

The Fruit of the Spirit Lesson 1 1Q 2010

By Their Fruit

As you read the lesson this week are there any issues that you want to be sure we cover?

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “One of the most...” thoughts? How do we abide in Christ? What does it mean to abide in Christ? What have you found effective in your ability to abide in Christ? What interferes with our ability to abide in Christ?

Let’s keep these questions in mind as we study the lesson this week.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph? Thoughts? How can we tell if we have received the Holy Spirit? What evidences would you cite as confirmation that the Holy Spirit has come into your life or another life?

- A change in life focus? How? Less self-centered and more other-centered.
- Loving others, compassion, tenderness, kindness, gentleness, humbleness, altruism, patience.
- Improved wisdom
- Improved reasoning ability
- Open mindedness, willing to evaluate opinions and ideas that differ from your own without bias and prejudice
- More tolerance for those different than us and those who have not yet come to Christ i.e. loving our enemies
- Love and hunger for the truth and willingness to change one’s beliefs based on evidence and truth
- Application of God’s methods to one’s life – healthier relationships and physical lifestyle

- Become a caretaker of God's planet (including animals) rather than an exploiter -
- Purposely choose actions to maintain the health of the Spirit temple - ??? moving toward a plant based diet if a healthy plant based diet is available?
- Using your time and resources to promote the love of your heart – Jesus Christ!

Is it necessary to speak in tongues to have had the life filled with the Holy Spirit? Does the Holy Spirit sometimes manifest through speaking, as Acts describes the gift of tongues, in one language and a mixed audience hears in a variety of languages? Certainly!

Does Satan ever try and counterfeit the movements of the Spirit of God? How? What might that look like?

- But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22.23

What is the last fruit of the Spirit? Self-governance or self-control, counterfeit movements of the spirit will frequently cause some loss of self-governance. This can be by emotional experiences in which the person flops on the floor, yells hysterically, barks like a dog, or other aspects in which the higher cortical functions have been turned off and the lower emotional centers are in control.

Satan wants to destroy the image of God in man. James tells us he tempts us through our desires or feelings. Jesus tells us that truth sets free (John 8:32), but truth cannot enter the mind if we are too emotional to think.

Another way the false spirit works is to get people to surrender self-control to another, hypnotism, mesmerism, surrendering thinking or judgment to authority figures, following blindly a person in charge.

Also movements of a false spirit tend to diminish the investigation of truth and evidence, which is the opposite of God's Spirit.

- For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” Eph 5:8-14

We are not to be in the dark – we are children of light, children of enlightenment, children of truth, thinkers not mere reflectors of other men’s thoughts.

God is infinite and each person is to have their own unique and personal relationship with Him. Each of us, as we know God for ourselves and He reveals Himself through us, through the fruits of the Spirit, become like facets on a diamond, windows into the heart of God. We become His Temple, radiant, pure and holy! This is why we fellowship together so that we may, through each other’s vantage point, experience a relationship with God ever drawing closer in our own experience.

But this requires each of us to think for ourselves, reason for ourselves and weigh the issues for ourselves coming to our own conclusions!

When we think about fruits of the Spirit, what manifestations are the easiest to counterfeit?

Read last paragraph – “Being a true Christian...” thoughts?

Read bottom green section – thoughts? Any definitions for good?

The dictionary had 58 different definitions for the word good, 41 adjectives, six nouns, one interjection, one adverb, nine idioms. The definition that best fits our usage is:

- morally excellent; virtuous; righteous; pious: *a good man*

But other definitions may be important as we answer the remaining questions such as:

- satisfactory in quality, quantity, or degree: *good health*.
- of high quality; excellent.
- well-behaved: *a good child*.

Can evil people do satisfactory quality and quantity of work? Can they get “good” report cards and job performance reviews? Does that mean they are “good”?

Can evil people produce high-quality and excellent products or performances – even sermons? Does that mean they are good?

Can evil people be well behaved socially? Does that mean they are good?

Can evil people be righteous, moral, and virtuous? No, what about pious? Yes!

So a person can do good and not be good,

Can a person who is good in heart, Christlike in character avoid doing good? Can a genuinely good person get poor grades or sub-par job performance evaluation? Would it be because of a lack of diligence, effort, heart desire to do good or because they are attempting some class or task they are either not prepared for or capable of?

What does all of this tell us about becoming a fruit inspector? Is it appropriate? When and why?

- When deciding someone’s fitness for church office?
- When deciding on your life partner?
- When deciding on a nanny for your child?

THURSDAY

Read top paragraph, "Between 1730 and 1745..." thoughts?

Here is an excerpt from Jonathan Edwards Sermon preached July 8, 1741:

Consider this, you that are here present, that yet remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fierceness of his anger, implies, that he will inflict wrath without any pity. When God beholds the ineffable extremity of your case, and sees your torment to be so vastly disproportioned to your strength, and sees how your poor soul is crushed, and sinks down, as it were, into an infinite gloom; he will have no compassion upon you, he will not forbear the executions of his wrath, or in the least lighten his hand; there shall be no moderation or mercy, nor will God then at all stay his rough wind; he will have no regard to your welfare, nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much in any other sense, than only that you shall **not suffer beyond what strict justice requires.**

The **misery** you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that he might show what that wrath of Jehovah is.

It is **everlasting** wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity. There will be no end to this exquisite horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see a long for ever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite.

Do you find this sermon presents the “truth about the awful weight of sin, the attitude of an infinitely holy God toward sin, and the surety of a day of judgment”?

Let’s consider another Christian writer and speaker who came about 100 years after Jonathan Edwards. Ellen White and her perspective on sin and God and judgment:

- We are **not** to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The **sinner brings the punishment upon himself**. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, **men separate themselves from God**, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

Does this sound like the same God?

- Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,-- could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but **they have never trained the mind to love purity**; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven**. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. **They would welcome destruction**, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own**

choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God. Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that **the wicked are incurable**. GC 542

Thoughts?

Read bottom green section – thoughts? Analogy of having pneumonia, we are not cured by working not to cough and taking cold baths to keep the fever down. We are cured by taking the remedy which we did not create and the remedy does something in us we cannot do for ourselves. But when we take the remedy the fever does subside and the coughing remits. Likewise we did not procure the remedy to sin, Jesus did. When we trust God the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it in us a work we cannot do by ourselves. But, just like the antibiotics prescribed by the doctor, we must take them, follow the doctors instructions, meet the doctor for appointments etc. And when we do the symptoms of sin will also remit and lives will be changed.

MONDAY

Read John 15:1-5

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes^a so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Thoughts? How do we connect to Christ? How do we stay connected? How do we grow and produce fruit?

^a The Greek for *prunes* also means *cleans*.

What disconnected us (humanity) from God? Lies told by Satan that we have believed.

God designed us for adaptation – we actually change physically, neurologically and genetically based on life experience including based on the beliefs we hold.

We have power over what we believe, but our beliefs have power over us!

- When given a placebo we believe will benefit us the brain releases endorphins and dopamine which makes us feel good.
- When we believe something bad has happened, taken a toxin, heard bad news, told we are cursed and will not get well, the brain stops the release of dopamine and endorphins and increases cholecystokinin which causes pain and dysphoria.
- The continued belief in something negative fires the amygdala, generates fear, elevates stress hormones, activates immune system, increases inflammatory cytokines which damage neurons, glia, synaptic signaling increasing mental illness and autoimmune diseases
- One study found that women who believed they are particularly prone to heart attack are nearly four times as likely to die from coronary conditions than other women with the same risk factors.
- In November 1998, a teacher at a Tennessee high school noticed a "gasoline-like" smell, and began complaining of headache, nausea, shortness of breath and dizziness. The school was evacuated and over the next week more than 100 staff and students were admitted to the local emergency room complaining of similar symptoms.

After extensive tests, no medical explanation for the reported illnesses could be found. It was the nocebo effect on a grand scale, says psychologist Irving Kirsch at the University of

Hull in the UK. "There was, as far as we can tell, no environmental toxin, but people began to feel ill."

In Jordan in 1998, 800 children apparently suffered side effects after a vaccination and 122 were admitted to hospital, but no problem was found with the vaccine.¹

What we believe has power over us – what belief changed in the Garden of Eden? Satan lied about God. Last quarter we just explored the metaphor of the OT sanctuary. What in the system symbolized Satan's lies?

The veil in the temple, consider the following:

- The High Priest walked in and out of the Most Holy Place despite the veil – The veil did not prevent Him from seeing God's glory unobstructed – Christ of course is the High Priest who is in heaven and unobstructed in His knowledge of the Father.
- The daily priests represent the priesthood of believers, who ministry the remedy to the world, represented by the blood. The daily priests would go in and out of the Holy Place but in the Holy Place as they looked toward the place God's presence appeared and longed to see Him something was in the way, what? The veil – and what was on the veil? Angels – a veil separating believer from God emblazoned with angels. Now, which angels are working to separate us from God? Satan and his host. And how do they separate us from God? By lying and getting us to believe lies:
 - For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Cor 10:3-5

¹ New Scientist May 2009

When Jesus died on the cross what happened to the veil? It was rent? What does this symbolize? The way to God, which Satan had obstructed, was now open. We can again see the truth about God! The lies of Satan have been completely and utterly refuted through the life and death of Jesus Christ!

- And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God...⁶ For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 2Cor 4:3,4,6

The good news about God is veiled or obstructed in the minds of unbelievers by the god of this age, who is Satan – how? By telling lies about God! But Jesus is the glory or light of God and has made His true nature and character to shine in our hearts and given us “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ!”

So we read in 2Cor 3:18, when the truth has removed the lies, and remember the lies are represented by the veil, so when the veil is removed we are no longer blinded by the lies of Satan:

- And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect^a the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2Cor 3:18

Thoughts? Our faces are unveiled which mean what? We see the truth about God as revealed in Jesus. And then what happens? Very interesting Greek used for the word translated “reflect”. It actually means to behold in a mirror, thus other versions read:

- And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. NRSV

^a Or *contemplate*

- So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image. NLT

What meaning to you take from this passage? As we contemplate, meditate, appreciate, behold, accept and love the truth about God as revealed in Jesus it changes us. We have a new set of beliefs. As our beliefs about God change and we realize He is trustworthy we let down the self-protective gate in our heart, and invited Jesus, who has been knocking, in. The Holy Spirit further enlightens, we experience a greater appreciation for the things of God. The fear centers calm, the love centers of the brain grow stronger. Physical health is improved and our neural wiring is changed. By beholding we are changed here and now and for eternity! And we are reflectors of Him – lights of love and truth in a dark and selfish world.

TUESDAY

John 15:8 “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

Thoughts? Revelation 14:7, “He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come.”
How do we give God glory? By beholding Jesus and being won to trust and experiencing in our lives the transforming power of His presence which removes fear and instills love! As we become more like Him He is glorified in our lives. He gets the credit of healing us and we get the benefit of witnessing to His amazing recreative power of love.

WEDNESDAY

Read top memory verse John 15:2 – thoughts? What is the purpose of pruning? To increase the productivity of the tree. What is pruning like for a human being?

What types of things would God be pruning out of the life? Anything that would destroy you and me, anything that is out of harmony with the very principles that life is designed to operate upon.

Like:

- Entertainment?
 - Theatrical entertainment?
 - Certain video games
- Food and substances?
 - Alcohol, tobacco, drugs and destructive foods
- Groups?
- Jobs?
- Possessions?
- Friends?
- Spouses?

FRIDAY

Read last paragraph and question 2 and discuss

Read question 3 and discuss

The Fruit of the Spirit Lesson 2 1Q 2009

The Fruit of the Spirit is Love

SABBATH

Read second paragraph – “John says it so...” thoughts? Maybe I am just playing word games with the quarterly, but what do you think about the phrase that “love is so central to His character”?

Is there more to God’s character than love? Recently I have been having an email exchange with an intelligent young man who struggles with this issue. He wrote:

To use the true statement, God is love, in an attempt to prove God’s character of love and His being of love are one in the same is unbiblical and illogical. The texts that use the statement God is love are clearly describing God, not identifying Him. It is understood Who is being talked about, what is being explained in these verses is what God is “about,” if you will. God is the Who (identity), love is the what (descriptor). .. You have provided no Biblical or logical evidence that supports the notion that God and His character are one in the same. There are no defining characteristics of God’s identity. ..The only “defining characteristics” of God’s identity are ones such as... Jehovah, Lord of Lords, etc. This is Who God is. His character is what He is like.

Thoughts? What do you hear from such a position regarding how this young man sees God? It seems He sees God as the one in authority, or God merely as the one in charge, sovereign. Now let us be clear, nothing we have ever said or suggested in this class, my writings or presentations would ever suggest God is not sovereign. He absolutely is – but power and sovereignty alone are not what God wants to be recognized for nor is it what generates in us what God desires – love for Him!

George MacDonald an 19th Century theologian said it beautifully:

What is the deepest in God? His Power? No, for power could not make him what we mean when we say God. A being whose essence was only power would be such a negation of the divine that no righteous worship could be offered him; his service would be only fear. *Discovering the Character of God*, Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989, p. 29.

Why is this important?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Cor 10:3-5

Romans 1 – Paul tells us that when we reject the truth about God the mind becomes futile, darkened and depraved – we cannot become what God wants us to be if we fail to realize the true nature of God – that He is love!

Thoughts?

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰ Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. Matt 16:13-20

Thoughts?

What kind of weapon is a gate? A defensive weapon – Satan took humanity captive by deception – about what? God, Satan holds humanity captive by continued lies about God. But Jesus is the exact representation of the Father (Heb 1:3). In Jesus all the lies of Satan are refuted.

Peter spoke the truth that Jesus is God and Jesus will build His church on this truth, and the gates of hell will not stand against it for the lies about God will be demolished by the divine weapons of truth revealed in Jesus!

And what are the keys of the kingdom? The truth about God which frees from lies and opens the heart to receive the Holy Spirit who fills the mind/heart with love! When we are bound to God on earth by the truth about Him as revealed in Jesus we are bound to eternal life. When we reject the truth about God we are set free to cling to the lies told by Satan and are lost from our heavenly home.

Is the truth about God's character important? Let's examine a passage from the book *The Great Controversy* and think through what she is saying. I will read it and then let's go back and analyze it:

The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable.
 [why is it unchangeable?] It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. **God is love, and His law is love.**
 [Where did God's law originate? Is it something external to God and compulsory upon Him or is it a manifestation of His nature? If a manifestation of His nature is it something He created or imposed?] Its two great principles are love to God and love to man. **"Love is the fulfilling of the law."** Romans 13:10. [Can love be imposed?] **The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law.**
 [What does love look like? It always does what is right and is always true, truthful] Says the psalmist: "Thy law is the truth:" "all Thy commandments are righteousness." Psalm 119:142, 172. And the apostle Paul declares: "The law is holy, and the

commandment holy, and just, and good." Romans 7:12. Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author. [Why is such a law enduring as its author? Because it emanates where? From the mind and will of God, who Himself is enduring forever] {GC 467.1}

It is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law. [What is God seeking to do? Reconcile God to man or man to God? Who needed to be changed after Adam's sin? And what is the change that mankind needs? To have minds/hearts that operate in harmony with what? The law of love] In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God; the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart. [In God's original design were there a bunch of rules imposed upon Adam and Eve to which they had to adhere or was the law the law of love which was written into their minds/hearts by God?] But sin alienated him from his Maker. He no longer reflected the divine image. His heart was at war with the principles of God's law. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Romans 8:7. [How did sin alienate man from God? What happened? See EGW quote below RH 1/5/86] But "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son," that man might be reconciled to God. [Again, why was Christ given, so that God might be forgiving? So that God would be reconciled to man and His anger might be assuaged, or to change and heal man? See EGW quote below 1SM346] Through the merits of Christ he can be restored to harmony with his Maker. His heart must be renewed by divine grace; he must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth, without which, says Jesus, "he cannot see the kingdom of God..." [What is the emphasis here and through all scripture? On changing, renewing and recreating humanity to be in harmony with God's character of love] {GC 467.2}

The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy. [Do you think her words were poorly chosen? Should she have said the law provides no legal payment? Is that our problem or do we actually need a remedy a cure?] While it promises life to

the obedient, it declares that death is the portion of the transgressor. [Why does the law declare death is the portion of the transgressor? Because the law says God must execute or kill? Or because the law is the basis of life and anything that deviates from it is not compatible with life?] The gospel of Christ alone can free him from the condemnation or the defilement of sin. He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed; and faith in Christ, his atoning sacrifice. [What does the good news of Christ accomplish? It destroys Satan's lies and wins us back to trust. Then in trust we open the heart and experience the Holy Spirit who takes the accomplishments (merits) of Christ and reproduces them in us. Thus through Jesus Christ we are restored to unity or oneness at-one-ment with God again. Christ sacrificed all in order to provide us reconciliation with God.] Thus he [the sinner] obtains "remission of sins that are past" and becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is a child of God, having received the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries: "Abba, Father!" [We are changed to be Christlike in character, back into the image God created us to be in the first place]. {GC 467.4}

- “Eve believed the words of Satan, and **the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband.** They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors...” RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8
- **Through belief in Satan's misrepresentation of God, man's character and destiny were changed, but if men will believe in the Word of God, they will be transformed in mind and character, and fitted for eternal life.** To believe that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16), will change the heart, and reproduce in man the image of God. {1SM 346.1}

We have power over what we believe, but our beliefs have power over us – we are changed, neurologically, biologically, physically, even genetically by a change in what we believe!

What does the law require? What do you think about this quote?:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Do you agree or disagree? Why? Why does God's holy law require a perfect character? Because perfect love is the basis of life, life cannot operate outside this principle!

Why do we experience remission of sins that are past, because of legal payment or God's forbearance?

When we experience this kind of regeneration in the heart, when the law of love is written again in the heart, what does it look like here and now on planet earth?

I received an email this week from a patient of mine, a young lady 20 years of age. She gave me permission to share it with you. This young lady was abandoned by her mother shortly after birth, never knew either parent. She was in an orphanage for several years and mistreated, neglected and abused and then adopted at age 5. She has struggled with marked fear and insecurity and inability to love and trust. I have been working with her for about 18 months. This is her email to me:

As you are aware I am a very selfish person and being selfless is not natural for me.

As I am in this holiday season I am trying not to forget that Christmas is not about GETTING but about giving. So I brighten my holiday season by brightening someone else's.

I had opportunities to give this year, and I strived to participate in all of them ;}

Our school is taking donations for a single mother with a son who has severe autism... and no income

The donation failed because people wouldn't give

These people have clothes, food, a warm bed, a house, and money. And all they could donate to this family were pennies....PENNIES!!! This poor woman has a child and doesn't know if she'll have a roof over her head... what is she going to do with a bunch of pennies? All she got was a bunch of pennies and a few dimes and two small boxes of food. I gave a box FULL of food for her.

And I feel bad for that family...In fact my heart breaks for that mother because she's going to have to suffer the consequences of people's selflessness... see? look! EMPATHY! ;}

Two years ago, I wouldn't have even thought twice about people in need. I didn't care about people in need, or homeless children who have no family. That's their problem not mine. All I cared about was what I got for Christmas, and I'd throw a fit if I didn't get what I wanted.

I am also participating in a Secret Santa program...I drew the name of a fellow student and I crocheted a scarf for her. I also participated in the Red Cross Holiday food drive.

I gave my day's tips from haircutting to a homeless man on the side of the road.

And after doing all this I am feeling things I've never felt...contentment...and pure joy...being proud of myself.

I am no longer feeling I need Christmas gifts. Right now they seem insignificant.

And I'm learning that by being selfish you are NEVER content, you will always want more, you can only feed it with one thing at a time.

But by being selfless you have done TWO things:

1. Help others
 2. You have helped yourself
- And that quells all selfishness

And I know that's the lesson God has wanted me to learn for a very long time ;}

And I could never have made these steps if not for your tough love and guidance. I think I know that's one of the reasons you never gave up on me, because you saw past the selfishness and saw the selfless, people loving, healthy woman I could be.

Thank-you ;}

And by meditating on God's love and giving of myself, I am moving towards health.

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Read last paragraph, "Think for a moment..." – thoughts?

Can we experience families where love abounds and genuine grace is experienced by utilizing force, coercion, commands, orders, requirements, impositions?

How does love expand and grow? By giving, sharing, sacrificing, living love in action, by love is love awakened. Why do we love

God? Because He first loved us – in action, in real sacrifice, in giving Himself to save us!

Listen to the following story from Philip Yancy's book, *What's So Amazing About Grace?* (page 49).

Thoughts? Can such love ever be commanded? This is God and the angels and the brothers and sisters of all the unfallen worlds waiting with banners held high tell you and me – “Welcome Home!”

What an incredible God! But does everyone love such a God? How do some still argue against such a God of love?

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

Some today make the same argument, that a forgiving God is a marshmallow God and that God must inflict punishment for sin or He is not a God of truth and justice.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “If we are to...” thoughts? I received the following email from one of our online class members, this is just a portion:

What I wanted to discuss is Jesus request that we love our enemies and pray for those that persecute us.

My question is even though Satan has at present made a decision that is against God should we not in accordance with Jesus teaching to love our enemies/pray for those that persecute us still pray for him anyway?

Here is what is driving my question. Tim, my heart just breaks for our Father. I used to think about things like what will our mansions look like, will my dog be there. Then I moved to wanting to relish in being taught by God how our universe was created. Then I moved to thinking about how he will be there to comfort me as I see my unsaved loved ones final moments of existence. Then I moved to considering his heart as he watches beings he loves experience their final moments of existence. I want to be there to comfort him. I look at my children and what I would go through to have to bury one of them and I can't even imagine what it will be like for him. I don't want him to have to experience that.

While I understand the concept of freedom and that Satan has the freedom to make the choice. Don't I still have the ability to make a choice how I respond to his attacks on me? Something that puzzles me and maybe I'm outside of scripture here I don't know (that's why I'm talking to you) is it seems like we (Christians) read the bible and see that Satan, demons, the unsaved will be destroyed and we kind of relish in it. Some feel sad for the humans in this process, but the people who believe in a fiery hell where people are actively punished can't wait to see Satan get his. And those of us who believe it's God turning and our souls just being snuffed out we sort of do the same thing, we can't wait to see the blame get put "where it belongs". Why are we doing this? Our Father will be hurting. He will give Satan his wish, but I can't imagine him doing it without tears in his eyes. If our father takes no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked why do we either take pleasure or just not care.

You are free to tell me I'm wrong but if I respond to Satan's attacks on me with anything other than prayer for him, I think I'm outside of being in alignment with God. I don't think when God asked me to pray for my enemies he was only talking about the people who cut me off in traffic or those humans who actively seek to discredit me. I think he intended a larger mission for me than my little world of personal annoyances.

Thoughts?

Part of my response:

What I think Christ was trying to do with instructing us to pray for our enemies is primarily to help prevent us from becoming hostile, hard hearted, bitter, resentful etc. When we pray for our enemies it moves us from being their enemy to being one concerned for their welfare and this changes us and opens our hearts to the Holy Spirit so the Spirit can heal us from our enemies attacks. Further, we become witnesses of God's grace as we maintain loving and grace filled attitudes toward our enemies. Such love toward our enemies is one of God's weapons for melting their hearts and winning them to trust.

However, there are some beings who have persisted so long in sin that prayer for them is not fruitful or helpful because there is nothing God can do for them. Satan is one of these beings. So, prayer for an enemy is useful for the person praying to prevent them from hardening their hearts and keeps their heart open to God's Spirit. It is also useful for those enemies who haven't persisted so long in rebellion against God that they have destroyed the very faculties which respond to the movements of God's Spirit. As we pray for these individuals our lives and God's agencies can be useful in reaching them. But praying for enemies who have gone beyond the point of healing will have no benefit on them as they can no longer recognize or respond to truth and love.

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Let's do the exercise the lesson suggests – let's turn the negative statements about what love is not into positive statements about what love actually is:

- Love does not envy – love rejoices in the success of others
- Love does not parade itself – love uplifts others
- Love is not puffed up – love is humble
- Love is not rude – love is polite and courteous
- Love is not self seeking – love is other centered, seeks to benefit others
- Love is not easily provoked – love is patient and tolerant of others
- Love thinks no evil – love thinks righteously
- Love does not rejoice in iniquity – love is grieved by iniquity

Read bottom green section – “As we contemplate...” Well said!

SUNDAY

The title, “Love Is Multidimensional” how did you read it? Is it referring to the word “love” and how it can be applied to many different situations like, “I love my car,” & “I love hot bread,” & “Let's go the bar and find some loving,” & “God is love”? Or do you think it is referring to the genuine love of God being multidimensional?

Clearly the word is multidimensional – what about God's love? How is it multidimensional?

THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs – what's wrong with the lesson of this story?

It is a contrived situation to try an expose some problem in the heart of the theology students – but do you think the students

would have responded the same way if they saw the man crossing the street and hit by a car that sped off and left him there bleeding and dying? Don't most of us think that the students would have gone and gotten help for the man, even if they were late or missed a preaching appointment?

What is the problem with the story? The man was placed in the school surrounded by a society filled with agencies to help him and in no danger of dying or starving to death. It isn't even clear if the man needed help. Further, in our society there are many people who actually prefer a life on the streets and when agencies work to get them some type of shelter they refuse it or leave it to go back to the street – not everyone of course, but some.

Other thoughts?

The lesson asks who is my neighbor – thoughts? Who is our closest neighbor? A spouse? How is a Christian supposed to show Godlike love to an abusive spouse? What is the most loving course to take? Concern for the eternal salvation of the abuser? And what happens to the heart of a man who abuses his wife? If the wife loves the man and wants to prevent his heart from hardening and work toward his eternal salvation what is the loving course?

Read bottom paragraph, "Consider..." thoughts

How do we balance Christ's words with Paul's counsel:

For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." 2Thes 3:10

And what about the old Indian proverb, "Give a man a fish feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime"? How does this wisdom play into charity?

FRIDAY

Question 3 read and discuss

The Fruit of the Spirit Lesson 3 1Q 2010

The Fruit of the Spirit is Joy

SABBATH

What is Joy?

Dictionary definition: the emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying; keen pleasure; elation

Read memory verse- John 15:11 – thoughts?

What things did He speak to them that would be the cause of their joy?

This conversation is happening in the upper room, the last supper – which starts in Chapter 13 verse one. What did Jesus communicate to the disciples in the upper room that was to be for them the source of their joy?

- All power was given to Jesus, why would this bring joy?
 - What did He do with all power?
 - He washed their dirty feet
 - What truth is being revealed by Jesus?
 - Does it tell us something about God, His character, how He operates?
 - Does it tell us something about the impact service has on a life?
 - How does this inspire joy?
- Jesus predicts His betrayal
 - What is being communicated in this that is to be a source of joy?
 - How did Jesus treat His betrayer?
 - He washed his feet and protected his reputation, does this bring you joy?
 - Can a God like this be trusted?

- What does it say that God foreknows yet such foreknowledge does not change how God treats us?
- Jesus tells them that He is going to glorify His Father and thereby be glorified, what does this tell us to bring us joy?
 - How does Jesus glorify the Father?
 - How is Jesus glorified?
- A new command to love one another – how is this connected to joy?
 - When have you experienced the most joy – when someone gave or did something for your or when you gave or did something for another?
- Jesus predicts Peter's betrayal, how does this bring joy?
 - How did Jesus treat Peter knowing Peter was going to let Him down?
 - How does God treat us knowing we make mistakes?
 - What does this tell us about God's attitude toward sinners?
- Jesus promises to go to the Father, prepare us a place and return to get us – does this bring you joy?
- Jesus tells us He is the way to the Father because He and the Father are one and anyone who has seen Jesus has seen the Father – is this a source of joy? How? Why?
 - In fact isn't this the very core to what Jesus meant would be the source of their joy?
- We may ask for anything in Christ's name and He will do it for us – what does this mean?
 - But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour's promise is given on condition. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience. {DA 668.2}
 - Does this bring joy?
- Jesus promises to the send the Holy Spirit and not leave us as orphans and through the Spirit give us His peace– how is this a source of joy?
 - What does the Holy Spirit do for us?

- Jesus then tells the parable of the vine and the branches – how does this parable communicate our foundation of joy?
- Jesus tells them if they love Him they will obey His commands
 - How does our obedience to the commands of Christ produce joy?

Read last paragraph, “Joy is a delight...” thoughts? Does it depend on what kind of God a person believes in? If you believe god is punishing, critical, watching to take away any happiness a god who takes mummies to heaven in car crashes or looks the other way when children are abused – would such awareness bring joy?

Could one of the primary messages of Jesus to His disciples as the source of their joy be, “if you have seen me you have seen the Father”? The Father is not like you have always thought Him to be?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Many believers allow...” – thoughts? What do you think about the solution offered to a group of people who have a mindset described here in this paragraph?

You have a child who hates spinach, “I command you – ENJOY it!” would such a command work? Is this what God is saying to people? Is a command a way to instill joy?

What about instead of a command we gave a prescription to rejoice in the Lord? Would a prescription be different? If we offer this as a remedy, an intervention, a treatment and as with all remedies and treatments we explain the basis for it, the reasons why to do it and the underpinning rationale behind it – in this case why God is worthy of our praise and what it means to rejoice in Him. Does such a prescription provide more than a command to rejoice?

The lesson indicates this in the second paragraph when it states that our spiritual stability is related to knowing God. This is the key, to actual know Him for who He is. And further down in the lesson it asks us to list what “reasons” there are for rejoicing. If there are reasons for it then it is more than a mere command!

What reasons do we have for rejoicing in the Lord? The lesson asks us to consider Psalms 139:

¹ O LORD, you have searched me
and you know me.

² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you know it completely, O LORD.

[What reason for joy in verses 1-4?

- Are you glad to know God knows everything about you? If you are cheating, He knows. If you are harboring resentment, He knows. If you are unkind, rude, gossiping, hard hearted, addicted to something – He knows. If you are in an adulterous relationship, He knows. He knows before you do any of it.
- Does this bring you joy? Why or why not?
- Does it depend on how you understand God?
- What is God's attitude toward you knowing all of this?
- What is the attitude of a doctor toward a patient severely ill, with many symptoms? Even a non-compliant patient?]

⁵ You hem me in—behind and before;
you have laid your hand upon me.

⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,

¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.

¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me

and the light become night around me,”

¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

[What message in these verses give you joy? God is not constrained by time or space. God is actively working in your life for good, guiding your life to eternal salvation. There is nothing hidden from Him and nothing can separate us from Him!]

¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place.
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,

¹⁶ your eyes saw my unformed body.

All the days ordained for me
were written in your book
before one of them came to be.

[Thoughts about this passage? What message brings joy?

- God is the Creator, we didn’t evolve over millions of years from slime,
- God has a purpose for our lives and oversees our destiny.
- God created us with individuality, unique identity, the ability to think and love and make free choices “my inmost being.”
- We don’t need to fear the unknown or the future because God has perfect foreknowledge!

How can this passage be misapplied to destroy joy and bring discouragement?

- That each of us was created directly by a divine act of God from heaven as we are.
- That a child born with congenital defects is that way because God wanted the child to be defective, sick, broken – or
- That God was having a bad knitting day, which means God isn’t someone we can trust, or

- When men rape women and they get pregnant God is creating – again, says terrible things about God and makes Him a being who can't be trusted.
- Any other ways this text is misapplied to distort God's character?]

¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand.

When I awake,
I am still with you.

¹⁹ If only you would slay the wicked, O God!
Away from me, you bloodthirsty men!

²⁰ They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.

²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD,
and abhor those who rise up against you?

²² I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies.

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

[What joyful message do you hear in this text? Honest communication with God and acknowledgment that God can be trusted. No hiding of the heart from God but a willingness to be fully known and transformed by Him. Do we pray such prayers?]

Read bottom green section – thoughts? Does rejoice in the Lord mean we will not to experience sadness, grief, heartache or pain? Or does it mean in the face of such we have hope that pierces through the pain to an eternal restitution and re-creation. We rejoice not in the hardship but in God who will overcome all hardships and ultimately bring healing and peace.

- But does the person with a cavity rejoice over dental drills and fillings?

- Does a person with a broken leg rejoice in surgeons, pins, rods and physical therapists?
- Does a person with defects of character rejoice in trials and opportunities to exercise their will in harmony with God to overcome?

MONDAY

Read top dark section, “To understand fully...” – thoughts? Where do you think Christ’s joy came from?

- Knowing His Father
- Being fully known by His Father
- Doing His Father’s will
- Helping others
- Not focusing on self
- Not concerned with other’s opinion of Him for His need sake
- The knowledge of what His mission would accomplish
 - The exoneration of the Father and the Son
 - The exposure of Satan as liar and fraud
 - The redemption of humanity and earth
 - The permanent eradication of sin from the universe

The lesson asks us to consider the three parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son as illustrations of joy – what thoughts do you have? From where did joy arise in these parables?

- From finding that which was lost, from being restored to that which the heart cherishes.
- What does God’s heart cherish? His creatures!
- And what brings God joy? Bringing us back to Him!

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “There is no greater...” thoughts?

Why does obedience bring joy? Does all obedience to God’s laws and commands bring joy? Can you obey God’s commands and not experience joy? How and why?

- The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}
- A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

Thoughts? How do you understand these passages? What is required to enter into the joy of obedience? Understanding! Understanding of God, understanding of God's law, understanding of sin, understanding of what Christ accomplished, and when we understand, it is a joy to obey! But obedience without understanding, blind obedience, is the type of obedience the Pharisees rendered, rule keeping because the rules must be kept. Such obedience destroys!

Why did disobedience bring war in heaven and sin and death to this planet? What was the cause of the disobedience? And when we "disobey" God what happens?

How does obedience help restore joy?

Read last paragraph "However clear the Bible..." thoughts?

Can any human, since the fall of Adam and excluding Jesus Christ, by human effort alone save Himself? Can any human by his or her own hard works reverse the damage of sin? No! So let's be clear, no human being could be saved without Jesus Christ!

Do works reveal to others the outworking of God's healing of our lives? Of course – but is that all works do? Do our works play any role in our individual salvation or is our individual salvation completely independent from our works?

- Through heathenism, Satan had for ages turned men away from God; but he won his great triumph in perverting the faith of Israel. By contemplating and worshiping their own conceptions, the heathen had lost a knowledge of God, and had become more and more corrupt. So it was with Israel. **The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion; it had now become the principle of the Jewish religion. Satan had implanted this principle. Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin.** {DA 35.2}

Are we all comfortable with this passage? Do we all believe that the idea that man can save himself is a lie? Is this the same thing as saying that man has no work to do in his salvation? Can it be true that salvation is completely of the Lord and yet we have a work to do as well? Let's consider some Bible texts:

- Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Phil 2:12,13
- For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph 2:8-10

- Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Gal 6:7,8
 - Who is doing the sowing?

- Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator...¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col 3:1-13

Thoughts? Who is doing the work? Is this work of life transformation only of God? Does it matter? Is our salvation dependent upon this ongoing work?

These Bible passages have been a source of great tension within Christianity resulting in two primary camps – the work your way to heaven camp in which our works commend us to God or somehow save us from sin – legalism, opposed by the camp which says our salvation is of God's grace without our work and our works only reveal what He has done within us.

Here are some thoughts from one of the founders of our church, what do you think?

- While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the **divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part.** His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}
- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . .** Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}
- In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is

the highest sense of freedom. **The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.** True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

- Remember, your character is being daguerreotyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb? "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" [Revelation 22:12]. . . . {TSB 62.1}

Thoughts? How do we put all the texts together? After Adam's sin humanity was changed from beings who operated in perfect accord with the law of love, the template of life. Mankind believed lies about God and didn't trust Him. Christ came to reverse all of this. First He came to reveal the truth to destroy lies and win us to trust, but more than this Christ, as our substitute, took our infirmities, our sick condition upon Himself in order to cure, reverse, recreate, rewrite God's perfect character into the human species. He did this in His own person! He procured the remedy to sin and now offers this to us through the application of His Spirit!

- The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

Thus, when we are won to trust we open the heart, surrender our will to Him and the Spirit infuses us. We partake of the divine

nature. We are inspired, enlightened, empowered, encouraged and we then choose daily to eliminate from our lives everything we know is harmful and embrace all that is good. As the apostle says, via the indwelling Holy Spirit – a cooperative arrangement, we choose to rid ourselves of the old life and live a life of love!

Is this more than a mere reflection or evidence of our salvation? Is it a cooperation in which we participate to experience the salvation which Christ alone achieved? In other words, Christ achieved the cure for sin alone, without any human effort and with no work from any human being. However, the application of that remedy to each human life occurs only when the human being actively cooperates with divine agencies. Is this correct?

If we hold a primarily legal view of salvation what problems arise? How do such legal views impair God's healing of our lives?

WEDNESDAY

Read Bible text at top of page, "These things..." thoughts? What does this tell us about those who are suffering, who are in tribulation? Does it mean they are abandoned by God? No, can we have peace in the midst of tribulation? How?

THURSDAY

Read Bible text at the top, "By faith Moses..." then read the paragraph below, "Moses' decision..." thoughts?

What does this text mean? Why did Moses leave Egypt? Did he leave Egypt because God told him to? Did he leave Egypt and turn his back on the throne because he didn't want the throne? Did Moses leave Egypt because he murdered someone and Pharaoh sought to kill him? But why did he murder someone? Because he was trusting God?

Below the lesson asks, "Think upon the last time you made a wrong decision based on 'good' reasons. What hard lessons did you learn?"

Did Moses make a wrong decision based on good reasons when he murdered the overseer?

What lessons do we learn from all of this? Did God cast Moses off because Moses made a wrong decision? Or was it the right decision to murder the overseer?

In Scripture what is God concerned with when it comes to choosing people as His agents?

Noah – drunk

Abraham – liar, polygamist

Jacob – liar, polygamist

Moses – murderer

Balaam – traitor and extortionist

David – adulterer and murderer

Solomon- mega polygamist, idolater and murderer

Samson – womanizer

Rahab – harlot

Mary Magdala – harlot

Saul of Tarsus – Racist, bigot, abuser,

When it comes to being a worker for God what is the criteria? History of a sin free life? Or experiencing a change of heart where we know God, trust Him and tell the truth about Him? What about today?

How would we respond today if we heard our pastor murdered someone at age 40 like Moses did? What if we heard our elder was a former prostitute? What if we heard our deacon, years ago, had sex outside of marriage?

What is the issue? The history of past sin or the condition of the heart today?

Bottom green section read – what has Jesus done and what is He doing today?

FRIDAY

Questions 1,3,4,5 read and discuss

The Fruits of the Spirit Lesson 4 1Q 2009

The Fruit of the Spirit is Peace

SABBATH

Read memory text John 14:27 – and then first paragraph, “As a champion...” thoughts?

Was Jesus referring to what the first paragraph intimates? Or was He referring to another peace, internal peace, peace with God?

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— ³⁶ a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’

³⁷ “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. MT 10:34-40

What does this text mean? How do we reconcile this text with the memory verse? Are we to seek peace with others at all costs?

What is the sword that Jesus brought? The sword of truth! And what is the sword of truth to do? Where is it wielded? When the sword of truth is brought to bear what impact does it have on those who are in error?

Does everyone who has yet to hear the truth respond positively?

Some sad events happened this week and are still ongoing. While I was studying the lesson for this week, reviewing these very scriptures I found out that a member of our church has taken it upon himself to attack our class and what we teach. He wrote a letter to the Review, also to another ministry which has been

supportive of us and said he would send a letter to our church board complaining about my theology and book, and requesting the book be removed and our class be shut down. He also posted a rant on Amazon.com against my book.

Do such rants have impact? What if the letter is false, twisted, misrepresents our position – would it have impact? The Review informed me it did not deem the letter to have merit, but the other ministry emailed me and determined it would be best to remove my book from their shelves, before actually taking the time to explore the allegations. I sent an email clarifying my position, and have had a couple email exchanges but no resolution yet.

As a class, how should we respond? How can we obtain peace with someone who practices such methods? What methods did Satan use in heaven? Was God able to secure peace with Satan?

When someone makes allegations against us what should be our first step? Hear what they say, as best we can understand their concerns and examine the evidence to see if there is any merit to their concerns.

There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. {CW 35.2}

Those who cannot impartially examine the evidences of a position that differs from theirs, are not fit to teach in any department of God's cause. 1SM 411

Maybe we should consider the criticism and investigate in light of scripture and inspiration. Bring the sword of truth to bear and evaluate what has been alleged. Here is a part of what he wrote:

I am a member of the Collegedale SDA church here in TN. I have a deep concern that I want to share with you regarding one of the books your store is selling. The book is titled "Could It Be This Simple?" and is written by Tim Jennings.

My concern is regarding what Jennings teaches in this book (although somewhat quietly, if you will), which are critically significant doctrinal positions that he teaches quite openly in the Sabbath School class that he currently runs at my church. Jennings' personal theology is essentially a Moral Influence theology. In accordance with this theological foundation, he believes that sinners do not need forgiveness from sins, and that the Ten Commandments are a "dim reflection," or "shadow," or "metaphor." Both of these positions are clearly taught in this book and they are diametrically opposed to the positions held by the vast majority of Christendom. More importantly, they are contrary to what the Bible teaches and eviscerate the Gospel of Jesus Christ...

He confuses God's offer of forgiveness to the unrepentant sinner with the repentant sinner's acceptance of God's offered forgiveness. This fundamental misunderstanding of the process of forgiveness is evident throughout this chapter. Later in the chapter he contradicts himself by stating that salvation requires forgiveness from God and repentance on the part of the sinner. This statement contains a partial truth (that salvation is possible because of God's offer of forgiveness) and an outright error (that salvation requires repentance on the part of the sinner). To say that repentance is required for salvation is a dangerous error that creates a salvation by works theology...

Jennings clearly teaches that the Ten Commandments written in stone by the very hand of God are far less than perfect aids to those seeking God's Truth. He refers to them numerous times as a "**dim reflection.**" He states that "**just studying the Ten Commandments will never reveal the fullness of God's law.**" "**Reading it in stone,**" he says, "**will never reveal its true nature.**" This is a deliberate and full force denigration of the Usefulness, Completeness, Purity, Holiness, and Sufficiency of God's law. What do the Psalmist and other Bible writers say about God's law? They describe it

in ways that are as different from how Jennings describes it as night is from day. Jennings belittles God's law because this is necessary in order to be consistent with his Moral Influence theology, specifically, the belief that there is no penalty for breaking God's law. Here Jennings is belittling the very act of God, of writing, with His own finger, the Commandments on stone. In these paragraphs, he claims that the Ten Commandments are "**only a transcript.**" By this he suggests they are not the real thing, but some secondary and ultimately ineffectual copy of the real thing. Jennings does not stop here however. He goes on to claim that the only way to fully understand God's law is to see it at work in living "**flesh,**" in an "intelligent living **being...**"

All his Sabbath School classes are recorded and posted on the website. .. In the interest of conserving time, if you listen to the podcast for lesson 11, "The Benefits of Christ's Atoning Sacrifice," you will get a very clear picture of their core teaching on this fundamental issue. Within the first five minutes or so of this podcast you will hear a class member (who often teaches the class when Jennings is not able to) **laughing at the idea that Christ mediating on our behalf before the Father should be comforting to Christians.** Jennings does nothing to counteract this laughter for the simple reason that what the man who is laughing says is exactly what Jennings is teaching, they are in perfect agreement. Within those first few minutes you will also hear other significant distortions regarding forgiveness of sin, salvation, and justification/sanctification. And this podcast as a whole clearly delineates Jennings' Moral Influence theology.

So the allegations are that we teach:

- God's law is not imposed
- The Ten Commandments are a "shadow" or "metaphor" or "dim reflection" of God's real Law
- Deny that the sinner needs to be forgiven by God
- A salvation by works theology
- That Christ did not pay a penalty for our sins at Calvary

- There is no penalty for acts of sin
- Moral Influence Theory
- Christ is not our Mediator
- God does not judge us, we judge ourselves in the final judgment

Thoughts? Let's use the sword of the Spirit and examine these allegations. If we are in error we want to be corrected by God's truth. We have nothing to fear in examining such criticisms in light of God's word. So let's do that:

God's Law

What would you say in regard to the allegation that we teach that God's law is not imposed? What inspired evidence do you have for this?

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Romans 13:10
- The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:14
- If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. James 2:8
- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. **For God is love, and love is life.** COL 258
- Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the outworking of a principle at war with **the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.** GC 493
- **The law of love being the foundation of the government of God**, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. {GC 493.2}
- Jesus, the express image of the Father's person, the effulgence of His glory; the self-denying Redeemer, throughout His pilgrimage of love on earth, was a living representation of the character of the law of God. In His life it is made manifest that

heaven-born love, Christlike principles, underlie the laws of eternal rectitude. . . . Those principles that were made known to man in Paradise as **the great law of life** will exist unchanged in Paradise restored.--Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 48-51.

- He came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, he showed that **the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness**. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {SW, April 23, 1907 par. 5}
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth **the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.** {DA 21.2}

What is the law of God? The law of love! If we go back in time before earth, angels or any time, space or matter was created by God, what would exist? God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and at that time in universal history, before anything was created, did God's law of love exist? And is this law imposed, enacted, legislated, or created, or does it emanate from the character of God?

- So allegation number one – we teach the law of God is not imposed or created– Yes, why? Because God is not created, His character is not created and the law originates in God's character an expression of Himself!

What about the allegation that we teach the 10 commandments are a shadow, metaphor or dim reflection of the law of love?

- We do not teach the 10 commandments are a shadow or metaphor – they are an expression of the law of love. But they are a distilled version of the law of love. They do not represent the fullness of the law of love and they were added because of sin, because of our need.
 - The 10 Commandments are a diagnostic tool to reveal where we fall short. The commandments were given for lawbreakers not the righteous according to Scripture.
 - The 10 commandments were not always written or in existence in this form.
 - If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}
 - But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. {MB 109.2}
 - I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments... "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the

apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. {1SM 233, 234}

- Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” MT 22:37-40

Forgiveness

Could sinners experience salvation without God’s forgiveness? No! If God was unforgiving no one would be saved. Do we teach that sinners do not need forgiveness? No, we absolutely need forgiveness. But, is forgiveness alone enough? Did Christ forgive those who put Him on the Cross? Were they, because of Christ’s forgiveness, saved? No!

Salvation

What is it? What does it mean? Salvation means healing and does the Bible teach that God’s plan of salvation includes more than forgiveness?

- In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. John 3:3
- Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live! Eze 18:31,32
- I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Eze 36:26
- No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Romans 2:29 (DT 10:16, 30:6).
- Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Ps 51:10
- This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. Heb 8:10

- Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2
- Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2Co 5:17

Do we need forgiveness? Absolutely, do we need more? Absolutely!
Is this a salvation by sinful human works theology? Absolutely not!
Do we have a cooperative role with God in our salvation?

- While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the **divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part.** His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}
- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does**

not dishonor the human understanding, but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus.** . . . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

So the balance is as follows:

- The Remedy to sin was fully achieved by Christ and no one else.
- We can do nothing to add to what Christ has done to save mankind, but, each person now must choose to open their heart in trust to receive from the Holy Spirit the benefit of Christ's victory in their life.
- When we do this a supernatural transformation of character, desire, motive, and attitude takes place.
- In this process there is a daily, ongoing, and constant cooperative work of the individual with the Divine in which the person chooses to continue to follow the direction of the Heavenly Physician until they are one day fully healed and set free to be self-controlled beings operating on the law of love, which has been fully restored into the heart. (Heb 8:10).

Penalty for Sin

Is there a penalty for sin? Yes, what does the Bible teach is that penalty?

- but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die. Gen 2:17
- For the wages of sin is death, Romans 6:23
- sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:15

What is the penalty? Is it sleep in the grave? Is it suffering in hell for all eternity? Is it torture at God's hands? What is the penalty? Death- eternal death.

Why is death the penalty for sin? What is the basis of life already discussed? Love, the law of love, and if we are out of harmony with

the law of love, what happens without restoration? Death! Does the Bible teach that the wages of sin is inflicted by God? No! Do we teach that there is a penalty for sin? Absolutely! Do we teach God is the source of that penalty? No! We teach that sin destroys and God heals!

Did it cost God and Christ an infinite price to redeem mankind? Yes! Why? Because God demanded a blood payment so God would forgive? Or because the only way to overcome sin and reverse sin's impact on humanity was through Christ's life, death and resurrection?

Did Christ have to die in order for mankind to be saved? Yes! Why? Because God demanded blood? No, because it was the only way to restore mankind back into harmony with the law of love. It was the only way to reconcile man to God!

Moral Influence Theory

What is Moral Influence Theory (MIT)? A theory that basically states the only problem with sin is that we don't know God and therefore Christ came to reveal the truth about God, which would morally influence us to return to God. There was no other purpose in Christ's life, death and resurrection than to reveal truth to win us back to trust.

Is this our position? What answer would you give to demonstrate we do not promote the MIT?

Imagine you have bacterial endocarditis (infection inside the heart)

- Man claims to have a cure – Osama Bin Laden would you trust Osama to give you a cure?
- Father is physician you trust but has no remedy?
- Will trust heal you? Will you get well without trust?
 - We aren't saved by faith/trust, we are saved by Grace, by God's working, God's healing power, but we don't experience God's healing grace if we don't trust Him.

- If you have no trust but have a remedy – will you get well?
- If you have trust but no remedy will you get well?
 - This would be the MIT – revealing truth to win us to trust, but providing no remedy – a theory rightly rejected

We need both, the trust to accept the remedy and a real remedy. Christ came and revealed truth to restore trust and also procured a real remedy!

From my blog of April 24, 2009:

Heb 2:14, 2Tim 1:10 and 1John 3:8 [sum] up the reasons Christ came to earth and died.

Heb 2:14 – By His death Christ destroys him who holds the power of death that is the devil –

What is the devil's power of death? John 17:3 – “this is life eternal that they might know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” If life eternal is knowing God, then eternal death is not knowing God. What then is Satan's power of death? The lies he tells about God that keep us from knowing Him. What then is the “Gospel” in the passage? What destroys lies about God? The truth about God as revealed by Jesus, thus it is the Good News about God, as revealed by Christ, that destroys the devil's power of death.

2 Tim 1:10: Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

How did Jesus death destroy death? The law of love is the law of life, the law upon which all life in the universe was designed to operate. Death comes as the natural result of breaking the law of love, just like death comes as the natural result of breaking the law of respiration by tying a plastic bag over your head. Christ destroyed death by perfectly restoring the law of love, the basis for life, into mankind and overcoming the inherent infection of fear and selfishness (survival of the fittest). He did this when, in His humanity, He chose to

surrender His life in love rather than use His power to save Himself. Thus, in Christ love overcame the infection of selfishness. The Good News – “The law of the Lord is Perfect Reviving the Soul” i.e. The kingdom of Love, emanating from the God of Love is Life and destroys death.

1John 3:8 The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.

What was the devil’s work? To misrepresent God, initially by lies, but then by co-opting mankind, who was created in God’s image to reveal God’s character, and replace God’s law of love with Satan’s law of selfishness (survival of the fittest) in the heart of man. Christ took our infirmity, condition, sinfulness upon Himself in order to heal, fix, resolve and resolve the sin problem. He did this by perfectly restoring God’s character of love back into the species human. In His human brain Christ lived God’s law of love perfectly revealing the true character of God that Adam was created to reveal. Thus He destroyed the devil’s work.

The life of Christ is to be revealed in humanity. Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; but Satan has **labored [worked]** to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image. Lift Him Up 48.

Mediation

Is Christ our mediator? Yes, to do what? Which way is He facing? Does the Father need Christ to plead to Him in order to persuade the Father to act in ways that will be for us?

If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus,

who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Romans 8:31-34

“Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. ²⁷ No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. John 16:25-27

Is mediation for human beings only, or for angels as well?

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Col 1:19,20

What does this mean? First God was in the Son carrying out the Father’s purpose for salvation and reconciliation. No need for the Son to plead to the Father if the Father is in the Son carry out the work. Secondly, the unfallen universe is reconciled to Christ as the cross!

“While we rejoice that there are worlds which have never fallen, these worlds render praise, and honor, and glory to Jesus Christ for the plan of redemption to save the fallen sons of Adam, as well as to confirm themselves in their position and character of purity. The arm that raised the human family from the ruin which Satan had brought upon the race through his temptations, is the arm which has preserved the inhabitants of other worlds from sin. Every world throughout immensity engages the care and support of the Father and the Son; and this care is constantly exercised for fallen humanity. Christ is **mediating** in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by his **mediatorial** work. Are not these themes of sufficient magnitude and importance to

engage our thoughts, and call forth our gratitude and adoration to God?" {RH, January 11, 1881 par. 4}

Do we believe in mediation? Absolutely! Christ is God's envoy, ambassador, mediator, representative, conduit to the entire universe and mankind carrying out God's love and plans for His Creation!

Judgment

Who is being judged? Who was the one accused?

From my blog June 12, 2009 responding to a question about Revelation 14:7:

In order to understand Revelation 14:7 we must first understand the Biblical meaning of several of the words.

Fear in this context is referring to those who will bring God glory, so it is the experience of the saved not the lost. In this case fear is to be understood as **awe, admiration, reverence, amazement, wonderment** with God's awesomeness. Fear in this context is not to be understood as terror, dread or anxiety, because the Bible teaches that God is love and perfect love casts out all fear. These people who bring glory to God will know Him and His love and thus not be afraid.

Glory refers to God's character. In Exodus 33 and 34 God put Moses in the cleft of the rock and had His glory pass before Moses and what was described was not light, fire, or power, but God's character of love. Therefore, in this context those who bring glory to God are those who reveal God's character in their lives. Why is this important? What was the war in heaven, initiated by Lucifer, all about? It is and always has been about Lucifer's allegation that God could not be trusted. How did Satan spread his rebellion to earth? By deceiving our first parents in regard to God's trustworthiness.

We are fighting a war over the knowledge of God! Jesus said in John 17:3 that life eternal is “knowing God.” When we know God, are in unity with God, we have life. This is why Satan attacks God’s character because if he can get us to believe lies about God, our connection with God is severed and unless this situation is remedied we will die an eternal death. Paul in Romans chapter one tells us that when we reject the truth about God our minds become darkened, depraved, and foolish. Hebrews tells us that the new covenant experience is when God writes His law on our hearts and minds. When that happens no one will need to say to his brother “know the Lord for all will know me.” (8:10-12). And in Romans 3:4 Paul tells us that God is the One on trial, the One accused, and the One who will be proved innocent:

- God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. Romans 3:4 KJV
- May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “That You may be justified in Your words, And prevail when You are judged.” NASB
- Certainly not! God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, “You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.” GNT
- No! God will continue to be true even when every person is false. As the Scriptures say: “So you will be shown to be right when you speak, and you will win your case.” NCV

Satan lied about God and humanity believed those lies severing our connection with God. Christ came to restore that connection and reverse the damage sin caused humanity. At the end of time, God is calling for a people who know Him, who have rejected the lies Satan has told about Him, who have judged God to be trustworthy, and have thus open their hearts to Him and experience His healing power. Such people will be transformed to live lives of love, revealing God’s character in

their lives, thus bringing glory to God! As such they are powerful witnesses to the world and universe of God's character of love, His methods and principles.

The Investigative Judgment

There are several texts that refer to the same event – Daniel 8:14, Daniel 7:9-14,21,22, Malachi 3:1-4, and the parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25. Each of these passages gives insight into the investigative judgment. My description here will not be comprehensive as entire books can be written on this subject. I instead will highlight issues pertinent to your question.

Daniel 8:14 is merely predicting the time this event will begin, no other significant details are given in the 8:14 text.

In Daniel 7 we are given more insight, but what is being described? Because of a preconceived idea that sin and its solution is a legal problem, some commentators have suggested this text is describing a judicial proceeding in heaven in which God is the great Judge who sits down to pronounce judgment upon all mankind, but this passage of Scripture does not actually say that, instead we have to read into the Scripture to come to that conclusion. If we take a more straightforward approach and ask what is being described in the context of the passage another idea emerges

“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened....“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was

given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Daniel 7:9,10,13,14

Traditionally, because of the assumption that we are in legal trouble with God, most commentators read a legal meaning into the above passage. They see the word “**court**” as a place of judicial rulings, a **courtroom**. But what is being described is not a judicial proceeding. Instead what is described is a **Royal Court!** It is the Royal Court of the universe which is holding the Coronation of Christ! Some are uncomfortable with this conclusion and rest their entire position on the Hebrew word “*diyn*,” which is translated “court,” claiming this Hebrew word refers to a judicial proceeding. I refer them to ***The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*** published in 1980 by Moody Press, which says:

This word, with its derived noun *diyn* is nearly identical in meaning with *šaphat* {shaw-fat} (q.v.) and its derived noun *mišhpāt* {mish-pawt} (q.v.). It appears only twenty-three times, a fraction of the times *šaphat* and *mišhpāt* appear. Of the twenty-three appearances, five are in parallel with *šaphat* (Jer 5:28; 22:16; Prov 31:8; Ps 7:8 [H 9]); 9:8 [H 9]) and twice more it is associated in the text with *mišhpāt* (Ps 72:2; Jer 21:12). Thus nearly a third of its occurrences show how closely the idea of *diyn* was identified or associated with the root *šaphat*. The verb also occurs in Ugaritic and in parallel with *tp* (the cognate of *šaphat*) (Fisher, RSP, vol. I, p. 166). Likewise a similar—nearly identical as far as it goes—list of terms is associated with *diyn*, demonstrating the near identity of meaning: with *mêyšhar* {may-shawr} “uprightness,” “equity” (Ps 96:10; cf. Ps 75:2); and with *gaša* (Ps 54:1 [H 3]; cf. Ps 72:4). As with *šaphat* it represents God’s government as both among his people (Israel) and among all peoples (Ps 135:14 “people”; Ps 7:8 [H 9] “peoples” cf Ps 72:2; Ps 9:8 [H 9]). As far as the small number of occurrences allows a test, the range of meanings is exactly the same: to govern, in the whole range of activities of government: legislative, executive, judicial, or

otherwise. See the discussion of *šhaphat* and *mišhpat*. The difference between the terms is simply that *diyyn* is poetic, probably also an archaic and more elegant term. Of the twenty-three occurrences, only one is outside the Protestant grouping of poetical and poetical-prophetic literature. The exception is the single passive form—a Niphal participle (II Sam 19:9 [H 10]). The chief theological significance of this word is that apparently like *šhaphat* it embodies the idea of government, in whatever realm, in all its aspects.[1]

Therefore, I believe that the above credible authority on Hebrew supports "*diyyn*" as I have rendered it above. Once we recognize that the court seated is the Royal Court of the universe convening for the governmental action of coronating Christ, we can more clearly understand what occurs during the investigative judgment.

Daniel 7:21,22 gives insight:

As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

The above rendering is from the NIV which many, who assume the legal model, prefer. But does the meaning of the passage change when we read from the King James Version?

Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Daniel 7:22

Which translation is more accurate? The Hebrew word translated "pronounced" actually means "to give" or "to impart" and thus the KJV would be more accurate in this context. Why do the saints of God need judgment (another word for **discernment**) imparted to them? The Daniel text tells us the horn warred against the saints and was defeating them. What kind of warfare was going on?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Cor 10:3-5

What kind of war? Where is it being fought? This is a war between truth and lies, centering on God's character, and being fought in our minds! Amazingly, Paul makes the connection to the cleansing of the Temple even closer and shows how the Temple is connected to this war going on in our minds:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's **temple**, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:1-4

Paul is describing the exact same events as Daniel 7 in which evil powers war against the saints and oppose God. In the aftermath of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, did this man of lawlessness ride into heaven overthrow God, set himself up in God's temple in heaven, and proclaim himself to be God? No, where did this happen? In the Spirit Temple! In our minds! **Therefore, the cleansing of the temple, as described in the Bible, is the cleansing of our minds from the lies about God**, which wins us back to trust and results in our cleansing from sin.

Daniel is told in vision that an evil power would arise that would lie, distort, misrepresent God, and defile the Spirit Temple by getting humans to accept, worship, and teach a false picture of God. According to our understanding of interpreting prophetic time, it would take 2,300 years before enough truth would be recovered for Christ to empower His people on earth with judgment (discernment) to break free from the lies and be cleansed in their minds and characters.

All of this is confirmed for us by the other text describing the same event as Daniel 8:14, Malachi 3:1-3:

Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will **purify the Levites** and refine them like gold and silver.

What is getting cleansed during the investigative judgment? The Levites. And who are the Levites? The Priesthood of believers (1Pet 2:5,9).

God is cleansing His people from what? 1) the lies about Him which keep us from trusting Him and 2) when we are won back to trust, He cleanses us from sin. God writes His law of love into our hearts. He restores His character of righteousness in us. This is what is happening during the investigative judgment.

How does this happen? By our investigating the truth about God as revealed in Christ, rejecting the lies, and clinging to the truth and trusting God!

Many have a very difficult time with this truth, because certain Bible passages are misunderstood, such as:

- As I judged your fathers in the desert of the land of Egypt, so I will judge you, declares the Sovereign Lord.
Ezekiel 20:36
- You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. Romans 14:10
- 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. 2 Cor 5:10
- Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. 1Peter 1:17
- And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Revelation 20:12

Traditionally, these texts are interpreted to mean that God's judgment *determines* our destiny, either saved or lost, in the form of an arbitrary decision on His part. But this is not the case. God's judgment is merely the accurate diagnosis of our condition, either healed and restored to Christlikeness or incurable. An example of God's judgment is found in Hosea 4:17:

Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone!

What is God's judgment in this case? Ephraim cannot be separated from his idols, so leave him the way he is. What determines our eternal destiny is not God's judgment upon us, but our judgment of God, which in turn makes us either fit or unfit for living in God's system of other-centered love. If we judge God trustworthy, then we open our heart and His Spirit

heals us from sin. If, instead, we accept Satan's lies and judge God as untrustworthy, then we keep our heart closed and eventually move ourselves beyond His healing reach. One day all will stand in God's presence and their true condition will be revealed – this is God's judgment. Jesus describes this reality:

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” Matthew 12:33-37

It is our very condition that determines our eternal destiny. We cannot make ourselves good. We can only be made good by the power of God working in us. And what determines whether God's power is experienced within our hearts and minds? Whether we trust God and open our heart to Him or not.

This reality is stated beautifully in the book *The Great Controversy*:

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declares the **verdict that the wicked are incurable**. They have no disposition to submit to divine authority. Their will has been exercised in revolt; and when life is ended, it is too late to turn the current of their thoughts in the opposite direction, too late to turn from transgression to obedience, from hatred to love. GC 543.1

Does God's verdict make the wicked incurable or does God's verdict merely pronounce the reality that already exists in the hearts and minds of the lost – that they are incurable?

We do not need to fear God who is trying to save and heal us; we need to fear sin, which if unremedied, destroys us!

Thoughts?

Any suggestions on how, in our own church, to experience peace with someone who misrepresents in this way?

SUNDAY

Read memory verse at the top and then first two paragraphs, "To have..." thoughts?

Who is the "we" that was reconciled to God once and for all at the Cross? Each individual person or the human species of which we are a part? Does it make a difference?

What does it mean to be justified? When you justify the margins on a document what have you done? When mankind sinned what was out of harmony that needed to be put right with God? Was God changed by Adam's sin or mankind? Then what needed to be set right or put right, God or man? Justify means to put man back right with God – in what way?

How did Christ accomplish this?

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Is this justifying mankind? How?

MONDAY

Read dark section at top, “Come to me all you..” what does it mean to yoke up with Christ? Is it not the same so the EGW passages we read earlier about cooperation between the human and divine?

TUESDAY

Read second to last paragraph “Why do you think...” – thoughts?

What is peace of the world? Does the world actually give peace? What does Christ give us that provides peace?

Security for the future – we don’t need to worry about outcomes. When we trust Him He has our future in His hands, not just eternal future, but temporal futures as well.

How much of your stress and worry comes from worrying about the future?

Have you ever watched a football game? Have you ever experienced stress, anxiety, worry, uncertainty? Have you ever watched a game that was recorded and you already knew the final score before watching? Did you have the same stress and anxiety and worry or was their peace? What made the difference? Can we, in a trust relationship with God, know our future is secure?

WEDNESDAY

Read top dark section – thoughts? Is it possible to leave at peace with all men? Physically? Spiritually? Relationally? Emotionally?

Do we as Christians ever go to court? Use physical force? What if a grandparent has Alzheimer’s and is confused, hallucinating, combative and dangerous, believing people are invading and has a

gun? Should we go to court to get custody? Should we use force to provide protective care? Other examples?

Read first paragraph, "Strange as it..." thoughts? Why is it so difficult to have peace at home? What causes the conflict? How can we avoid it?

If we love in our homes does that mean we always give in and go along with the other? Does love ever say no? Does love ever raise its voice and shout? Does love discipline? What is the focus of love? Doing what is actually in the eternal best interest of the other, whether they understand or not!

THURSDAY

Read top dark section – thoughts? What if you reach out to someone you have wronged but they won't even meet with you, speak with you or communicate with you? How should we approach such a situation?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2

The Fruits of the Spirit Lesson 5 1Q 2010

The Fruit of the Spirit is Patience

SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts? The first paragraph tells us that there are two Greek words that mean patients, one connotes endurance in trial and the other long suffering or greatly tempered.

Do you see differences in these two aspects of patience?

Read last two paragraphs, “A patient person...” thoughts?

How do we develop patience? What does it take to experience this fruit of the Spirit? The lesson suggests it takes, practice, God’s grace and a willingness to put aside self and let the Holy Spirit lead.

Thoughts about that? What would be necessary in order to practice patience? Circumstances which try our patience? What would those circumstances look like? Would we call them trials?

Are there practical things we can do to cooperate with God to experience greater patience?

All of the fruits of the Spirit are what is experienced as a natural result of our humanity operating as God designed. More specifically the fruits of the Spirit are what is experienced when the brain/mind operate as God designed.

Impulsivity, irritability, lack of self-restraint, impatience, selfishness all occur when prefrontal cortex (PFC) is impaired and limbic system is dominant.

What activities help move us toward God’s design of a healthy PFC and a calm limbic system moving us toward greater fruits of the Spirit, and what activities damage PFC and inflame limbic system moving us away from the fruits of the Spirit?

- Activities which promote good physical health are good for the PFC and calm limbic system – so regular exercise, healthy diet, water, sunshine
- 7.5-8.5 hours of sleep per night
 - Sleep deprivation impairs PFC undermining reason, judgment, patience and self-control, increases irritability
- Alcohol and illegal drugs impair PFC
- Theatrical television watching activates limbic system and decreases PFC activity
- Lies about God, distortions about God increase fear (limbic system firing) and decrease activity in or damage PFC
 - God is a God of love but must kill you if you don't love Him
 - God is a God of love but we are all predestined by God for salvation or damnation
 - The problem with sin is that it makes God mad and if Christ isn't there to protect us from God we are in trouble
 - The more sin you commit the more God is going to use His power to inflict pain and suffering on you in the end
 - God doesn't send His angels with you into a movie theater
 - God sent an earthquake to punish Haiti
 - God sent AIDS to punish homosexuals
 - God doesn't want us to think, just believe, asking questions reveals a lack of faith
 - Others?
- Meditation on a God of love causes growth in the PFC (specifically the ACC) and calms the limbic system, any other god-concept results in inflaming of the limbic system and greater fear.
- Altruistic endeavors causes growth in PFC and calms limbic system. Selfish endeavors inflames the fear centers.
- Harmony with God's law of love
 - Lying, cheating, murdering etc. increases fear and damages PFC
- Over studying
 - Intemperance in study is a species of intoxication; and those who indulge in it, like the drunkard, wander from

safe paths and stumble and fall in the darkness. The Lord would have every student bear in mind that the eye must be kept single to the glory of God. He is not to exhaust and waste his physical and mental powers in seeking to acquire all possible knowledge of the sciences, but is to preserve the freshness and vigor of all his powers to engage in the work which the Lord has appointed him in helping souls to find the path of righteousness. {CG 396.4}

What can we do to cooperate with God to experience greater Spiritual fruit?

- Exercise
- Eat healthy food
- Drink water
- Sunshine
- Regular sleep regimen
- Avoid toxins/poisons/alcohol/drugs
- Avoid theatrical entertainment
- Avoid over taxing the mind with too much study
- Come back to the true knowledge of God and meditate upon His character daily
- Trust God with your future
- Engage in service to others (give of self)
- Live in harmony with God's law

SUNDAY

Patience is an attribute of God – read memory verse at the top

The first two paragraphs describe God's dealing with Nineveh and how patient he was. What do you think about a God who is patient?

Was God patient with Lucifer?

God in His great mercy bore long with Lucifer. He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station when he first indulged the spirit of discontent, nor even when he began to present his false claims before the loyal angels. Long was he

retained in heaven. **Again and again he was offered pardon on condition of repentance and submission.** Such efforts as only infinite love and wisdom could devise were made to convince him of his error. The spirit of discontent had never before been known in heaven. Lucifer himself did not at first see whither he was drifting; he did not understand the real nature of his feelings. But as his dissatisfaction was proved to be without cause, Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong, that the divine claims were just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. He had not at this time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had forsaken his position as covering cherub, **yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God's great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office.** But pride forbade him to submit. He persistently defended his own course, maintained that he had no need of repentance, and fully committed himself, in the great controversy, against his Maker. {GC 495.3}

Thoughts? Was God patient with Lucifer? What about the idea Lucifer could be reinstated after lying, bearing false witness against God without Christ dying to pay his legal penalty for breaking God's law?

How does Satan twist the beauty of God's patience against God?

Almost the exact same paragraph as above is found in PP followed by this:

A compassionate Creator, in yearning pity for Lucifer and his followers, was seeking to draw them back from the abyss of ruin into which they were about to plunge. But His mercy was misinterpreted. **Lucifer pointed to the long-suffering of God as an evidence of his own superiority, an indication that the King of the universe would yet accede to his terms.** If the angels would stand firmly with him, he declared, they could yet gain all that they desired. He persistently

defended his own course, and fully committed himself to the great controversy against his Maker. Thus it was that Lucifer, "the light bearer," the sharer of God's glory, the attendant of His throne, by transgression became Satan, "the adversary" of God and holy beings and the destroyer of those whom Heaven had committed to his guidance and guardianship. {PP 39.2}

How does Satan turn God's patience against Him? First by alleging God is weak and will ultimately give in and allow Satan his way. But there is another way God's patience is misrepresented –

Turn to FRIDAY's lesson and read first paragraph –

In His dealings with the human race, God bears long with the impenitent. He uses His appointed agencies to call men to allegiance, and offers them His full pardon if they will repent. But because God is long-suffering, men presume on His mercy. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." **The patience and long-suffering of God, which should soften and subdue the soul, has an altogether different influence upon the careless and sinful. It leads them to cast off restraint, and strengthens them in resistance.** They think that the God who has borne so much from them will not heed their perversity. If we lived in a dispensation of immediate retribution, offenses against God would not occur so often. But though delayed, the punishment is none the less certain. There are limits even to the forbearance of God. The boundary of His long-suffering may be reached, and then He will surely punish. And when He does take up the case of the presumptuous sinner, He will not cease till He has made a full end. {3BC 1166.1}

Thoughts? How is God's patience turned against God and God's goal to heal and save sinners? By deceiving people that it doesn't matter, we can repent at any time, wait until our deathbed etc.

But how can the above passage, which rightly points out the folly in misunderstanding God's patience also be misunderstood to introduce another error?

Turn to WEDNESDAY's Lesson

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

Read fourth paragraph, “It might be argued that...” thoughts? Was waiting generations before losing patience an option for the antediluvians? Is it an option for angels? Will it be an option in the new heaven and earth?

Does God run out of patience? Is that the problem? If God could be patient just a little longer then we would have a greater opportunity for repentance? Is the problem God's limited patience?

This is a classic misunderstanding projected into writings based on a preconceived idea about God – namely that He must eventually punish. The statement from Friday's lesson doesn't state that God loses His patience. It states “There are limits even to the forbearance of God.” The question - What are those limits and how does God punish?

You see many people who hold to a god-concept in which God is the all powerful Sovereign of the universe who walks softly but carries a big stick. They like to take these quotations and not balance them with statements from the same author who explains what such words mean. So, what are the limits and how does God punish?

- We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

I recently discovered some people criticizing my use of this passage. They claim it only applies to the consequences of sin in this life and not to what happens to the wicked in the end. Amazing twists people go to in order to believe God is the source of death and inflicts pain and suffering on His creatures. So let's read some more:

- After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: ³ "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."
- "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. It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of."
Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

What are the limits of God's forbearance? Is there some inherent limit in God, He can only take so much and then His patience runs out or is the limit in the ability of His creatures to be healed?

Thoughts?

When Satan was cast out of heaven, what was the limit of God's patience? Did God have some divine limitation on His internal patience or was there something about the condition of Lucifer that meant no further patience on God's part would afford any benefit?

From ST January 9, 1879, paragraph 7: "It would not have been safe to suffer any who united with Satan in his rebellion to continue to occupy heaven. **They had learned the lesson of genuine rebellion against the unchangeable law of God; and this is incurable.**"

Is it the same with the wicked in the end? So when we talk about the forbearance of God having limits, what is the limit? The ability of His creatures to be healed!

God has given in His word decisive evidence that He will punish the transgressors of His law. Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary. The death of the spotless Son of God testifies that "the wages of sin is death," that every violation of God's law must receive its just retribution. Christ the sinless became sin for man. He bore the guilt of transgression, and the hiding of His Father's face, until His heart was broken and His life crushed out. All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed. In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin. And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgression... {GC 539.3}

God has given to men a declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin. "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering 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." Exodus 34:6, 7. "All the wicked will He destroy." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Psalms 145:20; 37:38. The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; **yet all the manifestations of retributive**

justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being. {GC 541.2}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And **all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes.** {GC 541.3}

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited. He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character. He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. **The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided. Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will?** {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters. Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to

the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; **but they have never trained the mind to love purity**; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven.** Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. **They would welcome destruction**, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that **the wicked are incurable**. They have no disposition to submit to divine authority. Their will has been exercised in revolt; and when life is ended, it is too late to turn the current of their thoughts in the opposite direction, too late to turn from transgression to obedience, from hatred to love. {GC 543.1}

And what does God do to the wicked in the end? How are they punished?

- **God is the fountain of life, and we can have life only as we are in communion with Him. Separated from God,**

existence may be ours for a little time, but we do not possess life. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." 1 Timothy 5:6. Only through the surrender of our will to God is it possible for Him to impart life to us. Only by receiving His life through self-surrender is it possible, said Jesus, for these hidden sins, which I have pointed out, to be overcome. It is possible that you may bury them in your hearts and conceal them from human eyes, but how will you stand in God's presence? {MB 61.2}

If you cling to self, refusing to yield your will to God, you are choosing death. **To sin, wherever found, God is a consuming fire.** If you choose sin, and refuse to separate from it, the presence of God, which consumes sin, must consume you. {MB 62.1}

- The **sinner's own thoughts are his accusers; and there can be no torture keener than the stings of a guilty conscience**, which give him no rest day nor night. {DA 223.3}
- **The light of the glory of God, which imparts life to the righteous, will slay the wicked.** {DA 107.4}

Thoughts? What is God's justice? What is the punishment and penalty for sin? What causes the wicked to suffer? It is time we in our church stop promoting lies about God, stop making God out to be the source of pain and suffering and death.

Back to SUNDAY's lesson

Read third paragraph, "If someone were to ask..." well said! What do you think about this paragraph?

Where would we ever get an idea that God is angry or quick to punish or loses His patience?

Is it important to read widely and include the entire inspired record?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “The church is made...” thoughts?

What do you think the lesson means by the spiritually mature? I was confused because I thought the mature were those who possessed the fruits of the Spirit, which would include patience, therefore to be impatient would be evidence of not being mature? Do you see how confused I am?

Or is it perhaps, the lesson is confusing spiritually mature individuals with those who are Christianized, experienced cultural Christians, those who now all the rituals, rules, norms, what foods to eat, clothes to wear, days to keep holy, adornments to avoid, and how to give eloquent public sermons and prayers?

- It is possible to have just enough religion to deaden the conscience, deceive the senses, and ruin the soul; just enough outward appearance of sanctity to have a name to live, while we are dead. {YI, September 20, 1894 par. 5}

Thoughts?

Read last paragraph, “Patience in the church...” – thoughts? Questions? What does it mean “had to pray”?

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, “We are prone to think...” thoughts?

Some really good points in this paragraph, like never condemning those who don’t accept certain doctrines, and not being judgmental. How are we doing?

What is our attitude toward those who don’t accept the Sabbath? What is our attitude toward those who wear jewelry, eat pork, or drink alcohol? Do we judge? Do we condemn?

Why are doctrines important and what mistakes do we often make with doctrines?

Doctrines are only important as they inform us about God and connect us to Him. If they fail to do this they are irrelevant to our salvation.

A danger with doctrines is that we can set them up as standalone elements with proof texts and go out and promote the doctrines and never actually reveal the truth about God. Such a systemized religion is a distortion and obstruction to knowing God. This is what the Pharisees did in Christ's day and what much of the religious world does.

Our doctrines must always be avenues into the heart of God, lead us to a greater intimacy with God or be discarded!

Can we do this with all of our doctrines?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The Greek word..." thoughts? How are trials related to our character development?

Will you ever develop any strength or skill without exercise? In the gym will you develop muscle strength without lifting weights? And in order to get stronger must the pressure, or difficulty, or weight increase? Does this have bearing on our character?

As a musician will you become more accomplished without practice? Will the difficulty or trial or complexity of the music have to increase?

Does this give us insight into why the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was placed in the Garden of Eden as a "test"? Was it for them to be tripped up and fail? Or was it necessary for Adam and Eve, as free sentient beings, to examine the issues of God's trustworthiness and actually exercise their own wills, minds and

choose loyalty to God? One of the purposes of the Tree was for their maturity and growth!

Does this apply to our lives today?

But read last paragraph, "This does not mean..." very important to remember that not every trial or difficulty in this world is there because we need it to grow.

FRIDAY

Questions 1 and 3 read a discuss

The Fruits of the Spirit Lesson 6 1Q 2010

The Fruit of the Spirit is Kindness

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “When Paul illustrated...” thoughts?

What is kindness? What does it look like, sound like? What does it mean to be kind?

1. of a good or benevolent nature or disposition, as a person: *a kind and loving person.*
2. having, showing, or proceeding from benevolence: *kind words.*
3. indulgent, considerate, or helpful; humane (often fol. by *to*): *to be kind to animals.*
4. mild; gentle; clement: *kind weather.*

How does kindness look in action?

Read second paragraph “Patience,..” thoughts? If we speak with a loud, intense, angry tone, even a commanding tone would that be kind? Do circumstances matter? Does the heart attitude matter? Does the goal one is trying to achieve matter? Or is it only our behavior? Can our behavior appear hostile, yet our action be kind?

When God thundered at Sinai was He being kind? Is God ever unkind? Why did God thunder at Sinai? What was He trying to accomplish? Was it God’s preferred method of interacting with His intelligent creatures? Then why do it?

