

PROPHETIC STUDY SERIES



**DOES GOD
KILL PEOPLE?
(THE FULL CUP PRINCIPLE)**

WAKE UP AMERICA SEMINARS
Proclaiming Revelation's Story

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On occasion, I have inserted italics and brackets in Scripture quotations to enhance understanding, not to change the meaning.

There are nine questions in this booklet which I hope you will answer. The author's answers are listed at the end. May God bless you as you study this fascinating topic!

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Does God Kill People?

John 3:16 is one of the most popular verses in the Bible, but few people realize it describes two very different levels of God's love: one is "corporate love" and the other is "love for individuals." Sometimes God's actions on one level make His actions appear inconsistent when viewed from the other level, so a closer look at these issues should help alleviate the confusion.

For thousands of years, nations have come and gone. Historians can explain specific events that caused a nation to rise or fall, but the history books never take into account a sovereign God, sometimes, sets these nations up and takes them down.¹ Consider the recurring problem God has faced throughout human history: How best to deal with the sin problem. Suppose the first generation of a new nation knows everything about God's ways and will, and are able to pass along 80% of what they know to their children (I know I am being generous, but this is an example). Then, each succeeding generation also passes along 80% of what they know to their children. In just five generations, the nation will only know one-third as much about God as their original ancestors! This rapid decline in spiritual knowledge and accountability explains, in part,

¹ Daniel 2:21; 4:17, 35; 5:22-30

why religious interest and church attendance drops with each passing generation. The irony in this illustration is the fifth generation is unaware of its spiritual darkness. Yet, each successive generation thinks it knows God. This is how every nation descends into apostasy from God's point of view. This declining process is universal and predictable. It always results in greater violence, decadence, and degeneracy. Fortunately for us, because God knows man's degeneration is inevitable, He has a policy in place to deal with whole nations and their people.

God's Love Poorly Understood

The Bible declares God is love, but the meaning of love is so distorted by sin today many people do not understand what the word love means. God's love is revealed in the perfect balance between His justice and mercy. Because of sin, man's sense of this balance has become distorted and inadequate. We cannot see everything God sees and our limited view makes trusting Him difficult. God understands our limitations, but He requires us to trust Him implicitly. He alone knows the best way through life to eternity. God allowed the prophet Isaiah to see certain aspects of His glory, yet, Isaiah was amazed at God's reluctance to show Himself

to the world. He wrote, **“Truly you are a God who hides Himself, O God and Savior of Israel.”**¹ God’s apparent silence in the affairs of humankind is a consequence of sin.

Most people know that inappropriate behavior can separate friends and family members from one another. The same is true of God. Sin is so offensive to God that it has separated us from His presence. As generations come and go, the reality of God becomes dimmer. As knowledge about God becomes faint, and the longer we go without renewed evidence of God’s authority and glory, the more silent He appears to be. In the vacuum of this silence, sin becomes more attractive and less offensive. Wicked people become bold and defiant in their transgressions. Violence, sorrow, and suffering arise like dandelions after a spring rain. Each day, news headlines confirm the human race is wallowing in the slime of depravity. Degenerate and hideous sins are either glamorized, justified, or treated as inconsequential. Sin is like the drug Novocaine—it deadens our sense of fairness. It causes us to minimize the suffering resulting from our deeds and to avoid, at all costs, any penalty for wrongful behavior. Because of sin’s deadening power, people can commit horrible deeds and then convince themselves

1 Isaiah 45:15

they did nothing wrong or justify doing it. Such is the power of sin. From the very beginning, sinners have been reluctant to accept their responsibility for sinning. Lucifer blamed God; Eve blamed the snake; Adam blamed God and Eve! Each offender deflected responsibility for sinning in the Garden of Eden.¹ Even though sin has great control over sinners, the power of sin can be broken. Whenever a sinner is “born again” by Holy Spirit power, the first thing a saint wants to do is to take responsibility and provide the necessary restitution for the sin.

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Question #1: God’s love is the balance between _____ and _____.

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The Full Cup Principle

Even though the Bible declares God is love,² it also says God has wrath.³ Because God’s character has both properties, it is sometimes difficult to reconcile these two attributes. So, how does the perfect balance between God’s love and wrath play out? Bible history shows God follows a consistent principle when dealing with humanity.

1 Genesis 3:12-13

2 1 John 4:8

3 Colossians 3:5-6; Revelation 15:1

God loves this world and watches over it at all times.¹ Because this planet is cursed by sin, people and nations have natural enmity toward one another. Somewhere on Earth, nations are always at war. God does what He has to do to keep the nations from killing one another. When God acts, He does what is necessary to benefit all mankind. So, when the fullness of time is right, God destroys a wicked nation for the sake of its oncoming generations.² God loves future generations the same as He loves the present one. In fact, He already knows the name of each person who will be in a future generation.³ Subsequently, His love for forthcoming generations creates a management problem. When the current generation becomes so evil that corporate repentance and reformation is impossible, God has to annihilate the offending generation so the next generation will have a fresh start.⁴

I call God's policy for dealing with wicked nations the "Full Cup Principle." I created this phrase to associate God's patience with the idea of a measuring cup because the Bible often uses the metaphor of a cup to indicate the fullness of an experience. For

1 Proverbs 15:3

2 Ezekiel 14:12-21

3 Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:16

4 Nehemiah 9:16-33; 1 Thessalonians 2:16

example, consider Jesus' words just before He was arrested and crucified, **"My Father, if it is possible, may this [bitter] cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."**¹ Jesus did not want to endure the experience of a bitter death on the cross, but He was willing to do it if this was the only way to save the human race. The metaphor of a cup can also be used to indicate a joyful experience. Consider David's well-known words, **"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup [of joy] overflows."**² King David uses the metaphor of an overflowing cup to express joy beyond containment! From these two examples we see a cup represents an experience, and its contents indicate the type of experience.

