yet God foresaw their fall before they even were created, and He made a plan to rescue them if they fell:

"Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished," He addressed the Father. The compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." John 19:30; 17:24. {DA 834.2}

"God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. {DA 22.2}

The plan was made to "redeem man if he should be overcome". God's perfect / ultimate plan for Adam and Eve was to live in Eden and never to sin; never to fall captive to Satan. But unfortunately, God's perfect plan did not happen, not because there was anything wrong with it, but because of Adam and Eve's decision and their disobedience. As a result God had to send His Son to die; He had to adopt another plan (which God and His Son had planned before the creation of the world).

The fact that it was not God's primary and perfect plan for Christ to come and die on the cross does not prove that it was not 'His will' or His command. (Keep in mind we are not talking here about 'how' the punishment was executed on Jesus, we will deal with that later, but whether it was God's will or not)

Back to the Israelites. If we apply the same principle here, we will find that it is only logical and scriptural that yes, it was not God's perfect will that any man should have to take anyone's life, yet it was still His will and command that was being executed.

Some one might ask: "well how come the commandment says "Thou shalt not kill" while in the next chapter God gives them commands to kill?"

The answer for this question becomes very clear when we understand the original meaning of the word translated as "kill". The Hebrew term for this word is "ratsach" which means 'murder'. So the commandment actually says "Thou shalt not murder"

There is a difference between execution and murder. The commandment is against murder, not execution. Laws for capital punishment are found in the next two chapters of Exodus. Ten crimes that called for the death penalty are listed, clearly illustrating that the sixth commandment is dealing with murder and not execution.

### 3. God does not command angels or His people to kill

This is based on a wrong foundation.

Based on the conclusion that these brethren reached, 'God does not kill because the commandment says "Thou shalt not kill"', they take the next logical step which tells them He can not command His angels and His people to kill.

There are numerous examples in the word of God which prove that God does command His people and His angels to execute His judgments. We will have a look at some of them later on. But here is one of the things that the prophet of the Lord said regarding this topic:

"God has borne with them [rebels] until they filled up the measure of their iniquity, and then He has brought upon them swift destruction. He has used His people as instruments of His wrath, to punish wicked nations, who have vexed them, and seduced them into idolatry."  
{2SM 333.1}

More on that later.

### 4. God does not sin or do evil

Again, this is a correct statement, but the understanding behind it is the problem. The brethren that teach this doctrine have their own interpretation of evil and sin. They believe that any pain, death, destruction is always evil. God does not do evil, thus God does not cause pain, death and destruction.

Here is an example of what I have just said:

"God has never sinned, therefore he has never destroyed." 'Behold your God' P. 221

"Yes friend, God is light and in Him is no darkness at all, therefore God cannot and can never be the source of sin or evil or death." 'God's Character' P. 31

As you can see, the writers of these books equate destruction and death with sin and evil.

But is this interpretation of evil correct? Is everyone who causes pain, death, or destruction considered evil? Are surgeons considered evil when they cause pain to their patients in the process of healing them? Are we considered evil when we cause pain (physical or emotional) when we correct or reprove a brother for the error that he/she is doing?

A seed needs to die to bring forth life, a baby is a joyful thing, but there is pain for it to be born. Sure, pain is a result of sin, not of God, but pain does not equal sin. Just as a surgeon who needs to remove cancer needs to cut it out, so God has had to use methods He would not have needed to use to remove sin. This does not mean that He stoops to the level of evil. It means that while evil exists, the playing field is different.

So as you can see, the statement that God does not do evil is correct, but still this does not mean that God does not kill or destroy.

5. God deals with the sinner by withdrawing His protection from Him and allowing calamities to come upon him. This is the only way He deals with sin for He does not and can not change

Here is where this whole doctrine stems from. Though it is true, that one of God's methods in dealing with sinners is withdrawing His presence and protection, and as a result calamities will happen, yet the mistake that is being made in here is that they take a 'method' and turn it into a 'principle'.

Where these brethren have gone wrong is they have looked at the passages and examples in the Bible where God did deal with sin and sinners by withdrawing His protection and allowing calamities to come upon them from Satan and their enemies, and concluded that since God acted this way in here, He must act like this in every other case. They put God in a box and limit the unlimited One to only one way that they like. And to prove their case they use the following texts:

"For I am the LORD, I change not" [Malachi 3:6](#)

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." [Hebrews 13:8](#)

One should ask 'When God says He does not change, what does He mean by it? Does it mean that He always acts in the same way? Does it refer to His attributes, His character, or His actions?'

Of course it is His character that does not change; not the way He acts and executes His judgments. God's character of love, His hatred to sin, will never change but the way He manifests His love to His children differs from one person to another. The way He deals with sin as well differs depending on what is the best and most loving thing to do in that particular situation.

Christ' miracles are a good example; If you look at the way He performed His miracles, He healed blind people in different ways. One time by touching their eyes another by anointing their eyes with clay ...etc. He did not always heal them in the same way.

God's actions are subject to change, He takes on different actions at different times, but the principles that underlie His actions never change. It is thus that God never changes.

It would be strange of me to say that since Christ healed a man by anointing his eyes with spit and clay, He can not use any other method to heal because "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

Therefore, we can not apply the above verses to support that God can not use different methods in executing His judgment. The fact that He is the judge can not change, the fact that He is love can not change, but the way He executes His judgments changes because the people He is working with are subject to change.

Having said that, we must note that God's protection must be withdrawn from the sinner before any judgment, whether directly from God or not, can come upon him. In other words, when God sends His angel to take someone's life, He must first withdraw His protection from that person in order for the Holy angel to take the sinner's life.

6. The cross was a perfect and complete revelation of the way God deals with sin.

This is another major point that these brethren use. They study what happened at the cross, and rightly conclude that God's dealing with sin (at the cross) was by withdrawing His protection and presence. In fact it was this withdrawal that killed Jesus and not the pain inflicted by His persecutors.

They take this conclusion further to say that

'Christ took the sinner's place and God dealt with Him there exactly as He will deal with every sinner throughout the annals of time. This is the point which must be clearly seen and accepted. God did not relate Himself to Christ any differently from what He does to the sinner.' Behold your God p 195

This is partially correct and partially wrong. Yes, Christ received the same judgment that every sinner will receive, and that is 'the second death'. But this does not mean that it will be executed in the same way.

The following statement is used to prove that sinners will receive the same punishment that Christ received:



“The instant man accepted the temptations of Satan, and did the very things God had said he should not do, Christ, the Son of God, stood between the living and the dead, saying, Let the punishment fall on Me. I will stand in man’s place. He shall have another chance.” S.D.A. Bible Commentary 1:1085.

That is true, but let us not add to it. All it says is that Christ will stand in man’s place and receive his punishment. What was the punishment of sin? Death, eternal death which is separation from God, the second death. And that is what Christ received. That is why all those who accept Christ as their Saviour will not die the second death, because Christ has taken their place and paid the penalty for them. But what this statement does not say is that Christ and all sinners will receive the punishment in the same way. Furthermore, no human being, other than Christ, has died the second death yet (as far as we know). All who died have died the first death, which is called ‘a sleep’. They all will be resurrected again.

All sinners will receive the same punishment, which is eternal separation from God (eternal death), but it is wrong to say that they will receive it the same way that Christ did. We read in revelation that the sinners, and Satan will be thrown in the lake of fire, while we know that Christ was not.

But what we want to focus on now is the first death. If God does not take life, then He could never command the taking of anyone’s life, including the first death. It will be wrong of us to compare the way the punishment of sin was implemented on the cross, with the way it has been implemented on some sinners. One is dealing with the second death, while the other is dealing with the first death.

Even in the first death God does withdraw His protection and His presence from sinners before the punishment is executed on them. But what happens after God withdraws His protection is not always the same; it differs from one situation to another. Sometimes God will send His angel to take the sinner’s life after He withdraws His protection from him out of love for others, and other times He will just leave Him under the mercy of his enemies and Satan. We will see many examples later on from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy to prove this point.

Nonetheless, to prove the point that the punishment will be executed in the same way, the following two statements are used:

1. “The death of Christ was to be the convincing, everlasting argument that the law of God is as unchangeable as His throne. The agonies of the Garden of Gethsemane, the insult, the mockery, and abuse heaped upon God’s dear Son, the horrors and ignominy of the crucifixion, furnish sufficient and thrilling demonstration that God’s justice, when it punishes, does the work thoroughly. The fact that His own Son, the Surety for man, was not spared, is an argument that will stand to all eternity before saint and sinner, before the universe of God, to testify that He will not excuse the transgressor of His law. Every offense against God’s law, however minute, is set down in the reckoning, and when the sword of justice is taken in hand, it will do the work for impenitent transgressors that was done to the divine Sufferer. Justice will strike; for God’s hatred of sin is intense and overwhelming” (MS 58, 1897).

The question that we should ask ourselves is what was “the work for impenitent transgressors that was done to the Divine sufferer”?

It was the separation from God and the eternal death, not the torture the wicked men inflicted on Him. The fact that not all sinners fall under such torture is clear enough evidence.

With this understanding, we can see how the sword of justice will do the same work that was done to Christ to every unrepentant transgressor, which is separation from God and eternal death. But please keep in mind that when God sends an angel to smite or take a person’s life, for example king Herod, God’s presence and protection is withdrawn from that sinner before the angel can do his work. So the above statement does not tell us that God can not command His angels or His people to take someone’s life.