Parents, have you ever had a child who was rebellious? Into self destructive behaviors? Have you ever “thundered” at them, to put the “fear of God” into them? Did you really want and desire your child to be afraid and live in fear of you? Then why did you do it? Were you willing to allow your child to live in fear of you for awhile? Why? What was your goal? What were you trying to accomplish? Was this kind? Was it kind for God to intervene the way He did?

Is God ever unkind? What about in the treatment of the wicked in the end?

SUNDAY

Have you ever heard, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect”? When you have heard this what ideas come to your mind?

- Perfect behavior?
- Perfect performance?
- Perfect Sabbath keeping?
- Perfect speech, dress, housekeeping?

Read Matthew 5:43-48:

You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

What does it mean to be perfect as our Father is perfect? Does it mean something different when we shift the focus of perfection from our behavior primarily, to our heart attitude? We are to love others more than ourselves, does this shift the focus?

When we think of perfection as performance where is our focus? On ourselves, how we are doing, how we are performing, how we can be better, whether we measure up. And what does such a focus lead to? More fear, anxiety, insecurity, uncertainty or more elitism, arrogance, pride, judgmentalism. Is this God’s goal for us?

- So when we see a neighbor struggling to carry a fallen tree branch out of their yard on Sabbath – wanting to be perfect like our Father in heaven in this understanding what do we do?

What if we focus on perfection in love, where is our focus? On others, how we can uplift, bless, encourage, minister, serve. And what does such a focus lead to? Peace, joy, quiet confidence, wellbeing, health!

- Now, with such a focus what do we do when we see a neighbor struggling?
- What did Christ do when He saw the sick on Sabbath?
- What did the Pharisees do?

What does it take to live a life of love?

None who have a sense of their accountability to God will allow the animal propensities to control reason. Those who do this are not Christians, whoever they may be and however exalted their profession. The injunction of Christ is, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48. He here shows us that we may be as perfect in our sphere as God is in His sphere.-- Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, pp. 454, 455 (1880).

Thoughts? Can we love well without being reasonable? Can we love well when we let our animal propensities control reason? What are the animal propensities? Survival of the fittest, which is fear, watching out for self. Our reason must rise above our instincts, our fears, our insecurities and choose to love, to give, to do what is best for the other person even when we don't feel like it.

From the time I realized that fear is part of the infection of sin, whenever I experience fear, insecurity, anxiety I pray, "Lord, fear is part of the infection of sin. I was born with this infection, but I don't want to be controlled by it. Please fill my heart with your love. Enlighten me with truth and empower me to choose to do what is right in spite of feelings of fear."

One other thought on being perfect as our Father in heaven in perfect:

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. **Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin.** He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

Thoughts? What is the devil's work? To destroy the image of God in man and put Satan's image in its place. God wants to remove all fear, insecurity, selfishness and restore perfect Godlike love into our hearts – here and now!

Genuine love, perfection in love means to love our enemies. Let's look at Monday's lesson.

MONDAY

2Samuel 9 recounts the story of King David's kindness to the son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth.

The lesson asks, "How did he, by this act, reveal the character of God?"

Read first paragraph, "Through reports..."

What lessons do we see regarding the great controversy? Why did Mephibosheth become prejudiced against David? Because of rumors, gossip, reports of enemies. Has God had lies, rumors, distortions spread about Him? How has God responded? With patience, love and truth.

How did King David treat Mephibosheth? With patience and love which demonstrated the truth of David's character and eventually resulted in Mephibosheth being won to trust David.

But what if Mephibosheth never had any personal encounters with David? What if he managed to avoid ever talking with David and just continued to harbor the stories he heard?

What about those who only hear the lies, falsehoods, and distorted theologies taught about God, but never hear the truth or encounter God for themselves?

When I moved to Dalton I met Christie and very shortly thereafter began asking her out. She began telling me no. She actually turned me down 6 times over 8 months before she went out with me. Later I found out why. She had been dating someone else who had been telling her lies about me. It took 8 months of going by, talking to her, interacting with her before she had enough personal experience to say, "I am not seeing what I was told." And then decided to go out to get more evidence.

When someone misrepresents us, lies about us, our reputations can be hurt and the only remedy is evidence over time.

When we present the truth about God Satan hates it and stirs up all his forces to attack and obstruct. Read about Jeremiah and how he was bitterly opposed and mistreated. Look at Christ who was the light to lighten all men, how did they treat Him?

It has been my experience that when anyone is presenting the truth about God, Satan will marshal his forces to attack them, to tell lies about them, to start rumors and controversy to divert the attention away from God onto other issues.

Watch for this Satanic strategy of diversion, the message we teach is about God. Satan cannot defeat this message so if the message itself cannot be defeated divert the attention away from the truth about God onto some rumor.

But we have the opportunity to be like David, who even though Mephibosheth thought wrongly about him, David still reached out in love and kindness.

We want to pray, “Father fill our hearts with love for those who would attack us.” Let’s as a class resolve, as we go forward presenting the truth about God, that the more vicious the attacks upon us, the more kind, patient and loving we will be. When we find out who is behind an attack let’s pray for them.

- Father, fill our hearts with love, love for you and love for our enemies. Let your love flow through us to them. We pray for our enemies now. We know they are our enemies only because they don’t know you. They don’t have an experience with your love, your kindness, they haven’t seen the beauty of your face or been held in your tender arms. Or there is some lie at work, some falsehood, some misunderstanding and we pray for truth, the truth that heals, the truth that sets free so you’re your family on earth may be united in love. Father, reach those who would do us harm with your kindness, grace and love. Empower our hearts to love them, that all our actions will be in harmony with your character and we may all become one with you. Amen

If we know them personally should we, like David, seek to bless them?

How can we today, love our enemies? We need to recognize it is at such times we have the opportunity to enter into union with God, to participate with Him in living His love! What practical things can we do here and now to love those who lie about us?

- As far as possible protect them and their reputations?
 - Jesus protected the reputations of those seeking to trap Him when they brought the woman caught in adultery before Him
- Avoid retaliation against them
 - Why do we not have to retaliate? What does sin do to the sinner?

- Seek to reconcile, reach out to present the truth in love, to forgive
 - God seeks after us, presents the truth in love and forgives

What if we do all of this and they remain our enemy and continue to spread lies about us and stir up opposition to us?

TUESDAY

The lesson suggests three different needs that call for three types of kindness. The first is kindness to spiritual babies. How can you tell the spiritual babes from the spiritually mature? What do spiritually mature look like? What do spiritual babes look like?

- Were the Pharisees and Sadducees spiritually mature or spiritual babes or not even babes because they weren't converted?
- How did they present themselves?
- Were there many people who thought the Pharisees were spiritually mature?
- In our church today do we have Pharisees, those who aren't even truly converted going around the church purporting to be the spiritually mature? How can you tell?

The last paragraph talks about kindness in our homes and the importance of kind speech in our homes. Excellent point – thoughts about this?

Who gets damaged by unkind speech? Everyone – the children are especially vulnerable because the younger they are the less capable of understanding the truth. Children personalize harsh speech and internalize criticism and harsh words as part of their forming sense of self.

But what happens to the person who speaks harsh words? I have never met someone yet, who after losing their temper and saying ugly words, once they cooled down, was proud of themselves, had

better self worth or esteem. No, such behavior always damages the one who engages in it!

What about kind hearing? Is it also important to hear things in the kindest way possible? Any examples?

- When someone is angry, says unkind or critical or mean words how can you hear it in a kind way?
 - From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks –
 - This is my spouse, who loves me, something must be terrible amiss for them to speak such harsh words to me. What is going on with my spouse? “sweetheart, I don’t know what is going on with you right now, but if you need to shout, it’s okay. I love you anyway. Go ahead, get it off your chest and then let’s talk.”
- What are you wearing? That is the ugliest dress ever.
 - How would you hear this? What would be an example of “kind hearing”?
 - Thank you for letting me know this isn’t one of your favorites. What is it you don’t like about it?
- Why are you buying an SUV, they are gas guzzlers.
 - How would you hear this?
 - “Thank you for thinking about me, for wanting to protect me from financial hardship with escalating gas prices. It means a lot knowing you are willing to share your insights with me. You’ve raised a good point and I will think carefully about it before I make my final decision.”

Other examples?

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph – “When we teach...” well said, thoughts?

Do you think we waste a lot of time in our church arguing over doctrines? What is the final message of mercy to go to the world?

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His

character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

How much energy is utilized in trying to argue this doctrine versus that doctrine rather than presenting the truth about God’s character of love?

What are some of the roots to theological error and mistakes? How can we take a truth and create obstruction to truth, with the truth?

Imagine a 1000 piece puzzle, each piece is part of a larger whole, which when assembled reveals a beautiful picture.

The Bible and inspired record is like this, more than a 1000 pieces, all of which need to be assembled into a beautiful picture. And what is the picture the Bible is to reveal? The true picture of God.

But historically we take a single piece of the puzzle and study it in detail, its shape, the colors on it, its thickness and we pull it out of the whole and make it a point of study on its own. We do this with doctrines. Pull out the Sabbath, study it, prove it with proof texts, review the history of Sabbath throughout human civilization, but we fail to take that piece of the puzzle and put it back into the whole. And what happens, we take a truth – the Sabbath, and create error, like God is arbitrary and the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience. We miss the big picture and actually make it harder to see God. Just imagine trying to understand the picture of a 1000 piece puzzle with 1 piece.

This is what the Jews did in Christ’s day – they had the Sabbath doctrine, but they couldn’t see God!

Or we take multiple pieces and assemble them together, 4 or 5, 50 or 60, creating distorted pictures of the true reality of God.

How can we avoid doing this today? When you start putting a puzzle together where do you start? Isn't always with the straight edges putting together the border? Why do you start with this? Because the straight edges are a standard, easily recognized and measured. Likewise, when we study God's word we start with measurable, reliable, and testable truths like God's law of love and liberty – the design template for life. And the place we see God's law most clearly revealed is.....? Jesus, the life of Jesus He was God's law in living flesh – the Word became flesh and dwelt among us! He was the fulfillment of the law!

One other major error in theology is taking the testimony statements, declarations, proclamations and building a picture on these divorced from the facts or evidence of what actually happened.

Imagine going to an Aborigine who has never heard anything about the Bible or God and taking one scripture verse away from the rest of scripture and tell him, "God is love." While true, this text, wrested, away from the rest of scripture is meaningless. We need the evidence of God dealing with humanity, culminating in the life of Christ. This is what gives the statement "God is love" power!

Likewise, some of the worst theology is built of the "proof texts" of scripture disconnected from the comprehensive history of the actions of God, what He actually did.

When we think about this process should we conclude that all the beliefs in the 28 fundamentals are 100% accurate or correct to their fullest degree? If truth is unfolding, if God is infinite and we are finite, wouldn't it stand to reason that we don't know it all, that there is more to learn and unlearn? Couldn't we figure this out just on the evidence itself? But many need permission from an authority other than the truth itself to accept such an idea:

There is **no excuse** for anyone in taking the position that **there is no more truth to be revealed**, and that **all our expositions of Scripture are without an error**. The fact that **certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible**. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. {CW 35.2}

We are living in perilous times, and it does not become us to accept everything claimed to be truth without examining it thoroughly; neither can we afford to reject anything that bears the fruits of the Spirit of God; but **we should be teachable**, meek and lowly of heart. There are those who oppose everything that is not in accordance with their own ideas, and by so doing they endanger their eternal interest as verily as did the Jewish nation in their rejection of Christ. {CW 35.3}

The Lord designs that our opinions shall be put to the test, that we may see the necessity of closely examining the living oracles to see whether or not we are in the faith. Many who claim to believe the truth have settled down at their ease, saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." --Review and Herald, December 20, 1892. {CW 36.1}

We have many lessons to learn, **and many, many to unlearn**. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed. {RH, July 26, 1892 par. 7}

Thoughts? Are we in error for questioning, studying, challenging long held beliefs pressing ever forward to a closer unity and knowledge of God?

One of the beauties of the SDA church is that it has never had a creed, a required set of beliefs that one must adhere to.

When God's Word is studied, comprehended, and obeyed, a bright light will be reflected to the world; **new truths, received and acted upon**, will bind us in strong bonds to Jesus. **The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union**; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony. Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts. **Man is fallible, but God's Word is infallible.** Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, "It is written." Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline.-- The Review and Herald, Dec. 15, 1885. {1SM 416.2}

Why is the Bible to be the sole bond of union? What is the central message of the Bible? What is the purpose of the Bible? What is the point of studying the Bible? It is all about the true knowledge of God! We are to be united in our understanding of and love for God!

WEDNESDAY

Read top dark section, "Give..." thoughts? Is this not describing the law of love?

Read bottom green section – thoughts? If we have awareness of the law of love and realize how it works and that blessings will accompany loving others, does that mean all our love for others is selfish?

I had a student once put the proposition to me that selfishness is the way to true happiness, that understanding God's laws we should keep them so that we will benefit from them and that healthy self-centeredness is God's goal for us. Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, "There are many..." thoughts?

Read and discuss questions 1,2 and 4

The Fruit of the Spirit Lesson 7 1Q 2009

The Fruit of the Spirit is Goodness

SABBATH

What is goodness? What does goodness look like?

Read Memory verse:

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph 2:10

– thoughts?

God's workmanship – thoughts about this? Ty Gibson points out that the Greek for workmanship is *poiema* and can also mean poem, or artwork, or masterpiece. Thoughts about that idea?

What was God's original purpose for the creation of mankind? What was transpiring in the universe when God created earth?

The loyal angels mourned the fate of those who had been their companions in happiness and bliss. Their loss was felt in heaven. The Father consulted Jesus in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth.-- ST Jan. 9, 1879. {TA 47.3}

Was man created before or after Lucifer's rebellion?

Is the creation of mankind part of God's response to Satan's rebellion?

After the earth with its teeming animal and vegetable life had been called into existence, man, the crowning work of the Creator, and the one for whom the beautiful earth had been fitted up, was brought upon the stage of action. To him was given dominion over all that his eye could behold; for "God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and

let them have dominion over . . . all the earth. . . . So God created man in His own image; . . . male and female created He them." Here is clearly set forth the origin of the human race....

He was placed, as God's representative, over the lower orders of being. They cannot understand or acknowledge the sovereignty of God, yet they were made capable of loving and serving man. The psalmist says, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: . . . the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, . . . and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." Psalm 8:6-8. {PP 45.1}

Man was to bear God's image, both in outward resemblance and in character. Christ alone is "the express image" (Hebrews 1:3) of the Father; but man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of comprehending divine things.

Did God create mankind, in Eden, to do good works? What good works? Could it be the good works of revealing the truth about God?

The life of Christ is to be revealed in humanity. Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; but Satan has labored to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image. Man is very dear to God, because he was formed in His own image. LHU 48

What is the nature of God? Love! And mankind was created in God's image, what do you think God designed to be the basis of life in Eden? Love, and what would Adam and Eve reveal about God had they stayed loyal? Mankind was created as the repository of God's law of love, the showcase!

Is it a good work to reveal God in our lives? How do we treat others when we love as God loves?

What does it mean “in Christ Jesus”? That because of Adam’s fall we cannot, naturally, in our own ability love or do anything good. Therefore, Christ came to restore in humanity God’s law of love, God’s goodness, God’s character, to make man again the dwelling place of God.

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was **God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator.** Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. **But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.** God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny **open to every soul.** But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, **Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,**--from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Mal. 3:1-3.
{DA 161.1}

It is only through Christ, His personal life on earth, His victory, His death and resurrection and our connection with Him that we can experience again the indwelling of God, the writing of the law of love on the heart and doing good works.

SUNDAY

Read fourth paragraph, "Think of human relationships..."
Thoughts?

Absolutely true that we were created by God to experience love, caring, compassion etc. Is that why we are able to experience these things today, because God created us that way? Or is something else going on besides the fact God created us this way?

The Lord says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." The enmity does not exist as a natural fact. **As soon as Adam sinned, he was in harmony with the first great apostate, and at war with God; and if God had not interfered in man's behalf, Satan and man would have formed a confederacy against heaven,** and carried on united opposition against the God of hosts. There is no natural enmity between evil angels and evil men; both are evil through transgression of the law of God, and evil will always league against good. Fallen men and fallen angels enter into a desperate companionship. {ST, July 11, 1895 par. 5}

Thoughts? It is true God created us to love and care for others. But God's creative designed was marred by sin/selfishness. Today, natural man has no capacity for love and care and concern. Any good, love, compassion is evidence of God's work in the human heart to restore and recreate. Thus, it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.

MONDAY

The title of the day's lesson is "All Have Sinned." Why? Why have "all sinned?" How many of you made a choice to be a sinner? How many of you sinned before you were capable of experiencing a

changed heart and having, through God's grace, victory over sin? Does God blame us for being sinners? What is sin?

All sin is selfishness. Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self. A species of insanity led him to seek to supersede God. And the temptation that led Adam to sin was Satan's declaration that it was possible for man to attain to something more than he already enjoyed, possible for him to be as God Himself. **The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world.** God desires every one to understand the evil of selfishness, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers. The design of the gospel is to confront this evil by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of benevolence. {The Worker's Bulletin, September 9, 1902 par. 3}

How many of you were selfish from birth? Psalms 51:5 "born in sin conceived in iniquity." Why do all sin? Because we all have sinful hearts, and left on our own, without God's grace, God's power, God's Spirit we cannot help but sin. But, God has intervened to provide us an option. We do not have to remain under the domination of our inherent selfish nature.

What are we held accountable for? Are we held accountable for being born sinners or for not choosing the remedy, the truth which sets free? For not loving the truth, for not loving God.

They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 2Thes 2:10

We are held accountable for rejecting the truth, for rejecting the salvation offered us freely. We are not held accountable for the fact we were born in a condition we had no choice to avoid.

Read dark section "How often we hear..." thoughts? All good, done by anyone is only because the Holy Spirit is working in their lives.

Read last paragraph, “Years ago...” thoughts?

Where does man look? Where does God look?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “While it cannot...” – thoughts?

What does it mean “blood bought”?

- Was Christ’s death necessary for our salvation? Absolutely yes!
- Are we saved by the blood – i.e. the red corpuscles? Or is the blood symbolic of something else?
- When Christ said unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood was He speaking of literal flesh and blood? Was He speaking of the same “blood” that was shed to save us or a different blood?
- When scripture speaks of the shedding of blood for the remission of sins are they speaking merely of spilling blood, as if Christ cut Himself and shed blood that would be enough, or is it a way of saying Christ’s life sacrificed?
- Did Satan, through Herod, try to kill baby Jesus? Was baby Jesus sinless? If Herod would have succeeded would the blood of Jesus have been shed? Then why didn’t God do that? Because the mere shedding of blood was not enough to ensure our salvation. It is not about red corpuscles. It is about what the blood represents and it represents His human life (divinity cannot die so the blood cannot represent the death of divinity). And as a baby, what had Christ accomplished in His human life/brain?
- Did the red corpuscles of Christ “purchase” anything? If somehow we recovered a piece of the burial cloth of Jesus, and it still had dried blood of Jesus on it. Could we present this to God and say, “Here is the blood of Jesus and with this I purchase my salvation”?

What is the blood of Christ symbolic of?

Christ did not soften down **His symbolical representation**. He reiterated the truth in yet stronger language: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." {DA 389.2}

To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. **It is by beholding His love, by dwelling upon it, by drinking it in, that we are to become partakers of His nature.** What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it, unless it becomes a part of our being. So Christ is of no value to us if we do not know Him as a personal Saviour. A theoretical knowledge will do us no good. We must feed upon Him, receive Him into the heart, so that His life becomes our life. His love, His grace, must be assimilated. {DA 389.3}

"In the **study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God**, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life." Fundamentals of Christian Education 378

"The leaven of **truth** works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, **washed in the blood of the Lamb.**" COL 102

What is the blood represent? The life of Christ which reveals the truth to set us free from lies and win us to trust and His perfect character which He wrought out in His human brain and which we receive by trust in Him!

None of the apostles or prophets ever claimed to be without sin. Men who have lived nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men whom God had honored with divine light and power, have

confessed the sinfulness of their own nature. They have put no confidence in the flesh, have **claimed no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ**. So will it be with all who behold Christ. {FLB 111.4}

The righteousness of Christ, as a pure white pearl, has no defect, no stain, no guilt. This righteousness may be ours. Salvation, with its blood-bought, inestimable treasures, is the pearl of great price. {FLB 111.5}

What is "blood-bought"? Salvation, and what is it that Christ achieved which provides us salvation?

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But **Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What did Christ purchase? A restored and healed and perfectly regenerated humanity! He, in His person, destroyed the infection of sin (carnal nature, selfishness, the law of sin and death) and restored perfectly God's law of love into the human species.

Now, why are we to do good works? Because God wants us to be the happiest, healthiest, holiest beings possible and in His universe such happiness is only experienced in giving, in blessing others in love! It is for our good that He calls us to such a life!

And how are we to do good works? By receiving the infusion of Christ's character rebuilt within us, via the work of the Holy Spirit when we trust Him.

Why will those who don't do good works not be "allowed" into the kingdom of heaven?

What is the kingdom of heaven? Is it not the kingdom of love?

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." John 3:3

What does this mean? Why can't they see it? What about those who pierced Him, won't they see Him coming in the clouds?

They will see His physical presence, but they have believed the lies of Satan and rather than seeing a God of love, they see what Satan alleges, a God of anger and wrath, thus, they will not, cannot, see the kingdom of God!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "The problem..." thoughts? Well said, exactly. Can the diagnostic instrument cure the problem? No! The written law cannot cure the sin problem, but it diagnosis perfectly.

How is the sin problem cured? Jesus – how? How does what Jesus do benefit us?

Read next paragraph, "In the plan..." thoughts?

Read dark section "In Psalms 40:8..." thoughts? Why do some people believe keeping the law is a burden? Because the law is presented as arbitrary, an arbitrary set of rules from an arbitrary God, who will inflict punishment if you don't obey. Rather, than the truth that the law is the principle of love, the design template for life and our happiness and health is dependent upon it. That only in harmony with the law is there real freedom.

WEDNESDAY

Read memory text at top and first paragraph – thoughts?

Okay, married folk, how easy is it to change a spouse? Can you actually change another person?

Excellent point about motives and right heart – this is what it is all about, being renewed in the inner man to have a change in heart motive!

Read last paragraph, “In chapter 7 of Romans...” thoughts?

Has chapter seven of Romans ever confused you? Here is my paraphrase starting with 7:7:

^{7:7} What shall we say then? Is the law evil and selfish because it increases the amount of evil and selfishness we see? Absolutely not! For I would not have known what evil and selfishness looks like if it wasn't for the diagnostic efficacy of the law. I would not have realized that coveting was evil and selfish if the law didn't say, “Don't covet.” ⁸ But selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the law is only a diagnostic instrument and not a remedy, magnified every covetous desire within me. For apart from the diagnostic ability of the law, sin is unrecognizable. ⁹ Once I thought I was healthy and free from the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness, but then the commandment examined me, exposed how utterly infected I was and diagnosed me as terminal. ¹⁰ I discovered that the very commandment given only to diagnose my condition, I had unwittingly attempted to use as a cure and thus my condition only worsened. ¹¹ For selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the commandment could only diagnose and not cure, deceived me into thinking I could be cured by working to keep the commandments, but instead my terminal state only worsened. ¹² So understand this, the law diagnoses perfectly, and the commandment is the standard of what is right and good, set apart by God, to reveal what is evil and destructive.

^{7:13} Did the law, which did good by diagnosing what was wrong with me, become the source of my terminal condition? Of course not! It only exposed what was already in me so that I could recognize how totally decayed, putrid and near death I was, so that through the lens of the

commandment I might become utterly disgusted with evil and selfishness and long for a cure.

Romans 7:14 We know that the law is consistent, reliable and reasonable; but I am inconsistent, unreliable and unreasonable, because the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness has warped my mind and damaged my thinking.¹⁵ I am frustrated with what I do. For having been restored to trust, I want to do what is in harmony with God and his methods and principles; but I find that even though I trust God, old habits, conditioned responses, preconceived ideas and other remnants of the devastation caused by distrust and selfishness are not yet fully removed.¹⁶ And if I find an old habit causing me to behave in ways that I now find detestable, I affirm that the law is a very helpful tool revealing residual damage in need of healing.¹⁷ What is happening is this: I have come to trust God and desire to do his will, but old habits and conditioned responses, which present almost reflexively in certain situations, have not yet been totally eliminated and thus cause me to do things I do not want to do.¹⁸ I know that my mind was completely infected with distrust, fear and selfishness which totally perverted all my desires and faculties, so that even when distrust has been eradicated and trust has been restored, the damage caused by years of distrustful and selfish behavior has not yet been fully healed. So I find, at times, I have the desire to do what is right, but do not yet have the ability to carry out the desire.¹⁹ For the old habits and conditioned responses are not the good I want to do; no, they are remnants of my selfish unconverted mind.²⁰ So, if I find myself doing what I no longer desire to do, it is not I, but vestiges of old habits and conditioned responses that have yet to be removed, and through God's grace will soon be removed.

7:21 So, I find this reality at work: When I want to do good, old selfish habits and residual feelings of fear are right there with me.²² For in my mind I rejoice in God's methods and principles;²³ but I recognize I remain damaged from years of being infected with distrust and practicing Satan's methods, so that even though the infection of distrust has been removed, the old habits of fear and self-promotion tempt me from within.²⁴ What a damaged and corrupt man I am! Who will deliver and heal me from a brain and body so diseased and deformed?²⁵ Praise be to God – for he has provided the healing solution through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I find that in my mind I am now renewed with trust for God and love of his methods, but my brain and body remain damaged by years of self-indulgent behavior.

Romans Chapter Eight

Romans 8:1 Therefore, those who trust in Christ Jesus are no longer destined to die, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of love has cleansed and healed me from the law of selfishness and death. ³ Because the written law was powerless to restore trust – as it could merely diagnose the infection of distrust and selfishness pervading us all, God accomplished this restoration of his character of love in man by sending his own Son in human flesh to eradicate selfishness from humanity, to reveal the truth about God, expose the lies of Satan, and reveal what happens when the infection of sin is not cured. And so he condemned the infection of selfishness as the destroying element in sinful man, ⁴ in order that the law of love – the principle upon which life is based, might be fully restored in us, who no longer live according to the selfish desires but in harmony with the Spirit of love and truth.

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2,3,4 and 6

The Fruit of the Spirit Lesson 9 1Q 2009

The Fruit of the Spirit is Meekness

SABBATH

Read Memory Verse – thoughts? What is meekness?

- Humbly patient, docile, calm, especially in the face of provocation
- No desire to promote self?????

Why will the meek inherit the earth? What makes the New Earth a safe place to live?

What is the difference between meekness and weakness?

Read third paragraph “Although weakness...” thoughts?

How do weakness and meekness look different and function different?

A woman who is married to a man who physically abuses her repeatedly, violently, broken bones, bloody lip, verbal assaults. If she stays and takes blame, “Oh, it wasn’t his fault...” is this meekness? How would a meek person handle it?

Does a person who is meek still live a life of Godlike love? Where is the focus of love? If the wife is meek, but genuinely loves her husband, what is her primary concern when her husband beats her?

What did Christ pray when they crucified Him? “Father forgive them they don’t know what they are doing.” Who was Christ concerned for?

What happens to the character, mind, reason, conscience of a man who beats his wife? If he persists living like this will he be saved,

even if he is elder in the church and “claims” Christ as his Savior? Why or why not?

What happens to the sinner who persists in sin? Does God get tired of him? Does the sinner ever wear out God’s patience? Does God ever become so disgusted with the sinner that God becomes something other than a God of love? If God always loves and never stops loving, what happens to those who persist in sin? What do you think about this description?

The prevalence of a sinful desire shows the delusion of the soul. **Every indulgence of that desire strengthens the soul's aversion to God.** In following the path of Satan's choosing, we are encompassed by the shadows of evil, and every step leads into deeper darkness and **increases the blindness of the heart.** {MB 92.2}

The **same law obtains in the spiritual as in the natural world.** He who abides in darkness will at last lose the power of vision. He is shut in by a deeper than midnight blackness; and to him the brightest noontide can bring no light. He "walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." 1 John 2:11. Through persistently cherishing evil, willfully disregarding the pleadings of divine love, **the sinner loses the love for good, the desire for God, the very capacity** to receive the light of heaven. The **invitation of mercy is still full of love, the light is shining as brightly as when it first dawned upon his soul; but the voice falls on deaf ears, the light on blinded eyes.**{MB 92.3}

No soul is ever finally **deserted of God**, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. "**Man turns from God, not God from him.**" Our heavenly Father follows us with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, **until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests with the sinner.** By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power. Thus **he passes on from one stage of resistance to another, until at last the light will fail to impress**, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the

Spirit of God. Then even "the light that is in thee" has become darkness. The **very truth we do know has become so perverted** as to increase the blindness of the soul. {MB 93.1}

What did you hear described? Did love ever stop? Did the light ever become dim or does it shine just as brightly? Then what happens? The sinner who persists in sin destroys the capacity to recognize and respond to love and truth. He becomes incurable!

What do you think it means the very truth we do know has become so perverted as to increase the blindness of the soul? What about the Sabbath in Christ's day? Did they know the truth of which day was the Sabbath? But because they rejected the truth about God what had the Sabbath become? And what did they accuse Christ of? And how did they treat the Lord of the Sabbath? Any risks for us today?

The truth about God's character of love is the center to which all other doctrines must align. Teachings which in any way undermine the truth about God's character will eventually harden the heart and obstruct our union with God.

SUNDAY

Read top dark section? Thoughts?

What does it mean to take Christ's yoke? If we surrender our lives to God, surrender our plans – surrender the "outcomes" to Him and simply follow His directions in carrying out our duty – doesn't that remove worry, stress and anxiety?

Read first paragraph, "Meekness is..." thoughts? Does the meek person seek to exert their rights? Fight for their fair share? Does that mean the meek person is a doormat and allows themselves to be run over?

Was Paul being meek when He opposed Peter publically? Why or why not? What was the difference? Was Paul standing up for himself or for Christ and the truth?

Are we to be more assertive in promoting the gospel, helping others?

How does a person learn to die to self? What brings a person to the point they die to self? What about this possibility, do you agree?

Paul could say: "I die daily." **It is the daily dying to self in the little transactions of life that makes us overcomers.** We **should forget self in the desire to do good to others.** With many there is a decided lack of love for others. Instead of faithfully performing their duty, they seek rather their own pleasure. {Mar 109.2}

God positively enjoins upon all His followers a **duty to bless others with their influence and means**, and to seek that wisdom of Him which will enable them to do all in their power to elevate the thoughts and affections of those who come within their influence. **In doing for others, a sweet satisfaction will be experienced, an inward peace which will be a sufficient reward.** When actuated by a high and noble desire to do others good, they will find true happiness in a faithful discharge of life's manifold duties. This will bring more than an earthly reward; for every faithful, unselfish performance of duty is **noticed by the angels and shines in the life record.** {Mar 109.3}

In heaven none will think of self, nor seek their own pleasure; but all, from pure, genuine love, will seek the happiness of the heavenly beings around them. If we wish to enjoy heavenly society in the earth made new, we must be governed by heavenly principles here. {Mar 109.4}

The greatest work that can be done in our world is to glorify God by living the character of Christ. {Mar 109.5}

Thoughts?

Why will heaven be safe? Because all will seek the good of others rather than self! How do we become like this? By choosing to cooperate with God in denying self and giving of ourselves to help others! This puts us in harmony with the law of love and healing takes place in our characters.

Why will acts of unselfishness shine in the life record? What is the life record? It is a photograph of your character! In your character every act of sin is faithfully recorded or in your character Christ has been reproduced by the work of the Holy Spirit.

- Angels of God are taking a **daguerreotype [photograph] of the character** just as accurately as the artist takes the likeness of the human features; and . . . **it is from this that we are to be judged!** {Mar 340.2}

Read last paragraph, “Ephesians 4:2...” thoughts? Is it not true that everything we have is a gift from God? All our boasting should be about God and Christ!

While this is absolutely true, what about when people give God credit for their own choices? It is true God gives us talents, health, wealth, intelligence and all the resources through which we achieve anything – but is there some aspect in which we exercise our own individuality in the use of all these resources, either for evil or for good?

If someone does something actually good, or loving, on this earth it is absolutely true that the only way that could happen was because of Christ’s death and the work of the Holy Spirit in their life. But does that mean the individual is not choosing to do the good themselves? When the Holy Spirit finishes His work in our lives we experience all the fruits of the Spirit and the last is, self-control? What does that mean? It means God’s plan is to actually heal us fully so that we are one day capable of living self-governed lives in harmony with His kingdom of love!

MONDAY

Models of meekness – when you think of those who modeled meekness who comes to mind?

What attributes, actions, behaviors demonstrate meekness?

Read fourth paragraph, “In Numbers...” thoughts? Meekness is a lack of “self-promotion” it is NOT a lack of interest in the welfare of others! Moses had great passion and energy when it came to protecting others and also protecting God’s reputation.

The last paragraph asks us to consider Jesus – how do you see meekness in the life of Jesus?

The lesson asks us to consider some specific experiences of Jesus:

John 18:20-23

²⁰ “I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied. “I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.”

²² When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded.

²³ “If I said something wrong,” Jesus replied, “testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” ²⁴ Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.

Thoughts? Was this meek? Why did Jesus speak this way? What was His goal? Was Jesus being insubordinate, sarcastic, or disrespectful? No, was this meek? Yes why?

Jesus still longed for these people, for those who could be won to Him. He was asking them to think about what He had done, review the evidences of His life, healing, helping, ministering, love in action and His teachings about His Father. Thus His answer was designed to reach others not protect Himself. He was trying to get them to think, to reason, to examine evidence, which would dispel their prejudice and lies.

What about when He drove the money changers from the Temple? Was this meek? Why or why not? Was He promoting self or was He promoting His Father and working to reach people with the truth,

working to overthrow the errors being taught by the religious leaders?

And, who ran and who stayed by? What does it mean that when Jesus overturned the tables, had a whip, and was “angry” that the children didn’t get frightened and run away but stayed behind and praised the Lord? Could you in church overturn the pulpit and pews and wield a whip such that the elders and pastors run out in terror but the children are not afraid?

Notice, only the guilty ran away, why?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What does it mean the day of the Lord’s anger? What is the Lord’s anger? Do we get a clue from Jesus in cleansing the Temple?

- **“My anger will flame up like fire and burn everything on earth. It will reach to the world below and consume the roots of the mountains. I will bring on them endless disasters and use **all my arrows against them.**”** (Deuteronomy 32:22,23 – GN)... **“They fail to see why they were defeated;** they cannot understand what happened. Why were a thousand defeated by one, and ten thousand by only two? **The Lord, their God, had abandoned them; their mighty God had given them up.**” (Deuteronomy 32:29,30 – GN)
- **“When that happens, I will become angry with them; I will abandon them,** and they will be destroyed. Many terrible disasters will come upon them, and then they will realize that these **things are happening to them because I, their God, am no longer with them.**” (Deuteronomy 31:17 – GN)
- **“I will fight against you with all my might, my anger, my wrath, and my fury.** I will kill everyone living in this city; people and animals alike **will die of a terrible disease....** Anyone who stays in the city will be **killed in war or by starvation or disease...**It will be **given over** to the king of Babylonia, and **he** will burn it to the ground. I, the LORD, have spoken...I will set your palace on fire, and the fire will

burn down everything around it. I, the LORD, have spoken.”.”
(Jeremiah 21:5,6,9-10,14 – GN)

- “The LORD **has abandoned** his people like a lion that leaves its cave. The horrors of war and the LORD’s **fierce anger** have turned the country into a desert.” (Jeremiah 25:38 – GN)
- “The LORD, the God of Israel, told me to go and say to King Zedekiah of Judah, ‘I, the LORD, will **hand this city over** to the king of Babylonia, and **he** will burn it down. (Jeremiah 34:2 – GN)
- “Very well, then, **I will give you freedom: the freedom to die by war, disease, and starvation.**” (Jeremiah 34:17 – GN)
- “**You will feel my anger when I turn it loose on you** like a blazing fire. And **I will hand you over** to brutal men, experts at destruction.” (Ezekiel 21:31 – GN)
- “**I will hand you over to other nations** who will rob you and plunder you.” (Ezekiel 25:7 – GN)
- “**I will attack the people of Israel and Judah like a lion.** I myself will tear them to pieces and then leave them. When I drag them off, no one will be able to save them. **I will abandon** my people until they have suffered enough for their sins and come looking for me. Perhaps in their suffering they will try to find me.” (Hosea 5:14,15 – GN)
- **God’s anger is revealed** from heaven against all the sin and evil of the people whose evil ways prevent the truth from being known. **God punishes them**, because what can be known about God is plain to them, for God himself made it plain...They say they are wise, but they are fools; instead of worshipping the immortal God, they worship images made to look like mortals or birds or animals or reptiles. **And so God has given those people over to do the filthy things their hearts desire**, and they do shameful things with each other. **They exchange the truth about God for a lie**; they worship and serve what God has created instead of the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever! Amen. Because they do this, **God has given them over** to shameful passions....**Because those people refuse to keep in mind the true knowledge about God, he has given them over** to corrupted minds, so that they do the things that they should not do.” (Romans 1:18,19,22-26,28 – GN)

- Then "Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" "My God, My God, **why hast Thou forsaken Me?**" As the outer gloom settled about the Saviour, many voices exclaimed: The **vengeance of heaven** is upon Him. The bolts of **God's wrath** are hurled at Him, because He claimed to be the Son of God. Many who believed on Him heard His despairing cry. Hope left them. If **God had forsaken Jesus**, in what could His followers trust? {DA 754.3}

Thoughts? Does it make a difference how we understand God's anger and wrath? Why? What happens if we believe God's anger is active infliction of pain and suffering that would not otherwise be reaped by sin and rebellion? What happens to liberty? And if liberty is violated what happens to love?

Read second paragraph "Meekness is necessary..." thoughts?

Does this mean that only meek people are in roles of Bible teachers, pastors, church leaders? Or can people who don't have meekness end up in such roles? Caiaphas?

Would these words of EGW been helpful for the people in Christ's day to know Caiaphas was not correctly receiving God's word?

- Satan's representations against the government of God, and his defense of those who sided with him, were a constant accusation against God. His murmurings and complaints were groundless; and yet God allowed him to work out his theory. God could have destroyed Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. **But by so doing he would have given a precedent for the exercise of force. All the compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. He would not work on this line. He would not give the slightest encouragement for any human being to set himself up as God over another human being, feeling at liberty to cause him physical or mental suffering. This principle is wholly of Satan's creation.** {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 7}

The principles of the character of God were the foundation of the education constantly kept before the heavenly angels. **These principles were goodness, mercy, and love. Self-evidencing light was to be recognized and freely accepted by all who occupied positions of trust and power.** They must accept God's principles, and, through the presentation of truth and righteousness, convince all who were in his service. **This was the only power to be used. Force must never come in. All who thought that their position gave them power to command their fellow beings, and control conscience, must be deprived of their position; for this is not God's plan.** {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 8}

These principles are to be the foundation of education in God's church today. The rules given by him are to be observed and respected. God has enjoined this. His government is moral. Nothing is to be done by compulsion. Truth is to be the prevailing power. . All service is to be done willingly, and for the love of God. All who are honored with positions of influence are to represent God; for when officiating, they are in the place of God. In everything their actions must correspond to the importance of their position. **The higher the position the more distinctly will self-sacrifice be revealed if they are fit for the office.** Every heart that is controlled by these principles will be loyal. **But when those who profess to be in God's service resort to accusation, they are adopting Satan's principles to cast out Satan;** and this never will work. {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 9}...

Today **Satan is working upon human minds by his crooked principles.** These will be adopted and acted upon by some who claim to be loyal and true to God's government. **How shall we know that they are disloyal and untrue?-- "By their fruits ye shall know them." God does not force any one. He leaves all free to choose.** But he says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The Lord will not write as wise those who cannot distinguish between a tree that bears thorn-berries and a tree that bears olives. {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 15}

Thoughts?

What about the fact Caiaphas claimed to be protecting the church, the nation of Israel? Will those who use Satan's methods claim to be protecting orthodoxy, yet instead of presenting truth in love ultimately resort to coercion to obtain their way?

The Beast of Revelation will use such power to coerce – this is one of the very clear demarcations differentiating God's kingdom from Satan's.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Meekness will be..." thoughts? Does meekness mean that all who are genuinely meek will have the same "personality"? Will there be meek people who have great variations in personality, talents, styles of communication, ability etc?

The lesson asks us to consider how some Bible texts reveal meekness:

Matthew 5:39: But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Thought? What is being taught here? A rule or a principle? Are there times when turning the other cheek would be sinful? What times? What is the principle of meekness? Not seeking to promote self, but seeking to promote the best for others.

What if your 5 y/o child has a temper tantrum and kicks and hits mommy or daddy because they can't have candy in the store. Should you turn the other cheek and buy them the candy? Why or why not?

What about a wife who is beaten by her husband?

Matthew 18:21,22: Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Thoughts? What does is the message from Jesus? Why is forgiving an offender meek? Whose heart is being revealed by forgiving? What would it mean not to forgive?

When we forgive does that mean we trust? Why or why not?

Galatians 6:1: Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Thoughts? Isn't this an evidence of meekness, not considering someone who fell into sin worse off than ourselves, but recognizing them in need of healing just as we are?

2Tim 2:24,25: And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth

Thoughts? Have you ever had opportunity to do this?

THURSDAY

What is the reward of the meek?

FRIDAY

Question one – read and discuss

When we are meek we are not self-centered, meaning we are not fear motivated, further selfish activities cause more fear, thus other-centered, love and meek living results in less fear and more peace.

Science as demonstrated that altruism results in better mental and physical health.

Question 3&4 read and discuss

The Fruits of the Spirit Lesson 10 1Q 2010

The Fruit of the Spirit is Self-Control

SABBATH

What is the difference between “self-control” and “God control”? Those who pray, “God I don’t want to be in control, you take control” will He do it?

When we surrender the will to God what happens? Do we become puppets? Do we have our freedom removed? How is it that surrender results in greater freedom?

Read last paragraph, “Self-control may sound....” Thoughts?

How is it that surrendering self to God increases freedom? If we don’t surrender to God what happens?

- Is a person who is addicted to alcohol or drugs free?
- Is a person who is addicted to porn free?
- Is a person who is addicted to bingeing on food free?
- Is a person who is addicted to getting adoration, praise, attention or opinion of others free?
- If we indulge appetite and violate the laws of health what happens? And when we are sick do we have as much freedom? Do we get more freedom with self-discipline?
- Is a person who is consumed with fear and insecurity free?

How do we find freedom from such problems?

SUNDAY

Self – control – what impairs our ability to experience self-control? What is the greatest obstacle to self-governance?

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is

dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:13-15

The Bible is describing the greatest source of our temptation, that we have a terminal condition, a brain wiring problem that causes us to be tempted from within. At its root all temptations are based on fear and selfishness. The lesson asks us to examine three primary avenues that these temptations are express through.

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 1John 2:16

What is being described? Sensualism, materialism, egotism.

What is sensualism?

- Alcohol, drugs
- Food
- Sex
- Unhealthy relationships

What is materialism?

- Gambling
- Greed
- Pursuit of wealth
- Cheating
- Ponzi schemes
- Always needing more

What is egotism?

- Needing to be first
- Needing to be acknowledged
- Power over
- Despotism

- Dictatorship
- Unwillingness to repent
- Unwillingness to admit wrong
- Unwillingness to change an opinion or respond to evidence
- The need to stand out, dressing overly humble and plain to demonstrate one's chastity and virtue

What happens in the mind when we allow our feelings to overrule our judgment?

- Temptation of premarital sex – feelings are powerful, judgment is saying no – what happens in the person?
- What about when you want to do something are prevented, by parents, circumstances – might feelings of frustrations arise? How might such feelings tempt you to act? And if you do what happens?

What happens in the brain when we allow feelings to overrule our judgment? We condemn ourselves in our own minds and results in:

- Lower self-esteem
- Lower self-worth
- Guilt, feelings of inadequacy
- Fear of rejection
- Activation of the fear centers with increased release of stress hormones, inflammatory factors and over time increased risk of physical and mental illness

If we find ourselves in such circumstances what can we do? What options do we have?

- First – we must admit our helplessness, that we are sick and can't fix ourselves
- Second we must recognize help exists only in God
- Third we must come to know God well enough that we can actually trust Him
- Fourth we must open our hearts and invite Him in

What is the greatest obstacle to our wellness, here and now and for eternity? Self!

God's promise is, "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13. {SC 43.1}

The **whole heart** must be yielded to God, or the change can never be wrought in us by which we are to be restored to His likeness. **By nature we are alienated from God.** The Holy Spirit describes our condition in such words as these: "Dead in trespasses and sins;" "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint;" "no soundness in it." We are held fast in the snare of Satan, "taken captive by him at his will." Ephesians 2:1; Isaiah 1:5, 6; 2 Timothy 2:26. **God desires to heal us**, to set us free. But since **this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature**, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him. {SC 43.2}

The **warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought.** The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness. {SC 43.3}

The government of God **is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control.** It appeals to the **intellect** and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. **God does not force the will of His creatures.** He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. **A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character;** it would make man a mere automaton. Such **is not the purpose of the Creator.** He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. **It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin**, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

Thoughts?

- What does this mean?
- How do you understand God's kingdom?
- Why is it better to surrender to Christ?
- What about surrendering to Christ your future?
- Can God be saying, "Love me, trust me, surrender to me – or else I will inflict torment and suffering upon you and kill you"? Why not?
- Why is it so important to see God as Jesus revealed Him to be? Because only the truth about God destroys the lies and wins us to genuine trust. And it is only in genuine trust that we are willing to surrender self to God and thereby experience transformation!

The lesson asks us to read Philippians 4:8:

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Why is this important? Because by beholding we are changed, but how are we changed?

- Neurologically – the brain changes by what we behold. TV watching in childhood alters the developing brain.
- Genetically, what we watch or behold impacts the beliefs we form and our beliefs result in change in brain function, stress response and ultimately gene expression
- Characterlogicoally we are changed by what we behold.

What we watch, think about, behold activates neural circuits which can either calm or inflame our passions and desires. Our choices, both in what we think and in what we do, change the wiring of our brains. We literally change.

Read last paragraph "He's talking about..." thoughts?

How do we overcome?

When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a **supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature.** The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. **We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world.** It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place. The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end. {DA 324.1}

Thoughts? What is being described? Why do we not have to choose Satan to be under his power? What is the natural state of our hearts? What do our own desires lead us to?

Do we have a role to play? Do we have the power in our own strength to overcome our own desires? But do we have to make the choice? What is the relationship between our choice and God's power?

In the work of redemption there is **no compulsion. No external force is employed.** Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left **free** to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the **highest sense of freedom.** The expulsion of sin is the **act of the soul itself.** True, **we have no power** to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are **imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit,** and they obey the dictates of **the will** in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

The Holy Spirit convicts, enlightens, draws, but leaves each person free to choose for themselves. When we do make the choice, then the Holy Spirit infuses with divine power to strengthen, cleanse, ennoble and sustain – but we don't get the power until we make the choice!

What about the idea of no longer being condemned? What does it mean to be condemned? In what way are we condemned?

How do we understand condemnation? What or who condemns?

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. ³⁰ And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ ³¹ So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. ³² Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!

³³ “You snakes! You brood of vipers! **How will you escape being condemned to hell?** ³⁴ Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. ³⁵ And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom

you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.

³⁷ “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. ³⁸ Look, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’ Matt 23:29-39

Where does the condemnation arise for these hard hearted people? Do you hear in Jesus voice condemnation or pity, longing to heal and save? Some would have us believe that condemnation arises from the heart of God, but what did Jesus say?

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For **God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world**, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is **not condemned**, but whoever **does not believe stands condemned already** because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. John 3:16-18

What does this mean? Is Jesus suggesting that the Pharisees will not be condemned by Him, yet they will still be condemned or not escape condemnation? What is the source of their condemnation?

²⁴ “I tell you the truth, whoever **hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned**; he has crossed over **from death to life**. ²⁵ I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

²⁸ “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, **and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned**.

Condemned by whom? What or who condemns?

³³ “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the **evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.** ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by **your words you will be condemned.**” Matthew 12:33-37

What did Jesus say condemns us? What does this mean? But won't Jesus judge and condemn us?

⁴⁷ “As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, **I do not judge him.** For **I did not come to judge** the world, but to save it. ⁴⁸ **There is a judge** for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; **that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.** ⁴⁹ For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰ **I know that his command leads to eternal life.** So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.” John 12:47-50

What will judge? The truth! What condemns us is our very condition! We are either restored to trust and experience renewal by the Holy Spirit and are recreated in love or we are settled into selfishness and lies.

Have you heard the phrase “condemnation of the law”? What does it mean? What law? What does the law condemn? How does the law condemn?

The law of love is the law of life, if you deviate from it what does the law say will happen? If you deviate from the law of respiration and tie a bag over your head what does the law of respiration say will

happen? Does the law of respiration condemn those who tie plastic bags over their heads? Yes, can the law be changed to meet the person with a bag over his head in that state so they can remain healthy? Can God's law be changed to meet the sinner?

What if a person was suffocating with a plastic bag over their head and they had a loving brother who tied a bag over his head in order to pay the legal penalty of the broken law of respiration which cannot be changed? Would that action result in saving the other? What is the only option for salvation? That the sinner must be changed to be in harmony with the law, the plastic bag must be removed.

Likewise, God sent Christ to remedy sin, to actually destroy all that Satan and sin had done to humanity (Heb 2:14, 1John 3:8, 2Tim 1:10). And having done this Christ becomes the source of salvation for all who obey Him (Heb 5:8).

The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; **it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health.** It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

"In assuming human nature, that he might reach to the very depths of human woe and misery and lift man up, Christ has shown what estimate he places upon the human race. In this work everything was at stake. Satan claimed to be the lawful owner of the fallen race; and with what persistent effort did he seek to overthrow Christ through his subtilty! It was only by the most desperate conflict with the powers of Satan that Christ could accomplish **his purpose of restoring the almost obliterated image of God in man, and place his own signature upon his forehead.** It was a desperate battle; for Satan had so long worked in league with human intelligencies as to almost completely intercept every ray of light shining from the throne of God upon the human mind. **The cross of Calvary alone could destroy the works of the devil.** In that

wondrous sacrifice all eyes were called to 'behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' The love of Christ kindles in the heart of all who continue to behold him. {General Conference Daily Bulletin, March 2, 1897 par. 17}

In the beginning, man was created in the likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature. **Sin defaced and almost obliterated the divine image; but Christ came to restore that which had been lost.** GC 645

Weakened through sin, we can not of ourselves keep the law of God. **But Christ came to our world to restore the moral image of God in men,** and to bring them back from the path of disobedience to a path of obedience. **His mission to the world was to reveal the character of God by living the law, which is the foundation of his government;** and those who will accept him as their personal Saviour will grow in grace, and in his strength will be enabled to obey the law of God. {ST, February 11, 1897 par. 15}

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Read bottom green section – thoughts? From where do we reap destruction? From the carnal nature, is God the source of destruction or the source of life?

If you believe God is the source of pain suffering and death what attitude toward God will you develop?

There are several lies Lucifer told in heaven that has caused this continued distortion. Here are two, which one of the founders of our church wrote about:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, **it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned.**

Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. DA 761

Many [angels] were disposed to heed this counsel, to repent of their disaffection, and seek to be again received into favor with the Father and His Son. But **Lucifer had another deception ready.** The mighty revolter now declared that the angels who had united with him had gone too far to return; that he was acquainted with the divine law, and **knew that God would not forgive.** He declared that all who should submit to the authority of Heaven would be stripped of their honor, degraded from their position. For himself, he was determined never again to acknowledge the authority of Christ. The only course remaining for him and his followers, he said, was to assert their liberty, and gain by force the rights which had not been willingly accorded them. {PP 40.3}

From the beginning it has been **Satan's plan to lead men to forget God,** that he might secure them to himself. To do this he has **misrepresented the character of God,** and has led men to cherish **false ideas of him.** The **Creator has been presented to their minds as possessing the attributes of the prince of evil himself,--as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,**--that he might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men...{SW, April 28, 1908 par. 1}

Christ came to reveal God to the world in his true character, as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to surround the throne of Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifested to men as the Light of Life. {SW, April 28, 1908 par. 2}

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the **enemy of good blinded the minds of**

men, so that they looked upon God with fear; **they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,-- one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor.** He pictured the Creator as a being who is **watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow**, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men. {SC 10.3}

What are Satan's lies? That every sin must be punished and that God is unforgiving and severe.

Do you ever hear these very lies of Satan taught today? That God must punish sin and that God cannot forgive without a legal payment of the blood of His Son?

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. **Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Repeat to them the precious assurance which God Himself has given to them: I am "**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**" (Ex. 34:6, 7). What a precious declaration is this! What can be too hard for Him, what sin too great for Him to pardon? He is gracious, not working according to our merit, but in His boundless goodness healing our

backslidings, forgiving our iniquities, and loving us freely while we were yet sinners. {19MR 303.3}

God is a forgiving God – Satan lied when He said God would not forgive – but check out this amazing statement:

God, in his great mercy, bore long with Lucifer. He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station when he first indulged the spirit of discontent, **nor even when he began to present his false claims before the loyal angels.** [this would be sin, bearing false witness] Long was he retained in Heaven. **Again and again he was offered pardon, on condition of repentance and submission.** Such efforts as only infinite love and wisdom could devise, were made to convince him of his error... **Though he had forsaken his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God's great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office.** GC 495

Does “pardon” need to be granted if no wrong is done, if no sin occurred? What is the condition upon which pardon and reinstatement would be granted? What about every sin being punished? Don’t some ideas about salvation today say that every sin must be punished?

Let’s imagine that concept in the scenario just read:

Lucifer repents and the penal model was enforced in heaven. Christ, comes in the form of an angel, is taken to center stage by God and the universe is told that Lucifer had sinned, had broken God’s law and has repented, but that every sin must be punished. They are told that Christ loves Lucifer and therefore would accept the punishment for Lucifer’s sin and then they watch as the Father executes His Son to satisfy His wrath against sin and enforce “divine justice.” What do you think would happen? Instantly fear and horror of God spreads throughout the universe. No longer do heavenly beings love and trust God but instead are terrified of Him. Sin is not eliminated but spreads rapidly throughout the universe

and after that God cannot restore harmony to His universe as beings serve Him out of fear rather than love.

Have I over stated it? Have I misunderstood the evidence? Are there ideas, evidences that we are not including which would shed further light on this topic?

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to consider Samson – what led to Samson’s downfall? Did Samson struggle with intense human emotions, desires, lusts? Did he struggle with self-governance? Yet, where do we find Samson in the New Testament? Did this undermine Samson’s usefulness? Did it change the course of Samson’s life? Did Samson suffer terribly here on earth because of his indulgence and lack of self-control? Yet, where do we find Samson in the New Testament? Heb 12, the hall of faith, and what does this tell us?

WEDNESDAY

The long race – what do we learn about Paul’s use of the idea of running the long race?

From the cross to the crown there is earnest work to be done. There is wrestling against inbred sin; there is warfare against outward wrong. But we shall triumph at last, if we do not become weary in well-doing. Heaven's portals will be opened for every one who does his best for God and his fellow-men.
ST, December 17, 1885 par. 14}

THURSDAY

What can we do to strengthen our self-control? Exercise, diet, fasting, homework, chores, all of these activities require the development of self-mastery, the ability to push self beyond what merely feels good in the moment. Also, meditation, prayer.

FRIDAY

Questions 1 and 2 read and discuss

The Fruit of the Spirit Lesson 11 1Q 2010

The Fruit of the Spirit is Righteousness

SABBATH

Read bottom paragraph, “We understand...”

What do you understand this to mean?

The Study Guide uses the traditional Protestant terminology of imputed and imparted. Is there a difference between these two or are they synonyms, different words, which, in practicality, mean the same things?

We are studying that the “fruit of the Spirit is righteousness,” if it is a fruit what does that mean? Is it more than something “credited” or “accounted”? Is it actually produced in the believer by the Holy Spirit? Maybe the lesson guide is indicating this by the term imparted and means something else by imputed?

Where might some confusion arise? Romans when Abraham was “imputed” as righteous, let’s look at chapter 4:22-24.

And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Romans 4:22-24 KJV

being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness. The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.” Romans 4:22-24 NIV

What do you think these texts mean? Would it be helpful to understand the Greek? The Greek word translated imputed or credited is: *logizomai* and how is it translated?

3049 λογίζομαι [*logizomai* /log·id·zom·ahee/] v. Middle voice from 3056; TDNT 4:284; TDNTA 536; GK 3357; **41 occurrences**; AV translates as “think” nine times, “impute” eight times, “reckon” six times, “count” five times, “account” four times, “suppose” twice, “reason” once, “number” once, and translated miscellaneous five times. **1** to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over. *1A* to take into account, to make an account of. *1A1* metaph. to pass to one’s account, to impute. *1A2* a thing is reckoned as or to be something, i.e. as availing for or equivalent to something, as having the like force and weight. *1B* to number among, reckon with. *1C* to reckon or account. **2 to reckon inward, count up or weigh the reasons, to deliberate. 3 by reckoning up all the reasons, to gather or infer. 3A to consider, take into account, weigh, meditate on. 3B to suppose, deem, judge. 3C to determine, purpose, decide.** *Additional Information: This word deals with reality. If I “logizomai” or reckon that my bank book has \$25 in it, it has \$25 in it. Otherwise I am deceiving myself. This word refers to facts not suppositions.* ¹

Thoughts? Is imputed righteousness separated from an actual change in the person or are they inextricably connected? Listen to some quotations from one of the founders of our church and see how you hear the meaning of imputed righteousness:

Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul **may be kept free from sin**; for all heaven, with its limitless

v v: verb

TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

TDNTA Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume

GK Goodrick-Kohlenberger

AV Authorized Version

¹Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario : Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G3049

resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation. . . . In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. **Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.** He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. {God's Amazing Grace 181.4}

How do you hear this description of imputed righteousness? It is through imputed righteousness we are "made" righteous. Does being made righteous mean something different than being "declared" righteous, or being "accounted" righteous, or being "credited" with righteousness?

Metaphor in the Bible is leprosy – when did the High Priest declare someone clean, before or after they were made clean? Leprosy was a metaphor for sin – Christ cleansed the lepers and then told them to go to the priest to be "declared" clean.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. **By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.** The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. {God's Amazing Grace 96.4}

How is "imputed" being used in this statement? Does it sound like a mere legal accounting? Is it more than that?

We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the

provision of God. **We are to reflect the highest attributes of the character of God. . . . The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain through the imputed righteousness of Christ.** {OHC 364.2}

Is the imputed righteousness of Christ somehow connected to what we attain? Is attainment different than credits? What would it mean to aim to low? Would it mean we are aiming for legal pardon rather than character transformation?

He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might **counteract evil, remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness.**
TMK 206

Where does it sound like Christ's righteousness is being "imputed"? Into record books or into believers?

Is there a difference between legally accounting one righteous and actually transforming the believer into righteousness? Do you find EGW to be in harmony with the Biblical meaning of *logizomai*? Absolutely!

And for balance here is one use of "imparting" rather than "imputing":

The Lord Jesus loves His people, and when they put their trust in Him, depending wholly upon Him, He strengthens them. **He will live through them**, giving them the inspiration of His sanctifying Spirit, **imparting to the soul a vital transfusion of Himself. He acts through their faculties** and causes them to choose His will and to act out His character. With the apostle Paul they then may say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me:** and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). . . . {TMK 78.4}

So, how might we, with this understand read Romans 4:20-24?
Here is my paraphrase:

Yet, even though, from human understanding, the promise seemed hopeless, Abraham did not waver in his confidence in God, but praised God as he ²¹ realized God was able to miraculously fulfill the promise. ²² This unwavering trust in God, in the face of scientific evidence to the contrary, was recognized as righteousness because this trust replaced distrust and opened Abraham's mind to receive the endowment of a new heart, right motives, and Christlike principles established by God's recreative power. ²³ This record of his trust being "recognized as righteousness" is not written merely for Abraham, ²⁴ but for everyone who trusts in God. For everyone who trusts in God, who raised Jesus from the dead, is recognized as righteous because distrust in God is gone and through trust he receives the endowment of a perfect heart and new motives created within. Romans 4:20-24 My paraphrase

Imputed righteousness and justification by faith are two ways of saying the same thing. Where does the confusion about imputed righteousness being primarily a legal activity arise?

The danger has been presented to me again and again of entertaining, as a people, false ideas of justification by faith. I have been shown for years that Satan would work in a special manner to confuse the mind on this point. **The law of God** has been largely dwelt upon and has been presented to congregations, **almost as destitute of the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His relation to the law as was the offering of Cain.** I have been shown that **many have been kept from the faith because of the mixed, confused ideas of salvation,** because the ministers have worked in a wrong manner to reach hearts. The point that has been urged upon my mind for years **is the imputed righteousness of Christ.** I have wondered that this matter was not made the subject of discourses in our churches throughout the land, when the

matter has been kept so constantly urged upon me, and I have made it the subject of nearly every discourse and talk that I have given to the people. {Faith and Works 18.1}

What is she saying? That many ministers misrepresent this teaching by misrepresenting the law of God as destitute of Jesus Christ. Could she mean this teaching has become a legal process of making a payment which is what Cain was doing? Rather than being won to trust in Jesus who infuses the soul with His Spirit and actually transforms us?

SUNDAY

Question in middle, “If we cannot be justified by the law then how are we justified?”

Justification by faith is another way of saying imputed righteousness, so what does it mean to be justified? To be made just, or right, or to be put right or set right. Right in what way? Right with God. When mankind sinned what became “wrong” that needed to be “set right”?

Did mankind become changed, such that our character, hearts, minds were out of harmony with God?

the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. Romans 8:7,8

If this is the state of our mind, then what needs to be put right, or made right, or justified? Mankind!

Jesus did this in His own human brain. Jesus took our humanity upon Himself, developed perfect character and destroyed the infection of sin!

The **law requires righteousness**,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as

man, lived a holy life, **and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they **have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, Christ **imbues men with the attributes of God.** He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus **the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."** Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What is being described in this paragraph? First Jesus had to come to earth, take humanity upon Himself, develop a perfect character, (cure the sin condition in His own person). This is justification of the species known as human (In Jesus Christ humanity was set right with God). Then, after doing this he offers His perfect character as a free gift to all who trust Him. When we genuinely trust Him we as individuals are “justified” or “set right” with God, just as Abraham was.

Third question in the lesson, “What does that the righteousness...” thoughts?

- What law?
- Can and will the righteous, through God’s grace, experience death to self and love for God and others, such that they will be willing to give their lives for others?
 - Moses
 - Paul
 - Revelation 12:11

Second question, “Although we know God hates sin but loves sinners, what wrong conclusions must we avoid?”

- All will be saved (universalism)
- God will allow sinners to “get away” with unremedied sin
 - Why won’t, even though God loves the sinner, the wicked in the end “get away” with sin?
- “every sin must be punished”

- Where did this idea arise? What is the problem with this idea?
- God will inflict suffering and death to punish sinners

TUESDAY

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

Let's contrast that with the top of Wednesday's lesson, first paragraph, "Though we are covered..." thoughts?

How do you hear these two ideas? Are they in harmony? Do you hear tension? What idea do you hear being taught?

According to what we have already studied about the meaning of the word *logizomai* can you ever have someone "legally" declared righteous by God who is not being made righteous?

Some argue that when God speaks then it is, as when He speaks things into existence. Therefore, when God "declares" us righteous then we are righteous. If this is how it works then why doesn't God just simply declare Satan righteous? And while He is at it, why not declare all intelligent beings in the universe righteous?

Can righteousness be obtained by God "declaring" it?

What about the idea of being covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness? Here is a statement from one of our founders:

It is the righteousness of Christ that makes the penitent sinner acceptable to God and works his justification. However sinful has been his life, if he believes in Jesus as his personal Saviour, he **stands before God in the spotless robes of Christ's imputed righteousness.** {FW 106.1}

How do you understand this? From all that we have studied how would you explain this? What does it mean to stand before God in the spotless robes of Christ's imputed righteousness?

I have heard it taught that it means we are covered with Christ's perfect character, that the Father when He looks at us doesn't see the deformity of our sinful character but only that of His perfect Son and therefore the Father treats us with forgiveness and acceptance. Thoughts? How is it true? How is it untrue?

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. **Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us.** "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

Thoughts? Does this sound like a legal accounting or a transforming experience?

Wednesday's lesson asks "What might we be deceived about in regard to what it means to be righteous?"

Read last paragraph, "Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine." COL 312.

Thoughts?

Recently I had someone present this quotation to me and asked whether I believed it:

After the saints are changed to immortality and caught up together with Jesus, after they receive their harps, their robes, and their crowns, and enter the city, Jesus and the saints sit in judgment. The books are opened--the book of life and the book of death. The book of life contains the good deeds of the saints; and the book of death contains the evil deeds of the wicked. These books are compared with the statute book, the Bible, and according to that men are judged. EW 52

What do you think about that quote? Does the quotation from COL shed any light on what it means to be judged by the record of evil deeds recorded in the books of heaven? How would you explain it?

Are there books that are merely recording good and bad behaviors, deeds? Or are the deeds a reflection of the character and the character is being accurately recorded in heaven? And it is from our very character, either healed through God's grace that we are rewarded, or hardened through persistent sin that we are judged and condemned?

Angels of God are taking a **daguerreotype [photograph] of the character** just as accurately as the artist takes the likeness of the human features; and . . . **it is from this that we are to be judged!** {Mar 340.2}

When the Judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, there will be many astonishing disclosures. Men will not then appear as they appear to the human eyes and finite judgments. Secret sins will then be laid open to the view of all. **Motives and intentions which have been hidden in the dark chambers of the heart will be revealed.** {Mar 340.3}

All will appear as a real life-picture. {Mar 340.4}

In that solemn and awful hour the unfaithfulness of the husband will be opened to the wife, and the unfaithfulness of

the wife, to the husband. Parents will then learn, for the first time, what was the real character of their children, and children will see the errors and mistakes that marked the lives of their parents. The man who robbed his neighbor through false representations, is not to escape with his ill-gotten gains. God has an exact record in His books, of every unjust account and every unfair dealing. {Mar 340.5}

Memory will be true and vivid in condemnation of the guilty one, who in that day is found wanting. **The mind will recall all the thoughts and acts of the past; the whole life will come in review like the scenes in a panorama.** {Mar 340.6}

Every passing hour of the present is shaping our future life. **These moments spent in carelessness**, in self-pleasing, as if of no value, are **deciding our everlasting destinies**. The words we utter today will go on echoing when time shall be no more. **The deeds done today are transferred to the books of heaven, just as the features are transferred by the artist onto the polished plate. They will determine our destiny for eternity**, for bliss or eternal loss and agonizing remorse. **Character cannot be changed when Christ comes, nor just as a man is about to die. Character building must be done in this life.** We fear that repentance will come to the self-indulgent, tainted soul all too late. A few resolves, a few tears, will never reverse a guilty past life nor blot out of the books of heaven the transgressions, the willful, knowing sins of those who have had the precious light of truth, and can explain the Scriptures to others, while sin and iniquity are drunk up like stolen waters. As though written with an iron pen, they may be found lead in the rock forever. {TM 429.3}

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read the middle section, “The man who attempts...” thoughts? Well said, what lessons can we draw from this?

- God will not force or coerce people to obedience
- Love requires freedom
- Real obedience comes from intelligent understanding and cooperation
- Blind obedience isn't obedience

How are we won to loyalty? And loyalty to God is righteousness, in other words, when we are won to trust, when we genuinely trust God so that we are loyal to Him we are recognized as being righteous!

Read next paragraph, "And what better way..." thoughts?

The Cross is absolutely the best inspiration we can have. Would we agree that the most important event in the history of the universe is Cross (His life, death and resurrection)? Do you think Satan knows this? Do you think Satan has ignored this or has he attacked what Christ did at the Cross in order to get people to draw wrongs conclusions? Can you think of any?

For God so loved the world that He GAVE his only Son...

Again, what is the robe of His righteousness? How do we stand in this robe?

How was Christ our substitute?

Read last paragraph – well stated, love for God is to be our motivator. What do lies about God result in? Fear of Him, if we remain "afraid" of God will we "love" Him? "Perfect love casts out all fear." When we act out of fear who are we working for? When we act out of love who are we working for?

TUESDAY

Top asks us to summarize Romans 5:17-19 in our own word.

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's

abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. NIV

Here are those verses in my words:

If by the choice of one man's distrust, selfishness and death permeated all humanity, how much more will those who accept the remedy that Christ has achieved, experience restored trust and complete healing to live forever with God. ^{5:18} Therefore, just as Adam's distrust infected humanity with the fatal condition of fear and selfishness, so too Christ's choice to sacrifice self achieved the life-giving remedy for all mankind. ¹⁹ Just as Adam's choice infected the human race with a terminal condition, so too Christ's perfect life has brought the remedy to heal all who accept it. (Tim's Paraphrase)

FRIDAY

Read questions 1, 4, 5 and discuss.

Question 1 – explore not just human legalism such as a works salvation, but explore “heavenly legalism”, those concepts in which God is “legally” required to execute justice upon His Son in order to achieve legal pardon for sinners. What do you think about such concepts?

Lesson 12: The fruit of the Spirit is TRUTH



*Truth, holding a mirror and a serpent (1896).
Olin Levi Warner, Library of Congress
Thomas Jefferson Building, Washington, D.C.*

What is truth?? Does truth ever change [grow], or does our understanding of truth change, or both?? What should our acceptance of truth be based on?? Is something “true” because the majority believes it to be true??

The major theories of truth:

Correspondence theory -- For the truth to correspond it must first be proved by evidence or an individual's valid opinion, which have similar meaning or context.

Coherence theory -- For coherence theories in general, truth requires a proper fit of elements within a whole system.

Constructivist theory -- Constructivism views all of our knowledge as "constructed," because it does not reflect any external "transcendent" realities (as a pure correspondence theory might hold). Rather, perceptions of truth are viewed as contingent on convention, human perception, and social experience.

Consensus theory -- Consensus theory holds that truth is whatever is agreed upon, or in some versions, might come to be agreed upon, by some specified group.

Pragmatic theory -- The three most influential forms of the pragmatic theory of truth were introduced around the turn of the 20th century by Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. Although there are wide differences in viewpoint among these and other proponents of pragmatic theory, they hold in common that truth is verified and confirmed by the results of putting one's concepts into practice.

1. the true or actual state of a matter: He tried to find out the truth.
2. conformity with fact or reality; verity: the truth of a statement.
3. a verified or indisputable fact, proposition, principle, or the like: mathematical truths.
4. the state or character of being true.
5. actuality or actual existence.
6. an obvious or accepted fact; truism; platitude.
7. honesty; integrity; truthfulness.

8. (often initial capital letter) ideal or fundamental reality apart from and transcending perceived experience: the basic truths of life.
9. agreement with a standard or original.
10. accuracy, as of position or adjustment.
11. Archaic. fidelity or constancy.

—Idiom

12. in truth, in reality; in fact; actually: In truth, moral decay hastened the decline of the Roman Empire. [ref: dictionary.com](http://ref:dictionary.com)

Those who are under the influence of the Spirit of God will not be fanatical, but calm and steadfast, free from extravagance in thought, word, or deed. Amid the confusion of delusive doctrines, the Spirit of God will be a guide and a shield to those who have not resisted the evidences of **truth**. FLB 56.5 (The Faith I Live By).

“I have yet many things to say unto you,” He continued, “but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the **Spirit of truth**, is come, He will guide you into all **truth**: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.” Jesus had opened before His disciples a vast tract of **truth**. But it was most difficult for them to keep His lessons distinct from the traditions and maxims of the scribes and Pharisees. They had been educated to accept the teaching of the rabbis as the voice of God, and it still held a power over their minds, and molded their sentiments. Earthly ideas, temporal things, still had a large place in their thoughts. They did not understand the spiritual nature of Christ’s kingdom, though He had so often explained it to them. Their minds had become confused. They did not comprehend the value of the scriptures Christ presented. Many of His lessons seemed almost lost upon them. Jesus saw that they did not lay hold of the real meaning of His words. He compassionately promised that the Holy Spirit should recall these sayings to their minds. And He had left unsaid many things that could not be comprehended by the disciples. These also would be opened to them by the Spirit. The Spirit was to quicken their understanding, that they might have an appreciation of heavenly things. “When He, the **Spirit of truth**, is come,” said Jesus, “He will guide you into all **truth**.” DA 670.3 (The Desire of Ages)

The Comforter is called “the **Spirit of truth**.” His work is to define and maintain the **truth**. He first dwells in the heart as the **Spirit of truth**, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the **truth**, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses **truth** upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the **Spirit of truth**, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. DA 671.1

True sanctification is a Bible doctrine. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Thessalonian church, declares: “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” And he prays: “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly” (1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:23). The Bible clearly teaches what sanctification is and how it is to be attained. The Saviour prayed for His disciples: “Sanctify them through thy **truth**: thy word is **truth**” (John 17:17, 19). And Paul teaches that believers are to be “sanctified by the Holy Ghost” (Romans 15:16). What is the work of the Holy Spirit? Jesus told His disciples: “When he, the **Spirit of truth**, is come, he will guide you into all **truth**” (John 16:13). And the psalmist says: “Thy law is the **truth**.” By the Word and the Spirit of God are opened to men the great principles of righteousness embodied in His law. And since the law of God is “holy, and just, and good,” a

transcript of the divine perfection, it follows that a character formed by obedience to that law will be holy. Christ is a perfect example of such a character. He says: "I have kept my Father's commandments." "I do always those things that please him" (John 15:10; 8:29). The followers of Christ are to become like Him—by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification. Mar 231.3 (Maranatha)

God intends that, even in this life, truth shall be ever unfolding to His people. There is only one way in which this knowledge can be obtained. We can attain to an understanding of God's word only through the illumination of that Spirit by which the word was given. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God;" "for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." And the Saviour's promise to His followers was: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.... For He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." 5T 703.2 (Testimonies for the Church Volume Five)

Multitude[s] have a wrong conception of God and his attributes, and are as truly serving a false God as were the worshipers of Baal. Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and his truth. Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human.

The prevailing spirit of our time is one of infidelity and apostasy—a spirit of avowed illumination because of a knowledge of truth, but in reality of the blindest presumption. Human theories are exalted and placed where God and his law should be. Satan tempts men and women to disobey, with the promise that in disobedience they will find liberty and freedom that will make them as gods. There is seen a spirit of opposition to the plain word of God, of idolatrous exaltation of human wisdom above divine revelation. Men have allowed their minds to become so darkened and confused by conformity to worldly customs and influences that they seem to have lost all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error. So far have they departed from the right way that they hold the opinions of a few philosophers, so-called, to be more trustworthy than the truths of the Bible. The entreaties and promises of God's word, its threatenings against disobedience and idolatry—these seem powerless to melt their hearts. A faith such as actuated Paul, Peter, and John they regard as old-fashioned, mystical, and unworthy of the intelligence of modern thinkers. In the beginning, God gave his law to mankind as a means of attaining happiness and eternal life. Satan's only hope of thwarting the purpose of God is to lead men and women to disobey this law, and his constant effort has been to misrepresent its teachings and belittle its importance. His master stroke has been an attempt to change the law itself, so as to lead men to violate its precepts while professing to obey it. PK 177-8.

The Fruit of the Spirit Lesson 13 1Q 2010

The Fruit of the Spirit: The Essence of Christian Character

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “When Moses...” thoughts?

What do you understand God’s glory to be? (Other Evidence – first and second temple).

Read memory verse Col 1:27: thoughts?

What is the mystery?

Let’s read some more texts and see what we can learn:

Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to **the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past**,²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. Romans 16:25-27

What new insights or questions come to mind? Why was the mystery hidden? From whom was the mystery hidden? How? “Long ages” refers to what? And what is now revealed?

² Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you,³ that is, **the mystery** made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight **into the mystery of Christ**,⁵ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets.⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this **mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God**, who created all things. ¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God **should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms**, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose which **he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord**. Col 3:2-11.

What is the mystery? Why was it to be revealed to the rulers in heavenly realms? Could this mystery be hidden so far in the past that even heavenly beings didn't know? Is the mystery somehow connected to the wisdom of God? Was the wisdom of God hidden? How?

How has the wisdom of God been revealed? Is the mystery of the Gentiles being heirs with the Jews a new mystery or part of the same mystery? How is this mysterious wisdom related to the Gentiles being brought in to the promise?

What is the mystery?

And he made known to us the **mystery of his will** according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—**to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head**, even Christ. Eph 1:9,10

The mystery of his will to unify all things – is there a thread running through all aspects of this mystery?

the **mystery that has been kept hidden for ages** and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. ²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of **this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory**. Col 1:26,27

My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and **united in love**, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may **know the mystery of God, namely, Christ**,³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col 2:2-3

What is the mystery? What do you hear?

- Christ
- Gentiles heirs along with Jews
- Unity of all things
- Christ living in the believer or believer renewed to be like Christ
- A truth that was mysterious but which Christ revealed and through the church is revealed to the universe

What is the mystery?

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—³⁰ for we are members of his body.³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”³² This is a profound **mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.**³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Eph 5:25-33

Does this give further insight into the mystery – what is the mystery? What is being described? Is it selfless love to heal, protect and build up?

Is the mystery the mystery about the character of God – His love, His law of love?

How has it been hidden? Was God's character of love, the mystery of selflessness hidden by God or by Satan's lies about God? How is it revealed? It is through Christ that God's love is manifest – not just in revelation of God, but it's power – it's life giving, healing, restorative power?

What is the impact of this mystery being revealed? The law of Lord is perfect reviving the soul!

Listen, I tell you a **mystery**: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— ⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

What is the mystery? Why is it a mystery that we will not all sleep? Is this a different mystery that Christ in you? Is this a different mystery that unification under one head? Is this a different mystery than two becoming one flesh, unity of Christ and His bride? No, it is the same – for what is the basis of life?

John 17:3 life eternal is knowing God – God is love, the law of love is the law of life, the new covenant is God writing His law in our hearts and minds, partaking of the divine nature, in other words Christ in you. Thus, death comes from not knowing God, from not living love, from being selfish, from separation from God. The mystery is the mystery of God's character of love, broken in mankind when Adam sinned, hidden away from our eyes by Satan's lies and revealed by and restored into humanity by Christ and for which we can all again partake. When will all of this happen?

But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, **the mystery of God will be accomplished**, just as he announced to his servants the prophets." Revelation 10:7

What is the mystery of God? The restoration of His law of love into His people, not on an individual basis only, but so that the Bride, the Church is ready to meet Jesus. (AKA cleansing of the sanctuary).

When we seek for appropriate language in which to describe **the love of God**, we find words too tame, too weak, too far beneath the theme, and we lay down our pen and say, "**No, it cannot be described.**" We can only do as did the beloved disciple, and say, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." [1 JOHN 3:1.] In attempting any description of this love, we feel that we are as infants lisping their first words. Silently we may adore; for silence in this matter is the only eloquence. **This love is past all language to describe. It is the mystery of God in the flesh, God in Christ, and divinity in humanity. Christ bowed down** in unparalleled humility, that in his exaltation to the throne of God, **he might also exalt those who believe in him**, to a seat with him upon his throne. **All who look upon Jesus in faith that the wounds and bruises that sin has made will be healed in him, shall be made whole.** {CE 77.1}

What is the mystery of God? His character of love, which God originally designed mankind to possess, yet this love was hidden by Satanic lies, replaced in the heart of man by Satan's law of selfishness, but Christ came to reveal God's love and replace it back into mankind again!