The full cup principle is based on the idea God measures the actions of mankind. Each time we do wrong, we add sin to our cup of grace. When all of God's grace has been displaced by willful sin, our cup becomes full of bitterness and we have to drink the consequences of our actions. When God forces people to reap what they have sown, He is returning what they deserve.³ The golden rule is iron clad. It says: As we do unto

1 Matthew 26:39, insertion mine

2 Psalm 23:5, insertion mine

3 Galatians 6:7

others, the same will be done to us.¹ Because God acts on this principle, He is said to have vengeance.² Suppose each new nation is given a measuring cup—a probationary period of grace. Over time, as generations pass and people begin to forget about God and their accountability to Him, the cup fills with guilt as people slide deeper and deeper into apostasy. When God sees the nation’s cup is full, He releases His righteous wrath and destroys it because the nation will not repent of its apostasy. Once that nation disappears, God gives the land to a new people and the process starts over. God measures the actions of all nations this way.

Daniel said to King Belshazzar the night he saw the handwriting on the wall, **“This is what these words [on the wall] mean: Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Peres: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”**³ Babylon had filled its cup and God responded. This story demonstrates God’s patience with man’s arrogance and defiance has limits. When the cup of transgression is nearly full, God breaks His silence

1 Matthew 7:12; Obadiah 1:15

2 Romans 12:19; Revelation 2:23

3 Daniel 5:26-28, insertion mine

by sending a warning through His selected messengers. If the warning does no good, He then uses one or more of His four deadly judgments: sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts.¹ If the situation is redeemable, His judgments are redemptive. If the situation goes beyond redemption, His judgments are totally destructive.

Many people currently interpret God's silence or passiveness with evil to mean that He is either nonexistent or indifferent to what we do. Others see His permissiveness as proof He is not interested in each person's day to day activities. For this reason, a growing number of people are committing horrible, evil deeds thinking God does not see them and will not hold them responsible. Many of us do not realize the strict accountability we must give to God for every action! Solomon said, **"Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."**²

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Question #2: The full cup principle is based on God's _____.

¹ Ezekiel 14:21; Revelation 6:8

² Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

God is Angry

The Bible declares God, a God of love, destroyed all but eight people with a flood in Noah's day.¹ The Bible also declares God, a God of love, will destroy every wicked person at the end of the thousand years.² These actions seem completely inconsistent with love, but God does not act or respond with the same type of impatience and anger humans do. God does get angry,³ but the basis for His indignation is never self-centered. Corporately speaking, God's anger is aroused when a majority of people in a city or nation openly and defiantly violate the moral values necessary for the well-being of society. God hates wickedness.⁴ He becomes especially angry when lawlessness and immoral conduct reach a point where the oncoming generation (innocent children) has no choice but to experience the deadly and painful consequences of their fathers' sins.⁵

The curse of sin is inescapable. History reveals no nation or civilization can save itself from the slippery slope of moral degeneracy. It is just a matter of time before a majority of people within a city

1 Genesis 6-9

2 Revelation 20

3 Deuteronomy 32:22; Hebrews 3:11

4 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

5 Exodus 20:5; Jeremiah 32:17-19

or nation fail to exalt or heed righteous counsel. When this occurs, God's wrath is aroused because He knows future generations will be ruined.¹ God's intimate view of man's behavior and moral degeneracy (1 Kings 16:7) explains why a God of love required ancient Israel to kill every man, woman, child, and all livestock belonging to the Amalekites. (1 Samuel 15:3) When nations become hopelessly evil and defiant, God may first send "redemptive" judgments to see if the people will repent. (Ezekiel 14:12-21) If the people will not repent, God either destroys them Himself or raises up a destroyer to eliminate them. This truly is an act of love so future generations can live and enjoy the land previously occupied by a decadent and degenerate people. (Leviticus 18:24-25) Innocent people perish in corporate events, but this does not mean all are eternally lost! The Bible says Rahab, the prostitute, was saved when Jericho was destroyed. (See James 2:25.) Daniel and some of his friends were saved when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem. (Daniel 1) However, the Bible also indicates sometimes God's people perish as a result of His wrath! (Revelation 6:9-11; 17:6)

Unfortunately, corporately speaking, children rarely rise to a higher, nobler standard of conduct than

¹ Genesis 18:20; Jonah 1:2; Colossians 3:5-6

their parents. Children may have more materialistic wealth, but seldom do they embrace a higher standard of moral conduct. Man's nature is sinful and attracted to rebellion and wickedness. Each generation of teens push the envelope of decency, and each generation delights in greater rebellion. As generations come and go, each generation becomes more ignorant of God's will, and then it insults God with greater indifference and degeneracy than their parents. This slippery slope leads each successive generation into greater wickedness. When we violate God's design for living, the suffering index increases and agony and death occur. There comes a point within man's misery where God's patience runs out and He takes matters into His own hands by cauterizing the cancer of sin. Ironically, what God is unable to achieve through patience and longsuffering, He can sometimes achieve through His wrath. (2 Peter 2) It is so important to properly understand both levels of God's love. In His love God does all He can to save the maximum number of individuals; and at appropriate times He must "prune back" the curse of sin so the people of Earth will not self-destruct or drown in wickedness.