2. “It is a fearful thing for the unrepenting sinner to fall into the hands of the living God. This is proved by the history of the destruction of the old world by a flood, by the record of the fire which fell from heaven and destroyed the inhabitants of Sodom. But never was this proved to so great an extent as in the agony of Christ, the Son of the infinite God, when He bore the wrath of God for a sinful world. It was in consequence of sin, the transgression of God’s law, that the Garden of Gethsemane has become pre-eminently the place of suffering to a sinful world. No sorrow, no agony, can measure with that which was endured by the Son of God. .... The agony which Christ endured, broadens, deepens, and gives a more extended conception of the character of sin, and the character of the retribution which God will bring upon those who continue in sin. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ to the repenting, believing sinner (MS 35, 1895). {5BC 1103.3, 4}

From the above statement, the brethren that teach this doctrine conclude that the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Christ all fell “into the hands of the living God”. Which is correct, but then they go on to say that since God did not command an angel to take Christ’s life but left Him to suffer in the hands of evil men, then He must have allowed the same process to take place with the flood and Sodom; that is,

He did not bring the fire down on Sodom and Gomorrah, neither was it He who brought the flood upon the earth. All that God did in these examples was exactly what He did with Christ, withdraw His protection and let the evil one do his work.

This conclusion is based on assumption. Nowhere do we read that God's wrath will be/was executed on all other sinners in the same way that it was executed on Christ. All we read is that they all "bore the wrath of God".

"But never was this [the fearful thing of falling into the hands of the living God] proved to so great an extent as in the agony of Christ, the Son of the infinite God, when He bore the wrath of God for a sinful world."

Why was it proved to such a great extent at the cross?

"The fact that His own Son, the Surety for man, was not spared, is an argument that will stand to all eternity before saint and sinner, before the universe of God, to testify that He will not excuse the transgressor of His law." (MS 58, 1897).

It was this that proved the fearfulness of falling into God's hand, not the way the punishment was done, but the fact that it was done to the Son of God.

As we have seen, the wrath of God or the punishment of sin is separation from God (eternal death) and that all sinners will receive.

Can We Call Parts of Scripture Not Inspired?

As we mentioned in the beginning, some of the brethren that teach this doctrine have gone to the extreme to call parts of scripture 'not inspired' because it contradicts what they believe. But it must be mentioned that not all who believe this doctrine reach the same conclusion.

The following is taken from a book entitled The Assassination of God's Character:

'If things said to be commanded by the Lord (including Bible verses) don't line up with the words, teachings and life example of Christ, it isn't truth! If it doesn't line up with the 10 commandments, it isn't truth! If it doesn't line up with the principles of love, it isn't truth!' p 654

"It can be seen that even by the time of the second temple, there were various renditions of the sacred text. Jesus obviously recognized which sections were authentic and chose to quote and confirm those passages which coincidentally, harmonies with the 10 commandments, the Messianic prophecies and the loving character of God." P 493

"If it doesn't line up with the principles of love, it isn't truth!" And who is the one who determines what love does and does not do? Of course it is the individual person who believes such things.

The brethren that teach that parts of the Old Testament are not inspired use the following reasoning to prove their point:

\* "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." [Matt 5: 31, 32](#)

\* "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." [Matt 5:38, 39](#)

\* "And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." [Luke 9:54, 55](#)

They use the above texts to teach that Christ changed some of the laws that were not divinely instituted, but rather were human traditions that the Jews had adopted as a result of their exposure to pagan religions in Egypt.

The above reasoning is a result of placing one's beliefs, views, and theories above the word of God. It is only when we come to the word of God with our preconceived ideas that we reach such conclusions. Any belief or doctrine that contradicts the word of God should be considered a false doctrine.

If we understand the above texts properly we will find that they do not contradict each other, but rather explain each other. In order to understand them we have to understand that the Israelites at the time of Moses were in a different condition than at the time of Jesus' incarnation.

At the time of Moses the Israelites had just come out of Egypt where they had been in captivity for over 200 years. They were in a land where people worshiped idols, where they were treated as slaves, where an Israelite's life was worth nothing. They forgot about the true God and His love and were burdened with the necessities of life. At the time of the Exodus they were in no condition to understand the far reaching nature of the commandments, neither were they able to comprehend the love of God or able to love each other as they should. (PP 310.1)

While at the time of Christ, the Israelites should have had enough time to understand the principle behind God's commandments, and should have been practicing the love that God had shown them all this time. But instead they were misrepresenting God and misapplying the provisions that God had allowed them because of the condition they were in.

Divorce:

Once the Pharisees came to Jesus and asked him

"Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" [Matthew 19:7](#)

If what Moses said was uninspired, or had it been wrong, this would have been a perfect opportunity for Jesus to clarify the matter. But rather here is what Jesus had to say:

"He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." [Matthew 19:8, 9](#)

It was because of the hardness of their hearts that God through Moses allowed divorce, but in the beginning it was not so ([Matthew 19:4-6](#)).

In [Deuteronomy 24: 1](#) we find the command that Moses gave to the people regarding divorce, and in it he says "if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement..."

"Uncleanness" Literally, "nakedness," and figuratively, as here, "shame" or "dishonor." Her offense could not have been adultery, for that was punishable by death ([Deuteronomy 22:22](#)). It was simply some behavior the husband considered improper or disgraceful. The Jews understood this Mosaic precept to mean that a man might divorce his wife for almost any reason ([Matthew 19:3, 7](#)). Christ explained, however, that it was not God's will for divorce to be thus easily obtained ([Matthew 19:4-6](#)), and that this provision had been made only because of the "hardness" of their hearts ([Matthew 19:8](#)).

At the time of the incarnation the Jews used to divorce their wives for any reason. Sister White tells us the following:

"Wrong sentiments in regard to marriage had found a place in the minds of the teachers of Israel. They were making of none effect the sacred institution of marriage. Man was becoming so hardhearted that he would for the most trivial excuse separate from his wife, or, if he chose, he would separate her from the children and send her away. This was considered a great disgrace and was often accompanied by the most acute suffering on the part of the discarded one. Christ came to correct these evils, and His first miracle was wrought on the occasion of the marriage. Thus He announced to the world that marriage when kept pure and undefiled is a sacred institution." {AH 341}

Christ corrected this evil that was practiced by the Jews by clarifying to them the importance of marriage and God's perfect will regarding it. Keep in mind, yes it was not God's perfect will to allow divorce, but nonetheless, He was the One who gave instructions regarding the bill of divorcement. At the time when it was given to them, they were not in a condition to understand His perfect love and the forgiveness that He wanted them to practice.

But when Christ came it was time for them to understand the truth and He revealed to them the perfect will of God, and in the same time did not deny that God did allow it in the past. All that Christ said is 'because of the hardness of your fathers hearts when they came out of Egypt, God through Moses allowed the divorce, it was a special provision made for them then and there, but not as you have taken it as a license to abuse and use any excuse to divorce, the only valid excuse in God's eyes is adultery, this is the way that it should have been and should now be.'

With this understanding we can harmonize both, what Moses said and what Jesus said, for both of them came from the same source: God.

Eye for eye:

We have to understand that the judgments that were given in Exodus 21...etc are civil statutes. These were the laws that the judges in Israel were supposed to follow. None were justified in avenging themselves, for they had the words of the Lord: "Say not thou, I will recompense evil." "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me." "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth." "If he that hateth thee be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink." [Proverbs 20:22; 24:29, 17; 25:21, 22](#), R.V., margin. The whole earthly life of Jesus was a manifestation of this principle.

The words that Jesus spoke were a reiteration of the teaching of the Old Testament. His words were not said for the judges but for individuals. What I mean is "love your enemies", "whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" ..etc were given to the individual people to live by and to forgive each other, but not for judges to judge the nation by.

The principle behind "eye for eye" is still valid. If you kill someone the judge in the court will put you in jail or give you the punishment of death as they still do in some countries. If you steal you will go to jail. But us as followers of Christ, as individuals, we are to forgive each other, and turn the other cheek.

If I was a victim and someone did something wrong to me I would forgive him because I am a follower of Christ. But when I am seated in the court as a judge I can not tell the offended person to turn his other cheek because Christ said so. No, in the court the law will take its course. But outside the court, as individuals, we are to forgive.

Having this in mind we can see that Christ was talking to the people, to individuals, and was teaching them how they should have been and should be treating each other. In that sense, yes, Jesus is telling them you are not to follow the eye for an eye principle, but be forgiving and loving. That is what they should have understood and practiced from the Exodus time, but they did not.

Here is what sister White had to say about the judgments:

"The minds of the people, blinded and debased by slavery and heathenism, were not prepared to appreciate fully the far-reaching principles of God's ten precepts. That the obligations of the Decalogue might be more fully understood and enforced, additional precepts were given, illustrating and applying the principles of the Ten Commandments. These laws were called judgments, both because they were framed in infinite wisdom and equity and because the magistrates were to give judgment according to them. Unlike the Ten Commandments, they were delivered privately to Moses, who was to communicate them to the people." {PP 310.1}

Fire from heaven:

This seems to be a contradiction between Jesus' attitude and Elijah's attitude in 2Kings 1. But what sheds light on this seeming contradiction is the fact that Christ was referring to the motive and not the action. Jesus said "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery". It is the motive in your heart which is in question.

When the disciples wanted to command fire to come down from heaven, what was their motive? It was hatred and indignation, which was not the case with Elijah. Here is what Sister White had to say about it:

"James and John, Christ's messengers, were greatly annoyed at this insult. They loved their Lord, and were filled with indignation because he had been so rudely treated by the Samaritans, who he was honoring by his presence. ... This manifest dishonor on the part of the Samaritans should not, they thought, be passed over without marked punishment.... The rebuke given to James and John sounds down along the line to our time. Many reveal the attributes of Satan by trying to compel their fellow men to believe as they believe. They desire to punish those who, they think, dishonor Christ. They may say that they are working for truth and liberty, they may claim to be doing honor to God; but if they exercise a zeal that brings pain to the bodies and spirits of those who dare to differ with them, they are controlled by the enemy of God. Such may think themselves righteous; but Christ says to them, as to the disciples: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." By his dealing with the Samaritans, Christ has shown us that although men manifest unmistakable contempt for him, his followers are not to harbor thoughts of hatred and revenge. {RH, February 7, 1899 par. 8}

So here again we see that Christ did not contradict what happened in the Old Testament.