Christ came to our world to become our sacrifice. He came to discover to our eyes the gems of truth, to place them in a new setting,--the frame-work of truth. He brought out of the treasure-house of God things **new and old**, that we might be able to trace down the links in the great plan of salvation. Through the sacrificial offerings of the Jewish dispensation, we

are pointed forward to Christ, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. When Christ came, **it was to engage in the conflict with the enemy of God and man, on this earth, in the sight of the universe of heaven.** But why was it necessary to wage the warfare in the sight of other worlds?--It was because Satan had been an exalted angel, and when he fell, he induced many angels to join him in his revolt against God's government. **He worked in the minds of the angels as he works in the minds of men today.** He made a pretension of loyalty to God, and yet he argued that angels should not be under law. He inculcated his ideas, his rebellion and enmity, and hatred of God's law originated in the minds of the angels in heaven through his influence. He caused the fall of man through the same temptations with which he had caused the fall of angels; and in the world where he proposed to work out his principles of rebellion, the battle had to be fought, **that all might behold the real nature and results of disobedience to God's great moral standard. He represented God in a false light, clothing him with his own attributes. Christ came to represent the Father in his true character. He showed that he was not an arbitrary judge, ready to bring judgments upon men, and delighting in condemning and punishing them for their evil deeds.** The Lord proclaimed his character to Moses in the mount. "And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, 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." {ST, November 18, 1889 par. 6}

What is this mystery of which Paul writes to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, saying that it was given to him to fulfil the word of God, the mystery "which hath been hid from ages and from generations?" One translation reads, "which hath been kept in silence through eternal ages." {ST, March 25, 1897 par. 2}

Many have endeavored to define **the mystery** which Paul here mentions. **But it embraces much, and our ideas in regard to the love, the goodness, and the compassion of God are strangely limited.** Because our knowledge of spiritual things has become so dwarfed and enfeebled, we have not advanced from light to greater light. **The Lord has not been able to open to our understanding many precious things.** In view of the losses which we have sustained by our earthliness and commonness, we have much to make us humble. {ST, March 25, 1897 par. 3}

God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make his purposes to fit circumstances, but he allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but he knew that such a condition would exist. **The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven,--this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages.** And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity. {ST, March 25, 1897 par. 4}

Thoughts? Is not the mystery a mystery about God, a being who could love His creatures so much that He would become one of them and give His life to save them from eternal death?

SUNDAY

Middle text, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you." Matt 6:33.

What is the kingdom of God that we are to seek? Does it mean seek for eternal life, to have sins pardoned, to get our record book erased, to get our payment made? As the lesson points out too often our prayers are about us, what we want or desire, rather than what we need to become.

Is the kingdom of God the kingdom of love and seeking it would mean seeking to be like God in heart?

What would God's kingdom look like in our lives today? How would we treat each other? When you hear of a member who has stumbled how would you respond, if you are a member of God's kingdom?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? What do you think about requests like this?

MONDAY

Other fruits of the Spirit include:

- Godliness
- Virtue
- Hope
- Knowledge
- Discernment

Thoughts about these gifts? How do we experience these fruits? Are they miraculous gifts bestowed without any effort on our part or are they gifts which require our effort in cooperation with divinity? Do we have to practice these gifts? Do we have to study? Do we have to choose to hope? Do we have to practice thinking and giving and godliness?

TUESDAY

Read last two paragraphs, “At the same time...” thoughts? Where does our salvation lie? What do you understand Jesus accomplished on the cross for you?

Read green section – thoughts? How is this true? How is it not true?

WEDNESDAY

Read top dark section – thoughts?

What does it mean to love the world? Flowers, animals, sunsets, mountain views, artwork, music? Or is it the methods and

principles of the world it is speaking of, loving self, promoting self, enjoying taking advantage, getting pleasure out of exploiting or hurting others, liking the power and control over others?

Read second paragraph, “While we...” thoughts? How is our church in danger of this? Did the Jewish nation in Christ’s day fall into this trap? Is our church vulnerable? How?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? How can we increase or encourage the work of the Holy Spirit in healing us?

The lesson suggests:

- Bible study
- Prayer
- Right thinking
- Christian witness

Thoughts about these? Did those who put Christ on the cross concern themselves with 3 of the 4, study of scripture, prayer and how they appeared or witnessed to others?

What about right thinking? The battle is for the mind when the mind and heart are right the behaviors are right. This is what true righteousness is about, a change in the inner man, not a mere behavior change.

What else can we do to help the Holy Spirit heal us?

- Problem solve, weigh out the issues, discuss together as we are here
- Minister to others
- Discipline self (diet, exercise, what we watch and read)
- Choose healthy friends and associates

Bottom green section states, “The fruit of the Spirit isn’t going to happen on its own. Your own choices will determine your destiny.”

Well said, this is absolutely true – then why do we teach God decides our destiny in the judgment?

FRIDAY

Questions 1-4 read and discuss

Health and Healing Lesson 1 2Q 2010

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

This quarter we are going to study about healthful living – why is this important? Can we eat our way into heaven? Can we eat our way out of heaven?

What is the primary purpose of healthful living on earth today? Is it to live 10 or 20 years longer in sin? Is it because every organ system of the body has as its primary purpose to serve the brain, and if the organs are diseased the brain is less efficient? And if the brain is less efficient then our ability to commune with God is impaired, our ability to grow, develop, achieve, and minister is impaired. And if our body is diseased we have less freedom to carry out God's purposes for our lives?

Is there some aspect of character development that is connected to healthful living? Does it require some aspect of self-control to live healthy lives, does this self-discipline help us in other areas of living?

Read top paragraph in the introduction page 3, "Of course it makes perfect sense..." – thoughts?

Have you considered the idea that Adam and Eve were physical, fleshly, beings with bone, muscle, tendons, neurons, brains, chromosomes and genes before they sinned?

What does this mean? God created Adam and Eve as physical beings with the ability to create beings in their image – what would that entail?

Did Adam and Eve have the ability to grow, develop, adapt and change themselves based on the choices they made? If they were to make choices to change themselves and then had children would that change be passed along to their children? How? Genetically?

When Adam and Eve sinned did they change themselves? Did they change in character? In heart motive? Did they change genetically? Did their physical bodies change?

What does it mean that God would not allow them to have access to the tree of life lest there be an immortal sinner? Does this mean they couldn't die from any cause?

- Would access to the tree of life have prevented Cain from smashing Abel's head with a rock?
- Would access to the tree of life prevent decapitation?
- Would access to the tree of life change the laws of physics on planet earth and a nuclear explosion such as Hiroshima would have no effect?
- Or would access to the tree of life merely prevent natural aging?

- God said to them "in the day you eat of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, dying you will die."
 - What does that sound like?
 - You will slowly die, you will decay away unto death, you will deteriorate until you die, you will age and die?
 - The tree of life would prevent physical aging, nothing more.
 - And in a world filled with self-centered sinners what would have happened if God had left the tree of life on earth? Would everyone have access at any time? Or would the greatest wars have been fought over it?

Recently a new theory has begun to circulate that the tree of knowledge contained a biotoxin which infected Adam and Eve with alien, viral, DNA and caused genetic changes and this is what brought death from sin, and salvation is a matter of fixing our DNA. In other words, some are arguing that the sin problem is primarily a physical problem from actual biotoxin rather than change in heart, mind, motive, and therefore Christ came to fix our DNA, not our characters. Thoughts?

What are the problems with such a theory?

- It removes the character of God from the center and diverts the mind to other themes
- Warfare between Christ and Satan is no longer a battle over truth and love versus lies and selfishness for the hearts/minds of intelligent creatures, but is a physical war with bioweapons
 - If this is true how weak does such a theory make God?
- It obstructs the truth about the law of love
- It fails to recognize God's design in creation, that our choices and thinking actually changes our biology, including gene expression
- It fails to recognize the consequence to our biology of sin since the fall (eating meat, loss of solar protection at the flood, ingestion of toxins, etc.)
- It fails to recognize the meaning of "dominion" given to Adam and surrendered to Satan at the fall.
- It makes the plan of salvation not about the character and heart and motives but about the biology
- It undermines Christ's accomplishment at the Cross

If the sin problem is primarily a physical problem, a biological infection of our DNA then why did Adam and Eve have to choose to partake the Tree? Why couldn't Satan just launch a bio weapon?

When we consider the plan of salvation what is God trying to heal or fix in us? What can we experience now? Can we experience a new heart and right spirit, a change in motive, freedom from fear and selfishness and live a life of love? Do we get new bodies now? Will we one day get new bodies?

Is it difficult for the creator God to fix biological defects? Did Christ do this constantly on earth? Did Christ when healing the lepers, the blind, the deaf, the lame make biological fixes including changes in DNA? Yes, did this fix the sin problem? No! Don't get caught up in this distraction, keep your mind fixed on Christ!

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs, “As the Hubble...” thoughts What does it mean? Does it mean we cannot know anything about God or that there will always be more to learn?

John 17:3 - life eternal is to know God, then what is the point the lesson is trying to make? That we couldn't go find God other than God has chosen to reveal Himself to us?

Given that God has chosen to reveal Himself can we find Him?
What about Jeremiah 29:13:

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Can we find God?

Read last paragraph, “As if all...” thoughts? Is there a difference from bearing our humanity and bearing our sins? Or is our humanity infected with sinfulness and when Christ chose to bear our humanity He took our sinfulness upon Himself and this is what the scripture means by Christ bearing our sins or becoming sin for us?

Ray van den Hoven, one of our online class members, emailed me this quotation what do you think?

And in order to elevate fallen man, Christ must reach him where he was. He **took human nature, and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He, who knew no sin, became sin for us.** He humiliated Himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might be qualified to reach man, and bring him up from the degradation in which sin had plunged him (RH July 28, 1874). {5BC 1081.7}

Here is another similar quotation:

What a contrast the second Adam presented as He entered the gloomy wilderness to cope with Satan single-handed. Since the fall, the race had been decreasing in size and physical strength, and **sinking lower in the scale of moral worth, up to the period of Christ's advent to the earth.** In order to elevate fallen man, Christ must reach him where he was. **He took human nature, and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He who knew no sin became sin for us.** He humiliated Himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might be qualified to reach man and bring him up from the degradation in which sin had plunged him. {Con 32.3}

Thoughts? Does it sound like taking our fallen humanity is synonymous with becoming sin for us? Does it make more sense than some idea of transfer of behaviors? Can behavior be transferred?

Ray noticed how the New Testament writers interpreted Isaiah 53:

Isa 53:4: **Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases;** yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. (RSV)

Matt 8:16-17:

That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. **This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."** (RSV)

How does Matthew apply Isaiah's prophecy about Christ carrying our sorrows and griefs? Does Matthew apply it as Jesus paying a legal penalty, or Jesus healing us and actually taking away our infirmities and diseases, ultimately taking away our sinfulness through His victorious death?

Yet, notice Isaiah's prophecy, we would misunderstand and consider it was God who struck Him and killed Him – have we done this?

Isa 53:5: But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, and **by His scourging we are healed.** (NAS)

1 Pet 2:24-25: and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, **that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.**
25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. (NAS)

How does Peter interpret Isaiah? That He bore our sin (or sinfulness) in His body, what does that mean? Could it mean that He took our sinful condition upon Himself, He took our humanity, our fallen nature? And for what purpose? So “that we might die to sin and live to righteousness!” Notice, it wasn't for legal payment or appeasement of God, but for actual transformation of humanity from sinful to righteous through Jesus!

Thoughts?

SUNDAY

Read top paragraph – thoughts? What is the gospel?

Jim Norton, one of our online class members, emailed me this week commenting on last class, but his comments fit here. This is what he said:

When I am in dialog with others, I often mention that three key terms in Christianity are corrupted.....>>> gospel, grace, and salvation.

I was listening to SSL #13 where you were presenting a competent segmented study of the word "mystery" and moving on to "gospel"...

I heard the definition of the gospel being >> "GOD is love" come from the audience. (after you mentioned that the gospel was **eternal**) I will not challenge that input at face value, yet because of NEH 8:8 and 1 Cor 14:3 the definition begs elaboration.

When I look in the bible and SOP for clues as to the definition of gospel, I take note of the equivalent word>>> "is".

One in the bible is ROM 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the **gospel** of Christ: for it **is** the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

“The gospel **is** the **good news of grace**, or favour, by which man may be released from the condemnation of sin, and enabled to render acceptable obedience to the law.” BEcho 1894

“We should lay hold on His promise, and pray for the manifestation of His power. The very essence of **the gospel is restoration**, and the Saviour would have us bid the sick, the hopeless, and the afflicted take hold upon His strength.” DA 824

What led me to do more searching years ago was the erroneous emphasis on static/positional doctrine to the diminution of dynamic/ experiential/sanctifying truth.

Thoughts? I like the idea of the gospel being dynamic, experiential, sanctifying – don't you? What about it being eternal?

Revelation 14:6

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the **eternal gospel** to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people.

Is the gospel eternal? Does eternal mean only future or does it mean always was and always will be? In other words is the gospel true in eternity past as well as eternity future?

What is the good news, the gospel? Is it restoration? How is restoration eternal? Was the death of Christ needed through all eternity past?

Is the good news that we can live forever with God? Would that be good news if God is the kind of being Satan alleges?

Is the good news the good news about God Himself, and life eternal is knowing God John 17:3? If life eternal is knowing God, then would returning to a genuine unity with God be restorative? Would such a intimate knowledge of God result in healing?

Many who claim to believe and to teach the gospel are in a similar error. They set aside the Old Testament Scriptures, of which Christ declared, "They are they which testify of Me." John 5:39. In rejecting the Old, they virtually reject the New; for both are parts of an inseparable whole. **No man can rightly present the law of God without the gospel, or the gospel without the law. The law is the gospel embodied, and the gospel is the law unfolded.** The law is the root, the gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears. {COL 128.2}

Thoughts? How do you see the law and the gospel connected? What law? The royal law of scripture, the law of love which originates in the heart of God – thus the gospel is the truth about God which has always been He is love and always will be He is love!

- The first words of the Conflict of the Ages Series:
 - "God is love." 1 John 4:16. **His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be.** PP 33
- The last words of the Conflict of the Ages Series:
 - From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that **God is love.** {GC 678.3}

Isn't this the eternal good news? And does this good news have power, power to heal, change, transform? Is it dynamic?

Bottom pink section says, "To love unconditionally is alien to the human heart." Was it always alien? How did it become alien? What is the consequence to love being alien? What took love's place in the human heart? And what happened? What is the only solution?

One of the definitions of the gospel was good news of grace – let's turn to Monday's lesson to explore that idea.

MONDAY

What is grace? The lesson suggests the definition as "unmerited favor." How do you like that definition? Would grace included unmerited favor? But is that definition a complete definition? If we leave it at that does it cause some narrowing of our understanding?

Would Jesus merit God's grace or would God's grace to Jesus be unmerited?

Luke 2:52: And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

The Greek work translated "favor" is charis, which is the same word translated 130 times as "grace." Did Jesus not deserve God's favor? Can grace be merited?

5485 χάρις [*charis* /*khar·e·ce*/] n f. From 5463; TDNT 9:372; TDNTA 1298; GK 5921; 156 occurrences; AV translates as “grace” 130 times, “favour” six times, “thanks” four times, “thank” four times, “thank + 2192” three times, “pleasure” twice, and translated miscellaneously seven times. **1** grace. **1A** **that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech.** **2** good will, loving-kindness, favour. **2A** **of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues.** **3** what is due to grace. **3A** the spiritual condition of one governed by the power of divine grace. **3B** the token or proof of grace, benefit. **3B1** a gift of grace. **3B2** benefit, bounty. **4** thanks, (for benefits, services, favours), recompense, reward.

Does grace describe the party receiving it or the one rendering it? Can you have grace without a gracious being? Could we say God’s grace is God’s work for His creation, His work to sustain those in loyalty and His work to redeem those in rebellion? In other words, grace is love in action, God acting?

Then do we find that the gospel, or good news, is here again the good news about God which has always been true and which will always be true?

Read last paragraph, “Sometimes though...” and then read bottom pink section. Thoughts?

What about Adam, as God created him, what had Adam done to deserve eternal life? What about Gabriel? What about the beings in other worlds? What makes them worthy of eternal life? Upon what is eternal life based? Is eternal life for any creature based on

n n: noun or neuter

f f: feminine

TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

TDNTA Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume

GK Goodrick-Kohlenberger

AV Authorized Version

something the creature earned or did? Do any of God's creatures earn eternal life?

John 17:3 "this is life eternal that they might know you..." When did any of us choose to be separate from God, to be sinners? Does God blame us for the condition into which we were born?

What makes us worthy of eternal life? Would it be that we are God's creation and He created us to live eternally in union with Him? Yet, God's purposes were interrupted by an enemy who caused Adam and Eve to break trust with God, to believe lies and no longer "know" God.

For God so loved the world He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but live eternally! What does this say? Why do we merit or deserve eternal life? Because God loves us! Because of who we are, God's children, the object of His love! Therefore, He sent Jesus to accomplish God's purpose in healing us, restoring us, bringing us back from death to life eternal!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Think of the incredible..." thoughts? Well said!

Read next paragraph, "Indeed, if the most important...." Thoughts?

How would you describe love? Certainly, love is relational, but is that enough? Should love have a qualitative aspect?

I have many patients who are in relationship, domineering, controlling, abusive, dependent, some even call this love, but would the relationship be "love"? Is "relationship" enough to define love?

How would you define it? Is it a principle? And what is that principle? And how does that principle impact relationship?

WEDNESDAY

Middle of the lesson asks, “Whatever your struggles right now, what are things that you have to praise God for?”

Let’s take a moment and answer that question, what do you have to praise God for?

THURSDAY

Read top Bible verse, “I beseech...” thoughts? What do you think Paul means by reasonable service?

Read last paragraph, “Scientists...” Is it reasonable to avoid toxins, to make choices that bring health and avoid disease, pain, suffering? Is this part of worship?

FRIDAY

Questions 1 and 2 read and answer

Health and Healing Lesson 2 2Q 2010

The Power of Choice

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, "One thing, though,..." thoughts?

Why is the freedom of choice critical? What would be lost if we didn't have choice?

The dark section asks us to read Genesis 2:16,17:

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

And then read next paragraph, "In Genesis 3:1-6..." thoughts?

What is God telling them? Why is the tree there? What purpose was there in putting the tree there?

Was it to tempt them? Have you ever heard it was there as a test of their obedience?

"Your eyes shall be opened," the enemy had said; "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:5. Their eyes were indeed opened; but how sad the opening! The knowledge of evil, the curse of sin, was all that the transgressors gained. **There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in yielding to appetite. It was distrust of God's goodness, disbelief of His word, and rejection of His authority, that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil. It was this that opened the door to every species of falsehood and error.** {Ed 25.2}

There was nothing poisonous in the fruit of the tree of knowledge itself, nothing that would cause death in partaking of it. The tree had been placed in the garden to test their loyalty to God.--ST Feb. 13, 1896. {Truth about Angels 56.2}

Remember last week our discussion of the “genomic” theory, this author shoots that theory down. I agree with the quote above.

Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. . . . They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, **their loyalty must be tested**. At the very beginning of man's existence a check was placed upon the desire for self-indulgence, the fatal passion that lay at the foundation of Satan's fall. **The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden, was to be a test of the obedience, faith, and love** of our first parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. **They were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan;** but if they endured the trial, they would finally be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favor with God. . . . {CC 13.2}

Is this true? How do we reconcile this with James 1:13:

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

If God doesn't tempt anyone then how do we make sense of the purpose of the tree?

One purpose, pointed out by some, was to protect them from Satanic assault, as long as they stayed loyal Satan could only access them at the tree. He could not follow them all over the Garden.

But is that the most important reason? What happens when we make choices? Are we changed by the choices we make? Would it be important for Adam and Eve to exercise their own minds to think through the temptations of Satan and choose to say no?

Parents think of your children, is there a difference in preventing your children from being in a situation in which they could be tempted and therefore you keep your child from choosing to sin, and your child being faced with the temptation and your child choosing to say no?

The very next paragraph from the quote above states:

God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automation. **Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. . . .** It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. {CC 13.3}

God wanted mankind to grow and advance and it is only by the exercise of their own power of choice that could develop. Therefore the tree was not placed there to trip them up, but as the most simple opportunity for them to exercise their own individuality and say no and thus solidify their own characters in righteousness! In other words, the tree was for their blessing.

Let's talk a little brain science. Your brain, both white cells and neurons, make proteins called Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor BDNF. This protein, and others like it, are like fertilizer for your neurons. But BDNF doesn't come off the DNA as BDNF it comes off as a precursor protein called pro-BDNF. While BDNF is like fertilizer to the neurons, pro-BDNF is like weed killer. What determines whether a neural circuit gets BDNF or pro-BDNF is the presence of an enzyme which will cleave pro-BDNF into BDNF. What determines whether that enzyme is present is the activity of the neural circuit

itself. If the circuit is active, the enzyme is produced and the circuit grows stronger, if it is dormant the enzyme is not produce the brain prunes back the neural connections.

Our choices, even in what we think, alter our brain development and gene expression.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The consequences...” Thoughts?

How do we affect our children?

- Interview with AH
- How we live our lives changes us, changes our genetics, our gene expression and we pass along our genetic expression to our children.
 - What the parents are, that to a great extent the children will be. The physical conditions of the parents, their dispositions and appetites, their mental and moral tendencies, are to a greater or less degree reproduced in their children.--MH 371 (1905). {1MCP 138.5}
 - The nobler the aims, the higher the mental and spiritual endowments, and the better developed the physical powers of the parents, the better will be the life equipment they give their children.... {1MCP 139.1}
 - Children born to mothers in the Netherlands during WWII when the average daily caloric intake was 500 calories per day, had their gene expression compared to their siblings from the same parents but who were born during times of normal food availability. Those who were born during the war had gene expression differences which increased their risk of obesity and metabolic illnesses.

You are what your grandmother ate

22:00 13 November 2006
NewScientist.com news service
Roxanne Khamsi

A mother's diet can change the behaviour of a specific gene for at least two subsequent generations, a new study demonstrates for the first time.

Feeding mice an enriched diet during pregnancy silenced a gene for light fur in their pups. And even though these pups ate a standard, un-enriched diet, the gene remained less active in their subsequent offspring.

The findings could help explain the curious results from recent studies of human populations – including one showing that the grandchildren of well-fed Swedes had a greater risk of diabetes.

The new mouse experiment lends support to the idea that we inherit not only our genes from our parents, but also a set of instructions that tell the genes when to become active. These instructions appear to be passed on through “epigenetic” changes to DNA – genes can be activated or silenced according to the chemical groups that are added onto them.

Gene silencer

David Martin at the Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute in California, US, and colleagues used a special strain of genetically identical mice with an overactive version of a gene that influences fur colour. Mice with the *AVY* version of this gene generally have golden fur.

Half of the mice were given a diet enriched with nutrients such as vitamin B12 and zinc. These nutrients are known to increase the availability of the “methyl” chemical groups that are responsible for silencing genes. The rest of the mice received a standard diet.

The pups of mice on the standard diet generally had golden fur. But a high proportion of those born to mice on the enriched diet had dark brown fur.

Martin believes that the nutrient-rich maternal diet caused silencing of the pups' *AVY* genes while they developed in the womb.

Passed down

Intriguingly, even though all of the pups in this generation received a standard diet, those that had exposure to a high-nutrient diet while in the womb, later gave birth to dark-coated offspring. Their control counterparts, by comparison, produced offspring with golden fur.

This shows that environmental factors – such as an enriched diet – can affect the activity of the *AVY* gene for at least two generations, the researchers say.

“The results make it clear that a nutritional status can affect not only that individual, but that individual's children as well,” says study member Kenneth Beckman.

Skin colour

Beckman notes that the *AVY* gene is linked to weight and diabetes risk. He adds that there is some evidence that a related gene in humans might affect skin colour – but it is unknown if it also affects weight.

Even though humans may have a similar gene, they should not make dietary changes based on the results of the mouse experiment, researchers stress. “It would be irresponsible to make any prescriptions about human behaviour based on these findings,” says Martin.

An earlier Swedish study which used historical data of harvests in Sweden, found that a youngster had a quadrupled risk of diabetes if their grandfather had good access to food during his own boyhood (see [Grandad's diet affects descendants' health](#)).

Journal reference: *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* (DOI: 10.1073/pnas.0607090103)

- Children who are abused have alteration in gene expression, particularly genes that code for stress response and cannot calm their amygdalas normally

Child Abuse Alters Brain Gene

By PSYCH CENTRAL NEWS EDITOR

Reviewed by John M. Grohol, Psy.D. on February 23, 2009

Childhood abuse can lead to lasting psychological problems in a person’s life, increasing the risk of depression and even suicide later in life. New research suggests that these problems may be traced back to a change in a brain gene as a direct result of the childhood abuse.

The study, led by researchers from McGill University, found that child abuse modifies a gene called NR3C1. This gene in the brain is one thought to affect a person’s ability to deal with stress.

The researchers studied the brains of 24 suicide victims, 12 who had suffered severe childhood abuse, which included physical abuse, neglect or sexual contact, and 12 who had not been abused.

Those who had been abused had lower levels of expression of the gene NR3C1, which is critical for the stress response pathway.

The changes observed in the gene suggests that the trauma associated with child abuse may permanently alter a person’s ability to deal with stress.

The researchers hypothesize that because of the changes in this gene’s expression, people might have trouble turning off their stress response. This could result in a person’s body being in a constant stressful state, leading to future problems with depression, anxiety and possibly even suicide. Further research is needed to confirm this finding.

This finding helps shed light on the gene/environmental interactions and could lead to a future procedure for identifying the gene change. It also suggests that a gene change brought about by environmental influences may also be potentially reversible.

The findings will be published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*.

Source: Nature Neuroscience

- Children of mothers who suffer from depression have higher rates of mental illnesses, if the mother's depression is untreated or fails to be treated to remission, however, if the mother's depression is treated to remission then the children don't experience the same increased risk of mental illness. And the faster the mother is treated to remission the better the children do.
- Animal studies show that pups whose mothers are attentive and lick them frequently have altered brain development such that they have calmer fear centers, less anxiety, socialize better, than pups who didn't get this grooming and attention from their mothers. But, when pups from mothers who were not attentive were reared by mothers who were attentive their brains developed the same as the offspring of the attentive mothers. This means that early childhood experiences changes neural development and gene expression.

Thoughts?

The lesson asks us to read DT 30, let's start with verse 11 and read through verse 19:

¹¹ Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. ¹² It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" ¹³ Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" ¹⁴ No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

¹⁵ See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. ¹⁶ For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, ¹⁸ I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

¹⁹ This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live

Thoughts? What do you hear being described? Is their fate in their hands? Will health and life be determined by what they choose? Is this true for us? Is it true only for our earthly existence or for our eternal existence? Then why do so many people teach that God judges us and determines our destiny if it is up to us to choose?

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Genesis 3:7-13:

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

¹¹ And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

¹² The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

The lesson asks to define, in one word, what they experienced – what would you say?

What emotion became the primary emotion in their hearts? Fear and selfishness, survival of the fittest? Do we experience the same thing today?

Read last paragraph, “Sure, we sometimes...” thoughts? What is the source of our greatest temptations? Is it not from within? From self?

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:13-15

Is it true we are all tempted from within? Is it true we should blame ourselves for this problem? No!

How many of you chose to be born a sinner? How many in this room had a choice to live a sin-free life? We were born in sin conceived in iniquity – it wasn’t our fault we were born this way and therefore we don’t need to blame ourselves for being sinners. But, if we reject free remedy, do we need to blame ourselves for that?

TUESDAY

Read top paragraph, “However much...” thoughts? What choice do we have? Why do we have choice? After Adam fell did Adam, still within himself retain the power to choose against Satan? Do we have the power to choose against our carnal nature by ourselves?

The Lord says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." **The enmity does not exist as a natural fact. As soon as Adam sinned, he was in harmony with the first great apostate, and at war with God; and if God had not interfered in man's behalf, Satan and man would have formed a confederacy against heaven,** and carried on united

opposition against the God of hosts. **There is no natural enmity between evil angels and evil men;** both are evil through transgression of the law of God, and evil will always league against good. Fallen men and fallen angels enter into a desperate companionship. {ST, July 11, 1895 par. 5}

Why do we have a choice at all? Because of God's grace, because of God's interference – what is another word for God's interference? Intercession, God intercedes with the powers of evil, with the process of sinfulness in order to bring cure and remedy and restore us to righteousness!

Read the next paragraph, “Polygamy...” thoughts?

- Did Abraham make the choice to take Hagar before or after God called him to follow Him?
- Before or after Abraham followed God by faith and was considered righteous?
- Did the sin in taking Hagar disqualify Abraham as God's friend?
- Do we have a record of God chastising Abraham for taking Hagar as his wife?
- We have a record of God informing him that the promised child wouldn't come through Hagar, but did Abraham get chastised or punished by God?
- Did it disqualify Abraham's salvation?
- How do we make sense of being in a saving relationship with God and choosing to sin?
- Does choosing to sin cancel our salvation?

Is the key to salvation perfect performance, or having a perfect heart attitude toward God and a longing for healing, a heart that when we do fall short is grieved, like Paul, “what a wretched man that I am who will save me from this body of death”?

Read last paragraph – thoughts?

The lesson makes an excellent point that God does not turn away from us, we turn away from Him. Like Adam and Eve we get deceived by our own feelings and false think no one, including God

could love us, and therefore, feel so bad about ourselves we won't allow God into our lives. We must recognize this lie and see the truth as revealed in Jesus, that God so loved us He sent His Son, that while we were sinners Christ died for us!

What about obedience? Does God want us to obey because He commands us? Is this God's desire?

One Sabbath Christie and I attended a church and as the pastor offered the opening pray he prayed:

“Dear God, we come here today not for the special music, not for the friends or fellowship, not even for the sermon, no, Lord, we come here today for one reason and one reason only, because you have commanded us to.”

Do you think this is God's ideal? Does God want us to come to church for such a reason?

- **The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey.** When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across **human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness,** the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}
- **A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel.** By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Though all have...." Thoughts?

Read second paragraph, "God knows..." thoughts? Does this help?

Read last paragraph, "According..." thoughts? Will God take control of our will, even if we ask?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, "God does not compel..." Does this sound like God takes control of the will? Why the weight of evidence?

Read Questions 1,3,4 and discuss

Health and Healing Lesson 3 2Q 2010

Celebrating Spiritual and Physical Fitness

SUNDAY

2 Tim 4:7 “I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

What does it mean to fight the good fight? What is the fight? What course? What does it mean to keep the faith?

The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness. {SC 43.3}

What does this mean? Do you agree? Is this the greatest battle fought? How have you experienced this fight?

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. James 1:13

Isn't this saying the same thing that we just read in Steps to Christ?

Have you found this to be true in your life?

If you are in high-school and hanging out with friends and they are all smoking and pressuring you to smoke too, where is your battle? Is it with your friends, or is with your own feelings of fear and insecurity, fear of rejection, fear of being laughed at?

What if someone insults you, calls you names – who will your battle be against? Won't it be against your own feelings of anger?

What if you are out a your date tries to take the relationship too far, and you fear rejection, and want him to like you, who is your battle against?

What if your child says this, “I thought you loved me, but every time I want to do something fun you say no. you don’t love me!” Where is your battle? Is it with your child? Or is it with your own feelings that such comments arouse?

Read last two paragraphs, “From merely....” Thoughts?

Last week we talked about BDNF and how the neural circuits we exercise grow stronger and the one’s we leave dormant grow weaker.

We have neural circuits that correspond to love, compassion, empathy, sympathy, the ability to care for another. This is primarily in the Anterior Cingulate Cortex. We also have a more primitive emotional center in which we experience fear, anger, irritability, anxiety, and other selfish impulses.

Are there specific behaviors we can engage in which will help our love circuits and calm our fear circuits and conversely are there specific behaviors which will stimulate our fear circuits and damage our love circuits?

- Love awakens love – when we experience someone genuinely loving us we have our love circuits awakened. And when we genuinely love another person, giving self to help another we have our love circuits exercised and they grow stronger.
 - But if we come from experiences in which we were betrayed, in which we trusted and were taken advantages of, then when someone loves us it could incite feelings of fear, fear of getting too close and becoming vulnerable to hurt again.
- Theatrical television watching activates the emotional centers while turning off the reasoning centers – this causes vicarious emotional stress. During high stress movies or TV the brain will stimulate the release of stress hormones like it would if you were going through the event.

- Altruism results in the activation of the love pathways and the calming of the fear circuits, has a positive effect on the immune system and results in better health
- Worshipping a God of love activates the love centers, brain scans document growth in the ACC of the brain when meditating on a God of love, conversely any other god-concept, angry, wrathful etc grows the fear circuits and not the love circuits.

MONDAY

The lesson asks, “how do we maintain and build up the faith we have been given as a gift?” Thoughts?

What is faith? Greek *pistis* is translated as “faith” “trust” “belief”. What causes you to have more trust? Where does trust originate? What causes you to “believe” something or in something?

- **Romans 10:17**. "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ." (*NRSV*)
- **1 Thessalonians 5:21**. "Test everything. Hold on to the good." (*NIV*)
- **Proverbs 14:15** "A simple man believes every word he hears; a clever man understands the need for proof." (*NEB*)

What do these texts mean? Upon what should we base our faith or beliefs? Should it be evidence?

"God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His Word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth, will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith." *Steps to Christ* 105 (1892); *9MR* 202; compare *Education* 169

Does it matter in what we place our faith? Where does sincerity come in? What if a person sincerely believes the wrong thing?

Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. Sincerity will never save a soul from the consequences of believing an error. Without sincerity there is no true religion, but sincerity in a false religion will never save a man. I may be perfectly sincere in following a wrong road, but that will not make it the right road, or bring me to the place I wished to reach. The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the divine credentials, which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action." Letter 12, 1890; *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 56

How do we get more faith?

First step in faith or trust is to be presented with enough evidence of trustworthiness that we are willing to extend trust or faith on some degree.

You meet someone and they ask you out, but they are a complete stranger so you instead of going out spend some time talking with them. The conversation allows for some exploration of them, their attitudes, behaviors, ideas. With this information you decide to trust enough to meet them at a public place. How they behave will cause greater or lesser trust over time and as trust builds you extend more trust.

How does this work with God? Does God expect us to blindly trust Him? Has He provided us evidence of His trustworthiness, goodness and love?

Once we have come to understand enough evidence that God is trustworthy then we must choose to begin exercising trust in God. Putting the outcome of our lives and situations into His hands. This is where trials come in and why God allows them, when we trust Him and we face a trial and He delivers us then our confidence or trust in Him grows stronger.

Read second to last paragraph, "So it is..." thoughts? What do you think of the idea of "taking chances"? Is faith taking chances?

Might it feel like taking a chance? Is it taking a chance? What is the difference between presumption and faith?

Is presumption believing without seeing or is that faith?

- There are many who fail to distinguish between the rashness of presumption and the intelligent confidence of faith. . . . God has given man precious promises upon conditions of faith and obedience; but they are not to sustain him in any rash act. If men needlessly place themselves in peril, and go where God does not require them to go, and self-confidently expose themselves to danger, disregarding the dictates of reason, God will not work a miracle to relieve them. He will not send His angels to preserve any from being burned if they choose to place themselves in the fire." *Review and Herald*, April 1, 1875 (1RH 161:2:5, 3:3); 2Red 87
- Here is a test which all may apply if they will. None need be left in uncertainty and doubt. There is always sufficient evidence upon which to base an intelligent faith. But God will never remove from any man all occasion for doubts. Those who love to dwell in the atmosphere of doubt and questioning unbelief can have the unenviable privilege. He who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things that he cannot make plain to his finite understanding, will be left to the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and skepticism, and will make shipwreck of faith." *Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1886 (2ST 83:2:2); 4T 232

TUESDAY

Title is Believing Without Seeing – is this what you think of when you think of faith?

What about experience, how does experience come in?

"Experience is said to be the best teacher. Genuine experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge, but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. Real experience is gained by a variety of careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude. . .

"That which many term experience is not experience at all. . . . There has not been a fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved in the action. . . .

"Here is where we have met the greatest difficulties in religious matters. The plainest facts may be presented, the clearest truths, sustained by the word of God, may be brought before the mind; but the ear and the heart are closed, and the all-convincing argument is, 'my experience.' Some will say, 'The Lord has blessed me in believing and doing as I have; therefore I cannot be in error.' 'My experience' is clung to, and the most elevating, sanctifying truths of the Bible are rejected. . . .

"Many examples might be given to show how people have been deceived by relying upon what they supposed to be their experience." *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* 109-110 (1890 - Originally written in 1865 in a series "How to Live"); *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 71; *RH* July 27, 1886; *The Health Reformer*, June 1, 1872; *Australasian Signs of the Times*, Dec. 19, 1904; *The Watchman*, Sept. 1, 1908

What do you hear being described? Does it sound scientific? Careful experiments? Minds free from prejudice and bias? Wow, are we really supposed to approach religion like this?

Read last paragraph “After Jesus...” thoughts?

How do we “know” of God’s love? Would knowing God’s love be evidence? If we have knowledge of God’s love would our faith in Him be without seeing?

If we have experienced God’s goodness, interventions, presence would our experience be evidence? Would our faith in God, based on our experience, be without seeing?

If God has shown us His goodness and love would that revelation be evidence? Is our faith, based on this, without seeing?

What is it we don’t see when we have faith? We don’t see the future, we don’t see the immediate outcome, we don’t see the specific plan of God – but is our faith in the intervention, is our faith in the outcome or is our faith in God? Is our faith in God without seeing?

WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY

Benefits of Exercise – what are benefits of exercise?

- Better cardiovascular health
- Better brain health
- Better sleep
- Better stress management
- Increased interleukin 10, which is anti-inflammatory and reduces pain
- Better aging, reduced dementia, reduced physical infirmities
- Better sex
- Better mood, endorphins, enkephalins
- Reduced risks of cancers

What interferes with regular exercise in your life?

What suggestions do you have for others to enhance exercise?

FRIDAY

Read top paragraph discuss

Read questions 2 and 4 and discuss

Health and Healing Lesson 4 2Q 2010

The Water of Life

SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

Is the water of life literal or metaphorical? From where does the water of life originate? Is it physical? What is the water of life?

From Friday's Lesson:

- The priest had that morning performed the ceremony which commemorated the smiting of the rock in the wilderness. That rock was a symbol of Him who by His death would cause living streams of salvation to flow to all who are athirst. **Christ's words were the water of life.** There in the presence of the assembled multitude He set Himself apart to be smitten, that the water of life might flow to the world. In smiting Christ, Satan thought to destroy the Prince of life; **but from the smitten rock there flowed living water.** As Jesus thus spoke to the people, their hearts thrilled with a strange awe, and many were ready to exclaim, with the woman of Samaria, "Give me this water, that I thirst not." John 4:15. {DA 454.1}

What is the water of life? How do we partake?

- He who seeks to quench his thirst at the fountains of this world will drink only to thirst again. Everywhere men are unsatisfied. They long for something to supply the need of the soul. Only One can meet that want. The need of the world, "The Desire of all nations," is Christ. **The divine grace which He alone can impart, is as living water,** purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul. {DA 187.2}

Jesus did not convey the idea that merely one draft of the **water of life** would suffice the receiver. He who **tastes of the love of Christ will continually long for more;** but he seeks for nothing else. The riches, honors, and pleasures of the

world do not attract him. The constant cry of his heart is, More of Thee. And He who reveals to the soul its necessity is waiting to satisfy its hunger and thirst. Every human resource and dependence will fail. The cisterns will be emptied, the pools become dry; **but our Redeemer is an inexhaustible fountain.** We may drink, and drink again, and ever find a fresh supply. He in whom Christ dwells has within himself the fountain of blessing,--"a well of water springing up into everlasting life." From this source he may draw strength and grace sufficient for all his needs. {DA 187.3}

What is the water of life?

- As the plan of redemption begins and ends with a gift, so it is to be carried forward. The same spirit of sacrifice which purchased salvation for us will dwell in the hearts of all who become partakers of the heavenly gift. Says the apostle Peter: **"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another,** as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Said Jesus to His disciples as He sent them forth: **"Freely ye have received, freely give." In him who is fully in sympathy with Christ there can be nothing selfish or exclusive.** He who drinks of the **living water** will find that it is "in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The **Spirit of Christ within him** is like a spring welling up in the desert, flowing to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life. It was the **same spirit of love and self-sacrifice which dwelt in Christ** that impelled the apostle Paul to his manifold labors. "I am debtor," he says, "both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise" (Rom. 1:14). "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8) (Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 730, 731).

Would the water of life be the life of Christ? Is that the same as the love of Christ, the character of God, being partakers of the divine nature, having the law written on the heart?

What does it look like when someone drinks of the water of life?

- When the **love of Christ is enshrined in the heart**, like sweet fragrance it cannot be hidden. Its holy influence will be felt by all with whom we come in contact. The **spirit of Christ in the heart is like a spring in the desert**, flowing to refresh all and making those who are ready to perish, eager to drink of the water of life. {SC 77.3}

Love to Jesus will be manifested in a desire to work as He worked for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. It will lead to love, tenderness, and sympathy toward all the creatures of our heavenly Father's care. {SC 77.4}

- **This world was established and is sustained by the compassionate love of the Creator.** God is the giver of all we have. He calls upon us to return to Him a portion of the abundance He has bestowed on us. {9T 50.1}

Can one experience the water of life without giving it away, without giving to others?

Is the water of life different from the Tree of Life? Was the Tree of Life literal or metaphorical?

- And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the **tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.** Genesis 2:9

Was the tree of knowledge a real tree? Did it possess something physical which caused harm?

- **There was nothing poisonous in the fruit of the tree of knowledge itself**, nothing that would cause death in partaking of it. The tree had been placed in the garden to test their loyalty to God.--ST Feb. 13, 1896.

What did they obtain from that tree? Knowledge, exactly as God said, the knowledge of sin, breaking of the law of love, with all its pain and suffering.

Was the death causing effects derived from the Tree of Knowledge itself? What about the tree of life? Is it literal? Was the life sustaining properties derived from the Tree of Life? What does it provide?

- And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from **the tree of life and eat, and live forever.**” Genesis 3:22

This sounds like it provides physical life –

- “Blessed are those who **wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life** and may go through the gates into the city. Rev 22:14

What does it mean to wash their robes? Literal robes? Or are robes symbolic of character? What about the tree? Literal or metaphorical or both?

- Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, ¹⁴ for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. ¹⁵ She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. ¹⁶ Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. ¹⁷ Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. ¹⁸ **She is a tree of life to those who embrace her;** those who lay hold of her will be blessed. Prov 3:13-18

What does this passage mean?

- What or who is wisdom?
- Is Christ wisdom? What kind of wisdom?
- If one has Christ what does one have?
- What wisdom is gained from Christ?
- Is it the wisdom of the kingdom of God?

- And what is God's kingdom? Is it not the kingdom of love?
- And what is the water of life, is it not Christ and His love?

Is the tree of life literal or metaphorical or both?

- **The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life**, and he who wins souls is wise. Prov 11:30

What is righteousness? Is it not perfect harmony with the law of love?

- **The tree of life is a representation of the preserving care of Christ for His children.** As Adam and Eve ate of this tree, they acknowledged their dependence upon God. **The tree of life possessed the power to perpetuate life**, and as long as they ate of it, they could not die. The lives of the antediluvians were protracted because of the life-giving power of this tree, which was transmitted to them from Adam and Eve (RH Jan. 26, 1897). {7BC 988.9}

What does it mean a "representation"?

- Does it mean it stood or symbolized something else?
- But the tree of life possessed power to perpetuate life, what does this mean?
- Did Adam and Eve's life originate in the tree?
- Did God discover this tree, form Adam out of the dust and put some fruit of the tree in Adam's mouth and then Adam became a living being?
- Did the tree possess life sustain properties by some process of evolution?
- Or, did the Creator choose to use a tree to promote life, but the life still originated and flowed from God?

What does this mean? Are we in need of finding the literal tree of life, or are we in need of finding God, of being reunited with God?

- After the entrance of sin, the heavenly Husbandman transplanted **the tree of life to the Paradise above; but its branches hang over the wall to the lower world.** Through the redemption purchased by the blood of Christ, we may still eat of its life-giving fruit. {7BC 989.1}

Of Christ it is written, "**In him was life; and the life was the light of men.**" **He is the fountain of life.** Obedience to Him is the life-giving power that gladdens the soul. {7BC 989.2}

Is the life giving fruit we eat of different than that of Adam and Eve? Was the life giving power really in some molecules of a plant? Or does life originate and flow from God?

- **Christ is the source of our life, the source of immortality. He is the tree of life,** and to all who come to Him He gives spiritual life (RH Jan. 26, 1897). {7BC 989.8}
- **Christ . . . was the tree of life to all who would pluck and eat** (MS 95, 1898). {7BC 989.6}

Thoughts? Is the water of life and the tree of life the same? How do we partake of them?

What do these insights tell us about the idea that the sin problem originated in the Tree of Knowledge and life is primarily obtained from the Tree of Life?

- The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. **The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same--**a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will.** To transgress His law, physical, mental, or

moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin. {Ed 99.2}

Thoughts?

SUNDAY

Again explores the metaphor of water – when we think about water what properties does water have and what does water do or what is water used for?

- Water cleanses, internal and external
 - Christ cleanses from sin, both internal (mind/character) and external all physical deformities at the second coming
 - According to the Center for Disease Control, what is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection? Handwashing!
 - There are 52 million cases of the common cold each year in the United States,
 - More than 250 types of food borne illnesses.
 - Ten to 20 percent of Americans are infected with the flu virus each year.
 - The CDC released a report showing that proper handwashing nearly cut in half the incidence of pneumonia-related infections in children under five worldwide. Pneumonia is the leading cause of death in children under five globally.
 - Proper handwashing has also been shown in other studies to be responsible for a 47% reduction in impetigo, a highly contagious bacterial skin infection.
 - A recent FDA study reveals that proper handwashing can stop up to one half of all food borne illnesses, such as E.coli and salmonella.
 - Kids who wash their hands at least four times a day experience 24% fewer sick days from colds, flu and the like, and 51% fewer sick days due to stomach ailments

- American Society of Microbiology studies showed:
 - 97% of females and 92% of males say they wash their hands after using bathroom
 - of these only 75% females and 58% males washed
 - 50% of middle and high school students say they wash after using the bathroom
 - of these 33% of females and only 8% of males used soap while washing hands
- Minnesota Department of Health led three observational studies at public restrooms:
 - 2003 Back to 50's Car Show Event—64% females washed and 30% males
 - 2003 State Fair—65% females washed and 39% males
 - 2004 State Fair—75% females washed and 51% males

When washing hands with soap and water:

- Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue rubbing hands for 15-20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing "Happy Birthday" twice through to a friend.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet.
- Always use soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.

If soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub to clean your hands. Alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of germs on skin and are fast-acting.

When using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Apply product to the palm of one hand.
- Rub hands together.
- Rub the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry.

- What spiritual lessons do we learn from hand washing and the reduction in illnesses? Do we get less spiritual sickness, problems if we partake of Christ multiple times a day and wash our hearts and minds in His love? Do we have less fear, insecurity and make better decisions?

Other lessons from water?

- Water is a requirement of life
 - Christ is a requirement of life
- We are composed of water and need water to live
 - We are composed of energy, which emanates from God, designed to be in constant flow, or giving. We need energy from God to live.
- Water is stable, not volatile, and is used to extinguish fire
 - We are branches plucked from the fire of sin and God's love extinguishes the damages and soothes our burns and heals our hearts
- Water can present in many forms, liquid, solid, gas
 - God's love presents in many ways, gentle, compassionate, discipline, firm, patient, and surrendering of ourselves to save others

Others?

First paragraph states, "His offer is still valid today, for He never changes." Is that true? If it is true that our God of love never changes, He is always love, why do some teach He becomes wrathful and vengeful and uses His power to inflict pain and suffering on His creatures?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph "Read Acts..." thoughts? Do churches to this today? If someone hears about Christ, is convicted, and wants to follow Him and says to a church pastor, "There is some water, what is stopping us from baptizing me?" what would happen? Would there likely be a baptism at that time? Why not?

Were the Apostles wrong in not requiring a six week baptismal course and pledge of loyalty to an established doctrinal statement? When we are baptized are we baptized into Christ or into a specific organization? What did Paul say about the idea of being baptized into different groups?

- I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one **another so that there may be no divisions among you** and that you may be **perfectly united in mind and thought.** ¹¹ My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. ¹² What I mean is this: **One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos";** another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." ¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? **Were you baptized into the name of Paul?** ¹⁴ I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. ¹⁶ (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 1Corinthians 1:10-17

Thoughts? Is this different than saying, "were you baptized into the Methodist church, or Baptist church or SDA church?" Or are we baptized into Christ? Or are only those in the SDA church baptized into Christ? Does Christ have His true followers in other organizations? If someone is baptized by another church are they baptized into Christ?

How should we act as Christians toward those in other organizations? Do we consider them members of Christ's body? Should we as a church refuse to baptize someone into Christ who doesn't want to be a member of the SDA church? Should we require someone to adhere to all the 28 fundamentals before they are baptized into Christ?

Water of baptism – what is baptism? Does water baptism cleanse from sin? Is water baptism necessary to be saved? The lesson asks us to read Romans 6:1-6, this is from my paraphrase:

Romans 6:1 What, then, should we say about this amazing healing plan? Should we spread the infection of distrust and selfishness, cause more devastation and destruction so that the power of God's healing solution may be more fully displayed? ² Absolutely not! We have taken the antidote, and the infection of distrust and selfishness has been purged from our hearts; how then, can we choose to be reinfected with distrust of God and practice selfish methods again? ³ Or don't you realize that all of us who were immersed in the truth of Christ Jesus were immersed in selflessness and have died to self-centeredness? ⁴ We symbolically demonstrate we have joined him in dying to self by being buried in water, in order that just as Jesus arose from the dead displaying the life giving glory of the Father, we too live a new life displaying God's glorious character in our lives. ⁵ If we have joined him in dying to self, we will absolutely join him in his resurrection and new life! ⁶ For we know that when our old selfish heart and fear ridden mind trusts God and surrenders to be crucified with Christ, the infection of selfishness is purged, and our heart is no longer controlled by Satanic principles – ⁷ because anyone who dies to selfishness is free from Satan's methods, principles and control.

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Uses of water in the Bible – how was water used in Old Testament times?

The priests would wash their hands and feet before any ministry in the sanctuary and also before entering the Holy Place. What does this symbolize?

What is the Holy Place a symbol of? The church with the Lamp (Living and written Word of God), the Showbread (Christ the manna that came down from heaven), golden altar (heart of converted in which prayers mixed with incense offered to God).

Who are represented by the daily priests? The believers, and what does the water represent? The Holy Spirit which takes Christ's love and character and reproduces it in us enabling us to carry out any ministry for God.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out that staying hydrated while exercising allows one to maintain strength and not fatigue – how does this relate to our spiritual strength and living water?

THURSDAY

Any thoughts on water therapy?

FRIDAY

Read questions 2 and 3 and discuss

Health and Healing Lesson 5 2Q 2010

The Environment

What questions do you have regarding the environment?

To the best we are able to discern, what was the environment like when God created earth?

- The earth came forth from the hand of the Creator exceedingly beautiful. There were mountains and hills and plains; and interspersed among them were rivers and bodies of water. The earth was not one extensive plain, but the monotony of the scenery was broken by hills and mountains, not high and ragged as they now are, but regular and beautiful in shape. **The bare, high rocks were never seen upon them, but lay beneath the surface, answering as bones to the earth.** The waters were regularly dispersed. The hills, mountains, and very beautiful plains were adorned with plants and flowers, and tall, majestic trees of every description, which were many times larger and much more beautiful than trees now are. The air was pure and healthful, and the earth seemed like a noble palace. Angels beheld and rejoiced at the wonderful and beautiful works of God. {LHU 47.2}

Thoughts?

- As man came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of lofty stature and perfect symmetry. His countenance bore the ruddy tint of health and glowed with the light of life and joy. Adam's height was much greater than that of men who now inhabit the earth. Eve was somewhat less in stature; yet her form was noble, and full of beauty. **The sinless pair wore no artificial garments; they were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear. So long as they lived in obedience to God, this robe of light continued to enshroud them.** {PP 45.3}

- While they remained true to God, Adam and his companion were to bear rule over the earth. **Unlimited control was given them over every living thing.** The lion and the lamb sported peacefully around them or lay down together at their feet. The happy birds flitted about them without fear; and as their glad songs ascended to the praise of their Creator, Adam and Eve united with them in thanksgiving to the Father and the Son. {PP 50.2}
- In the days of Noah a double curse was resting upon the earth in consequence of Adam's transgression and of the murder committed by Cain. Yet this had not greatly changed the face of nature. There were evident tokens of decay, but the earth was still rich and beautiful in the gifts of God's providence. The hills were crowned with majestic trees supporting the fruit-laden branches of the vine. The vast, gardenlike plains were clothed with verdure, and sweet with the fragrance of a thousand flowers. The fruits of the earth were in great variety, and almost without limit. The trees far surpassed in size, beauty, and perfect proportion any now to be found; **their wood was of fine grain and hard substance, closely resembling stone, and hardly less enduring. Gold, silver, and precious stones existed in abundance.** {PP 90.1}

Can you use your imagination to see the world before sin?

- Was it a dark place or brilliant with light?
- No jagged peaks, no death, decay, thorns, thistles,
- Unlimited control – how would they have exercised that control?
- Gold, silver and precious stones in abundance – how do you envision this?
 - Do you see rivers with ruby and diamond riverbeds, waterfalls with emerald, gold and silver linings, spring with pools of different precious stones and medals all shimmering and radiating brilliantly?
- What about their robes of light? Do you think the light emanated from them in a variety of colors, hues, intensities

corresponding with their mood, like our facial expressions change?

What happened after they sinned?

- After his transgression Adam at first imagined himself entering upon a higher state of existence. But soon the thought of his sin filled him with terror. **The air, which had hitherto been of a mild and uniform temperature, seemed to chill the guilty pair.** The love and peace which had been theirs was gone, and in its place they felt a sense of sin, a dread of the future, a nakedness of soul. **The robe of light which had enshrouded them, now disappeared,** and to supply its place they endeavored to fashion for themselves a covering; for they could not, while unclothed, meet the eye of God and holy angels. {PP 57.1}
- In humility and unutterable sadness they bade farewell to their beautiful home and went forth to dwell upon the earth, where rested the curse of sin. **The atmosphere, once so mild and uniform in temperature, was now subject to marked changes,** and the Lord mercifully provided them with a garment of skins as a protection from the extremes of heat and cold. {PP 61.5}

Why did their garments of light disappear and the temperature change? Where did the robe of light originate? Any thoughts on what it might be? What happened to the robe of light?

- When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that **his face was radiant** because he had spoken with the LORD. ³⁰ When Aaron and all the Israelites **saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him.** ³¹ But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. ³² Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.

When Moses finished speaking to them, **he put a veil over his face.** ³⁴ **But whenever he entered the LORD's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out.** And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, ³⁵ they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD. Exodus 34:29-35

Why was Moses face radiating? When they were stoning Steven what was his face doing? Where did such light originate? Why was Steven's face radiating? When might we wear a robe of light?

- **In the time of trouble** we all fled from the cities and villages, but were pursued by the wicked, who entered the houses of the saints with a sword. They raised the sword to kill us, but it broke, and fell as powerless as a straw. Then we all cried day and night for deliverance, and the cry came up before God. The sun came up, and the moon stood still. The streams ceased to flow. Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. But there was one clear place of settled glory, whence came the voice of God like many waters, which shook the heavens and the earth. The sky opened and shut and was in commotion. The mountains shook like a reed in the wind, and cast out ragged rocks all around. The sea boiled like a pot and cast out stones upon the land. And as God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus' coming and **delivered the everlasting covenant to His people**, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth. The Israel of God stood with their eyes fixed upward, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of Jehovah, and rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder. It was awfully solemn. And at the end of every sentence the saints shouted, "Glory! Alleluia!" **Their countenances were lighted up with the glory of God; and they shone with the glory, as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The wicked could not look on them for the glory.** And when the never-ending

blessing was pronounced on those who had honored God in keeping His Sabbath holy, there was a mighty shout of victory over the beast and over his image. {EW 34.1}

Why will our faces shine with light? The everlasting covenant is delivered, which is? The law of love written fully and perfectly in the heart and all know God intimately themselves! Reconciliation with God!

What happened to Adam and Eve's dominion and rule over nature?

- **Under the curse of sin all nature was to witness to man of the character and results of rebellion against God.** When God made man He made him rule over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in subjection to him. But when he rebelled against the divine law, **the inferior creatures were in rebellion against his rule.** Thus the Lord, in His great mercy, would show men the sacredness of His law, and lead them, by their own experience, to see the danger of setting it aside, even in the slightest degree. {PP 59.4}

What lesson was earth created to teach? Adam and Eve represented the Godhead, the animals created beings throughout the universe. When Adam rebelled the lower life forms rebelled to reveal the chaos, damage, destruction, death which transpires when beings are out of harmony with the law of love, which is the character of God.

What happened to plant life?

- **Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up.** In the parable of the sower the question was asked the master, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?" The master

answered, "An enemy hath done this" (Matt. 13:27, 28). All tares are sown by the evil one. **Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation** he has corrupted the earth with tares. {2SM 288.2}

Does this mean Satan has capacity to cause genetic mutations in nature? Can he directly affect nature? In the book of Job he brought a storm, so evidently he can.

What does it mean amalgamation? Consider this commentary regarding life on earth before the flood:

- Instead of doing justice to their neighbors, they carried out their own unlawful wishes. They had a plurality of wives, which was contrary to God's wise arrangement. In the beginning, God gave to Adam one wife--showing to all who should live upon the earth, his order and law in that respect. The transgression and fall of Adam and Eve brought sin and wretchedness upon the human race, and man followed his own carnal desires, and changed God's order. The more men multiplied wives to themselves, the more they increased in wickedness and unhappiness. If any one chose to take the wives, or cattle, or anything belonging to his neighbor, he did not regard justice or right, but if he could prevail over his neighbor by reason of strength, or by putting him to death, he did so, and exulted in his deeds of violence. **They loved to destroy the lives of animals. They used them for food, and this increased their ferocity and violence, and caused them to look upon the blood of human beings with astonishing indifference.** {1SP 68.1}

But if there was one sin above another which called for the destruction of the race by the flood, **it was the base crime of amalgamation of man and beast which defaced the image of God**, and caused confusion everywhere. God purposed to destroy by a flood that powerful, long-lived race that had corrupted their ways before him. He would not suffer them to live out the days of their natural life,

which would be hundreds of years. It was only a few generations back when Adam had access to that tree which was to prolong life. After his disobedience he was not suffered to eat of the tree of life and perpetuate a life of sin. In order for man to possess an endless life he must continue to eat of the fruit of the tree of life. **Deprived of that tree, his life would gradually wear out.** {1SP 69.1}

Thoughts?

As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Mt 24:37

Do we have problems like this today? Do we have problems with marrying many wives or husband, maybe not at once, but serially? I had a patient this week whose mother was married to 10 different men while his was being raised.

Do we have problems with violence in society? Cruelty to animals? Do we produce animals to slaughter and eat?

What was God's attitude toward the slaughter of animals?

- But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. ¹¹ But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and **many cattle as well**. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"
Jonah 4:10,11
- Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah! ¹¹ "The **multitude of your sacrifices— what are they to me?**" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. Isa 1:10,11

Did God ever enjoy the slaughter of animals? No! He is the giver of life, He hates the taking of life!

Do we have problems like the days of Noah today?

What does the meat industry do to the environment?

- According to a 2006 report by the Livestock, Environment And Development Initiative, the livestock industry is one of the largest contributors to environmental degradation worldwide, and modern practices of raising animals for food contributes on a "massive scale" to air and water pollution, land degradation, climate change, and loss of biodiversity. The initiative concluded that "**the livestock sector emerges as one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global.**"
- In 2009 two World Bank scientists estimated that meat industry contributes 51% of all emissions of greenhouse gasses.
- A 2006 study at the University of Chicago concluded that a person switching from a typical American diet to a vegan diet with the same number of calories would prevent the emission of 1485 kg of carbon dioxide per year. The difference exceeds that of an individual switching from a Toyota Camry to the hybrid Toyota Prius, and collectively amounts to over 6% of the total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

From Goveg.com

- Animals raised for food produce **130 times as much excrement as the entire U.S. population**, roughly 89,000 pounds per second, all without the benefit of waste treatment systems.
- According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, animals on factory farms in America produce 20 tons of fecal matter each year for every U.S. household.

- A pig farm with 5,000 animals produces as much fecal waste as a city of 50,000 people.
- According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the run-off from factory farms pollutes our waterways more than all other industrial sources combined.
- Factory farms also produce massive amounts of dust and other contamination that pollutes our air. A study in Texas found that animal feedlots in the state produce more than 14 million pounds of particulate dust every year and that the dust “contains biologically active organisms such as bacteria, mold, and fungi from the feces and the feed.”
- The massive amounts of excrement produced by these farms emit toxic gases such as hydrogen sulfide and ammonia into the air. The EPA reports that roughly 80 percent of ammonia emissions in the United States come from animal waste.
- When the cesspools holding tons of animal urine and feces get full, factory farms will frequently get around water pollution limits by spraying liquid manure into the air, creating mists that are carried away by the wind. People who live nearby are forced to inhale the toxins and pathogens from the sprayed manure.
- The EPA reports that chicken, hog, and cattle excrement have polluted 35,000 miles of rivers in 22 states and contaminated groundwater in 17 states.

What about use of fresh water? Do we waste fresh water in growing animals to slaughter and eat?

1 cubic meter of water equals 1000 liters or 264 gallons.

Estimated virtual water requirements for various crops (m ³ water/ton crop) ^[6]					
	Hoekstra & Hung (2003)	Chapagain & Hoekstra (2003)	Zimmer & Renault (2003)	Ok et al. (2003)	Average
Beef		15977	13500	20700	16726
Pork		5906	4600	5900	5469
Cheese		5288			5288

Poultry		2828	4100	4500	3809
Eggs		4657	2700	3200	3519
Rice	2656		1400	3600	2552
Soybeans	2300		2750	2500	2517
Wheat	1150		1160	2000	1437
Maize	450		710	1900	1020
Milk		865	790	560	738
Potatoes	160		105		133

For beef almost 4.5 million gallons of water for 1 ton of meat, a cow weighs between 1,000 and 2,000 pounds so this is for 1 – 2 cows

Are we today acting toward animals like they did before the flood? And consider God's law of love, God's law of love is the design template for life, giving rather than taking. What is happening as we take, exploit animals for slaughter and food? We are destroying the environment as well as our health. In other words, violating the law of love results in death, the wages of sin is death!

What about amalgamations?

- Research at the University of Nevada is ongoing into growing sheep with human organs. They inject sheep embryos with human stem cells in order to grow and harvest human organs for transplantation.
- Chinese scientists at the Shanghai Second Medical University in 2003 successfully fused human cells with rabbit eggs. The embryos were reportedly the first human-animal chimeras successfully created.
- In Minnesota in 2004 researchers at the Mayo Clinic created pigs with human blood flowing through their bodies.
- At Stanford they have created mice with brains that contain 1% human neurons and want to create mice with brains made of 100% human neurons. This is done by injecting embryonic mice brains with human neurons.

Thoughts? Are we like the days of Noah? What impact would it have upon the world if people gave up eating meat? Are there reasons that go beyond health for the individual? What about character of love for others, including animals?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “God Himself...” thoughts? What do you think about the idea of God “keeping” the Sabbath? How do you hear that? What does it mean? Is keeping it different than instituting it, or creating it? Is the Sabbath compulsory upon God? Is it a law that is obligatory to Him and His creation?

Do they mean “keeping the Sabbath holy”? What makes the Sabbath holy? Do we keep Sabbath holy by avoiding work?

- So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.” ¹⁸ For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. John 5:16-18

Do we keep Sabbath holy by avoiding work? Does it matter what kind of work one is doing? How do we keep Sabbath holy?

What is it that makes Sabbath holy? It is invested with the attributes of God, truth presented in love and leaving others free. We keep Sabbath holy by having the law written on the heart. There is nothing exclusively behavioral we can do to keep Sabbath holy – the Jews did all the behaviors.

The Sabbath is evidence of God’s character, a revelation of His methods and principles! The Sabbath every week screams, “Satan lied”! Every seven days the existence of the 7th day Sabbath proclaims God is not like Satan alleged, God is love, God presents truth in love and leaves us free!

We keep the Sabbath holy by moving away from selfish existence and living lives of God and others first, living the truth in love and leaving others free. Every Sabbath, we voluntarily choose to set aside self-absorbed activities, self-serving activities, and instead focus on God, friends, family and ministry. We give our minds time to rest from the cares of the world and celebrate our relationship with God!

Read fourth paragraph, “As the centuries...” thoughts? Do we do this today? How?

What is the true meaning?

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, “Exploitation...” thoughts?

- “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. ¹⁸ The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great— and for **destroying those who destroy the earth.**” Rev 11:17,18

Thoughts?

Does any of what we have studied today have any impact on how we live our lives? If we love God, love others, love life, do we kill? Do we exploit the environment, eat animals etc? Are there reasons beyond living a healthy life for vegetarian diet?

In fact, is love for life a higher motive than keeping self healthy?

Read bottom pink section, “Years ago...” thoughts?

Truth is we shouldn’t worry about what happens to the environment or the earth, for we cannot control what happens to that, our responsibility is for our conduct. We are responsible for

how we live. We don't eat vegetarian because we believe by so doing we will save the earth, we know that if the entire world were vegetarian that the world is still getting worse. We do these things because they are the right action to take, because they are the only actions we can take and become more like God.

WEDNESDAY

Top section asks, "What, if anything, can we do to improve our environment?"

Should we be focused as individuals or church on saving our environment? Or is it a side track? A way of diverting attention away from saving people?

What is the world trying to do with carbon credits? Are they setting up a system of rules whereby they will "save" the planet? Is this another way to avoid God's salvation, we will save ourselves? Is it another deception of Satan to control buying and selling and economies and countries?

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, "One thing...." Are "modern sun worshippers" people who tan a lot?

FRIDAY read questions 1,2,4 and discuss

Come & Reason Sabbath School.
Lesson 6 Faith and Healing 2Q 2010

Sunday.

Is Fear healthy?? Where did Fear originate in humanity?? The lesson asks ‘what should we be afraid of’??

[ref. Luke 12:4-5 (New International Version) 4"I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. 5But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

So, whom, according to the founder of our church [Jesus], should we fear?? OURSELVES, if we have not had the image of God restored in our hearts & minds.

Tuesday

What is **Faith?**

Hebrews 11:1 (New King James Version)

1 Now **faith** is the *substance* of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Gr. *Hypostasis* – Hypo – under, below, underneath Stasis – Stable state [*standing*].

Substance -- Sub – under, below, underneath Stance -- *standing*.

Wednesday

STRESS. Eustress vs Distress.

Rahe carried out a study in 1970 testing the reliability of the stress scale as a predictor of illness. The scale was given to 2,500 US sailors and they were asked to rate scores of 'life events' over the previous six months. Over the next six months, detailed records were kept of the sailors' health. There was a +0.118 correlation between stress scale scores and illness, which was sufficient to support the hypothesis of a link between life events and illness. In conjunction with the Cornell medical index assessing , the stress scale correlated with visits to medical dispensaries, and the H&R stress scale's scores also correlated independently with individuals dropping out of stressful underwater demolitions training due to medical problems. The scale was also assessed against different populations within the United States (with African, Hispanic and White American groups). The scale was also tested cross-culturally, comparing Japanese and Malaysian groups with American populations.

Stress according to the Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale, the number of "Life Change Units" that apply to events in the past year of an individual's life are added and the final score will give a rough estimate of how stress affects health.

Death of a spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Imprisonment	63
Death of a close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Dismissal from work	47
Marital reconciliation	45
Retirement	45
Change in health of family member	44
Pregnancy	40
Sexual difficulties	39
Gain a new family member	39
Business readjustment	39
Change in financial state	38

Change in frequency of arguments	35
Major mortgage	32
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
Change in responsibilities at work	29
Child leaving home	29
Trouble with in-laws	29
Outstanding personal achievement	28
Spouse starts or stops work	26
Begin or end school	26
Change in living conditions	25
Revision of personal habits	24
Trouble with boss	23
Change in working hours or conditions	20
Change in residence	20
Change in schools	20
Change in recreation	19
Change in church activities	19
Change in social activities	18
Minor mortgage or loan	17
Change in sleeping habits	16
Change in number of family reunions	15
Change in eating habits	15
Vacation	13
Christmas	12
Minor violation of law	11

Score of 300+: At risk of illness.

Score of 150-299+: Risk of illness is moderate (reduced by 30% from the above risk).

Score 150-: Only have a slight risk of illness.

** According to an 1991 article in the New England Journal of Medicine, the rates of both respiratory infection & clinical colds increased in a dose-response manner with increases in the degree of psychological stress. Infection rates ranged from approx. 74% to approx. 90%, according to levels of psychological stress, and the incidence of clinical colds ranged from approx. 27% to 47%.**

Thursday

What is **Healing**? What sort of healing does God want for humanity??

Proverbs 12:17-19 (New International Version)

17 A truthful witness gives honest testimony,
but a false witness tells lies.

18 Reckless words pierce like a sword,
but the tongue of the wise brings **healing**.

19 Truthful lips endure forever,
but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.

Proverbs 15:4 (New International Version)

4 The tongue that brings **healing** is a tree of life,
but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.

Isaiah 58:7-9 (New International Version)

- 7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe him,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?
8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your **healing** will quickly appear;
then your righteousness [a] will go before you,
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.
9 Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.
"If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

Malachi 4:1-3 (New International Version)

- 1 "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them.
2 But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with **healing** in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.
3 Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things," says the LORD Almighty.

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 (New International Version)

- 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,
9 to another *faith* by the same Spirit, to another gifts of **healing** by that one Spirit,
10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

Revelation 22:1-3 (New International Version)

- 1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb
2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the **healing** of the nations.
3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

Faith and works are the two oars with which we are to make our way in the Christian life. The Lord calls upon all who think they know what *faith* is, to be sure that they are not pulling with only one oar, and their little bark going round and round, making no progress at all. *Faith* without intelligent works is dead. *Faith* in the **healing** power of God will not save unless it is combined with good works. AUCR, October 15, 1905 par. 787 (Australasian Union Conference Record)

Taking proper measures is not a denial of *faith* in prayer for **healing**.—Many who seek the Lord's **healing** mercy think that they must have a direct and immediate answer to their prayers or their *faith* is defective. For this reason, those who are weakened by disease need to be counseled wisely, that they may act with discretion. They should not disregard their duty to the friends who may survive them, or neglect to employ nature's agencies for the restoration of health. (The Ministry of Healing, 231.)

Employ Every Facility.—It is not a denial of *faith* to use such remedies as God has provided to alleviate pain and to aid nature in her work of restoration. It is no denial of *faith* [for the sick who request prayer for **healing**] to cooperate with God, and place themselves in the condition most favorable to recovery. God has put it in our power to obtain a knowledge of the laws of life. This knowledge has been placed within our reach for use. We should employ every facility for the restoration of health, taking every advantage possible, working in harmony with natural laws.—The Ministry of Healing, 231, 232 (1905).

When we have prayed for the recovery of the sick, whatever the outcome of the case, let us not lose *faith* in God. If we are called upon to meet bereavement, let us accept the bitter cup, remembering that a Father's hand holds it to our lips. But should health be restored, it should not be forgotten that the recipient of **healing** mercy is placed under renewed obligation to the Creator. When the ten lepers were cleansed, only one returned to find Jesus and give Him glory. Let none of us be like the unthinking nine, whose hearts were untouched by the mercy of God. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17. CCh 306. (Counsels for the Church).

This is the life we are to present to the sick, telling them that if they have *faith* in Christ as the restorer, if they cooperate with Him, obeying the laws of health, and striving to perfect holiness in His fear, He will impart to them His life. When we present Christ to them in this way, we are imparting a power, a strength, that is of value; for it comes from above. This is the true science of **healing** for body and soul.—The Ministry of Healing, 243, 244 (1905).

So with all the promises of God's word. In them He is speaking to us individually, speaking as directly as if we could listen to His voice. It is in these promises that Christ communicates to us His grace and power. They are leaves from that tree which is "for the **healing** of the nations." Revelation 22:2. Received, assimilated, they are to be the strength of the character, the inspiration and sustenance of the life. Nothing else can have such **healing** power. Nothing besides can impart the courage and *faith* which give vital energy to the whole being. MH 122.3 (The Ministry of Healing).

The power of love was in all Christ's **healing**, and only by partaking of that love, through *faith*, can we be instruments for His work. If we neglect to link ourselves in divine connection with Christ, the current of life-giving energy cannot flow in rich streams from us to the people. There were places

where the Saviour Himself could not do many mighty works because of their unbelief. So now unbelief separates the church from her divine Helper. Her hold upon eternal realities is weak. By her lack of *faith*, God is disappointed and robbed of His glory. DA 825. (The Desire of Ages)

Here was ground with which Nicodemus was familiar. The symbol of the uplifted serpent made plain to him the Saviour's mission. When the people of Israel were dying from the sting of the fiery serpents, God directed Moses to make a serpent of brass, and place it on high in the midst of the congregation. Then the word was sounded throughout the encampment that all who would look upon the serpent should live. The people well knew that in itself the serpent had no power to help them. It was a symbol of Christ. As the image made in the likeness of the destroying serpents was lifted up for their **healing**, so One made "in the likeness of sinful flesh" was to be their Redeemer. Romans 8:3. Many of the Israelites regarded the sacrificial service as having in itself virtue to set them free from sin. God desired to teach them that it had no more value than that serpent of brass. It was to lead their minds to the Saviour. Whether for the **healing** of their wounds or the pardon of their sins, they could do nothing for themselves but show their *faith* in the Gift of God. They were to look and live. DA 174. (The Desire of Ages)

He was active to relieve every species of human misery that was brought to Him in *faith* for relief; but He did not bestow **healing** power indiscriminately where there was manifested an independence and selfish exclusiveness that would give no expression to their sorrows nor ask for the help so much needed. All who came unto Him in *faith* He was ready and willing to relieve. Sorrow fled at His presence; injustice and oppression withered beneath His rebukes; and death, the cruel spoiler of our sinful race, obeyed His commands. TDG 249.3 (This Day With God)

God is just as willing to restore the sick to health now as when the Holy Spirit spoke these words through the psalmist. And Christ is the same compassionate physician now that He was during His earthly ministry. In Him there is **healing** balm for every disease, restoring power for every infirmity. His disciples in this time are to pray for the sick as verily as the disciples of old prayed. And recoveries will follow; for "the prayer of *faith* shall save the sick." We have the Holy Spirit's power, the calm assurance of *faith*, that can claim God's promises. The Lord's promise, "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:18), is just as trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles. It presents the privilege of God's children, and our *faith* should lay hold of all that it embraces. Christ's servants are the channel of His working, and through them He desires to exercise His **healing** power. It is our work to present the sick and suffering to God in the arms of our *faith*. We should teach them to believe in the Great Healer. MH 226.1 (The Ministry of Healing).

227.2 In the word of God we have instruction relative to special prayer for the recovery of the sick. But the offering of such prayer is a most solemn act, and should not be entered upon without careful consideration. In many cases of prayer for the healing of the sick, that which is called faith is nothing less than presumption. 227.3 Many persons bring disease upon themselves by their self-indulgence. They have not lived in accordance with natural law or the principles of strict purity. Others have disregarded the laws of health in their habits of eating and drinking, dressing, or working. Often some form of vice is the cause of feebleness of mind or body. Should these persons gain the blessing of health, many of them would continue to pursue the same course of heedless transgression of God's natural and spiritual laws, reasoning that if God heals them in answer to prayer, they are at liberty to continue their unhealthful practices and to indulge perverted appetite without restraint. If God were

to work a miracle in restoring these persons to health, He would be encouraging sin. MH 227.2,3 (The Ministry of Healing).

There is something better for us to engage in than the control of humanity by humanity. The physician should educate the people to look from the human to the divine. Instead of teaching the sick to depend upon human beings for the cure of soul and body, he should direct them to the One who can save to the uttermost all who come unto Him. He who made man's mind knows what the mind needs. God alone is the One who can heal. Those whose minds and bodies are diseased are to behold in Christ the restorer. "Because I live, He says, "ye shall live also." John 14:19. This is the life we are to present to the sick, telling them that if they have faith in Christ as the restorer, if they co-operate with Him, obeying the laws of health, and striving to perfect holiness in His fear, He will impart to them His life. When we present Christ to them in this way, we are imparting a power, a strength, that is of value; for it comes from above. This is the true science of healing for body and soul. MH 243.3 (The Ministry of Healing).

Health and Healing Lesson 7 2Q 2010

Rest and Restoration

SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

The lesson tells of a medical student who was burning out, staying up late, getting up early and falling behind. A professor told him to get 7 hours sleep each night and 30 minutes exercise each day. He did it, even though he didn't believe he had time and his grades improved. Why?

Are we like that medical student? Do we need to take time away to rest? What kind of rest?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Read Genesis 1...." Thoughts?

The lesson suggests that when God created Earth with evening and morning He was setting up a biorhythm which would include sleep. Was sleep required in the Garden of Eden? Will sleep be necessary in the new heaven and earth?

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for **there will be no night there... There will be no more night.** They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. Rev 21:23-25, 22:5

Will we sleep in the new earth? Here's the perspective of one of the founders of our church:

Eld. White and Dr. Kellogg have not given themselves proper rest. God instituted the Sabbath as a day of rest to repair nature's exhausted energies. No mind can continue day after day without cessation, either in business which taxes the mental powers, or in the acquirement of knowledge, without injury. **There is no night in Heaven. There is no wear and weariness of the human machinery. There we shall never be sensible of fatigue; never need or want repose.** There is no tire in performing God's will; we shall never be wearied in sounding his praise. **We shall always have the freshness of the morning.** But as we are now in this world, with bodies which weary, we must pay heed to God's plans, and take repose when we need it. {PH043 39.1}

Thoughts?

Is sleep necessary in our current world? Has anyone ever had difficulty sleeping? Is that a problem?