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Question #3: God's anger is aroused by _____ violation of _____ values.

Does God Kill People?

From time to time, scholars and pastors assert God does not kill people. They defend this by maintaining, God does not violate His own commandment **“Thou shalt not kill”** (Exodus 20:13, KJV), or God just steps aside and turns evil people over to the natural consequences of sin which brings death and destruction. The justification used to support either position is false. A person cannot understand aspects of God’s character and ignore His own words! Notice what the Lord Himself said in the days of Noah, **“The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, ‘I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth – men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.’”** (Genesis 6:6-7) The Bible puts God in an active role, not passive, concerning the destruction of Earth at the time of the flood. Notice the same position of God with respect to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: **“Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord. . . . Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the Lord out of**

the heavens. Thus He overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land.” (Genesis 13:13; 19:24-25) Centuries later, Jude warned early Christians saying, **“In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who [will] suffer the punishment of eternal fire [that will come down from God out of Heaven].”** (Jude 7, Revelation 20:9, insertions mine)

The next verse shows how God Himself is willing to destroy nations when necessary. The Lord said to Israel at the time of the giving of the covenant at Mount Sinai: **“If in spite of these things [redemptive judgments] you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward Me, I myself will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over. And I will bring the sword upon you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. When you withdraw into your cities, I will send a plague among you, and you will be given into enemy hands.”** (Leviticus 26:23-25, insertion mine) These verses show God not only kills people for justifiable reasons, but takes full responsibility for doing so.

Falsehoods about God's character do a lot of damage when they contain some truth. (A good lie is 99% truth.) The Bible says God is love, and Jesus' death on Calvary proves He is. What more could He do than live among the stench and rejection of sinners for 33 years and then give His life to redeem us? Not only did He make eternal salvation possible, but He gives us grace to meet the challenges we face each day. He provides food and clothing, He sustains us, and desires the best for us. He even knows the number of hairs on our heads. (Matthew 10:30) The problem though, is God's love does not lessen the importance of His boundaries. (Genesis 2:17) God requires man to live within the physical and moral boundaries He has established. For example, consider the physical law of momentum: Mass times velocity equals momentum. A 4,000 pound car going 60 miles per hour has a lot of momentum. Suppose a man drinks too much, gets drunk, and while driving his car at a high rate of speed hits a tree and dies. God did not kill the driver. The law of momentum produced the injury that caused death. So, there is validity to the claim sin has consequences. However, the question remains, did a loving God create the law of momentum that killed the drunk driver? God did create the law of momentum and He wants us to live

within the boundaries of that law. If a man chooses to get drunk and drive his car into a tree, then it is fair to conclude the drunk killed himself. The other motorists can consider themselves fortunate if the drunk driver kills only himself or herself!

Regarding this issue, many people stumble over the sixth commandment, **“Thou shalt not kill,”** wondering if God violates His own commandment when He kills people. This is a good and fair question and to arrive at a correct answer we must understand the intent of the commandment, **“Thou shalt not kill.”** God has declared there are a few circumstances where death can be inflicted upon a person (capital punishment) without breaking the intent of His law. Notice what the Lord told Noah at the time of his exit from the ark: **“And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.”** (Genesis 9:5-6) This verse unmistakably states God expects other men to put murderers to death. Capital punishment is not man’s invention; it is a command from God. Scripture declares

capital punishment originated with God—not man. (See also Leviticus 20.)

In the wilderness, God not only spoke the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel, He also elaborated the terms and conditions for capital punishment. **“These are to be legal requirements for you throughout the generations to come, wherever you live. Anyone who kills a person is to be put to death as a murderer only on the testimony of witnesses. But no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. Do not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer, who deserves to die. He must surely be put to death.”** (Numbers 35:29-31) God does not break the intent of His own law by requiring men to put murderers to death. A person has to incorporate all God has said about killing to understand the intent underlying the laws governing life and death. When God said, **“Thou shalt not kill,”** He was forbidding premeditated murder. However, if someone chose to commit murder, God declared the murderer must be put to death and the next of kin could kill the murderer without incurring guilt. Notice, **“[If] the avenger of blood finds him [the murderer] outside the city [of refuge], the avenger of blood may kill the accused without being**

guilty of murder.” (Numbers 35:27, insertions mine) If sinful people can kill a wicked person without incurring guilt under lawful circumstances, God is also guiltless under the law.

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Question #4: Capital punishment is not _____ invention, it is a command from _____.