A couple of things for those who believe that some of the writings of Moses were not inspired:

\* Jesus recommended the writings of Moses as a Divine authority whereby they can identify the Messiah. [Luke 16: 31](#) [John 5:46](#)

\* The Bible tells "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die." [Deuteronomy 18:20](#) (Moses either truly spoke in the Lord's name, or he did not. And if he did not, how come he was not killed? Did the word of God fail? God forbid.)

Furthermore, those who advocate that parts of the Bible are not inspired try to defend their false doctrine by a false interpretation of [2 Timothy 3:16](#). They reason that when this verse says "All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God" it actually means 'every part of scripture that is inspired...' which means that some parts of scripture are not inspired.

As you can see it is neither logical nor scriptural to teach such things. In fact we are counseled very clearly in the Spirit of Prophecy not to call any part of scripture not inspired, and we are told that this false interpretation of [2 Timothy 3:16](#) is nothing but a peg to hang our doubt upon:

"It is wonderful what an amount of evidence is required on the side of truth by the mind trained to doubt, and what weak, thread-like suppositions will be readily fastened upon to support skepticism. In the language of the apostle Paul it might be asked, O skeptic, "who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" The interpretation often heard that "All scripture given by inspiration of God," means that some Scripture is not inspired, is a very slender peg to hang a doubt upon. The apostle means simply, "I present to you the Living Oracles, the Scriptures, all given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Then comes the charge to Timothy: "Preach the word." "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." {BEcho, August 26, 1895 par. 2}

As you can see; this interpretation of [2 Timothy 3:16](#) is not new light, but an old error that the prophet of the Lord had met.

Another pillar statement that is being used to prove that some parts of scripture are uninspired is:

"I saw that God had especially guarded the Bible; yet when copies of it were few, learned men had in some instances changed the words, thinking that they were making it more plain, when in reality they were mystifying that which was plain, by causing it to lean to their established views, which were governed by tradition. But I saw that the Word of God, as a whole, is a perfect chain, one portion linking into and explaining another. True seekers for truth need not err; for not only is the Word of God plain and simple in declaring the way of life, but the Holy Spirit is given as a guide in understanding the way to life therein revealed. {EW 220.2}1882

Notice that Sister White said the above statement in 1882, while in 1895 she said the following:

"In giving the word, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The word was not given at the option of men, and the use to be made of it is not left to their option. Men may not dissect or pronounce upon, wrest or misinterpret, take from or cast aside, any portion of that word according to their own judgment. Although its compilation, preservation, and transmission have been committed to men, it is wholly divine in its origin and in the thoughts expressed. It may not be demerited and pronounced upon by finite minds, because of its transmission through human agents. {BEcho, August 26, 1895 par. 1}

And in December 1, 1888 she said:

"And although we may try to reason in regard to our Creator, how long He has had existence, where evil first entered into our world, and all these things, we may reason about them until we fall down faint and exhausted with the research when there is yet an infinity beyond. We cannot grasp it, so what man is there that dares to take that Bible and say this part is inspired and that part is not inspired? I would have both my arms taken off at my shoulders before I would ever make the statement or set my judgment upon the Word of God as to what is inspired and what is not inspired.

How would finite man know anything about that matter? He is to take the Word of God as it reads, and then to appreciate it as it is, and to bring it into the life and to weave it into the character. There is everything plainly revealed in God's Word which concerns the salvation of men, and if we will take that Word and comprehend it to the very best of our ability, God will help us in its comprehension.

Human minds without the special assistance of the Spirit of God will see many things in the Bible very difficult to be understood, because they lack a divine enlightenment. It is not that men should come to the Word of God by setting up their own way, or their own will or their own ideas, but it is to come with a meek and humble and holy spirit.

Never attempt to search the Scriptures unless you are ready to listen, unless you are ready to be a learner, unless you are ready to listen to the Word of God as though His voice were speaking directly to you from the living oracles. Never let mortal man sit in judgment upon the Word of God or pass sentence as to how much of this is inspired and how much is not inspired, and that this is more inspired than some other sources. God warns him off that ground. God has not given him any such work to do." {1SAT 65, 66}

So, obviously her words in Early Writings page 220 do not give us a license to call parts of scriptures uninspired or not true. In fact according to EGW the following is the result of condemning scripture:

"Thus many walk blindly where the enemy prepares the way. Now, it is not the province of any man to pronounce sentence upon the Scriptures, to judge or condemn any portion of God's word. When one presumes to do this, Satan will create an atmosphere for him to breathe which will dwarf spiritual growth." {GCDB, April 13, 1891 par. 6}

Furthermore, it will be naïve to use any statement from Ellen G. White to prove that God does not take life. The reason we say this is because her stand on this doctrine was as clear as daylight. She believed that God does command His angels and His people to take life. This should be clear from the examples we mentioned above.

#### Evidence from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy that God Does Command His people and His Angels to Destroy

As we look through the many examples provided for us, please keep in mind that God executes His judgments in different ways, and one of them is by withdrawing His protection and allowing evil to come upon man. What we are seeking to prove is that this is not the only way; it is a method and not a principle. For it to be a principle it has to work every time. But as we are going to see now there are many, many examples that tell us differently.

Before we start we should clarify exactly what this doctrine says. As we saw they teach that God can not break His commandments. And since the 6th commandment says "Thou shalt not kill" then God can not kill.

In other words, God can not command His people not to do something, and then He Himself does it. He can not command us not to kill, while He is allowed to break His commandment and kill. Well, let us take this reasoning to its logical end. If the 6th commandment applies to God, then everything that it entails should apply to God.

How did Jesus explain the 6th commandment?

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." [Matthew 5: 21, 22](#)

"Here Jesus describes murder as first existing in the mind. That malice and revenge which would delight in deeds of violence is of itself murder." {2SP 219.3}

So if the commandment applies to God as it applies to us, then since we can not do deeds of violence, God can not either. If we can not cause someone to be sick, God can not either. If we can not make someone blind or dumb, God can not either.

Those who teach this doctrine use the following statement to prove their point:

"Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer." {MH 113.1}

All we need to do in order to understand this statement is to read it in context. It is found in the book Ministry of Healing. If read in context we will see that it has nothing to do with this topic. Ellen G. White was talking about everyday sickness and injuries. In other words she is saying that God is not the one who gives you the flue, cancer, AIDS...etc. all this sickness, suffering and death are the result of sin. In no wise is she saying that God never takes someone's life, or never sends blindness or dumbness on someone as He did with Paul, Zachariah, Elymas...etc. The examples below will prove that she never meant that.

Here are some of the many examples we have to illustrate the truthfulness of what we are saying.

Herod ([Acts 12: 21 – 23](#))

"Herod was acquainted with the law of God, which says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" ([Exodus 20:3](#)); and he knew that in accepting the worship of the people he had filled up the measure of his iniquity and brought upon himself the just wrath of Jehovah. The same angel who had come from the royal courts to rescue Peter, had been the messenger of wrath and judgment to Herod. The angel smote Peter to arouse him from slumber; it was with a different stroke that he smote the wicked king, laying low his pride and bringing upon him the punishment of the Almighty. Herod died in great agony of mind and body, under the retributive judgment of God." {AA 151,152.}

Sodom and Gomorrah ([Genesis 19: 13, 24](#))

"While angels drew near on their mission of destruction, men were dreaming of prosperity and pleasure . . They rushed upon him [Lot], and would have torn him in pieces had he not been rescued by the angels of God. The heavenly messengers put forth their hand, and pulled lot into the house . . The inhabitants of Sodom had passed the limits of divine forbearance—'the hidden boundary between God's patience and His wrath.' The fires of His vengeance were about to be revealed in the vale of Siddim. The angels revealed to Lot the object of their mission: 'We will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it' [[Gen 19:13](#)] . . Lot went out to warn his children. He repeated the words of the angels, 'Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city' [[Gen 19:14](#)]. He did not realize the terrible necessity for God's judgments to put a check on sin . . But for the angels of God, they would all have perished in the ruin of Sodom. The heavenly messengers took him . . out of the city. Here the angels left them, and turned back to Sodom to accomplish their work of destruction." {PP 157, 159–160}

The first-born in Egypt ([Exodus 4:22, 23](#)) & the 70,000 men ([2 Samuel 24:15](#))

"A single angel destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians, and filled the land with mourning. When David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when he permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere." {GC88 614.2}

Dear brethren if none of the examples given is clear enough, this very statement should clarify the matter to you. "destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands"

Some reason that it could not have been a Holy angel that smote the first born in Egypt because the Bible says: "For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." [Exodus 12:23](#) Then they provide some statements and verses that says that Satan is the destroyer, which is correct. But what they miss is that 'destroyer' is not a name, but an adjective. It describes what the person is doing. For example, the Bible says that Jesus "is the Son of God" but this does not mean that every time we read the word son, it must apply to Jesus, because it is not His name.

Here are some statements that will clarify to us who the angel was that smote the firstborn (Please read [Exodus 4:23](#)):

"Each visitation from God was more severe than the preceding one, yet they would not release the children of Israel until the angel of the Lord slew the first-born of the Egyptians." {1 T, 265}

"When the destroying angel was about to pass through the land of Egypt, and smite the first-born of both man and beast, the Israelites were directed to bring their children into the house with them, and to strike the door-post with blood, and none were to go out of the house; for all that were found among the Egyptians would be destroyed with them. Suppose an Israelite had neglected to place the sign of blood upon his door, saying that the angel of God would be able to distinguish between the Hebrews and the Egyptians; would the heavenly sentinels have stood to guard that dwelling? We should take this lesson to ourselves. Again the destroying angel is to pass through the land. There is to be a mark placed upon God's people, and that mark is the keeping of his holy Sabbath. {HS 217.1}

Why is the 'angel of God' called the 'destroying angel'?