- 37% of US adults c/o of excessive sleepiness that interferes with functioning at least a few days per month
- 16% c/o of excessive sleepiness that interferes with functioning at least a few days per week or more
- Major incidents related to sleepiness
 - Chernobyl nuclear meltdown
 - Exxon Valdez oil spill
- Motor vehicle accidents
 - Falling asleep while driving is responsible for at least 100,000 crashes, 40,000 injuries, and 1550 deaths per year
 - Excessive sleepiness impairs driving as much as alcohol intoxication

Women have more sleep problems than men and this changes with life

- A recent survey found women in the United States are not sleeping well and that this affects all aspects of their lives.
 - 67% report sleep problems a few nights each week

- 46% report sleep problems every night

Contributing factors to women's sleep problems:

- Overwork with house, family and career
- Hormonal changes
 - 24% of women of childbearing years report problems sleeping all but a few nights per month
 - 40% of women during pregnancy reported trouble sleeping all but a few nights per month
 - 55% post partum women reported problems sleeping all but a few nights per month
 - 25% of perimenopausal women and 30% of postmenopausal women reported problems sleeping all but a few nights per month
- 72% of working mothers had sleep impairments
- Causes of frequent awakenings included
 - Noise (39%), children (20%), pets (17%)
- If women allow children (9%) or pets (14%) to share the bed they suffer more sleep disturbance.
- Consequences to women of poor sleep
 - 80% increased stress
 - 55% unhappy, sad and depressed
 - 39% spend less time with family/friends
 - 33% too tired for sex
 - 27% drive drowsy
 - 20% late for work
- Even though many women were found to be consistently and dangerously sleepy, they are not trying to get more sleep.

- 60% do chores late
- 20% do work related to their job
- 87% watch TV
- 51% read
- 37% engage activities with their children
- Sleep deprived women don't do much with their spouses

Thoughts?

Normal sleep has stages – I, II, slow wave (III, IV) and REM. REM is when we dream.

- Decreased REM results in decreased ability to read emotions in other people's faces
- REM also is the phase in which we consolidate memory and resolve emotional stress. During REM the emotional connections to the memory are stripped away so that we can remember the event without reliving the emotion.
 - Certain meds, like benzodiazapines interfere with normal sleep architecture and can impair memory
- PTSD patients have frequent nightmares and have impairments in the ability for the emotional content to be stripped from the memory so the brain brings it up again and again trying to strip the emotion away. This results in increased stress hormones and increased risk of depression.
- During REM serotonin and norepinephrine shut down, but PTSD patients have higher levels and therefore this interferes with the brains ability to separate the emotional content from the memories
 - A recent study by Walker and his colleagues examined how rest - specifically, **rapid eye movement (REM) sleep - influences our ability to read emotions in other people's faces.** In the small analysis of 36 adults, volunteers were asked to interpret the facial expressions of people in photographs, following either a 60- or 90-minute nap during the day or with no nap. Participants who had reached REM sleep (when dreaming most frequently occurs) during their nap were better able to identify expressions of positive emotions like happiness in other people, compared with participants who did not achieve REM sleep or did not

nap at all. Those volunteers were more sensitive to negative expressions, including anger and fear.

Past research by Walker and colleagues at Harvard Medical School, which was published in the journal *Current Biology*, found that in **people who were sleep deprived, activity in the prefrontal lobe - a region of the brain involved in controlling emotion - was significantly diminished.** He suggests that a similar response may be occurring in the nap-deprived volunteers

REM sleep appears to not only improve our ability to identify positive emotions in others; it may also **round out the sharp angles of our own emotional experiences.** Walker suggests that one function of REM sleep - dreaming, in particular - is to allow the brain to sift through that day's events, **process any negative emotion attached to them, then strip it away from the memories.** He likens the process to applying a "nocturnal soothing balm." REM sleep, he says, "tries to ameliorate the sharp emotional chips and dents that life gives you along the way."

"It's not that you've forgotten. You haven't," he says. "It's a memory of an emotional episode, but it's no longer emotional itself." That palliative safety-valve quality of sleep may be hampered when we fail to reach REM sleep or when REM sleep is disrupted, Walker says. "If you don't let go of the emotion, what results is a constant state of anxiety," he says.

The theory is consistent with new research conducted by Rebecca Bernert, a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at Florida State University who specializes in the relationship between sleep and suicidal thoughts and behaviors, and who also presented her work at the sleep conference this week.

In her study of 82 men and women between the ages of 18 and 66 who were admitted into a mental-health hospital for emergency psychiatric evaluation, Bernert discovered that the presence of severe and frequent nightmares or insomnia was a strong predictor of suicidal thoughts and behaviors. More than half of the study participants had attempted suicide at least once in the past, and the 17% of the study group who had made an attempt within the previous month had dramatically higher scores in nightmare frequency and intensity than the rest. Bernert found that the relationship between nightmares or insomnia and suicide persisted, even when researchers controlled for other factors like depression

If that's the case, it may help explain the recurring nightmares that characterize psychiatric conditions like posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Walker says. "The brain has not stripped away the emotional rind from that experience memory," he says, so "the next night, the brain offers this up, and it fails again, and it starts to sound like a broken record ... What you hear [PTSD] patients describing is, 'I can't get over the event.' "

At the biological level, Walker explains, the "emotional rind" translates to sympathetic nervous-system activity during sleep: faster heart rate and the release of stress chemicals. Understanding why nightmares recur and how REM sleep facilitates emotional processing -

or hinders it, when nightmares take place and perpetuate the physical stress symptoms - may eventually provide clues to effective treatments of painful mental disorders. Perhaps, even, by simply addressing sleeping habits, doctors could potentially interrupt the emotional cycle that can lead to suicide. "There is an opportunity for prevention," Bernert says.

Sleep is also important to our physical health. Poor sleep is linked to:

- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Coronary artery disease
- Immune problems

Several large-scale genomic studies published last month *Nature Genetics* (vol 40, p 1399) have revealed a link between blood sugar levels and the biological clock that cues our sleeping and waking cycles. The link is very significant given that type 2 diabetes is increasing dramatically in the developed world, while average amounts of sleep are decreasing. The research suggests that the link is a protein that recognises the sleep hormone melatonin. It's clear that the less one sleeps, the less insulin one produces, though exactly how melatonin affects the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas remains to be worked out. The intriguing possibility is that this is somehow related to the fact that sleep-poor individuals also tend to be at increased risk of obesity and immune problems.

Sleep deprivation can mimic other disorders, such as depression or ADHD:

- In an analysis of 83 children with ADHD, David Gozal from the University of Louisville, Kentucky, and colleagues found that a quarter of those diagnosed with mild ADHD suffered from sleep apnoea, compared with just 5 per cent of those with strong ADHD and 5 per cent of healthy controls. "SDB can lead to mild ADHD-like behaviours that can be readily misperceived and potentially delay the diagnosis and appropriate treatment," the team concluded (*Pediatrics*, 2007, vol 111, p 554).
- A study of children undergoing surgery to remove their tonsils and adenoids (a common treatment for snoring and sleep apnoea) found that before the operation, 25% had a diagnosis of ADHD compared to 7.4 per cent of

healthy controls. But a year after the operations, half of these children no longer met the criteria for ADHD (*Archives of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery*, vol 133, p 974).

- Sleep deprivation impairs prefrontal cortex function and result in diminished capacity to modulate limbic system. This results in more moodiness, impulsivity, less ability to focus, organize, plan, self restrain and problem solve.
- Sleep deprivation in childhood can interfere with healthy brain development.

Age and condition	Average amount of sleep per day
Newborn	up to 18 hours
1–12 months	14–18 hours
1–3 years	12–15 hours
3–5 years	11–13 hours
5–12 years	9–11 hours
Adolescents	9–10 hours
Adults, including elderly	7–8(+) hours
Pregnant women	8(+) hours

- Things to improve sleep:
 - Make healthy sleep a priority; (Sleep over TV, games, studies, work)
 - Allow enough time to get 7-9(adults) hours of sleep each night;
 - Create a relaxing and quiet environment for sleep;
 - Exercise regularly (but not less than 3 hours before bedtime) and eat a healthy diet;
 - Avoid caffeine and alcohol;

- If you have a new infant, arrange for help;
- Do not let children or pets in bed with you;
- Cool environment;
- Melatonin 3mg 6 p.m.;
- Early a.m. bright light; and
- Healthy spirituality (clear conscience).

Questions?

MONDAY

The lesson states, “Much of the time, if we would listen to what our bodies tell us, we would get enough rest.”

What things interfere with our ability to get enough sleep?

- Work
- Housework
- Schoolwork
- Worries
- Eating late
- Caffeine
- TV
- Video games
- Telephone
- Texting
- Guilty conscience
- Alcohol, tobacco, drugs
- Pets
- Children
- Relationship problems
- Situational stressors
- Pain states

The lesson asks us to “Consider the word restoration, which means ‘the act of returning to an original state or condition.’”

Thoughts about this? Is this meaning connected with Sabbath? How?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “God rested...” thoughts? Why is it hard to grasp? Is it hard because we have failed to understand the Great Controversy, the nature of God’s character and government and the nature of sin? What kind of rest did God take? Was it a physical rest? If we think it was a physical rest then we miss the point:

So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.” ¹⁸ For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. John 5:17, 18

Does God stop physically working (expending energy) on Sabbath? Here is a commentary from the book Education:

As regards this world, God's work of creation is completed. For "the works were finished from the foundation of the world." [HEB. 4:3.] **But his energy is still exerted in upholding the objects of his creation.** It is not because the mechanism that has once been set in motion continues to act by its own inherent energy, that the pulse beats, and breath follows breath; but every breath, every pulsation of the heart is an evidence of the all-pervading care of Him in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." [ACTS 17:28.] **It is not because of inherent power** that year by year the earth produces her bounties, and continues her motion around the sun. **The hand of God guides the planets, and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens.** He "bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by

names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." [ISA. 40:26.] **It is through his power that vegetation flourishes, that the leaves appear**, and the flowers bloom. He "maketh grass to grow upon the mountains," and by him the valleys are made fruitful. Education 195.

Does God rest every seventh day? What kind of rest did God take on the Sabbath? He rested from presenting the truth about Himself. He rested from presenting evidence to refute Satan's lies. He rested His case. He left His intelligent creatures free to consider the allegation of Satan and the evidence He had provided and come to their own conclusion.

But when mankind fell, God had another work to do, a new work that He didn't need to do before man sinned. What work was that? Christ came to finish the work Adam was created to achieve as well the work of reversing the damage sin caused this creation. And after Christ finished His work, He again rested. He rested His case on the Sabbath and the intelligences of the universe were now convinced of God's goodness and Satan was exposed as the liar, murderer and fraud.

Some question the Sabbath being for the universe when the Bible says the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. How do you answer this?

- 1Cor 4:9 this world is a lesson book to the universe
- Isa 66 that in the new heaven and earth all will celebrate the Sabbath

Commentary from EGW:

- In the beginning the Father and the Son had rested upon the Sabbath after Their work of creation. When "the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them" (Gen. 2:1), **the Creator and all heavenly beings rejoiced in contemplation of the glorious scene.** "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job

38:7. . . . When there shall be a "restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21), the creation Sabbath, the day on which Jesus lay at rest in Joseph's tomb, will still be a day of rest and rejoicing. Heaven and earth will unite in praise, as "from one sabbath to another" (Isa. 66:23) the nations of the saved shall bow in joyful worship to God and the Lamb. {Mar 371.1}

What were the heavenly beings doing on Sabbath? Contemplating, thinking, weighing the issues, coming to their own conclusion, but what about after the fall of Adam and Christ's work of redemption? Why rest in the tomb on Sabbath? For contemplation?

- It was in order that the heavenly universe might see the conditions of the covenant of redemption that Christ bore the penalty in behalf of the human race. The throne of Justice must be eternally and forever made secure, even tho the race be wiped out, and another creation populate the earth. **By the sacrifice Christ was about to make, all doubts would be forever settled, and the human race would be saved** if they would return to their allegiance. Christ alone could restore honor to God's government. The cross of Calvary would be looked upon **by the unfallen worlds, by the heavenly universe, by Satanic agencies, by the fallen race, and every mouth would be stopped.** In making His infinite sacrifice Christ would exalt and honor the law. He would make known the exalted character of God's government, which could not in any way be changed to meet man in his sinful condition.

Who is able to describe the last scenes of Christ's life on earth, His trial in the judgment hall, His crucifixion? **Who witnessed these scenes?--The heavenly universe, God the Father, Satan and his angels.** {ST, July 12, 1899 par. 2}

- **Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer.** By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he

had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

Thoughts?

The lesson says the Sabbath is a perpetual sign of our recognition of His love. Why? How? Did the Jews worship on the true Sabbath? Did they experience God's love? Why not? What was the problem? They believed in a legal system of salvation, a system with a legalistic God who is angry, wrathful and must inflict punishment. Can that be a problem today?

Read last paragraph, "Besides all the spiritual..." thoughts? Did they need a Sabbath to rest without guilt or rest their bodies in Eden? Will this be the reason for Sabbath in the earth made new? What is the reason for the Sabbath in the new earth?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "The rest that Jesus..." thoughts? The Greek word for soul is "psuche" which means our minds. How does Jesus bring rest to our minds?

Read third paragraph, "It includes..." Does this bring rest to your mind?

How do you hear the idea that God accepts us because of Jesus perfect work?

- Is it that God is unaccepting or somehow against us until Jesus presents His blood to the Father and the Father becomes convinced by Jesus to accept us?

Christ was not only an expression of the Father's love, but a channel to convey the love of God to men. Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us. He gave His life that He might bring salvation to perishing sinners. Man could not satisfy the claims of justice; no human hand **could apply the atoning blood and cleanse the heart from sin.** Christ alone, by clothing His divinity with humanity, could reach mankind and bring it near to God. {ST, January 13, 1909 par. 1}

And "**God so loved the world** that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **In the compassionate life of Christ we behold the character of the Father.** "He that hath seen Me," Christ declares, "hath seen the Father." {ST, January 13, 1909 par. 2}

God does not love us because Christ died for us, but it was because He loved us that He gave Christ as a ransom for our sins. Satan has represented God as selfish and oppressive, as claiming all, and giving nothing, as requiring the service of His creatures for His own glory, and making no sacrifice for their good. But the **gift of Christ reveals the Father's heart.** It testifies that the thoughts of God toward us are "thoughts of peace, and not of evil." It declares that while God's hatred of sin is strong as death, **His love for the sinner is stronger than death.** Having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. {ST, January 13, 1909 par. 3}

- Is Jesus covering us from the view of the Father? Then what is Jesus covering us for or from?
- If Jesus is covering us from the view of the Father what does that say about God and does that bring rest to your mind?
- As soon as Adam and Eve sinned they ran and HID, are we saying that Jesus is actively hiding us from the Father?

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He

offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. **By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

- To whom did Jesus pay a penalty?
- What is the high standard God requires of us? How do we experience this? Did Jesus achieve for us that which we could not achieve for ourselves? And can we experience this transformation through the work of the HS in our lives?

How would you explain the good news brought by Jesus which brings us rest?

SUNDAY

Talks about being too busy to rest, what in your life interferes with your ability to get daily sleep, and weekly rest?

FRIDAY

Read question 1 and discuss

Health and Healing Lesson 8 2Q 2010

The Atmosphere of Praise

MONDAY

Read last paragraph, “God did just...” thoughts? Well said in the quarterly. Where did human life originate? When did God create human life? Is it true, as the quarterly says, that our individual lives originated in Eden? What was the condition of humanity when God created mankind? What is our condition today? Why? For each of us, why are we the way we are, did God create us in this condition?

What is the implication of this truth?

- This is not as good as God can do
- God did not want you to have any defect you may have
- God did not use His power to create us with sickness and sin
- Sickness, disease, and defect are a result of sin
- God is working to heal and restore us to His perfect ideal

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “Every soul...” thoughts?

Have you ever met someone who created a positive atmosphere? Someone you just enjoyed to be in their presence? Have you ever met someone who created a negative atmosphere?

If we are creating a negative atmosphere what does that mean? Is such an atmosphere information? Does it reveal something? When Christ said “the good man brings forth good out of the good stored up in him and the evil man brings forth evil out of the evil stored up in him” would this include the atmosphere one creates?

If someone habitually creates a negative atmosphere would that inform of a problem in their heart? What kind of negative atmospheres are there?

- Violent
- Erotic
- Perverse
- Victimized
- Self-absorbed
- Angry, irritable, pouting

Can we change the atmosphere we create? How?

- Remove infecting agents (TV, music, games, books that instill negativity)
- Separate from people who are negative
- Fill mind with healthy material
- Surrendering heart to God and inviting in His Spirit
- Regular interaction with God, prayer, meditation, Bible study
- Counseling if needed
- Forgiving those who have injured
- Repentance for offenses
- Trust God with outcomes
- Set healthy boundaries (leave others free, not just from obvious control but to think, act, feel as they choose, even to not like you)

What kind of atmosphere is there in heaven? What kind of atmosphere do God's children create?

How about the world? Can we quantify elements of each atmosphere?

Heaven's atmosphere – love, concern, compassion, empathy, sympathy, patience, mercy, joy, freedom, truthfulness

The world's atmosphere? Selfishness, harshness, greed, coercion, control, deceit

How have God's representatives been treated by the world through history? What kind of atmosphere did they have to contend?

- Noah?
- Moses?
- David?
- Jeremiah?
- John the Baptist?
- Jesus?
- The Apostles?
- The Early Church?
- The Reformers?
- What about today?

What kind of atmosphere did all of these people create? What elements do you see in common amongst God's people? How does it contrast with those who value the world?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "The air has..." thoughts? Were the animals created as they are today? Have animals evolved over time? Have they changed based on environmental changes over time?

- Did God create animals to kill and eat one another?
- Consider all the breeds of dogs and cats, have all of these always been in existence? From where did they come?

What does this say about God? God designed life on earth to change based on experience, this is part of His design. And when we sin we change in unhealthy ways.

Can you identify any way in which life has "changed" because of sin?

- Humans born blind, deaf, or other deformities?
- If we live destructive lives, unhealthy, unruly, rebellious, will this change us? Will we pass along any of these changes to our children?

Life experience changes which genes are turned on and which are turned off, and we pass along not only the genes we have to our children, but also the instructions on how those genes are to be expressed.

The commandment says:

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, **punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,** ⁶ but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. Exodus 20:4-6

What does this mean? Does it mean God uses His power to punish your unborn children, babies, for your sins? Or, does it mean, that God's design for humanity is that we pass along to our children our own tendencies, and if we rebel we, in harmony with God's design (law), pass along disadvantages to our children thus punishing them?

Some people would have you believe God uses His power to punish the children for the sins of the parents. If this were true what kind of a god would he be? Which of us had a choice in our parents? Would you love and trust a god who would punish you for the sins of your grandparents?

How do we know what to believe?

Let's read what the Bible says in Ezekiel:

**18 The word of the LORD came to me: ²“What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel:
“The fathers eat sour grapes,
and the children's teeth are set on edge’?”**

³ “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, **you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel.** ⁴ For **every living soul belongs to me**, the father as well as the son—both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die.

⁵ **“Suppose there is a righteous man who does what is just and right.**

⁶ He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look to the idols of the house of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor’s wife or lie with a woman during her period.

⁷ He does not oppress anyone, but returns what he took in pledge for a loan. He does not commit robbery but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked.

⁸ He does not lend at usury or take excessive interest. He withholds his hand from doing wrong and judges fairly between man and man.

⁹ **He follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws. That man is righteous; he will surely live, declares the Sovereign LORD.**

¹⁰ **“Suppose he has a violent son, who sheds blood or does any of these other things ¹¹ (though the father has done none of them):**

“He eats at the mountain shrines. He defiles his neighbor’s wife.

¹² He oppresses the poor and needy. He commits robbery.

He does not return what he took in pledge. He looks to the idols.

He does detestable things.

¹³ He lends at usury and takes excessive interest.

Will such a man live? He will not! Because he has done all these detestable things, he will surely be put to death and his blood will be on his own head.

¹⁴ “But suppose this son has a son who sees all the sins his father commits, and though he sees them, he does not do such things:

¹⁵ “He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look to the idols of the house of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor’s wife.

¹⁶ He does not oppress anyone or require a pledge for a loan. He does not commit robbery but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked.

¹⁷ He withholds his hand from sin and takes no usury or excessive interest. He keeps my laws and follows my decrees.

He will not die for his father’s sin; he will surely live. ¹⁸ But his father will die for his own sin, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother and did what was wrong among his people.

¹⁹ **“Yet you ask, ‘Why does the son not share the guilt of his father?’ Since the son has done what is just and right and has been careful to keep all my decrees, he will surely live.** ²⁰ **The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son.** The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him.

²¹ “But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die. ²² None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered against him. Because of the righteous things he has done, he will live. ²³ **Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?**

²⁴ “But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die.

²⁵ **“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear, O house of Israel: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? ²⁶ If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he has committed he will die. ²⁷ But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life. ²⁸ Because he considers all the offenses he has committed and turns away from them, he will surely live; he will not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Are my ways unjust, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust?**

³⁰ **“Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. ³¹ Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!**

Does God punish the children for the sins of the fathers? Then how do we understand the commandment?

One of our church founders weighed in, supporting my view that God designed us to pass along ourselves, our strengths or weaknesses to our children:

- What the parents are, that to a great extent the children will be. The physical conditions of the parents, their dispositions and appetites, their mental and moral tendencies, are to a greater or less degree reproduced in their children.--MH 371 (1905). {1MCP 138.5}
- The nobler the aims, the higher the mental and spiritual endowments, and the better developed the physical powers of the parents, the better will be the life equipment they give their children. In cultivating that which is best in themselves,

parents are exerting an influence to mold society and to uplift future generations.... {1MCP 139.1}

- Through the indulgence of appetite and passion their energies are wasted, and millions are ruined for this world and for the world to come. Parents should remember that their children must encounter these temptations. Even before the birth of the child, the preparation should begin that will enable it to fight successfully the battle against evil. {1MCP 139.2}

Is this speaking of just environment or also of genetics? Consider this quotation:

- As a rule every intemperate man who rears children transmits his inclinations and evil tendencies to his offspring ; **he gives them disease from his own inflamed and corrupted blood.** Licentiousness, disease, and imbecility are transmitted as an inheritance of woe from father to son, and from generation to generation, and this brings anguish and suffering into the world.-- T., V. IV, p. 30. {HL 57.1}

Science has proved this to be true – we change ourselves based on our choices and these changes we pass along to our children – but there is good news for all of us who were born to imperfect parents. (Those of you who were born to perfect parents don't need this encouragement):

- In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but

in the fullness of divine power. **It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure.** Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. **Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil,** and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}

What is being described? First, no matter who our parents were, no matter what our inherited tendencies toward evil, through the indwelling Spirit of God we can experience victory.

Second, she describes the Spirit helping us by doing what? “Making effectual what has been wrought out” by Christ. What has Christ wrought out? A perfect character, the Holy Spirit infuses us with new mind, motive, character that Christ achieved in His human brain while here on earth.

If Christ had not done this the Holy Spirit would have nothing to heal us with!

We can actually experience, because of Christ’s victory in His human brain, a new heart, right spirit and victory over all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil!

Thoughts?

But some prefer to believe God inflicts punishment for sin, how do you understand this verse:

⁴⁰ I lift my hand to heaven and declare:
As surely as I live forever,
⁴¹ when I sharpen my flashing sword
and my hand grasps it in judgment,
I will take vengeance on my adversaries
and repay those who hate me. DT 32:40,41

Thoughts? How do we understand these texts? Should we just have faith, “God said it, I believe it, that settles it”? Or should we allow scripture to interpret scripture?

A sword is what kind of instrument? An instrument of war – what kind of war is God involved in? Is it a war of physical might and power?

- For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Cor 10:3-5
- God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government.** The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon **goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used.** God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

What kind of war are we in? A war of ideas, centering on the character of God. Is God using might and power to destroy?

- ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty. Zech 4:6

So what about this sword? Are we to believe the sword God wields is physical, or even representative of physical might and power?

- I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that

no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ **Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.** “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Rev 19:11-16

- Who is the rider? Christ,
 - With what does He make war? Justice, which is what? Rightness, or truth!
 - What does the robe dripped in blood refer to? Is it not His selflessness, His life sacrificed to save us?
 - What does the fine linen represent? Perfect character
 - What about the sword? Will Christ have a piece of metal coming out of His mouth? What comes out of the mouth? Words, and Christ is called the Word of God and what kind of words does God speak? Truth!
- For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Heb 4:12,13

What kind of war is this? What is the weapon to be used? What is the sword of God? The wicked are destroyed by the revelation of truth and love proceeding from God’s unveiled presence. Our very condition determines our destiny.

- “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? **For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.** ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the

evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ **For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.**” Matt 12:33-37

This gives us the opportunity to explore the process of reasoning, or critical thinking. When you hear an idea, a concept, a perspective, maybe conflicting ideas, how can you discern which is the more accurate?

Here are some of the principles I use:

- I use evidence based integrative approach to Bible study and Come and Reason SS class does not presume to tell people *what* to think but stimulates people to think, teaches members *how* to think.
- My approach is to require any individual truth to also fit the whole. And the main central truth of Scripture, to which all truth must align, is the truth about God’s character of love.
- If any doctrine undermines the truth about God, as revealed in Christ, it is misplaced, misunderstood, misaligned or simply wrong.
- Further, all true Bible doctrine will always harmonize with God’s law, all of God’s law (including nature and science). My approach is to integrate, as my mind can assimilate it, 100% of the inspired record along with the scientific record. I don’t want to leave anything out and I don’t want to compartmentalize beliefs.

Thoughts? Is this a reasonable approach? What about experience, where does experience come in?

Experience is said to be the best teacher. Genuine experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge, but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes

experience. **Real experience is gained by a variety of careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude, and an anxious desire to learn, to improve, and to reform** on every point that is not in harmony with physical and moral laws. {Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene 109.1}

That which many term experience is not experience at all; it has resulted from mere habit, or from a course of indulgence, thoughtlessly and often ignorantly followed. There has not been a **fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved in the action. Experience which is opposed to natural law,--which is in conflict with the unchangeable principles of nature,--is not to be relied upon.** Superstition arising from a diseased imagination is often arrayed in opposition to reason and to scientific principles. To many a person, the idea that others may gainsay what he has learned by experience, seems folly, and even cruelty itself. But there are more errors received and held through false ideas of experience than from any other cause. There are many invalids today who will ever remain such because they cannot be convinced that their experience is not to be relied upon. {CTBH 109.2}

What did you hear in this that we can use? Examine evidence, careful experiments, examining evidence without prejudice. Why does this work? Because such experiments bring into the open the laws upon which God has designed the universe to run, and these laws are constants, testable and rightly understood lead us back to God. When we understand these laws we can use them as a barometer upon which to base our conclusions.

There is a real conflict between certain views of God being taught in Christianity and even in our church. How can you know which view is the right one? Does the above guideline give us a basis to proceed?

Are we to rely on feelings? When Bill Clinton stood before the nation and said He did not have relations with that woman, did he appear

sincere? Was he able to move people's emotions? Did he garner certain sympathy and were many inclined to believe him?

When Monica brought out her dress, was it possible some had negative feelings toward her? Were their feelings relevant to the evidence found on the dress? What was more reliable the President's declaration of the evidence?

God runs his universe on certain principles, certain fundamental laws, certain constants that life is designed to operate upon.

The Law of Love
 The Law of Liberty
 The Law of Worship
 The Laws of health
 The Laws of nature

Let's look at the law of liberty –

What happens when liberty is violated?

- Love is always damaged and eventually destroyed
- Rebellion is instilled
- If freedom isn't restored, individuality is eroded

Love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom

This law is not an enacted, legislated or created law – this law emanates from the very nature and character of God Himself for God is love!

It is one of the principles that life is designed to operate upon and our health and happiness is dependent upon harmony with it.

Because this is a law you can test it – test it on your spouse

- And once you are convinced that this law is real, that it works, that it is a constant, that it never changes, we have a standard against which we can test our theories, our doctrines, our

beliefs about God. God will never violate His own character of love, which means God will never violate freedom, the law of liberty.

This standard, this law is one of the spiritual weapons you can wield in warfare against evil forces:

Remember the war is over the knowledge of God, who is God, what is He like, can He be trusted

Is God like Satan has alleged

OR

Is God like Jesus revealed Him to be

This is the question

We have a standard against which we can test our theories

Is God a power monger, is God a being of stern justice who must use His power to inflict penalties

Does God say, "All I want is your love but if you don't love me I will kill you, I will burn you in hell and torture you until you die."

In every false religion of the world the central fallacy is a distorted picture of God. He is either a being who is too busy to care, detached and disinterested or a cruel being of absolute power that we must be appeased.

And what is the final contest over?

What will be the culmination of events as the Bible predicts?

A conflict of worship, over two systems over two pictures of God

- The Beast System which violates liberty, neither buy and sell
- God's system of love,
 - Greater love has no man than he give his life..
 - This is how we know what love is..

- For God so loved the world..
- these are they who did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death

What is the result of worshipping a God who does not value our freedom?

What is the price we pay for accepting lies about God?

What is the consequence to believing in a God who will use His power to destroy, a God who must be appeased in order to forgive?

It is a violation of the Law of Liberty and just as in human relationships the outcome is predictable:

- love is damaged and eventually destroyed
- rebellion is instilled
- individuality is eroded

And Jesus states that at the end of time the love of most will grow cold – Paul states they will have a form of godliness but deny its power. Why will they have a form of godliness but without power? Why will love grow cold? Because they have accepted Satan's version of God and preach it from the pulpit!

When we have a form of godliness but worship a god who is like Satan alleges, love is destroyed and over time---

We either become shadow people

- people who have lost their ability to reason
- people who worship out of fear of punishment
- people who become non thinking empty shells afraid to have an independent thought, God said it, I believe it that settles it, we don't ask questions we take that on faith,
- people who rigidly clinging to rules, rituals and ceremony without understanding what they mean
- We become like that god and will use power to control others, dominate others, coerce others into our way,
- We will bombing abortion clinics, flying planes into buildings.
- Use our power to silence freedom of thought and opposing views.

- o No one can buy or sell save him who is like this god.

OR

We rebel completely and reject the idea of God altogether and become a post modernist agnostic, evolutionary teaching atheist

This is Satan's goal – to destroy love and trust for God and thus destroy humanity!

Love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom

God cannot be saying – love me or I'll kill you, love me or I will be forced to torture you in hell forever.

If you hear a such concepts, test them, do experiments. We are to practice God's law in our lives. We are to live a life in complete harmony with God, so if someone teaches such distortions and you are confused, challenge them to test it and see what happens.

Love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom

Questions?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson talks about the importance of fresh air versus stale air or polluted air, no question about it. The lesson then states, "It's so much better to sleep at night with a window open, even just a little, so that we can enjoy the benefits of fresh air while we sleep." - thoughts?

Better than what?

FRIDAY

Read third paragraph, "Although there may be..." thoughts? What kind of experiences are we confronted with which will contaminate our minds? What can we do about it?

Health and Healing Lesson 9 2Q 2010

Temperance

MONDAY

The lesson ID's Noah as the first person on record to get drunk – any thoughts about that? I heard one person speculate that in the aftermath of the flood the environment had changed and that caused a change in the fermentation process causing the wine to ferment either at a different rate or concentration than occurred before the flood and this is why Noah got drunk. No evidence to prove it, just one person's theory.

Read last paragraph, “The mind...” thoughts?

What things cloud the mind or cause intoxication or undermine reason and judgment?

- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Certain foods
 - High sugar foods, high fat/animal foods
 - **But the sugar and milk combined are liable to cause fermentation in the stomach, and are thus harmful. The free use of sugar in any form tends to clog the system,** and is not unfrequently a cause of disease. Some think that they must eat only just such an amount, and just such a quality, and confine themselves to two or three kinds of food. But in eating too small an amount, and that not of the best quality, they do not receive sufficient nourishment. {Counsels on Temperance and Bible Hygiene 56.4}
 - According to the American Heart Association added sugars to our diet contribute to obesity, DM II and increased coronary artery disease.
- Sleep deprivation
- Certain medicines
- Medical illnesses

- Over study
 - **Intemperance in study is a species of intoxication, and those who indulge in it, like the drunkard, wander from safe paths and stumble and fall in the darkness.** The Lord would have every student bear in mind that the eye must be kept single to the glory of God. He is not to exhaust and waste his physical and mental powers in seeking to acquire all possible knowledge of the sciences, but is to preserve the freshness and vigor of all his powers to engage in the work which the Lord has appointed him in helping souls to find the path of righteousness.... The command of heaven is to do, to work,--to do something that will reflect glory to God by being a benefit to our fellow men.... {Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students 405.3}
- Physical deconditioning
- Video games
- Music?

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Alcohol – What impact does alcohol have on the brain? First let's explore some of the different brain regions and their relationship.

Phineas Gage

- Born July 9, 1823 – May 21, 1860
- September 13, 1848 an Iron rod 1¼” diameter 3'7” length, weighing 13.25 pounds blasted through his brain
- He survived and was talking within a few minutes and sat up and awake for the ¾ mile ride to town

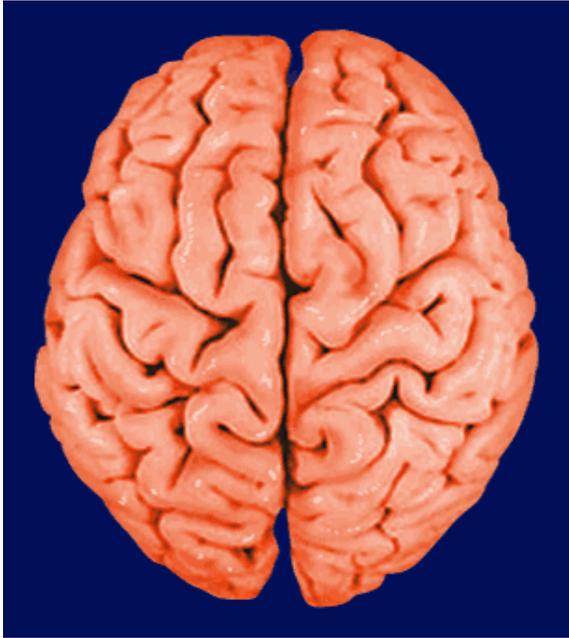


Dr. Harlow's Description

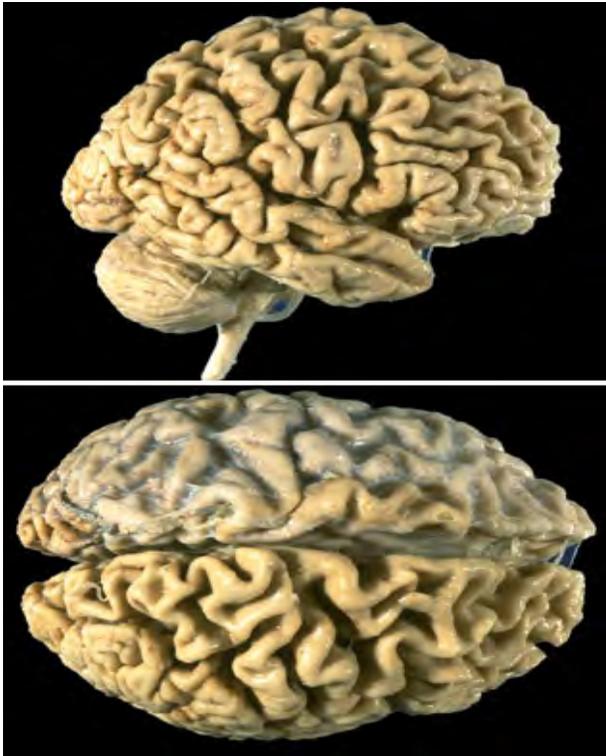
- The equilibrium or balance, so to speak, between his intellectual faculties and animal propensities, seems to have been destroyed. He is fitful, irreverent, indulging at times in the grossest profanity (which was not previously his custom), manifesting but little deference for his fellows, impatient of restraint or advice when it conflicts with his desires, at times pertinaciously obstinate, yet capricious and vacillating, devising many plans of future operations, which are no sooner arranged than they are abandoned in turn for others appearing more feasible. A child in his intellectual capacity and manifestations, he has the animal passions of a strong man. Previous to his injury, although untrained in the schools, he possessed a well-balanced mind, and was looked upon by those who knew him as a shrewd, smart businessman, very energetic and persistent in executing all his plans of operation. In this regard his mind was radically changed, so decidedly that his friends and acquaintances said he was 'no longer Gage.

The prefrontal cortex is the seat of our higher functions of judgment, self-governance, reason, wisdom, etc.

Normal Brain:



Alzheimer's Brain:



You can find spect scans of brains at:

<http://www.amenclinics.com/brain-science/spect-image-gallery/>

Alcohol and drugs damage our brains, particularly our prefrontal cortexes and it is here that we have our highest capacities.

Why is it important to avoid these activities? Because if we damage the PFC we damage our judgment, our ability to self restrain, our characters!

Thoughts?

Alcohol and drugs are damaging no question about it, now let's look at the lesson and use of scripture:

Read second paragraph, "Interestingly, long before..." thoughts?

While it is true avoidance of alcohol would protect the developing fetus, was this the primary purpose? Perhaps, but what else did a Nazirite have to avoid?

- The LORD said to Moses, ² "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of separation to the LORD as a Nazirite, ³ he must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or from other fermented drink. He must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. ⁴ As long as he is a Nazirite, he must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins. ⁵ "During the entire period of his vow of separation no razor may be used on his head. He must be holy until the period of his separation to the LORD is over; he must let the hair of his head grow long. Numbers 6:1-5

Thoughts? Was there something more involved in the Nazirite vow than just protecting the brain from the damaging effects of alcohol?

TUESDAY

Is alcohol good for the heart?

No! Tannins are good for the heart which are the chemicals that give food their color and this can be experienced with grape juice.

The lesson did a good job of documenting why the studies which suggested that alcohol might have heart benefit were flawed.

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, “Temperance is so...” thoughts?

Have you ever known someone who was doing something “good” to excess? I have patients who want to eat healthy to the point they are killing themselves – ever know of church members who get so into the health message they actually undermine their health?

Why does this happen? Because people focus on specific do’s and don’ts rather than on the principles involved. I know people who won’t take medications because they believe they should handle their problems with natural remedies, but some situations require meds and to avoid them only results in ruined health.

Read last paragraph, “Ellen G. White caught...” thoughts?

What does it mean to avoid that which is harmful? Can something be harmful in one situation but helpful in another situation?

- A sharp knife used by a murderer or surgeon?
- Alcohol used for recreation or as a medicinal?
- 100% oxygen for healthy lungs or person in respiratory failure?
- Antibiotics for viral infections or for meningitis?
- Amphetamines for recreation or ADHD or narcolepsy?
- Wheat bread for someone with celiac disease or someone without?
- Peanut butter or strawberries for someone with allergies?

Can we make cookie cutter rules about what is harmful or must we use our judgment and decide where, who and in what circumstances?

Are there some things harmful in all situations?

- Deviations from the law of love
- Cigarette smoking
- Nuclear weapons exposure

Does God prefer we avoid harmful substances because He says so? Is there a better reason? What if we don't avoid these substances? What will God do? Try to heal us if we will let Him!

What does it say about God that He wants us to understand, to think for ourselves?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Why is harming self more than harming yourself? How does unhealthy choices for you hurt others?

- Those who love you are emotionally hurt
- Your children will be impacted by your example
- Your unborn children will be impacted by your DNA changes
- Your family and society will be impacted by financial burdens your unhealthy lifestyle will have upon them – increased crime to supply you with drugs, increased health care costs to pay for your sicknesses, increased taxes to pay for your childcare etc. etc.

Read second paragraph, “The Bible...” thoughts?

If we don't take care of our bodies what happens? Do we lose autonomy or freedom? How?

If we abuse our bodies with burgers and fries, soft drinks, hard drinks, drugs – does God have to send an angel down from heaven to punish us?

What do we miss out on? Can we experience the fullness of love, joy, happiness if we abuse our bodies?

If we have abused our bodies can God still save us or are we eternally lost? God can save and heal all who trust Him, we still may have health problems on earth awaiting a new body, but we can begin the healing process of recovery here and now.

Read fourth paragraph, “What a price...” thoughts?

How do you understand the language of paying a price, or ransom language in scripture?

- Did it cost God (all three) a lot to save us? Yes, what does this mean? Does it mean that they had to pay one of them off by the blood of the other, or the actual process of redemption had a price to it? Like saving someone in renal failure by donating a kidney, would that cost? Is it because you have to donate the kidney so the doctor would be willing to save?
- What about ransom? What does a ransom do? It is the price necessary to free someone held in captivity. What holds us in captivity?
 - Two things, the lies of Satan about God, which Christ destroyed by His perfect life, death and resurrection. So one price is the price of truth.
 - Secondly, we are held in bondage by sin, and Christ had to deliver humanity from the carnal nature, which He did when He destroyed it at the Cross. We couldn't do this, but Christ being a unique being took our condition upon Himself and perfectly restored the law of love into the human species and destroyed the survival of the fittest, me first, selfish instinct which infects us all. This is the ransom price.

- The blood of Christ is a symbolic way of representing both. The blood represents the perfect life of Christ as well as the truth He revealed about His Father!
- The leaven of **truth** works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By **it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb.** COL 102
- The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

FRIDAY

Read third paragraph and discuss

Read questions 2 and 4 and discuss

Health and Healing Lesson 10 2Q 2010

Integrity: Wholeness and Holiness

SABBATH

Read memory text – what would this look like today? Any examples?

What is integrity? According to the dictionary

- adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty

Wouldn't it matter then what ones morals were, what ones principles were?

Where does one derive ones principles?

- a fundamental, primary, or general law or truth from which others are derived: *the principles of modern physics.*
- a fundamental doctrine or tenet; a distinctive ruling opinion: *the principles of the Church.*

Does it make a difference which definition we use and live by?

Examples:

- The Jews in Christ day had principles set by the church on what they could do on Sabbath. Did the Pharisees and religious leaders adhere to these principles? So, if those principles were the standard then they were people of integrity-
 - Then why did Jesus have conflict with them? Was He breaking the Sabbath? What were the principles Jesus was living by?
 - What did the wrong principles in regard to the Sabbath lead the Jewish leaders to do? Crucify the Lord of the

Sabbath and want Him off the cross so they could keep the Sabbath.

- What is the true principle of the Sabbath? Is it the mere avoidance of work? Is it avoidance of going out to eat? Is it attendance at church? Is it the mere avoidance of chores, homework and TV/Radio? What is the principle of the Sabbath?
- What about today – any examples like this of people in the church keeping the Sabbath based on church rules rather than God's principles? Could they also crucify Christ?

What would lead people to do this? How could people crucify God while they think they are keeping the Sabbath? Where could they come up with such distorted principles?

- We are not to think of God only as a judge, and to forget him as our loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this; for **our whole spiritual life will be molded by our conceptions of God's character.** {RH, April 5, 1887 par. 10}
- Having received the faith of the gospel, the next work of the believer is to add to his character virtue, and thus cleanse the heart and prepare the mind **for the reception of the knowledge of God. This knowledge is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation; and it is this alone that can make one like God in character.** Through the knowledge of God and of His Son Jesus Christ, are given to the believer "all things that pertain unto life and godliness." No good gift is withheld from him who sincerely desires to obtain the righteousness of God. {AA 530.3}
- **Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal.** Are we worshipping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne.

He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshipping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

If you were to describe the characteristics of the god the Jewish leadership worshipped at the time of Christ what would they be?

- Powerful
- Vengeful
- Wrathful
- Severe
- Exacting
- Unforgiving

Have you heard leaders today presenting similar picture of God? Are such attributes God's true characteristics? Who is represented by such? Satan, what are God's attributes?

- Love
- Selflessness
- Mercy
- Forgiveness
- Kindness
- Patience
- Gentleness
- True to principle – His character of love (Justice – doing what is right)

Why would people go along with the ugly picture of God and what happens if they do?

- If we mistake the wisdom of man for the wisdom of God we are led astray by the foolishness of man's wisdom. Here is the great danger of many in -----. **They have not an experience for themselves. They have not been in the habit of prayerfully considering for themselves, with**

unprejudiced, unbiased judgment, questions and subjects that are new and that are ever liable to arise. They wait to see what others will think. If these dissent, that is all that is needed to convince them that the subject under consideration is of no account whatever. Although this class is large, it does not change the fact that they are inexperienced and **weak-minded** through long yielding to the enemy, and will always be as **sickly as babes**, walking by others' light, living on others' experience, feeling as others feel, and acting as others act. They act as though they had not an individuality. Their identity is submerged in others; they are merely shadows of those whom they think about right. Unless these become sensible of their wavering character and correct it, they will all fail of everlasting life; they will be unable to cope with the perils of the last days. They will possess no stamina to resist the devil, for they do not know that it is he. Someone must be at their side to inform them whether a foe or a friend is approaching. They are not spiritual, therefore spiritual things are not discerned. They are not wise in those things which relate to the kingdom of God. **Neither young nor old are excusable in trusting to another to have an experience for them.** Said the angel: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." **A noble self-reliance is needed** in the Christian experience and warfare. {2T 129.2}

Thoughts?

Does this remind you of any scripture texts? This takes us to Sunday's lesson.

SUNDAY

Read top paragraph, "Compromise is so easy..." thoughts?

- "Especially as one gets older things do not often appear so black and white as they once did."

Thoughts?

- ¹¹ We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. ¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, ² instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. ³ And God permitting, we will do so. Heb 5:11-6:3

What is being described?

- When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 1Cor 13:11

What is the context of Paul's statement? The chapter on love and what is the purpose of the chapter on love, to give a list of rules or to move people to a higher principle?

What does it mean to be righteous? The children don't understand righteousness, instead they are focused on rules, dos and don'ts, why is this, is this something normal for children?

What are normal developmental stages from childhood to adulthood?

Piaget –

- Sensorimotor - birth to 24 months of age, primary integration of sensory experiences with motor coordination, learning by touching, smelling, hearing, seeing, tasting, building a data base of experiences
- Pre-operational – ages 2-7, children learn to develop thoughts about the world and represent the world by thoughts, language develops, drawing and objects are used. The child cannot solve problems in their mind, thinking is self centered, they cannot empathize well,
 - An example of egocentrism, children cannot distinguish their perspective from others. Three views of a mountain are shown the child and then the child is asked what a traveling doll would see at various angles. The child always picks their own view.
 - At this age they also experience animism, believing inanimate objects have lifelike qualities like the chair was mad at them and made them trip.
 - So how might they conceive of God?
 - Unable to demonstrate conservation – have two beakers of water, one tall and thin the other large and wide, fill the tall thin one up, pour it into the large one and then repeat, which leaves the large beaker only partially full, then refill the tall thin one all the way to the top and ask, which has more water. The child who has not mastered conservation says the tall thin one.
 - Other studies revealed that only 50% of children master this level even at age 13, this impairs ability to see life from another perspective.
- Concrete operations – 7-11 years of age, begin to use basic logic, if A is larger than B and B is larger than C, then A must be larger than C. They can order things in sequence, classify things together that are similar in nature, they can reverse a sequence. But they cannot abstract reason. They begin to start seeing other's perspectives.
- Formal operations – begins around 11 and continues throughout adulthood – can abstract, think logically, hypothesize, include hypothetical possibilities, see various

perspectives on a problem, empathize with others, see the gray and not see only black and white.

What if someone doesn't make the developmental transitions in thinking? What if someone remains in concrete operations? Would that affect their view of God? Would it affect why they do what they do? Did Paul deal with people like this? Would he be speaking of people like this in Hebrews? What about today? Do we have people like this in the church?

Let's look at something even more profound to our situation in the church:

KOHLBERG'S STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

A. PREMORAL OR PRECONVENTIONAL STAGES: Behavior motivated by anticipation of pleasure or pain.

STAGE 1: PUNISHMENT AND OBEDIENCE:

Avoidance of physical punishment and deference to power. The immediate physical consequences of an action determine its goodness or badness.

The atrocities carried out by soldiers during the holocaust who were simply "carrying out orders" under threat of punishment, illustrate that adults as well as children may function at stage one level.

STAGE 2: INSTRUMENTAL EXCHANGE:

Marketplace exchange of favors or blows. "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." Justice is: "Do unto others as they do unto you." Eye for an eye mentality. Wrong doing must be punished.

Vengeance is considered a moral duty.

B. CONVENTIONAL MORALITY: Acceptance of the rules and standards of one's group.

STAGE 3: INTERPERSONAL CONFORMITY:

Right is conformity to the behavioral expectations of one's society or peers. Individuals act to gain approval of others.

Good behavior is that which pleases or helps others within the group. "Everybody is doing it." One earns approval by being conventionally "respectable" and "nice."

Sin is a breach of the expectations of the social order.

Retribution, however, at this stage is collective. Individual vengeance is not allowed. Forgiveness is preferable to revenge. Punishment is mainly for deterrence. Failure to punish is "unfair." "If he can get away with it, why can't I?"

STAGE 4: LAW AND ORDER:

Respect for rules, laws and properly constituted authority. Defense of the given social and institutional order for its own sake.

"Justice" normally refers to criminal or forensic justice. Justice demands that the wrongdoer be punished, that he "pay his debt to society," and that law abiders be rewarded. "A good day's pay for a good day's work."

Injustice is failing to reward work or punish demerit.

Authority figures are seldom questioned. "He must be right. He's the Pope (or the President, or the Judge, or God)."

STAGE 4 ½:

Between the conventional stages and the post-conventional Levels 5 and 6, there is a transitional stage. College-age students that have come to see conventional morality as relative and arbitrary, but have not yet discovered universal ethical principles, may drop into a hedonistic ethic of "do your own thing." This was well noted in the hippie culture of the 1960's. Disrespect for conventional morality was especially

infuriating to the Stage 4 mentality, and indeed was calculated to be so.

C. POSTCONVENTIONAL OR PRINCIPLED MORALITY: Ethical principles

STAGE 5: PRIOR RIGHTS AND SOCIAL CONTRACT:

Moral action in a specific situation is not defined by reference to a checklist of rules, but from logical application of universal, abstract, moral principles. Individuals have natural or inalienable rights and liberties that are prior to society and must be protected by society.

Retributive justice repudiated.

The statement, "Justice demands punishment," which is a self-evident truism to the Stage 4 mind, is just as self-evidently nonsense at Stage 5. Retributive punishment is neither rational nor just, because it does not promote the rights and welfare of the individual. Only legal sanctions that fulfill that purpose are imposed-- protection of future victims, deterrence, and rehabilitation.

The freedom of the individual should be limited by society only when it infringes upon someone else's freedom.

STAGE 6: UNIVERSAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES:

An individual who reaches this stage acts out of universal principles based upon the equality and worth of all human beings.

Persons are never means to an end, but are ends in themselves. Having rights means more than individual liberties.

This is the "Golden Rule" model. A list of rules inscribed in stone is no longer necessary.

At this level, God is understood to say what is right because it is right; His sayings are not right, just because it is God who said them.

Persons at this level have accepted God's invitation to "come and let us reason together".

THE FOLLOWING ARE OBSERVATIONS THAT WERE MADE BY KOHLBERG

1. STAGE DEVELOPMENT IS INVARIANT.

One must progress through the stages in order, and one cannot get to a higher stage without passing through the stage immediately preceding it.

2. IN STAGE DEVELOPMENT, SUBJECTS CANNOT COMPREHEND MORAL REASONING AT A STAGE MORE THAN ONE STAGE BEYOND THEIR OWN.

3. IN STAGE DEVELOPMENT, MOVEMENT THROUGH THE STAGES IS EFFECTED WHEN COGNITIVE DISEQUILIBRIUM IS CREATED, THAT IS, WHEN A PERSON'S COGNITIVE OUTLOOK IS NOT ADEQUATE TO COPE WITH A GIVEN MORAL DILEMMA.

4. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE FOR A HUMAN BEING TO BE PHYSICALLY MATURE BUT NOT MORALLY MATURE.

5. KOHLBERG BELIEVED THAT ONLY ABOUT 25% OF PERSONS EVER GROW TO LEVEL SIX, THE MAJORITY REMAINING AT LEVEL FOUR.

The Bible enjoins principles of modesty, humility, and wise stewardship of the money. Application of these principles might preclude the purchase of expensive jewelry, furs, flashy cars, or other items primarily for show. A person functioning at level six would have no problem applying these principles. Persons functioning at a level four on the other hand, might make rules about "jewelry" (in a church for instance) or red dresses, or cosmetics. But they might not even notice a flashy

car or the lady who wears a new dress every single week. Those things aren't on the list. If Kohlberg's observation is true, then level 6 thinkers would be in the minority. They might even be misunderstood and persecuted by a level 4 majority (Christ being the primary example).

STAGE THEORY AND THE ATONEMENT

Level 1: Man sinned and offended God. God responded with angry vengeance taking the life of Jesus.

Level 2: God somehow struck a bargain with the Devil, a market place exchange of Christ's life, paid as a ransom to the Devil, in trade for the devil's releasing his hostages. In the popular version, Satan found out too late that God had conned him, when Christ rose from the dead.

Level 3-4: The Law must be kept. Man broke the Law. Someone had to pay the penalty. "The wages of sin is death." Jesus paid that penalty. The integrity of the Law was maintained.

There is an aspect of truth on the law must be kept when the law is understood as the law life is built upon.

Level 5-6: He demonstrated that separation from God is death. ("Why have you forsaken me?") Since we separate ourselves from Him, not He from us, He is not our executioner. He allowed Satan to play out his hand, exposing his selfish character for all both man and angels to see, and thus erasing all sympathy for the accusations of the fallen foe. God's character was vindicated.

Level 7: Atonement becomes at-one-ment. God did what it took to win our love and trust, destroy the infection of sin and restore us to unity with Him again. Neither God, nor His law, defined as the eternal principles upon which He bases His government, change, but our understanding of His law changes, and God speaks to us at each level of our understanding. It is a mistake to cling to expressions appropriate to an earlier age of understanding, regardless of how valid and useful they were in their own context, when more appropriate expressions exist.

We must be patient with our brethren who perhaps are just beginning their maturing process, and allow the pastor to preach for them sometimes. For even as God was laying down detailed concrete rules for the Israelites, He was already looking forward to the day when He would "write His laws on our hearts."

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Read last paragraph, "If we are honest..." thoughts? Is withholding information the same as deceiving? What did Jesus tell His disciples before His ascension? How did Jesus respond to Herod?

TUESDAY

Read last paragraph, "So much promise.." thoughts? Isn't this good news, that we can be changed? Can we be changed without our active involvement in the process? What is the change like for the one being changed? Is it always pleasant, or in fact, is genuine change, at some point, always painful as we fall on the rock, are broken and die to self?

WEDNESDAY

Sexual integrity? Any questions?

For those who haven't watched the presentation on this please visit our website and watch the presentation: Human Sexuality, God's Design, Your Kids and Their Questions.

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "some easily..." thoughts? How do you hear the "commanded" portion?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph:

The greatest want of the world is the want of men-- men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall. {Ed 57.3}

Thoughts?

Questions 1 – 4 read and discuss

Health and Healing Lesson 11 2Q 2010

Optimism: Happiness and Healing

How do you feel about this lesson, this week?

Are you feeling optimistic?

SABBATH

Read third paragraph, "Hope enables..." what hope do we have?

Read last paragraph, "We often..." how can we adjust our internal attitude?

As the gospel message spread in Pisidia, the unbelieving Jews of Antioch in their blind prejudice "stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them" from that district. {AA 176.1}

The apostles were not discouraged by this treatment; they remembered the words of their Master: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:11, 12. {AA 176.2}

The gospel message was advancing, and the apostles had every reason for feeling encouraged. Their labors had been richly blessed among the Pisidians at Antioch, and the believers whom they left to carry forward the work alone for a time, "were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost." {AA 176.3}

Christ told His disciples that in the world they should have tribulation. They would be brought before kings and rulers for His sake; all manner of evil would be spoken against them falsely, and those who destroyed their lives would think they

did God service. And all, in every age, who have lived godly lives have suffered persecution in some form. . . . They have suffered every indignity, outrage, and cruelty which Satan could move upon minds to invent. {My Life Today 69.2}

To Christ, and to Christ alone, is given the right of authority over all things. Those who put their trust in Him, and will hold fast the profession of their faith firm unto the end, will be protected. As Christ's disciples, as laborers together with Him, there must be united action among all the laborers. Some are converted to the truth in one way, others are best reached by a different method. So the laborers will act, some in one line, others in another, but all may blend unitedly. To every man is given his work. {This Day with God 297.1}

Those who criticize their fellow workers open a door through which the enemy will enter. What can be more sad than to see brother working against brother, expressing suspicion and doubts of the other's sincerity? There is room enough for all to use their God-given talents. All are laboring with the one object of inspiring belief in the words of inspiration. Then let everyone so order his speech and work that he may be in harmony with those who are laboring to the same end as he himself. . . . {TDG 297.2}

SUNDAY

Depression and Despair – wow, is this timely or what?

Read third paragraph – “There are two ...” thoughts?

How many genes would we have to include to account for 80% variance of depression? In other words, how many genes would have to be included to account for 80% risk/likelihood of depression? 93,000 genes. What does that tell us?

One gene the serotonin transporter gene has been implicated in depression. In the human genome there are two variants, one with a short arm and one with a long arm. Over 100 studies have shown

that the short arm version confers risk for depression 2 studies have shown it doesn't. What is going on? If a person has two short arm versions and is raised in an environment with stress, abuse, lack of nurturance or trauma etc. then they are at greater risk of depression. But if a person with two short arm versions is raised in a healthy, nurturing environment it conveys advantage and these individuals grow up to be leaders and dominant in the society. It appears the two short arm versions confer sensitivity and the environment then contributes outcome.

What implications does this have?

How do we deal with adversity?

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
James 1:2-4

Are you joyous this week? Should we be? How have you experienced joy from the events of the last week?

We are all born infected with fear and selfishness, survival of the fittest. Our instinct is to watch out for ourselves, and retaliate and attack those who don't go along with us. This is Satan's kingdom and method.

God's kingdom is the kingdom of love, to give, to turn the other cheek, to be compassionate, forgiving, understanding and patient. We don't have to retaliate against those who do us wrong, they destroy themselves.

So, events such as the past week give us the opportunity to practice God's methods. So let's contrast God's methods and Satan's methods.

God's methods:

Love
 Truth
 Openness
 Freedom
 Humility
 Tolerance
 Reasoning
 Evidence

Satan's Methods:

Selfishness
 Deceit
 Secrecy
 Coercion/control
 Arrogance
 Intolerance
 Non-thinking obedience
 Declarations/claims

Our natural instinct is to practice Satan's methods, to retaliate, to attack, to become intolerant, etc. It is situations like this that we are presented with the opportunity to CHOOSE to exercise different neural circuits, to cooperate with God for the rewiring of our brains, the transformation of our characters, which simultaneously witnesses the power of God's kingdom as we love those who persecute us!

This is not easy, nor natural to our hearts. We can experience this only in cooperation with God.

It was when Moses was hidden in the cleft of the rock that he beheld the glory of God. It is when we hide in the riven Rock that Christ will cover us with His own pierced hand, and we shall hear what the Lord saith unto His servants. To us as to Moses, God will reveal Himself as "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Ex. 34:6, 7. {COL 162.3}

The work of redemption involves consequences of which it is difficult for man to have any conception. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Cor. 2:9. As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross, and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. **A new heart is given him.** He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Holiness finds that it has nothing more to require. God Himself is "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. And "whom He

justified, then He also glorified." Rom. 8:30. Great as is the shame and degradation through sin, even greater will be the honor and exaltation through redeeming love. To human beings striving for conformity to the divine image there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power, that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen. {COL 162.4}

What if you believe distorted ideas about God? Let's review some brain science and come back to what happens when we believe lies about God:

Slide Show:

Things we can do to have a healthy brain:

- Know God – the truth about Him
 - Romans 1 the mind becomes darkened, depraved and futile if we reject the truth about God
- Live in harmony with His laws
 - All laws, law of love, health, liberty, worship etc.
- Exercise
 - Produces Interleukin 10 a powerful anti-inflammatory interleukin, endorphins, enkephalins, neurotrophic factors
- Regular sleep
 - Consolidates memories, neural restructuring, stress hormones
- Healthy diet
 - Nutrients essential for brain health
- Meditate on God's character of love
 - 12 minutes per day grows an anterior cingulate cortex, where we experience love and altruism and calms fear circuits
- Rejoice, keep positive attitude
- Keep larger view
- Medications if needed

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Optimism...” thoughts?

What kind of things keep you overburdened and overworked?

How do you stay optimistic?

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, “Yet, even amid...” thoughts? Has anything in our lives taken God by surprise? How does that reality affect you? What impact does that have on our responsibilities?

The lesson quotes Romans 8:31, “If God is for us...”

- If God is for us can He also be against us?
- If God is for us can He be threatening to kill us if we don't love Him?
- If God is for us is He the reason we die?
- If God is for us will He use His divine power to inflict torture upon us?

What evidence do we have?

WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY

A merry heart does good like a medicine Prov 17:22 – and science had demonstrated that mirthful laughter results in a healthier immune system, lower stress hormones and increase of mood improving hormones.

FRIDAY

Read questions 1-3 and discuss

Health and Healing Lesson 12 2Q 2010

Nutrition and the Bible

SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

What does it mean to do something to the glory of God?

Jesus loves those who represent the Father, and John could talk of the Father's love as no other of the disciples could. He revealed to his fellow men that which he felt in his own soul, **representing in his character the attributes of God. The glory of the Lord was expressed in his face.** The beauty of holiness which had transformed him **shone with a Christlike radiance from his countenance.** In adoration and love he beheld the Saviour until likeness to Christ and fellowship with Him became his one desire, and in **his character was reflected the character of his Master.** {AA 545.2}

Thoughts?

Are we to reveal God in our lives? What does that look like? Would that include, in addition to loving kindness, if possible physical vitality and mental acuity?

SUNDAY

What was the original diet? Does the original diet have anything to do with bringing glory to God?

In whose image were we made? Are we to live lives that reveal God?

The Bible tells us this earth is a theater to the universe – 1Cor 4:9, what are they learning from this theater?

What was the purpose in the creation of man?

How do we glorify God by our diet?

What lesson would be taught, if we had other options for food, yet slaughtered animals to eat?

What fuel did God design our bodies to run upon? What if you drive a car designed to run upon unleaded fuel and you use diesel?

What happens to our bodies when we use the wrong fuel?

Do we have problems in our society from eating wrong fuel?

1976-80 – 15% of Americans obese

1988-1994- 25% of Americans obese

1999-2000 – 32% of Americans obese

The incidence of diabetes in Americans 30-39 has increased 70% and 1 in 3 diabetics don't know there are diabetics.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "As Christians..." thoughts? Was the first sin a temptation of appetite? "Hey Eve, this food is so tasty, so delicious, so scrumptious that it makes all the other fruit in the garden taste nasty"? Was it hunger that caused Eve to take the fruit? Was it appetite at all?

"Eve believed the words of Satan, and **the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband.** They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors..." RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8

What was the real temptation? To doubt God's goodness, to believe lies about God and then take what was not theirs to take, in order to do what? To taste a new delicacy, to satisfy hunger or appetite? Or to attain power or ability?

Was the behavior of taking the fruit the primary problem or the secondary problem? Was the primary problem the believing lies about God and rebelling in heart, which was subsequently manifested in the behavior?

This is the problem with the Penal model of thinking, it always focuses on behavior and fails to see the real problem and therefore confuses.

Did Adam and Eve, in the Garden, have a problem with appetite? No! but since the fall do we? Why?

Is there anything beyond nutritional value in maintaining a healthy diet? What about gaining self-mastery, self-governance, learning to develop prefrontal cortex control over the limbic system?

How did the diet of mankind change after the flood? Could it be a contributing factor in the shortening of lifespan?

How do you understand the idea of clean and unclean meats? What is the difference? Is there an underlying principle? Is it merely Jewish or are there still such things today?

Do the foods we eat really matter? Can they affect mood and brain chemistry?

Adapted from: http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0100-879X1998001200002&script=sci_arttext&tlng=en

Neurotransmitters and neuromodulators are basic units of chemical communication within the nervous system. These include a variety of phenethylamines and their derivatives (dopamine, norepinephrine, epinephrine, tyramine, octopamine, and tetrahydroisoquinolines), indoleamines (serotonin, melatonin, and tryptamine), cholinergics (acetylcholine and choline), amino acids and their derivatives (glutamate, aspartate, glycine, taurine, histamine and gamma-amino butyric acid), nucleosides (adenosine and inosine), hormones (prostaglandins, corticosteroids, estrogen,

testosterone, thyroid hormone and many others), and peptides (enkephalin, endorphin, substance P, cholecystokinin, somatostatin, cyclo (His-Pro), thyrotropin releasing hormone and many others).

Most of these are synthesized *de novo* using precursors provided by the food that we eat and thus are under direct influence of the diet.

A carbohydrate-rich/protein-poor diet increases and a protein-rich diet decreases brain serotonin synthesis.

The synthesis of serotonin in the brain is limited by the availability of tryptophan. The large neutral amino acids (LNAA), tryptophan, valine, leucine, isoleucine, methionine, phenylalanine, and tyrosine, share the same transport carrier across the blood-brain barrier (4). At physiologic blood amino acid concentrations, there is competition for available carrier sites. Therefore, the transport of blood tryptophan into the brain is proportional to the ratio of its concentration to that of the sum total of other LNAA (4).

Consumption of a protein-rich meal raises the blood level of many amino acids. Tryptophan is one of the least common amino acids in dietary protein. **Therefore, a protein-rich meal contributes proportionately more competing LNAAs than tryptophan, resulting in reduced entry of tryptophan into the brain and reduced serotonin synthesis.**

Conversely, a carbohydrate-rich meal can also alter blood amino acid levels (5). This effect is mediated by the action of insulin, which promotes the uptake of most amino acids by muscle, which accounts for >45% of lean body weight. Muscle metabolizes branch-chain amino acids, thereby lowering their concentration in the blood. Plasma tryptophan levels are unaltered by carbohydrate consumption, and insulin does not promote the net uptake of tryptophan into muscle because this amino acid is largely bound to low-affinity, high-capacity sites on albumin. Normally, 75 to 85% of plasma tryptophan is bound to albumin. When insulin is secreted, the plasma levels

of nonesterified fatty acids (NEFAs) fall because insulin promotes uptake of NEFAs by adipocytes. NEFAs also are adsorbed on circulating albumin, thereby increasing the number of sites available on albumin for binding tryptophan. This rise in bound tryptophan compensates for the slight fall in plasma free tryptophan caused by insulin-mediated uptake of amino acids by muscle. The total amount of tryptophan in plasma (bound plus free) determines the rate of transport of tryptophan into the brain because the affinity of the transport system for tryptophan is much greater than the affinity of albumin for tryptophan. Thus, ingestion of a high-carbohydrate/low-protein meal facilitates entry of tryptophan into the brain (6).

However, obesity as well as chronic stress, including worshipping a wrathful god construct, alters this dynamic as it increases insulin resistance. With insulin resistant the fat and muscle cells don't respond normally and this results in less tryptophan transport to the brain and another factor in mood and anxiety disorders.

Once in the brain, tryptophan undergoes a series of enzymatic reactions, resulting in the synthesis of the neurotransmitter serotonin. The first (and the rate-limiting) step in the conversion of tryptophan to serotonin is hydroxylation of tryptophan by the enzyme tryptophan hydroxylase, a low-affinity ($K_m = 0.4 \text{ mM}$) enzyme that is abundant in the brain. Accordingly, whenever the brain tryptophan level rises, more serotonin is produced (7).

Serotonin

Serotonin is a chemical the brain produces from tryptophan. Where do we get tryptophan? From the protein in our food. Brain serotonin controls many different types of bodily functions, including appetite, body temperature, libido, and mood, to name a few. Some of the foods rich in serotonin and tryptophan banana, pineapple, plum, nuts, milk, and turkey.

Cholecystokinin

Cholecystokinin (CCK) is found naturally in our brain and gut. Soon after we begin to eat, CCK begins to be released from our gut. When the blood level of CCK rises to a critical level, we feel satiated and stop eating (12). The release of CCK after satiety has been achieved is terminated by the action of trypsin on gut cells (13,14). For that reason there is now substantial interest in developing CCK as a drug for appetite control. Unfortunately, large doses of CCK act on sites in the brain that control anxiety and panic behavior (15). One solution to this problem might be the use of food rich in CCK. Unfortunately, to date we know of no such natural food. This does not mean CCK does not exist in natural foods, only that no one has taken time to screen common foods for this peptide. Meanwhile, there are data to suggest that the use of certain foods to increase blood CCK levels may be possible. For example, many animal and human studies show that a diet containing soy protein, a rich source of trypsin inhibitor, may increase circulating level of CCK. Actually, any food rich in trypsin inhibitors should result in increased CCK secretion and early satiety.

The relationship between food and mood in seemingly normal individuals is not a simple one but instead depends on the time of day, the type and macronutrient composition of food, the amount of food consumed, and the age and dietary history of the subject (39). For example, while skipping breakfast impairs cognitive performance (40), a larger-than-normal breakfast improves recall performance but impairs concentration (41). Furthermore, changes in the macronutrient composition of breakfast have differential effects on mood (42). For example, changes in mood have been produced most effectively by raising brain serotonin levels by administering tryptophan or by supplementing a carbohydrate-rich/protein-poor diet with tryptophan (43

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TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “As we...” thoughts?

Have you ever tried to share healthful living ideas with non SDAs?
 What kind of responses have you experienced? What were barriers?
 What truth did the non-SDAs bring to the discussion?

Is it true that the ceremonial laws were done away with at the Cross?

How has this been twisted by Satan to damage believers? Has the termination of the ceremonial system changed the laws of health? If something was unhealthy for the human body before Christ died is it healthy for the human body today? Or is it still unhealthy?

And if our bodies are diseased does that impact the functioning of the brain and if our brain doesn't work as well does that impair our ability to discern truth?

Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. ² One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³ The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Romans 14:1-3

Thoughts about this?

Here is my paraphrase:

Romans 14:1 The young in Christ often have weak confidence in God and limited understanding of his methods, so don't be critical with them and don't argue over trivial matters. ² Consider foods offered to idols: A mature Christian, whose trust in God and understanding of his methods is strong, recognizes an idol is just a piece of wood or stone and cannot affect the nutrition of the meat offered to it – so he will eat the meat without worry. But the immature Christian, whose trust in God and understanding of his methods is weak, continues to struggle with misconceptions about idols and thinks that maybe the idol has the power to contaminate the meat offered to it, and thus eats only the vegetables that were not set before the idol. ³ The mature man, who eats everything that is healthy, must not demean and make fun of the man still struggling with fear and insecurity over what he eats; and the man afraid to eat all healthy foods, must not condemn as wicked the man who eats everything healthy, for he is at peace with God.

When we eat food what actually happens to the food once it enters our body? It gets digested, meaning, we get energy, but do we get more than energy? We get the building blocks of our bodies.

Omega three fatty acids rather than being burned as energy are assimilated into our body, they become part of neuronal membranes and keep them healthy. Likewise the food we eat becomes the tissues of our bodies. Does this give us insight into

what Christ meant when He said, “unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no part with me”?

How are we to assimilate Christ?

Are there examples in Scripture of eating truth but it turning sour?

Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: “Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.”

⁹ So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, “Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.”

¹⁰ I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. Revelation 10:8-10

What does this mean, sweet to eat but sour in stomach? The little book is Daniel, sweet to eat was the initial understanding of the prophecies, but the sour was the Great Disappointment. Why did it turn sour? They misunderstood its true meaning.

Does what a person believes have anything to do with what kind of impact the Bible has on them? Can a person study the Bible with the wrong mindset and actually be harmed by it?

What about with actual physical food, can our beliefs alter our experience with food? Any examples?

Television watching alters our perceptions, values and beliefs.

- Before the introduction of American TV into Fiji there was zero eating disorders, after the introduction of American TV eating disorders skyrocketed to 15% in adolescent girls and the more TV exposure the higher the risk
- The number one factor contributing to the likelihood a teen will drink or smoke is seeing it done in movies or on TV

Does TV affect the food choices people make? Absolutely!

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “Just because...” thoughts?

Have you ever experienced a cultural caste system of dietary purity? Those with the least animal products are more righteous than those with the most? Why is this defective thinking?

But what is the truth about vegetarian diet? Does it matter? Are there advantages?

What are healthy foods?

- Spinach
- Blueberries
- Pomegranate
- Nuts (almonds, pecans, walnuts)
- Omega 3 fatty acids (flax, chia, cold water fish oil)
- Whole grains (oats, flax, barley)
- Olive oil

THURSDAY

Does being an Adventist make a difference in health?

Adventist Health Study 1 (AHS-1)

An additional study (1974–1988) involved approximately 34,000 Californian Adventists over 25 years of age. Unlike the mortality study, the purpose was to find out which components of the Adventist lifestyle give protection against disease.

The data from the study have been studied for more than a decade and the findings are numerous – linking diet to cancer^[2] and coronary heart disease.^{[3][4]}

Specifically^[1]

Health and Healing Lesson 13 2Q 2010

Social Support: The Tie That Binds

SABBATH

Read memory Text: - I want to thank this class, locally and online for your support, camaraderie, friendship and love. I have experienced God's love through all of you and pray will we continue to grow in His love.

Read first two paragraphs, "It is very clear..." thoughts?

Have you ever been isolated? Is it hard? Is there a difference from being alone to being lonely? Can you be lonely in the midst of people? Can you be isolated yet not lonely? What makes the difference?

I have many patients who struggle with loneliness, they fear isolation, fear being alone. They believe the worst thing possible is to be a single person and so they constantly seek relationships.

Question – what is worse, to be a single adult, or to marry the wrong person?

While God made us for relationship, including marriage relationship, that doesn't mean marriage to anyone is better than not being married.

Thoughts?

What impact does social isolation and lack of human contact have upon developing children?

The study of the effects on human infants of extreme deprivation, in particular the emotional and tactile care-giving aspects, was carried out on infants reared in Romanian orphanages. At the age of two years, these children did not show the usual variation of cortisol levels that were found in

home-reared children. Carlson, M., & Earls, F. (1997) Psychological and neuro-endocrinological sequelae of early social deprivation in institutionalized children in Romania. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 807, 419-428.

Studies from Romanian orphanages reveal that childhood neglect, lack of nurture, caressing, holding, touching etc. results in alteration in neural development including the oxytocin/vasopressin system related to human bonding. <http://www.pnas.org/content/102/51/18247.full.pdf+html?sid=56a8f379-e1bc-4846-a9b6-2ad4db43d791>

These brain changes increase the rates of mental and physical illness in adults who were neglected as children.

SUNDAY

The dark section in the lesson states, “How does...”

What characters did our first parents have?

Not a shadow interposed between them and their Creator. They knew God as their beneficent Father, and in all things their will was conformed to the will of God. And God's character was reflected in the character of Adam. His glory was revealed in every object of nature. {AH 26.4}

What is the character of God? The lesson states it nicely, “The unselfish love and concern for others that marked Jesus’ life also must have been reflected to some degree in Adam and Eve before the Fall, who were from creation made ‘in the image of God.’”

What happened? They sinned, but why? What was God’s design, purpose? Why did God put the tree of knowledge in the Garden? What did He warn them would happen?

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Gen. 2:17. {CC 13.1}

What is the warning here? What was actually said? How do we interpret the meaning of the text? Did God say, “if you eat I will be forced, in order to be just, to execute you”? Does this text tell us why they would die?

Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. . . . They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, **their loyalty must be tested.** At the very beginning of man's existence **a check was placed upon the desire for self-indulgence**, the fatal passion that lay at the foundation of Satan's fall. The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden, was to be **a test of the obedience**, faith, and love of our first parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, **on pain of death.** They **were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan;** but if they endured the trial, they would finally be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favor with God. . . . {CC 13.2}

How do you hear this? What does it mean? Why test their loyalty? On pain of death? Does that mean God would have to inflict death if they disobey, or could it mean that if they disobey they will deviate from the basis of life and the only result is death? If God said you are forbidden to jump off the Empire State Building on “pain of death” would that mean God would kill them if they did? How do we know which way? Keep reading – next paragraph.

God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; **but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automation. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could**

have been no development of character. . . . It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. {CC 13.3}

Why was the tree placed in the Garden? What was God's goal for mankind? What was mankind to accomplish?

God made man upright; He gave him noble traits of character, with no bias toward evil. He endowed him with high intellectual powers, and presented before him the strongest possible inducements to be true to his allegiance. **Obedience, perfect and perpetual, was the condition of eternal happiness.** On this condition he was to have access to the tree of life. . . . {CC 13.4}

What was the condition of eternal happiness? Why? If God said, as long as you obey and don't jump off the Empire State Building, this is a condition of eternal happiness or health – what would it mean? Is it similar? Do violations of God's law cause God to become an enforcer of pain, suffering and death, or do violations of God's law damage us and result in our suffering and death – unless remedied?

Here is another place she states it:

The Lord placed man upon probation, that he might form a character of steadfast integrity for his own happiness and for the glory of his Creator. He had endowed Adam with powers of mind superior to any other creature that He had made. His mental powers were but little lower than those of the angels. He could become familiar with the sublimity and glory of nature, and understand the character of his heavenly Father in His created works. Amid the glories of Eden, everything that his eye rested upon testified of his Father's love and infinite power. {Con 12.1}

What was Satan's allegations as to why death would come if one broke the law?

In the opening of the great controversy, **Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed**, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, **it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan**; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, **Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor**. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

What is Satan's position? Why can mankind be saved and Satan cannot?

But even as a sinner, **man was in a different position from that of Satan**. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. **Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will**. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. **For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God**. {DA 761.5}

What does this mean? That Satan, at some point, solidified his character in selfishness to the point it could not be changed. What draws us back to God? The truth about God's character of love!

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; **but mercy does not set aside justice**. The **law reveals the attributes of God's character**, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for

man's redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5:19. {DA 762.1}

What is God's character? Love, what does the law reveal? The law of love, the principle of life. It cannot be changed to meet man in his fallen condition, but sacrificed Himself in Christ for our redemption - what does this mean?

Imagine someone breaks the law of respiration and ties a plastic bag over their head to selfishly hoard their CO₂ – can the law be changed to meet this person in their condition? No! Will someone coming and tying a bag over their own head and dying to pay a legal penalty help them? What is needed, the plastic bag needs to be removed. Notice in the very next paragraph what she says Christ came to do, to achieve justice!

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. **But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. **Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What does the law require? Why does the law require this? Why does the law of respiration require the bag be removed? Christ came to earth and did what? Developed a perfect character and offers this as a free gift – to us, He doesn't offer a legal payment to His Father or the law, this was never required. What was required was that we are back in harmony with the design template for life. It is so simple and sensible! Thus Christ restores us back to His original image!

MONDAY

Romans 14:7 For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone.

What does this passage mean? How do we impact each other?

What about the adage "I'm not hurting anyone but myself?" Or, "Its my life I can do with it what I want?"

What is the root to sin? Selfishness, have we become so selfish we have lost the ability to empathize, to appreciate how we are all interconnected?

A 2007 study of 16,475 college students who completed an evaluation called the Narcissistic Personality Inventory between 1982 and 2006 found that measures of narcissism have risen steadily in the 25 years covered by the study. By 2006 two thirds of the students had above average scores, which was 30% higher than in 1982.