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God Does Kill People

Individuals who claim God does not kill people cannot give a Scriptural reason for the death of the firstborn, both men and animals, at the time of the Exodus. The Lord warned Moses if the destroying angel did not find blood on the doorposts, He Himself would slay the firstborn of each family, whether man or animal! **“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn both men and animals and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord.”** (Exodus 12:12) This is an important point. Who claims responsibility for killing the eldest (highest ranking) family member of men and animals in Egypt, the Lord or the devil? If we make the devil responsible, then we must conclude the devil is speaking in Exodus 12 or God and the devil were partners in the killing of the firstborn.

God does not need to use the devil to accomplish works of righteousness. Furthermore, if God simply turned His back on the firstborn in Egypt and allowed the devil to kill this select group of people, then God should be considered an accomplice to murder. God says if an individual has the opportunity to prevent harm and does nothing about it, he becomes an accomplice to the harm committed and shares in its guilt. (Ezekiel 3:17-21) The real point is do we take God at His word? Notice what the Lord told Moses: **“See now that I Myself am He! There is no God besides Me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.”** (Deuteronomy 32:39)

The deaths of the firstborn in Egypt reveal something important about the character of God. He gave Pharaoh and his court nine plagues (nine chances) to convince them He was Sovereign, but Pharaoh refused to recognize God’s authority. So, God sent a tenth plague upon Egypt which killed many, including Pharaoh’s firstborn. During the Great Tribulation, history will be repeated. God will provide an abundance of evidence He is sovereign, but millions of people will refuse to obey the commands of the Almighty and they will

receive His seven last plagues! When men and women refuse the clearest evidence of God's will, what more can He do? What are God's options if individuals willfully refuse to recognize the difference between right and wrong? God killed Egypt's firstborn as an object lesson for Israel and to punish Egypt. Egypt's punishment was due to open rebellion against the authority of God. Pharaoh had filled his cup! The object lesson for Israel was even more impressive! The "passing over" pointed forward to a time when God would pass over every human being in judgment to verify the blood of His sacrifice on Calvary was on the door posts of the heart. (2 Corinthians 5:10) The death of the firstborn in Egypt was a shadow of the death of God's only Son that would be necessary for man's salvation. The story of Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah reveals the same concept. God tested Abraham's faith to see if Abraham was willing to do to his own son what God would have to do to His Son. No wonder Jesus is called the Lamb of God. (John 1:29) Incidentally, the New Testament describes three instances in which people were killed outright under interesting circumstances. Read Acts 5:1-11 and Acts 12:23 and see if you can determine who did the killing. Also, carefully

examine 2 Kings 1:1-17 and determine who destroyed 102 men with fire. Then, read Isaiah 37 and pay close attention to verse 36 which states who killed 185,000 men.

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Question #5: God _____ Egypt's firstborn to
_____ Egypt.

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In the Days of Noah

The whole world filled its cup in Noah's day. The Bible says, **"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the Earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the Earth, and His heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, 'I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the Earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.'"** (Genesis 6:5-7) Remember, some people foolishly argue a God of love does not kill people, because God Himself says **"Thou shalt not kill."** (Exodus 20:13, KJV) These people place the Bible in a state of internal conflict because they do not understand killing is not al-

ways murder. Murder is an act born out of hatred or predatory behavior, (1 John 3:15; Psalm 11:5-7; Numbers 35) and God does not consider carrying out the death penalty to be murder or an act of hatred. In fact, God says putting murderers to death is necessary to achieve justice. (Genesis 9:5-6; Numbers 35:31) What else could **“I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the Earth”** mean? The argument that God does not kill people is a false claim because it makes God appear to lie or the Bible to be contradictory. God broke His silence through Noah by warning the world about His forthcoming actions. Then, when 120 years had expired, He destroyed all but eight of the inhabitants of the world when the antediluvians’ cup of iniquity had reached full measure. God fulfilled His promise. He destroyed the men, women, and children who refused to get into the ark. When extended mercy fails to produce repentance and reformation, God’s justice demands destructive action.

I need to make a point before going to the next section. I believe all children, in all religions and cultures, are born in a *saved* state. The Bible does teach all human beings are born with fallen natures. We come from the womb having a natural

tendency toward selfishness, sin, and rebellion. However, I believe God does not impart guilt to children for their sins until they reach the age of accountability. For normal children, the age of accountability (knowing the difference between right from wrong and having the ability to follow through with a conscientious decision to do right or wrong) varies somewhere between the ages of 7 and 14. God does not condemn a child to eternal death because Adam sinned, the child's parents are sinners, or the child is a natural-born sinner. If the blood of Jesus can justify an adult who has willingly sinned, then it can justify a child whose ability to reason is limited and knowledge of right and wrong is incomplete. A child is a living trust given to parents until he or she is intellectually and emotionally prepared to bear the responsibilities of adulthood. Because the emotions of children can be easily swayed, because children cannot reason adequately, and because children do not have a well-defined understanding of right and wrong, they do not have accountability during their first years of life. In fact, this is why we call them *minors*.

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Question #6: Killing is not always _____.