"At length the destroying angel was bidden to slay the first-born of man and beast among the Egyptians. That the Israelites might be spared, they were directed to place upon their doorposts the blood of a slain lamb. Every house was to be marked, that when the angel came on his mission of death, he might pass over the homes of the Israelites" {DA 51.3}

Because his mission was to destroy/kill the first born, He is also called 'the angel of death', 'the avenging angel' and 'the avenging angel of God'

"The Lord gave special directions to the Hebrews, for each family to slay a lamb and sprinkle the blood upon their door posts, that when the destroying angel should go forth upon his errand of death, the blood upon the post of the door should be to them a sign that those who were within the house were the worshipers of the true God. The angel of death passed over the houses thus designated. {LHU 31.5}

"The Egyptians could not see the avenging angel, who entered every house and dealt the death blow, but they knew that it was the Hebrew's God who was causing them to suffer the same distress they had made the Israelites to suffer. .... While the angel of death was passing through Egypt, each family of the Hebrews was to eat the lamb, that they were commanded to roast whole. .... Fifteen hundred years after this night, Jesus, the antitype of the paschal lamb, died upon the cross for the sins of the world. The lamb without blemish represented the spotless Lamb of God, without the taint of sin. As the houses of Israel were to be sprinkled with blood in order for the avenging angel to pass over them, so it will be necessary for us to repent of our sins and avail ourselves of the virtue of the blood of Christ to guard us from the avenging angel of God in the day of slaughter." {YI, May 1, 1873 par. 6, 9, 11}

So we can see that the destroyer in [Exodus 12:23](#) is called 'the angel of God', 'the avenging angel of God'...etc. this begs the question, can an 'evil angel' be called 'the angel of God'? If yes, where is the evidence? And if not, then we can only conclude that it was a Holy angel sent by God who smote the firstborn in Egypt.

The man that cursed in the camp ([Leviticus 24:10-15](#))

"On one occasion the son of an Israelitish woman and of an Egyptian, one of the mixed multitude that had come up with Israel from Egypt, left his own part of the camp, and entering that of the Israelites, claimed the right to pitch his tent there. This the divine law forbade him to do, the descendants of an Egyptian being excluded from the congregation until the third generation. A dispute arose between him and an Israelite, and the matter being referred to the judges was decided against the offender. Enraged at this decision, he cursed the judge, and in the heat of passion blasphemed the name of God. He was immediately brought before Moses. The command had been given, "He that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death" ([Exodus 21:17](#)); but no provision had been made to meet this case. So terrible was the crime that there was felt to be a necessity for special direction from God. The man was placed in ward until the will of the Lord could be ascertained. God Himself pronounced the sentence; by the divine direction the blasphemer was conducted outside the camp and stoned to death. Those who had been witness to the sin placed their hands upon his head, thus solemnly testifying to the truth of the charge against him. Then they threw the first stones, and the people who stood by afterward joined in executing the sentence." There are those who will question God's love and His justice in visiting so severe punishment for words spoken in the heat of passion. But both love and justice require it to be shown that utterances prompted by malice against God are a great sin. The retribution visited upon the first offender would be a warning to others, that God's name is to be held in reverence. But had this man's sin been permitted to pass unpunished, others would have been demoralized; and as the result many lives must eventually have been sacrificed." {PP 407, 408}

The man who collected sticks on the Sabbath ([Numbers 15:32, 34-35](#).)

"Soon after the return into the wilderness, an instance of Sabbath violation occurred, under circumstances that rendered it a case of peculiar guilt. The Lord's announcement that He would disinherit Israel had roused a spirit of rebellion. One of the people, angry at being excluded from Canaan, and determined to show his defiance of God's law, ventured upon the open transgression of the fourth commandment by going out to gather sticks upon the Sabbath. During the sojourn in the wilderness the kindling of fires upon the seventh day had been strictly prohibited. The prohibition was not to extend to the land of Canaan, where the severity of the climate would often render fires a necessity; but in the wilderness, fire was not needed for warmth. The act of this man was a willful and deliberate violation of the fourth commandment--a sin, not of thoughtlessness or ignorance, but of presumption. He was taken in the act and brought before Moses. It had already been declared that Sabbathbreaking should be punished with death, but it had not yet been revealed how the penalty was to be inflicted. The case was brought by Moses before the Lord, and the direction was given, "The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp." [Numbers 15:35](#). The sins of blasphemy and willful Sabbathbreaking received the same punishment, being equally an expression of contempt for the authority of God. In our day there are many who reject the creation Sabbath as a Jewish institution and urge that if it is to be kept, the penalty of death must be inflicted for its violation; but we see that blasphemy received the same punishment as did Sabbathbreaking. Shall we therefore conclude that the third commandment also is to be set aside as applicable only to the Jews? Yet the argument drawn from the death penalty applies to the third, the fifth, and indeed to nearly all the ten precepts, equally with the fourth. Though God may not now punish the transgression of His law



with temporal penalties, yet His word declares that the wages of sin is death; and in the final execution of the judgment it will be found that death is the portion of those who violate His sacred precepts." {PP 408, 409}

The death of Nadab and Abihu ([Leviticus 10:1-2](#).)

"For burning the incense they took common instead of the sacred fire which God Himself had kindled, and which He had commanded to be used for this purpose. For this sin, a fire went out from the Lord and devoured them in the sight of the people." {PP 359}

"Contrary to God's express direction, they dishonored Him by offering common instead of sacred fire. God visited them with His wrath; fire went forth from His presence and destroyed them." {3T 295.}

The death of the 185,000 Assyrians ([2 Kings 19:35](#).)

"That very night deliverance came. The angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand." Verse 35. "All the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria," were slain. [2 Chronicles 32:21](#).....The God of the Hebrews had prevailed over the proud Assyrian. The honor of Jehovah was vindicated in the eyes of the surrounding nations." {PK 361}

Sacrificial system ([Gen 4:3, 4](#); [22:13](#); Exodus; Leviticus...etc)

If God does not command killing, then who gave the sacrificial system? Who gave the commandments to sacrifice animals?

Some people reason that it was a pagan ritual that the Israelites had adopted from their neighboring pagan nations; that God could never command such a thing.

That this reasoning is wrong and based on lack of understanding can be shown by the fact that the sacrificial system was in place before any pagan nation existed. It was there from the time that Adam was cast out of Eden:

"These brothers [Cain & Abel] were tested, as Adam had been tested before them, to prove whether they would believe and obey the word of God. They were acquainted with the provision made for the salvation of man, and understood the system of offerings which God had ordained. They knew that in these offerings they were to express faith in the Saviour whom the offerings typified, and at the same time to acknowledge their total dependence on Him for pardon; and they knew that by thus conforming to the divine plan for their redemption, they were giving proof of their obedience to the will of God. Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin; and they were to show their faith in the blood of Christ as the promised atonement by offering the firstlings of the flock in sacrifice." {PP 71.2}

"When Adam and his sons began to offer the ceremonial sacrifices ordained by God as a type of the coming Redeemer, Satan discerned in these a symbol of communion between earth and heaven." {LHU 26.4}

This alone is enough to dismiss such false doctrine that tells us God never commanded His people to sacrifice. Moreover, to say that the sacrificial system was not ordained by God but was a pagan ritual is blasphemy because Christ was the antitype of the Passover lamb. In other words we would be saying that Christ is the antitype of something that Satan ordained and not God. God forbid that we should believe such things.

\* Who commanded the Israelites in Egypt to kill a lamb and sprinkle the blood on the door posts? What did this lamb represent?

"The innocent lamb slain in Egypt, the blood of which sprinkled upon the door-posts caused the destroying angel to pass over the homes of Israel, prefigured the sinless Lamb of God, whose merits can alone avert the judgment and condemnation of fallen man. The Saviour had been obedient to the Jewish law, and observed all its divinely appointed ordinances. He had just identified himself with the paschal lamb as its great antitype, by connecting the Lord's Supper with the Passover." {5Red 48.1}

\* Why did God command Moses to take the Israelites out of Egypt three days journey and sacrifice unto Him? ([Exodus 3:18](#))

\* If God never commanded the sacrifices, then how could the High Priest go into the presence of God in the most Holy place and sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat? Why would God accept such a thing? ([Leviticus 16:14](#))

Some use the following verse out of context to teach that God never commanded the burnt offerings and sacrificial system.

"For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:" [Jeremiah 7: 22](#)

This verse can be explained in two ways:

a- If read in context.

The book of Jeremiah was written just before and during the captivity of Israel. Chapters 5, 6, & 7 mention many times how the Israelites are worshipping false gods. In chapter 6:16 God was calling them to go back to the 'old paths' but they have rejected. In 6:19 we read that "they have not hearkened unto" the words and laws of God, but rejected them. And in verse 20, God tells them "your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me."

Chapter 7:9, 10 "burn incense unto Baal" and they say "we are delivered [from Egypt] to do all these abominations".

Vs 18 "make cakes to the queen of heaven and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods" Then we have Vs 22 "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:"

What sacrifices and burnt offerings is God talking about? Is it His sacrifices that He has instituted since the fall of Adam, or is it their sacrifices that they have adopted from the pagans around them?

We find the answer in the same chapter Vs 30, 31 "burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart." God had never commanded this. It was this "burnt offering and sacrifices" that God was referring to in Vs 22, and not His sacrificial system. God can never contradict Himself

b- Compared with similar verses:

There is a good lesson for us to learn in Isaiah 58 regarding how God views our actions. He examines the motives behind the actions more than the actions themselves. Although the Jews were obeying God's commandment by fasting, yet God told them that He never commanded such a fast. Their fast was not accepted in His sight. Why? Because the motive behind their fast was not the right motive ([Isaiah 58:4](#)).

Same as [Isaiah 1: 11- 13](#). It was God who ordained the new moons, feasts, and Sabbaths, yet He said "I cannot away with, it is iniquity"? Obviously God was referring to the way and motives the people had while keeping them.

So even if the words in [Jeremiah 7:24](#) were not referring to the human sacrifices; they could be understood in the same way as Isaiah 1 & 58. God never commanded such burnt offering and sacrifices. They lost the significance behind such rituals.

"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." 1Samuel 15:22

The only reason that leads people to understand [Jeremiah 7:24](#) to mean that God never ordained the sacrificial system is due to placing ones beliefs and theories above the word of God. It stems from the belief that parts of scripture are not inspired.