The study asserts that narcissists "are more likely to have romantic relationships that are short-lived, at risk for infidelity, lack emotional warmth, and to exhibit game-playing, dishonesty, and over-controlling and violent behaviors."

Twenge, the author of "Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled — and More Miserable Than Ever Before," said narcissists tend to lack empathy, react aggressively to criticism and favor self-promotion over helping others.

"Permissiveness seems to be a component," he said. "A potential antidote would be more authoritative.

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,254904,00.html>

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “All humanity...” thoughts? What does it mean? How would you explain it?

Read third paragraph, “No one hates his...” thoughts?

I have patients who hate their bodies, their looks, some have something called Body Dysmorphic Disorder, others have obesity, others have chronic pain states, others are paralyzed – I have patients who hate their bodies. Paul himself said, “what a wretched man am I who will save me from this body of death.”

Why do people not like their bodies? What is the common underlying theme? That something is wrong, something isn't working like it was designed to work and what we don't like is the dysfunction. Should we hate our bodies or simply work to fix what is wrong, if possible?

When we think about relationships, the church does the church ever get dysfunctional? Are there elements in the church that sometimes don't function properly? Should we hate our church or simply work to fix what is wrong, if possible?

Do relationships affect our emotional and physical health?

Absolutely!

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks us to consider some Bible passages and inquire what lessons we can learn from these:

- By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:35
- Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. Romans 15:7

- Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32
- Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13
- Therefore encourage each other with these words. 1Thes 4:18
- Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16
- Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. 1Peter 3:8
- Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 1Peter 4:9
- But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1John 1:7

Read last paragraph, “An outstanding...” thoughts?

What does love look like in action? Consider Helen Keller, has anyone seen the movie The Miracle Worker?

Did Helen’s mother love Helen? How did the mother treat Helen? What was happening to Helen? What about Annie Sullivan? How did she treat Helen? Was it love? Who did Helen in the end love more? Why?

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “Think for a moment...” thoughts? This is right, we were designed for service, to give, giving is living, this is the law of love in action. It results in greater health across the board.

Fear results in greater self focus and taking, protecting, hoarding, exploiting, etc. and is the medium of isolation and death. But love is the medium of other centered regard and brings healing and life.

If we refuse to live a life of love what happens? Does God have to use His power to inflict pain and suffering? Why or why not?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

Redemption in Romans Lesson 2 3Q 2010

Jew and Gentile

SABBATH

Read first three paragraphs, "The first converts..."

Thoughts? Are SDAs accused of being Judaizers because of adherence to the Commandments, or because of adherence to the Commandments in a manner like the Jews did?

How did the Jews keep the commandments? What, then was there problem? Do we have such problems?

And was that the purpose of the 10 Commandments? Were they given by God as a list of deeds to be done, a checklist of behaviors to perform?

No! What was the purpose of the law?

- The law was added so that the trespass might increase.
Romans 5:20

What does this mean? So that sin might become recognizable, so that we might see it more clearly and then see how ubiquitous sin really is:

- What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law.
Romans 7:7

The law then is like an MRI for the soul. It is a diagnostic tool, to expose our sickness, our terminal state. If we are right in understanding this then who is the law given for?

- We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy

and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim 1:8-11

So, if we are right about the law – that it is a diagnostic tool, given for the wicked, the sinful, then what is its purpose? What is it to do for us?

- So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. Galatians 3:24,25.

What is the law to do? Diagnose us and lead us to Christ, for what purpose?

Is the law given so that we can work to keep it in order to demonstrate to God we are worthy?

Is the law a diagnostic instrument to convict us of our helpless and hopeless state, if left to ourselves? And therefore, to lead us to Christ, so He can set us right with God when we trust Him.

What is this faith or trust?

First, recently some have suggested we teach a works model because we say that in order to experience God's saving grace in our lives we have to trust God, and therefore, this trust is a work we do. They counter that in the penal model, rather than having to trust, they have faith in what Christ has done.

The Greek word for faith is *pistis* and means, "belief with the predominate idea of trust (or confidence) whether in God or in Christ"¹

¹Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario : Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G4102

So, faith, belief, trust, confidence are all synonyms. So what is it?

- Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb 11:1

What does this mean? Substance, comes from Greek *hupostasis* and has two parts, “hypo” as hypoglycemic, hypodermic and means under, and stasis, means standing. In 1611, there wasn’t much archeological evidence of this word, so they translated it to Latin, and the Latin for under is “sub” as in submarine, subterranean, etc. and stasis, was stance. So substance. Our English translation would be “faith is our understanding.”

But this understanding is more than a cognitive understanding. Archeological evidence discovered after 1611 revealed this Greek word was used as the title for business contracts. Thus, faith is our contract, or agreement, or accord, or understanding with God.

Thus EGW states,

- Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. DA 347.

So when we have “faith” in God, we have an understanding with Him and what would that understanding be?

We enter into a transaction with God – what is that transaction?

We trust Him, surrender ourselves into His hands, follow where He leads, and He will save and heal and regenerate us.

Then how do the 10 Commandments fit in?

After being diagnosed as terminal, after being led back to Christ, after reviewing the evidence Christ has provided of His trustworthiness, after the Holy Spirit has brought us to conviction, we choose to surrender our lives to Christ. We trust Him and the

Holy Spirit indwells our minds and we experience new motives, desires, insights, wisdom, perspective and as we continue in our contract, transaction with God, to choose to do what He leads, we experience greater and greater healing and transformation.

In other words, the saving and healing is done all by God, in those, who trust Him! The 10 Commandments then are not only a diagnostic instrument to diagnose and lead us to Christ, but God's promise of what we will look like when He finishes with us!

What is the difference in this experience and being a Judaizer? Did the Jews view the law as an arbitrary test of obedience? Do any Christians make the same mistake today? What about SDAs?

What about the New Covenant, what is it? How is it different from the Old Covenant?

As the Bible presents **two laws**, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two covenants. **The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden**, when after the Fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this covenant offered pardon, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation. {FLB 77.2}

This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it, and **he trusted** in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was **this faith that was accounted** unto him for righteousness. The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God's law. The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." The testimony of God concerning His faithful servant was, "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Gen. 17:1; 26:5. . . . {FLB 77.3}

The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the "second," or "new," covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. {FLB 77.4}

The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant. {FLB 77.5}

There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus. **The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us today.** . . . Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the author and the finisher of our faith. {FLB 77.6}

Thoughts?

SUNDAY

First I want to commend the study guide for paragraph number three, "Meanwhile, ..." well said.

Read first paragraph, "Perhaps..." thoughts?

"Only through the atonement He provided could they have their sins forgiven." – what does this mean?

- without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Heb 9:22

What does it mean to have one's sins forgiven?

- Does it mean that God personally pardons?
- Does it mean that we are reconciled to God and sin is removed from us?
- Does it mean both?

Could God do the first (personally pardon) without Christ's death?

Could God do the second (heal and restore) without Christ's death?

Was Christ's death needed to enable God to personally pardon?

- But **forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose**. When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9. **God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.** David had the **true conception of forgiveness** when he prayed, "**Create in me a clean heart**, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath **He removed our transgressions from us.**" Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

Thoughts? Notice forgiveness is much more than God's pardon, it includes the cleansing of the sinner, the renewal of our hearts, the removal of fear and selfishness from our characters!

One of the deceptions is to get people to misunderstand forgiveness as judicial or legal, something that happens in record books, because this obscures the reality of what God wants to do in us!

The paragraph talked about standing before God without condemnation occurs from the imputation of Christ's perfect life. What does this mean?

Consider this statement:

- "In My name," Christ bade His disciples pray. In **Christ's name His followers are to stand before God**. Through the value of the sacrifice made for them, they are of value in the Lord's sight. **Because of the imputed righteousness of Christ they are accounted precious**. For Christ's sake the

Lord pardons those that fear Him. **He does not see in them the vileness of the sinner. He recognizes in them the likeness of His Son**, in whom they believe. {DA 667.5}

How do you like this paragraph? Could it sound like Christ is influencing God? Could it sound like “accounting” tricks in heaven? Could it sound like God’s value of us is because of Jesus? Yes, if we read this in isolation, but what if we read the next couple of paragraphs – do they clarify and enlighten the meaning?

The Lord is disappointed when His people place a low estimate upon themselves. He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price He has placed upon them. **God wanted them, else He would not have sent His Son on such an expensive errand to redeem them.** He has a use for them, and He is well pleased when they make the very highest demands upon Him, that they may glorify His name. They may expect large things if they have faith in His promises. {DA 668.1}

But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour's promise is given on condition. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." **He saves men, not in sin, but from sin;** and those who love Him will show their love by obedience. {DA 668.2}

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. **And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses.** The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. **Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.** {DA 668.3}

Thoughts?

Why does the Father see us in the purity of Christ? Because Christ actually lives in the believer!

Read last paragraph, “Helping both...” thoughts? Why a transition, did the salvation process change? Were Jews before Christ saved in a different way than Christians after Christ? What needed to change? Why would it take time? Does this have any bearing on us today?

MONDAY

Third paragraph, “The moral law...” nicely said, it is a summary, it is not the entirety or fullness of the law, but a distillation of the law of love, written for this creation’s need.

What evidence do we have that the 10 Commandments were not always in existence but added for our need?

- Did angels have things pass down the generations?
- Did angels need to honor mother and father?
- Did angels need a prohibition on adultery?
- The Sabbath is measure by what? When was the sun created?
- **The law of God existed before man was created.** The angels were governed by it. Satan fell because he transgressed the principles of God's government. After Adam and Eve were created, God made known to them His law. **It was not then written, but was rehearsed to them by** Jehovah. {SR 145.1}
- **The Sabbath of the fourth commandment was instituted in Eden. After God had made the world and created man upon the earth, He made the Sabbath** for man. After Adam's sin and fall nothing was taken from the law of God. The **principles** of the Ten Commandments existed before the fall and were of a character suited to the condition of a holy order of beings. After the fall the principles of those precepts were not changed, but additional precepts were given to meet man in his fallen state. {SR 145.2}

What was the purpose of the feast days in the OT?

Festivals to remind the people of God's plan of salvation. Was there some form of cleansing from sin inherent in the festivals? In OT times was it required to keep the festivals in order to be saved?

Nebuchadnezzar, Naaman, others?

Today some suggest that it is a requirement, if it wasn't a requirement then, how much less so now.

TUESDAY

The early church was turned to confusion by a group of Pharisees who argued that the Gentiles must be circumcised. Where were they turning the focus?

To behavior, performance, acts, deeds, law. Where was the focus to be turned? To Christ, God's character of love, renewal of heart and mind to be recreated to love others and die to selfishness.

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

What should our attitude be toward church leadership? Should we be respectful? Should we surrender our thinking? Does a position of leadership in the church ensure that the leader is correct or right?

Caiaphas was High Priest, was he right? Was he even on God's side of the controversy?

What should Martin Luther have done when church leadership met, had counsels, and the leaders voted that he was wrong?

Do we determine truth by vote of church leaders? What if the issues are unrelated to truth?

What did EGW do when the church leaders wanted her to go to Australia? Did she have a word for the Lord she was to go? No, but she went. Was going to Australia compromising the truth? No.

We may find ourselves worshipping in places because leadership votes, but voting of committees cannot determine truth. Truth originates in God and is truth regardless of leadership. Our ideas and opinions must be in harmony with the evidences of God's word, not the opinions of man, even if those men hold leadership positions in the church.

Have we sought separation from our church? What do we do when leadership is not open to unity, communication, reconciliation?

We humbly pray for God's healing of our church and continue to present the truth in love exercising patience.

WEDNESDAY

The church leadership determined that the Gentiles were not to be burdened with Jewish traditions. But they did instruct them to not eat blood, animals sacrificed to idols and against adultery.

Read last paragraph – “Although Jewish...” thoughts? What do you think about the reason given for keeping these restrictions, to not be an offense to the Jews?

I don't think that was the reason. I think it was to help cleanse the minds of the Gentiles, to protect them from old habit patterns of thinking.

The Gentiles had worshipped idols, often related to fertility and believed the idols had power. The rules were to prevent the slippage into old thinking and to allow faith in God.

Why not food offered to idols, so that the blessings they were receiving would be clearly attributed to God. To prevent the temptation in their mind, did this good thing happen because of Jesus or because of the idol, since I am eating food blessed by the idol. Avoiding all such things eliminates such questions.

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “It is an...” thoughts?

What do you think about the language “binding”? How are the 10 Commandments binding?

Which law was being talked about in the book of Galatians? Both laws,

I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments...

"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. {1SM 233, 234}

What did Paul say would happen to those who bring another gospel?

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! ⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! Gal 1:8,9

Anathama, damned to hell – why? Is Paul calling for God to do this? Or is Paul announcing the only possible outcome? What happens to someone who accepts and teaches a false gospel?

If a person is in a terminal state, rejects the only cure, and promotes a counterfeit which will not heal, what is the only possible outcome? And this is what Paul is saying.

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

FRIDAY- Read first paragraph, “But if...” thoughts? What did they lose? Questions 1 and 2 read and discuss.

Redemption in Romans Lesson 3 3Q 2010

All Have Sinned

SABBATH

Read first sentence, “Unless a person acknowledges that he or she is unrighteous, that person will sense no need for justification (God’s declaration of a sinner as righteous in His eyes).” Thoughts?

First, do we agree that a person generally doesn’t seek help if they don’t recognize there is a problem? Do you call a repairman if something isn’t broken? Do you go to the ER if something isn’t wrong? Do we need a Savior if we are not sinners, if we are not dying?

So, of course, if we deny we have a problem, if we deny we are sinners, then we will not be open to God’s salvation.

As we anticipate next week’s lesson consider the second part of the sentence? Is justification God doing something to God so He can change the way He sees us? “I God declare that I know see this sinner as righteous. Wink, wink, angels in heaven, we all know the sinner isn’t righteous, but let’s all pretend he is because I have declared it so.”?

Next week the entire lesson is on justification by faith, so consider this issue as we prepare for next week’s lesson.

Read last two paragraphs, “Ellen, G. White makes it...” thoughts?

How do you hear the phrase “liquidate the debt of his transgression”? What does it mean?

What does liquidate mean? It means, according to Miriam Webster’s dictionary:

1 a (1) : to determine by agreement or by litigation the precise amount of (indebtedness, damages, or [accounts](#)) (2) : to

determine the liabilities and apportion [assets](#) toward discharging the indebtedness of **b** : to settle (a debt) by payment or other settlement

2 *archaic* : to make clear

3 : to do away with

4 : to convert (assets) into cash

Which definition do you think fits best?

What about debt, what does it mean?

1 Sin, trespass

2 Something owed

Which fits best?

Christ's righteousness alone can avail for what? With whom?

Christ ever lives to make intercession, interceding to accomplish what? Interceding with what or with whom?

Let's first answer the question of righteousness and in doing so turn to SUNDAY's lesson

SUNDAY

Read top dark section, - thoughts? First, what is the power of God? The gospel – is the gospel a laser weapon? Is it a flaming sword? Is it thunder and fire coming down from heaven? Why is it some insist that God's power is something that coerces, pressures, punishes, controls?

What is more powerful coercive power or the power of love? What never fails?

What is righteousness?

The lesson states righteousness is being right with God, what do you think about this? What does it mean to be right with God?

What is it that prevents us from being right with God?

- Is being right with God, being “declared” right?
- Is it doing something to God so He will consider us right?
- Is it Christ doing something to hide us from God and getting God to see us as right, when we are not yet right?
- Can we be legally right without being changed in some real way?

What is wrong that keeps us from being right with God? Is there something wrong with God? Is there something wrong with us?

Can *we* fix what is wrong with us and thereby set us right with God?

Can God fix what is wrong with us and thereby set us right with Him?

Does this give us insight as to why it is only the “righteousness” that comes from God that is acceptable? Why?

How does Christ set us right with God?

- **The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give.** He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. **More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God.** He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

THURSDAY

Read top paragraph – thoughts?

Can God enforce His law? Is God's law enforceable?

What is God's law? The law of love? And what does it look like to be in harmony with God's law? Would repentance be part of that?

Can God get repentance by the exercise of force? What about love? What about enjoyment in the Sabbath? What about cheerful giving?

Where is it that God wants to put His law? Can God get His law into our hearts by the exercise of might and power? Can He force it in?

"The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty, it is left with us to decide our course." *Review and Herald*, July 17, 1888

Read second paragraph, which is well said, "We should notice..." thoughts?

Then the lesson, after this very positive insight regarding God's inability to get forgiveness, or anything else He wants by the exercise of force, asks:

"What comes to those who resist God's love, refuse to repent, and remain in disobedience? *Rom. 2:5-10.*"

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ God "will give to each person according to what he has done." ⁷ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸ But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. ⁹ There will be trouble and distress for

every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰ but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

The Bible said it – do we believe it? What does it mean?

If we let Paul, who wrote this to Romans, define what he means by wrath a few verses earlier, then what do we learn? What is wrath?

Chapter one starting in verse 18 Paul tells us that God's wrath is letting people go to reap that which they have sown. It is God's suspending His intervention/intercession. It is God no longer holding back the consequences of unremedied sin.

According to Paul, from where does the punishment come?

The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; Galatians 6:8

What about God's judgment, what is it? Does God's judgment determine the condition, situation or punishment of the wicked? Or is it merely the proper and accurate diagnosis or judgment of what their situation or condition already is? Any examples?

Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone! Hosea 4:17

Or from Great Controversy:

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day **declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable**. They have no disposition to submit to divine authority. Their will has been exercised in revolt; and when life is ended, it is too late to turn the current of their thoughts in the opposite direction, too late to turn from transgression to obedience, from hatred to love. {GC 543.1}

What is God's judgment? Does God's judgment cause it or merely confirm what already is true?

Why do the wicked suffer and die?

They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 2 Thes 2:10

So what is Paul saying? That all humans, whether Jew or Greek are infected with selfishness, which is outside God's design protocols for life, the law of love. We can't fix or heal ourselves and only by accepting the truth about God and trusting Him can we be restored to unity with Him. Those who refuse the truth and prefer lies about God will have their condition worsen, and when Christ returns He accurately diagnoses everyone and each person will suffer according to their own unhealed condition.

So, knowing all of this how do we help someone who is like the little boy in the first paragraph of today's lesson?

MONDAY

Romans 3:23 "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

Thoughts about this passage? What does it mean?

Who is all? Is it all intelligent beings in the universe? Is it all humans? Except Jesus.

How do we fall short of God's glory? When in our lives did we leave the fullness of God's glory to a place where we fall short? Were we born short of God's glory? Was the condition of our birth our fault?

Does God know that you and I as individuals were born short of His glory?

So is this being short of God's glory primarily about a choice we have made to leave God's glory or about a condition into which we were born?

Has God provided opportunity for us to be restored to His glory? Is this the choice He sets before us – remain outside my ideal, my design, my glory – or let me restore you?

Does paying a legal penalty restore a sinner to God’s glory?

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Romans 1:22-32 and then asks how this is similar today. But I would like to start in verse 18 and go through 32.

What do you hear as the primary problem? What did Paul say six times is the problem? The truth about God has been exchanged for a lie – and what was the result of doing this?

Their minds became futile, depraved and darkened – and when that happened what happened to their behavior? What kind of sins did Paul list?

Was it just sexual sins? Or others?

They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Verses 29-31.

And how was it they were able to become such people? Could they become people like this if the Holy Spirit was dwelling in their lives? Could they become people like this if they were standing in the immediate presence of God?

So, when they insisted on rejecting the truth about God and clinging to false God concepts, and rejecting all efforts to turn them around, what did God do? Verses 24,26, 28, therefore “God gave them up”. And what does Paul call this action on God’s part?

God's wrath!

What are the lessons we are learning here? What happens if we hold to false God concepts? We are damaged in our minds and characters, and we practice what types of behaviors?

Gossip, slander – what would this look like today?

Would it include deception? Would it include using power to coerce and control?

And could it happen because people teach falsehoods in regard to God's character, such as teaching a wrathful God?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

Wednesday

In what way are all people, Jews, Gentiles, all in the same situation?

If we are all in the same situation then how can we criticize or judge each other?

Do we? How?

Read last paragraph, "Paul's point..." thoughts?

What is the divine standard? Why don't we meet it?

What does it mean we are condemned? How are we condemned?

What or who condemns us?

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” MT 21:33-37

Thoughts?

Why is there no hope without Christ?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, “A terrible picture...” thoughts?

Redemption in Romans Lesson 4 3Q 2010

Justified by Faith

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs, “In this lesson...” thoughts?

Does this description bring you comfort?

What if we add to it the description from lesson 3 on Sabbath, where it describes justification in these words, “God’s declaration of a sinner as righteous in His eyes.” Or from this week’s lesson on Tuesday, “We are justified when we are ‘declared righteous’ by God.”

Any questions about this theory? Are there any problems?

What assumptions are made?

- Justification is a legal problem
- Sin is a legal problem
- Sin and crime are synonymous – thus sin is behavioral
- Justification is the process of changing our records
- Justification happens by declaration
- Sin can be transferred
- Pardon is the goal
- Justification is God doing something to change how God sees us
- Most egregious of all - In God’s government it is “legal” to punish the innocent in place of the guilty
 - How would you like to live in a kingdom in which innocent people could be punished in place of the guilty?
 - What does such a concept do? It makes God’s law arbitrary – there is no relationship to cause and effect, the natural laws of God can be voided. It undermines the entire foundation of God’s universe.

EGW had concerns about how justification was taught:

- The danger has been presented to me again and again of entertaining, as a people, **false ideas of justification by faith**. I have been shown for years that **Satan would work in a special manner to confuse the mind on this point. The law of God has been largely dwelt upon and has been presented to congregations, almost as destitute of the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His relation to the law as was the offering of Cain. I have been shown that many have been kept from the faith because of the mixed, confused ideas of salvation, because the ministers have worked in a wrong manner to reach hearts.** The point that has been urged upon my mind for years **is the imputed righteousness of Christ**. I have wondered that this matter was not made the subject of discourses in our churches throughout the land, when the matter has been kept so constantly urged upon me, and I have made it the subject of nearly every discourse and talk that I have given to the people. {FW 18.1}

What was her concern? That justification would take a legal emphasis, that the law would be depleted of the true knowledge of Christ. Christ is the living law, the law of love, a living being, a person. When you hear the description of justification given by the lesson guide what do you hear? Do you hear mainly a legal description? Is it destitute of Christ?

What would Paul say if he were in class today and you asked him, “what did you mean by justification?” Most likely he would say, “I never heard of that word.”

Paul wrote in Greek, justification is a Latin based word. One of the reasons we hear so much “legality” to the plan of salvation is that our legal language is derived from Latin, and many of the terms in theology have a Latin base:

- Justification
- Sanctification

- Propitiation
- Expiation

When Paul wrote Romans he used these words:

Dikaosune – Righteousness or justice (Romans 3:21,22,25, 26; 4:3,5)

Dikaioo – To be or make righteous, to justify (Romans 3:24, 26 4:2,5)

Turn to Tuesday’s lesson and let’s read the first paragraph, “What is the idea...” thoughts?

What do you think of the conclusion? The Greek has three possible meanings, make righteous, declare righteous, consider righteous, do you agree with the lesson’s choice? Will God consider someone righteous who isn’t actually righteous? Does God deceive Himself?

Read next paragraph in Tuesday’s lesson, “Before this justification...” thoughts?

Do you have any problems with this description? Is it in keeping with Scripture?

So what does it mean to be justified by faith? Romans 3:21-31:

But now a righteousness from God, **apart from law**, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ **to all who believe**. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Thoughts?

Here is my paraphrase:

^{3:21} But now God has revealed, a healthy state of being – a character that is right and perfect in everyway, that did not come from the written code, but is exactly what the Scriptures and the 10 Commandments were pointing your minds toward. ²² This perfect state of being comes from God and is created within us by God when we trust him. Our trust in him is established by the evidence given through Jesus Christ of his supreme trustworthiness. There is no difference amongst any ethnic groups, ²³ for all humanity is infected with the same disease of distrust, fear and selfishness, and are deformed in character and fall far short of God's glorious ideal for mankind. ²⁴ Yet all, who are willing, are healed freely by God's gracious remedy that has been provided by Jesus Christ. ²⁵ God presented Jesus as the way and means of restoration. Now, through trust established by the evidence of God's character revealed when Christ died, we may partake of the remedy procured by Christ. God did this to demonstrate he is right and good, because in his forbearance he suspended, for a time, the ultimate consequence of sin and has been falsely accused of being unfair. ²⁶ So, he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so he would be seen as right when he heals those who trust in Jesus.

Thoughts?

When you justify the margin on your document what have you done? Have you declared it to be right or in line? Have you pardoned it? Have you put a special set of glasses on so that when you look at the document it appears to be in line? Or have you actually put what is out of line back in line?

Because of sin, what is out of line, out of harmony, that needs to be put back in line? Our hearts and minds! We no longer know or trust God!

Justification is so simple, it is Christ restoring humanity back into rightness with God in His own personhood on the Cross, when He overcame sin in His human brain. In Christ Jesus the human species was set right with God again. Now, how many specimens will join Him? As individuals we are set right with God when our hearts are won back to trust in Him! This restored trust is being set right with God again!

Romans 4:1-3

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? ² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³ What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Thoughts? What does “credited” mean? Does it mean to call something that is not righteous, righteous? Does it mean to have an angel in heaven give a notation in the record book – “Abraham is now recognized to be righteous – asterisk but we all know he really isn’t”? Or is it an actual change in Abraham?

The word translated as “credited” or “accounted” or “recognized” is the Greek *logizomai* and the Strong lexicon states, in regard to this word:

This word deals with reality. If I “logizomai” or reckon that my bank book has \$25 in it, it has \$25 in it. Otherwise I am deceiving myself. This word refers to facts not suppositions.

¹

So God doesn’t “reckon” someone as righteous that hasn’t had a change of heart to be right with God!

My paraphrase:

¹Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario : Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G3049

Romans 4:1 What about our father Abraham, what did he understand about this issue? ² If, Abraham was somehow healed by his own efforts at keeping a set of rules or performing certain rituals, then he would have his own healing formula to promote, and would not need to trust in God. ³ But what does the Scripture say? "Abraham trusted God, and his trust was recognized as righteousness, because the distrust caused through Satan's lies had been removed, and through trust he was endowed with a new heart, right motives and Christlike principles."

A person cannot be justified, set right, without being changed in the process. In fact, it is the change, brought about by God, that sets a person right with God.

Thoughts? So, what might EGW be referring to when she states that false ideas of justification by faith are presented from pulpits?

Could she be referring to the legal, penal, payment, declared without change system taught?

The **wedding garment**, provided at infinite cost, is freely offered to every soul. By the messengers of God are **presented to us the righteousness of Christ, justification by faith**, the exceeding great and precious promises of God's word, free access to the Father by Christ, the comfort of the Spirit, the well-grounded assurance of eternal life in the kingdom of God. COL 317.

Is she describing justification as something that happens in record books or within people?

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it **not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us.** "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins;

and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. **By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

Can we be covered with the wedding garment without a change in the believer? Can we be justified without being changed?

Earlier we read a statement about justification being equivalent with the imputed righteousness of Christ – what is this?

Traditionally, Christians have claimed imputed righteousness is something God legally accounts to us, but which does not occur in us. They say imparted righteousness is what occurs within us.

Consider these EGW quotes and tell me if she is describing something that is merely accounted, declared, considered, reckoned, or is she describing something that is actually occurring within the believer?

- Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul **may be kept free from sin**; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation. . . . In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. **Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.** He looks upon us

as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. {God's Amazing Grace 181.4}

- Is made and declared the same?
- Where does sin abound, in books or people?
- But **we all**, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, **are changed** into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. **By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.** The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. {God's Amazing Grace 96.4}
- We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the provision of God. **We are to reflect the highest attributes of the character of God. . . . The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain through the imputed righteousness of Christ.** {OHC 364.2}
- He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might **counteract evil, remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness.**

TMK 206

If justification is receiving the imputed righteousness of Christ can it be done without a change in the believer?

Does God declare things to be which are not? How do we understand the aspect of justification which is God declaring us righteous?

When Jesus was on earth and declared that the leaders were of their father the devil – was it so, or was Jesus declaring something that was not so? And were they of their father the devil because Jesus declared it to be, or did Jesus declare it because it was so?

Is this an example of how we understand the declarative aspects of justification by faith? Does God declare us to be righteous when we are not? Does His declaration make it so, or after God having set us right with Him (justified us) does He also declare the reality if that change?

Now is some language easier to understand than other language? Was the reference just read fairly easy to comprehend? What about this one?

As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf and **accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith.** Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God's will and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory. {FW 103.1}

Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. **The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety.** The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: "This is My child, I relieve him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy--eternal life--because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son." **Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness,** stands faultless before God. {FW 103.2}

Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God's boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly

undeserving. **He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins.** Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal. {FW 104.1}

Thoughts?

What does it mean to have our sins pardoned or forgiven? Here is another place the penal model makes a mistake – they describe forgiveness merely as legal pardon, which required Christ's death to achieve. Not so:

But **forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose.** When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9. **God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.** David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

When we understand forgiveness is not mere pardon, but the actual process of reclaiming us from sin, of healing us, of removing sinfulness from our hearts and minds, then does it make sense why Jesus' death was necessary? Does it make sense how justification and pardon are the same thing?

If we include that justification is also the possessing the robe of righteousness and the robe of righteousness means the mind and heart are aligned again with God, does it make sense?

In Romans 3:4 Paul says, God may you be proved right or shown to be right, when you are judged. The Greek here is *Dikaioo* which is the same as in the earlier passages and means to justify. How do we understand it? Did God need to be pardoned? No! When we interpret justify as legal we miss the reality of what is transpiring.

Did God need to have the *allegations* of sin removed from Him? Did He need to have Satan's lies removed from His reputation in the minds of intelligent beings? Did God's reputation and character need to be put right in our minds again?

Why is justification the opposite of condemnation? Why are we condemned?

- “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ **For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.**” Matt 12:33-37

What condemns us? Our very condition, either we have been justified and have Christ reproduced within, not by our work, but by abiding in a trust relationship with Him, or we have not.

What does it mean God forgives for Jesus sake? Jesus is the means of removing our sin and restoring us to Holiness. God could not accomplish His purpose without Jesus and what He accomplished. So it is because of Jesus success that God is able to heal us, or remove our sinfulness from us and restore us to His original ideal. And this is what it means to forgive – “reclaiming from sin.”

- God was in the Son reconciling the world to Himself 2Cor 5:19

- For God so loved the world... John 3:16
- If God is for us... Romans 8:31

What about Jesus taking our sins? What does this mean?

Isa 53:4:

Surely our griefs He himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.(NAS)

Matt 8:16-17:

16 And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and **healed all who were ill**

17 **in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases."** (NAS)

Bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows does not mean that Christ "paid a legal penalty" for our sins, but instead means that he took away from us our griefs and sorrows (ie took away our sicknesses). He removed fear and selfishness and guilt and shame from our hearts and minds!

Isa 53:5:

But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, and **by His scourging we are healed.** (NAS)

1 Pet 2:24-25:

24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, **that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.**

25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. (NAS)

By His scourging we are healed does not represent a “legal” transaction in heaven where God’s attitude toward us is “healed”, but instead represents a change in our heart, where we die to sin and live to righteousness, returning to God instead of straying from Him.

Interestingly, the words translated as “sins” and “sin” in this text come from the same Greek word.

1Pet 2:24 *hamartia* translates as “sin” 172 times, “sinful” once, and “offense” once.²

Why don’t they translate it as “sin” both times? Does it make it clearer?

My paraphrase:

He took upon himself our sinfulness, our terminal condition, in his own person upon the cross, so that we could be freed from sin and live the right way, loving God and others more than ourselves. You have been healed by the remedy his painful ordeal procured.

SUNDAY

The lesson does a good job of pointing out the purpose of the law:

“The law, however, reveals a person’s shortcomings and guilt before God. The law cannot remove the guilt; what it can do is lead a sinner to seek a remedy for it.” – Well said and that remedy comes from Christ!

²Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario : Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G266

MONDAY

Read top dark section, “Now the righteousness...” and then second paragraph, “This is, of course...” thoughts?

Question, where is this righteousness, which Christ achieved, which is provided by God and not by observing the law, applied?

Read middle dark section, “Righteousness...” thoughts? How do you hear this? What does it sound like?

What law is referenced in the statement? Is it the law of God? And that law is what? The law of love, which is the basis of life? So why does the law of love *demand* righteousness? Because it is the design protocol upon which life is constructed to operate.

Why does the law of health *demand* we breath?

Notice the only way we can *attain* righteousness is through faith. What does it mean to attain something? Is it merely something that is declared? If someone declares you have a million dollars, is that the same as having attained a million dollars?

So through trust in God we actually attain the righteousness of Christ. It is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me. We become partakers of the divine nature – and this is why and how we, by faith can bring to God the righteousness of Christ.

How and why does the obedience of Christ get placed to our account? Because Christ’s character is reproduced within!

Consider a child with metastatic cancer....

WEDNESDAY

What is propitiation? It comes from the Greek hilasterion and is the name for the lid to the ark of the covenant. Christ is the place and means of restoring us to unity with God.

Read second paragraph, “The text also...” thoughts? Is it our historic behaviors or our condition of sinfulness?

Consider you are being recommended for a position in children’s division at your church, church board considers your name and someone brings up that when you 10 years old you had the measles. Would this disqualify you from being involved with the children? What if you had the measles now?

Is it our historic acts of sin that make us unacceptable or an unregenerated heart, a persistence in sinfulness?

And are “sins” remitted, or is sinfulness remitted? Do the historical facts of history ever get removed? Will Solomon be wiped out as he was conceived after David murdered Uriah and married Bathsheba? What remits, historic acts, or sinfulness in the heart?

Read third paragraph, “The word for remission...”

Remission here is not the best translation –

Romans 3:25

- Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; KJV
- God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— NIV
- whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; NRSV

It really is better as passing over, or passing by, in other words, God over looked the sins, or passed over them in order to provide remedy.

THURSDAY

Read middle paragraph, “Ellen G. White gives an...” thoughts?

FRIDAY

Any questions from the lesson?

Redemption in Romans Lesson 5 3Q 2010

Justification and the Law

But before we go into this week's lesson, there were a couple of points I wanted to follow up on from last week.

I wanted to follow up on the idea that justification is God declaring something to be so.

Does God declare things to be which are not? Is God's declaration what makes it so? As someone asked, is it when God speaks and it exists?

If God's declaration is what makes one righteous then why doesn't He just declare everyone righteous? Or stated another way, if justification is God declaring someone to be righteous why doesn't God declare everyone righteous and thereby justify everyone?

Can a person be legally right with God while their heart is still unchanged toward God?

How do we understand the declarative aspects of justification?

When Jesus was on earth and declared that the leaders were of their father the devil – was it so, or was Jesus declaring something that was not so? What caused them to be of their father the devil? Jesus' declaration or something that they had chosen?

At the end of time when the wicked are declared to be filthy still and the righteous are declared to be righteous still – will it actually be that way? Will the declaration cause it to be that way?

Is this an example of how we understand the declarative aspects of justification by faith? Does God declare us to be righteous when we are not? Does His declaration make it so, or after God has set us right with Him (justified us) does He also declare the reality if that change?

In the penal model what is emphasized as necessary for our justification? Is it not having our legal penalty paid? Is it not claimed that Christ's death paid the penalty to justify us?

But our model suggests that focusing on a penalty paid misdirects our attention from God's true plan. In other words we suggest that mere blood payment for sin was insufficient to justify us because we didn't need mere legal pardon we need restoration to righteousness in order to be right with God again. With that in mind, what do you think about Romans 4:25 in this regard?

He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

What does it mean? Delivered over is the same Greek as Romans 1:24, 26, 28 when God "let go" sinners to experience their choice. Christ was let go for our sin, what does this mean? It was for the purpose of destroying the infection of selfishness, the carnal nature, our sinfulness, that he was delivered over to death. Yet He was raised to life for our justification? Is this informing us that our justification required more than Christ's death, did it also required His resurrection?

Why? If legal penalty paid is what justifies us, why the need for resurrection?

When we realize that justification is not a legal process of getting a legal penalty paid, but an actual setting right, an actual putting beings right with God again, then we understand it took both Christ's death and resurrection to set humanity right with God again!

Now is some language easier to understand than other language? Was the reference just read fairly easy to comprehend? What about this one?

As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf and **accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are**

pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God's will and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory. {FW 103.1}

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Thoughts?

What does it mean to have our sins pardoned or forgiven? Here is another place the penal model diverts our attention from the reality of what Christ has done and is doing – they describe forgiveness merely as legal pardon, which required Christ's death to achieve. Not so:

But **forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose.** When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts

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accomplish His purpose without Jesus and what He accomplished. So it is because of Jesus success that God is able to heal us, or remove our sinfulness from us and restore us to His original ideal. And this is what it means to forgive – “reclaiming from sin.”

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By His scourging we are healed does not represent a “legal” transaction in heaven where God’s attitude toward us is “healed”, but instead represents a change in our heart, where we die to sin and live to righteousness, returning to God instead of straying from Him.

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SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “In Romans 4...” thoughts? Do you agree with stage one, God’s promise to provide all that is needed to save us? Do you agree with stage two, that we respond to God’s initiative by trusting Him? What about stage three? Is it when we trust Him that stage three is a pronouncement, or some legal credit?

Why do they stop short of what God actually does? When we trust Him a change has been wrought in the believer – the mind that was enmity with God is now in a state of trust with God! This is a radical change in the believer brought about by grace. And in the mind/heart that trusts God the Spirit dwells and reproduces Christ’s character within!

Any thoughts or questions about this?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “According to this...” thoughts?

A better meaning than “accounted” righteous when he trusted God, is recognized to be right with God, or was seen as standing in right relationship with God.

Do we agree that faith or trust in God in no way voids God’s law?

Do you see the lesson struggling to make this point?

Let’s use the analogy given by the penal model of someone in a court. What if a person got a speeding ticket and was found guilty in court and fined the appropriate amount. But then Bill Gates steps up and not only pays the fine, but puts down 50 billion dollars for all future speeding tickets (our sins past, present and future are paid for at the Cross according to the penal model). While with each speeding ticket another \$100 dollar fine is paid from the 50 billion, and the law is still in effect – does the law have any real effect in the life of the person? When all future penalties are already paid what effect does that have on one?

But what if a person was dying of lung cancer from years of cigarette smoking, from breaking the laws of health, will a legal penalty help them? But what if there was a regenerating treatment that would heal the damage and the person, in trust, submitted to the treatment. Would the regenerating treatment in any way make void the law of respiration? And what if the person, after taking the remedy, went out and began smoking again?

Understanding correctly God's law as the template for life clarifies immediately that God's grace in healing sinners and restoring us to His original design, through all that Christ has done, in no way voids His law. It instead, as the Scripture says, establishes it. It puts life back in harmony with the law.

But when we see the law as legal, as a system imposed which requires payments made – then when the payment is made, the law no longer has power over a person. All my sins, past, present and future have been paid – so what of the law, we now have immunity because Christ bore my penalty.

Read last paragraph, “Paul sets forth...” thoughts?

Yes legalism is a perversion of it – then why are we still so strongly promoting a legal gospel? David prayed for a new heart and right spirit, to be changed in the inner man. David didn't pray to be covered so the Father couldn't see him, but prayed for God to search him and find any wicked way within him!

God wants to heal us, we need to be opening ourselves in trust to our Creator who alone can fix what is wrong! But when we believe our Creator is a stern judge who must punish any sin He sees, we instead create theories to hide us from Him.

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to consider Romans 4:6-8:

- David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: ⁷ “Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ⁸ Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.” NIV

Thoughts?

Here it is in the New Century Version, which I believe gets verse six right:

- David said the same thing. He said that people are truly blessed when God, without paying attention to their deeds, makes people right with himself. Romans 4:6 NCV

The word translated credits is that same word *logizomai* which deals with reality, not suppositions. God does not recon, or consider someone righteous who is not. So the person is blessed who God has actually made right with Himself.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “It’s important to remember...” yes this is important. As we said last week one of the factors which has caused a legal slant to understanding the plan of salvation is that our legal justice system is based on Latin, and many of the words used in theology are Latin translations of the Greek. But another reason, is that Paul was speaking to legalistic people and in doing so he used language which was designed to reach them where they were. In order to do that he spoke in legal figures. Sadly, many today have taken Paul’s gracious figures of speech as the literal reality of God’s kingdom and have not grown past the legal language Paul needed to use to reach the legalistic people of his day.

Read last paragraph, “If Paul here...” thoughts? Are we saved by faith or grace through faith? Can we have faith, but in something or someone that doesn’t save?

When we speak of unbelief, we do not mean that a person believes nothing. The mind must rest upon something; and when it does not grasp truth, it lays hold of error. All men in one sense believe, and the effect produced upon the heart and character is according to the things believed. **Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors,** and it was only by repentance toward God and faith in the promised Messiah that they could hope ever to regain the lost image of God. **Paul had faith before his conversion; but it was not a correct faith.** His self-righteousness strengthened his faith that he was doing God's service in rejecting Christ, and he enjoyed a restful satisfaction. **False faith as well as true faith will give peacefulness for a time.** Paul verily thought that he was doing God service when he was persecuting the followers of Christ and putting them to death. **He was sincere in his belief; but sincerity will not make error truth, nor truth error.** "When the commandment came," says Paul, "sin revived, and I died." He then received the truth as it is in Jesus, and experienced its transforming power upon his soul. The truth was so firmly planted in his heart that he could say, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}

Thoughts?

At the end of SS class last week a question was raised regarding whether someone has to see justification as we are expressing it to be saved or not and we answered that question last week. One might contemplate, then what difference does it make?

And then I received this email this week from one of our class members:

The revelation of Gods character, presented in sabbath school, has had a huge impact in my life.

I feel that in addition and in unison with the message of God revealed through Christ, a greater emphasis on God revealed through us, and how his character looks in us, would be a powerful part of sabbath school.

We talk about the purpose of Christ's life and death, the remedy for sin, but not enough of how we are to take the remedy, and what kind of life we should be living.

I know that by merely observing the character of God it manifests itself in us. But, more emphasis on its appearance in our lives, and the role the sabbath school as a group and as individuals play in living lives like Christ, is, I think, necessary to encourage us in that direction.

We need reminder of how to take the remedy, and what side effects to expect.

Thoughts?

How do we take the remedy? Does it matter what we say about God? Does it make a difference in which God we place our faith?

- **It is a law of the mind, that it will narrow or expand to the dimensions of the things with which it becomes familiar. The mental powers will surely become contracted,** and will lose their ability to grasp the deep meanings of the word of God, unless they are put vigorously and persistently to the task of searching for truth. **The mind will enlarge,** if it is employed in tracing out the relation of the subjects of the Bible, comparing scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual. Go below the surface; the richest treasures of thought are waiting for the skillful and diligent student. {CE 119.1}

- **It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence.** Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward. {GC 555.1}

Does it make a difference and real impact on the believe how they view God?

WEDNESDAY

Read last two paragraphs, “If there had been...” thoughts?

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.** Romans 13:10
- The **entire law** is summed up in a single command: “**Love** your neighbor as yourself.” Galatians 5:14
- If you really keep the **royal law** found in Scripture, “**Love** your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. James 2:8
- Jesus replied: “**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘**Love** your neighbor as yourself.’ **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**” Matt 22:37-40
- In the **way of righteousness there is life**; along that path is immortality. Pr 12:28
- He who pursues **righteousness and love finds life**, prosperity and honor. Pr 21:21
- The **law** of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7
- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. **For God is love, and love is life.** COL 258

Where does all life originate? In God He is the source of all life! But what is God's law? And while life comes from God what is that life built or based upon? His law of love!

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, "In the New Testament..." well said, this is absolutely true, anyone care to explain why?

Read last paragraph, "We often hear..." thoughts?

If the law is imposed, an arbitrary law enacted by God, to which His creatures must adhere on pain of death, and if sins can be transferred to an innocent replacement to be punished in our stead, then once that transfer and payment is complete the law has been satisfied.

But, this is not the problem – the problem is not a legal one but an actual one, we are in a condition which is its very nature at odds with God, incompatible with life and inconsistent with God's design. This had to be fixed.

So, what was nailed to the Cross?

FRIDAY

Questions 2-4 read and discuss

Redemption in Romans Lesson 6 3Q 2010

Expounding the Faith

Before we go into this week's lesson I want to clarify what I have been saying the last two weeks.

As you know I have drawn a distinction between the traditional penal model and our model. And I want to clarify one point to allay any possibly misunderstanding or confusion.

Our model does not suggest that God did not need to pardon or forgive us – it is just that in our model God's personal pardon/forgiveness or what some call "legal pardon" was never an obstacle to our salvation. Christ did not need to do anything to procure God's personal pardon or forgiveness as it is freely given.

Along these lines we do not suggest that God does not make a declaration regarding His justified saints. I believe He does – but His declaration is descriptive of a reality that exists and is not some form of empty claim.

Sin happens in living beings not in record books. God is cleansing sinners from sin, not "doctoring" the books.

SABBATH

Read first sentence, "Paul has established...." Can this sentence be understood in more than one way? Do we need to define the words in the sentence, like justification, acceptance, faith and right standing?

If we conclude that justification means legal adjustment of record books do we get a different understanding than if justification means actually fixing the damage sinned caused and putting sinners right with God in heart and mind again?

How do we understand the record books?

If justification is a legal action then what is being suggested that prevents us from being accepted with God? What if justification is actually fixing what is wrong with humanity, then what prevents us from being accepted?

Second paragraph, read, “Through the fall...”

Thoughts? What does it mean to “remit” a record of sin? How does one do that? What would that entail? Would it entail destroying evidence? Would Bibles need to be burned? Would the heavenly record books need to be destroyed? Would angels need lobotomies? Would humans need memory erasure?

Does anyone see a problem with a theological system which requires records to be remitted? Is there some other way to understand this that I am missing?

Read last paragraph, “Paul contrasts...” thoughts?

Do you like how this is said? Did Christ come to undo what Adam did? Absolutely! And what did Adam do to humanity? How did Christ undo it?

Does paying a legal penalty undo what Adam did? Did Adam simply break a rule that was imposed, that in itself had no consequence and therefore all that was needed is the perfect fine to be paid? Or did Adam actually get changed, literally, and needed to be healed?

How did Christ undo this?

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Romans 5:1-5:

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. NIV

Then read first two paragraphs – “Being justified”... Thoughts?

What could be more glorious? How about the character of God as revealed in Christ – that God is not a liar, fraud, or twister of evidence and truth? How about that God is love and love sacrifices self to heal and restore? How about that God never required a payment or that sins be punished, such an idea is Satan’s allegations:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.** DA 761

Two paragraphs later EGW states:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty.** Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Thoughts regarding this or the presentation from the quarterly?
 What do you hear from the lesson guide? Any questions? Any concerns?

Can sin be transferred? Are historic acts of sin transferrable from person to person? If acts of sin were transferred to Christ does that mean Hitler and Stalin reduced Christ's suffering by shorting the lives of millions thus reducing committed sins by trillions? Do we reduce Christ's suffering with abortions, thus preventing people from being born who would commit sin? Are acts of sins transferable?

Notice the logic in the lesson, it is by transferring our sins to Christ that we avoid being punished and He receives our punishment in our place.

Consider Ezekiel 18 – the guilt of one is not transferable to another, and the righteousness of one is not transferable to another. And God challenges them because they accuse God of not being fair.

Consider the parable of the 10 Virgins – all appeared ready but five didn't have oil, why couldn't the five who had oil share it with those who didn't?

But some will have delayed to obtain the oil for replenishing their lamps, and too late they will **find that character, which is represented by the oil, is not transferable. That oil is the righteousness of Christ. It represents character, and character is not transferable.** No man can secure it for another. Each must obtain for himself a character purified from every stain of sin. The Lord is coming in power and great glory. It will then be His work to make a complete separation between the righteous and the wicked. But the oil cannot then be transferred to the vessels of those who have it not. {BEcho, May 4, 1896 par. 2}

Is it only righteous character that is not transferable or is sinful character also not transferable?

The problem we have is real – it is an actual condition of being, which when we are born is out of harmony with God and His protocols for life. Jesus came to reverse this. Because of Jesus we can be actually healed in mind/heart to love God and others more than self.

If character isn't transferable how do we receive Christ's character?

Any Scripture come to mind?

TUESDAY

Read second and third paragraph, "Commentators..." thoughts?

We are born infected with a condition we did not choose – we are not held responsible for this. But there is a free remedy which will cure us, if we refuse the remedy are we responsible for that?

Read Romans 5:12-14 – thoughts?

Here is my paraphrase:

^{5:12} Therefore, the infection of distrust of God, which deformed man's heart and mind with selfishness and fear and results only in death, infected the human race when Adam accepted Satan's lies about God and broke trust with him. This infection of distrust and selfishness is inherited by all mankind, because all are born infected – ¹³ this is revealed by the fact that before the written law was given, the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness was already in the world. But this infection of distrust, fear and selfishness is not diagnosable without the law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, even without being diagnosed as infected with this terminal condition, mankind still died from the time of Adam to Moses, even those who did not break a specific command, like Adam did – revealing that the problem is the infected state of our minds not a legal issue with God.

Adam, the first man, being the conduit through which the infection entered humanity, represents the one man who is the conduit of the antidote which cures the many who accept it.

While behaviors or acts of sin cannot be passed along, can the consequences of our behavior, both healthy/righteous and unhealthy/sinful be passed along to our children? Any examples?

The commandment “unto the third and fourth generations” what does it mean?

We have talked before about epigenetic changes – epi means above, so these changes are not genes to the genes, or DNA itself, but to control regions of the DNA.

Experience changes the various control groups which determine which genes are turned on and which are turned off, and these changes are passed down multiple generations:

- Fruit flies exposed to a drug called geldanamycin show unusual outgrowths on their eyes that can last through at least 13 generations of offspring even though no change in DNA has occurred (and generations 2 through 13 were not directly exposed to the drug).
- roundworms fed with a particular type of bacteria exhibit loss of a green fluorescent protein and a small dumpy appearance that lasts 40 generations. In human terms, factoring for 40 years equaling one generation, would represent 1600 years of generational history.
- What about stressful emotional events? Michael Meany at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, discovered newborn mice that were neglected by their mothers are more fearful and agitated as adults, which correlated with epigenetic changes in the genes that control stress.
- What about behavior? Men who smoke before the age of 11 increase the rate of obesity and metabolic problems in their

sons, but not their daughters. This means epigenetic changes to their Y chromosome.

- Men who experience starvation or short food supplies before they have children will confer higher mortality risks to their grandsons, but not granddaughter, where as women who experience famine will confer higher mortality risks to their granddaughters but not grandsons. Again demonstrating epigenetic changes of the X and Y chromosomes passing multigenerational.

These are examples of negative effects being passed along, what about positive changes? Can we pass those along?

- Mice genetically engineered to have memory problems were raised in an enriched environment--given toys, exercise, and social interaction--for two weeks during adolescence. The animals' memory improved--an unsurprising finding, given that enrichment has been previously shown to boost brain function. The mice were then returned to normal conditions, where they grew up and had offspring. This next generation of mice also had better memory, despite having the genetic defect and never having been exposed to the enriched environment.
- The researchers also looked at a molecular correlate of memory called long-term potentiation, or LTP, a mechanism that strengthens connections between neurons. Environmental enrichment fixed faulty LTP in mice with the genetic defect; the fixed LTP was then passed on to their offspring. The findings held true even when pups were raised by memory-deficient mice that had never had the benefits of toys and social interaction.

Thoughts?

- A genuine conversion changes hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong. The religion of God is a firm fabric, composed of innumerable threads, and woven together with tact and skill. Only the wisdom which comes from God can make this fabric complete. There are a great many kinds of cloth which at first have a fine appearance, but they cannot

endure the test. They wash out. The colors are not fast. Under the heat of summer they fade away and are lost. The cloth cannot endure rough handling. {Mar 237.2}

Christ came to fix everything Adam's sin did to humanity. In order to do this He took upon Himself a humanity just like ours. And only through unity with Christ can we experience a real transformation in our minds, brains, characters and even how our DNA is expressed.

MONDAY

First paragraph, read – “When Adam and Eve....” – this is well said.

Read second and third paragraph, “As the blood...” thoughts?

Does God have wrath toward sin? What about toward the sinner? What about this idea that it is because of love He has wrath?

Is it true that God's love motivates Him to destroy that which destroys His creation? Is it true He has a holy hatred for that which damages the objects of His love?

Will God eventually eradicate the universe of sin?

What is damaging God's creation? Sin, and God hates it and is going to destroy it – how?

Question – what is sin made of? What is this sin stuff that God has wrath toward? Is sin physical? Is it made from molecules? Or is sin ideas and attitudes of hearts and minds of intelligent beings?

How can God eradicate this? What eradicates lies? Truth – is God's supreme revelation of truth, at the end of time, when He reveals Himself without any veil in between Him and His creatures the fullness of His wrath? Will truth consume lies? What happens to those steeped in lies?

What about selfishness in hearts and minds? What eradicates selfishness? Love – is God’s supreme, unveiled, loving presence what ultimately consumes selfishness? What happens in the hearts and minds of those solidified in selfishness?

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power **are not prepared to enter the presence of God.** Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters. Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no;** years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire.** They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that **the wicked are incurable**. GC 542

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, “It is true...” thoughts?

What is the premise? Why is sin bad? What happens to those who sin? In order for God to be just what must He do? Punish – in this model where does the pain and suffering and death originate? Does it suggest God inflicts punishment?

What would happen to sinners if He didn't? Would they live eternally in sin, or is sin terminal?

Read last paragraph, “When the Israelites...” thoughts? If our faith is not legalistic, then why is there so much emphasis on legalities?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “As humans....” Thoughts?

How would you explain Christ is our substitute?

What does it mean to be on vantage ground with God?

The lesson says it very well in the third paragraph, “Look at the opposing...” thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2 and 3

Redemption in Romans Lesson 7 3Q 2010

Victory Over Sin

Thoughts regarding the title?

What is your belief about what this means?

Is it possible to have victory over sin? In this life? What would that look like? What does it entail?

When the Scripture says that “you shall call his name Immanuel for he shall save his people from their sin” what does that mean?

Should we expect victory over sin in this life?

Grace can thrive only in the heart that is being constantly prepared for the precious seeds of truth. The thorns of sin will grow in any soil; they need no cultivation; but grace must be carefully cultivated. The briars and thorns are always ready to spring up, and the work of purification must advance continually. If the heart is not kept under the control of God, if the Holy Spirit does not work unceasingly to refine and ennoble the character, the old habits will reveal themselves in the life. Men may profess to believe the gospel; but unless they are sanctified by the gospel their profession is of no avail. **If they do not gain the victory over sin, then sin is gaining the victory over them.** The thorns that have been cut off but not uprooted grow apace, until the soul is overspread with them. {COL 50.4}

Christ specified the things that are dangerous to the soul. As recorded by Mark He mentions **the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things.** Luke specifies the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. These are what choke the word, the growing spiritual seed. The soul ceases to draw nourishment from Christ, and spirituality dies out of the heart. {COL 51.1}

Thoughts? Can we experience victory? How?

Christ promised that the Holy Spirit should abide with those who wrestle for victory over sin, to demonstrate the power of divine might by endowing the human agent with supernatural strength and instructing the ignorant in the mysteries of the kingdom of God. . . . {AG 212.5}

When one is fully emptied of self, when every false god is cast out of the soul, the vacuum is filled by the inflowing of the Spirit of Christ. Such a one has the faith that purifies the soul from defilement. He is conformed to the Spirit, and he minds the things of the Spirit. He has no confidence in self. Christ is all and in all. {AG 212.6}

What does it mean to have every false god cast out?

Christ gave his life that all who would might be freed from sin, and reinstated in the favor of the Creator. It was the anticipation of the redeemed, holy universe that prompted Christ to make this great sacrifice. Are we followers of God as dear children? or are we servants of the prince of darkness? Are we worshipers of Jehovah, or of Baal? of the living God, or of idols? **No outward shrines may be visible, there may be no image for the eye to rest upon; yet we may be practising idolatry. It is as easy to make an idol of cherished ideas or objects as to fashion gods of wood or stone. Thousands have a false conception of God and his attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal.** God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of his throne. He is a God of love, of pity, and tender compassion. Thus he is represented in his Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore, and whose character we are seeking to imitate, we are worshiping the true God. {RH, December 3, 1908 par. 2}

Could a person be a Christian, a baptized member of the church and not experience victory over sin because they continue to worship a false god in concept and idea?

How do we understand, “Be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect”? Is this an impossibility? Would God direct us to do something impossible to achieve?

Is it based on behavior or something else?

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matt 5:43-48

What type of perfection is this? Would this be victory over sin?

Is it a perfect attitude of love and desire to grow, develop, advance – a humble, cooperative attitude? Is it living like Micah wrote?

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

This week I thought we might do something a little different than just examine what the study guide says. This week’s lesson is focused on Romans chapter six. Let’s examine Romans six ourselves and see what we discover. If we have time we can then examine some points from the lesson guide.

Read Romans 6:1-4

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We

were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Thoughts? What does this passage mean to you? How would you explain it?

What does it mean to die to sin? How does baptism play a role? Is sin something active, something within, or is sin historical, records? If sin is recorded acts how do we die to it?

So what is sin? Is it a commodity?

I asked over 350 Christian HS students to answer the question, on a 3x5 card, “what is sin” here are some of their answers:

- An act against what God stands for
- It is something that separates us from God
- To do something that is morally wrong
- Anything evil or unjust
- Something that brings us down
- The absence of anything good/anything not of God
- Doing anything you know in your gut is wrong
- Bad stuff
- A bad thing that Satan discovered and brought upon us
- The cause of all pain and suffering
- When you do something you feel guilty about
- Anything that makes God unhappy
- Something to be forgiven
- Whatever you do wrong and you don't even care what you did

And the following two answers were submitted by more than ten percent of the students:

- Sin is not following the Ten Commandments
- Sin is going against the will of God

These answers break down into two general categories:

- (1) sin is bad behavior, an act of disobedience, something we do wrong; or,
- (2) sin is some evil commodity, entity, element, some “thing” or some “stuff” that separates us from God or makes us unhappy.

Three students saw sin differently. Their answers pierced a deeper level of truth. To them sin was something more than bad behavior and was certainly not a commodity that could be passed from one person to the next. These three saw sin as:

- The absence of love
- The opposite of God’s character – sin is being selfish
- Focusing on self. It all started with Satan and how he wanted to be greater than God. This is the root of all evil.

They saw sin as a state of being, a defect in character, a deviation from God’s heart of love.

How do you answer the question, “What is sin?” Does our answer to what is sin impact how we understand Romans?

Satan's rebellion **was to be a lesson to the universe** through all coming ages--a perpetual **testimony to the nature of sin** and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. **Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings**, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty. {PP 42.4}

Has the nature of sin been a question in the Great Controversy? Satan’s allegation is that sin is legal, breaking rules, God’s position is that sin is a condition, a state of being out of harmony with His law of love – a principle at war with love – selfishness.

Here is my paraphrase of Romans 6:1-4:

Romans 6:1 What, then, should we say about this amazing healing plan? Should we spread the infection of distrust and selfishness, cause more devastation and destruction so that the power of God's healing solution may be more fully displayed? ² Absolutely not! We have taken the antidote, and the infection of distrust and selfishness has been purged from our hearts and minds; how then, can we choose to be reinfected with distrust of God and practice selfish methods again? ³ Or don't you realize that all of us who were immersed into union with Christ Jesus were immersed into selflessness and have died to self-centeredness? ⁴ We symbolically demonstrate we have joined him in dying to self by being buried in water, in order that just as Jesus arose from the dead displaying the life giving glory of the Father, we too live a new life displaying God's glorious character in our lives.

Thoughts?

Read Romans 6:5-7:

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ⁷ because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Thoughts? How do you understand this? How would you explain it to another?

What does it mean to do away with the body of sin? Is it talking about our physical tissue, our actual human body? Is it talking about our inherited condition of selfishness?

Here is my paraphrase:

^{6:5} If we have joined him in dying to self, we will absolutely join him in his resurrection and new life! ⁶ For we know that when our old selfish hearts and fear ridden minds trust God and surrenders to be crucified with Christ, the infection of selfishness is purged, and our hearts are no longer controlled by Satanic principles – ⁷ because anyone who dies to selfishness is free from Satan's methods, principles and control.

Thoughts?

Read verses 8-10:

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

How would you explain these verses? What does it mean the death He died He died to sin? What is sin? How did Christ die to it? Why does death no longer have mastery over Him?

Here is my paraphrase:

^{6:8} Now if we join Christ in dying to self, we are confident we will live with him forever. ⁹ Because Christ was raised from the dead and cannot die again; he has secured the remedy and has revealed the truth, and death cannot touch him again. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died once destroying Satan's lies, the infection of fear and selfishness and restoring love and trust; therefore, the life he lives, he lives to glorify God.

Thoughts?

Read verses 11-14:

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer the parts

of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

How would you explain this? What does it mean do not let sin reign in your mortal body? What would it mean to offer your body to sin? What about offering your body to God? How do we experience a life where sin is not our master?

Here is my paraphrase:

^{6:11} In the same way recognize you are dead to the ways of Satan and alive to the ways of God as revealed in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not indulge the selfish desires and participate in destructive activities. ¹³ Do not use your physical body for evil, to indulge selfishness, but rather offer your entire being to God – revealing that Satan’s principles of death have been replaced by God’s principles of life. So offer your entire self to God doing what is right and healthy because it is right and healthy. ¹⁴ For distrust, fear and selfishness will no longer be what controls you, because you are no longer under the law’s terminal diagnosis, but have partaken of God’s gracious remedy and are under his healing care.

Thoughts?

Read verses 15-18:

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. ¹⁸ You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Thoughts? What does it mean sin leads to death? Does it mean God must inflict death for sin? What about obedience which leads to righteousness?

What does it mean to be set free from sin? To be slaves of righteousness?

My paraphrase:

6:15 What then? Shall we indulge selfish desires because God has provided a gracious cure for our terminal condition? Absolutely not! ¹⁶ Don't you realize that when you gratify the selfish desires, you are slowly transformed and become more and more selfish destroying the very faculties that recognize and respond to God's healing truth – thus over time you lose your freedom to choose and become a slave to selfishness and lust, which leads only to self-destruction and death? Conversely if you accept God's gracious remedy and choose his methods you are transformed and become Christlike in character. ¹⁷ Thanks be to God, that even though you used to be slaves to selfishness, you wholeheartedly accepted the truth revealed by Jesus, trusted God and practice his methods of love, truth and freedom, which you were taught. ¹⁸ Therefore, you have been freed from distrust, fear and selfishness and have been bonded to love, truth and liberty, doing what is right because it is right.

Thoughts?

Read verses 19-23:

I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. ²⁰ When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. ²¹ What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result

in death! ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What does this mean? How would you explain it?

My paraphrase:

^{6:19} I state this as simply as possible, using human terms because it is easier to understand and learn that way. Just as you used to choose to use your bodies in lewd, vile and debasing ways, so now choose to use your bodies doing what is right, reasonable and healthy, which leads to purity and holiness. ²⁰ When you slavishly indulged the selfish desires you avoided what was healthy, right and good. ²¹ But what good did that do you? It only caused pain, heartache and ultimately death. ²² But now you have accepted the truth about God, been restored to trust and been set free from fear and selfishness. You are wholeheartedly committed to God and receive complete recreation of heart and mind resulting in eternal life. ²³ For the infection of selfishness leads only to death, but the gift of God is eternal life through the healing remedy brought by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thoughts?

How do we have victory over sin? By surrendering self and trusting God with our lives, wants, future and outcomes. By choosing His methods and allowing Him to determine how things turn out. By saying no to selfish desires and yes to what is right and healthy.

SABBATH

Read fourth and fifth paragraph, "In the Bible..." thoughts? Is this clear to you? How do you explain sanctification? How do you explain being sanctified? How is sanctification a work of a lifetime?

Does that mean the older get greater opportunity? Did the antediluvians have an advantage?

Is eating a work of a lifetime? Why? Is this what “sanctification is a work of a lifetime” means? Are we to be daily set apart, dedicated to God? Do we err if we focus on some level of achievement in sanctification rather than focusing on the daily surrender and commitment of oneself to God?

Can one be justified without being sanctified? Can one be sanctified without being justified? What is the benefit of such distinctions?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Paul follows...” Thoughts? Is the lesson stating that a justified person has died to sin? I think so and I agree with that, but wouldn’t that mean something has changed in the believer? If a person has died to sin hasn’t a change occurred in them? Is such a change more than a “claim” or “declaration”? Yes, justification is putting the sinner right with God again, which means the sinner, in heart, has died to sin.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “The word...” thoughts? What is sin? After our discussion today, how do you answer?

Read third paragraph, “The Greek...” thoughts? Have you ever heard the idea that we overcome by faith and claiming promises? What does that mean? I have many patients say they pray every day, they claim promises but....

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read last paragraph, “We should...” Thoughts? What does it mean the condemnation the law inevitably brings? Is it the law that condemns us or our own condition of being out of harmony with the

law, while the law merely diagnoses, exposes, or allows us to see what our condition really is? Should we blame the law for our condemnation?

WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph, “Notice how...” thoughts?

What does it mean to obey? A humble willingness to listen and follow, an openness to truth, a willingness to be shown the error of your ways, accept redirection and follow the new light.

Wow, how many Sabbath keepers are not obeying?

What is the importance of doctrine? How does doctrine, even correct doctrine become a stumbling block?

Sabbath, correct day of week taught, but taught as an arbitrary test suddenly misrepresents God and obstructs the truth about Him!

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “Notice too...” thoughts? Did the paragraph make it clear to you? That free from dominion means no longer dominated? How would you explain it?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph? Do you believe this? Why or why not?

Read second paragraph, “A profession..” why is it not harmless to engage in pleasure and amusements?

As the Supreme Ruler of the universe, **God has ordained laws for the government not only of all living beings, but of all the operations of nature.** Everything, whether great or small, animate or inanimate, is under fixed laws which cannot be disregarded. **There are no exceptions to this rule; for**

nothing that the divine hand has made has been forgotten by the divine mind. But while everything in nature is governed by natural law, man alone, as an intelligent being, capable of understanding its of his creation, God has given a conscience to realize the sacred claims of the divine law, and **a heart capable of loving it as holy, just, and good**; and of man prompt and perfect obedience is required. Yet God does not compel him to obey; requirements, is amenable to moral law. To man alone, the crowning work he is left a free moral agent. {ST, April 15, 1886 par. 2}

Thoughts?

Redemption in Romans Lesson 8 3Q 2010

The Man of Romans 7

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “Bible students...” thoughts?

What does this paragraph say to you? What questions come to your mind?

If we stand perfect before God then why does He need to then sanctify us and conform us to the image of His Son?

Is there a different way to say this? Could it mean we stand before God in a restored trust and in that trust He heals us and restores us to the image of His Son?

What do you think is Paul talking about in regard to Romans 7? Is Paul referring to the converted man’s struggle or the uncovered man? Let’s see if we can answer that this week.

SUNDAY

Romans 7:1-6 Paul uses the analogy of a woman married and after the death of her husband she is no longer legally bound to her husband. He does this to say something about the Jews and their relationship to the law – what lesson do you derive?

Read third paragraph, “As the death...” thoughts?

What does it mean “delivers her from the law of her husband?” The previous paragraph said, “she is free from the law that bound her to him.” Any difference?

What about the death of the old life through Christ? What does this mean? Did it deliver just the Jews? What were the Jews delivered from?

Were the Jews, previous to Christ, involved in a system that brought salvation? Was salvation possible through the blood of animals?

Had the Jews attempted to save themselves through their own effort at obeying the law? Didn't Christ deliver all humanity from trying to save self?

The lesson suggests the analogy is teaching deliverance from the Jewish system of ordinances – what do you think? What law would a person die to? What law would they be delivered from? Is it the ceremonial law or is it the law of sin and death, i.e. selfishness?

What would be the basis of the new marriage? Would it be to the same husband? Is the husband the ceremonial system or the law of sin and death? Is the new husband a new system, or a new life based on a new law the law of love in union with Christ?

Read Romans 7:1-3

Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? ² For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. ³ So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

- The Woman is human will – our individuality –
- The first husband who dies is our carnal nature, selfishness, the law of sin and death. We are born with our will enslaved to our carnal natures. When we die to selfishness our will can be united with another.
- The second husband is Christ and the law of love

The last paragraph says that Paul would not suggest that the 10 Commandments were no longer binding, was the ceremonial law binding? In what way was it binding?

What is Paul trying to free them from? Was it the ceremonies and rituals designed to teach them about the Messiah, or the distorted, twisted, belief system they had developed about those rituals that prevented them from being free from the law of sin and death i.e. selfishness?

Was there ever any saving benefit in sacrificing animals?

MONDAY

Read fourth paragraph, "Thus, Paul explains..." thoughts? Could you find a definition for sin in Scripture like this? What do you think about it?

Violation of the revealed will of God? When Satan sinned in heaven had there been a list of rules not to lie? If God's will on this issue was so clearly revealed in heaven why did 1/3 of the perfect angels, without carnal natures choose to rebel against it?

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. {MB 109.2}

What was the purpose of the written law? To make sin easier to see, why? Could it be that God's will i.e. methods, law, principles weren't easily seen? And why were they not easy to see? Could it be because Satan began to misrepresent, distort and twist thus causing confusion?

How has God used law and what does it say about Him?

What about the idea of recognizing oneself as a sinner under condemnation and death and “In this sense, the person dies”?

Read Romans 7:7-11:

⁷ What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.” ⁸ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. ⁹ Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. ¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. (NIV)

Thought about this? Here is my paraphrase:

^{7:7} What shall we say then? Is the law evil and selfish because it increases the amount of evil and selfishness we see? Absolutely not! For I would not have known what evil and selfishness looks like if it wasn't for the diagnostic efficacy of the law. I would not have realized that coveting was evil and selfish if the law didn't say, “Don't covet.” ⁸ But selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the law is only a diagnostic instrument and not a remedy, magnified every covetous desire within me. For apart from the diagnostic ability of the law, sin is unrecognizable. ⁹ Once I thought I was healthy and free from the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness, but then the commandment examined me, exposed how utterly infected I was and diagnosed me as terminal. ¹⁰ I discovered that the very commandment given only to diagnose my condition, I had unwittingly attempted to use as a cure and thus my condition only worsened. ¹¹ For selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the commandment could only diagnose and not cure, deceived me into thinking I could be cured by working to keep

the commandments, but instead my terminal state only worsened.

TUESDAY

The lesson states some really great things in Tuesday's lesson.

Read the first three paragraphs, "Because the Jews..." well said, on all accounts. Thoughts?

We agree with all of this. Isn't God wonderful to provide us with such an efficient diagnostic tool to help us realize our need?

What has been the problem with the law through history?

Romans 7:12-15 from my paraphrase:

¹² So understand this, the law diagnoses perfectly, and the commandment is the standard of what is right and good, set apart by God, to reveal what is evil and destructive.

^{7:13} Did the law, which did good by diagnosing what was wrong with me, become the source of my terminal condition? Of course not! It only exposed what was already in me so that I could recognize how totally decayed, putrid and near death I was, so that through the lens of the commandment I might become utterly disgusted with evil and selfishness and long for a cure.

^{7:14} We know that the law is consistent, reliable and reasonable; but I am inconsistent, unreliable and unreasonable, because the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness has warped my mind and damaged my thinking. ¹⁵ I am frustrated with what I do. For having been restored to trust, I want to do what is in harmony with God and his methods and principles; but I find that even though I trust God, old habits, conditioned responses, preconceived ideas and other remnants of the devastation caused by distrust and selfishness are not yet fully removed.

Thoughts?

If the law is a diagnostic instrument and not a remedy to sin why do some suggest the need we have is to pay the penalty of the law?

Read bottom green section – thoughts? Why is it not a good idea to play with sin? We are changed, we actually alter ourselves, our neural circuits, our gene expression and makes it harder to be free. One hit of cocaine activates a gene which produces a protein, not previously produced, which causes increased cravings for cocaine.

WEDESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Using the law...” thoughts?

Can we fulfill the requirements of the law? So is the law reminding us no matter what we do God is displeased with us? Are we displeasing to God? What about being the apple of His eye?

If your child is sick with a terminal disease and suffering, is your child displeasing to you?

What is the problem with this sentence? The lesson has made it clear that we can never fulfill the requirements of the law, that we were born in this condition not of our own choosing, and now suggest we are displeasing to God? Is it not sin that is displeasing to God?

Read Romans 7:16-20

¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

Thoughts? Converted or unconverted man?

My paraphrase:

¹⁶ And if I find an old habit causing me to behave in ways that I now find detestable, I affirm that the law is a very helpful tool revealing residual damage in need of healing. ¹⁷ What is happening is this: I have come to trust God and desire to do his will, but old habits and conditioned responses, which present almost reflexively in certain situations, have not yet been totally eliminated and thus cause me to do things I do not want to do. ¹⁸ I know that my mind was completely infected with distrust, fear and selfishness which totally perverted all my desires and faculties, so that even when distrust has been eradicated and trust has been restored, the damage caused by years of distrustful and selfish behavior has not yet been fully healed. So I find, at times, I have the desire to do what is right, but do not yet have the ability to carry out the desire. ¹⁹ For the old habits and conditioned responses are not the good I want to do; no, they are remnants of my selfish unconverted mind. ²⁰ So, if I find myself doing what I no longer desire to do, it is not I, but vestiges of old habits and conditioned responses that have yet to be removed, and through God's grace will soon be removed.

Does it matter how we see sin? Are old habits, conditioned responses, preconceived ideas excuses to avoid victory? Even though we struggle with these is victory reasonable to pursue?

THURSDAY

Read Romans 7:21-25

²¹ So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Thoughts?

Read first paragraph, "In this passage..." thoughts?

From my paraphrase:

^{7:21} So, I find this reality at work: When I want to do good, old selfish habits and residual feelings of fear are right there with me. ²² For in my mind I rejoice in God's methods and principles; ²³ but I recognize I remain damaged from years of being infected with distrust and practicing Satan's methods, so that even though the infection of distrust has been removed, the old habits of fear and self-promotion tempt me from within. ²⁴ What a damaged and corrupt man I am! Who will deliver and heal me from a brain and body so diseased and deformed? ²⁵ Praise be to God – for he has provided the healing solution through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I find that in my mind I am now renewed with trust for God and love of his methods, but my brain and body remain damaged by years of self-indulgent behavior.

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read third paragraph, "After Christ..." thoughts? What force did the ceremonial law have before the Cross?

Discuss questions 1-3

Redemption in Romans Lesson 9 3Q 2010

Freedom in Christ

SABBATH

Read memory text – what does it mean to be “in” Christ?

Read second paragraph, “Paul was saying...” Thoughts?

No doubt Christ offers to free us from sin – question – when? When can we take Christ up on that offer? Have you heard Christ’s deliverance from sin broken up into portions?

- Delivers from the penalty of sin
- Delivers from the power of sin
- Delivers from the presence of sin

Can we be delivered from sin’s penalty without being delivered from sin’s power or presence? So how does Christ deliver us from sin’s penalty? Is it not by delivering us from sin?

Can we experience deliverance from sin now? How?

The **knowledge of God as revealed in Christ** is the knowledge that all who are saved must have. It is the knowledge that **works transformation of character**. This knowledge, received, **will re-create the soul in the image of God**. It will impart to the whole being a spiritual power that is divine. {MH 425.2}

This **is life eternal that they might know you the only true God** and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. John 17:3

Read next paragraph, “Paul continues...” thoughts?

Much to contemplate in this paragraph,

Isn't it true it cost God (all three) infinitely to save mankind? How can the reality that "it cost God infinitely to save us and eliminate sin from the universe," be misconstrued?

Isn't it similar to say "it cost God infinitely" and "God paid an infinite price" to save mankind? These are reasonably the same – are they the same as saying "God paid our legal penalty?" Does this language introduce another element?

He took our humanity, the only way He could relate to us, what does this mean?

What about Hebrews 2:17,18?

For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Does this mean that because Jesus became human God now knows what we are going through and can sympathize with our needs? Did the humanity of Jesus educate God in some fashion so that Christ is now our sympathizing and faithful High Priest who informs the Father of our struggles and plight?

Christ was about to visit our world, and to become incarnate. He says, "A body hast Thou prepared Me." Had He appeared with the glory that was His with the Father before the world was, **we could not have endured the light of His presence. That we might behold it and not be destroyed, the manifestation of His glory was shrouded. His divinity was veiled with humanity,--the invisible glory in the visible human form.** {DA 23.1}

Why would we have been destroyed if Christ would have come with His unveiled divinity? Would He have been angry and inflicting death or is death unavoidable for unhealed sinners in the unveiled

glory of God? Does this give us insight as to why the wicked die in the end?

What other reasons did He become incarnate?

He pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men, **that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life.** DA 23.3

Since Jesus came to dwell with us, **we know that God is acquainted with our trials**, and sympathizes with our griefs. **Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners.** For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour's life on earth, we see "God with us." {DA 24.1}

Was God's character called into question? Did human beings fail to know this about God?

Did Christ become incarnate in order to learn something He didn't know? Did God become incarnate to educate Himself? No! He became incarnate to reveal God to us without destroying us, to convince us of God's everlasting goodness and love for us, to overcome our fear and mistrust of Him!

Any other reasons why He had to be made like His brothers in every way? This is addressed in next point of the paragraph which said, He became "the substitute and died in our stead."

What does Hebrews say He needed to accomplish – atonement, and what does this mean? Reconciliation, unity, at-one-ment. How does suffering and being tempted like us enable Him to achieve atonement and help us who are being tempted?

What is the problem sin caused God needed to fix? Did God get changed in some fashion when Adam sinned? Did mankind get changed? Was mankind, after Adam's sin in unity, harmony, oneness with God? No!

What needed to happen? Someone had to restore God's law and character back into the species human. Jesus became like us so that He could accomplish this, so that He could fix humanity, eradicate sin from us and restore mankind into perfection!

The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; **it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters** (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

How does Christ help us when we are tempted? He provides us with a new heart and right spirit, He regenerates us into His likeness when we open our hearts to Him.

Nothing but divine power can regenerate the human heart and imbue souls with the love of Christ, which will ever manifest itself with love for those for whom He died. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. **When a man is converted to God, a new moral taste is supplied, a new motive power is given, and he loves the things that God loves.** . . . Love, joy, peace, and inexpressible gratitude will pervade the soul, and the language of him who is blessed will be, "Thy gentleness hath made me great" (Ps. 18:35). {AG 302.2}

But those who are waiting to behold a magical change in their characters without determined effort on their part to overcome sin, will be disappointed. We have no reason to fear while looking to Jesus, no reason to doubt but that He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto Him. . . . {AG 302.3}

We are to grow daily in spiritual loveliness. **We shall fail often in our efforts to copy the divine pattern. We shall often have to bow down to weep at the feet of Jesus, because of our shortcomings and mistakes; but we are not to be discouraged;** we are to pray more fervently, believe more fully, and try again with more steadfastness to grow into the

likeness of our Lord. **As we distrust our own power, we shall trust the power of our Redeemer**, and render praise to God, who is the health of our countenance, and our God. . . . {AG 302.4}

By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. {AG 302.5}

Why are we not to become discouraged with shortcomings? Because it is not our power that cures or heals us, it is Gods! He has achieved our remedy and cure, ours is merely the daily cooperative walk with Him as He continues to transform us.