The Amorites

When the Lord made the following promise to Abraham, the Amorites had not yet filled up their cup: **“Then the Lord said to him [Abraham], ‘Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.’ ”** (Genesis 15:13-16, insertion mine)

Notice the last sentence of the text. God promised to give Canaan to Abraham’s offspring only after the sins of the Amorites had reached their full measure! Make no mistake about this. Canaan belongs to the Creator, and He promised Canaan to Abraham’s descendants only after the Amorites had exhausted their chance for possessing that beautiful land. Keep in mind Israel’s possession of Canaan was based on the same conditions that applied to the Amorites. Contrary to what many people think, Israel’s possession of Canaan has always been con-

ditional. Moses warned Israel: **“But be assured today that the Lord your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly, . . . After the Lord your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, ‘The Lord has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.’ No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is going to drive them out before you. It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations.”** (Deuteronomy 9:3-5) This is an extremely important point: The Canaanites were also driven out and/or destroyed when they filled their cup of wickedness! When God’s patience with the Canaanites reached its limit, He broke His silence by sending wrath upon them! (Leviticus 18:24-25)

Notice how God used the metaphor of the “cup” in Jeremiah’s day: **“This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, said to me: ‘Take from My hand this cup filled [to the brim] with the wine of My wrath and make all the nations to whom I send**

you drink it. When they drink it, they will stagger and go mad because of the sword I will send among them.’ So I took the cup from the Lord’s hand and made all the nations to whom He sent me drink it.” (Jeremiah 25:15-17, insertion mine) Now, compare Jeremiah’s words with the warning given by God’s servants, the 144,000, in Revelation 14: **“If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.”** (Revelation 14:9-10) These texts point forward to a time during the Great Tribulation when people will be warned about worshiping the Antichrist. Everyone who submits to the laws of the devil will have to drink from the cup of God’s wrath.

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Question #7: When God’s patience reaches its limit, He sends _____.
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Why Was Israel Given a Second Chance?

God is no respecter of nations. He has no favorites. God destroyed Israel once their cup had filled just

as he destroyed the antediluvians and Amorites. In fact, the Bible says He destroyed Israel twice: the first time in 605 B.C. and then again in A.D. 70. Just before God sent Israel to Babylon in 605 B.C., He spoke through the prophet Jeremiah explaining why He was punishing Israel, saying: **“But you did not listen to me . . . and you have provoked Me with what your hands have made, and you have brought harm to yourselves . . . Because you have not listened to My words, I will summon all the peoples of the north and My servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon . . . and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin . . . This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt . . . and will make it desolate forever.”** (Jeremiah 25:7-12) This prophecy predicts Babylon will be destroyed at a time in the future! It proves God deals fairly with all nations. In God’s eyes, wickedness is wickedness. Each person, city, and nation has a cup and when it becomes full, God

breaks His silence. When the Babylonian empire's cup became full, God destroyed the empire and gave it to the Medes and Persians. When the Medes and Persians filled their cup, God destroyed their empire and gave the land to the Grecians. This process goes on and on because of the curse of sin.

God caused Israel to be destroyed in 605 B.C. for provoking Him to anger. God destroyed Babylon, the Medes and Persians, and Greece for the same reasons He destroyed Israel! (Ezekiel 14:12-21) Jesus gave the underlying basis of the full cup principle when He said, **“But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”** (Luke 12:48) God gives each nation a measuring cup when it forms, and when its cup is filled, God's wrath breaks out because of defiance. Historians can explain the sequence of events describing *how* a nation fell, but only the Bible explains *why* it fell.

God then gave ancient Israel a second opportunity to fulfill His plans, so we can say He gave Israel two measuring cups. He did this because Abraham's faith impressed Him and He wanted a whole na-

tion of Abrahams as His representatives on Earth. God made a promise to Abraham that his descendants would someday be as numerous as the stars. He also wanted Abraham's descendants to serve as the trustees of His gospel. He wanted to bless the whole world through a nation of priests: a people who would know, understand, and share His love. God wanted His gospel of salvation spread to every corner of Earth! Therefore, He entered into a covenant with Israel and from the beginning, He graciously promised He would give the nation a second chance if they happened to go astray.

Notice these two passages: The Lord said, **“But if they [my people] will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers [when they are exiled in the land of their enemies, if they will confess]—their treachery against Me and their hostility toward Me, which made Me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies—then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, I will remember My covenant with Jacob and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land . . . They will pay for their sins because they rejected My laws and abhorred My decrees. Yet in spite of this, when**

they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking My covenant with them. I am the Lord their God. But for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the Lord.” (Leviticus 26:40-45, insertions mine)

Solomon referred to the Lord’s promise of a “second chance” in his prayer when He dedicated the temple to God in Jerusalem: **“When they [your people, Israel] sin against You—for there is no one who does not sin—and You become angry with them and give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive to his own land, far away or near; and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with You in the land of their conquerors and say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly’; and if they turn back to You with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to You toward the land You gave their fathers, toward the city You have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name; then from Heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their**

plea, and uphold their cause. And forgive your people, who have sinned against You; forgive all the offenses they have committed against You, and cause their conquerors to show them mercy; for they are your people and your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace. May your eyes be open to your servant's plea and to the plea of your people Israel, and may You listen to them whenever they cry out to You.” (1 Kings 8:46-52, insertion mine)

God kept His word and He did as He promised. He gave Israel a second chance lasting 70 weeks (490 years: from 457 B.C. to A.D. 34). Unfortunately, Israel did not learn from its mistakes. God also gave the city of Nineveh a second measuring cup, but the succeeding generations in Nineveh did not learn from the mistakes of their forefathers. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Nineveh about 160 years after the city repented in the days of Jonah.