Korah ([Numbers 16: 30 -35](#))

"The eyes of all Israel were fixed upon Moses, as they stood, in terror and expectation, awaiting the event. As he ceased speaking, the solid earth parted, and the rebels went down alive into the pit, with all that pertained to them, and 'they perished from among the congregation' . . . But the judgments were not ended. Fire flashing from the cloud consumed the two hundred and fifty princes who had offered incense." {PP 400-401}

Dear reader, the example of Korah, his followers, and what the Israelites did the next day is vitally important. We will see why in the section entitled "Why is this doctrine dangerous?"

But for the mean time, we would like to point out that according to Spirit of Prophecy, the fire came or flashed "from the cloud". This begs the question, who was in the cloud? Who followed them by cloud in the day and pillar of fire by night?

"From the pillar of cloud Jesus "spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you" (Ex. 31:12, 13). {3SM 256}

The above should be clear enough, no comment is needed

Uzzah (2 Sam 6: 6, 7)

"Angels who attended the ark struck down Uzzah for presuming impatiently to put his hand upon the ark of God." {1SP, 410}

"The fate of Uzzah was a divine judgment upon the violation of a most explicit command." {PP 705}

"The Philistines, who had not a knowledge of God's law, had placed the ark upon a cart when they returned it to Israel, and the Lord accepted the effort which they made. But the Israelites had in their hands a plain statement of the will of God in all these matters, and their neglect of these instructions was dishonoring to God. Upon Uzzah rested the greater guilt of presumption. Transgression of God's law had lessened his sense of its sacredness, and with unconfessed sins upon him he had, in face of the divine prohibition, presumed to touch the symbol of God's presence. God can accept no partial obedience, no lax way of treating His commandments. By the judgment upon Uzzah He designed to impress upon all Israel the importance of giving strict heed to His requirements. Thus the death of that one man, by leading the people to repentance, might prevent the necessity of inflicting judgments upon thousands." {PP 705.3}

The priests of Baal and Elijah (1 Kings 18:40)

That repentant Israel may be protected from the allurements of those who have taught them to worship Baal, Elijah is directed by the Lord to destroy these false teachers. The anger of the people has already been aroused against the leaders in transgression; and when Elijah gives the command, "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape," they are ready to obey. They seize the priests, and take them to the brook Kishon, and there, before the close of the day that marked the beginning of decided reform, the ministers of Baal are slain. Not one is permitted to live." {PK 153.2}

Jericho (Joshua 6)

"God's judgments were awakened against Jericho. It was a stronghold. But the Captain of the Lord's host Himself came from heaven to lead the armies of heaven in an attack upon the city. Angels of God laid hold of the massive walls and brought them to the ground." {3T 264}

Keep in mind that there were people living on the walls (Joshua 2:15)

You might be thinking that these commands are contrary to the character of God, at least to what you think His character is. Well, you are not the only one who thought so, even in Ellen White's days some people thought that and here is what she said:

"The utter destruction of the people of Jericho was but a fulfillment of the commands previously given through Moses concerning the inhabitants of Canaan: "Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them." Deuteronomy 7:2. "Of the cities of these people, . . . thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth." Deuteronomy 20:16. To many these commands seem to be contrary to the spirit of love and mercy enjoined in other portions of the Bible, but they were in truth the dictates of infinite wisdom and goodness. God was about to establish Israel in Canaan, to develop among them a nation and government that should be a manifestation of His kingdom upon the earth. They were not only to be inheritors of the true religion, but to disseminate its principles throughout the world. The Canaanites had abandoned themselves to the foulest and most debasing heathenism, and it was necessary that the land should be cleared of what would so surely prevent the fulfillment of God's gracious purposes." {PP 492.1}

If this is not clear enough, and you still think that God can not command such things and He does not use humans as instruments to punish wicked nations, then read the following quote:

"The Lord is regarded as cruel by many in requiring His people to make war with other nations. They say that it is contrary to His benevolent character. But He who made the world, and formed man to dwell upon the earth, has unlimited control over all the works of His hands, and it is His right to do as He pleases, and what He pleases with the work of His hands. Man has no right to say to his Maker, Why doest Thou thus? There is no injustice in His character. He is the Ruler of the world, and a large portion of His subjects have rebelled against His authority, and have trampled upon His law. He has bestowed upon them liberal blessings, and surrounded them with

everything needful, yet they have bowed to images of wood and stone, silver and gold, which their own hands have made. They teach their children that these are the Gods that give them life and health, and make their lands fruitful, and give them riches and honor. They scorn the God of Israel. They despise His people, because their works are righteous. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works" (Ps. 14:1). God has borne with them until they filled up the measure of their iniquity, and then He has brought upon them swift destruction. He has used His people as instruments of His wrath, to punish wicked nations, who have vexed them, and seduced them into idolatry." {2SM 333.1}

Again this is clear enough that God does use His people as instruments of His wrath.

If you are wondering why would God do such a thing, read the following:

"The inhabitants of Canaan had been granted ample opportunity for repentance. Forty years before, the opening of the Red Sea and the judgments upon Egypt had testified to the supreme power of the God of Israel. And now the overthrow of the kings of Midian, of Gilead and Bashan, had further shown that Jehovah was above all gods. The holiness of His character and His abhorrence of impurity had been evinced in the judgments visited upon Israel for their participation in the abominable rites of Baalpeor. All these events were known to the inhabitants of Jericho, and there were many who shared Rahab's conviction, though they refused to obey it, that Jehovah, the God of Israel, "is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath." Like the men before the Flood, the Canaanites lived only to blaspheme Heaven and defile the earth. And both love and justice demanded the prompt execution of these rebels against God and foes to man." {PP 492.2}

You see it was because of "love and justice" that God had to execute such judgments which seem harsh to us. It is not out of hate, but out of love and justice.

Moses at the foot of Sinai (Exodus 32:27)

"Those who performed this terrible work of judgment were acting by divine authority, executing the sentence of the King of heaven. Men are to beware how they, in their human blindness, judge and condemn their fellow men; but when God commands them to execute His sentence upon iniquity, He is to be obeyed. Those who performed this painful act, thus manifested their abhorrence of rebellion and idolatry, and consecrated themselves more fully to the service of the true God. The Lord honored their faithfulness by bestowing special distinction upon the tribe of Levi. The Israelites had been guilty of treason, and that against a King who had loaded them with benefits and whose authority they had voluntarily pledged themselves to obey. That the divine government might be maintained justice must be visited upon the traitors. Yet even here God's mercy was displayed. While He maintained His law, He granted freedom of choice and opportunity for repentance to all. Only those were cut off who persisted in rebellion. It was necessary that this sin should be punished, as a testimony to surrounding nations of God's displeasure against idolatry. By executing justice upon the guilty, Moses, as God's instrument, must leave on record a solemn and public protest against their crime." {PP 324, 325}

Saul and the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15)

"The expedition was not to be entered upon for the purpose of self-aggrandizement; the Israelites were not to receive either the honor of the conquest or the spoils of their enemies. They were to engage in the war solely as an act of obedience to God, for the purpose of executing His judgment upon the Amalekites. God intended that all nations should behold the doom of that people that had defied His sovereignty, and should mark that they were destroyed by the very people whom they had despised." {PP 628.3}

"This victory over the Amalekites was the most brilliant victory that Saul had ever gained, and it served to rekindle the pride of heart that was his greatest peril. The divine edict devoting the enemies of God to utter destruction was but partially fulfilled. Ambitious to heighten the honor of his triumphal return by the presence of a royal captive, Saul ventured to imitate the customs of the nations around him and spared Agag, the fierce and warlike king of the Amalekites." {PP 629.2}

If it was not God's command to smite and destroy all the Amalekites, then why was God angry with Saul when he did not kill them all? If God does not command killing, then how come the prophet of the Lord, Samuel, killed Agag? ( 1 Sam 15:33)? If it was not God who commanded such command, then how dare Samuel the prophet speak on behalf of the Lord saying: "now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." 1 Samuel 15: 1 – 3

According to Deuteronomy 18: 20 if truly it was not God who commanded such things, then king Saul should have killed Samuel the prophet instead of the Amalekites. Samuel would have been considered a false prophet and worthy of death because he presumed to speak a word in the name of the Lord, which God did not command him to speak!

Many will think that this was a cruel thing to do, but had they been able to see what God sees, they would not say that. Had Saul done exactly what God commanded him to do, the Israelites would not have had to face all the trouble they did at Esther's time. Haman, the one who almost caused the extermination of God's people was the descendent of Agag the king of the Amalekites. "Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite" [Esther 3:1](#). Obviously some of the descendents of the king were not killed by Saul and years later they wanted revenge.

#### Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22)

"Satan was at hand to suggest that he must be deceived, for the divine law commands, "Thou shalt not kill," and God would not require what He had once forbidden. Going outside his tent, Abraham looked up to the calm brightness of the unclouded heavens, and recalled the promise made nearly fifty years before, that his seed should be innumerable as the stars. If this promise was to be fulfilled through Isaac, how could he be put to death? Abraham was tempted to believe that he might be under a delusion. In his doubt and anguish he bowed upon the earth, and prayed, as he had never prayed before, for some confirmation of the command if he must perform this terrible duty. ...Darkness seemed to shut him in; but the command of God was sounding in his ears, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." That command must be obeyed, and he dared not delay. Day was approaching, and he must be on his journey." {PP 148.3}

#### Ananias and Sapphira ([Acts 5:1–11](#))

"Infinite Wisdom saw that this signal manifestation of the wrath of God was necessary to guard the young church from becoming demoralized. Their numbers were rapidly increasing. The church would have been endangered if, in the rapid increase of converts, men and women had been added who, while professing to serve God, were worshiping mammon. This judgment testified that men cannot deceive God, that He detects the hidden sin of the heart, and that He will not be mocked. It was designed as a warning to the church, to lead them to avoid pretence and hypocrisy, and to beware of robbing God." {AA 73, 74}

And there are much more:

\* Would the angel have killed Balaam had not his donkey turned aside, he said he would have. Or was that an evil angel who then caused Balaam to bless Israel? ([Numbers 22: 33](#))

\* What about when Abram took 318 trained servants and rescued his nephew Lot from the five kings that had concurred Sodom and taken lot captive? Why does Melchizedek come and bless him for what he has done ([Genesis 14: 14, 18](#))? And why then is Christ of the order of Melchizedek? Hebrews 5–8

\* Who brought death upon (killed) Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea? ([Exodus 14:26](#))

\* Did God give Miriam the leprosy or was it the devil? (Numbers 12). If God never causes anyone to get sick, then who caused Moses' arm to be leprous ([Exodus 4:6](#))

\* Who expelled Adam and Eve from Eden? ([Genesis 3: 23, 24](#))

\* Who wrestled with Jacob, and how come He put Jacob's thigh out of joint?([Genesis 32:25](#))

\* Who sent the fire down on the two bands of 50 soldiers that came to arrest Elijah? ([2 Kings 1:10](#))

\* Who anointed Jehu as a king, and who commanded him to smite the house of Ahab? ([2 Kings 9: 6 – 10](#))

\* How come the Lord was pleased with Jehu when he executed the house of Ahab? ([2 Kings 10:30](#))

\* Who took the life of Ezekiel's wife? ([Eze 24: 16 – 18](#)).

\* Is it cruel to make someone lie in his bed on one side for 390 days, and make him eat bread baked with cow's waste? ([Eze 4: 4 – 15](#))

\* Who gave Samson the strength all through his life and especially after his prayer in [Judges 16:28, 29](#)?

\* ....etc

As we have mentioned before, we will mention it again. The Lord has said:

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." [Isaiah 55:9](#)

That is why sometimes we can not comprehend why God would require His people to do such things, as He required of Ezekiel and many others to do.

#### Why is This Doctrine Dangerous?

The following example will show us that this doctrine is not only important, but it is salvational. If we believe this doctrine, we end up calling good evil and evil good. We end up attributing the work of God to Satan.

#### Korah ([Numbers 16: 30 -35](#))

"Korah would not have taken the course he did had he known that all the directions and reproofs communicated to Israel were from God. But he might have known this. God had given overwhelming evidence that He was leading Israel. But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that the most striking manifestations of His power were not sufficient to convince them; they attributed them all to human or satanic agency. The same thing was done by the people, who the day after the destruction of Korah and his company came to Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." Notwithstanding they had had the most convincing evidence of God's displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them, they dared to attribute His judgments to Satan, declaring that through the power of the evil one, Moses and Aaron had caused the death of good and holy men. It was this act that sealed their doom. They had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin by which man's heart is effectually hardened against the influence of divine grace. "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man," said Christ, "it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." [Matthew 12:32](#). These words were spoken by our Saviour when the gracious works which He had performed through the power of God were attributed by the Jews to Beelzebub. It is through the agency of the Holy Spirit that God communicates with man; and those who deliberately reject this agency as satanic, have cut off the channel of communication between the soul and Heaven." {PP 404-5}

Dear reader, the very next day after Korah and his followers were killed by the very God who created them; the people came to Moses and attributed the judgments of God to Satan. They said that "through the power of the evil one" Moses had caused the death of Korah. In other words, they said that God would not do such a thing, it was Satan who caused the earth to open up and swallow Korah and the men, it was Satan who caused the fire to come down from heaven and kill 250 men.

Because of that, because these men attributed the works of God to Satan, their doom was sealed. Fourteen thousand and seven hundred people died as a result ([Numbers 16:49](#)). If we say that it was not God who killed in such and such instances, while as a matter of fact it was, then we are attributing the work of God to Satan, and our fate will be like those who did the same thing in the days of Korah.

In order for you to believe this doctrine, you have to believe that many of the prophets in the Bible had a wrong understanding of God's character. As a result, they said 'the Lord says this or that' while as a matter of fact, what God wanted them to say is 'I will withdraw my protection from them, and sin will kill them'. Some even say that Moses out of his wrong understanding of God's character, and his anger against the actions of these men, said what he said. (For example [Exodus 32:26, 27](#); Numbers 16). In other words, this doctrine destroys people's confidence in the inspired men that wrote the Bible.

Those who teach such things, are committing the same mistake that Korah did:

"Like Korah and his companions, many, even of the professed followers of Christ, are thinking, planning, and working so eagerly for self-exaltation, that in order to gain the sympathy and support of the people, they are ready to pervert the truth, falsifying and misrepresenting the Lord's servants, and even charging them with the base and selfish motives that inspire their own hearts. By persistently reiterating falsehood, and that against all evidence, they at last come to believe it to be truth. While endeavoring to destroy the confidence of the people in the men of God's appointment, they really believe that they are engaged in a good work, verily doing God service." {RH, November 12, 1903 par. 35, 36}

Will we understand God's character more than Moses did? When Moses asked God to show him His glory, what did God do? He revealed to him His character, for this is God's glory.

"And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." [Exodus 34: 6, 7](#)

It was this character of God that made Moses haste, and bow his head toward the earth, and worship. Vs 8.

Our God is balanced between these two characters, a merciful God and a righteous judge. If you take either of the two out you will not have the same balanced God. Think about it, those who take the mercy side out end up worshipping a tyrant. While those who take the justice side out end up having some silent God, who relies on Satan to do His work.

You might be wondering after reading all these examples that 'Jesus came to manifest His Father's character, but the character that He manifested was full of grace, peace, and love; there was no such thing as all these examples above. And we know that God never changes, so there must be something wrong.'

To answer these thoughts, let us first read this verse:

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." [John 1:17](#)

God has chosen to reveal His law and justice through Moses and the people before Christ, but through Jesus, He chose to reveal His grace and forgiveness.

Please do not misunderstand; we are not saying that through Moses it was only law and justice, never love and mercy. Not at all! If you read the story of the Exodus, you will see for your self how much mercy and forgiveness God showed to His people. And in the same way, it was not only love and mercy that was revealed through Jesus, there was justice revealed as well. The earthly life of Jesus was a manifestation of the love, mercy, and forgiveness principles that were recorded in the Old Testament which were forgotten by the people. "Say not thou, I will recompense evil." "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me." "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth." "If he that hateth thee be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink." [Proverbs 20:22; 24:29, 17; 25:21, 22](#) R.V., margin

Examples where Jesus revealed God's justice while on earth:

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." [Matthew 10:28](#)

"But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." [Luke 12:5](#)

Where did Jesus get this concept from? It was from [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: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand."

Who was Jesus referring to in these words? Who has power to "destroy both soul and body in hell"? Who has power to "cast into hell" after "He has killed"?

It is none other than God the Father Himself! Jesus was not oblivious of this side of God. He knew His Father very well, and He would never misrepresent Him. Yet Jesus said with His own mouth that God has power to cast into hell and kill and destroy both soul and body.

To any honest reader this should be very clear. Jesus did not come to manifest the character of the righteous judge, because at the time of His coming, that is all that the Jews knew, they forgot about the love side of God.

That is why Jesus came to reveal the love of God to them, because they had forgotten it, rather they never knew it.

"The rabbis had a saying that there is rejoicing in heaven when one who has sinned against God is destroyed; but Jesus taught that to God the work of destruction is a strange work. That in which all heaven delights is the restoration of God's own image in the souls whom He has made." {COL 190}

But still, He confirmed to the people by His words that although God is merciful and loving and forgiving, yet by no means He will clear the guilty.

"He [Christ] taught that God was a rewarder of the righteous, and a punisher of the transgressor." {3SP 47.1}

"His [Christ's] object was to reconcile the prerogatives of justice and mercy, and let each stand separate in its dignity, yet united. His mercy was not weakness, but a terrible power to punish sin because it is sin, yet a power to draw to it the love of humanity." {7 BC, 935–936}

"I am instructed that when the Lord's time comes, should no change have taken place in the hearts of proud, ambitious human beings, men will find that the hand that has been strong to save will be strong to destroy. No earthly power can stay the hand of God." {9 T 13}

We have seen from the stories of the Old & New Testament, from the words of our Lord, and from the words of our God when He revealed Himself to Moses, that God is a righteous judge who has power to destroy, kill, and will not clear the guilty. Yet in the same time, He is forgiving, loving, willing to do anything to save a sinner, and is not willing that any should perish.

In conclusion:

Does God command taking life?

"Elijah is directed by the Lord to destroy these false teachers. {PK 153.2}

And many other statements of which a sample was given in the previous pages.

Does God use Holy Angels to take someone's life?

"The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when he permits." {GC88 614.2}

Does God use human beings to punish wicked men?

"He has used His people as instruments of His wrath, to punish wicked nations, who have vexed them, and seduced them into idolatry." {2SM 333.1}

In believing this doctrine you will:

1. Attribute God's work to the Satan
2. Believe that the prophets who wrote the Old Testament had a wrong understanding of God's character
3. Misinterpret hundreds of scriptures that tell us clearly that God does take life
4. Gain a false picture of love
5. Present God as One who is too loving to kill, but who instead leaves His creatures to be tortured by the cruelest being in existence (human beings and fallen angels)
6. Call every act of justice as evil
7. You accuse God of 'false witnessing / lying'



## Seeming Objections:

### \* Objection:

"We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but he leaves the rejecters 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. 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." {GC88 36.2}

In the above statement we are told "God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression". Some use the previous words to prove that God is never the One who executes the judgments against transgression. Thus He is never the One who takes life. But is this so? Are the above words talking about a specific time in earth's history, or do they apply to God's dealing with humanity through all the ages?