Do not settle down in Satan's easy chair, and say that there is no use, you cannot cease to sin, that there is no power in you to overcome. There is no power in you apart from Christ, but it is your privilege to have Christ abiding in your heart by faith, and **He can overcome sin in you, when you cooperate with His efforts**. . . . You may be living epistles, known and read of all men. You are not to be a dead letter, but a living one, testifying to the world that Jesus is able to save. {OHC 76.5}

So why is Christ able to help those who are tempted, because He now knows something He didn't previously know, or because He now achieved something not previously achieved – He now has perfected humanity? He has now cured the human condition in His own person and it is this He offers to us!

Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. Heb 5:8,9

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, **coming to the earth as**

man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

SUNDAY

Read Romans 8:1,2

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Top section of the lesson asks, "What does 'no condemnation' mean? No condemnation from what?"

From where does condemnation of sinners arise?

- But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by **your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.**" Matt 12:36,37
- "As for the person **who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him.** For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. ⁴⁸ There **is a judge for the one who rejects me** and does not accept my words; **that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.** John 12:47,48
- "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and **believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.** John 5:24

What do you understand from these passages about condemnation? From where does it arise? What causes a person to be condemned? Is it not their very own condition of remaining in sin, of retaining a selfish heart, of remaining out of harmony with the very basis of life in God's universe?

What prevents condemnation? Belief in Christ, which results in a transformation within the believer such that they have new hearts, right spirits, and are in harmony with God and His law of love!

The lesson describes a person who is in sin and wretchedness who surrenders to Christ in the third paragraph, "But then..." - thoughts?

Where does the actual change take place? Is it in the standing a person has before God or in the heart of the one who has surrendered to Him? Does God recognize the change in the heart of the believer who previously distrusted God but now trusts Him? Or is God prevented, by Christ, from seeing the true heart condition of the sinner?

Why is there no more condemnation? Is it, as the lesson says, that Christ's perfect record stands for ours? If that were true what would it imply about the source of condemnation? And what does it imply about the solution? Notice, this scenario has the solution as fixing books in heaven rather than fixing sinners.

But Hebrews 8:10 tells us that it is our hearts that get fixed, not records in heaven.

From where does condemnation arise? From the condition of being selfish and alienated from God. The reason there is no more condemnation for those in Christ is because these sinners, while not yet perfected, are in unity, harmony, relationship, friendship with God through their trust in Christ. In other words their hearts have been changed from enemies to friends.

Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. ¹⁹Our message is that God was in Christ making the whole human race his friends.^d God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends.

20 Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends! 2Cor 5:17-20 GNT

Thoughts? What is God doing? Changing us!

What is the law of the Spirit of life that set us free from the law of sin and death? And what is the law of sin and death?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "God provided..." thoughts? Was Christ's life in the likeness of sinful flesh "extremely important" or essential?

TUESDAY

Read Romans 8:5,6:

Those who live as their human nature tells them to, have their minds controlled by what human nature wants. Those who live as the Spirit tells them to, have their minds controlled by what the Spirit wants. ⁶To be controlled by human nature results in death; to be controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace. GNT

Thoughts? Read second paragraph, "To have one's..." thoughts?

^d God was making the whole human race his friends through Christ; or God was in Christ making the whole human race his friends.

Why is such a mind against God? Is it that they consciously choose to say no to God or consciously rebel against God or is it that selfishness is opposed to all that God is? And why is such a state death because God is powerful and will kill or because selfishness goes against His design for life?

WEDNESDAY

Read Romans 8:9-14

But you do not live as your human nature tells you to; instead, you live as the Spirit tells you to—if, in fact, God’s Spirit lives in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ lives in you, the Spirit is life for you because you have been put right with God, even though your bodies are going to die because of sin. If the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from death, lives in you, then he who raised Christ from death will also give life to your mortal bodies by the presence of his Spirit in you.

¹² So then, my brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it is not to live as our human nature wants us to. For if you live according to your human nature, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death your sinful actions, you will live. ¹⁴Those who are led by God’s Spirit are God’s children.

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read versus 15,16

For the Spirit that God has given you does not make you slaves and cause you to be afraid; instead, the Spirit makes you God’s children, and by the Spirit’s power we cry out to God, “Father! my Father!” God’s Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God’s children.

Thoughts? What do you notice from these verses? God's Spirit doesn't make us slaves – why do you think Paul is saying this? What is he telling us? What is the lesson?

And Paul says the Spirit won't make us afraid – what is the importance of this? Any other texts bear on this? How about “perfect love casts out all fear.”

What does it mean to be a child of God? Does it mean we reveal God in us? His image is again reproduced in us?

What does it mean God's Spirit joins himself to ours?

FRIDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “Our ransom...” thoughts? What does a ransom do? Frees from bondage, what holds us in bondage? Lies about God and sinful nature – what is the price to free us? The truth about God and a new nature purified!

Read question 2 and discuss.

Redemption in Romans Lesson 10 3Q 2010

Redemption for Jew and Gentile

SABBATH

Read memory text – “Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.” Rom 9:18

Thoughts? What does this text mean? Is there anyone on whom God does not want to have mercy? Is there anyone God inflicts hardness? Does God use His power to cause the hardening of hearts? Does God use His power to prevent someone from conversion and instead forces them into rebellion and hardness of heart?

If God did that what would such action say about God?

Some argue that God’s sovereignty is such that He actively does cause all things including the hardening of hearts – this is a common teaching among Reform theology a.k.a. Calvinism.

Did God harden Pharaoh’s heart?

- But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the Israelites go. Exodus 10:20
- But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh’s heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said. Exodus 7:22
- But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go. Exodus 8:32

Are all these verses equally inspired? Which is correct? How do we understand them?

From our Bible commentary on Romans 9:18 we read:

“In Exodus the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart is sometimes described as self-produced and sometimes described as produced by God. In the Bible God is often represented as doing that which He does not prevent (see on 2Chron. 18:18). Paul here chooses the latter representation as better suited to his purpose in this context.”

Thoughts? Is there any further explanation beyond this?

How is a heart actually hardened? What is required to harden a heart? Is it not the choosing against the truth, the choosing against God? Did God present to Pharaoh truth regarding the impotence of the Egyptian gods and the truth that He was the only true God? Did Pharaoh get convicted by this truth? Did he then choose to reject it? Would Pharaoh’s heart have been as hard without the truth presented? But did God force Pharaoh to choose against the truth? No! Thus all passages of scripture are true!

The Lord sends us warning, counsel, and reproof that we may have opportunity to correct our errors before they become second nature. But **if we refuse to be corrected, God does not interfere to counteract the tendencies of our own course of action.** He works no miracle that the seed sown may not spring up and bear fruit. {1MCP 35.2}

That man who manifests an infidel hardihood or a stolid indifference to divine truth is but reaping the harvest which he has himself sown. Such has been the experience of many. They listen with stoical indifference to the truths which once stirred their very souls. They sowed neglect, indifference, and resistance to the truth; and such is the harvest which they reap. The coldness of ice, the hardness of iron, the impenetrable, unimpressible nature of rock--all these find a counterpart in the character of many a professed Christian. {1MCP 35.3}

It was thus that the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh. God spoke to the Egyptian king by the mouth of Moses, giving him the most striking evidences of divine power;

but the monarch stubbornly refused the light which would have brought him to repentance. **God did not send a supernatural power to harden the heart of the rebellious king, but as Pharaoh resisted the truth the Holy Spirit was withdrawn**, and he was left to the darkness and unbelief which he had chosen. **By persistent rejection of the Spirit's influence, men cut themselves off from God. He has in reserve no more potent agency to enlighten their minds.** No revelation of His will can reach them in their unbelief.--RH, June 20, 1882. (3BC 1151.) 1MCP 36.

Thoughts?

Read third and fourth paragraph, "The answer is found..."

I agree that Paul is talking about God's use for various purposes and calls some for one office and another for another office. In this case Paul is saying that God has called Gentiles to share in the gift of salvation and the evangelizing of the world, and who are you, Jews, to argue with God – is He not free to call anyone to His service?

But, does this mean God forces people to take on certain roles against their will?

What do you understand about mercy? What is mercy?

A member of our online class, Jon Nash, emailed the following:

The word, "mercy", has always implied to me that an authority figure was bending a law so that I would not experience the consequence (real or arbitrary) of my action. In that context mercy always seemed at odds with "justice". I have come to feel that in the context of Romans, Christians actually mix laws and God's actions to create a confusing and contradictory explanation of what Paul was speaking about. It seems to me that "showing mercy" is in fact the extension of God's power to forestall the consequences of sin while God's justice or righteousness is His dependable actions based on His own law

of love - saving or letting go - always desiring to rescue and restore. His mercy is not the bending of His law at all.

This seems so consistent with Micah 6:8. We should show mercy - working to protect and save people from consequences of sin, act justly - applying the law of love to rescue or let go, and at all times walk humbly with God, following His leading, learning from Him, developing a Christ-like character which leads to hope.

Thoughts? I think it is well said.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "God needed..." thoughts?

What happened? What did God provide for Israel to help them succeed in their mission?

- Prophets – to reveal God’s truths
- Scripture – to reveal God and the truth
- Sanctuary service – to reveal God and His plan to save
- 10 Commandments/Sabbath – to reveal God and diagnose us
- Health reform – to reveal God and teach us His methods
- Tithes and offerings – to participate in God’s methods
- Jubilees – to exercise trust in God

What happened to each of these?

- Prophets – were martyred or rejected
- Scriptures – twisted and misinterpreted to see a severe and punitive God
- Sanctuary service – became legalistic
- 10 Commandments/Sabbath – became badge of honor, burdened with rules, test of obedience, and method of salvation
- Health reform became a spiritual work and point of pride
- Tithes and offerings became means of boasting and exploitation

- Jubilees became ignored

Was there a remnant in Israel that was true to Jesus and who did recognize Him and did become His followers?

And with this twisting and perverting of what God had given what happened to their construct of God?

Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God. He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, **that men might lose the true views of God's character, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth. He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth.** Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes.** That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

Thoughts?

Read question 2 from FRIDAY's lesson:

“How do you see the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its calling in the world today paralleling the role of ancient Israel in its day? What are the similarities and the differences? In what way are we doing better? In what way are we doing worse?”

What was Israel’s purpose? To evangelize the world with the truth about God preparing the world for the first advent?

What is the mission of the SDA church? To evangelize the world with the truth about God to prepare the world for the second advent.

With what has God blessed the SDA church to help succeed in our mission?

- Prophet
- Scripture
- Sanctuary message
- 10 Commandments/Sabbath
- Health reform
- Tithes and offerings

What happened to each of these?

- Prophet – shipped to Australia and increasingly rejected
- Scriptures – do we struggle with twisting and misinterpreting scripture that promotes a severe and punitive God
- Sanctuary message – has it become legalistic?
- 10 Commandments/Sabbath – has it become a badge of honor and burdened with rules and a test of remnant status?
- Health reform – has it become a spiritual work and point of pride
- Tithes and offerings – an obligation or ignored?

What are all these blessings of God to do for us? Is it related to revealing God to us? How important is it for us, as a people, to have the right concept of God?

In order to endure the trial before them, [those who would stand during the time of trouble] they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; **they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them.** GC 593

We must understand the truth about God's character, government and purposes and act in accordance –

- What is God's character?
- What is the basis of God's government?
- What is God's purpose on earth at this time in history, His purpose for this last day movement?

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. **Men are losing their knowledge of His character.** It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. **Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory,** the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...**The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

Is it God's purpose that the message of His character is to go to the world? How? Does He have a last day purpose for us?

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. **When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.** {COL 69.1}

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown

with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain. {COL 69.2}

How do we hasten the day? Is it not be revealing God's character in our lives? Is it God's purpose for you and me to reveal His character in our lives?

Does the Bible speak of a group of people, who at the end of time, have the character of Christ reproduced within them?

After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and **the earth was lightened with his glory.** Rev 18:1

- Who is the angel referred to in this passage? God's last day people!
- What is glory? Character of God!
- Whose glory is lighting the world? The glory of the angel!
- How does the angel lighten the world with glory?

Is this message of God to be carried forward in our lives? Do we expect to be the very vehicles God uses to glorify Himself on earth to finish the work?

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, **but for the sake of my holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. **Then the nations will know** that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, **when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.**

²⁴ "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.**

²⁶ **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I**

will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.
Ezekiel 36:22-27

In the parable the wise virgins had oil in their vessels with their lamps. **Their light burned with undimmed flame** through the night of watching. **It helped to swell the illumination for the bridegroom's honor.** Shining out in the darkness, **it helped to illuminate the way to the home of the bridegroom,** to the marriage feast. {COL 414.1}

So the followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world. Through the Holy Spirit, **God's word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver.** By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, **the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory--His character--is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom's home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb.** {COL 414.2}

Do we believe God can do this in us, so perfectly that we genuinely glorify Him in our lives?

Has this message been made more difficult to see by some traditions?

THURSDAY

Was there a remnant in Israel?

Read Romans 9:27-32:

Isaiah cries out concerning Israel:

“Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. ²⁸ For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.”

²⁹ It is just as Isaiah said previously:

“Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.”

³⁰ What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. ³² Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone.” ³³ As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

Thoughts?

Here is my paraphrase of Romans 9:25-32:

²⁵ As he says in Hosea:

“I will call them ‘my representatives’ who were not my representatives; and I will call her ‘the conduit of my love’ who had previously rejected my love.”

^{9:26} and,

“It will happen that even though they were told, ‘You do not represent me,’ they will be changed in character and called ‘sons of the living God.’”

^{9:27} Isaiah declares concerning Israel:

“Though the genetic descendants of Abraham are as numerous as the sand by the sea, only a small remnant will accept the remedy and be healed.

^{9:28} For the Lord will carry out his diagnosis on the earth with accuracy and certainty.”

^{9:29} It is sadly as Isaiah has said:

“If the Lord Almighty hadn’t worked so hard, so patiently, so diligently to preserve us, we would have no descendents. We

would have ended up like Sodom, we would have ended up like Gomorrah.”

^{9:30} How then do we understand this? It is very simple – the Gentiles who had no idea they were infected with selfishness and were therefore dying, and certainly didn’t have a clue that a remedy to heal them was available, therefore, didn’t pursue God’s healing cure. But when they became aware of their condition and that a cure existed obtained it by trust in him who heals and restores; ³¹ but Israel, who knew their condition and knew a cure was available, who had been given the teaching tools designed to lead them back to trust did not attain it. ³² Why not? Instead of trusting God and accepting his free remedy, they attempted to cure themselves by their own efforts. Thus they stumbled over the “stumbling stone” refusing to trust in him. ³³ As it is written:

“See, I have placed in Zion a stone of truth that reveals the stumbling and shortcoming of men, and a rock of righteousness that exposes how far short they fall, but the one who trusts in him will be completely healed and never stumble or fall again.”

What about our church? Are we doing better than ancient Israel? In what way? What can we do better than we are currently doing?

MONDAY

The third paragraph expresses quite nicely who decides our eternal destiny – is it God’s judgment of us or our decision? The lesson says, “It’s our own choices, not God’s, that keep us from the promise of eternal life in Christ.”

TUESDAY

Read memory verse at top of page, “For my thoughts...” thoughts?

How have you heard this text used? Have you ever heard it used to justify the idea that God will inflict torture and suffering on sinners to make them pay and then execute them in the end?

But what is the context, verse 7, immediately before says:

Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

Thoughts? What is God saying are not His ways? The way of vengeance, revenge, punishment etc. Instead, God's ways are the ways of mercy and free forgiveness!

Does that mean Christ's death wasn't necessary for our salvation? Of course not, we could not be saved without the death of Christ, but Christ's death wasn't needed to get God to forgive or have mercy. Christ's death was necessary for our healing, our restoration!

Read second paragraph, "Obviously..." thoughts? Do you find this line of reasoning a little thin?

Read bottom green section – thoughts? If we understand God's character is exactly as Jesus revealed it, does that set certain parameters or boundaries on how we interpret the rest of Scripture? Any examples?

WEDNESDAY

Read Romans 9:25,26:

As he says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," and, "It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"

What is Paul saying in this passage? Who are the people of God?
Why were they not God's people before?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph and discuss? Thoughts about what we are
elected to accomplish? How does Christ elect us to this?

Read and discuss question 1

Redemption in Romans Lesson 11 3Q 2010

The Election of Grace

SUNDAY

Read Romans 10:4:

Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Thoughts? What does it mean “end of the law?” Does it mean he brought an end to the penalty the broken law required by paying our legal debt? No! Why not? Somehow being an end to the law brings righteousness - How would paying a penalty bring righteousness? It doesn't –

The classic example often given of a speeder coming into court and the judge finds him guilty and then gets off the bench and pays the fine himself – demonstrates the weakness – we have our fine paid, but how does that change us? We are still speeders – more so if we now know the judge just didn't pay that fine but all future fines are likewise paid in full.

The third paragraph in the lesson points out that the word translated “end” can also be translated “goal” or “purpose” of the law. How is Christ the end, goal or purpose of the law?

What was the goal or purpose of the law? The written law was given to diagnose sin and lead us to Christ is that what this is referring to? Is Christ the end, goal or purpose of the written law's diagnosis?

Or is there another, deeper understanding of God's law?

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.** Romans 13:10
- The **entire law** is summed up in a single command: “**Love** your neighbor as yourself.” Galatians 5:14

- If you really keep the **royal law** found in Scripture, “**Love** your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. James 2:8
- Jesus replied: “**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘**Love** your neighbor as yourself.’ **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**” Matt 12:37-40
- The **law** of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7

Is Jesus the complete fulfillment of the law of love? And does this idea fit with the text in regard to righteousness for everyone? Did Jesus restore the law into humanity?

The law is more than a code on stone but a living law upon which life is built. Doesn't that mean we can only really see and understand God's law when it is seen in a living being – Jesus?

Read first paragraph, “Legalism...” thoughts

What forms of legalism have you heard or seen?

Works of the law as the lesson points out, with which some again try to burden us. How may read the blog for this week posted yesterday regarding circumcision and feast days? Some argue we should still be observing them because God never said to stop – what is the weakness of this position?

Any other forms of legalism?

What about legal penal substitution? Is this a form of legalism? Jesus died to pay our legal penalty, or to pay the law, or so the Father could offer us legal pardon etc.?

What about models that have legal events transpiring in heaven in which God declares things to be such and such when they are not? Or record books are being adjusted and sins are being erased from the books – a heavenly, legal, record keeping scheme?

Do we teach various forms of legalism and call it righteousness?

If our sin problem isn't a legal problem how would you describe our problem and God's solution?

Read second paragraph, "Romans 10:4..." thoughts? What is righteousness? What does righteousness mean?

Does it mean harmony with God's law? What law? Would it be the law of love? And how do we understand the law of love? Is it imposed? Is it the design template for life? If righteousness means harmony with the law of love which is the law of life, in what would we expect righteousness to result? Health and life?

- In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality. Proverbs 12:28
- He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor. Proverbs 21:21

So if righteousness is the same as perfect harmony with the law of love – how do we achieve it?

He [God] would have us comprehend something of His love in giving **His Son to die that He might counteract evil, remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God**, and reinstate the lost, elevating and **ennobling the soul** to its original purity **through Christ's imputed righteousness**. TMK 206

What do you hear in this description? What does imputed righteousness do? Penal models claim imputed righteousness is a legal proclamation or accounting as if it were so – but notice this description is an actual event, achievement, transformation that occurs within the believer – all possible because of Christ's actual achievements on earth.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to

glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. **By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.** The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. {AG 96.4}

Again what do you hear? How are we changed? By meditating, admiring, worshipping, surrendering, choosing, beholding and loving Christ!

Brain science reveals that what we believe actually changes us and by beholding we are transformed more and more to be like that which we revere and admire. Even DNA expression can be changed.

MONDAY

Read Romans 11:1-7:

I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ² God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: ³ "Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me"^a? ⁴ And what was God's answer to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal."^b ⁵ So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. ⁶ And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.^c

^a 1 Kings 19:10,14

^b 1 Kings 19:18

^c Some manuscripts *by grace. But if by works, then it is no longer grace; if it were, work would no longer be work.*

Thoughts?

Who is the remnant? Was Israel the remnant or was the remnant a group from within Israel who were loyal to Christ? What about in the SDA church? Is the remnant the SDA church or those who in the church experience renewing grace and the true knowledge of God?

Read Romans 11:7-10:

What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, ⁸ as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day."^{d 9} And David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. ¹⁰ May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever."^e

Thoughts?

Read last paragraph, "In these verses..." thoughts? Does God blind people to salvation? But the lesson emphasizes this is not about salvation but about the role people are to take. Does God use His power to blind people to His calling for their lives?

How do we understand these passages?

Each actor in history stands in his lot and place; for God's great work after His own plan will be carried out by **men who have prepared themselves to fill positions for good or evil.** In opposition to righteousness, men become instruments of unrighteousness. But **they are not forced to take this course of action.** They need not become instruments of

^d Deut. 29:4; Isaiah 29:10

^e Psalm 69:22,23

unrighteousness, any more than Cain needed to. . . . {CC 371.2}

Men of all characters, righteous and unrighteous, will stand in their several positions in God's plan. With the characters they have formed, they will act their part in the fulfillment of history. In a crisis, just at the right moment, they will stand in the places they have prepared themselves to fill. Believers and unbelievers will fall into line as witnesses to confirm truth that they themselves do not comprehend. **All will cooperate in accomplishing the purposes of God, just as did Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod. In putting Christ to death, the priests thought they were carrying out their own purposes, but unconsciously and unintentionally they were fulfilling the purpose of God.** {CC 371.3}

God looks into the tiny seed that He Himself has formed, and sees wrapped within it the beautiful flower, the shrub, or the lofty, wide-spreading tree. So does He see the possibilities in every human being. **We are here for a purpose. God has given us His plan for our life, and He desires us to reach the highest standard of development.** . . . {CC 371.4}

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, "Into this tree..." thoughts? Do you think the tree represents Israel? Are we to derive our sap from Israel?

Isn't Jesus the vine and we are the branches?

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear

much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. John 15:5-8

Read fourth paragraph, “What happened...” thoughts?

Have you ever struggled with either question, once saved always saved, or every sin loses your salvation? What is the problem with both?

Both perspectives are legalistic in nature – Once saved always saved is based on sin being in legal trouble with God, once we accept the legal payment Jesus has made, then all sins past, present, future have been paid for and we are saved. Any future sin is already been paid for so we cannot be lost, once we accept Jesus and His legal payment.

The other view, is also legalistic, every sin committed must be punished (who urged this idea? see DA 761) and therefore if we don't confess and ask forgiveness for every individual act of sin then those sins won't be “paid” for and won't be “erased” from the record book and will stand against us in the judgment and result in required punishment of eternal death.

Both views are wrong because both have accepted a wrong concept of God's character, government and what sin actually is.

What is the truth?

WEDNESDAY

Read Romans 11:25-27:

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away

from Jacob. And this is^a my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”^b

Thoughts? The lesson says this passage has been debated for centuries, what do you think it means?

To whom does God’s covenant of removing their sins from them apply? Is it not to all people or only to genetic descendants of Abraham?

Who, according to the Bible is a descendent of Abraham?

³⁹“Abraham is our father,” they answered.

“If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would^c do the things Abraham did. ⁴⁰ As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. ⁴¹ You are doing the things your own father does.”

“We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.”

⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. ⁴³ Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John 8:39-44

What did Jesus say makes one a child of Abraham?

Romans four Paul already made the point that Abraham is the father of all who believe, or trust God like Abraham did, both the circumcised and uncircumcised.

^a Or *will be*

^b Isaiah 59:20,21; 27:9; Jer. 31:33,34

^c Some early manuscripts “If you are Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then

Paul makes the same point to the Galatians:

Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”^a ⁷ Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. Gal 3:6,7

So what does the text in Romans mean? Here is my paraphrase:

11:25 I want to explain to you this mystery – this unexplainable rejection of God’s plan by Israel, so that you will not become conceited and make the same mistake: A large part of the genetic descendants of Abraham have hardened their hearts to God and rejected the truth as revealed by Jesus, therefore God’s plan for Abraham’s descendants will not be fulfilled until those hardened and broken off are replaced by a large number of Gentiles who are grafted in. ²⁶ And so all true children of Abraham – those like Abraham in character, not genetics, will be saved, as it is written:

“The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will remove all selfishness and sin from all those who trust God like Jacob.

11:27 And my promise to them is this: I will heal them and remove all sin, disease and defect from them restoring them perfectly to my original ideal.”

Thoughts?

What was God’s plan for Israel? To reveal the truth about God to the world – and God’s plan for Israel will not be fulfilled until all of us, who will accept Jesus come in and reveal Him in our lives and characters.

THURSDAY - Any questions or comments about Thursday’s lesson?

FRIDAY Read questions 1-3 and discuss

^a Gen. 15:6

Redemption in Romans Lesson 12 3Q 2010

Love and Law

What do you think about the title? Is there a difference between love and law? If so how? If not why not?

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “Romans contains...” thoughts? What would cause a person to desire to obey?

- Truth – about how obedience heals and disobedience destroys
- Love – experienced from God and others
- Fear? What about the time honored method of inciting fear of punishment? Is there a place for this? Yes – when and where? What happens if this method never changes?

- The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

- A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

What happens if fear of punishment, or fear of loss of eternal life, or fear of embarrassment or any other fear remains our motivator for obedience? Rebellion and failure to mature – what then about sermons designed to incite fear?

What obstructs or interferes with our desire to obey?

- Lies – clearly lies about God, but what about lies about what obedience is and is not? And lies about why we obey?
- Misunderstanding of God’s law and universe
- Habits
- Emotions/feelings of attachment to disobedience
- Discomfort of change – what if the truth is that a certain diet is healthier than the one you were raised upon?
- Pain of accepting the truth – what if the truth means a certain way of living is unhealthy, like living together without being married, and someone you love and admire is in such a situation? What would accepting the truth mean? We cannot model ourselves after the person we admire, our estimation of them may fall, this may be disappointing and we may be unwilling to allow this? What happens if we are the one in such a relationship?
- Stress of relationships, what if accepting the truth results in rejection from family?
- Stress of society – what if accepting the truth results in loss of job or imprisonment?

Last paragraph states,

“One could even argue that because of the added revelation after Jesus came, the New Testament requirements are more difficult than what was required in the Old. New Testament believers have been given an example of proper moral behavior in Jesus Christ.”

Thoughts? What do you think this means? What argument can be made for the idea that it is harder after Christ than before? Were the requirements of salvation different before the cross than after?

God requires at this time just what He required of the holy pair in Eden--perfect obedience to His requirements. His law remains the same in all ages. The great standard of righteousness presented in the Old Testament is not lowered in the New. It is not the work of the gospel to weaken the claims of God's holy law but to bring men up where they can keep its precepts. {FW 52.1}

It is unsafe to trust to feelings or impressions; these are unreliable guides. God's law is the only correct standard of holiness. It is by this law that character is to be judged. If an inquirer after salvation were to ask, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" the modern teachers of sanctification would answer, "Only believe that Jesus saves you." But when Christ was asked this question He said, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" And when the questioner replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, . . . and thy neighbour as thyself," Jesus said, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:25-29). {FW 52.3}

What do you hear? Has there been a change in the requirements? And what are the requirements? Love – why is this the requirement? Because this is the basis upon which life is constructed to operate – it is the same as asking why is it a requirement we breathe?

Is it harder today than before the cross? Or is it easier now that we have a clearer picture of God and the assurance that Christ has won the battle?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “For starters...” thoughts?

Several points to contemplate –

- Faith is not a substitute for obedience – why? If you are sick and go to your doctor and you have a kind, loving, competent doctor, and you trust or have faith in your doctor and he tells you that you need to change your diet, exercise, cut out

alcohol, get 7.5 hours sleep per night. Will your trust in the doctor substitute for actually choosing to apply to your life what He has instructed? If you are sick and the doctor gives an antibiotic, if you trust the doctor what will you do? Will trust substitute for taking the antibiotics? Is this similar to our relationship to God?

- The lesson states, “The moral precepts are still in force.” How do you hear this? What does it mean?
- The paragraph states that “if we stumble, we are not cast away but have a High Priest who intercedes in our behalf.” (Heb 7:25). What does this mean? What is our High Priest interceding to achieve? What does intercession look like? Where and with whom does He intercede?

The lesson quotes Heb 7:25:

“Therefore he is able to **save completely** those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”

What does it sound like the High Priest is interceding to achieve? Our salvation – which means what? What needs to happen for us to be saved? Does God need to be persuaded to save us? Does God need some cosmic legal loophole created so He is allowed to save us? Is the obstacle to our salvation found somewhere in God?

What is the obstacle to our salvation? Is it not our own sinfulness? Then when we sin where would the High Priest intercede? Would it not be in our hearts and minds to heal and restore?

The OT sanctuary gives examples of this – where is the law in the old system? In the Most Holy place – where in the new covenant? In our hearts and minds. Where was the blood administered in the old system? Throughout the courtyard and building – where in the new? Inside us (John 6). Jesus is the light which lightens the world and is represented by the solid gold candlestick, but we are the branches connected to

the vine and are to let our light shine – what happened to the candle stick twice per day? The High Priest and only the High Priest trimmed the wicks so they would shine brighter – meaning that Christ works in our hearts so we will shine brighter for Him!

In the parable of the wedding what was to happen to the guests? They were to wear new clothes – was someone interceding standing between the guests and the Lord of the supper preventing Him from seeing them or did the Lord provide new clothes for the guests? Is the High Priest clothing/cleansing us or obstructing the view of the Father?

In Malachi 3 the Lord comes to His temple and does something – He cleanses the Levites – this is what our High Priest is interceding to accomplish!

Next paragraph asks us to consider Romans 12:1:

- Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your **spiritual act of worship**. NIV
- I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your **reasonable service**. KJV
- I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your **intelligent service**. Darby

Thoughts? What does this mean? What does it mean to be spiritual?

The Greek translated as “spiritual, reasonable, logical” is log·ik·os

What do you hear in this word? Can a person be spiritual without being logical and reasonable?

When we talk about being sealed by God what is that seal?

Just as soon as the people of God are **sealed** in their foreheads--it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, **but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved**--just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; {FLB 287.7}

What does it mean to be settled intellectually? What does it mean to be settled spiritually? How does this relate to what Paul is telling us in Romans 12:1?

Consider smoking – have you evaluated the truth about what smoking does? Have you been settled into the truth intellectually so that no graph or chart or statistics from a tobacco company could shake you out of that truth? Are you not only settled intellectually, but have you also decided to never smoke and in character and behavior you are settled beyond the point you could be induced to smoke? This is spiritual settling, settling into the character and behavior.

Consider a smoker – have you ever known one who was convinced and intellectually settled into the truth of the harm smoking does, yet they keep on smoking? This would be a person who is settled intellectually but not spiritually.

And I have a rare patient who actually believes that smoking is good for their lungs and such a person is not settled intellectually or spiritually.

So what is Paul telling us? Is it reasonable and logical for a person to understand the truth about smoking and choose to be so settled they will never smoke? Is it reasonable and logical to be so settled into the truth about God, His kingdom of love, our inherent condition and inability to fix ourselves, that we present ourselves fully to Him for His healing and we intelligently choose His methods

for our lives, and through His grace actually love others more than self?

TUESDAY

Second paragraph states, "The concept, the principle of government, is God-ordained. Human beings need to live in a community with rules and regulations and standards." Thoughts?

Is it true we need a community with rules, regulations and standards? Is this true only for our condition in sin or will we still need rules and regulations when sin will be eliminated?

Is there a difference between rules, regulations and law?

Why does a child need a "rule" to brush their teeth? Does the child need the rule? Once the child is an adult does the child need the rule? Was it only needed because the child didn't have such principle upon the heart?

Where is God's law to be written? In the heart and in heaven will there be a law? Absolutely! What law? The law of love! Will there be codified rules and regulations? Absolutely NOT!

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, **the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of.** In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. **There is perfect unity between them and their Creator.** Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. **So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart."** Psalm 40:8. {MB 109.2}

Why do you think so many religious people emphasize rules and regulations?

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will **devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey.** All this **turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart,** and with it perishes love for his fellow men. **A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions,** will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies. {MB 123.1}

Thoughts? Have you ever felt under a system of multitudinous exactions? How do we avoid it? What is the truth about God's law?

Do we expect a written law in heaven?

Paul evidently didn't:

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹ We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim 1:8-11

Why will we not need a written law, or regulations, or rules in heaven?

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. **I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.** Heb 8:10

WEDNESDAY

Read top dark section "Owe no man..." thoughts? What fallacy or false assumption exists in the question? That there is a law other than the law of love! There is no other law in God's universe and perfect harmony with the law of love is perfect harmony with all God's law!

- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth **the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.** DA 21
- **God is constantly employed in upholding and using as His servants the things that He has made. He works through the laws of nature, using them as His instruments. They are not self-acting.** Nature in her work testifies of the intelligent presence and active agency of a Being who moves in all things according to His will. MH 416
- **Many teach that matter possesses vital power**--that certain properties are imparted to matter, and it is then left to act through its own inherent energy; **and that the operations of nature are conducted in harmony with fixed laws, with which God Himself cannot interfere. This is false science,** and is not sustained by the word of God. Nature is the servant of her Creator. **God does not annul His laws or work contrary to them, but He is continually using them as His instruments.** Nature testifies of an intelligence, a presence, an active energy, **that works in and through her laws.** There is

in nature the continual working of the Father and the Son. Christ says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." John 5:17. {PP 114.4}

- **But His energy is still exerted in upholding the objects of His creation. It is not because the mechanism that has once been set in motion continues to act by its own inherent energy that the pulse beats and breath follows breath; but every breath, every pulsation of the heart, is an evidence of the all-pervading care of Him in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:28.** It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth produces her bounties and continues her motion around the sun. The hand of God guides the planets and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens. {PP 115.1}

God is love. His law is love and all nature, as God designed, is an expression of this law. All laws of nature are designed to operate as expressions and in harmony with God's law of love, which is His character.

Thoughts?

Read first paragraph, "As Jesus...." Thoughts? Why is the law still binding? Why will the law always be binding? Does our position undermine the standard and exactness of the law or does it make it much more uncompromising? The law cannot be changed to meet the sinner in his sin – why? So if the law cannot be changed what must be changed? Not the penalty of the law – not appeasing, paying or any other way – but the sinner must be changed, to be brought back into harmony with the very standard life is built upon!

Bottom green section – read and discuss

THURSDAY

Read Romans 13:11

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

Thoughts? What does it mean? What does it mean to wake up from slumber?

Last two sentences of first paragraph state, “Though, ideally, Judaism even in Old Testament times was a religion of grace, legalism arose and did a lot of damage. How careful we as a church need to be that we don’t make the same mistake.”

Thoughts?

Read last paragraph, “Though Paul...” thoughts?

Is our faith really meaningless without the second coming? If there was no second coming would that mean there is a better way to live than in harmony with the law of love? If we “obey” only to get the reward of the second coming are we really obeying or is it still all about self?

Angels were so interested for man's salvation that there could be found among them those who would yield their glory and give their life for perishing man... SR 45

Isn't it God's goal to heal our hearts to such a point?

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.
1John 3:16

Isn't it still better to live as God designed, if for only a few years, than to live out of harmony with His law for centuries? In fact, isn't living out of harmony with His law the very basis of pain, suffering and torment?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Yet, it is...” thoughts? How do you hear this? What does “spirit” of the law mean? Which is greater, the 10 Commandments or the law of love? Why?

Read fourth paragraph, “Paul here shows...” thoughts?

What does practical love look and act like? Any examples?

- Gifts, flowers, kind words, smiles, food, clothes, shelter
- What about vaccines, time outs, spankings, prison?

Does love ever act contrary to love? Does love ever end?

- What about the final destruction of the wicked?
- How is the final destruction of the wicked an act of love?

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters. Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. **What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests?** {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no;** years of

probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction,** that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. **Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable. GC 542.3

Does God have to act to inflict death or is it when God let's go, stops exercising His power that the wicked die? If God were to act to keep them at His side, what would be the result? Why would keeping the wicked at His side be torture? Would God be inflicting it? What would such a state do to God? What is the only course love can take?

FRIDAY - Read first paragraph, "In the Bible..." thoughts?

Read and discuss questions 2 and 3.

Redemption in Romans Lesson 13 3Q 2010

All the Rest is Commentary

SABBATH

Second paragraph states, "What is the role of the law – be it the whole Old Testament system or just the Ten Commandments – in the area of salvation? Paul needed to define clearly what are the grounds upon which God accepts a person."

Thoughts about this?

What would you say are the grounds upon which God accepts a person? What makes a person unacceptable to God? How does our unacceptableness get changed into acceptance?

What reasons have you heard that we are unacceptable to God and what grounds have you heard that God can accept us?

After Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, they were filled with a sense of shame and terror. At first their only thought was how to excuse their sin before God and escape the dreaded sentence of death. When the Lord inquired concerning their sin, Adam replied, laying the guilt partly upon God and partly upon his companion: "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The woman put the blame upon the serpent, saying: "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.' Why did You make the serpent? Why did You suffer him to come into Eden?" These were the questions implied in her excuse for her sin, thus charging God with the responsibility of their fall. **The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Confessions of this order are not inspired by the divine Spirit and will not be acceptable before God.** True repentance will lead a man to **bear his guilt himself** and acknowledge it without deception or hypocrisy. {5T 637.2}

Why is such a confession not acceptable before God?

Does this give us insight into what makes one acceptable, what the grounds are?

The apostle says, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." Let every soul heed these words, and know that the **Lord Jesus will accept of no compromise**. In accepting and retaining workers who **persist in retaining** their imperfections of character, and do not give full proof of their ministry, the standard has been greatly lowered. There are many in responsible positions **who do not heed the injunction of the apostle, but make provision for fulfilling the lust of the flesh. Unless the worker puts on the Lord Jesus Christ** and finds in Him wisdom, sanctification, and redemption, how can he represent the religion of Jesus? All his efficiency, all his reward, is found in Christ. .. Why is it that those who have been long engaged in the ministry do not grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus? I have been shown that they gratify their selfish propensities and **do only such things as agree with their tastes and ideas**. They make provision for indulgence in pride and sensuality and carry out their selfish ambitions and plans. They are full of self-esteem. But although their evil propensities may seem to them as precious as the right hand or the right eye, **they must be separated from the worker, or he cannot be acceptable before God.**
{TM 171.1}

What do you hear in this reference that prevents one from being acceptable to God? Is it similar to the first reference? Does our lack of acceptance with God have anything to do with our condition?

The apostle recognizes the importance of the family relations, and the powerful influence of the home. In his epistles he enjoins certain rules upon families. He says of the children, "Let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents; for **that is good and acceptable before God.**"
{The Health Reformer, December 1, 1877 par. 1}

What is good and acceptable before God? Again is it something about our heart/mind/character condition?

What makes us acceptable before God? Is it not union with Jesus Christ which transforms us back into His image and we live His life?

You can show to the world that there is power in the religion of Christ. Jesus will help those who seek him with all their hearts, to overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil. **When you follow the light, walking in the path of truth, you will reflect the rays of glory**, and be like a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid. **When the books of remembrance shall be opened, your words, your deeds of love, will be acceptable before God;** your robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb, will be spotless; the righteousness of Christ will be put upon you, and you will be given a new, an immortal name. {RH, September 16, 1890 par. 8}

What makes us acceptable before God? Is it not being healed and restored to Christlikeness by God's work in our lives and living a life in harmony with God's law of love?

Why is this what makes us acceptable? Why can God not accept something else?

It is faith that engrafts us into the parent stalk of the living vine. Faith that depends on Christ, derives virtue from him as the branch draws sap from the root. Says the prophet, "The just shall live by faith," and this truth, woven into the religious experience of every Christian, should be that by which the righteous shall live. .. {ST, August 5, 1889 par. 7}

The Gentiles had no light upon the law of God, and had not followed after righteousness, but those who believed in Christ attained unto righteousness through faith in him. They accepted God's law as the rule of character. The unbelieving Jews had not attained to the righteous requirements of the

law, because they refused the only virtue that could avail **to make them righteous and acceptable before God.** "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness [which is of the law], have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." **Christ is the end, or purpose, of the law. The law condemns the sinner, and thus drives him to Christ for righteousness.** {ST, August 5, 1889 par. 8}

What do you hear? What do we obtain from Christ – a declaration or a real transformation in heart/mind/character? We are actually changed to be like Him and this is what makes us acceptable to God!

What is the role of the law? Is there more than one law? Let's name as many of the different types of law as we can:

- Universal Principles
 - Law of love
 - Law of liberty
 - Law of worship
 - Laws of health
 - Laws of nature
- Written laws
 - By God
 - 10 Commandments
 - Criminal
 - Civil
 - Property ownership
 - Marriage
 - Ceremonial laws
 - Religious rituals
 - Diet
 - Hygiene
 - By men
 - Criminal
 - Civil

- Rules
 - Parental
 - Brush teeth, clean room etc.
 - Organizational
 - School
 - Dress, absenteeism, conduct
 - Work
 - Dress, absenteeism, conduct
- Social rules/conventions
 - Don't come to church in a swimsuit
 - Eastern society take shoes off indoors

With this in mind let's turn to Sunday's lesson

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "In Romans..." thoughts? Why is there confusion over this point? Because people confuse three different laws.

- The text is referring to the law of worship and that if you recognize an idol is nothing more than a piece of stone or wood it has no impact on the nutritional value of the food, so eat. But if you don't recognize this, and your spiritual maturity (faith) is such that you still struggle with certain superstitions and fear the food offered to idols may curse you, then don't eat.
- Second law sometimes considered in this text is the ceremonial law. We recognize that after Christ one cannot be ceremonially unclean by association with things non-Jewish.
- Third law – laws of health

The mistake made today by much of Christianity is in confusing these three laws. While it is true an idol is not real and has no power and the ceremonial law is no longer applied, neither of those truths do away with the laws of health. Meaning, just because something isn't affected by an idol, or causes us ceremonial uncleanness, doesn't mean it is healthy. And therefore much of

Christianity suffers with illness of body and mind they could avoid if they would remember the laws of health and eat only that which God has given for food.

Can you think of other areas in which we get “laws” confused?

Read bottom green section, “Though we need...” thoughts?

How can we know when to speak and when to keep silent? When are we to speak?

- When we are in the position of responsibility – like parents teaching our children the principles of God’s kingdom and healthy living
- When we are health care practitioners treating a patient
- When we are preacher or teach exhorting a group

What about person to person in the church or community?

I have seen the great sacrifice which Jesus made to redeem man. He did not consider His own life too dear to sacrifice. Said Jesus: "Love one another, as I have loved you." **Do you feel, when a brother errs, that you could give your life to save him? If you feel thus, you can approach him and affect his heart; you are just the one to visit that brother.** But it is a lamentable fact that many who profess to be brethren, are not willing to sacrifice any of their opinions or their judgment to save a brother. There is but little love for one another. A selfish spirit is manifested. {1T 166.2}

Thoughts? What about judging our leadership? Is it ever appropriate to do this? Why or why not? What about judging God? Are we to make judgments about God?

MONDAY

Read memory text from SABBATH’s lesson and then read first paragraph, “We tend...” thoughts?

Why will those who judge others be judged with the same measure? Is it because God has an angel keeping track of what we do and how we judge others to ensure He gives us exactly what we have given others? No!

Jesus said, “from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, the good man brings forth good out of the good stored up in him and the evil man brings forth evil out of the evil stored up in him.” Matt 12:34,35.

What is Jesus telling us? The measure we use to judge others reveals what? The actual condition of our heart and mind, therefore, this is the measure to judge us because it is the measure of our very own condition!

Read next paragraph, “The citation...” thoughts? How do you understand the idea of appearing before the judgment seat of God? Would you hear it differently if we said “everyone must appear before the diagnostic eye of God?”

When God “judges” what is He doing? Is it not making the accurate diagnosis of our hearts and minds, either healed or unhealed?

Here is one of God’s judgments in Hosea 4:17:

Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone!

Does such a judgment cause Ephraim to be this way or merely accurately diagnose his actual condition?

Why can no one answer for another? We are all responsible for the condition of our own hearts and minds and characters, have we accepted opportunities to overcome injury, heal wounds, rise above disadvantages of upbringing and through God’s grace develop a loving, kind and forgiving heart – or have we made excuses and refused God’s healing plan?

Last paragraph, “A person should not...” thoughts? Why is this true? Can someone actually have an overly sensitive conscience? I

want to suggest no, we can have a misinformed conscious or an overly active conscious. In other words we can believe untruths which bring sense of guilt when no wrong had transpired, or have neural circuit defects which cause guilt, but the conscious in this state is not overly sensitive but overly active. What is the way to help someone in this state? By the truth and other appropriate treatments.

But we can have an imbalanced mind in which reason is not operating while conscience is. Our judgment is comprised of reason and conscience and if reason is diminished or sidelined then conscience can become unhealthy.

WEDNESDAY

Read Romans 14:5:

One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

The lesson asks if this applies or refers to the fourth commandment and then argues that it does not. What are your thoughts?

Is Christ important to our salvation? Does each person, who is saved, need to be fully persuaded in their own mind regarding Christ?

Is the Sabbath important? Does each person need to be fully persuaded in their own mind?

Is Paul saying whichever day doesn't really matter or is he saying if you are not fully persuaded in your own mind about the value and benefit of the Sabbath, then even if you avoid work on it, you won't be blessed by it.

What are you persuaded about when it comes to the Sabbath?

- Which day of the week is the Sabbath

- What about its purpose?
 - Embodiment of God's principles truth, love, freedom
 - Evidence of God's character
 - Evidence to the fundamental questions of life, where are we from, why are we here, and where are we going
 - Given to mankind for our protection, enlightenment, and as evidence of God's true nature and character
- Is it a delight?

TUESDAY

Read Romans 14:15-23:

If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ¹⁸ because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.

¹⁹ Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. ²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. ²¹ It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

²² So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. ²³ But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Thoughts? What does this mean to you? How do you apply this in your life?

THURSDAY

Read Romans 15:1-3:

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. ² Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. ³ For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”^c

Thoughts? What does this mean?

My paraphrase:

Romans 15:1 We who have had our minds set free from distrust and fear, and are therefore strong in our confidence in God and in our understanding of his methods, have a responsibility to help those still weakened by the infection of distrust and selfishness and not simply live to please ourselves. ² Each of us should do all in our power to help our neighbor recover from the devastation caused by distrust in God, fear and selfishness. We should work to help heal and restore our neighbor. ³ Christ, himself, has shown how to live, for he did not live to please himself but, as the Scriptures state, “I have accepted the abuse meant for you in order to protect and heal you.”

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2 and 3.

^c Psalm 69:9

Backgrounds and Characters in the Old Testament L1 4Q 2010

Story and History

SABBATH

Read memory text, “Every Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work.”

Thoughts about this passage? Is it true? I have with me the Bible that was given to me in the US Army, let me read from Maccabees, Tobit, Susana, or I also have the book of Mormon would we want to use it this morning? But isn't all Scripture inspired by God?

Why are we not comfortable with this? Is the Scripture correct? The translation is not. The American Standard Version is more accurate:

Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.

Do you notice the difference? Is every scripture inspired by God? But those that are inspired are useful for teaching etc.

Is the entire Bible inspired by God? What does it mean? Does that mean any verse in Scripture represents a truth from God?

What do we mean when we say the Bible is inspired? Are the words of scripture inspired? Or are the ideas represented by the words inspired? Is the Bible an expression of God's thoughts or men's thoughts?

The Bible is written by inspired men, but **it is not God's mode of thought and expression**. It is that of humanity. **God, as a writer, is not represented**. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. **But God has not put Himself**

in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers. {1SM 21.1}

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. **But the words receive the impress of the individual mind.** The divine mind is diffused. **The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind** and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.--

Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886). {1SM 21.2}

Thoughts? Do you agree? What difference does it make to you to realize the Bible is written by inspired men who expressed the ideas with their language, phrases, expressions?

Should we then over emphasize certain words chosen by the Bible writers? Or should we instead focus on the theme, meaning or general point?

Have you always understood inspiration this way? What danger exists in misunderstanding the meaning of Bible inspiration? Might the idea the Bible is inspired lead some to believe they are not to question or think about what the Bible says?

What is the primary purpose of Scripture? Is it a code book of how to live, what to do and not to do?

The primary purpose of Scripture is to reveal God to man – it is a weapon, a sword, a light in the darkness of misunderstanding about God. It is provided to elevate and ennoble our minds.

We should not take the testimony of any man as to what the Scriptures teach, but should study the word of God ourselves. **If we allow others to do our thinking, we shall have crippled energies and contracted abilities.** The noble powers of the mind may be so dwarfed by lack of exercise on themes worthy of their concentration as to lose their ability to

grasp the deep meaning of the word of God. **The mind will enlarge if it is employed in tracing out the subjects of the Bible**, comparing scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual. **There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures.** No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. **If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose that is rarely seen in these times.** {CE 58.1}

Thoughts? What do you hear?

The lesson points out that the Bible is filled with stories – when we form our doctrines, do we typically use the stories or the “proof” texts? Has it ever seemed like the stories are for the children, while the proof texts are for the adults? Could it be the opposite? Could the stories be for the spiritual adults while the exhortations and instructions are for the children?

Who needed the written law, the ceremonial law, the ordinances – the mature or the children? Who needed the instructions to treat their wives like Christ treats the church, the spiritual mature or the immature?

Have we missed something by relegating the stories to the children?

Why are the stories so important? Are the stories in the Bible there for us to primarily learn about the individual characters? The stories are where we see God in action, where we see what “God is love” looks like in real life. We see how God acts and behaves and treats people and we learn of Him.

SUNDAY

Read top paragraph, “Plot is defined...” thoughts? What is the plot of the Bible?

In its wide range of style and subjects, the Bible has something to interest every mind and appeal to every heart. In its pages are found history the most ancient; biography the truest to life; principles of government for the control of the state, for the regulation of the household--principles that human wisdom has never equaled. It contains philosophy the most profound; poetry the sweetest and the most sublime, the most impassioned and the most pathetic. **Immeasurably superior in value to the productions of any human author are the Bible writings, even when thus considered; but of infinitely wider scope, of infinitely greater value, are they when viewed in their relation to the grand central thought.** Viewed in the light of this thought, every topic has a new significance. In the most simply stated truths are involved principles that are as high as heaven and that compass eternity. {CG 505.1}

What is the grand central thought or theme of scripture? What are the principles involved?

The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its **grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation.** He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. {Ed 190.2}

What do you hear as the plot? What is the grand central theme? How would you describe it? What are the two antagonistic principles? How do they enter every phase of our existence? How has Satan infiltrated his system into Christian thinking?

What is the basis of Satan's system? Selfishness – my way or die.
What are Satan's methods, how does he work?

How did Satan approach the angels in heaven? How did he approach Adam and Eve? How did he approach Jesus in the wilderness?

- He approached them gently, kindly, subtly, softly, to convert them to his way of thinking – the angels and man were converted – But what happens when one isn't converted?
- Jesus didn't listen and what did Satan do? Resorted to coercive pressure, brought authority to bear and when that didn't work? Execution, kill those who don't agree with him.
- What about the beast system of the Dark Ages? What methods did it employ? Send missionaries to do good works and convert, but if conversion didn't happen then what? Coercion, no one buys or sells, and if coercion didn't work, then what? Execution!
- What method does the penal model of salvation say God uses? He sends His blessing and missionaries, including His Son, revealing truth to convert. If that doesn't work He sends coercive pressure and if that doesn't work and we don't accept Jesus then He will torture and kill us in the end. Do you see this presentation, this distorted idea about God has infiltrated Christian thought and is preparing the world for the great deception. It is our mission to reveal the truth about God to counter such misconceptions and prepare minds to meet Jesus.

The lesson asks us to consider the story of Job and asks us to identify the two plots in the story and suggests in Scripture there is never one plot but two. Thoughts?

I like the lesson's focus on moving our thinking away from just what we see here and now to an eternal reality behind the scenes, don't you?

EGW talks about two antagonistic principles which enter every phase of human experience – can we see those in the story of Job?

What are those two antagonistic principles? How are they related to the grand central theme?

Do you see in Job's story the same thing, subtly, then coercive pressure?

Read bottom green, "What is your plot? What kind of character are you?" While each of our stories are unique, do we each have the exact same antagonistic principles at war in our lives?

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to consider David when he was alone in the cave with Saul, who was seeking to kill him; and Joseph when propositioned by Potiphar's wife. Do you see the same two antagonistic principles? Do you see the serpent's methods – subtly followed by coercive pressure?

The lesson asks us to consider the setting – what was the setting for David? What was the setting for Joseph?

Was David's true setting a cave or Joseph's a room in Egypt? Or is there a grander reality in which to "set" the "setting"? Do you think David and Joseph remembered the grand setting?

What was Joseph's response? "How can I commit this sin against God?" notice his perspective, what setting was he in?

Satan wants obstruct our ability to see our true setting and cause us to consider our setting as what he can construe around us.

What is our true setting? Does it make a difference to see things in this light?

Read last paragraph, "But setting is not..." thoughts?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts? Why do you think David and Joseph responded as they did?

What are the two antagonist principles vying for our hearts? Love versus selfishness – what motivates selfishness – is it not fear for what will happen to self? If David was thinking about himself what would he have done? If Joseph was thinking about himself what would he have done? When we think about self first how do we live and act? Do these stories show a better way?

TUESDAY

Read bottom paragraph, “When we lose the big...” thoughts? Do we as a modern people, as a modern church, struggle with losing our focus on what God has called us to accomplish? Do we ever make minors into majors?

What has God called this church to accomplish? Do we expect to live victoriously – lives that love rather than are controlled by fear and doubt? Do we expect to experience peace with God and peace within, in the face of a world in conflict?

What are we to witness to the world? What is the final message of mercy? How are we to present it? Does it have anything to do with our own hearts, minds and characters being healed and restored?

Where does God’s law fit in? How do we take the “major” message of the end time and make it a “minor” point? What about the Sabbath? Is the final conflict merely over which day we worship upon? Is it simply over whether we recognize Saturday versus Sunday? No! such focus turns things to a “minor” point and misses the major point.

The final conflict coming upon the world is between the two antagonistic powers – between God’s law and Satan’s law. God’s law of love versus Satan’s law of survival of the fittest.

The Sabbath is involved in that it embodies all of God’s law, truth, love, freedom. But the point in the end will be on what law do you live – will you love others more than self, will you love the truth and will you respect the freedom of others.

The beast system will be selfish, will lie and will coerce others. It is about the character of God versus the character of Satan, whose character are you developing?

WEDNESDAY

Asks us to read 1Samuel 8:7-20:

And the LORD told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. ⁸ As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. ⁹ Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.”

¹⁰ Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. ¹¹ He said, “This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. ¹² Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. ¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. ¹⁶ Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle^b and donkeys he will take for his own use. ¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. ¹⁸ When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the LORD will not answer you in that day.”

¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us. ²⁰ Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”

^b Septuagint; Hebrew *young men*

²¹ When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. ²² The LORD answered, “Listen to them and give them a king.”

Thoughts? What do you hear? What lessons? Why did they get kings? Did God want them to have kings? When they asked for kings what did God do? And after His warnings what then? When they insisted on having kings what did God say? What tone do you think was in God’s voice?

This is a story – it doesn’t have a proof text, but what do we learn about God from this story? Do we see a God who wants to protect His children from harm, a God who wants to provide for them and not have them exploited? Do we see a God who warns and extols? Do we see a God who will respect the choice of His creatures and let them go?

Does this apply to how God treats the wicked and unrepentant? This is exactly what God does – listen:

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}

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.--14MR 3 (1883). {LDE 242.2}

God will use His enemies as instruments to punish those who have followed their own pernicious ways whereby the truth of God has been misrepresented, misjudged, and dishonored.--PC 136 (1894). {LDE 242.3}

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.--Ms 134, 1898. {LDE 242.4}

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Describes the fall of Israel in 722 B.C. to the Assyrians and Judah to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. why? Why did these nations fall?

What do we learn from their stories? What do we see God doing during this time?

He sent prophets with messages, what kind of messages?

The city of murderers is doomed! I myself will pile up the firewood. Bring more wood! Fan the flames! Cook the meat! Boil away the broth! Burn up the bones! Now set the empty bronze pot on the coals and let it get red-hot....You will not be pure again until you have felt the full force of my anger. I, the Lord, have spoken. The time has come for me to act. (Ezekiel 24:2,9-14).

Now many theologians will read passages just like this and then preach that God will get you if you don't do what He says. But, what did God actually do to ancient Israel and Judah? He let them go! He surrendered them! He abandoned them to their own choice! It was the Babylonians, not God that came and took them away, because they no longer would let Him protect them!

Do you see the kind of trouble we can get into when we forget the stories and only remember the words God spoke?

FRIDAY

Second paragraph states, "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teachings in our past history." Have we ever forgotten how the Lord has led and His past teachings?

Read and discuss questions 1-4

Background Characters in the Old Testament L6 4Q 2010

Uriah: Faith of a Foreigner

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs, "Imagine that you..." thoughts?

What about when motivated by love for God and others, then does situation make a difference?

What about Rahab?

What about God? Does God Himself, His character of love, ever change? Does God's behavior change depending on circumstance? Examples? Did God thunder at Sinai? Did He cry at Olivet? What made the difference? Was God different?

Did God reign fire down to consume the platoons trying to arrest Elijah? Did Jesus die at cavalry? What made the difference? Was God different?

How do we understand this? Do parents ever thunder at their children? Why?

Should situation matter or should we have rules that apply in all circumstance?

Is it ever appropriate for a man to stand up in the middle of church service and rip a woman's blouse off exposing her breasts? What if she had a heart attack and he was the paramedic who was going to defibrillate her heart and save her life? Does the situation make a difference?

Is it ever okay to speak vile, lewd and disgusting profanity? What if you were a witness to a crime and under oath in court you were asked to testify to the exact words the perpetrator used? Does the situation make a difference?

Should we always tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Maybe you can help me with such a dilemma. You all know what I do there are manmade rules which govern patient confidentiality, I have given my word and promise to my patient to protect their confidentiality...Your pastor comes to see me as a patient because he is struggling with an addiction. The only time I have ever met your pastor is as my patient. I come and do a seminar in your city and during one of the breaks you ask me, "Do you know Pastor_____?" What do I say? Do I say,

"I'm sorry, but because medical ethics, rights of patient confidentiality I am not allowed to answer your question"?

"I have much to tell you but you cannot yet bear it?"

Do I say, "no"? Do I say yes and then you ask where do you know him from?

If I say yes, not only do I harm your pastor, what if you were in marriage counseling with your pastor and he was really helping you, but you now were to discover he was in counseling for an addiction, might that undermine your confidence in him and harm you? And might you get less out of his sermons? And might you be tempted to gossip and tell what you know? And might others get harmed in the church with this news?

What is the Biblical principle in such a situation, is it to tell all the truth or to love your neighbor and protect their reputation?

Speaking of the 9th commandment EGW states:

False speaking in any matter, every attempt or purpose to deceive our neighbor, is here included. An intention to deceive is what constitutes falsehood. By a glance of the eye, a motion of the hand, an expression of the countenance, a falsehood may be told as effectually as by words. All intentional overstatement, every hint or

insinuation calculated to convey an erroneous or exaggerated impression, even the statement of facts in such a manner as to mislead, is falsehood. This precept forbids every effort to injure our neighbor's reputation by misrepresentation or evil surmising, by slander or tale bearing. Even the intentional suppression of truth, by which injury may result to others, is a violation of the ninth commandment. {PP 309.3}

What do you hear? Is it that love does not harm? And therefore, telling the truth “statement of facts” in order to mislead by which someone may be harmed is the issue?

First sentence of last paragraph states, “This week we’ll see a powerful contrast of ethics between those of King David and of the soldier Uriah.” Was this a contrast of ethics or something more basic? How about a contrast of principle, of character, of heart motivation?

Before talk about David and Uriah, let’s examine another question. If two people find themselves doing the very opposite does that mean that one would necessarily be unethical? Could two people with love in their hearts, seeking to do what they thought is best for another, arrive at different decisions? Could they both be ethical but do the opposite?

Could one person, ethically support freedom of conscience and freedom to choose and therefore protect a woman’s right to abortion, while another person ethically seek to protect human life and seek to prevent abortions?

What is ethics?

a set of moral principles : a theory or system of moral values

Do you think David and Uriah had different ethics or different morals or different character development? Do you think David really thought his actions were “right” and “ethical”? If so why did he try to cover it up?

SUNDAY

The lesson talks about David's sin against Uriah, how he had an affair with Uriah's wife, then tried to cover it up culminating in the murder of Uriah.

Read second paragraph, "Some may want..." thoughts?

Was Uriah the first to suffer? Do you think Bathsheba suffered? Do you think she went home feeling shame and guilt? Do you think David suffered, with guilt, fear, dread, anxiety, searing of conscience and warping of reason?

No question Uriah suffered the fate of being murdered – but did Uriah suffer with guilt, dread, anxiety, fear of rejection, fear of loss of salvation, fear of God's displeasure with him? Did David suffer these things? Which is the greatest suffering? Which is more serious from an eternal perspective?

The paragraph describes the chain reaction of how David's sin contributed to rape, murder, rebellion in the nation. Why? Why did David's sin have this impact? What could have prevented it? What weapon has God given us to prevent this type of consequence?

Would David's sin have had this cascade of consequences if the others in his community loved as God loves? Was it David's sin that caused the problems, or David's sin impacting those still governed by selfishness?

What would have happened if those in David's community would have forgiven David? What if they recognized David's actions reveal character defect in David in need of healing? What if they longed for David's salvation? Would that have made a difference?

Locally, how can we prevent sin against us from spreading and causing greater damage?

The two sentences of the last paragraph state, “However, there is one thing that David does not control: sin. Although he seems to control the outward action, sin controls his choices and motivations.” Thoughts?

What is sin?

Our only definition of sin is that given in the Word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" **it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.** {GC88 492.2}

Is sin a behavior or is sin a principle? And what principle is it? It is the principle of selfishness. Selfishness controlled David’s behavior and this resulted in increased fear and insecurity which led to more self-centeredness, and protect self actions.

How do we overcome this?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “David decides...” thoughts?

The paragraph states that the greatest dangers are almost always from within – do you agree with this?

James 1:14 confirms this when he tell us our own evil desires lead us into temptation.

Would this be true for Christ – was His greatest danger from within – not within His character, but within the humanity He assumed?

Heb 4:15 states Christ was tempted like us “in every way.” Could He be tempted like us in every way if He did not experience the emotional temptation to save Himself?

What about the abuse of power? Does power corrupt? Did Satan make any such allegations against God?

How do we know Satan's allegations are false?

Read third paragraph from Friday's lesson, "It was the spirit..."

What lesson do we learn? Is it true that rulers of the earth are exempted from laws which apply to their subjects? That they get privileges that their subjects don't get?

This is how Satan accuses God. He claims God is exempted from loving others, that God has rules He applies to His creatures but He Himself is above them. People look at earthly governments and draw false conclusions about God, that He acts as earthly kings act. But more than this, they look at earthly governments, which have tribunals and courts and trials and inflict penalties including the death penalty and conclude God in heaven is also like this. Again a lie of Satan.

Satan had accused God of requiring self-denial of the angels, when he knew nothing of what it meant himself, and when he would not himself make any self-sacrifice for others. This was the accusation that Satan made against God in heaven; and after the evil one was expelled from heaven, he continually charged the Lord with exacting service which he would not render himself. **Christ came to the world to meet these false accusations, and to reveal the Father.** RH Feb 18, 1890

To Daniel was given a vision of fierce beasts, representing the powers of the earth. But the ensign of the Messiah's kingdom is a lamb. While earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power, **Christ is to banish every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion. His kingdom was to be established to uplift and ennoble fallen humanity.** {AG 15.2}

Thoughts?

The lesson points out that David made his decisions based on emotion and passion rather than rational thinking, then asks some questions in the bottom pink section:

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Who could be an Israelite? Did one have to be a genetic descendent of Israel to be an Israelite? Ruth, Rahab, Caleb, Uriah and others were assimilated into Israel and Ruth and Rahab became progenitors of Christ.

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph...

Abram changed to Abraham
Jacob changed to Israel
Daniel changed to Belteshazzar

When we pray in the “name” of Jesus what does that mean?

But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour's promise is given on condition. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience. {DA 668.2}

Thoughts?

Read fourth paragraph, “The name of...” thoughts? Does having family members in prominent position in the church give one a special standing with the Lord? What about being a pastor, conference president or SS teacher – does that give one special standing before the Lord?

How do we deal with persons who say the “pastor is the Lord’s anointed” and we should respect what he says and teaches? Are all pastors the Lord’s anointed? How can we know?

The slightest insinuations, from whatever source they may come, inviting you to indulge in sin or to allow the least unwarrantable liberty with your persons should be resented as the worst of insults to your dignified womanhood. The kiss upon your cheek, at an improper time and place, should lead you to repel the emissary of Satan with disgust. If it is from one in high places, who is dealing in sacred things, the sin is of tenfold greater magnitude and should lead a God-fearing woman or youth to recoil with horror, not only from the sin he would have you commit, but from the hypocrisy and villainy of one whom the people respect and honor as God's servant. {AH 335.3}

Is it only sexual sin such a statement would apply to? What if a pastor led people into other sin, say, believing lies about God?

The priests did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD?’ Those who deal with the law did not know me; the leaders rebelled against me. The prophets prophesied by Baal, following worthless idols. (Jeremiah 2:8).

Should we believe because a pastor, priest or SS teacher says so? When should we believe?

Read last paragraph, “By dying...” Thoughts?

Was Christ’s death necessary only for humans or was it necessary for sinless beings as well?

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Col 1:19,20

What does this mean? Do sinless beings in heaven need the cross?

But the plan of redemption had a **yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man**. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; **but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe**. To this result of His great sacrifice--its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man--the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, **but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan**. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory.

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion. {DA 758}

Do we believe this is true? Did the angels in heaven need a legal penalty paid for them? But the cross was still necessary and reconciles them to God?

Okay – what about mediation – do the angels in heaven need Christ as mediator?

“While we rejoice that there are worlds which have never fallen, these worlds render praise, and honor, and glory to

Jesus Christ for the plan of redemption to save the fallen sons of Adam, as well as to confirm themselves in their position and character of purity. The arm that raised the human family from the ruin which Satan had brought upon the race through his temptations, is the arm which has preserved the inhabitants of other worlds from sin. Every world throughout immensity engages the care and support of the Father and the Son; and this care is constantly exercised for fallen humanity. Christ is **mediating** in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by his **mediatorial** work. Are not these themes of sufficient magnitude and importance to engage our thoughts, and call forth our gratitude and adoration to God?" {RH, January 11, 1881 par. 4}

THURSDAY

In speaking about Bathsheba the lesson states, "However, even though she appears to be passive in the entire account, she too will pay a high price." Do you like this expression? What does it sound like? How might you have expressed it?

Is sin about "paying prices"? Would it have been better to say, "Even though she appears passive she will be significantly injured by these events"?

Read last paragraph, "Read Psalms 51..." thoughts

FRIDAY

Read and discuss all questions.

Background and Characters in the OT Lesson 7 4Q 2010

Abiathar: The Priest

Who was this priest?

ABIATHAR – His name means the father is preeminent, father of abundance, or my father excels. He was the tenth high priest, and the fourth in descent from Eli. He was a descendant of Eli the priest through Phinehas, Ahitub, and Ahimelech. Abiathar was the only son of Ahimelech to escape the sword of Doeg the Edomite, who slaughtered the priests of Nob at Saul's behest because of Ahimelech's aid to David (1 Sam. 22:17–20). Abiathar fled to David with the ephod and David, feeling partly responsible for the tragedy, accepted him among his own people (vv. 20–23).

This is occurring at approximately 1000 b.c., the world at this time is inhabited by approximately 50 million people. It is the start of the Iron Age.

- Ancient Iranian people are entering Persia,
- China is in the Zhou dynasty.
- The Phoenician alphabet is invented.
- Rice is cultivated in ancient Japan.
- Chavin culture starts in the Andes.
- Italy is just being inhabited by Latin speaking people from the Danube region.
- Assyrians start conquering neighboring regions.
- Greece was in its Dark Ages, the first Olympic games wouldn't be played for another 224 years in 776 b.c. Coins wouldn't be introduced for 400 years in 600 b.c. and the Persians first invade Greece in 546 b.c. and defeat the Spartans at Thermopylae in 480 b.c.

Abiathar served as David's priest, not only at Keilah (1 Sam. 23:9) but also later when the Amalekites had raided Ziklag (30:7). He advised the future king through the lots of the ephod which he had taken with him from Nob (cf. 23:6). Abiathar continued in this

capacity even after the death of Saul and subsequently during David's reign at Hebron and Jerusalem.

- **AMALEKITES** Amalek was the son of Eliphaz (Esau's son) by his concubine, Timna (Gn 36:12; 1 Chr 1:36). Descendants of this tribal chief of Edom were known as Amalekites. They settled in the Negev Desert and became allies of the Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, Ishmaelites, and Midianites.¹

Throughout the rebellion of Absalom Abiathar remained loyal to King David. He and Zadok intended to carry the ark as they fled Jerusalem (2 Sam. 15:24), but were instructed by David to carry it back into the city (vv. 25, 29). They were also to keep the exiled king informed of new developments (vv. 35–36), which they did (17:15–21).

Surprisingly, near the end of David's long reign Abiathar favored Adonijah rather than David's younger son Solomon for the throne (1 Kgs. 1:7). Perhaps Abiathar, as the descendant of Aaron's youngest son Ithamar, was jealous of Zadok (the descendant of Aaron's elder son Eleazar), the other Davidic high priest (usually mentioned before Abiathar; e.g., 2 Sam. 15:24–29; so KD *in loc.*). But once the rebel son of David was executed, Abiathar was deposed from his priestly office by Solomon and banished to his estate at Anathoth. He was not given the death penalty because he had carried the ark and had shared in David's afflictions (1 Kgs. 2:26–27). According to the author of Kings, this is how the prophecy concerning Eli's house became fulfilled (cf. 1 Sam. 2:27–36): Eli was one of Abiathar's ancestors and Zadok, who had supported Solomon, replaced Abiathar as high priest (1 Kgs. 2:35).

In his account of Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees about David and the meaning of the Sabbath laws, Mark attributes David's eating the Bread of the Presence to the time of Abiathar rather than that of his father Ahimelech, when the incident actually occurred (Mark 2:26; cf. 1 Sam. 21:1–6).²

Thoughts?

¹ Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). *Tyndale Bible dictionary*. Tyndale reference library (33). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

² Myers, A. C. (1987). *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (5–6). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.

SABBATH

Read memory text – “But you are a chosen people...” thoughts?

What does this text mean?

- How are you and I priests?
- What does it mean to be a priest?
- What is the duty of a priest?
- Are we priests only in our homes or are we priests of God for the community, in the church?
- Does one have to go to seminary to be a priest of God?
- Does one have to be ordained by the church?

Is there a difference between the priesthood of the Old Testament and that which we are called to fulfill? What would be the difference?

Did God want a specific elite group of priests and the rest not to have priestly duties?

Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.” Exodus 19:5,6

Thoughts?

Why a specific priesthood if God wanted all the people to be a nations of priests?

The Levitical priesthood was that of the theater, the stage, the enactment, the lesson book – they represented in the lesson book what all people were to become in reality.

What about in the church today? Is the church supposed to be a theater or is it to be a reality of Christian unity and experience? Are we to all be functioning as priests? In what way?

What were the duties of the priests? Intercession? What does this mean? What were the priests to intercede for, about, with whom?

In the lesson book example what did the priests do and how does that translate into our reality?

- They wore white robes and we are to be clothed in the character of Christ
- They ministered the blood of the sacrificial animal around the sanctuary. We are to spread the gospel truth and love of God in our world – into hearts.
- They ate the showbread together in the Holy Place on Sabbath. We are to gather together on Sabbath and ingest the living word, partake of Christ, study His word.
- People presented themselves to the priests for examination to determine cleanliness to be in community. When people come to us we can counsel and help diagnose spiritual problems that needs resolution, helping them to experience God’s grace, healing and victory in life.
- The priests carried the ark into battle – we are to carry the fullness of God’s truth, love, law, principles, methods, fruits of righteousness and His Spirit into the battles we face in life.

MONDAY

Fourth paragraph last sentence states, “The author of Hebrews tells us that Jesus can be our High Priest because He fully can empathize with us (Heb 2:17).” Thoughts?

And Question 2 from Friday states, “Dwell more on the idea of how Jesus in His humanity is able to sympathize with us in our struggles.”

What does this mean? Can the Father be our High Priest? Why not? Is the Father less empathetic? Is the Father less capable of

empathizing? Does the Father need the Son to inform Him of our difficulties because the Father doesn't actually appreciate how hard it is on us?

Let's read the text starting in Heb 2:14:

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. 16 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. ³

Thoughts? What do you hear? Why did He have to be made like us?

- To destroy Satan's power of death
 - What is Satan's power? John 17:3
- To free mankind
 - What holds us? Lies and our own carnal nature, John 8:32
- To help humans
 - Help us with what? 1John 3:8
- Propitiate, atone, forgive sins,
 - **But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose.** When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways,

³ *New American Standard Bible : 1995 update.* 1995 (Heb 2:14–18). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9.
God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath **He removed our transgressions from us.**" Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

- To aid those being tempted
 - How does He aid us?

So why is Christ our High Priest and the Father is not? What does Christ possess that the Father does not possess? A perfect human character!

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. **But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Thus when he was made perfect he became the source of salvation for all who obey him. Heb 5:9

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Second to last paragraph describes the duplicity, spying, plotting, and conniving going on, people pretending to be one thing but doing another.

Read the last paragraph, “In our own...” thoughts? How do we do this?

WEDNESDAY

Second paragraph states, “In the time of David, the firstborn son was traditionally considered his father’s main heir. For a king, that would mean that the firstborn won would inherit the throne. God is, however, never bound by tradition.”

The lesson points out that Abiathar ignored God’s plan in favor of tradition.

Then read last paragraph, “Tradition can be...”

Do we have traditions today that we prefer over God’s plan?

- Day of worship?
- What we do on day of worship?
- Dress?
- Ordination?
- What about traditional ways of explaining the gospel?
 - EGW said the medical ministry is the right hand of the gospel - do we present the gospel message as a healing message or does tradition cause us to reject this in favor of a legal message?

The lesson asks in the pink section, “How often do we let tradition get in the way of God’s leading?”

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “A superficial...”

Then read question #4 from Friday – thoughts?

Does God have foreknowledge? Does God’s foreknowledge affect free choice? Why or why not?

If God doesn’t have foreknowledge what does it say about God?

If God does have foreknowledge what does it say about God?

Does it bring you comfort to believe God has foreknowledge?

If God didn’t have foreknowledge what would it mean that He had Noah preach 120 years but build only one ark?

Bottom pink section states, “Free choice is one of the most sacred gifts God has given us.”

Why is this so important? What is lost without freedom? Love!

Do we have freedom if God is threatening to punish and kill us for disobedience? No!

Do we have freedom if God is warning us that unremedied sin will damage and destroy us? Yes!

What about doctrines that say God uses His power to inflict punishment for sin upon sinners – then are we free?

If you told your spouse they were free to talk on the phone, but if they do you will beat them, are they free?

Do we have full freedom if we are being threatened?

The earth was **dark through misapprehension of God**. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. **This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He**

desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; **His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan.** This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Mal. 4:2. {DA 22.1}

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **Rebellion was not to be overcome by force.** **Compelling power is found only under Satan's government.** **The Lord's principles are not of this order.** His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is **moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** {DA 759.1}

Satan's representations against the government of God, and his defense of those who sided with him, were a constant accusation against God. His murmurings and complaints were groundless; and yet God allowed him to work out his theory. God could have destroyed Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. **But by so doing he would have given a precedent for the exercise of force. All the compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order.** He would not work on this line. He would not give the slightest encouragement for any human being to set himself up as God over another human being, feeling at liberty to cause him physical or mental suffering. **This principle is wholly of Satan's creation.** {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 7}

God made them free moral agents, capable of appreciating the wisdom and benevolence of His character and the justice of

His requirements, and **with full liberty to yield or to withhold obedience**. PP 48.

They do not see that **to deprive man of the freedom of choice would be to rob him of his prerogative as an intelligent being, and make him a mere automaton**. It is **not God's purpose to coerce the will. Man was created a free moral agent**. PP331

One of the traditions of the church, which opposes God's purposes, is the idea of a punishing God who must inflict punishment upon unrepentant sinners. Revelation tells us it is the beast who uses coercive power, not God!

FRIDAY - Read and discuss question 1

Background Characters in the Old Testament Lesson 8 4Q 2010

Joab: David's Weak Strongman

SABBATH

Read memory verse – thoughts? What is this talking about? Any examples?

What about dating someone who is clearly not well matched, mature, ready, appropriate or healthy for you? If our feelings are aroused are we as honest with ourselves – or do we continue down a path that isn't right, convincing ourselves it is okay? What mental gymnastics do we have to play on ourselves to do this?

- Denial –
 - he really didn't mean to hit me,
 - he doesn't smoke around me, only when I'm not around
 - she only drinks to deal with her parents
 - he may lie to his brother, but he doesn't lie to me.
 - She only shoplifts from stores, she doesn't steal from people
- Rationalization-
 - I have been alone for so long, if I lose this person I may never find another
 - He has so much potential if only he would get in rehab, if only he would give up smoking, if only he would accept Jesus...

What happens if people do this? Who are they deceiving?

Pearl: You can never avoid the truth you can only delay the day you deal with it. The longer you delay the more damage and pain when one finally has to deal with the truth.

Read first paragraph, "Joab's story..." thoughts? What did you think about the idea that it was the kings that united Israel? Did you ask why? Why didn't they become a nation under the judges? What was God's plan or design for their nation? Did God want them

to have a king? Did God want them to become a unified nation? Did God's plan for a unified nation require a king? Then why didn't they unify without a king?

Could it be they were so darkened in mind, that their thinking was so shaped by worldly traditions and values, that they couldn't conceive of a nation without a king?

What about today- does God have a plan, a gospel message that is to go to the world? Could it be that our thinking about God's government has been so impacted by worldly governments that we have accepted a distorted gospel?

Do we project onto the heavenly government a earthly system of governing – such things as God legislating/imposing/enacting laws upon His children, God conducting tribunals, God determining guilt and innocence, God (or heavenly juries) determining penalties and then God inflicting punishment upon His children?

To Daniel was given a vision of fierce beasts, representing the powers of the earth. But the ensign of the Messiah's kingdom is a lamb. While earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power, **Christ is to banish every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion. His kingdom was to be established to uplift and ennoble fallen humanity.** {AG 15.2}

What does this mean? Why do earthly governments say we need stiff penalties for lawbreaking? To deter crime – and what does it mean to deter crime? Doesn't it mean to put in place a threat, a penalty to coerce people away from crime?