Israel Filled Its Cup

Like Nineveh, Israel turned away from God and went into such deep apostasy that when the Son of God came to Earth and spoke the truth, they

accused Him of blasphemy. Shortly before Jesus' death, He used the idea of a measuring cup in His final exchange with the Pharisees. After Jesus pronounced seven curses on the Jewish leaders for their religious bigotry and hypocrisy, He said, **“Fill up, then, the measure of the [cup of] sin of your forefathers! You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?”** (Matthew 23:32-33, insertion mine) When the Jews rejected Jesus, they filled their cup and God destroyed them because God's patience has a limit. At that point, the Father could do nothing further with ancient Israel so He established a new Israel. God destroyed the city of Jerusalem, and the nation of Israel in A.D. 70, and gave the land to the Arabs; later, the Muslims put a mosque on the Temple Mount. I believe God brought this about to keep the Jews from ever rebuilding a temple there. Contrary to what is predominantly believed today, modern Israel is not an extension or rebirth of ancient Israel. This unbiblical belief perpetuates Zionism, and Zionism is something completely different altogether. History reveals God would rather have a mosque on the Temple Mount than a Jewish temple.

New Testament Examples of the Full Cup Principle

Paul confirmed God's full cup principle in the New Testament when he warned the sexually immoral Romans, **"But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourselves in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed! He will reward each one according to his works: eternal life to those who by perseverance in good works seek glory and honor and immortality, but wrath and anger to those who live in selfish ambition and do not obey the truth but follow unrighteousness."** (Romans 2:5-8) Compare these verses with Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:10: **"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."** Paul understood why God's wrath is coming. He told the believers in Colosse, **"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming."** (Colossians 3:5-6)

About A.D. 55, Paul encouraged the believers in Thessalonica to be patient in their suffering until the enemies of Christ had filled their cup. **“You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches [in Judea] suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They [the Jews] displease God and are hostile to all men in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.”** (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16, insertions mine) When Paul wrote this epistle, he knew the Jewish nation had filled up its cup of sin and he knew God was sending the Romans to destroy Jerusalem. They did so in A.D. 70 just as Jesus had prophesied. (Matthew 24:1-2; Luke 21:22) In A.D. 476, the Roman Empire, at last, filled its cup and God destroyed it as well. God eventually does this to every nation. Neither your country nor my country will be exempt from God’s wrath when its cup is full.

Restitution and Atonement

The underlying principles behind capital punishment are atonement and restitution. God requires atonement and restitution for every sin.

In God's order, there is no forgiveness for sin. Now, before you jump to any hasty conclusions, keep reading. I am not writing sinners are not forgiven. I am writing sin itself is not forgiven. There is a huge difference between the two. At first, this statement seems contradictory, but this is what atonement is all about. Atonement for sin is possible only after restitution has been made. It is for this very purpose Jesus died on the cross. Let me explain:

When a person commits a sin against his neighbor, he actually commits two sins. He sins against his neighbor and against God who commands us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. If the sinner repents and makes restitution to his neighbor, he still has "outstanding guilt" because he violated the second commandment of love. A sinner cannot make restitution for "outstanding guilt." This sin is against God, not the neighbor. The sobering penalty for sin is death. Yet, even though the law is changeless and unforgivable, God has made a way to eliminate the incurred guilt. I call this process the "Transfer Doctrine." God illustrated this doctrine in the Earthly temple services He gave to Moses. (Hebrews 8:1-5; 10:4)

To eliminate “outstanding guilt” in ancient Israel, a person had to first restore his victim through restitution. After making amends for his wrong doing, he had to present himself before the Altar of Burnt Offering (Matthew 5:23-24) and confess his sin to God, whereby, through the blood of a flawless lamb, his “outstanding guilt” was transferred to the horns of the altar. Once the blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the horns, the blood served as a record of the transaction. The “outstanding guilt” recorded on the horns of the altar contaminated the temple. So each year, God required the temple be cleansed of all guilt (restored to a sinless condition) on the Day of Atonement. At the end of the cleansing service, the temple’s accumulated guilt was transferred to a goat, often called a “scapegoat.” After the guilt was transferred to the scapegoat, the temple was free of guilt and the goat was led far out into the wilderness to slowly die of starvation. This scapegoat represents Lucifer. He is the father of sin and bears all responsibility for its curse; therefore, he has third party guilt. He led Eve to sin and set up circumstances so Adam would sin also. Therefore, the curse of sin came through the devil. Worse still, ever since influencing Adam and Eve, Lucifer and his demons have been actively engaged, seducing all people toward sin.