How can we harmonize the above words with the following:

"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; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." [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." [Exodus 34:6, 7](#). While He does not delight in vengeance, He will execute judgment upon the transgressors of His law. He is forced to do this, to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from utter depravity and ruin. In order to save some He must cut off those who have become hardened in sin. "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked." [Nahum 1:3](#). By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. And the very fact of His reluctance to execute justice testifies to the enormity of the sins that call forth His judgments and to the severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor." {PP 628.1}

"The Lord sees every human being: He denotes every phase of character. In the great day of judgment He will execute the sentence against the sinner. It will then be seen that the sinner's conduct has never stopped with himself." {KC 49.4}

"No man was to exercise an arbitrary power over another man's conscience. Christ gave no ecclesiastical right to forgive sin, nor to sell indulgences, that men may sin without incurring the displeasure of God, .... Jesus charged his disciples to preach the remission of sin in his name among all nations; but they themselves were not empowered to remove one stain of sin from the children of Adam. Nor were they to execute judgment against the guilty; the wrath of an offended God was to be proclaimed against the sinner; but the power which the Roman Church assumes to visit that wrath upon the offender is not established by any direction of Christ; he himself will execute the sentence pronounced against the impenitent. Whoever would attract the people to himself as one in whom is invested power to forgive sins, incurs the wrath of God, for he turns souls away from the heavenly Pardoner to a weak and erring mortal." {3SP 245.1}

"In the entire Bible, God is presented not only as a Being of mercy and benevolence, but as a God of strict and impartial justice."--ST March 24, 1881. {LDE 240.4}

"How much less can transgressors look upon the Son of God when He shall appear in the glory of His Father, surrounded by all the heavenly host, to execute judgment upon the transgressors of His law and the rejecters of His atonement. . . ." {Mar 40.4}.

From the above statements we can see that the Spirit of Prophecy tells us clearly that God and Christ do execute the sentence or the judgment upon transgression. Yet in another place we read that "God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression". The question is how can we harmonize them? Should we accept one and reject the others? Of course not.

If we read the questioned statement in context we will realize that Ellen White was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem (past) and the destruction of the world in the seven last plagues (future). Here are some sentences taken from the context around it:

"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 destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control.....

The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. .... 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 ..... 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."

The Saviour's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon his law. Dark are the records of human misery that earth has witnessed during its long centuries of crime. ....what are these, in contrast with the terrors of that day when the restraining Spirit of God shall be wholly withdrawn from the wicked, no longer to hold in check the outburst of human passion and satanic wrath! The world will then behold, as never before, the results of Satan's rule.

Like Israel of old, the wicked destroy themselves; they fall by their iniquity. By a life of sin, they have placed themselves so out of harmony with God, their natures have become so debased with evil, that the manifestation of his glory is to them a consuming fire.

Let men beware lest they neglect the lesson conveyed to them in the words of Christ. As he warned his disciples of Jerusalem's destruction, giving them a sign of the approaching ruin, that they might make their escape, so he has warned the world of the day of final destruction, and has given them tokens of its approach, that all who will may flee from the wrath to come." {GC88 36 – 38}

As you can see, in context it is clear enough that Ellen G. White is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem as a "faint shadow" of what will happen after probation has closed and God's Spirit is totally withdrawn from the wicked, namely the seven last plagues.

If the above is still not clear enough to prove that the statement in question is talking about the time of the seven last plagues, please compare it with the following statement:

"When He [Christ] 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}

Who will be the executioner of the seven last plagues?

"Already the Spirit of God, insulted, refused, abused, is being withdrawn from the earth. Just as fast as God's Spirit is taken away, Satan's cruel work will be done upon land and sea." {LDE 242}

"This earth has almost reached the place where God will permit the destroyer to work his will upon it." {7T 141}

"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, reproves, 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." {LDE 242.1}

"Four mighty angels hold back the powers of this earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. The nations of the world are eager for conflict; but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish. Deadly instruments of warfare will be invented. Vessels, with their living cargo, will be entombed in the great deep. All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of satanic agencies. But they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon." {7BC 967.8}

From the above statements we can learn that after God's Spirit is withdrawn and probation is closed, the wicked will be under the control of Satan, and they will have no protection from the outburst of human passion and satanic wrath! The world will then behold, as never before, the results of Satan's rule. God will not be the executioner of the sentence against transgression at that time. He will withdraw His Spirit and let the wicked have the master of their choosing.

Having this in mind, we can harmonize the seeming contradicting statement. The words "God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression" are referring to the time of the seven last plagues when God's Spirit is withdrawn and probation is closed during which God will let the world behold as never before the results of Satan's rule. It is then when "The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere." {GC 614}

\* Objection:

"God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself." {COL 84.4} (This statement if understood correctly should shed some more light on the first objection)

The above statement is used to mean that God does not command the killing of anyone. But if understood correctly, it means 'God is not the cause of the sinner's death'.

Here is the statement in context;

"Every action, good or bad, prepares the way for its repetition. How was it in the case of Pharaoh? The statement in Holy Writ is that God hardened his heart, and at every repetition of light in the manifestation of God's power the statement is repeated. Every time he refused to submit to God's will his heart became harder and less impressible by the Spirit of God. He sowed the seed of obstinacy, and God left it to vegetate. He might have prevented it by a miracle, but that was not His plan. He allowed it to grow and produce a harvest of its own kind, thus, proving the truthfulness of the scripture: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." When a man plants doubts, he will reap doubts. By rejecting the first light and every following ray, Pharaoh went from one degree of hardness of heart to another, until the cold, dead forms of the first-born only checked his unbelief and obstinacy for a moment. And then, determined not to yield to God's way, he continued his willful course until overwhelmed by the waters of the Red Sea.

This case is placed on record for our benefit. Just what took place in Pharaoh's heart will take place in every soul that neglects to cherish the light and walk promptly in its rays. God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence. When a person once neglects to heed the invitations, reproofs, and warnings of the Spirit of God, his conscience becomes seared, and the next time he is admonished, it will be more difficult to yield obedience than before. And thus with every repetition. Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the Spirit of God is grieved.

We want all to understand how the soul is destroyed. It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved. He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. Then comes the harvest to be reaped from the seed of unbelief and resistance. Oh what a harvest of sinful indulgences is preparing for the sickle!" {5T 119, 120} (1882-1889)

What Sister White meant by "God destroys no one" is "It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved". It is obvious to every honest reader that she does not mean that 'God does not take life' as in commanding His angels or His people to take life. But as she said God should never be blamed for the lost and unsaved soul. Again, in another article she says:

"God destroys no man; but when a man stifles conviction, when he turns from evidence, he is sowing unbelief, and will reap as he has sown. ... In simplicity and truth we would speak to the impenitent in regard to the way in which men destroy their own souls. You are not to say that God is to blame, that he has made a decree against you. No, he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth, and to the haven of eternal bliss. No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. God follows men with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests upon the sinner." {RH, February 17, 1891 par. 2}

"God destroys no man; but after a time the wicked are given up to the destruction they have wrought for themselves." {YI, November 30, 1893 par. 6}

"God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence." {FLB 58.7}

As you can see, when read in context, you can not apply the above statement to mean that God does not command His people or angels to destroy a city or nation ...etc. it is only when taken out of context that it can be understood that way.

In order to understand exactly what EGW meant by her statements we have to look at her writings as a whole. She can not say in 1891 that 'God does not destroy' meaning He can not send an angel or His people to take someone's life, and three years later say the following:

"I am instructed that when the Lord's time comes, should no change have taken place in the hearts of proud, ambitious human beings, men will find that the hand that has been strong to save will be strong to destroy. No earthly power can stay the hand of God." {PH090 16.2} Feb. 15, 1904.

And in other places say the following:

"The same angel who had come from the royal courts to rescue Peter, had been the messenger of wrath and judgment to Herod. The angel smote Peter to arouse him from slumber; it was with a different stroke that he smote the wicked king, laying low his pride and bringing upon him the punishment of the Almighty." {AA 151,152.}

"He [God] has used His people as instruments of His wrath, to punish wicked nations, who have vexed them, and seduced them into idolatry." {2SM 333.1}

"Under God the angels are all-powerful. On one occasion, in obedience to the command of Christ, they slew of the Assyrian army in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand men." {DA 700} (1898). {LDE 243.2}

And many other statements. Please refer to the section entitled "Evidence from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy that God does command His people and His angels to destroy."

Obviously "God destroys no man" can not mean that God does not take anyone's life.

To those who say that God is love, He can not do such things, He can not command His angels and His people to make wars, war is cruel and evil, God can not command such things, please read the following:

"The Lord is regarded as cruel by many in requiring His people to make war with other nations. They say that it is contrary to His benevolent character. But He who made the world, and formed man to dwell upon the earth, has unlimited control over all the works of His hands, and it is His right to do as He pleases, and what He pleases with the work of His hands. Man has no right to say to his Maker, Why doest Thou thus? There is no injustice in His character. He is the Ruler of the world, and a large portion of His subjects have rebelled against His authority, and have trampled upon His law. He has bestowed upon them liberal blessings, and surrounded them with everything needful, yet they have bowed to images of wood and stone, silver and gold, which their own hands have made. They teach their children that these are the Gods that give them life and health, and make their lands fruitful, and give them riches and honor. They scorn the God of Israel. They despise His people, because their works are righteous. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works" (Ps. 14:1). God has borne with them until they filled up the measure of their iniquity, and then He has brought upon them swift destruction. He has used His people as instruments of His wrath, to punish wicked nations, who have vexed them, and seduced them into idolatry." {2SM 333.1}

It is our understanding of what love is that is wrong, and not God's actions. "Let God be true, but every man a liar"

\* Objection:

Ellen White grew in her understanding of God's Character. In August 8, 1883, EGW wrote a letter to Uriah Smith, in it she referred to a vision she had in 1879 {4T 384.1} through which God clarified to her the dynamics by which the wicked are destroyed:

"I was shown in the vision given me of the judgment, that God would send warnings, counsels and reproof. . . . I was shown that the time was in the near future that these whom God has warned and reproved and given great light, but they would not correct their ways and follow light, He would remove from them that heavenly protection that 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 simply be left to themselves and the protection of God [would] be withdrawn from them, and they would not be shielded from the working of Satan. . . . 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 houses, in their eating and drinking. Wherever they are, His eye is upon them. They are preserved from a thousand

dangers, all of them unseen. Satan has laid snares, but the Lord is constantly at work to save His people from them. But those who have no sense of the goodness of God, 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 soul he had tempted. God will bear long, but there is a bound to His mercy, a line which marks His mercy and 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.....after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them. 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. Storm and tempest both by land and sea 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." MR No. 1081

The question that should be asked is: What was this vision about? Is it a principle that we should explain all the scriptures with, or is it relating to something specific?