How many describe God's government as doing the exact same thing? Are we any better today than ancient Israel?

But God did give the 10 Commandments at Sinai, so how do we understand God's use of law?

Parents do you ever add rules to your child's life? You must bath every day, brush your teeth after meals, you must eat your veggies before dessert, you must go to bed by..., etc. why do you add all these rules? Do you like making rules? Why then?

Is it like this with God? Did God add rules because He originally wanted it that way or because, after sin, our condition needed it?

What do you think about this quote?

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, **the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of.** In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. {MB 109.2}

What do we think about this quote? Do we agree? Do we find scripture to support these ideas?

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹ We also know that law **is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels**, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim 1:8-11

If the law wasn't given for the righteous, then was it given before sin? Did it exist in heaven? Did it exist in Eden? Or was the law added because our condition required it?

What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. Gal 3:19

What law was added? One of the founders of our church had an opinion, with which I happen to agree:

I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments. {1SM 233.1}

Does God run His universe like earthly governments? Then why do we insist on describing God's kingdom in a model that parallels earthly governments? We need to free our minds from the warp of the world and see God's kingdom as revealed in Jesus!

SUNDAY

Read last two paragraphs, "During the..." thoughts?

Where is grace? Where is forgiveness? Where is love? Do you see selfishness in the story? What about today? Do we struggle with the same temptations?

Read pink section at the bottom. Thoughts? Do you ever step back in your own mind and ask, "What is the truth?" and how do you determine what the truth in a situation is?

I know many people who refuse to think and instead rationalize their behavior. One of the ways they rationalize selfishness in the church is by following the "law", despite who it hurts.

Why were the Pharisees angry that Christ was healing, including on the Sabbath? Because it threatened their power. But how did they justify their anger at Christ healing on the Sabbath? They claimed to be following the law, they claimed to be loyal to a "thus saith the Lord."

What about today do people do this? How have you seen this done?

How did Christ respond to those who treated Him unjustly? How should we respond?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “It seems...” Do you find this to be true? It is true – we are designed to change, yes in character, but physically, neurocircuits, gene expression, based on the decisions we make.

Our dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) is where we reason and plan, our ventralmedial prefrontal cortex (VMPFC) is where we experience guilt or conviction of wrong doing. When the VMPFC is active the DLPFC is less active, meaning we cannot think as clearly when our guilty, or when our consciences are not clear.

Read second paragraph, “Sin also breaks...” thoughts? When we sin do we change ourselves? Do we change ourselves to be more healthy, reliable, trustworthy, or do we become less trustworthy? Thus, sin decreases reliability because it changes us – does this mean, once we have sinned we cannot recover and be healed?

Credibility is only lost if the sin is known and recognized as sin by others. Consider how does a gang member gain credibility within the gang? Guess who has earned a reputation as one of the great heroes of al qaida? US Army psychiatrist Major Nadal Hasan – who one year ago went on a shooting rampage at Fort Hood Tx.

Sin undermines credibility when two elements are in place, the sin is known and the sin violates the values of the social group from which one derives support.

More important than credibility, is character and trustworthiness. Regardless of whether the sin is known, or whether a particular group values your sin, all sin damages the sinner, sears the conscience, warps reason, destroys the image of God within the sinner.

What do you think about the reasons given that David stands by while his sons act as they did? Do you find the idea persuasive? Then how do we explain Eli's sons and Samuel's sons? Did Eli and Samuel discipline their sons? Was it because they had publicly sinned and lost moral authority?

I know many parents who haven't committed public sin and lost credibility and are very loving, kind and good people, yet struggle to discipline their children. Do we have any evidence of David being a good disciplinarian father before his sin with Bathsheba?

Is being a good disciplinarian a guarantee that one's children will turn out healthy?

And is it true that once we have sinned, and repented, and experienced God's grace in our lives that we have no credibility to discipline? As we read last week, forgiveness means recovery from sin, which is a changed heart and right spirit. Is it possible that having suffered through the pain of sin, and having been restored to spiritual health by God that one might be more sensitive to the dangers to their children and therefore offer better discipline?

Now read the next paragraph, "Joab had the same..." thoughts, is David's and Joab's situation the same? No! David is a sinner who has experienced God's forgiveness, repentance and grace – Joab has not. Would you expect the sinner, restored to favor with God and the sinner who remains hostile to God to experience the same development of character? To practice the same methods?

Was Joab's problem that he had the blood of Abner on his hands, or that he remained selfish in heart, motives and attitude?

What do you think about the idea that after sin, after repentance, after experiencing God's grace and renewal of heart and mind that one continues to live with loss of integrity?

Definition of integrity: firm adherence to a code of especially moral values (incorruptibility).

Isn't it true that after we come to Christ, with all our history of sinfulness, that we experience a new heart and right spirit? Do we believe we get transformed in character so that we go from low integrity to great integrity or not?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Second Samuel..." thoughts? What do you think of this idea of "honor"? What makes such an act as murdering your brother honorable? Do you notice how in this value system one does something dishonorable and calls it honorable in order to restore honor?

Where do such ideas come from? Is this idea any different that God killing His innocent Son in order that justice might be served and the guilty pardoned? In other words how is calling the legal execution of the innocent in place of the guilty justice any different from murdering your brother and calling it honorable?

Today honor killings still happen – in certain parts of the world a woman who is raped may be killed by her family to restore honor – is there something wrong with this picture? How could things become so perverted that the victim is killed to restore honor to the family?

Those behind the terrorist attacks on 9/11 believe they are doing the honorable thing as they believe the US has exploited and abused Islam and thus in fighting back as they do they are restoring honor. Is there something wrong with this type of thinking?

When the Bible speaks of honoring father and mother, does it mean we should kill our parents if they embarrass us?

This so called honor is another way of promoting self under a cloak of self-justification. There is nothing honorable in murder, terrorism, family killings, or executing the innocent in place of the

guilty and calling it justice. It is all selfishness hidden under a human contrivance.

Regarding Absalom, could it be that he really only wanted power and used the opportunity to avenge his sister as a way of seeking to ascend the throne?

Was all of this mess going on in the kingdom really because of David's sin? Did no other sentient being have freedom to choose? Were people prohibited from being gracious and forgiving? Are we responsible for the decisions of others? If we do good, and give a car to charity and someone uses that gift by planting a car bomb and committing an act of terrorism, are we responsible for their act?

WENESDAY

Read first three paragraphs – thoughts? What mechanism was used to justify Joab's actions? Linking Joab to David so the people thought that loyalty to David meant loyalty to Joab. Do we ever struggle with similar issues of confused loyalties?

What about the idea that loyalty to the church means loyalty to a particular pastor? What about loyalty to God means loyalty to a particular church? What about loyalty to God means loyalty to modern Israel?

How can we tell what we should be loyal to and what we should not be loyal to?

THURSDAY

David is now old and cold – and they bring a young woman as his nightly hot water bottle to keep him warm. But he was so old he never “knew” her.

Joab thinks this is time to make another move and so he supports Adonijah in a coup – but David with Nathan's help makes Solomon co-regent.

Read third paragraph, “Joab seems...” thoughts? What do you think of this idea of retribution? Is God a revengeful God? Does God have a government that seeks to take retribution on His children or that will take retribution on His children?

Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. **Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God.** He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, that **men might lose the true views of God's character, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth.** He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, **and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God.** Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes.** That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

Thoughts? Satan lies about God, claiming that God is revengeful and severe. We have far too often believed those lies and this ugly distorted God concept gets promoted throughout the world. This is part of the wine of Babylon which all the nations drink.

Some may argue, but wait Scripture says:

“vengeance is mine says the Lord” Romans 12:19

Many use this text as “proof” that God is vengeful and Satan’s allegations against God are correct. But that is because we don’t let the Bible define its own self. When we allow the Bible to define itself we discover something altogether different:

Therefore the Lord, the Lord Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: “Ah, I will get relief from my foes and **avenge myself on my enemies.** ²⁵ I will turn my hand against you; **I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities.** Isaiah 1:24,25

What is the vengeance of God? Turning enemies into friends – His vengeance is not on sinners but on sinfulness. He attacks and destroys sin! This is His vengeance which purges and cleanses the sinner! The greatest vengeance God can have on Satan is healing and restoring all those who trust Him!

Thoughts?

Let’s take another look at Joab – what actually happened? Did God strike Joab down? Did God inflict punishment upon Joab? Is reaping what we sew the same as God taking retribution?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “We should...” thoughts? What do you think about the idea of truth sanctifying? How and why? Does it have any relation to Isaiah 1:18 “come let us reason together”? How?

Read question 3 – thoughts? What about in the church? How many find themselves following “orders” in the church that are wrong? Has this ever happened? Does it happen today? How?

Discuss questions 1 and 4.

Background Characters in the Old Testament Lesson 9 4Q 2010

From a listener, Gillian, in Canada I received the following this week:

Hi Dr Tim,

I was listening to the current lesson about Uriah and David and the question was asked "if David was forgiven why was he not allowed to build the temple(paraphrasing)" The answer is quite simple God did not intend to live in a temple he wanted to be in the tent where he could be among the people and he would not be seen as God only of Israel but available to all nations. It was David's guilt(?) after he had acquired so much wealth and had built himself a majestic palace, then he saw the tent that the Lord dwelt in he decided to give God a better idea. This happened in 2 Sam 7 before he committed adultery and murder. I hope you can clear this up for you class as many people believe that this was David's punishment from God.

Rizpah: The Influence of Faithfulness

SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts? Any questions?

What is faithfulness? Last two sentences of the second paragraph state: “faithfulness is not conditioned by circumstances or good (or bad) fortunes. Faithfulness is an unconditional commitment to do what’s right regardless of the cost.”

What do you think about this? I like it – to do what is right regardless of the cost.

Could it be this, a question of faithfulness, is the very heart of the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan?

But what if some of them were not faithful? Does this mean that God will not be faithful? Certainly not! God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says,

“You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.”¹

What did the war in heaven start over? Was it not a question of God’s faithfulness, God’s trustworthiness? Was God not the one alleged to be unfaithful to His creatures? And therefore distrust of God infected the hearts of some of the angels and then mankind?

Therefore, God is working to free us from such misconceptions and restore us back to trust in Him!

How do we determine what the right is? What is our standard of right and wrong?

If our definition of right originates in God would it be important for one to have the true knowledge of God? What might happen if someone accepts distorted concepts of God?

Could someone be faithful to the wrong cause – do what they thought was right, but in actuality do wrong? Did Saul of Tarsus do what he thought was right by persecuting the church? Was it right?

What is the right thing to do in a given situation? When in doubt think “love”, what can I do to honor God, what can I do to bless the other person. This might mean keeping silent, it might mean turning the other cheek, it might mean speaking out, it might mean defending oneself, holding someone accountable, calling the authorities, giving a spanking etc.

The right course of action is the course in which we love God and love others. Thoughts?

¹ American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible : The Good news Translation* (2nd ed.) (Ro 3:3–4). New York: American Bible Society.

What is the sealing?

Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads--it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved--just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. FLB 287.

Would sealing mean people have been changed to the point they are "faithful," that they will do what is right no matter the cost?

SUNDAY

Rizpah was a concubine of King Saul, who became part of the royal house of Saul's son Ishbosheth after Saul died. Ishbosheth was set up by Abner to rule over Israel in opposition to David.

The lesson explains concubines were females taken from the rank of slaves or maids, with the express purpose of producing heirs. Once they had a male offspring they had a status similar to a tertiary wife.

Thoughts about this practice? Do we find this practice occurring only among those who didn't know God or who were God's enemies?

Who had concubines?

- Abraham
- Israel (Jacob)
- Gideon
- Saul
- David
- Solomon

Do we find God gave instructions, through Moses, on how concubines were to be treated, and their children?

¹⁵ If a man has two wives, and he loves one but not the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife

he does not love, ¹⁶ when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love. ¹⁷ He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him. ²
 (see also Exodus 21:7-11, DT 21:10-14).

Do we find God tells them not to have concubines? Then, does this mean it is God's will and okay?

Do we find a practice, engaged in by God's faithful followers, codified by God's prophets, blessed by God - as children of such relationships were part of forming the 12 tribes of Israel, to still be wrong?

If we find something in scripture, which occurred, which had prophetic involvement/instructions, and which God blessed, does that automatically mean it is right, good or in harmony with God's will?

Some other Scripture which sheds light on this:

- Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. ¹⁴ You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. ¹⁵ Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. ¹⁶ "I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment,"

² *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996 (electronic ed.) (Dt 21:15-17). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith. Mal 2:13-16

- “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’?⁶ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” Mt 19:4-6.
- Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach. 1Tim 3:2

Thoughts?

Keep this idea in mind, that we can find practices in Scripture, done by God’s people, even sometimes codified and blessed by God that are still wrong.

Why? Because God meets people where they are, works with them in their understanding and leads them as fast as they can move toward His methods and principles. Behavioral adherence is not what God wants. He could get this quickly, what He wants is agreement, changed hearts where we want to do it His way. This takes time.

MONDAY

Ishbosheth accuses Abner of sleeping with Rizpah and this so offends Abner that he changes loyalty and goes to David offering to bring the rest of Israel under David’s rule.

This accusation is so serious because to sleep with a king’s concubine is tantamount to usurping the throne and claiming all the king’s rights, property, position, and authority. So, if Abner had done this he would have been saying I am sovereign and this is what Ishbosheth accused him of.

TUESDAY

Read 2Samuel 21:1-10:

During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said, “It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death.”

The Gibeonites, also known as Hivites, were descendants of Canaan son of Ham and were one of the seven nations which were to be destroyed when Israel conquered Canaan. However, the Gibeonites presented themselves to Israel as ambassadors from a distant country and Israel entered into a treaty with them before consulting with God. When Joshua discovered he was deceived he honored the letter of the treaty by allowing them to live but relegated them to woodcutters and water bearers. Saul years later attempted to eliminate them and the only a few survived. It is these survivors David addresses in the following verses.

² The king summoned the Gibeonites and spoke to them. (Now the Gibeonites were not a part of Israel but were survivors of the Amorites; the Israelites had sworn to spare them, but Saul in his zeal for Israel and Judah had tried to annihilate them.) ³ David asked the Gibeonites, “What shall I do for you? How shall I make amends so that you will bless the Lord’s inheritance?”

⁴ The Gibeonites answered him, “We have no right to demand silver or gold from Saul or his family, nor do we have the right to put anyone in Israel to death.”

“What do you want me to do for you?” David asked.

⁵ They answered the king, “As for the man who destroyed us and plotted against us so that we have been decimated and have no place anywhere in Israel, ⁶ let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be killed and exposed before the Lord at Gibeah of Saul—the Lord’s chosen one.”

So the king said, “I will give them to you.”

⁷ The king spared Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the oath before the Lord between David and

Jonathan son of Saul. ⁸ But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Aiah's daughter Rizpah, whom she had borne to Saul, together with the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab, whom she had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite. ⁹ He handed them over to the Gibeonites, who killed and exposed them on a hill before the Lord. All seven of them fell together; they were put to death during the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning.

¹⁰ Rizpah daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. From the beginning of the harvest till the rain poured down from the heavens on the bodies, she did not let the birds of the air touch them by day or the wild animals by night.

Thoughts?

The study guide draws several lessons from this story – let's examine this story, the suggested lessons and see if we can learn something useful.

The first lesson suggested by the study guide is in the last paragraph of Tuesday's lesson, "God expects us to honor our promises."

Thoughts? If we make a promise should we honor it? In all circumstances?

Is a promise different than an agreement, a contract, a vow, a covenant, or are they all basically the same, if we give our word to do something we should do it? In any and all circumstance?

Did Balaam agree to curse Israel? But God wouldn't let him keep his word – why not?

How about if you have given your life to God, you have surrendered to Him and promised to be faithful to Him and His kingdom and sometime later someone deceives you into making a promise that would violate your promise to God – what do you do?

What about Jephthah found in Hebrews hall of faith:

And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord: “If you give the Ammonites into my hands, ³¹ whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the Lord’s, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.”

³² Then Jephthah went over to fight the Ammonites, and the Lord gave them into his hands. ³³ He devastated twenty towns from Aroer to the vicinity of Minnith, as far as Abel Keramim. Thus Israel subdued Ammon.

³⁴ When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of tambourines! She was an only child. Except for her he had neither son nor daughter. ³⁵ When he saw her, he tore his clothes and cried, “Oh! My daughter! You have made me miserable and wretched, because I have made a vow to the Lord that I cannot break.”

³⁶ “My father,” she replied, “you have given your word to the Lord. Do to me just as you promised, now that the Lord has avenged you of your enemies, the Ammonites. ³⁷ But grant me this one request,” she said. “Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry.”

³⁸ “You may go,” he said. And he let her go for two months. She and the girls went into the hills and wept because she would never marry. ³⁹ After the two months, she returned to her father and he did to her as he had vowed. And she was a virgin. Judges 11:30-39

Should Jephthah have sacrificed his daughter as a burnt offering?
Do you think God was pleased?

What if your teenager made a suicide pact with some of their friends, should they say, well mom/dad, I realize I shouldn’t have made the promise, and I really don’t want to do it anymore, but since I did make the promise I am going to meet the others and kill myself?

EGW comments on the Gibeonites and the promise made:

Great was the indignation of the Israelites as they learned the deception that had been practiced upon them. And this was heightened when, after three days' journey, they reached the cities of the Gibeonites, near the center of the land. "All the congregation murmured against the princes;" but the latter refused to break the treaty, though secured by fraud, because they had "sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel." "And the children of Israel smote them not." The Gibeonites had pledged themselves to renounce idolatry, and accept the worship of Jehovah; and **the preservation of their lives was not a violation of God's command to destroy the idolatrous Canaanites. Hence the Hebrews had not by their oath pledged themselves to commit sin.** And though the oath had been secured by deception, it was not to be disregarded. **The obligation to which one's word is pledged--if it do not bind him to perform a wrong act--should be held sacred.** No consideration of gain, of revenge, or of self-interest can in any way affect the inviolability of an oath or pledge. "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord." Proverbs 12:22. He that "shall ascend into the hill of the Lord," and "stand in His holy place," is "he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." Psalms 24:3; 15:4. {PP 506.1}

How do we understand stories like the sacrifice of Saul's 7 sons and Jephthah's daughter?

Read bottom pink section, "Though we don't..."

The lesson is correct that behavior has consequences, but is there any direct connection between Saul's action and a famine, like there is with not brushing your teeth and cavities? Is the idea we should take that the problem with sin is that God will inflict punishment? That the only problem is that God acts to cause consequences?

WEDNESDAY

Read top paragraph, "David consents..." thoughts?

Is this a valid idea of Biblical atonement? Is the lesson trying to suggest that this is somehow related to God's plan of salvation by connecting the word used by David with the sanctuary service – what do you think?

If we go down this trail of thinking could it lead us to conclude that it is through human sacrifice that “atonement” is achieved and God needed a perfect human sacrifice to pay for the crimes of human sin and therefore, just as the Gibeonites executed the sons of Saul, God executed His Son to satisfy divine justice?

“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, *yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.*” (vs 4).

February 2007 Woodrow Whidden: “Why did God the Father choose a cross to be the instrument of death? Why did He not choose to have Christ instantly beheaded or quickly run through with a spear or sword? Was God unjust in executing judgment on Christ with a cross when He could have done it by beheading, a noose, a sword, a gas chamber, a bolt of lightning, or a lethal injection?”

(<http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2007/February/sinner-s-in-the-hands-of-god.html>).

In December 2007 World Review “One of the fundamental problems of the Moral Influence Theory is that it rejects the substitutionary nature of Christ's death. The idea that **God had to kill the innocent** instead of the guilty in order to save us is considered a violation of justice.” (p 40, emphasis mine).

Thoughts? Do you think God killed His Son on the cross? What evidence do we have beside Isaiah's prophecy that we would misunderstand and think it was God who did it?

“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me.” Matt 27:46.

What is Jesus testimony as to what God did to Him? Did God exercise His might to execute His Son?

Consider EGW's statement:

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. **He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings.** Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

Who does EGW said killed Christ? And when this was understood by the heavenly intelligences what impact did it have on them? And who do you think would be behind the idea that God is the one who killed His Son? And what impact does it have on us to believe God is the one who killed His Son?

The idea that God requires some arbitrary death penalty of a substitute innocent in order to satisfy some bloodlust, some sense of justice is part of human misconceptions about justice and goes all the way back to pagan god concepts and practices. Satan constantly works to project His character onto God and all too often we have accepted his distortions.

Why the Hebrew word David used is the same as that in the sanctuary service is because atonement means to bring two warring parties together, to reconcile, to make one. In the case of the Gibeonites what *they* required to be reconciled was the death of the seven sons. But, what is required for mankind to be one with God again?

Was the death of Christ a requirement – Absolutely – but why? Was it for the same reasons as the Gibeonites? Was it because the wronged party, God, required someone to die so His sense of justice would be appeased? Absolutely NOT!

The death of Christ was required as the only means whereby God could destroy Satan and his power, destroy death, and destroy the devil's work of defacing God's image in man and replacing it with Satan's image. (Heb 2:14, 1Tim 1:10, 1John 3:8, LHM 49).

In other words Christ death was required to remedy the sin situation and restore mankind fully back into harmony with God, to actually fix in man what sin had destroyed.

The dark section states, "How are we to understand this passage? Or can we understand it? In what ways is this an example of something in Scripture that we can't fully explain but that we simply need to trust the Lord on?"

Thoughts about this? What is the study guide suggesting? Is it encouraging us to search for answers?

Can we understand this story? Yes! It has to do with the people.

First, do we accept that the famine was somehow God's direct act, or rather that the author of scripture attributed it to God that which He did not prevent, as we read about a few weeks ago?

When the word came to David that this was a result of Saul's actions toward the Gibeonites, did David seek God's solution to the problem or did David seek the Gibeonites for solution?

Are we surprised that the Gibeonites wanted human sacrifice? Where in the text do we find God supporting this? Where do we find God instructing it? Where do we find God endorsing it?

Or do we find God working with humans, where those humans were in their understanding and developmental level?

Don't you think God was sickened by what the Gibeonites wanted and how this played out?

Do you remember how reconciliation occurred when the Assyrians surrounded Elisha? What happened? They were struck blind and Elisha led them into the midst of Israel and the king of Israel wanted to kill them but Elisha instructed them to through a feast for the Assyrians and then release them.

Do you think if they had sought the Lord He could have found another solution?

Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet. {MH 481.2}

THURSDAY

Last paragraph first few sentences state, “The famine does not end after the seven descendents of Saul are executed. God responds to the plea for the land only after David has provided a respectable resting place for the remains of Saul and his descendants. In other words, although justice and righteousness are important elements of our interactions with one another, reconciliation is required as well.”

Thoughts? What do you think about the idea of justice and righteousness? Are these two separate things? In scripture the word translated justice is the word translated righteous or righteousness. Thus we read in Romans 1:17:

- For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” NIV
- For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “*The just shall live by faith.*” NKJV

Do we see why Paul said in Romans,

Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written:

“So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.”

The issue is about God – how do you see Him? How do we understand the stories of the OT. What more could God do when dealing with people who are so darkened in mind, but patient meet them where they were and slowly lead them to greater light?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2,4 and 5

Background Characters in the Old Testament Lesson 10 4Q 2010

The Man of God: Obedience Is Not Optional

SUNDAY

Read first two paragraphs – “After...” thoughts?

Do we have any modern day examples of well intentioned actions leading away from God?

- What about attempts to provide a day of rest for people leading to legislating Sunday laws?
- What about attempts to “promote life” leading to restricting liberties?

Read third paragraph, “It is necessary...” What do you think about the idea of “even small deviation from the clear command of God has far-reaching effects.”

Can we think of any examples of this and why?

- Adam and Eve eating the fruit – on the surface it appears a fairly minor act – it’s just a piece of fruit – why is it so significant?
 - Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors, and it was only by repentance toward God and faith in the promised Messiah that they could hope ever to regain the lost image of God. {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}
 - So the taking of the fruit, was it the primary problem or an outward manifestation of something much more significant? Is it a minor or major deal to no longer trust God?

- Analogy, what if you were traveling and following a compass and your compass was off by 1 degree – it is a minor deviation, would it really matter?

Can we think of any examples of this idea being abused, of how this truth of the importance of not deviating from God’s expressed commands gets twisted to result in people who think they are keeping God’s commands but are actually opposed to Him?

- Did God give an expressed command regarding keeping the Sabbath holy? Did God give express commands on all permutations of all behavior over all time? Could someone in seeking to keep the Sabbath holy be offended at Christ healing on the Sabbath? Could someone be a Sabbath keeper and still crucify Christ?
- What about today – could we be Sabbath keepers but still be God’s enemy? If a person goes to eat at a restaurant on Sabbath does that mean they are breaking an express command of God? Can we tell if someone is God’s friend or enemy by the way they observe Sabbath?

The last sentence of the paragraph states, “Jeroboam was compelled to make priests of common people, which in turn degraded the sacred office.” What do you think about this idea?

Was the priesthood degraded in Israel? Yes it was – was it necessarily because the priests were not Levites? If this is the reason then would genetics mean a person makes a better priest? Do we have any Biblical evidence that genetics doesn’t make a difference?

- Melchizedek - was he a priest of God? Was he a Levite?
 - **It was Christ that spoke through Melchisedek, the priest of the most high God. Melchisedek was not Christ, but he was the voice of God in the world, the representative of the Father.** And all through the generations of the past, Christ has spoken; Christ has led His people, and has been the light of the world. When God chose Abraham as a representative of His truth, He

took him out of his country, and away from his kindred, and set him apart. He desired to mold him after His own model. He desired to teach him according to His own plan (RH Feb. 18, 1890). {1BC 1093.1}

- Christ – from what tribe was Christ? Judah, He was not a Levite, yet is He our High Priest? Was the priestly office degraded because Christ wasn't a Levite? This argument of Levitical priesthood is what Paul was dealing with in Hebrews.
- What about the priesthood of believers, is God's church composed of priests? Is it degraded because we are not of the tribe of Levi?
- Let's turn the argument around – if the priests are from the tribe of Levi does that mean that the priesthood is pure?
 - Consider Eli's sons, Samuels sons, those who crucified Christ, and Jeremiah 2:8 tells us the priests led the people astray.

So we know the priesthood was degraded in Israel – what was the primary reason, was it genetics? Or was it rejecting the truth about God and holding to lies, promoting self, refusing to humble self, seeking one's own way, selfishness reigning in the kingdom? And as such selfishness leads us to do things our way rather than cooperating with God and following His counsels, and we set up priests of our own not of Levi, but is the problems primarily and simply only that they were not genetically descended from Levi?

MONDAY

The story – Jeroboam sets up new places of worship in Israel. He builds altars and golden calves. A young prophet of God is dispatched for Judah to warn the king – let's pick up the story in 1Kings 13:1-24:

13 By the word of the Lord a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. ² He cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord: "O altar, altar! This is what the Lord says: 'A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings

here, and human bones will be burned on you.’ ” ³ That same day the man of God gave a sign: “This is the sign the Lord has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out.”

First question – did Josiah do what the prophet foretold? Yes see 2Kings 23. How was the prophet able to predict, first that a king named Josiah would exist and secondly what that king would do? Of what is this evidence? It is evidence of God’s foreknowledge, that He actually knows the future, not what might happen, but what will happen.

Let’s keep reading our story for today:

⁴ When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, “Seize him!” But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back.

⁵ Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the Lord.

⁶ Then the king said to the man of God, “Intercede with the Lord your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored.” So the man of God interceded with the Lord, and the king’s hand was restored and became as it was before.

Thought about this? Was God punishing Jeroboam? Why did the king’s hand wither? What was the purpose in the prophet going to Jeroboam in the first place? Was it God’s design to punish and destroy or to warn and save?

Was the miracle of the withered hand in harmony with His overall purposes to heal and save? When the king cried for mercy and the hand was restored, what impact did it have on the king?

Did the king humbly repent of his error? Why not? What does a miracle not do? It doesn’t present evidence to change a person’s beliefs or character.

Not by might nor by power but by the way the Spirit works says the Lord. Zech 4:6. This is why God doesn't accomplish His purposes with miracles. Consider the flood, Sodom, plagues of Egypt, fire by Elijah, etc. did these miracles ever get what God wanted from people? Even Christ's own miracles did not accomplish His purposes so He stopped doing them.

Today, if we see miracles does that mean we should follow the person performing the miracles? Why or why not? Can miracles be counterfeited? What about a talking serpent?

That is why God says we are to come and reason and our sins will be cleansed. It is in our minds that God works to heal and cleanse and this through His methods of truth and love presented in a free environment.

⁷ The king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and have something to eat, and I will give you a gift."

⁸ But the man of God answered the king, "Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here. ⁹ For I was commanded by the word of the Lord: 'You must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came.'" ¹⁰ So he took another road and did not return by the way he had come to Bethel.

¹¹ Now there was a certain old prophet living in Bethel, whose sons came and told him all that the man of God had done there that day. They also told their father what he had said to the king. ¹² Their father asked them, "Which way did he go?" And his sons showed him which road the man of God from Judah had taken. ¹³ So he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." And when they had saddled the donkey for him, he mounted it ¹⁴ and rode after the man of God. He found him sitting under an oak tree and asked, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?"

"I am," he replied.

¹⁵ So the prophet said to him, "Come home with me and eat."

¹⁶ The man of God said, "I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. ¹⁷ I

have been told by the word of the Lord: ‘You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.’ ”

¹⁸ The old prophet answered, “I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the Lord: ‘Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.’ ” (But he was lying to him.) ¹⁹ So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.

²⁰ While they were sitting at the table, the word of the Lord came to the old prophet who had brought him back. ²¹ He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, “This is what the Lord says: ‘You have defied the word of the Lord and have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you.

²² You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers.’ ” ²³ When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. ²⁴ As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was thrown down on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it.

What do you think of this story? Was the old prophet a false prophet or a prophet of the Lord?

Does this give us any insight in how we should relate to prophets? Are prophets supposed to do our thinking for us? Can prophets lie, even prophets of the Lord? Can Apostles be wrong? Consider Peter and Paul’s need to rebuke him publicly.

What does this say about the purpose and role of a prophet? A prophet is a spokesperson for God an individual through whom God can speak or carry out a purpose. But is a prophet God? Does a prophet retain their humanity and sinful nature? Can they make mistakes?

If a prophet prophecies and their prophecy fails to come true what does that mean? What about Jonah – true or false prophet? Did he give conditions on his prophecy? Did it come true?

Was the point of Jonah's prophecy to predict the future or to bring a people to repentance?

Should we allow the words of prophets to be our thoughts for us or are we to hear the words of the prophets and then weigh them out for ourselves, asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten and come to our own conclusion as to the meaning?

TUESDAY

Jeroboam invited the prophet to his home for dinner and offered the prophet gifts – why do you think God told the prophet to say no? The lesson suggests that gifts put the receiver in the debt of the giver – thoughts about this?

If I give a gift and then expect the receiver to owe me something, have I actually given a gift? Have you ever received gifts with strings attached – you knew if you accepted the gift expectations were attached?

Have you ever received gifts without strings attached?

Which kind of gifts are given in love? Which do you like better? Which do you give to others?

Why do you give gifts? Because you are obligated? Because you want to influence someone to do something for you or like you? Because you love the other person and want to bless them in some way? Other reasons?

We are told that God gave the gift of His Son – why?

- What type of gift was it?
- Did God's gift indebt us to Him?
- Did He give His Son freely or with strings attached?
- Was the motivation to bless us or manipulate us?
- How can we tell?

When people give gifts with strings attached and they don't get reciprocity, how do they react? Do they feel they were cheated, that

something fair didn't happen? Do they get angry, upset, threaten? How is God often portrayed in treating those who don't accept the gift of Jesus?

WEDNESDAY

Why did the young prophet die in the story? Was he condemned for believing a lie, for being tricked? Or was his problem that he failed to hold to the truth? Is there a difference?

Read fourth paragraph, "It's really..." thoughts?

Eve really believed the words of Satan, but her belief did not save her from the penalty of sin. She disbelieved the words of God, and this was what led to her fall. **In the judgment men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth.** Notwithstanding the sophistry of Satan to the contrary, it is always disastrous to disobey God. We must set our hearts to know what is truth. All the lessons which God has caused to be placed on record in His word are for our warning and instruction. They are given to save us from deception. Their neglect will result in ruin to ourselves. Whatever contradicts God's word, we may be sure proceeds from Satan. {PP 55.2}

Thoughts? What does this mean? What happens if we don't love the truth?

They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie ¹

Why is this the result? What happens in the mind if we reject truth, on any subject.

¹ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996 (electronic ed.) (2 Th 2:10–11). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Is it important to have a mind receptive and open to the truth? Is having a mind like this related to obedience? How?

The Greek for obedience is: ὑπακοή *hypakoē* obedience

It means having a humble willingness to listen and be instructed, it is not primarily about performance, but secondarily about performance. There was a servant whose title was the *hypakoē* and the job of this servant was to listen for the sound of the master's voice and when he heard it open the gate for the master. If the servant faithfully listened and as soon as he heard the master jumped up to open the door, but the door was stuck, and with all his might he couldn't open it, is the servant disobedient.

This is why the religious leaders in Christ's day were disobedient because they wouldn't humbly open their minds to new truth that Jesus wanted to bring.

We can keep all the rules, eat the right foods, worship on the right day, but if don't develop a love for truth, a willingness to grow in the truth we are disobedient.

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "the greatest..." thoughts? Do you agree with this? What evidence from history do we have?

Where did Lucifer come from when originating his rebellion? The presence of God.

What about in human history, who have opposed God most successfully? Hasn't it been various religious leaders?

Thoughts on how to prevent oneself from being led astray by a powerful speaker or teacher?

- Always think for yourself, never surrender your mind or judgment to another
- Require your beliefs to be evidenced based

- Require the evidence to harmonize
- Use all the evidence available, inspiration, science and experience
- Listen to perspectives that differ from your own but filter those perspectives through the lens of your own sanctified judgment, comparing it with the truth of God's word and science.
- Establish testable parameters to compare theories to –
 - Law of love
 - Law of liberty
 - Law of worship
- Use Jesus as the touchstone or lens to understand all doctrines regarding God

FRIDAY

Read questions 1,2,4 and discuss.

Background Characters in the Old Testament Lesson 11 4Q 2010

The Widow of Zarepath: The Leap of Faith

Sunday

Let's set the setting –

It is 860-850 b.c., Ahab is king of Israel and married Jezebel daughter of the king of Tyre. Under her influence Baal worship experiences resurgence.

The Hebrew noun *ba'al* means 'master', 'possessor' or 'husband'. Used with suffixes, e.g. Baal-peor or Baal-berith, the word may have retained something of its original sense; but in general Baal is a proper name in the OT, and refers to a specific deity, Hadad, the W Semitic storm-god, the most important deity in the Canaanite pantheon. ¹

Yahweh was 'master' and 'husband' to Israel, and therefore they called him 'Baal', in all innocence; but naturally this practice led to confusion of the worship of Yahweh with the Baal rituals, and presently it became essential to call him by some different title; Hosea (2:16) proposed 'iš, another word meaning 'husband'. Once the title 'Baal' was no longer applied to Yahweh, personal names incorporating the word were likely to be misunderstood. So *bōšeṭ* ('shame') tended to replace *ba'al* in such names. Thus Esh-baal and Merib-baal (1 Ch. 8:3f.) are better known as Ishbosheth (2 Sa. 2:8) and Mephibosheth (2 Sa. 9:6).²

Baal is a weather god associated with thunderstorms, weather, rain and therefore fertility. At Ras-Shamra, Baal was called the son of Dagan, a fact not easily harmonized with the more general notion that El was sire of the pantheon. Also known as

¹ Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed.) (108). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

² Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed.) (108). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

Hadd (Hadad), Baal was called ‘the Prince,’ ‘the Powerful,’ ‘Rider of the Clouds’ (an epithet once predicated of Yahweh in the Bible, Ps. 68:4). At Ras-Shamra, Baal’s consort, evidently also his sister, was Anat. Philo of Byblos, a Greek historian (ca. a.d. 63-141), collected additional valuable information about Baal, whom Philo called Zeus. And in Greek mythos Zeus’ wife was his sister Hera. Zeus of course was the god of thunder and lightning.

El - Ancient Semitic name for deity, perhaps meaning “power” (cf. Gn 17:1); used by the Hebrews generally in a poetic sense to denote the true God of Israel. The same word was used for the senior Canaanite god and the god in Ugaritic mythology. The “Il” or “El” of ancient Canaanite mythology (before 3500 bc in the region of Syria) was not as active as the god Baal, who struggled with Death and triumphed over Chaos. But Il was the father god of the Canaanite pantheon. .. El is combined with other adjectives to describe the numerous attributes of God; for example, God Most High (Gn 14:18–24), the seeing God (16:13), the jealous God (Ex 20:5), the forgiving God (Neh 9:17), and the gracious God (v 31).³

El-Shaddai, Bethel, Eliazer, Daniel – all names in Hebrew in which El- was a part.

Back to Baal - The phenomena associated with thunderstorms were closely linked to Baal. Baal was said to appoint the season of rains. Clouds were thought to be part of his entourage. Lightning was his weapon, and it may have been his invention. The windows of Baal’s palace were thought to correspond to openings in the clouds through which rain flowed. Rain was important to Canaanite agriculture, and Baal was consequently a god of fertility—a prodigious lover as well as the giver of abundance.

³ Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). *Tyndale Bible dictionary*. Tyndale reference library (413). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

The Ugaritic literature preserves a cycle of myths in which Baal is the protagonist. They link Baal to Mount Zaphon. They tell of his battle against Lotan (Leviathan) and of his struggles against other adversaries called Yamm (Sea) and Mot (Death). The struggle between Baal and Yamm has left its mark on Israelite literature in the form of stories about and allusions to Yahweh's encounters with watery enemies (e.g., Isa. 51:9b-10; Ps. 74:13). Through his struggles, Baal achieves the first rank among the gods. Along the way Baal perishes and revives, providing the Ugaritic literature with stirring themes and dramatic moments.

Baal and Ancient Israel: The cult of Baal was widespread in the Syro-Palestinian world and became the focus of Israelite religious animosity. .. We hear of the cult of Baal in a number of local manifestations: Baal of the Covenant at Shechem (Judg. 9:4); Baal of Peor at Shittim (Num. 25:3); Baal 'Zebub' ('of the flies'; but should Zebul, 'Prince,' be read?) of Philistia (2 Kings 1:2-3); and perhaps Baal of Hamon (Song of Sol. 8:11). Jezebel introduced to Samaria the worship of Tyre's god Baal (1 Kings 18:19). It is not altogether clear whether these local baals were taken to manifest the single great god Baal or whether they were imagined as discrete deities. ⁴

Any thoughts about the context of the day? Do we see how Satan works to corrupt our thinking about God? How he subtly weaves together truths and errors so that one has a difficult time separating them?

If you were an ancient Israelite, without Scripture, might you have had some confusion about God?

If Jesus were not only the name of our Savior, but also the name given to various false gods, would it make it confusing? Do we have any problems like this today, with the true God being confused with false gods in our religion?

⁴ Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row, P., & Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). *Harper's Bible dictionary* (1st ed.) (84–85). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshipping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshipping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

Is this the God we worship? Have other god concepts entered Christianity?

Do we gain some insight from ancient Israel's history into how and why the truth about God takes time to eradicate distortions?

Think about when Christ came to earth. While the fertility rights, and human sacrifices and polytheistic local god concepts had been eliminated from Israel's thinking by the time Christ came, had all their distorted ideas of God's character been eliminated?

So, into this setting we find Elijah, a man who knows God and delivers a message to King Ahab, that Baal, the god of thunder, is false and that the true Creator will hold the rain demonstrating the impotence of Baal.

SUNDAY

Read first dark section – “What irony...” thoughts?

Does this mean that famines, storms, pestilence, earthquakes, disasters are from God?

Recently several pastors/theologians have taken strong opposition to our view of God because they claim that God will use His power

to pour out the seven plagues of Revelation in order to punish and destroy. Thoughts?

First, when we compare the character and methods of God versus Satan who uses coercion and force? Remember the history of Satan, how he and his agents always first approach with subtlety, distortion and flattery, but if one is not converted then coercive pressure comes followed by infliction of death.

- Satan's approach to angels and Adam, then Satan's approach to Christ
- The work of the persecuting power in the Dark Ages, missionaries to convert, then coerce, then destroy
- The beast of Revelation, convert, then no one buy or sell then the death penalty

If God is the one who inflicts plagues then what method is being used? What inspired evidence do we have to help us understand?

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: ³ "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." ⁵

Consider the Biblical definition of wrath, is letting go, (Romans 1:18-28). Therefore, God's wrath being poured out is God letting go His restraint on evil forces.

"I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way;

⁵ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996 (electronic ed.) (Re 7:1–3). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

"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.

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

Elijah flees to Zerephath and encounters a widow and her son. He asks her to feed him. She only has enough flour and oil for one more cake. Elijah has no food.

Read bottom paragraph, "It's important..." thoughts?

Do we find it hard to reach out and ask for help? Do we sometimes believe that we shouldn't have problems? Or perhaps if others knew of our problems they wouldn't like us anymore?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

MONDAY

Elijah was at the river Cherith until it ran dry. While there he was fed, the Bible says by Ravens – thoughts? Some commentators say that he was fed by Arabs:

Elijah was miraculously fed by ravens as he hid from King Ahab (1 Kgs. 17:1–6; some commentators read Heb. *·arbîm* "Arabs").⁶

⁶ Myers, A. C. (1987). *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (874). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.

6158 עֵרֵב [*‘oreb*, *‘owreb* /o·**rabe**/] n m. From 6150; TWOT 1690a; GK 6854; 10 occurrences; AV translates as “raven” 10 times. **1** raven.

6159 עֵרֵב [*‘Oreb*, *‘Owreb* /o·**rabe**/] n pr m loc. The same as 6158; GK 6855; Seven occurrences; AV translates as “Oreb” seven times. **1** one of the chieftains of the Midianite army defeated by Gideon. **2** a rock east of the Jordan where Oreb and part of his army fell to the Ephraimites. *Additional Information:* Oreb = “raven”.⁷

EGW states:

For a time after appearing before Ahab, Elijah remained hidden in the mountains by the brook Cherith. **There he was fed morning and evening by an angel from heaven.** Later on when, because of the continued drought, the brook became dry, God sent his servant to find refuge in a heathen land. "Arise," he bade him, "get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." {RH, August 28, 1913 par. 1}

After his first appearance to Ahab, denouncing upon him the judgments of God because of his and Israel's apostasy, God directed his course from Jezebel's power to a place of safety in the mountains, by the brook Cherith. **There He honored Elijah by sending food to him morning and evening by an angel of heaven.** Then, as the brook became dry, He sent him to the widow of Sarepta, and wrought a miracle daily to keep the widow's family and Elijah in food. After he had been blessed with evidences of such love and care from God, we would suppose that Elijah would never distrust Him. But the apostle tells us that he was a man of like passions as we, and subject, as we are, to temptations. {3T 288.2}

⁷ Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

That God who sent the ravens to feed Elijah by the brook Cherith will not pass by one of His faithful, self-sacrificing children. Of him that walketh righteously it is written: "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Isaiah 33:16; Psalm 37:19; Romans 8:32. He who lightened the cares and anxieties of His widowed mother and helped her to provide for the household at Nazareth, sympathizes with every mother in her struggle to provide her children food. {MB 110.3}

Thoughts? Do we find a contradiction here? Some have made a big deal out of whether angels or ravens came to feed Elijah, and because EGW uses both that she is inconsistent and contradicts Scripture – what do you think? What about God using the angels to direct the ravens, like the angel spoke through Balaam’s donkey? Do we really think, if ravens brought Elijah food, that they thought this up and planned it on their own? Do we really think the ravens milled the flour and baked the bread brought to Elijah?

In a time of drought lasting over three years, how hungry would the birds likely be? Do we really think in such a situation some baker was leaving bread around for ravens to steal every day, and then the ravens wouldn’t eat it but every day fly to where Elijah was and deliver it to him? Even if it was real birds bringing it to Elijah would those birds have had been guided by an intelligence? Why not angels? Doesn’t the Bible tell us they are God’s ministering spirits to help us?

After leaving the brook Elijah goes to the widow and asks her for food, she says:

“As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil

in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”⁸

Thoughts on her response? Does she sound hopeless?

Elijah responds by saying:

“Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴ For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land.’ ”⁹

TUESDAY

Read last two paragraphs, “Remember...” thoughts?

Was this foolish from a worldly perspective? I don’t get that concept.

She has suffered years in a drought. She has no husband, no income, no resources. She has spent most of her time scouring the country side for any scrap of food or sustenance. Does she have a real sense of the lack of resources available to her?

From a worldly perspective, what is the likelihood of her survival? From a worldly perspective what is the likelihood of her survival if she eats one more piece of bread?

From a worldly perspective do new possibilities open up to her if she shows kindness to a powerful man? Might his words be true and a miracle happen? Might, he merely be indebted to her kindness and seek to help her out?

From a worldly perspective was it really foolish to help Elijah?

⁸ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996 (electronic ed.) (1 Ki 17:12). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

⁹ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996 (electronic ed.) (1 Ki 17:13–14). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Now, just because we realize there were objective, earthly reasons for her to consider Elijah's request as reasonable, does that remove the possibility she also had faith in what Elijah told her?

Could she have been familiar with the events transpiring in Israel? Might she have heard the reason for the drought? With the "All Points Bulletin" out on Elijah, with the king's men scouring the country for years for him, is it possible she might have heard of Elijah? And if she, having lived through the drought, believed Elijah represented the God who is stronger than Baal, might she not be expected to have some awe, respect and even faith?

Read the bottom pink section – thoughts? Is it likely the woman gave the bread in raw, naked, blind faith or might there have been some reflective reasoning that entered her decision?

Consider our story from last week – didn't the young prophet do this very thing – he exercised raw, naked, blind faith in what a prophet told him – was it a good idea?

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Through the prophet..." thoughts?

Why do we feel this way? When Adam sinned what did he do? He ran and hid, why? Was God angry? Was God seeking to punish? Was God his enemy? Why was Adam hiding? Where did the sense of condemnation originate?

What about today? Does God condemn us or does God have compassion? Any evidence?

What about woman caught in adultery – what did God say to her? "neither do I condemn you!"

How many have a concept of God as condemning sinners?

Read third paragraph, "Perhaps..." thoughts? Is it likely her sinfulness caused her to believe God was punishing her or distorted concepts of God, not actually knowing Him?

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence he has sought to **misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself,--as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,--that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men.** Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. **Then he would obliterate the divine image in man** and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will. {5T 738.1}

It was by falsifying the character of God and exciting distrust of Him that Satan tempted Eve to transgress. By sin the minds of our first parents were darkened, their natures were degraded, and **their conceptions of God were molded by their own narrowness and selfishness.** And as men became bolder in sin, the knowledge and the love of God faded from their minds and hearts. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God," they "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." {5T 738.2}

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

The widow's son has died and Elijah prays for God to resurrect the boy – read first paragraph, "Notice..." thoughts?

Do prophets struggle to understand? Do prophets even understand all there is to know in their own prophecies?

What does this mean in how we relate to prophetic writings?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, “By this relation...” thoughts?

What limits God’s working with us? What causes us to be separated from God? Why do our sins separate us from God? Is it because each of our sins makes God angrier and angrier and if we don’t get the blood of Jesus to erase those sins from the records in heaven then God can’t even look at us?

How many used to hear or think something like this?

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. **Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {1SM 235.2}

Read and discuss question 1 – thoughts?

Read and discuss question 2 – thoughts?

Read and discuss question 3 – thoughts?

Background Characters in the Old Testament Lesson 12 4Q 2010

Gehazi: Missing the Mark

SUNDAY

Who was Gehazi? He was Elisha's servant. The lesson emphasizes his role as servant.

Read first paragraph, "Being a servant..." thoughts?

What do you think about the idea of being a servant?

Let's list the attributes of a faithful servant?

- Obedience
- Loyalty
- Trustworthiness
- Faithfulness
- Willingness to listen and be taught

Consider Biblical servants, can you name any of note?

- Abraham's chief servant
- Joseph
- Naaman's servant – who advised Naaman to follow Elisha's advice
- Jesus

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

⁷ but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—

even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:5-11

Does the Bible teach the reality that God's kingdom is the kingdom of service, where, in love, we all serve each other?

Then how do we understand John 15:15, when Jesus said to His disciples, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

Many of you have heard that A. Graham Maxwell, author of *Servants or Friends* died this week. Graham spent his life working to spread the truth about our God of love. He emphasized the idea that God actually wants friendship with us rather than mere servanthood.

Would you believe that this idea of friendship with God, that Christ has invited us to, is one point in which has been criticized? It is alleged that the idea of friendship with God diminishes the Biblical teaching of servanthood and creates an imbalanced concept of our relationship with God.

What is the balance between servants and friends and how do the concepts get distorted?

Is there a difference between friendly service and a serving friend?

What distortions of servanthood and friendship have you encountered?

- Servants do what the master says, no questions asked, they hear and obey.

- What about Abraham and Moses? Were they God's servants and friends? Did they ever question God?

What happens if we take the position that service means we obey without question, we simply do what the master says?

Do we develop as God would have us? Can a character be changed by mere obedience without thinking, without reason, without agreement?

A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. God does not want blind obedience He wants an intelligent obedience. Thus He invites us into friendship with Him to understand Him, His methods, principles and even plans!

Consider these quotes:

- He [Christ] maintained his disguise till he had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to **an intelligent faith in his life, his character, his mission to earth, and his death and resurrection**. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, **not** because it was supported by his personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of his life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. *The Signs of the Times*, Oct. 6, 1909.
- All whom God has blessed **with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians**. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would **know for himself** what is truth, **exert his mental powers** to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. **We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life**. . . . We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. . . . We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . **The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent**

knowledge of the Scriptures. *Review and Herald*, March 8, 1887 (2RH 117:1:1 - 2:0); *The Medical Missionary*, May 1, 1892

Thoughts? What is the difference between friendly service and a serving friend? Does being a friend of God do away with service? Or the closer in friendship the great one serves if they have God's character reproduced within?

Graham's ministry has asked those who have been blessed by Graham, or have some story to tell to share it with them. This can be done at www.pineknoll.com

In 1984 Graham wrote the following:

I believe that the most important of all Christian beliefs is the one that brings joy and assurance to God's friends everywhere -- the truth about our Heavenly Father that was confirmed at such cost by the life and death of His Son.

God is not the kind of person His enemies have made Him out to be -- arbitrary, unforgiving and severe. Jesus said, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." God is just as loving and trustworthy as His Son, just as willing to forgive and heal. Though infinite in majesty and power, our Creator is an equally gracious Person who values nothing higher than the freedom, dignity, and individuality of His intelligent creatures - - that their love, their faith, their willingness to listen and obey may be freely given. He even prefers to regard us not as servants but as friends.

This is the truth revealed through all the books of Scripture. This is the everlasting Good News that wins the trust and admiration of God's loyal children throughout the universe.

Like Abraham and Moses -- the ones God spoke of as His trusted friends -- God's friends today want to speak well and truly of our Heavenly Father. We covet as the highest of all commendations the words of God about Job: "He has said of Me what is right."

Thoughts?

What group of people in scripture is called God's servants?

But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his **servants the prophets.**" Rev 10:7

Who are the servants of God? And in this passage what did the servants announce? The mystery of God and what is that mystery?

Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of **this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.** ¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to **his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.** ¹² **In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.** Eph 3:8-12

Why can we approach in freedom and confidence? Is it because Jesus stands there to protect? Is the mystery that God has a secret payment, the blood of His Son, that if those who are sinners will claim then the Father won't see their sins and they can boldly enter the Father's presence? Is this the mystery?

How is the hidden mystery related to our ability to enter God's presence and the time when the seventh trumpet is about to blow?

I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— ²⁶ **the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations,** but is now disclosed to the saints. ²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this

mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Col 1:25-27

What is the mystery? Christ in you, renewal of heart and mind, regeneration, recreation, healing, restoration, being at-one with God. Why was it kept hidden? Because sin had not transpired and once sin did transpire Satan's lies obscured the truth about God and thus the mystery of His purpose has been hidden by lies.

Can we put the pieces together – what is the mystery? Why is it accomplished when the seventh trumpet is about to sound? And how is it related to our ability to enter freely into God's presence?

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that **when he appears, we shall be like him**, for we shall see him as he is. ³ Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. 1John 3:2,3

It is as the seventh trumpet is about to sound, at the end of earth's history that God has a people on earth who have accepted the truth about Him and who, through the work of the Spirit are transformed in character to receive the law of love reproduced within them, and thus we are transformed to be like Jesus, again at-one with God and thus we are able to stand confident in God's presence, knowing Him to be exactly like Jesus!

Middle of the second paragraph the lesson states, "By serving his master Elijah, Elisha would be learning to put himself aside and serve others." Thoughts about this concept of servanthood, and how this brings us into unity with God?

Read bottom pink section, "How do we get..." thoughts?

MONDAY

The story is of the Shunnamite woman who builds a room on her home for Elisha, when Elisha asks what can be done for her Gehazi reports she has no son and her husband is old. So Elisha tells her

she will have a son. She does and later the son dies and is resurrected.

Thoughts?

Is this a miracle? Is it a miracle in the same order as that which happened to Mary the mother of Jesus? In other words, did the Holy Spirit come upon this woman and cause a pregnancy?

Or did God heal the physical malady of infertility and the pregnancy occurred in the normal way pregnancies occur?

In Scripture there are seven examples of miracle births that are metaphorical lessons teaching of The Virgin Birth and our Messiah:

1. Sarah- Isaac – Mount Moriah willing to be sacrificed
2. Rebekah – Jacob – who became Israel the father of the nation built upon twelve sons, Jesus the cornerstone of the church built upon twelve apostles
3. Rachel – Joseph – who sold into slavery (becomes a servant), became ruler to save people from famine
4. Monoah's wife – Samson – blessed with strength to deliver Israel from bondage of oppressors and rule over them
5. Hannah- Samuel – who became High Priest
6. Shunammite woman – child died and resurrected
7. Elizabeth – John the Baptist – who greatest of prophets

Thoughts?

Read bottom pink section "It sometimes..."

Thoughts?

Activities which activate selfish neural circuits will strengthen these circuits, activities which activate altruistic circuits will strengthen these circuits. By beholding we become changed.

We cannot, by force of will, change ourselves. We must fix our eyes on Christ, the truth about God as He revealed, to value and cherish Him and this will have a transforming effect.

But false pictures of God, or embracing the world's value set will only cause greater selfishness.

TUESDAY

The story of Naaman – let's read it from Scripture:

2Kings 5:1-19:

Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.

² Now bands from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. ³ She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

⁴ Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. ⁵ "By all means, go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing. ⁶ The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy."

If you were the king how would you have reacted to this request?

⁷ As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!"

What do you think of the king's response? What about today, if today a general comes to you with cancer and a letter from the President of the US along with gold, silver and gifts and the letter

says, “Here the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. He has cancer. Please cure him.” What would you do? What if you lived in China and it was the Chinese Premiere who sent the letter with his general? Might you be stressed? Would you simply say – no problem, thank you God for giving me this opportunity to show your power and tell the man to go bathe 7 times in a river and he will be healed?

What did Elisha do?

⁸ When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: “Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel.” ⁹ So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha’s house. ¹⁰ Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, “Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed.”

¹¹ But Naaman went away angry and said, “I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. ¹² Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn’t I wash in them and be cleansed?” So he turned and went off in a rage.

What do you think of Naaman’s response? As a kid I remember never understanding it. I thought, hey if he told me to do something that simple I would have been running to the river. Any thoughts as to why Naaman reacted the way he did? Was it pride?

The servants of Naaman, not hung up on pride, gave some counsel:

¹³ Naaman’s servants went to him and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed!’” ¹⁴ So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

¹⁵ Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, “Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept now a gift from your servant.”

¹⁶ The prophet answered, “As surely as the Lord lives, whom I serve, I will not accept a thing.” And even though Naaman urged him, he refused.

Why do you think Elisha wouldn't take any reward? Shouldn't he have started a building fund for a new church? Shouldn't he have accepted gifts for the Samaritan Center? Shouldn't he have started a food bank or a new sanitarium? Why didn't he accept gifts?

What if pastors practiced the same philosophy today? Did Jesus get a salary? What about Paul or the Apostles? If pastors were required to support themselves like Paul did would it change the composition of the pastorate in anyway? Do you think we gain or lose in the church when the pastorate becomes a career rather than a calling?

¹⁷ “If you will not,” said Naaman, “please let me, your servant, be given as much earth as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the Lord. ¹⁸ But may the Lord forgive your servant for this one thing: When my master enters the temple of Rimmon to bow down and he is leaning on my arm and I bow there also—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the Lord forgive your servant for this.”

¹⁹ “Go in peace,” Elisha said.

What about Naaman's request? Was he compromising? What is the difference between Namaan and three worthies in Babylon?

What does this story tell us about God?

WEDNESDAY

Gehazi goes and seeks reward from Namaan:

Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said to himself, “My master was too easy on Naaman, this Aramean, by not accepting from him what he brought. As surely as the Lord lives, I will run after him and get something from him.”

Why do you think Gehazi did this? Any clues? Was it mere greed? Was there some element of prejudice or nationalism?

²¹ So Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw him running toward him, he got down from the chariot to meet him. “Is everything all right?” he asked.

²² “Everything is all right,” Gehazi answered. “My master sent me to say, ‘Two young men from the company of the prophets have just come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two sets of clothing.’”

²³ “By all means, take two talents,” said Naaman. He urged Gehazi to accept them, and then tied up the two talents of silver in two bags, with two sets of clothing. He gave them to two of his servants, and they carried them ahead of Gehazi. ²⁴ When Gehazi came to the hill, he took the things from the servants and put them away in the house. He sent the men away and they left. ²⁵ Then he went in and stood before his master Elisha.

“Where have you been, Gehazi?” Elisha asked.

“Your servant didn’t go anywhere,” Gehazi answered.

²⁶ But Elisha said to him, “Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to take money, or to accept clothes, olive groves, vineyards, flocks, herds, or menservants and maidservants? ²⁷ Naaman’s leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever.” Then Gehazi went from Elisha’s presence and he was leprous, as white as snow. 2Kings 5:20-27

What do you think about this story, especially the part about Naaman’s leprosy clinging to Gehazi and his descendants forever?

Do you think this was leprosy as we know leprosy, Hansen’s disease? Most likely not as the skin doesn’t turn white as snow – it sounds more consistent with Vitiligo.

THURSDAY

Gehazi finds himself in the king's court and is telling about the Shunnamite woman and her son and son's resurrection. In the intervening years, during a famine, the woman left her country for seven years and when she returned someone else had occupied her home. She now, on the day Gehazi is telling his story, appears before the king and asks for her property to be returned, which the king so ordered.

Thoughts?

Each actor in history stands in his lot and place; for God's great work after His own plan will be carried out by men who have prepared themselves to fill positions for good or evil. In opposition to righteousness, men become instruments of unrighteousness. But they are not forced to take this course of action. They need not become instruments of unrighteousness, any more than Cain needed to. . . . {CC 371.2}

Men of all characters, righteous and unrighteous, will stand in their several positions in God's plan. With the characters they have formed, they will act their part in the fulfillment of history. In a crisis, just at the right moment, they will stand in the places they have prepared themselves to fill. Believers and unbelievers will fall into line as witnesses to confirm truth that they themselves do not comprehend. All will cooperate in accomplishing the purposes of God, just as did Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod. In putting Christ to death, the priests thought they were carrying out their own purposes, but unconsciously and unintentionally they were fulfilling the purpose of God. {CC 371.3}

Thoughts?

Read bottom paragraph, "And so Gehazi..." thoughts? Why could Gehazi only live in the past? Was his mistake such that God would

not allow him to repent? Did God refuse a repentant and humble Gehazi? What happened?

Read first two paragraphs on Friday's lesson, "Solemn..." thoughts?

Does this mean for such a sin a person cannot repent? Was Gehazi's sin worse than Peter's denial of Christ? Why the different outcome?

When the king tried to have the young prophet arrested and the king's arm withered, and the king pled for mercy what happened?

What do you think would have happened if Gehazi would have genuinely repented? Mercy or not?

Why does a false witness not go unpunished? What happens to the sinner that persists in sin?

FRIDAY

Question 1 read and discuss

Background Characters in the Old Testament Lesson 13 4Q 2010

Baruch: Building a Legacy in a Crumbling World

SABBATH

Read memory text – this is a grand old memory verse – how many memorized this one as a child?

Okay – we know what it says, what does it mean?

How do we apply it?

If they speak not according to what scripture teaches then there is no light, no truth in them?

So if someone doesn't accept the seventh day Sabbath, does that mean they have no light in them?

If someone doesn't accept the state of the dead does that mean they have no light in them?

Do we make this text absolutist or do we see people on growth curves and realize it depends on which way they are going?

Does someone have to speak according to Scripture, in that they must get the interpretation of Scripture correct on all doctrines, or must a person have a love for Scripture a willingness to be led out of darkness to the truth?

Examples from history – what about Martin Luther – did he understand the Sabbath?

Foremost among those who were called to lead the church from the darkness of popery into the light of a purer faith, stood Martin Luther. Zealous, ardent, and devoted, knowing no fear but the fear of God, and acknowledging no foundation for religious faith but the Holy Scriptures, Luther was the man for his time; through him God accomplished a great work for

the reformation of the church and the enlightenment of the world. {GC 120.1}

Notice “a man for his time” what does this mean? Truth is unfolding, Martin Luther didn’t understand all truth, but wanted to follow the truth where it led.

What about today? Is there any person on earth who understands the Scripture completely accurately in all details? Then is there anyone who speaks correctly on all details? Then what does the text mean?

Could it mean that if they oppose the truths that have been revealed, if they reject new light, if they are unwilling to keep the mind open for new revelation then they will lose their understanding of what they previously had?

We shall **not** be accepted and honored of God in doing the same work that our fathers did. **We do not** occupy the position which they occupied in the unfolding of truth. In order to be accepted and honored as they were, **we must improve the light which shines upon us**, as they improved that which shone upon them; we must do as they would have done, had they lived in our day. Luther and the Wesleys were reformers in their time. **It is our duty to continue the work of reform. If we neglect to heed the light, it will become darkness**; and the degree of darkness will be proportionate to the light rejected. {Spirit of Prophecy vol 4. p 186.2}

Thoughts?

The same law obtains in the spiritual as in the natural world. **He who abides in darkness will at last lose the power of vision**. He is shut in by a deeper than midnight blackness; and to him the brightest noontide can bring no light. He "walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." 1 John 2:11. Through persistently cherishing evil, willfully disregarding the pleadings of divine love, **the sinner loses the**

love for good, the desire for God, the very capacity to receive the light of heaven. The invitation of mercy is still full of love, the light is shining as brightly as when it first dawned upon his soul; but the voice falls on deaf ears, the light on blinded eyes. {MB 92.3}

No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. **"Man turns from God, not God from him."** Our heavenly Father follows us with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. **The responsibility rests with the sinner.** By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power. Thus he passes on from one stage of resistance to another, **until at last the light will fail to impress**, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God. Then even "the light that is in thee" has become darkness. **The very truth we do know has become so perverted as to increase the blindness of the soul. {MB 93.1}**

What do you hear in this passage? What kind of God do we serve? Why will individuals be lost? What does sin do to the sinner? And what happens to the truth we possess if we reject further truth?

So when we hear our memory verse quoted and it is used to hold us to the light of past ages, rather than advance in the light, what should we think?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Baruch's world..." thoughts?

What do you think about strong nationalistic undercurrents? Should we have strong ties to our countries? Should we be patriots to an earthly king or kingdom?

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1John 2:15

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for **they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.** ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ **They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.** ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ **As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.** ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. John 17:14-19

Was Jesus loyal to a nation? Was Jesus a nationalist? Are we to be His representatives in the world? Are we to be nationalists? Or are we to love all humanity regardless of nationality?

Where is our citizenship? Is it not in heaven? Are we not citizens of God's heavenly kingdom? Do we live that way?

Yesterday someone emailed me the link to a Newsweek article entitled, *One Nation Under God*. It is about the agenda of the Christian right in America – listen to this excerpt:

Gay marriage and abortion used to predictably drive religious-right voters to the polls. As recently as 2004, when evangelicals were credited with the reelection of George W. Bush, sex and sexual mores defined the sides in the culture wars. But no longer. As the economy has become the political priority for liberals and conservatives alike, the traditional family-values issues have been blunted—not in their importance to individuals but as weapons in the political theater. What's motivating religious conservatives now, says Campolo, is a vision of America as God's own special country, and free-market capitalism as crucial to the nation's flourishing. Everyone who doesn't see things this way, according to this perspective, is a socialist or a communist—“Pinkos who are subverting America under the auspices of the president of the United States,” he says. “The marriage between evangelicalism and patriotic nationalism is so strong that anybody who is raising questions about loyalty to the old, laissez-faire capitalist system is ex post facto unpatriotic, un-

American, and by association non-Christian.” <http://www.newsweek.com/2010/12/09/one-nation-under-god.html>

Thoughts? Where is our loyalty? Where should it be?

The lesson asks us to read Jeremiah 7:1-11

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ² “Stand at the gate of the Lord’s house and there proclaim this message:

“ ‘Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the Lord. ³ This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. ⁴ Do not trust in deceptive words and say, “This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!” ⁵ If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, ⁶ if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, **and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm,** ⁷ then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever. ⁸ But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless. ⁹ “ Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known, ¹⁰ and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, “We are safe”—safe to do all these detestable things? ¹¹ Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the Lord.

Thoughts about this passage?

What is God telling them? Why will harm come to them? Will God use His power to punish, or will they destroy their own minds and sever their connection with God?

What were they doing? Living in harmony with Satan's methods and presenting God as Satan represents Him, thus misrepresenting God.

What about today? Do we say, "The temple, the temple" or rather "The Sabbath, The Sabbath"? Do we ever rest secure in our organizational affiliation, or traditions rather than in our intimacy with God? Do we ever claim to be God's representatives while misrepresenting Him?

Thoughts on practical steps we can take to prevent substituting religious form for spiritual substance?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "The book of Jeremiah..." thoughts?

How do you understand inspiration?

Does the fact that the book of Jeremiah was written by his scribe rather than by Jeremiah concern you?

Does it trouble you that the Bible is not written word for word as dictation from God?

If the Bible is not a direct dictation from God, but instead it contains ideas, concepts, truths God revealed to His prophets and they expressed those ideas in their own way, what does that mean to us when we read it?

Can we be safe in proof texting our way through Scripture? What is the only safe way to be sure we understand the true meaning?

Is it not in requiring all the books of Scripture to harmonize around the central theme of God's character as revealed in Jesus?

Whenever we move God from the center of scripture and make the central focus of the Bible about something else we will begin losing focus.

What other ideas replace God as center focus of scripture?

- Our salvation
- Healthy living
- Rules for society

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

TUESDAY

Baruch reads Jeremiah to the people and then leadership inquires what he is teaching- how does leadership respond to the message?

The king cuts up the scroll and burns it.

Why would the king do this? What was the message of the scroll? That they should humble themselves and accept Babylonian oversight - but the king wouldn't listen.

How did the king treat Jeremiah and Baruch?

If we have truth about God to share should we share it even though we know it won't be popular or some will turn against us?

How do we balance our responsibility to witness the truth with Christ's admonition:

Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. Matt 7:6

When do we speak boldly and when do we hold our peace? Where do you draw the line?

Speak only to those who want to hear?

What principles do you use in knowing when to speak and when to keep silent?

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “Of course, feeling dejected....” Thoughts?

Is it true we all struggle with powerful feelings, and sometimes these feelings are very discouraging?

Into the experience of all there come times of keen disappointment and utter discouragement--days when sorrow is the portion, and it is hard to believe that God is still the kind benefactor of His earthborn children; days when troubles harass the soul, **till death seems preferable to life**. It is then that many lose their hold on God. . . . Could we at such times discern with spiritual insight the meaning of God's providences we should see **angels seeking to save us from ourselves**, striving to plant our feet upon a foundation more firm than the everlasting hills, and new faith, new life, would spring into being.... {CC 213.3}

Thoughts?

We all struggle with feelings, but do our feelings reliably inform us of our true situation?

Any examples?

- Elijah after Carmel
- Disciples after Crucifixion
- Mary and Martha after Lazarus died
- Others?

What about today? When I was in my early twenties I lost a job and was discouraged and dejected. I asked God, why? The following week I found another job, there I met a person who became a friend. She was premed at UTC. I wanted to go but hadn't gotten around to it. With her encouragement I went back to school and became a physician – changed my entire life. God knew I needed that little extra encouragement and I am so glad I lost that job.

If I could have seen things from His perspective I would not have been discouraged.

What about love – when we have love in our hearts will we always feel good? What would you say is the greatest demonstration of love in the history of the universe? Would it not be Christ’s sacrifice at the Cross? What were His human emotions like?

Yet, somehow, through the agony of Gethsemane the scriptures say he went forward for the joy set BEFORE Him. He looked forward to joy which would be achieved through the valley of trial.

The greatest demonstration of love was not based on feelings but on understanding!

THURSDAY

The lesson asks at the top to read Jeremiah 45 and asks, “What does this passage tell us about God?”

This is what Jeremiah the prophet told Baruch son of Neriah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, after Baruch had written on a scroll the words Jeremiah was then dictating: ² “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to you, Baruch: ³ You said, ‘Woe to me! The Lord has added sorrow to my pain; I am worn out with groaning and find no rest.’ ”

⁴ The Lord said, “Say this to him: ‘This is what the Lord says: I will overthrow what I have built and uproot what I have planted, throughout the land. ⁵ Should you then seek great things for yourself? Seek them not. For I will bring disaster on all people, declares the Lord, but wherever you go I will let you escape with your life.’ ”

Thoughts?

What does this passage say to you about God?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, “The spirit of opposition...” thoughts? Do you see this happening today? Is it only those outside the church who refuse to heed warnings, or within as well?

Some have alleged that our class is doing this – how can you tell the right from the wrong, the truth from the error to ensure we don’t do this?

Must we compare Scripture with Scripture, using all the inspired record? But what if someone opposes the truth claiming scripture and writes long treatises opposing the truth, how can one know which interpretation of scripture is correct? We must harmonize, scripture, science and experience, use testable evidence, the laws of God’s known universe, the principles of His government, the life of Christ as a touchstone all to help differentiate the truth.

Why will there ultimately be no help from heaven for those who do this? What help does God provide? Is God not the God of truth? Is He not the God of love? And if one rejects truth and love and instead prefers lies, what happens to the mind? What can God do to help such a one?

Read questions 1,3,5 and discuss.

Jesus Wept The Bible and Human Emotions Lesson 1 1Q 2011

Emotions

In the introduction to the quarterly we read in the first paragraph:

“One could argue justifiably, that emotions rule our lives to a much greater extent than reason does or ever could.”

Thoughts about this idea?

Is it true that in the world many, perhaps most, people are ruled by their emotions?

But what about the idea that emotions rule our lives to a greater extent than reason ever could? Is this true?

Is it God’s design that emotions should “rule” our lives?

James 1 tells us it is our emotions or desires that lead us into temptation – but Jesus said truth will set free. Are emotions to be a guiding light to rule over us?

Feelings can lie – we can have powerful feelings that are 100% false. Any examples?

Should we rely on our feelings as a guide to action? What about impressions, can we trust impressions, perhaps impressions of the Holy Spirit?

- They [some unconverted ministers] have occasionally a flight of feeling, which gives them the impression that they are indeed children of God. **This dependence upon impressions is one of the special deceptions of Satan.** *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 505.5 (Oct. 25, 1868); *RH* May 19, 1885
- **Impressions alone are not a safe guide to duty.** The enemy often persuades men to believe that it is God who is guiding them, when in reality they are following only human impulse.

Acts of the Apostles 279 (1911); *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, August 24, 1911

- Counterfeit holiness, spurious sanctification, is still doing its work of deception. Under various forms it exhibits the same spirit as in the days of Luther, diverting minds from the Scriptures and leading men **to follow their own feelings and impressions** rather than to yield obedience to the law of God. This is one of Satan's most successful devices to cast reproach upon purity and truth. *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 152 (1884); *Great Controversy* 193 (1888)
- We must go to the people **with the solid Word of God**; and when they receive that Word, the **Holy Spirit may come, but it always comes, as I have stated before, in a way that commends itself to the judgment of the people**. In our speaking, our singing, and in all our spiritual exercises, we are to reveal that calmness and dignity and godly fear that actuates every true child of God. . . (*LDE* 93)
- I am **afraid** of anything that would have a tendency to turn the mind away from the **solid evidences** of the truth as revealed in God's Word. I am afraid of it; I am afraid of it. We must bring our **minds within the bounds of reason**, lest the enemy so come in as to set everything in a disorderly way. There are persons of an excitable temperament who are easily led into fanaticism; and should we allow anything to come into our churches that would lead such persons into error, we would soon see these errors carried to extreme lengths, and then because of the course of these disorderly elements, a stigma would rest upon the whole body of Seventh-day Adventists. . .
- **It is through the Word—not feeling, not excitement—that we want to influence the people to obey the truth**. On the platform of God's Word we can stand with safety. The living Word is replete with evidence, and a wonderful power accompanies its proclamation in our world." MS 115, 1908; *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, pp. 372-375; portions in *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, pp. 43,44; VSS 290; *LDE* 93; "The Ralph Mackin Story," *Review and Herald*, Aug. 17, 1972

Thoughts?

On the second page of the introduction the lesson states, “We are, today, thousands of years from the ‘tree of life’ (Gen 2:9). The DNA is wearing thin. We’re damaged goods, and, contrary to the myths of evolution, we’re getting only worse.”

Thoughts?

The human genome is damaged – how would you classify this damage?

Scripture says we are born in sin conceived in iniquity (Ps 51). What does this mean?

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field: ²⁵but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶But when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. ²⁷And the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it tares? ²⁸And he said unto them, An enemy hath done this. Mt 13:24-28

Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up. In the parable of the sower the question was asked the master, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?" The master answered, "An enemy hath done this" (Matt. 13:27, 28). All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares. {2SM 288.2}

What do you think it means to sow seeds of death into the system? Would it not mean, that after Adam sinned and Satan now had access to this biosphere he began mucking around with DNA?

Viruses are an example of Satan's amalgamations. Viruses operate on the system of Satan's government of selfishness, take, take, take all for the purpose of making more of "me" the virus.

How infected is nature? In the ocean in deep sea water it is estimated that there are 3 billion virus per liter of water, in coastal waters it is estimated there are 100 billion viruses per liter of ocean water. With the sea containing 1.4 billion cubic kilometers of water it is estimated it contains 4×10^{30} viruses. If a virus measures 0.1 micrometer and we put all viruses from the sea end to end that distance would be 4×10^{20} kilometers or 42 million light years in length. This is roughly 100 times the distance across the Milky Way Galaxy.

Reference:

http://books.google.com/books?id=emJIuSbbLkYC&pg=PA131&lpg=PA131&dq=viruses+in+the+ocean+distance+light+years&source=bl&ots=FcPcUU30j_&sig=hRaL7qjggOTIthatzhfDqW7if8I&hl=en&ei=NnoJTfuTCIqCsQPN1uXEDg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CBoQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=viruses%20in%20the%20ocean%20distance%20light%20years&f=false

What about the human genome? Science has discovered that the human genome is filled with what used to be called "junk" DNA but now appears to be something called Transposons or Transposable elements. DNA that can move around and insert itself here and there within our DNA. It is now believed that up to 50% of the human genome is composed of TEs or foreign DNA which some are beginning to argue accounts for almost all disease with which human's suffer.

Below is a list of diseases associated with TEs:

AIDS
ALCOHOLISM
ALPORT SYNDROME
ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE
ANGELMAN SYNDROME
ASTHMA

ATAXIA TELANGIECTASIA
AUTISM
AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES
BIPOLAR DISORDER
BRUGADA SYNDROME - ARRYTHMIA
CANCER: BREAST
CANCER: CARTILAGE HAIR HYPOPLASIA
CANCER: LUNG
CANCER: LYMPHOMA
CANCER: MULIPLE MYELOMA
CANCER: NON-POLYPOSIS COLORECTAL
CANCER: PROSTATE
CANCER: THYROID
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE
CYSTIC FIBROSIS
DIABETES MELLITUS TYPE II
DiGEORGE SYNDROME
DUCHENNE MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY
DYSKERATOSIS CONGENITA
EPILEPSY
ESSENTIAL HYPERTENSION
FAMILIAL DYSAUTOSOMIA
FRAGILE X SYNDROME, AUTISM
FRIEDREICH CEREBELLAR ATAXIA
HIRSCHSPRUNG DISEASE
HYPERCHOLESTEROLEMIA, FAMILIAL
HYPER-FERRITINEMIA-CATARACT SYNDROME, FAMILIAL
HYPER-IgM SYNDROME TYPE 1
LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS
LYMPHOMA, B-CELL
MALARIA
MEASLES
MELANOMA
MENTAL RETARDATION
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS
MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION
MYOTONIC DYSTROPHY
NEUROFIBROMATOSIS
PARKINSONS' DISEASE

PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME
 PSEUDOXANTHOMA ELASTICUM (PXE, GROENBLAD-
 STRANDBERG SYNDROME)
 PSORIASIS
 RETT SYNDROME
 RETINITIS PIGMENTOSA
 SCLERODERMA
 SPINOCEREBELLAR ATAXIA
 STROKE
 SCHIZOPHRENIA
 TAY-SACHS DISEASE
 TOURETTE SYNDROME
 VON WILLEBRAND DISEASE

Aren't you looking forward to Christ's return?

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "Emotions are..." thoughts?

When God created Adam and Eve in Eden what kind of emotions did they experience before sin? Now, of course, they had the capacity to experience painful emotions, fear, anxiety, worry, but were such feelings part of the way God designed them to be?

Could we say negative emotions are a consequence of sin? Similarly, the feeling of suffocation is never experienced unless something cuts off one's air supply – there is the capacity to experience this feeling, but one never does unless something goes terribly wrong.

What went terribly wrong? How did sin effect human emotions?

From where do positive emotions arise? What contributes to or gives rise to positive emotions of peace, joy, contentment, happiness?

Any ideas?

What gives rise to negative emotions of fear, anxiety, dread, terror, heartache, abandonment, guilt, shame?

Can we uncover any underlying themes or principles from which all positive emotions arise and from which all negative emotions arise?

What emotion do you experience when someone is kind to you? When you choose to help another? When you are appreciated and accepted and valued for who you are?

What emotion do you experience when you are betrayed, lied about, attacked? What emotion do you experience when you betray your trust, lie about another, falsely accuse, steal or cheat?

What are the underlying themes?

Is there a connection between beneficence, altruism, love and other-centered living and positive emotions?

Is there a connection between selfishness, me first living and negative emotions?

Are these two types of living at all connected to God's and Satan's governments?

In what condition are we born?

What does God want us to experience? What is conversion? Is conversion primarily a change in religious affiliation? Is it denominational? Is conversion about changing one's doctrinal understanding or is it about a change of heart motive and attitude toward God and others?