Mankind was created inferior to the angels (Psalm 8:5); therefore, when it comes to angelic predators, humans are considered minors in God's sight. Of course, human beings can sin without demonic influence because we have free will and a natural predisposition to do so. Sooner or later, the carnal nature causes everyone to sin. (Romans 7:17) The devil and his demons are not "directly" involved in each willful sin. James wrote, **"Each person is tempted when he is dragged away by his own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."** (James 1:14-15) However, the devil and his demons indirectly have some guilt in each sin because man's sinful nature stems from the fall of Adam and Eve. Remember, if an adult leads a child to commit a crime, both are guilty in the eyes of law, but the adult has greater guilt. If a child commits a crime on his own, he is guilty in the eyes of the law. However, his standing as a minor or juvenile is taken into consideration and a judge often grants leniency an adult would not receive. Jesus is a righteous judge, He understands these matters and deals with guilt accordingly.

All children, and people having diminished intellectual abilities, will be saved because God does not acknowledge guilt for those who do not know right from wrong. His grace and the assignment of third party guilt ensures Christ's righteousness and eternal life will be transferred to them. Condemnation is only attributed after a person knows right from wrong and chooses to do wrong: **"If anyone, then, knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for him."** (James 4:17) He is our atonement for sin through faith. If the Old Testament sanctuary service teaches us anything, it is this: God requires atonement for all wrong doing. **"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."** (Leviticus 17:11) **"In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."** (Hebrews 9:22)

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Question #8: God requires _____ and _____ for every _____.

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God Will Not Be Silent Forever

The Bible confirms God breaks His silence from time to time by using one or more of His four deadly judgments to limit the growth of sin. (Ezekiel 14:21) The four judgments He uses are sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts. (Revelation 6:8) In His infinite wisdom, God allows a nation to have power until it fills up its cup of iniquity and, when it does, the Bible says He removes that nation from power. (See Daniel 2:21; 4:17; Leviticus 18:24-28.) What makes this process so remarkable is that God, even within the chaos of sin, always accomplishes His plans and purposes on Earth! We may try to explain the outcome of earthly events by analyzing the actions of the players, but this remains a limited view. Do not be naive and think events occur because of human being prowess. Nothing occurs in the universe without God's knowledge and permission. Even though we are not able to see God on His throne, we can know He reigns over the kingdoms of man. God is Sovereign. We may not see all He is doing, but the evidence is right before our eyes. The Bible is crystal clear. God is in control. (Job 38) How He maintains control is a mystery. That He does it without showing Himself is His silence.

God's silence is not impossible to penetrate if you really want to see and hear Him. The evidence of His handiwork is all around us if we want to acknowledge Him. However, if we choose not to give Him respect, we can easily ignore Him and deny the recognition He is due. Thus, His silence complements our power of choice. God can either be the greatest and most wonderful Being in all the universe or, if we so choose, we can deny His existence. What a God! Perhaps the least understood element within God's character is His reluctance to awe His creatures with His power and presence. **“I the Lord have spoken. The time has come for me to act. I will not hold back; I will not have pity, nor will I relent. You will be judged according to your conduct and your actions,” declares the Sovereign Lord.**” (Ezekiel 24:14) When the Lord spoke these words to Ezekiel, He was referring to the fact that Israel had filled its cup. Our day is coming, too. God will break His silence and demonstrate His animosity toward sin. It will happen suddenly, severing the past from the oncoming future. Life as we know it will immediately and irrevocably change. The world has never witnessed anything like the coming judgments of God, nor can it sustain more than one visitation. God will act suddenly and decisively, and will overwhelm

all the inhabitants of Earth with His swiftness and intensity. In this context, God's authority, character, and actions will become the subject of profound interest and controversy among all the people of Earth.

God's Character is Misunderstood

God will soon break His silence with the first global earthquake. (Revelation 8:5) When Earth's inhabitants experience God's coming judgments, God's love and His purposes will be grossly misunderstood and misrepresented. The religious leaders of the world will encourage politicians to enact laws "honoring and appeasing the God of Heaven." However, mandating righteousness cannot accomplish God's plans! God is more interested in true repentance and a submissive attitude from His children. He wants men and women to recognize His sovereignty, not for who He is, but for what He is and what He represents: God is love. He calls men and women to live a life free from the damning power of sin. Even more, He is willing to grant His power to everyone so they can be victorious over sin. He wants us to overcome our carnal nature and rebellion against His ways. Inconceivable as it may seem, Revelation predicts the majority of men and women will reject God's terms and conditions for salvation during the Great Tribulation. Hardened

by lifelong rebellion, the hearts of many people have become so numbed by sin even God cannot reach them. If a person's heart cannot be reached through love and patience or through redemptive judgments, how can God convict a broken heart and repentant spirit within a sinner?

Revelation describes how wicked people will be filled with a spirit of hatred when confronted with the truth about God and His will. God will initiate this confrontation when He selects and anoints 144,000 servant-prophets to speak on His behalf. These spirit-filled people will proclaim the gospel to the inhabitants of every nation. Evil men will punish and torture God's servants because their message will expose man's rebellion against God. God's messengers will be in direct conflict with those who govern a world that currently belongs to Satan. (Luke 4:5-6) The persecutors of God's servants will think, like Pilate, they can wash their hands from the guilt of these acts. Yet, God never ignores evil, even though He may allow it to flourish for a time. Eventually, God will avenge every evil deed and He will be sure wicked people receive a double portion of pain in return for the pain they have inflicted. (See Revelation 18:6; 2 Corinthians 5:10; and Obadiah 1:15.)