If we read the vision she had in context (4T 384 – 387) we can clearly see that it is referring to the day of Judgment when the books will be open and probation will be closed. That is the time of the seven last plagues. In other words, the mechanics of the judgments explained in that vision is referring to the seven last plagues not to the instances when God executed His judgments in the Old and New Testament. As a result, we can not use it as a principle to test or explain all the other examples we have in the Bible.

The following are sections taken from the vision she had:

"The great day of the execution of God's judgment seemed to have come. Ten thousand times ten thousand were assembled before a large throne, upon which was seated a person of majestic appearance. Several books were before Him, and upon the covers of each was written in letters of gold, which seemed like a burning flame of fire: "Ledger of Heaven." One of these books, containing the names of those who claim to believe the truth, was then opened"

"Then were uttered these solemn words: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still...." The book then closed, and the mantle fell from the Person on the throne, revealing the terrible glory of the Son of God.

"The scene then passed away, and I found myself still upon the earth, inexpressibly grateful that the day of God had not yet come, and that precious probationary time is still granted us in which to prepare for eternity." {4T 384, 387}

The above is clear enough to prove that the vision spoken about is referring to the day of Judgment and to the dynamics or mechanics of executing that specific judgment (in this case the seven last plagues) not to the things that happened in the past.

Having that in mind, compare the following two statements:

"I was shown in the vision given me of the Judgment,..... I was shown that the time was in the near future that .... He would remove from them that heavenly protection which had preserved them from Satan's cruel 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.....after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them." {14MR 1 – 3} (taken from what she wrote in 1883 about the vision she had in 1879)

Compare the above with:

"When He [Christ] 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}

As you can see, the vision she had in 1879 as she said, is about the judgment, and the explanation of the mechanics of the judgments are talking about the plagues that will fall on the wicked after Jesus leaves the sanctuary. And as we have seen in the first objection, the seven last plagues will not be executed by God, but by Satan. God will simply let the world "behold, as never before, the results of Satan's rule." {GC 36, 37}

It is then when:

"The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere." {GC 614}

Moreover, what further proves this objection to be invalid is the fact that after EGW had this vision in 1879 she never corrected her old statements, never mentioned publicly to anyone that she was wrong in her understanding and has been corrected by God, and maintained the same understanding in the later years:

"While He [God] does not delight in vengeance, He will execute judgment upon the transgressors of His law. He is forced to do this, to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from utter depravity and ruin. In order to save some He must cut off those who have become hardened in sin. 'The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.' [Nahum 1:3](#). By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. And the very fact of His reluctance to execute justice testifies to the enormity of the sins that call forth His judgments and to the severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor." {PP 628.1} 1890

"His [Christ's] object was to reconcile the prerogatives of justice and mercy, and let each stand separate in its dignity, yet united. His mercy was not weakness, but a terrible power to punish sin because it is sin, yet a power to draw to it the love of humanity." {GCB, October 1, 1899 par. 21}

"I am instructed that when the Lord's time comes, should no change have taken place in the hearts of proud, ambitious human beings, men will find that the hand that has been strong to save will be strong to destroy. No earthly power can stay the hand of God." {PH090 16.2} Feb. 15, 1904.

\* Objection:

"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}

This statement taken out of context seems to say that God never commanded the Israelites to make any war. But if only read in context we will see that this is not what is meant by it:

"God had made it their privilege and their duty to enter the land at the time of His appointment, but through their willful neglect that permission had been withdrawn. Satan had gained his object in preventing them from entering Canaan; and now he urged them on to do the very thing, in the face of the divine prohibition, which they had refused to do when God required it. Thus the great deceiver gained the victory by leading them to rebellion the second time. They had distrusted the power of God to work with their efforts in gaining possession of Canaan; yet now they presumed upon their own strength to accomplish the work independent of divine aid. "We have sinned against the Lord," they cried; "we will go up and fight, according to all that the Lord our God commanded us." [Deuteronomy 1:41](#). So terribly blinded had they become by transgression. 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}

Read as well the story in Deuteronomy 1 especially verses 41, 42 to get the context. After they rebelled against God and God told them that they will not enter the land, they decided to go up and fight. It was their own decision and not God's, which is why God said: "Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies." [Deut 1:42](#).

Moreover the above statement is talking about one specific incident where God did not want them to fight and they disobeyed Him. It is not a general statement that could be applied to all the wars of Israel.

\* Objection:

The following statements if taken out of context could be misunderstood, but in context they are talking about the penalty of sin itself, which is death, eternal death, and not the way it was executed. These statements point out to us that even the Son of God was not spared

to save us from our sins. He was hanged on the cross and received the punishment of sin, which is separation from God and eternal death, in our stead. They tell us that the cross shows us the mercy, tenderness, and parental love blended with holiness, justice and power. They prove to us that even the Son of God after becoming sin for us, had to pay the penalty of sin.

But by no means are they dealing with the way the judgment was carried. As we have seen, the punishment of sin is separation from God and eternal death. All sinners will receive this punishment, but what happens after the sinner is separated from God is what makes the difference.

Here are the statements

\* "The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption,—the Son of God uplifted on the cross. This is to be the foundation of every discourse given by our ministers." {GW 315.2}

\* "Though the griefs and pains and temptations of earth are ended, and the cause removed, the people of God will ever have a distinct, intelligent knowledge of what their salvation has cost.

The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified. Never will it be forgotten that He who could command all the powers of nature, who by a word could summon mighty angels to do his will and execute vengeance upon his enemies, ~~the beloved of God, the Majesty of Heaven,~~ submitted to insult, torture, and death, that sinners might be redeemed. That the Maker of all worlds, the Arbiter of all destinies, should lay aside his glory, and humiliate himself from love to man, will ever excite the wonder and admiration of the universe. ...

The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. In the light that streams from Calvary, the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive. Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power. While we behold the majesty of his throne, high and lifted up, we see his character in its gracious manifestations, and comprehend, as never before, the significance of that endearing title, our Father. {4SP 468, 469}

A Vision Shown EGW Regarding this Topic:

War in Old Testament Times

"The Lord commanded Moses to vex the Midianites, and smite them, because they had vexed Israel with their wives, wherewith they had beguiled them to transgress the commandments of God.

The Lord commanded Moses to avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites, and then he should be gathered to his people. Moses commanded the men of war to prepare for battle against the Midianites. And they warred against them as the Lord commanded, and slew all the males, but they took the women and children captives. Balaam was slain with the Midianites. "And Moses, and Eleazar, the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp ..." (Num. 31:13-16).

Moses commanded the men of war to destroy the women and male children. Balaam had sold the children of Israel for a reward, and he perished with the people whose favor he had obtained at the sacrifice of twenty-four thousand of the Israelites.

The Lord is regarded as cruel by many in requiring His people to make war with other nations. They say that it is contrary to His benevolent character. But He who made the world, and formed man to dwell upon the earth, has unlimited control over all the works of His hands, and it is His right to do as He pleases, and what He pleases with the work of His hands. Man has no right to say to his Maker, Why dost Thou thus? There is no injustice in His character. He is the Ruler of the world, and a large portion of His subjects have rebelled against His authority, and have trampled upon His law. He has bestowed upon them liberal blessings, and surrounded them with everything needful, yet they have bowed to images of wood and stone, silver and gold, which their own hands have made. They teach their children that these are the Gods that give them life and health, and make their lands fruitful, and give them riches and honor. They scorn the God of Israel. They despise His people, because their works are righteous. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works" (Ps. 14:1). God has borne with them until they filled up the measure of their iniquity, and then He has brought upon them swift destruction. He has used His people as instruments of His wrath, to punish wicked nations, who have vexed them, and seduced them into idolatry.

A family picture was presented before me. A part of the children seem anxious to learn and obey the requirements of the father, while the others trample upon his authority, and seem to exult in showing contempt of his family government. They share the benefits of their father's house, and are constantly receiving of his bounty. They are wholly dependent upon him for all they receive, yet are not grateful, but conduct themselves proudly, as though all the favors they received of their indulgent parent were supplied by themselves. The father notices all the disrespectful acts of his disobedient, ungrateful children, yet he bears with them.

At length, these rebellious children go still further, and seek to influence and lead to rebellion those members of their father's family who have hitherto been faithful. Then all the dignity and authority of the father is called into action, and he expels from his house the rebellious children, who have not only abused his love and blessings themselves, but tried to subvert the remaining few who had submitted to the wise and judicious laws of their father's household.

For the sake of the few who are loyal, whose happiness was exposed to the seditious influence of the rebellious members of his household, he separates from his family his undutiful children, while at the same time he labors to bring closer to himself the remaining faithful and loyal ones. All would honor the wise and just course of such a parent, in punishing most severely his undutiful, rebellious children.

God has dealt thus with His children. But man, in his blindness, will overlook the abominations of the ungodly, and pass by unnoticed the continual ingratitude and rebellion and heaven-daring sins of those who trample upon God's law and defy His authority. They do not stop here, but exult in subverting His people, and influencing them by their wiles to transgress and show open contempt for the wise requirements of Jehovah.

Some can see only the destruction of God's enemies, which looks to them unmerciful and severe. They do not look upon the other side. But let everlasting thanks be given, that impulsive, changeable man, with all his boasted benevolence, is not the disposer and controller of events. "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel" ([Prov. 12:10](#)). --Spiritual Gifts, vol. 4, pp. 49-52. {2SM 332 - 334}

The Character of God