In the context of His coming judgments, God's character and behavior will be incredibly misrepresented and misinterpreted. This is the heart of Revelation's story. It is a story of a patient God visiting a planet in deep trouble. It is also a story about rebellious people and a world gone astray. Most people, when put to the coming test, will openly and willfully reject the clearest evidences of God's truth and God's sovereignty. They will unite themselves in rebellion against the laws of the Most High God by first obeying the laws of the land and then, the laws of the radiant being, the Antichrist—the devil himself. About two and a half years after the Great Tribulation begins, God will allow Satan to physically appear before the people of Earth because **“they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”** (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11) Jesus said, **“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”** (John 3:19-20)

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Question #9: God is interested in true _____ and a _____ attitude.

Does God Protect His Saints from His Wrath?

Many Christians believe that God protects His saints from persecution and suffering. This idea is “theological ear candy.” Beginning with Abel, scan through the centuries of recorded history, review the persecution of God’s people, and you will find many biblical and present day examples of persecution and death of Christians. Under the spotlight of all this evidence, how can anyone believe God will shield His saints? Jesus told His disciples, **“No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. . . . All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.”** (John 15:20; 16:1-2) It is traditionally understood nine of the twelve disciples were martyrs for their faith.

The book of Daniel indicates God handed “His saints” over to the little horn power for 1,260 years (538-1798) of persecution. (Daniel 7:25) The book of Revelation indicates many saints will perish during the Great Tribulation. **“When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of**

God and the testimony they had maintained. . . . This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven say, 'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.' " (Revelation 6:9; 14:12-13)

God has His own reasons why He allows His saints to be persecuted and put to death. I offer two reasons which I believe to be important. First, persecution and hardship for Christ's sake separates the sheep from the goats, the 'wannabes' from the committed. When faithfulness to God and His commandments comes with a hefty price, only those who are wealthy in the currency of faith which leads to salvation are not ashamed or afraid to pay the price. (See Daniel 3 and Mark 8:34-37.) Second, God uses His suffering saints to demonstrate to unbelievers the importance of His Word and the reality of His sustaining grace. When unbelievers see the suffering God's saints are willing to endure because of their faith in God, they are forced to witness God's presence and His sustaining grace within His suffering people. This is the most pow-

erful testimony a human being can give, and God allows His saints to suffer at times so He might save many unbelievers.

For God So Loved the World

God has three types of wrath: Divine judgments (redemptive and destructive); the consequences for wrongdoing; and the penalty for wrongdoing. I believe we need to know there are different types of wrath because God wants everyone to know all His faithful children will escape the penalty for sin. This is what Paul meant when he wrote: **“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath [execution for our sins] but to receive salvation [eternal life] through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us [He was executed in our place] so that, whether we are awake or asleep [in the grave], we may live together with Him.”** (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10, insertions mine) **“Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath [the penalty for sin] through Him!”** (Romans 5:9, insertion mine)

I hope you can see these verses do not support the notion of Christians leaving Earth before God’s wrath begins. On the contrary, the book of Revelation indicates several times the saints of God will

be on Earth during the Great Tribulation and for the two reasons presented earlier, they will experience persecution and wrath during the Great Tribulation. Hopefully, the following texts will now make more sense in light of the information we have covered: **“He [the beast] was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. . . . If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints. . . . This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.”** (Revelation 13:7, 10; 14:12, insertion mine)

Now we have considered God has two levels of love and three kinds of wrath, I pray John 3:16 shines brighter than ever before. **“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish [eternally] but have eternal life.”** (John 3:16, insertion mine) Think about this, God loved the world enough to give us His Son, and the words, “whoever believes in Him” refers to individuals like you and me.

Great Tribulation

Soon, billions of people will be forced by dire circumstances to seriously contemplate God's love and God's wrath. Earth is rapidly approaching a rendezvous with God's wrath, and now is the time to consider the harmony that operates within God's love and wrath. God is not internally conflicted. His love and justice operate in perfect harmony, and this harmony is not difficult to understand if a person is willing to consider all the Bible has to say about these two matters.

If you have read this far, you should see a strong parallel developing. The Full Cup Principle and the fourteen plagues of Revelation are inseparable. Mankind's cup is almost full. God's coming wrath will be global, because the world is at the same level of apostasy today as the world was in Noah's day. God has unsealed the book of Daniel so we can understand His plans. The time has almost arrived. All that remains is for Jesus to declare, "There will be no more delay!" When He does, a global earthquake will destroy many of the world's infrastructures (e.g., communication, travel, banking, power grids, etc.) and then four horrifying judgments will follow. (Revelation 8:5-12) At the end of 1,335 days Jesus will appear; the Great Tribulation will

be over; and the 1,000 years mentioned in Revelation 20 will begin. When the 1,000 years have ended, Jesus will purify this planet with fire. Then, He will create a new Heaven and a new Earth. The saints will inhabit the new Earth and enjoy it eternally!

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Answers to Questions:

1. justice and mercy
2. patience
3. defiant / moral
4. man's / God
5. killed / punish
6. murder
7. wrath
8. restitution / atonement / sin
9. repentance / submissive

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