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read 2Sam 13

In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David.

² Amnon became frustrated to the point of illness on account of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.

³ Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. ⁴ He asked Amnon, "Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?"

Amnon said to him, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

⁵ "Go to bed and pretend to be ill," Jonadab said. "When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.'"

⁶ So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, "I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand."

⁷ David sent word to Tamar at the palace: "Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him." ⁸ So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it. ⁹ Then she took the pan and served him the bread, but he refused to eat.

"Send everyone out of here," Amnon said. So everyone left him.

¹⁰ Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom. ¹¹ But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, "Come to bed with me, my sister."

¹² "Don't, my brother!" she said to him. "Don't force me. Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing.

¹³ What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you." ¹⁴ But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.

¹⁵ Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, “Get up and get out!”

¹⁶ “No!” she said to him. “Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me.”

But he refused to listen to her. ¹⁷ He called his personal servant and said, “Get this woman out of here and bolt the door after her.” ¹⁸ So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. She was wearing a richly ornamented robe, for this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore. ¹⁹ Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornamented robe she was wearing. She put her hand on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went.

²⁰ Her brother Absalom said to her, “Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet now, my sister; he is your brother. Don’t take this thing to heart.” And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom’s house, a desolate woman.

²¹ When King David heard all this, he was furious. ²² Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.

²³ Two years later, when Absalom’s sheepshearers were at Baal Hazor near the border of Ephraim, he invited all the king’s sons to come there. ²⁴ Absalom went to the king and said, “Your servant has had shearers come. Will the king and his officials please join me?”

²⁵ “No, my son,” the king replied. “All of us should not go; we would only be a burden to you.” Although Absalom urged him, he still refused to go, but gave him his blessing.

²⁶ Then Absalom said, “If not, please let my brother Amnon come with us.”

The king asked him, “Why should he go with you?” ²⁷ But Absalom urged him, so he sent with him Amnon and the rest of the king’s sons.

²⁸ Absalom ordered his men, “Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine and I say to you, ‘Strike Amnon down,’ then kill him. Don’t be afraid. Have not I given you this order? Be strong and brave.” ²⁹ So Absalom’s men did to

Amnon what Absalom had ordered. Then all the king's sons got up, mounted their mules and fled.

³⁰ While they were on their way, the report came to David: "Absalom has struck down all the king's sons; not one of them is left." ³¹ The king stood up, tore his clothes and lay down on the ground; and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn.

³² But Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, "My lord should not think that they killed all the princes; only Amnon is dead. This has been Absalom's expressed intention ever since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar. ³³ My lord the king should not be concerned about the report that all the king's sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead."

³⁴ Meanwhile, Absalom had fled.

Now the man standing watch looked up and saw many people on the road west of him, coming down the side of the hill. The watchman went and told the king, "I see men in the direction of Horonaim, on the side of the hill."

³⁵ Jonadab said to the king, "See, the king's sons are here; it has happened just as your servant said."

³⁶ As he finished speaking, the king's sons came in, wailing loudly. The king, too, and all his servants wept very bitterly.

³⁷ Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. But King David mourned for his son every day.

³⁸ After Absalom fled and went to Geshur, he stayed there three years. ³⁹ And the spirit of the king longed to go to Absalom, for he was consoled concerning Amnon's death.

Thoughts?

What emotion was motivating Amnon? Was it love? Why does the Bible say it was love – if the Bible says it is love shouldn't we believe the Bible?

Can we not take the Bible as it reads? Do we have to think through what it says? If we were to conclude that Amnon loved Tamar because the Bible said he loved her, would we draw the right conclusion?

What about people who read about God's anger or wrath and draw the conclusion that God is angry or wrathful?

What does love look like? If Amnon really loved Tamar how would he have treated her?

What do you think about Tamar asking Amnon to wait so they could be married? Was it a stalling tactic to get out of the room? Did she really want to marry him?

Why do you think Amnon "hated" her? Did he hate her? The Bible says he hated her – should we believe it? Or do we have to understand what it means?

Why did Amnon "hate" Tamar? Is it because she reminded him of his own evil heart and character? Is it because he actually felt guilty and hated himself for being so weak? So who did he really hate?

Then why would the Bible say he hated Tamar? Do we learn something from this story on how we should understand Scripture? Can we take everything as it reads and believe that is exactly what it means?

Don't we have to compare what is said with the evidence to draw the right conclusions? Doesn't Amnon's behavior and the facts of what happen enlighten us to understand his true motivations? That he neither loved nor hated Tamar but lusted after her and then hated himself?

Many people who study scripture make this type of error in regard to God and devise ideas about God that He is angry, wrathful, must inflict punishment, etc. Why? Because they don't incorporate all the evidence, but take passages as they read.

Any other thoughts about this story?

Read last paragraph, "As any woman...." Thoughts?

This is a great example of how feelings lie and deceive. I have had many patients who were molested, sexually abused and/or raped. In every case the person when they came to see me struggled with feeling ugly, dirty, nasty, impure, defiled, unworthy, inadequate, ruined, no good, disgusting etc.

In every case the victim felt like they were no longer the same pure, clean, virtuous person they were before the abuse. Why?

Because of the feelings associated with the event are so powerful they dominate the internalization of the experience.

Imagine you walk in and see a 35 year old man molesting a 5 year old girl or boy – do you think, “What a disgusting, gross, ugly, dirty, perverted little girl?” Of course not – you immediately think those things about the man – because “From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks....”

The man’s behavior tells us about him, not the child. What does the child walk away feeling like? Is she or he? No!

What happens is that such an event causes very powerful negative emotions – which are appropriate to the experience but unfortunately almost always get attached to the self. Healing comes when we are able to allow the feelings to be experienced, but rightly place them where they belong, attached to the event and not the self.

I use the analogy of walking in a cow pasture....

Likewise, when a gross experience happens negative emotions are appropriate to the experience, but we remain unsullied in character, in personhood.

MONDAY

Read top paragraph, “Negative emotional...” this is true.

What impact do you believe modern society has on our emotions? Is it healthy or unhealthy?

Am J Psychiatry 2006 163:2141-2147 – The rate of depression markedly increased over the last 10 years

Comorbid Substance Use Disorders in the United States Between 1991–1992 and 2001–2002

Wilson M. Compton, M.D., M.P.E., Kevin P. Conway, Ph.D., Frederick S. Stinson, Ph.D., and Bridget F. Grant, Ph.D.

OBJECTIVE: The authors examined changes in the prevalence of major depression in the United States between 1991–1992 and 2001–2002 and sought to determine whether changes in depression rates were associated with changes in rates of comorbid substance use disorder. **METHOD:** Data were drawn from two large (Ns exceeding 42,000) cross-sectional surveys of representative samples of the U.S. population conducted 10 years apart. Both surveys used face-to-face interviews, the same diagnostic criteria, and consistent assessment instruments. Rates of past-year major depressive episode in the total samples and among subjects with and without co-occurring substance use disorders in major demographic groups were compared. **RESULTS:** From 1991–1992 to 2001–2002, the prevalence of major depression among **U.S. adults increased from 3.33% to 7.06%**. Increases were statistically significant for whites, blacks, and Hispanics and for all age groups. For Hispanic men overall and Hispanic women 18–29 years of age, rates increased but not significantly. The hypothesis that increases in the rates of depression could be explained by concomitant increases in co-occurring substance use disorders was supported only for black men 18–29 years of age. **CONCLUSIONS:** Rates of major depression rose markedly over the past decade in the United States, and increases were noted for most sociodemographic subgroups of the population. If the prevalence continues to increase at the rate it did during the past decade, the demand for services will increase dramatically in the coming years.

- In US increased wealth in the last 40 years but decrease in happiness, US is 157/173 in happiness of nations rated
- The farther from a park a person lives the higher risk of depression
- When stressed our brains activate an inflammatory cascade, two pathways both through the adrenal glands:
 - First – pituitary ACTH, Adrenals and cortisol
 - Second – Locus Ceruleus, norepinephrine (NE), Adrenals more NE and epinephrine EPI, which activate innate immunity, which is the inflammatory response, done in order to prime the system for potential injury.
- Innate immunity, shotgun approach, attacks foreign things generally and non specifically and causes much collateral damage to body tissue (inflammation). Fight or flight response.
- Acquired immunity is sniper, B cells, antibodies and specifies targets to attack, takes days or weeks to ramp up
- Stress and depression result in decreased acquired immunity and increased innate immunity and increased inflammation
- Cannot activate stress response without activating immune system

Our bodies have two general automated nervous systems – these regulate things like body temperature, heart rate, blood pressure, digestion, motility of food through the gut, alertness, breathing, etc.

These two general systems are the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. The sympathetic system is generally the system associated with fear, anxiety, alertness, fight or flight, adrenalin. The parasympathetic is associated with calmness, digestion, and slowing things down.

Under stress the sympathetic system becomes more active and the parasympathetic less active. This means higher heart rate, blood pressure, GI upset, sleep problems and greater inflammation.

The sympathetic system will activate the immune response turning on white blood cells called macrophages which begin releasing inflammatory cytokines.

- Cytokines affect brain and cause fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, loss of joy and pleasure and impaired concentration
- Why does such a response, sickness exist? Body's response to fight off infection, if block fever increase mortality in reptiles and mammals and prolongs illness
- Same pathways are activated by psychosocial stress increasing inflammation as by infection, but this activation is much more marked in patients who are depressed
- Obesity increases inflammation
- Sedentary lifestyle increases inflammation
- Unhealthy diet (transfats) increases inflammation
- Social isolation increases inflammation
- Sleep deprivation increases inflammation
- Increase of cytokines is sine qua non of medical illness and medical illness is the number 1 factor in contributing to major depression, #2 is psychosocial stress

Within our immune system there are different types of cells. Some cells are used to turn the system on and others to turn it off. Think of the immune system as the national guard – it is designed to protect the country from invasion. Likewise the immune system is designed to protect the body from invasion.

And just as the national guard has officers to order an attack or to call off an attack, so too our immune system has cells to order attacks or call off attacks.

- T- helper cells
 - T – helper 1 fights things like TB, and when goes wrong causes autoimmune diseases, arthritis, Crohns disease, ulcerative colitis, fibromyalgia etc.
 - T –helper 2 which fights helminthes and when goes wrong causes allergies
 - T – regulator cells which turn off immune response, stop autoimmune disorders and increase IL-10 and TGF-beta cytokines which are very powerful anti-inflammatory cytokines

- Veterinary studies reveal lack of worms in dogs is set up for immune system disorders in people, we need saprophytic bacteria, gut flora, and some exposure to worms so that the immune system can learn to tolerate certain non dangerous life exposures and this occurs because of increase in Treg cells

- #1 predictor of low C-reactive protein, which means low inflammation, in people as adults is animal feces in the home as children

Bottom line, unremitting stress activates immune pathway leading to physical and mental illness.

TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY

Jesus emotional manifestations

What emotions were experienced by Jesus? Would not all emotions have been experience?

Heb 4:15 he was tempted in every way like us, and James 1:14 we are tempted when drug away and enticed by our own evil feelings or desires.

What motivated Jesus to action? Was it emotional? Was Jesus driven around by His emotions? Or was it a higher duty, which resulted in emotions?

Is love an emotion or does love include emotions as a piece of something much larger?

What is the greatest evidence of love in the universe? Would it not be Christ giving his life?

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13

This is how we know what love is: Christ gave his life for us. We too, then, ought to give our lives for our brothers and sisters! 1John 3:16

When you look at Gethsemane, did Christ make this decision based on emotions?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “The world seems...” thoughts?

Is it true that those who engage the world’s system experience genuine joy? Can they experience pleasure? Does the pleasure last?

Consider alcohol, drugs, illicit sex, gambling, thrill seeking, relationship addiction – is there any real joy in it? Can there be pleasure? What about genuine peace, joy, happiness, contentment, health?

What about the righteous, do the righteous have a free pass to escape pain, grief, suffering? But is there a transcendence that allows one to endure such trials and still have a sense of peace?

What is it? It is being connected to Christ, being on mission, being in unity with God, having purpose for the suffering. And thus, while Jesus did not sacrifice Himself based on emotions:

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb 12:2

FRIDAY

Discuss question 2

Jesus Wept The Bible and Human Emotions Lesson 2 1Q 2011

Divine Provision for Anxiety

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “Scripture is filled with...” thoughts?

Is it God’s plan we experience fear? When do we have the first record of humans experiencing fear?

After sin, they ran and hid because they were afraid.

How is love and fear connected or relate? What happens when one of these increases?

How then do we understand the passages of Scripture that tell us to “fear God”?

Read second paragraph, “And why not?...” thoughts? Remember what Churchill and Roosevelt said, “there is nothing to fear except fear itself.” What does this mean?

What impact does fear have upon us?

- Fear impairs physical growth
 - Iraqi children in war zones are shorter than Iraqi children in rural areas
- Fear impairs intellectual growth
 - Test anxiety, performance anxiety
- Fear impairs relational growth
 - Fear in relationships result in control, loss of freedom, jealousy etc.
- Fear impairs spiritual growth
 - Fear results in rules, regulations, decreased thinking, superstitious beliefs
- Fear impairs judgment
 - Chemistry teacher fears having car repossessed...

- Fear impairs physical performance
 - Consider walking a balance beam on the floor versus the same 4 inch beam 100 feet in the air, which are you more likely to fall from?

What does chronic fear do to us?

- Activates sympathetic nervous system “fight flight”
- Which activates innate immunity, activating macrophages
- Which release inflammatory cytokines
- Which damage insulin receptors, synapses resulting in insulin resistance, obesity, diabetes mellitus, heart attacks, strokes, depression etc.

Are some people more fear prone than others? Why? What contributes to increased fear?

- Physical contributions
- Psychological spiritual contributions

Physical contributions to increased fear:

- If mother was anxious and stressed when pregnant alters fetal brain development so the child will be less capable of calming the fear circuits of the brain
- Lack of care, nurture as infant young child, alters the developing brain so the fear circuits don't calm as easily
- Childhood abuse – over develops fear circuits
- Trauma – up regulates fear circuits, can cause unhealthy beliefs
- Alcohol/drugs (mother's use and yours) – damages brain
- Theatrical entertainment – over activates fear circuits, slows prefrontal cortex
- Genetic defects – certain disorders can result in increased or decreased fear (Williams syndrome missing 25 genes on chromosome 7 and over representation of oxytocin receptors on amygdala therefore no fear of strangers)
- Sleep deprivation

Psychological contributions to increased fear:

- Childhood abuse/neglect
- Trauma
- Theatrical entertainment
- False God concepts
- Relationship conflict
- Dishonesty, selfish behaviors
- Unforgiving attitudes

What can be done to improve one's state of anxiety?

Target the contributing factors!

- Truth about God
- Loving human relationships
- Avoid alcohol/illegal drugs
- Avoid stimulants like caffeine
- Exercise regularly
- Regular sleep
- Avoid theatrical entertainment
- Altruistic endeavors
- Honest living
- Prescription medications
- Psychotherapy
- Forgive others

Two emails I received in the last month or so:

- First of all I would like to say a huge thank you for all of your great work! I have recently committed my life to knowing God and carrying out his will. Your book and your website have been paramount in helping me reach this decision because until I came across your insights into God's nature and the healing model of atonement I had many conflicting ideas about God that kept me from fully trusting him. I am a medical student and I have also been suffering from some pretty bad

anxiety this year (particularly when my search for God and the truth intensified). But since I have discovered the truth about God and his character as revealed by Jesus, and as I spend time with this God by reading his word daily, I have been noticing a real change in my heart and mind. As I learn to love others as God loves, my anxiety gets better and better. The bible quote "Perfect love casts out all fear" is so true and has changed my life completely.

- I have been listening to you for over 2 years. I really appreciate your weekly SS lessons and book. May the Lord bless you in many ways. I was raised in a SDA church and on a very rigid home (full of rules), and after listening to your lessons I am learning to love God, Jesus, the Sabbath instead of fearing them.

Does our picture of God make a difference?

SUNDAY

The first fearful experience – when Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil – why were they afraid? What happened?

When you disobey, what happens? Have you ever said something you wished you hadn't of said? Maybe you were upset and spoke out of turn, as soon as the words were out how did you feel?

Where was the source of Adam's fear? Was there some objective external threat to Adam after eating the fruit? Did some T Rex jump out of the woods and start chasing him?

During that long time spent in communion with God, the face of Moses had reflected the glory of the divine Presence; unknown to himself his face shown with a dazzling light when he descended from the mountain. .. Aaron as well as the people shrank away from Moses, and "they were afraid to come nigh him." Seeing their confusion and terror, but ignorant of the cause, he urged them to come near. **He held out to them**

the pledge of God's reconciliation, and assured them of His restored favor. They perceived in his voice nothing but love and entreaty, and at last one ventured to approach him. Too awed to speak, he silently pointed to the countenance of Moses, and then toward heaven. The great leader understood his meaning. In their **conscious guilt, feeling themselves still under the divine displeasure,** they could not endure the heavenly light, which, had they been obedient to God, would have filled them with joy. **There is fear in guilt.** The soul that is free from sin will not wish to hide from the light of heaven. {PP 329.5}

Thoughts? What does this mean? Were they under the divine displeasure? Why did they feel that way? When Adam sinned was his conscience guilty? Is this the source of fear? He ran and hid from who? Did he need to fear God? Was God coming to hurt Adam?

Guilt is an internal condemnation in which we feel fear, conviction, self doubt, self displeasure activating the fear circuits of the brain. It distorts our thinking and we see others through the lens of our own self-distortion, we believe that others will see us as we see ourselves.

This is an additional layer of confusion which causes so many false God concepts. People see God through the lens of their own guilt and inadequacy.

MONDAY

Abraham was afraid that after so many years the promise of God for an heir would not be realized. What is the source of this fear?

Was Abraham afraid God would not keep His word? Why was this so concerning for Abraham? Was Abraham afraid that the plan of redemption would be interrupted if he didn't have a child or was Abraham afraid he personally wouldn't have an heir?

How could Abraham have avoided this fear? By surrendering the outcome to God, by surrendering what he wanted to happen to God.

TUESDAY

Read John 14:1-3:

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Read first paragraph, "These loving words..." thoughts?

What does it mean to trust in God? I have patients in my office every day who live in fear about the future but also affirm they trust God. What is the balance between trusting God and fear?

What causes someone who trusts God to still fear?

- Does improving one's perspective help decrease fear?
- Does a healthy biology help decrease fear?
- Do healthy relationships help decrease fear?

What enhances your trust in God? What undermines your trust in God?

What did Jesus mean in John 17:3 that life eternal is knowing God? Does this have anything to do with trust in God?

- Story of young boy in a NY 3rd floor apartment...

How can we know God better?

Experience is said to be the best teacher. Genuine experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge, but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. **Real experience is gained by a variety of careful**

experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude, and an **anxious desire to learn, to improve, and to reform** on every point that is not in **harmony with physical and moral laws.** {CTBH 109.1}

That which many term experience is not experience at all; it has resulted from mere **habit**, or from a course of indulgence, thoughtlessly and often ignorantly followed. There has **not been a fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved** in the action. **Experience which is opposed to natural law,-- which is in conflict with the unchangeable principles of nature,--is not to be relied upon.** Superstition arising from a diseased imagination is often arrayed in opposition to reason and to scientific principles. To many a person, the idea that others may gainsay what he has learned by experience, seems folly, and even cruelty itself. But there are more errors received and held through false ideas of experience than from any other cause. There are many invalids today who will ever remain such because they cannot be convinced that their experience is not to be relied upon. {CTBH 109.2}

Thoughts? This is so true on several levels. First, in religions, including Christianity, many superstitious teachings are put forth which cannot hold up when careful experiments are done in harmony with natural laws. When we believe things that actually go against natural law, what happens to our sense of reality? Our security?

Might we come to view God as arbitrary? If God is arbitrary is there predictability? If no predictability what happens to security, what about fear?

Any examples of teachings like this? The most obvious is that sin requires God to use His power to punish. This teaching goes against experience, reason and natural law and thus causes us to fear God. It results in turning off the brain, teaching non-sense in various ways.

This is true with many anxiety disorders in which people believe falsehoods which drive fear and anxiety.

- If I don't touch the door seven times something bad will happen
- Nobody loves me
- I can't do anything right
- God doesn't care

WEDNESDAY

The lesson suggests that from Christ's Sermon on the Mount we gain some lessons:

- Keep things in perspective – God will provide
 - Are we promised that all our needs will be provided?
 - Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other... For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. ²² If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. Matt 24:9,10,21,22
 - What are we promised?
- Become inspired by simple things from nature
 - What do we learn from nature? Do we learn of the Father's law of love and His supreme care?
- Worry is useless and pointless
 - Thursday's lesson states regarding what we worry about:
 - 50% never happen
 - 25% are events of the past that cannot be changed
 - 10% are unconfirmed criticism by others
 - 10% is about health
 - 5% is about real problems

- BUT that 5% is almost always magnified out of proportion to the real stress
- Straighten out your priorities
 - Seek first the kingdom of God.... What does this mean? What is the kingdom of God that we are to seek? What does that kingdom look like?

THURSDAY

Matt 6:34 Jesus tells us not to worry about tomorrow each day has enough worries of its own. What does this mean?

Is Jesus telling us to stop escaping living in the presence by running into the past or worrying about the future? How much time to you spend ruminating over a past issue or worrying about a future problem?

How much time to you spend enjoying the moment?

Several years ago I attended a cancer support group. One of the ladies had been diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She had small children. She reported how the cancer had changed her life, **FOR THE BETTER!** She reported how it made her realize what was important and what wasn't. She said that before the cancer she was so stressed out about the little things that didn't matter. She would get so upset if the kids came down with socks that didn't match and would make a big fuss and make them go change. Prior to the cancer she was more concerned with appearances, how her house looked and would spend hours cleaning it. But after the diagnosis she realized that what really mattered were people and she started spending her time with people, loving her family and building relationships and her fears actually went away.

FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "It is not work..." thoughts?

What does it mean to have more faith, love, patience? How do we get more of these? Is it something we passively receive? Is it something we actively participate to build?

Read and discuss question 2

Question 3 – read, why did Jacob and Joseph’s brothers experience fear? Had they done wrong? Did they have a guilty conscience? What does a guilty conscience do?

Read question 4 did Job’s problems come as a result of his fear causing self fulfilling prophecy? Can self-fulfilling prophecies occur? Examples? How about a person who is afraid that no one likes them, that they will not be loved, valued or appreciated, they believe it is just a matter of time before they are rejected, so they develop a distrustful attitude and present a hostile, obstinate, manipulative attitude creating a stressful environment? What will most people do over time?

Jesus Wept The Bible and Human Emotions Lesson 3 1Q 2011

Stress

SABBATH

Memory verse: Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matt 11:28

Thoughts – have you ever claimed this Bible promise? I know I have and I have experienced God’s peace and presence.

What is stress?

Read first paragraph, “Stress touches...” thoughts?

Is stress only negative events or can positive life events also be stressful? Can planning a wedding be stressful? Can performing a concert be stressful? Can the first day on a job be stressful?

How would you apply Christ’s invitation to come to Him when one has lost a spouse? When a parent has lost a child? What does it mean to come to Christ when stressed?

Does it mean something more than claiming Bible promises?

I thought it might be helpful to present a case and think about:

- What you might experience if you were the parent in this situation
- What you might experience if you were the child
- How would you apply Christ’s promise to come to Him in this situation

Jenny

- Jenny was out of control.
- The rages, anger outbursts, skipping school, and the steady stream of foul language started when she was 13.

- Her mother and stepfather tried various forms of discipline: grounding, loss of cell phone and iPod, and extra chores. But she only got worse.
 - At 14 she began dressing in black, wearing black nail polish, and sneaking away from school to smoke.
 - Her parents took her to counselors and psychiatrists. She was placed on several medications,
 - but by 15 she was deliberately cutting herself when stressed and bingeing and purging on an almost daily basis.
 - She complained of feeling fat, despite being only 100 pounds at five feet four inches tall.
 - She reported anxiety, emptiness, and moodiness, and when she became overwhelmed, she would either binge, then purge, or would cut herself in order to “relieve the tension.” She was out of control and getting worse fast.
-
- Jenny was beautiful with dark hair and brilliant green eyes that sparkled with a golden hue, yet radiated a deep, almost primal, pain
 - She mostly avoided direct eye contact, hanging her head with her knees pulled up to her chest and her arms wrapped tightly around them at the shin.
 - She was frightened, not of me, but of the emotional storm raging inside her; terrified she could not be helped; worried she would never find peace.
 - She felt worthless

Do you think Jenny’s parents were stressed? Was Jenny stressed? What would happen in this situation if you quoted our memory verse to Jenny? Do you think it would resolve her problem?

What does it mean to come to Jesus?

What could Jenny do in this situation to actually come to Jesus and experience His peace?

Have any of you ever felt worthless, empty, no good, struggled with low self esteem and no confidence, felt unloved, like no one cares?

I am going to tell you two truths:

1. you are not alone
2. Feelings can lie

James 1:14 no one should say God tempts, each one is tempted....

John 8:32 the truth will set you free

We have power over what we believe but our beliefs have power over us – power to heal and power to destroy! And if we believe what our feelings say, we are usually led down painful and destructive paths

- Jenny had been running from a faceless, formless, shadowy internal tormentor that haunted her constantly. She didn't know from where her persecutor had come, but she couldn't remember a day free from its taunting.
- She heard the brutal thoughts echoing in her mind,
 - *You're fat,*
 - *you're gross,*
 - *you're ugly,*
 - *you're worthless!*
 - *Nobody could love you.*
 - *You're always messed up.*
 - *You're bad and disgusting.*
- No matter what she did, she just couldn't make the thoughts stop, so, she wanted to die, believing it's all she deserved. She thought suicide was her only escape.
- It was hard for Jenny to talk, but eventually she told me the source of her pain
- Jenny was three when her father walked out. One day he just left home and never returned. He divorced her mother and she had not seen him since.
- Jenny began to cry as she recounted how she missed him. She told me that she remembered her father, remembered she loved to ride on his shoulders; loved to be held in his arms.
- Reluctantly, hesitantly, she told me she knew why her father left.
 - "Because I was bad,"
 - "If I had been a better girl my daddy wouldn't have left."

- It's my fault!"
- What did Jenny believe?
- What we believe has power over us, power to heal and power to destroy – Jenny believed a lie.
- This was it, the core, the pernicious root that had been poisoning her mind.
- This lie had to be removed.

What does it mean to come to Jesus? What does it mean to apply our memory verse promise? Doesn't it mean we come to know Him, His methods, principles and begin to apply them to our lives?

What are some of Satan's weapons? What weapons were being used on Jenny?

What do we receive when we come to Jesus that enables us to defeat the enemy?

I told Jenny what I am going to tell you, and

I know some of you have been hurt, mistreated, betrayed, abused I know some of you have heartaches, and have been through painful experiences. But we:

- Cannot change history
- Can reevaluate the conclusions drawn and replace distortions with facts, errors with the truth.

Jesus said, "from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"

- Imagine a 40 y/o man cursing a 5 y/o girl

How did Jenny file away her father's leaving?

Jenny's brain at age three couldn't understand these truths so:

- Jenny had done what almost all children do when hurt by a parent; she had blamed herself for the shortcoming of her father.
- In the aftermath of her father leaving, Jenny felt abandoned, alone, empty, and rejected.
- At age three, her mind struggled to make sense of her father's departure,
- "If I had been a good girl and picked up my toys, daddy wouldn't have left."
- Her deep feelings of hurt and rejection, having been turned back on herself, grew into a loathsome self-image. She despised herself, hated herself, and thought everyone else did as well. After all, she had driven her father away.
- The echoes of her own disapproval, her own castigation, her own constant self-criticism constantly oppressed Jenny.
- The mysterious tormentor turned out to be her own hurt feelings and distorted self-image. As she grew older it got worse.
- Her mind filtered reality. Whenever someone complimented her, commended her, or showed appreciation for her, she discounted the affirmation and thought, *If they really knew me they wouldn't say that. If they really knew me they wouldn't want to be around me either.* But whenever someone was critical, cruel or unkind she held onto to those experiences as proof she was "bad" and replayed them over and over again in her mind. No matter where she went or what she did she never got away from her tormentor because the tormentor lived within.
- She feared letting people get too close lest they see the horrible thing she was, (as she saw herself) and reject her. Therefore, she acted out, instigated conflict, criticized, disobeyed, was hostile, whenever anyone was too kind or got too close in order to avoid anticipated exposure and rejection.

- Jenny reported, while in the middle of a binge, she would feel a sense of relief, a feeling of comfort, an emotional soothing. But almost immediately after the binge ended she was deluged with guilt, oppressed with disgust and overwhelmed with feelings of fatness, which led her to purge.
- Why do you think Jenny binged?

- Was it for nutritional sustenance?
- What happens when infants eat?
- On some deeply unconscious level,
- Why did Jenny think she was fat? Is a young lady who is 5'4" and weighs 100 pounds fat?
- Why did she think she was fat?
- BECAUSE SHE FELT FAT
- Feelings can lie, James 1:14
- Feelings masquerade
- Then I asked her, "What does it feel like when you feel fat?" "Bad, I feel bad, Worthless, no good, gross and ugly."
- "Do you remember a time in your life when you felt bad? A time when you felt worthless?" "After my father left."
- What lie entered Jenny's mind?
- Does it feel bad when a parent leaves? Yes, it does feel bad, what is the lie?
- That because it feels bad that Jenny is bad, or gross, or disgusting, or ugly.
- Cow pasture analogy

What we believe has power over us, power to heal and power to destroy –

What does it mean to come to Jesus with our burdens? Does it mean we stop thinking? Or does it mean in relationship to Him we reason, think and begin to apply the truth and His methods to our lives?

The truth heals and the truth sets free!

SUNDAY

Elijah during the famine was fed by ravens/angels and then sent to the widow and the oil and flour miraculously never ran dry.

Was this a stressful time? What about for the widow and her son?

Why do you think that the oil and flour appeared new every day? Why not perform a miracle in which the pantry was filled with barrels of oil and tons of wheat, appropriately sealed to avoid spoilage?

Did God want to increase their stress or reduce it? Was God merely trying to sustain them for an earthly existence, or was God working through these experience to strengthen their confidence, trust, faith in Him and to open their minds to a greater reality?

What about today with our problems? Have you ever wondered why the bank account seems to have just enough to pay the bills each month? Could it be, like Elijah, to keep strengthening our faith in God and help us see a grander reality?

The lesson notes that despite Elijah's successes he had stress. What stress do you note in Elijah's life?

- Would it be stressful to go in front of the royal court and confront the king to his face?
- Would it be stressful to confront the 450 prophets of baal?
- Would it be stressful to live as a fugitive?
- Would it be stressful to have the majority of your church members think you were a heretic and trouble maker?
- Would it be stressful to have the religious leaders in your community call you divisive?
- Would it be stressful to have your church members refuse to worship with you?

Do we ever experience any stress along these lines? Does Bible prophecy tell us we will one day experience stress like this, if not already?

“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.” Mal 4:5,6

What is the Elijah message that is prophesied to occur at the end of time?

A message that turns the hearts of people back to one another again, and what kind of message is that? What brings unity, harmony, oneness?

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

Is it happening? Is this message going forward? Will those who carry the Elijah message experience stress like Elijah did?

MONDAY

Read top paragraph, “Read 1Kings 18:40...”

Then Elijah commanded them, “Seize the prophets of Baal. Don’t let anyone get away!” They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there. 1Kings 18:40

Thoughts?

What do you think about this revival and reformation in Israel? Should we conduct ourselves in a similar way? Was killing the prophets the only way?

How would you feel about a revival in Chattanooga between two opposing views of God and after a miracle the one leader told the audience to kill the leaders of the opposing view?

How is this different from what some elements of Islam are doing? Does God need us to physically fight to kill people who don't love and worship Him?

Would God prefer people to do this to each other? What impact does it have on the character to kill another human being? Does it cause one to become more tender, compassionate, or perhaps hardened?

Could God not have brought an earthquake as He did for Korah? Was it a necessity for humans to do the killing?

Did the killing of the prophets of Baal result in the eradication of idolatry from Israel? So the lesson's conclusion that it was the only way to eradicate idolatry is incorrect if idolatry wasn't eradicated? And God would know this wouldn't He? Then was the destruction of the prophets to eradicate idolatry?

What was it for? To reduce its influence? To slow its spread? To remove those who were hardened against God and allow for a greater opportunity for the truth to spread? As a deterrent in the future?

But what kind of methods are these? What happens to a person who obeys under threat of death? Does love flourish? What lesson should be drawn from what happened here?

What actually transpired in history? Did the use of such tactics result in what God wanted?

Then rather than a demonstration of God's methods is this perhaps a demonstration of what DOESN'T work, what methods will NOT bring about what God wants and thus in scripture we read, "not by might nor by power but by the way the spirit works says the Lord. Zech 4:6?"

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Sleep. Eat...” thoughts?

Yes, nutrition, hydration, sleep, rest, exercise are all important for maintaining physical health and combating stress.

These have anti-inflammatory properties to them and restore functioning of the prefrontal cortex which calms the stress circuitry.

Any other interventions?

Meditation, particularly on God’s character of love.

Work, altruistic endeavors, sunshine.

WEDNESDAY

What methods did Jesus use to cope with stress?

- Healthy diet
- Exercise
- Sleep
- Meditation/communion with God in prayer
- Nature
- Rest for mind
- Friends
- Helping others
- Spreading the truth
- Work
- Sunshine
- Water
- Faith/trust God with future, outcomes

Which of these do we need to do – which do we need to do more of?

Mothers frequently need to take more time away from their children – to rest their minds, to be able to turn off the “radar” and relax.

THURSDAY

Read last two paragraphs, “John D. Rockefeller...”

Thoughts? Science demonstrates that those who engage in altruistic endeavors live longer and have better physical and mental health.

But what happens if someone gives away money or resources for the purpose of getting better health and longer life?

FRIDAY

Read top paragraph and discuss

Read and discuss questions 1-4

Jesus Wept the Bible and Human Emotions Lesson 4 1Q 2011

Relationships

SABBATH

Read Memory Text:

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. Matt 7:12

Thoughts?

This simple principle sums up the Law and the Prophets – what is the law and the prophets? It is a way of referring to the Old Testament. The Law refers to the first five books of Moses and the Prophets refers to the rest of the Old Testament.

Sometimes the Old Testament is referred to as the Law, Prophets and Psalms, a further division. But generally, when the phrase Law and Prophets is used it is referring to the Old Testament Scriptures.

So, how is the entire Old Testament summed up in this principle?

Is there a law being summed up in this text? What law? The law of love. What does this law look like in action?

If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Rom 12:20

If you have done someone wrong how would you like to be treated? With grace, compassion, loving accountability to help you overcome your own weakness of character?

How important is this law? Where does it rank say in regard to the Sabbath?

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’

⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

⁴⁴ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

⁴⁵ “He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ Matt 25:31-45

Isn't this law of doing unto other as we would have them do to us the very outworking of God's character of love? And it is this law which is to be written upon the heart?

One other example from Scripture of this law in action – when the woman was caught in adultery – how did Jesus treat her? How did He treat those who brought her? Did He protect their reputations?

How do we want others to treat us when they know secrets about us, when they know our weaknesses, our ugly character warts?

Then how should we treat others? Should we protect them?

What helps? If we view the sin problem as legal is it easier to report what we know? If we view the sin problem as medical – they are sick in heart and mind and are struggling with symptoms, is it easier to keep confidential what we know?

What happens if this law of doing to others as you would have them do to you is broken? What happens? What is the consequence?

In a relationship do we want people to maintain their loyalty and be trustworthy, to continue to show they genuinely care about our health and welfare? What happens if this is broken, someone betrays our trust, someone is disloyal, someone lives for self instead of others?

Will the relationship suffer? How? Will the individual suffer? How?

What is the remedy for breaking such a law? If people no longer seek to do good to others, but instead have had the law of love replaced by the law of selfishness (sin and death) then what fixes it?

Will paying a legal penalty fix selfishness in a heart? Will replacing selfishness with love fix the problem?

What did this law look like in Eden? When God made Adam it wasn't good – why? Why was Eve created as his helper – to help with what?

How have marriages been affected since sin and why?

How have women been treated since sin entered the world? Is it God's plan that woman should be subordinated?

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided "an help meet for him"--a helper corresponding to him--one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be **one with him in love and sympathy**. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was **not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal**, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was **his second self**; showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it." Eph. 5:29. . . . {FLB 251.3}

What do you hear described? Has God's ideal or design for marriage changed since sin entered? How has sin marred God's design?

Why do so many religions argue for a subordinate place for women?

The classic argument is taken from the fact Eve was deceived and Adam was not – and this fact is globalized to women will always have less spiritual light than men – is this credible?

Why do women get blamed so often? Because of selfishness in the heart so men who are seeking to find someone to blame for their lack of spiritual maturity – "It wasn't me it was that woman you gave me..." Men are still throwing that lie out and acting as if it is true.

What would you expect to happen in our marriage relationships, our church relationships, as God's law of love is reproduced within? Will self seek its way, or will we become more humble, kind, patient and seek to uplift others?

How will we treat each other when love is written in the heart? As we grow closer to Christ will our marriages grow such that there is greater and greater equality of the marriage partners?

What about in the church? As love is written in the heart will we find greater and greater equality among the sexes or will women continue to be relegated to second class citizens?

Are there spiritual lessons that we can learn from the marriage relationship?

- Life is the outgrowth of love or love is the basis of life
 - As God designed it marital love culminates in procreation
- Intimacy is more than physical
- Love is a genuine selfless regard for the wellbeing of the other

What role does trust play in a relationship? Can a healthy marriage exist without trust?

How is trust broken in a marriage?

- Adultery, sexual infidelity – the most obvious
 - Does this always mean sex with another person?
 - What about pornography?
 - \$57 billion worldwide (\$12 billion US)
 - Porn revenue is larger than all combined revenues of all professional football, baseball and basketball franchises.
 - US porn revenue exceeds the combined revenues of ABC, CBS, and NBC (\$6.2 billion)
 - Child pornography generates \$3 billion annually
 - 4.2 million pornographic websites (12%)
 - 68 million daily porn web searches (25%)
 - 20% of men visit porn sites at work
 - 47% Christians say porn is a major problem in their home
 - Visitors to porn sites 72% male 28% female
 - 1996 Promise Keepers survey at a stadium event revealed that over 50% of the men in attendance were involved with pornography within one week of attending the event.

- 51% of pastors say cyber-porn is a temptation. 37% say it is a current struggle (Christianity Today, Leadership Survey, 12/2001).
- Over half of evangelical pastors admit viewing pornography last year.
- 2000 Christianity Today survey
 - 33% of clergy admitted to visiting a sexually explicit Web site.
 - 53% had visited such sites “a few times” in the past year, and
 - 18% visit sexually explicit sites a couple of times a month or more
- 29% of born again adults in the U.S. feel it is morally acceptable to view movies with explicit sexual behavior (The Barna Group).
- 57% of pastors say that addiction to pornography is the most sexually damaging issue to their congregation (Christians and Sex Leadership Journal Survey, March 2005).

Why does Satan attack us sexually? In whose image are we made? What does sexuality say about God? How does sexual deviation change us?

Sexuality outside a loving marriage alters neural circuits such that it impairs bonding and genuine love and increases limbic system activity ultimately increasing fear, anxiety, insecurity with subsequent self-centeredness.

What other ways can trust be broken in a marriage?

- Sharing personal secrets with others
- Having loyalty to other family members before spouse
- Having someone other than your spouse as your primary emotional confidant – especially if it is someone of the opposite sex
- Scapegoating your spouse for your mistakes
- Diverting money behind the back into gambling, addictions etc

- Treat with unkindness, rudeness, cruelty, anywhere but especially in public

If trust has been broken how can it be reestablished?

- In general healing requires both repentance on part of the wrongdoer and forgiveness on part of the one wronged
- But, more specifically, requires the wrongdoer to, as far as possible, seek to heal any damage they have inflicted. They not only need to demonstrate a change in heart attitude and behavior, but to actually humble themselves and inconvenience themselves in order to promote the wellbeing of the other.
 - Examples- husband cheats on wife, is repentant but wife doesn't trust him. What can husband do to help heal the damage other than the obvious maintenance of loyalty? What about actions to reduce wife's fears? Give her access to his emails, phones, computer. What if the infidelity was with coworker – what about changing jobs?
 - If history of gambling then give spouse complete control of family assets
 - If having been unkind, seeking to lift burdens, without being asked, clean kitchen, mop floor, put things away, think actively about the burdens of the other and seek to relieve them

How can you tell the difference between confession, tearful, crying confession and genuine repentance?

- Confession lasts as long as the person who was offended remains on guard, upset, vigilant and monitors – as soon as the offended party is satisfied and no longer monitors, then the old behaviors will slowly resurface
- Repentance is a change of heart in which the person has died to self and genuinely seeks to uplift the other. Such a person will put others first across the board, will seek to give to bless others, volunteer to help without being asked, will have an overall change in attitude and demeanor across the board,

which will persist even when the offended person no longer “monitors.

SUNDAY

Asks us to review the story of David, Nabal and Abigail...

Read second-fourth paragraphs, “David sent...” thoughts?

“A gentle answer turns away wrath” Prov 15:1

What if we do kindness and it doesn’t result in reconciliation? Does that mean we somehow handled things poorly?

Does love and kindness work on everyone?

God in His great mercy bore long with Lucifer. He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station when he first indulged the spirit of discontent, nor even when he began to present his false claims before the loyal angels. Long was he retained in heaven. **Again and again he was offered pardon on condition of repentance and submission. Such efforts as only infinite love and wisdom could devise were made to convince him of his error.** The spirit of discontent had never before been known in heaven. Lucifer himself did not at first see whither he was drifting; he did not understand the real nature of his feelings. But as his dissatisfaction was proved to be without cause, Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong, that the divine claims were just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. He had not at this time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had forsaken his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God's great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office. But pride forbade him to submit. He persistently defended his own course, maintained that he had no need of repentance, and fully committed himself, in the great controversy, against his Maker. {GC 495.3}

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Jesus upgraded...” thoughts? What does it mean “upgraded”? Did God start with one method and discover it didn’t work so well so came out with a new version, like upgraded windows 7, now He got the glitches out?

Were Christ’s instructions new?

‘Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD. Lev 19:18

Why was eye for an eye given in the first place? Was it because God wanted it that way, or that was as much light as the people of that generation could absorb and apply?

What does it mean to “return good for evil”? What is the principle involved? Is it not doing what is in the best interest of the other party?

Read second paragraph, “A couple...” thoughts? This often is an excellent action – but does it always work?

What happens when you give to someone who is entitled and believes they deserve it? What if the neighbors had said, “well its about time you brought us some pies. What, no crust on top? Next time please make mine with crust on top. And you will have them here by the weekend won’t you?”

If they were dealing with such neighbors, then how should they respond?

The example of David is given where Saul kept attacking, but David would attack the Lord’s anointed. Did David’s refusal to attack Saul, result in any lasting change in Saul?

Did Saul initially get convicted by David's actions? What happened?

Are there some people who refuse to allow truth to heal them? Are there some who refuse to repent and humble themselves? Who do they hurt most?

TUESDAY

Forgiveness –

What is forgiveness?

- The offender relinquishing demand for revenge or repayment?
- Legal pardon
- Reconciliation with transformation of the offender such that they are now a friend?

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. 51:10. {FLB 129.2}

What we speak of God's forgiveness of the sinner it entails the entire process of healing from sin.

Does Jesus have to implore the Father to forgive? Is the Father unforgiving except for the pleadings of the Son? Did Jesus need to die in order to get God's attitude or position to be one of forgiveness?

What are the obstacles we have to forgiving those who do us wrong?

Various myths:

- I can't forgive until they say they are sorry
- Forgiveness means restored trust
- Forgiveness means forgetting

- Forgiveness increases vulnerability
- Forgiveness means what they did was okay
- Forgiveness means they get away with it

Thoughts about these?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Sins against...” thoughts? What do you think it means “secure forgiveness” from who? Do you agree? Is it always necessary, or usually necessary?

What benefit does it have to do this? Why is such confession a vital part of experiencing Biblical forgiveness?

What is Biblical forgiveness? It is heart change – does it result in a change of the offender’s heart to confess his/her sins and experience forgiveness and grace?

Can this be done without a change in the offender? Can people learn to say, “I’m sorry. I said I was sorry.” And then expect everything to be the same but no heart change has occurred? How would you handle that situation?

Read second paragraph, “There is an...” thoughts? This is so true – we live in fear, part of the infection of sin. When we have done wrong we fear if others knew they would hate us, reject us, that we would be outcast, so we hide in fear. This aspect of confessing sin to a trusted friend, and experiencing acceptance and love is part of the healing the church is to do. But, there is a warning:

Read third paragraph, “A word of caution...” thoughts?

THURSDAY

The lesson speaks about building each other up, rather than tearing each other down.

Thoughts on how we can build each other up in our community?
 What things have you done that are beneficial?

FRIDAY

Read question 1 – thoughts? What constitutes gossip?

We think with horror of the cannibal who feasts on the still warm and trembling flesh of his victim; but are the results of even this practice more terrible than are the agony and ruin caused by misrepresenting motive, blackening reputation, dissecting character? Let the children, and the youth as well, learn what God says about these things: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." {AH 440.5}

The spirit of gossip and talebearing is one of Satan's special agencies to sow discord and strife, to separate friends, and to undermine the faith of many in the truthfulness of our positions. {AH 441.1}

When I am reading my eye will often catch upon passages that give clues as to why we haven't yet finished the work and seen the coming of the Lord. This week I came across such a passage for the first time:

We have had seasons for fasting and prayer, beseeching that the Lord would raise up laborers to go into his harvest-field, and yet, when laborers have been raised up, and sent to different fields, many of them have not been appreciated, even those who have given full proof of their devotion to, and interest in, the work. **Envious tongues have spoken against them, evil surmisings have been cherished**, and tares have been sown by those who would not like to reap the bitter harvest that will result. Before we appoint another day for fasting and prayer that the Lord shall raise up laborers, let us see to it that we treat those who have already been sent, with respect and love, as God would have them treated. Let us not treat them in such a distrustful manner that their prayers will ascend to God for deliverance from the evil surmisings and evil reports of their

brethren. **As long as those who are doing a good work for the Master, are not appreciated, but accused, condemned, and oppressed by the false tongue, how can we consistently ask God to raise up more laborers? There needs to be a turning away from talebearing and talebearers,** and a drawing toward our brethren,--a coming near, even heart to heart, that the grace of Christ may be manifested in large measure through his people. The church should be bound together with the golden chain of love, and then it would be terrible as an army with banners. {RH, October 31, 1893 par. 4}

Thoughts?

Read Question 2 – 4 and discuss.

SS Quarterly 1 2011: *Jesus Wept: The Bible & Human Emotions*

Lesson 5 – **Guilt**

Legitimate guilt vs Illegitimate guilt [read *Could it be this Simple?* pgs. 90-96 by Tim Jennings, MD]

In summary:

Legitimate guilt—This occurs when we are out of harmony with the Law of Love. The solution is repentance-forgiveness-restoration.

Illegitimate guilt Type I—example: the moody spouse griping about everything and nothing. The other partner assumes the responsibility of the spouse's bad mood & tries to "fix" things. This actually worsens things. There is nothing to repent-forgive-restore. This guilt is resolved by application of the truth. The one spouse did nothing to cause the moodiness in the other spouse.

Illegitimate guilt Type II—guilt from having pursued a course of action, ending in trauma, based on available information that was inadequate or inaccurate. Consider the parent who takes their child to the ER with fever, etc. and is sent home with a diagnosis of a common cold and orders to give them Tylenol & "they'll be fine in a few days". The child actually has viral meningitis, and later dies. The parent blames his/herself for the child's death. This guilt is also resolved by application of the truth. The parent made the correct decision based on the information they had available.

Illegitimate guilt Type III—guilt from not being healed in heart & mind. This sounds a lot like legitimate guilt, and is often confused for it. Ex: An adulterous spouse has an affair, and is appropriately guilty. He/she confesses to God & spouse, experiences forgiveness, and restoration of the relationship, but continues to be plagued with guilt over the affair. The problem here is that the thinking pattern that led to the affair in the first place has not been corrected. The affair was a result of being led astray by powerful feelings of attraction, etc. and even the affair is over the same feelings are present. This guilt is also resolved by application of the truth. Seeing a pattern yet?? When the guilty spouse applies the **truth** regarding using sound judgment to overrule powerful emotions, he/she can experience healing.

Sabbath's Lesson

Memory Text: **"If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared."**

Ps. 130:4 [NIV]

1. What does this mean??
2. Does the author really mean "Awed" instead of "feared"?
3. Is this why we should be afraid of God??
4. Is this why *devils* tremble??
5. What is the relationship between the message of this text & our topic – Guilt ?
6. Is guilt a natural consequence of sin, or is it one of God's interventions to keep in check the consequences of sin?

Sunday's Lesson

Gen. 3:8-13

Any insights?

The 2nd paragraph of the lesson states: "Guilt brings about a seemingly automatic response to place the blame on somebody else ..." Is it really guilt that does this or is this a result of sin's effect on the mind?? Is this the same thing??

Farther down in the same paragraph the lesson suggests that blaming others poses a barrier to God's forgiveness. I want to clarify that the guilt process may, indeed, pose a barrier for humans to accept / understand God's forgiveness, but it does NOT pose a barrier to the forgiveness itself. Am I making sense??

Monday's lesson

Gen. 42.

The lesson makes a great point, in the 2nd paragraph, that in order to resolve guilt, "*repentance and forgiveness are required.*" This is spot on. We humans struggle with both forgiveness & [true] repentance. Praise God that He does not struggle with forgiveness AND he is able to transform our hearts / characters so that true repentance is possible.

Tuesday's lesson

Ps. 32

- 1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered.
- 2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no deceit.
- 3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old
Through my groaning all the day long.
- 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah
- 5 I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I have not hidden.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

I recently spoke with a physician about Fibromyalgia patients, and he quoted the above passage as a possible source of their discomfort. Any thoughts?? Ladies?? Don't kill the messenger, please.

1 Tim 4: 1,2

Seared consciences. Anyone [other than me] wonder why this simile?? I think this dovetails nicely with the Old Testament metaphor regarding leprosy & sin. Leprosy [Hansen's disease] is a bacterial infection of the peripheral nerves which causes a loss of sensation [pain], and, therefore further tissue damage. Don't we see the same thing in our consciences?? Think back to the first time you saw a murder on TV [many were too young to actually understand what they were seeing]. Did it cause you any discomfort, revulsion, fear?? After seeing many more murders on TV, film, etc does it still have the same effect anymore??

Wednesday's Lesson

Matt. 26:75

Contrast Peter's guilt experience with Judas'.

Thursday's Lesson

Rom: 8:1,2

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

John 3:16,17

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

John 12:48-50

47 And if anyone hears My words and does not believe,[i] I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. 49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. 50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

Ps 103:12

12 As far as the east is from the west,

So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Do you think David knew that there is a North & South Pole?? Why the E – W directions??

Isa. 1:18

18 " Come now, and let us reason together,"

Says the LORD,

" Though your sins are like scarlet,

They shall be as white as snow;

Though they are red like crimson,

They shall be as wool.

The green box at the bottom of Thursday's lesson asks "How can we be sure our sins are forgiven if we don't feel that they are forgiven?" Any thoughts??

1/15/2011 7:30:00 AM

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Jesus Wept The Bible and Human Emotions Lesson 6 1Q 2011

Good Thinking

SABBATH

Read Memory Text:

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Philippians 4:8

Does it matter upon what we think? What difference does it make?

Read first paragraph, “As one of...” thoughts

Are there any Bible passages that describe or support this concept?

If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. John 8:31,32

What do you think it means to hold to the teaching?

As a people we are to make an entire surrender of ourselves to God. God calls upon every church member to enter His service. **Truth that is not lived, that is not imparted to others, loses its life-giving power, its healing virtue.**" 7MS 353.

Can we “know” the truth if we don’t apply the truth?

- Can we know what it is like to swim if we never get in the water?
- Can we know how refreshing a slice of watermelon on a hot summer day is if we never eat a slice?
- Can we know the truth and be set free by it if we never apply it and live it out?

Is there a difference between knowing about swimming and knowing how to swim? Is there a difference between knowing about the truth and actually knowing the truth?

- Does it make a difference to your brain to read about swimming or to actually swim?
 - First initiate the movement in your prefrontal cortex which activates the motor cortex and the motor cortex activate
 - Corticospinal track which goes to the muscles to make them move while simultaneously activating the
 - Corticopontocerebellar track which informs the cerebellum of the intended movement
 - Then the cerebellum gets information back from the extremities through the spinalcerebellar track of where the extremity actually moved and compares this actual movement with the intended movement and
 - Then cerebellum sends information back to the motor cortex to refine what will be the next movement
 - The cerebellum, which coordinates motor movements also, via the vermix, helps coordinate thinking
 - When one actually swims the activations of these tracks results in gene expression change, production of neurotrophic factors and vascular factors which make new neurons and recruit new neurons to improve these movements.
 - Additionally, the brain produces endorphins and enkephalins with exercise which boost mood and increase hope and optimism
 - And the muscles when exercised produce anti-inflammatory interleukins which decrease inflammation and muscles, tendons, ligaments and bone all strengthen

- Progression, not stagnation, is the law of heaven. Progression is the law of every faculty of mind and body. The things of nature obey this law. In the field there is seen first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. In the spiritual life, as in the physical life, there is to be growth. Step by step we

are to advance, ever receiving and imparting, ever gaining a more complete knowledge of Christ, daily approaching more closely the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. {HP 183.4}

- **The world today is full of pain and suffering and agony. But is it the will of God that such a condition shall exist? - No. God, the Creator of our bodies, has arranged every fiber and nerve, and sinew and muscle, and has pledged himself to keep the machinery in order, if the human agent will cooperate with him, and refuse to work contrary to the laws which govern the physical system. {SpM 40.5} God's law is written by His own finger upon every nerve, every muscle, every faculty which has been entrusted to man.** These gifts were bestowed upon him, not to be abused, corrupted and abased, but to be used to His honor and glory. Every misuse of any part of our organism is a violation of the law which God designs shall govern us in these matters, and by violating this law human beings corrupt themselves; sickness and disease of every kind, ruined constitutions, premature decay, untimely deaths, these are the results of a violation of nature's laws. {SpM 40.6}
- As the foundation principle of all education in these lines, the youth should be taught that the **laws of nature are the laws of God-- as truly divine as are the precepts of the Decalogue.** The laws that govern our physical organism, God has written upon every nerve, muscle, and fiber of the body. **Every careless and willful violation of these laws is a sin against our Creator.** How necessary, then, that a thorough knowledge of these laws should be imparted! {CG 363.1}

What do these passages mean in regard to our spiritual life? Is there a different law at work on our physical and spiritual lives? Or is it the same law? What is that law?

- Does the brain respond differently to knowing the truth about God's kingdom of love and applying it?

- When we choose to live God’s law of love we are honest, kind, patient, gentle, loyal, faithful – this avoids conflict, results in healthy relationships, and less activation of the fear circuits of the brain – whenever we violate God’s law of love our ventromedial prefrontal cortex and orbital prefrontal cortex convict us of wrong, they increase activity, this causes decreased activity in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and we cannot think as clearly, this also results in increased activity of the amygdale and we experience more fear and anxiety but problem solve less efficiently. The activated fear circuits cause a cascade of inflammatory factors in our body increasing disease and within the brain suppressing growth factors and endorphins/enkaphalins resulting in increased dysphoria.

Can a person know the right doctrinal “truth” and still not “know” the truth, not know what it really means, what it is like to embrace it and apply it, how the truth transforms the life? What about those that put Christ on the cross – did they know the truth about the Sabbath? Which day of the week? Yes, did they know the truth of it? No.

Why do people have problems in thinking?

- Physical defects of the brain
 - Alzheimer’s
 - Brain injuries
 - Certain chromosomal and genetic abnormalities
 - Toxins and poisons which damage the brain
 - Drugs and alcohol
- Childhood experiences
 - Who chose to learn English? Our primary language is deeply ingrained before we make a conscious choice about it. Likewise certain patterns of thinking and processing are learned early on without our knowing it.
 - What of a child who is molested by a parent?
 - What of a child who is nurtured in a healthy way?
 - What of a child indulged?

- Learned distortions
 - Taught in school we evolved from apes
 - That survival of the fittest is normal and healthy
 - That blacks or Jews are subhuman
 - That women are subordinate and less valuable than men
- Self deception
 - In a relationship in which spouse is cheating, or beating, don't want to know because it would be emotionally painful to deal with so make excuses and lie to self
 - Addicts tell themselves they can handle it, deny they have a problem because accepting the truth hurts ego
- Trusting others
 - Allowing others to examine the evidence and tell you what to think – we don't need to examine questions that prior generations of church leaders and theologians have already thought through and answered. How does that idea work? What about in science?
- Value feelings over evidence and reason
 - If it feels right it must be right – it must be love...

Other ways?

Read bottom paragraph, “This week...” thoughts?

What do you think? Is Christ seeking to take “charge of our minds”? In what way yes and in what way no?

Is Christ seeking to take charge of the healing, recovery, restoration, rebuilding process to lead, guide, teach and restore?

Is Christ seeking to do our thinking for us or to program us?

SUNDAY

Read Mark 7:21-23:

For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² greed, malice,

deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’ ”

Thoughts? How did this evil get into the heart? Where did it originate?

What is the primary problem – the evil in the heart or the sinful behavior?

Where is God’s solution focused on the behavior or on renewing the heart? If the heart is renewed then the behavior takes care of itself:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. Matt 23:25,26

Notice what Christ says happens to the outside when the inside is cleansed? Do you notice how much of Christianity is focused on dealing with the outside? Getting sins pardoned, or paid for, or punished in Christ, or erased from record books, or having our record covered by the blood or ourselves covered by a robe, when all of these metaphors are actually about cleansing the inside of the cup.

- God not remembering our sins means cleansing our hearts so sin is no longer in us and thus when God looks at us He doesn’t “see” or “think” about our sins, because we aren’t filled with sin anymore:
 - This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. **I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they will be my people. ¹¹ No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹² For I will forgive their wickedness and will **remember their sins no more.** Heb 8:10-12

- Covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness means to be cleansed in heart and mind to be like Him
 - When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then** as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}
- Cleansed by the blood means to internalize Christ and have His character reproduced within
 - Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. John 6:54-57
- Erasing sins means erasing sinfulness from our character
 - Remember, your character is being daguerreotyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb? "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" [Revelation 22:12]. . . . {TSB 62.1}
 - Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin... Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Ps 51:2,7
- Pardon or forgiveness means to have the heart cleansed and renewed.
 - God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of

redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. 51:10. {FLB 129.2}

Did Christ's mission to earth have anything to do with transforming hearts or did He come simply to deal with penalties for bad behaviors?

Do our thoughts about God, on this issue matter?

How do we experience change in the inner man? How can we experience change in our thoughts? Do our choices make a difference?

Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor – explain how this comes off the DNA and how our decisions impact whether a circuit grows or withers, and how our imagination plays a role.

With this in mind what happens when we watch theatrical television programming? What happens if that programming is unhealthy programming? What happens when we read unwholesome books, or play violent video games?

What happens if one continues to think of God in certain ways?

Can a person struggling with a terrible infection, high fever, sepsis, get well if they rub manure into their wound daily? What if they are taking high dose antibiotics every day but rubbing manure in the wound?

Can a person who is struggling with anxiety, fear, irritability, confused thinking, self doubt, moodiness, restlessness find God's peace if they are filling their minds with worldly material? What if they are filling their minds with worldly material but are praying at least once or twice a day and spending 15 minutes reading something inspirational?

Read second paragraph, “Indeed, sinful acts...” thoughts? It is true that a sinful thought can lead us into wrong acts – but what typically comes first?

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:13-15

More commonly it is our feelings or desires that lead us into temptation and the desires or feelings will react on the thoughts and the thoughts will reinforce the feelings. However, it is also true that thoughts can originate feelings which will reinforce the thoughts and it is generally when the feelings, desires get to a certain intensity that we act on those desires.

MONDAY

Read top dark section, “What are the things...” thoughts?

Is the question that needs answering in order to bring us peace whether God has power? What is the source of insecurity and uncertainty? Is it that God is not powerful or is it whether God can be trusted, whether God is good, whether God cares, whether God has time, whether God is interested? Isn't the question that we need answered about God's character and motives not His power?

Second paragraph is the story of a woman who died because she believed a fortune teller who said she would die on her 23rd birthday – thoughts about this? The mind is powerful and what we believe can change us physically including stop the heart.

What do you think Ananias and Sapphira believed about God? Could their belief about God have had anything to do with their deaths? Are only witch doctors and fortune tellers able to cause someone's mind to be so fearful that they die? Could a person's

distorted beliefs about God also cause death? What do the wicked in the end cry for when Christ returns? Why?

Next paragraph, “Also, just as important...” thoughts? Does it matter what we say and how we treat people? What about children and how they are spoken to by their parents?

Are there times when it is loving to speak very cutting words?

²⁵ “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

²⁷ “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. ²⁸ In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Mt 23:25-28.

How are Christ’s words loving? Are there some people so deeply rooted into self deception that their only hope is if someone speaks directly and intensely their condition?

- Patient who kept cheating on husband over and over and left him with kids at home – how confrontation of her selfishness brought her to repentance.

TUESDAY

First sentence of the first paragraph states, “Remembering, repeating, thinking about, and meditating on the words of the Bible is one of the greatest spiritual blessings available to us, and it is a sure way to cultivate what Peter called “wholesome thinking.”

How can you do this so it is a blessing? Is there any way this can be a cursing?

Healthy Bible Reading:

- Don't just read, but stop and ask "what does it mean?" and "how does it apply today and to my life?"
- Use Christ as a lens to filter all Bible stories
- Ask the question, "What does this story/passage tell me about God?"
- Read with the Great Controversy in mind
- Require Scripture to harmonize with itself and with testable laws and nature

Unhealthy Bible Reading:

- Proof text approach
- Here a little there a little patchwork approach
- Taking the Bible as it reads without asking what it means or understanding the context of when it was written and to whom
- Thinking concretely rather than abstractly
- Failing to recognize the primary purpose of Scripture is to reveal God to man and thus using Scripture to as a code of how to live to be saved
- Failing to harmonize Scripture with science and testable laws

Next paragraph last sentence states, "The Word of God is the only true fortification we have against the mental onslaught of unspiritual distractions that come from the world." Thoughts?

How many young people who are raised in the church, memory verses each week, church schools, end up leaving the church in adolescents? Why? If all that was necessary was to have them read and memorize scripture why do so many leave?

Is there a way to teach the Bible that can increase the likelihood our children will stay loyal to God?

Analogy, if we teach our children the only reason to brush teeth is because the Bible says so, I say so, the Church says so and no other reason is ever discovered – what is the likelihood they will continue?

What if they are taught the reasons for brushing teeth?

What about when we teach the Bible if we teach the reasons as because God said it, the Bible says it, the Church says it, or if you don't God will have to punish?

What if someone falls in love with Jesus and then comes into religious group who begin to monitor behavior and tell them you can't do this, you can't do that, you can't wear this and can't wear that – what will happen over time? Can love exist in an atmosphere without freedom?

What is the balance between freedom and parental authority and directing the actions of the child? Are there times that parents when dealing with children must restrict their freedom? Why? How is this loving? For what purposes are freedoms being restricted? Is it not to help the child gain self mastery and ultimately their freedom from self?

Read bottom paragraph, "Pray is another way..." Thoughts?

Is prayer important – absolutely! We need to pray for in prayer we open ourselves up to God, we share our thoughts and feeling with Him, not to inform Him but to connect with Him in relationship and allow Him to lead us in healthy ways.

So prayer is important, but does it matter to whom one prays? Isn't it true that those who flew planes into buildings on 9/11 prayed five times per day? What if one prays five times per day but cherishes faulty God concepts?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Why would it make you nervous for God to know the secrets of your heart?

If you are guilty of a crime and go before a judge who, if found guilty, will be forced by law to execute you, would you be nervous if he could see the secrets of your heart?

If you were dying of a terminal condition and you went before a doctor who specializes in curing your condition would you be nervous about him seeing the secrets of your condition? How about if your condition was due to some behavior in which you were engaged, say you had been injecting IV drugs and now have an infection of your heart – if you go to the ER with heart failure, stroke like symptoms are you afraid for the doctor to find out you have been injecting drugs or do you want him to know?

If there is a policeman in the ER do you want him to know?
 If we consider God as the great policeman in the sky will we open ourselves to Him? Does it matter what God concept we hold?
 If you were planning on doing a crime and came before a police officer would you be nervous about him seeing the secrets of your heart?

If you were having symptoms occurring, your blood pressure rising, temperature rising etc, would you be nervous about the doctor discovering these symptoms?

Which way do you see God? Do you see Him as the police officer or judge waiting to dole out punishment? Or do you see Him as your friend and savior longing for you to trust Him enough that He can heal you?

Read third paragraph, “Likewise, Satan...” Are you comforted to know Satan cannot read your thoughts? But does that mean he doesn’t have a pretty good idea of what you’re thinking?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “This passage takes us...” thoughts? Is avoiding sin a matter of choice? Do we have a say in it? What about

someone who refuses to make choices to improve self but blames past experiences? It isn't my fault I was born this way? Or it isn't my fault I was abused as a child?

Do we still have choice to align ourselves with God or not?

What choices can we make to experience healing of mind here and now?

- With whom we associate
- Whether we are honest with others or deceitful
- What we watch
- What we speak
- Whether we harbor resentment or forgive
- Whether we keep our word or break it
- Whether we spend time with Christ or not
- Whether we trust God with how things turn out or continue to try to make life turn out the way we think it should?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "More precious..." thoughts?

Read questions 2,3,5 and discuss

Jesus Wept The Bible and Human Emotions Lesson 8 1Q 2011

Resilience – what is it?

1. the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress
2. an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change

Physical resilience –

What decreases physical resilience?

- Alcohol, tobacco, drugs, toxins
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Diet
 - Lack of essential nutrients
 - Meat
 - Increases risks of cancers and metabolic disorders across the board, increases inflammation
 - Milk
 - Animal studies aflatoxin, a fungus that grows in nature, in high concentrations can cause liver necrosis and cancer. Rats were randomly assigned to two groups, and received the same diet, except one of the groups had added casein protein, the protein from cow's milk. Then animals in both studies were dosed with aflatoxin. The animals receiving casein protein developed liver cancer, those not on casein protein did not.
 - Casein protein interferes with human DNA repair mechanisms
- Lack of sunshine or too much sunshine
- Dehydration
- Sleep deprivation
- Loss of hope
- Believing lies
- Age

What promotes physical resilience?

- Avoidance of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, toxins
- Avoid animal products
- Hydration
- Nutrition
 - Vit D recently hot topic in med literature with epidemiological evidence supporting Vit D lowers heart disease, blood pressure, reduces cancer risk, improve cognition, reducing inflammation – activated Vit D, once through kidneys and liver, acts like a steroid, which is different from other vitamins.
 - Omega 3 Fatty acids – lipid membranes and scavenge free radicals, animal models show omega 3 fatty acids reduce end organ damage from diabetes mellitus
 - Vitamin E from food, concentrates in lipid membranes and scavenges free radicals
 - Vitamin C contributes to connective tissue health and concentrates inside cell fluid scavenging free radicals
- Exercise – improves physical reserves and produces anti-inflammatory effect
- Sunshine anti bacterial, vit D, stimulates immune system, anti cancer (in proper doses)
- Sleep (in harmony with biorhythms)
- Group support
 - Medscape News reports on a recent article in the February *Journal of the American Medical Association*:
 - <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/736734?src=mpnews&spon=12>
 - Dr. Spiegel's essay comes about 6 months after a study on palliative care in cancer was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (2010;363:733-742). In that study, the introduction of palliative care — a program designed to minimize pain and improve quality of life — at diagnosis, in parallel with standard oncologic care, was associated with a significant improvement in

survival in patients with metastatic nonsmall-cell lung cancer (NSCLS).

- After discussing the palliative care study in his essay, Dr. Spiegel states that "there is increasing evidence that social support affects survival [in cancer]." He cites 2 studies in particular: a study in women with early-stage breast cancer, which was led by Barbara Andersen, PhD, from Ohio State University in Columbus (*Cancer*. 2008;113:3450-3458); and a study by Dr. Spiegel himself in women with metastatic breast cancer (*Lancet*. 1989;2:888-891).
- To *Medscape Medical News*, he mentioned 3 other randomized trials and 1 matched-cohort trial that "have found that psychosocial treatment for patients with a variety of cancers produced both psychological and survival benefits." The cancers in these types of studies tend to be those with the poorest prognosis, including malignant melanoma, NSCLC, leukemia, and gastrointestinal tract cancers, Dr. Spiegel points out in his essay.
- Do we find this supported by Scripture?
 - "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Mt 11:28-30
 - Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Gal 6:2
- Hope - What gives you hope?

General factors:

- Healthy intrauterine life – alters brain development
 - High stressed mother has increased stress hormones which alter the developing brain impairing the braking mechanism on the stress response – less resilience

- Healthy nurturing upbringing, alters brain development
 - Pups of nurturing mothers (licking/grooming) compared to pups of mothers who didn't nurture
 - Pups without attentive mothers had altered brain development such that they had over active amygdalas and social impairments
 - When pups of neglect mothers were reared by nurturing mothers their brain development was the same as the pups of the nurturing mother
 - <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15220929>
- Genetic constitution

Mental resilience

What decreases mental resilience?

- Physical illness disease
- Poor physical health/conditioning
- Guilt
- Resentment
- Worry
- Fear
- Stress
- TV
- Video gaming (certain games) using psychic energy, less physical intimacy with spouse
- Believing in false God concepts

What promote mental resilience

- Better physical health
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Family member confidant
 - significantly reduced the risk of overall behavioral and emotional problems by age 18.

- Females at age 18 who had a family member confidant
 - higher self-esteem and reduced risks of major mental disorders, suicidal thoughts, depression, drug disorders, and overall behavioral problems
 - Males with advice-giving families
 - had better school performance, lower school dropout rates, less depression, behavioral or emotional problems
- Family cohesion
 - in receiving school and community honors, and a reduced risk of numerous problems and some mental disorders. Family cohesion appeared to be especially important for young women in reducing risk of serious mental disorders.
- Is there scripture to support this –
 - Honor father and mother and live long – why?
- Knowing God – the truth about God
 - Does who you know make a difference? Does your personal relationship with God make a difference?
 - What if the God one worships is severe, revengeful, unforgiving? What if you fear the God you worship? If you make mistakes does it crush hope? If you see God as a severe judge waiting to punish what does that do to hope?
- Perspective – enlarging one’s view
 - Does perspective make a difference? What perspective enhances hope? What about purpose?
- Trusting God with outcomes
- Meditation and prayer
 - Meditating on God of love
- Helping others
- Having a purpose
- Having hope

SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

What do you hear when you read this text? What expectations do you have because of this passage?

What is this text promising? Is it promising deliverance? What kind of deliverance?

What about the 6 million Jews who claimed this promise during WWII?

⁴ Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹ **"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.**

¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Mt 24:4-14

Is this a promise to deliver us from earthly trials, tribulation and even death? What is it promising?

Why are we not to fear? Could it be because we see from a different vantage point?

Jesus said:

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Matt 10:28

Of what are we not to be afraid? Are we to view things from a worldly or eternal perspective? Who decides whether we are saved or lost? Can any earthly trial, tribulation, army, attacker or evil entity decide whether you are saved or lost?

MONDAY

Read Romans 5:3-5

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Thoughts? What is the purpose of suffering? How and why does suffering help us?

In OT times David got in troubling for taking a census of his army, why?

Once David discovered he had tens of thousands of soldiers, bowman, spearmen, chariots etc. what might he be tempted to do? Might he be tempted to trust in his army rather than trust in God?

Today we have stocks, bonds, savings, retirement plans, houses, cars, land, investments and could we be tempted to trust in these rather than trust in God? Could trials be a way of helping use lift our eyes to a greater reality to where our real hope lies?

Do trials help to keep us humble? Do they help us remember our true source of strength, health, wisdom?

Do trials help us develop empathy?

Read 2Cor 1:3,4:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who

comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

Thoughts

How does God comfort us? I love this quote:

The Comforter is called "**the Spirit of truth.**" His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and **thus He becomes the Comforter.** There is **comfort and peace in the truth**, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. **It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.** {DA 671.1}

What does this mean to you? How does truth bring comfort? Any examples?

- A person who is sick with an unknown illness is finally diagnosed – is there comfort in knowing?
- I have patients who run from mistakes, guilt, shame, but it is only when they embrace the truth, deal with the truth of their situation that they find peace.
- What about spiritual truth? What happens to peace when we believe lies about God? What happens when we come to the knowledge of God?
- How many here have experienced peace and comfort as your picture of God has changed to be like Jesus revealed?

Read 2Cor 1:8,9:

⁸ We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under

great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹ Indeed, **in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God**, who raises the dead.

Thoughts?

Into the experience of all there come times of keen disappointment and utter discouragement--days when sorrow is the portion, and it is hard to believe that God is still the kind benefactor of His earthborn children; **days when troubles harass the soul, till death seems preferable to life.** It is then that many lose their hold on God and are brought into the slavery of doubt, the bondage of unbelief. Could we at such times discern with spiritual insight the meaning of God's providences we should see **angels seeking to save us from ourselves**, striving to plant our feet upon a foundation more firm than the everlasting hills, and new faith, new life, would spring into being. {PK 162.1}

From who do we need to be saved? Self! Our greatest battle is with self, and our greatest battle with self is with powerful feelings.

Can we trust what we feel? What impacts our feelings toward discouragement? Is it not perspective, beliefs, what we think is transpiring? Does it make a difference to know what is actually happening?

Consider being pregnant but not knowing you were pregnant, and going into labor – would it be more terrifying to experience labor pain not knowing what was happening? Does understanding what is happening make dealing with the pain easier?

Read Matt 24:4-14

⁴ Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but

the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ **All these are the beginning of birth pains.**

⁹ “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² **Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,** ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ **And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**

Thoughts? What do you hear being described?

Have any of these things occurred? Are any occurring today? What about presenting the gospel to the whole world?

If you were in the airport, waiting for your flight, and someone asked you, “What is the gospel?” What would you say?

What message should we be taking to the world? Any ideas on how we can do this more effectively?

Read 2Tim 1:11,12:

And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. ¹² **That is why I am suffering as I am.** Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

When we present the true gospel message, will we experience some persecution? Why?

Why is the truth about God so viciously opposed? Who in history have been the greatest opponents to the truth about God? Has it been the agnostics – or the religious?

What about today? And from where does persecution come at the end of time, from the irreligious or the religious?

Read first sentence last paragraph, “God does not want us to suffer needlessly.” Do we need to suffer? When and why?

SUNDAY

Job – top question – “What is it about Job that makes him an example to be emulated?” thoughts?

Could the primary thing about Job that we would want to emulate be his knowledge of God, that no matter what happened he knew God is good?

The day is about patience – what has helps you gain more patience?

Do trials alone build patience? Or is it trials in the right mindset? I know many people whose lives are nothing but one trial after another and it never leads to patience.

What, in addition to trials is needed to develop patience?

For me it has definitely been coming to know God better, trusting Him with how things turn out, rather than believing I had to somehow calculate and make choices to ensure certain outcomes.

Read bottom green section, “Think about times...” thoughts?

“Pain is inevitable but misery is optional.”

TUESDAY

Naomi, who had her husband and two sons die, is comforted by two daughter in laws of Moabite descent, one, Ruth who converted to Israel and went back with Naomi eventually marrying Boaz and becoming a progenitor of Christ.

Thoughts about this? What do we learn from this?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Esther was born into a world in which her people were in captivity to another nation – but it doesn't sound like they were slaves, just ruled or governed by another government.

Bottom green section asks us to consider our situation, how we didn't choose where we were born or what circumstances in which we were raised and consider how we can see the positive and move past the negative?

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Contentment – what is it? How do we get it? What prevents us from experiencing it?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, thoughts? What do you hear? What does it mean?

Read and answer questions 1,2,3 and 5

Lesson 9 - Self Esteem

Sabbath:

Is the concept of „Self Esteem“ God given or has it resulted from sin??

Did Adam and Eve consider their self esteem before the fall??

Where do we see the first example of „Self Esteem“ gone wrong?? Hint – Isa. 14:12-14.

Did you know there are sports events for children where there are no winners / losers?? School classes where everyone gets the same grade?? All in the interest of improving self esteem.

Definitions of Self Esteem [yes, they are from Wikipedia – deal with it].

1. The original definition presents self-esteem as a ratio found by dividing one's successes in areas of life of importance to a given individual by the failures in them or one's "success / pretensions".[6]

Problems with this approach come from making self-esteem contingent upon success: this implies inherent instability because failure can occur at any moment.[7]

1. In the mid 1960s Morris Rosenberg and social-learning theorists defined self-esteem in terms of a stable sense of personal worth or worthiness. [Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996]

1. Nathaniel Branden in 1969 briefly defined self-esteem as "...the experience of being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and being worthy of happiness". This two-factor approach, as some have also called it, provides a balanced definition that seems to be capable of dealing with limits of defining self-esteem primarily in terms of competence or worth alone.[8]

Branden's (1969) description of self-esteem includes the following primary properties:

1. self-esteem as a basic human need, i.e., "...it makes an essential contribution to the life process", "...is indispensable to normal and healthy self-development, and has a value for survival."
2. self-esteem as an automatic and inevitable consequence of the sum of individuals' choices in using their consciousness
3. something experienced as a part of, or background to, all of the individuals thoughts, feelings and actions.

Self esteem is a concept of personality, for it to grow, we need to have self worth, and this self worth will be sought from embracing challenges that result in the showing of success.

Implicit self-esteem refers to a person's disposition to evaluate themselves positively or negatively in a spontaneous, automatic, or unconscious manner. It contrasts with explicit self-esteem, which entails more conscious and reflective self-evaluation. Both explicit self-esteem and implicit self-esteem are subtypes of self-esteem proper.

Implicit self-esteem is assessed using indirect measures of cognitive processing. These include the Name Letter Task^[9] and the Such indirect measures are designed to reduce awareness of, or control of, the process of assessment. When used to assess implicit self-esteem, they feature stimuli designed to represent the self, such as personal pronouns (e.g., "I") or letters in one's name.

[6] James, W. (1983). *The principles of psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1890).

[7] Crocker, J., & Park, L. E. (2004). "The costly pursuit of self-esteem". *Psychological Bulletin*, 130(3), 392–414.

[8] Mruk, C. (2006). *Self-Esteem research, theory, and practice: Toward a positive psychology of self-esteem* (3rd ed.). New York: Springer.

[9] Koole, S. L., & Pelham, B. W. (2003). On the nature of implicit self-esteem: The case of the name letter effect. In S. Spencer, S. Fein, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *Motivated social perception: The Ontario Symposium* (pp. 93-116). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

High self-esteem correlates highly with self-reported happiness. However, it is not clear which, if either, necessarily leads to the other.^[20] Additionally, self-esteem has been found to be related to forgiveness in close relationships, in that people with high self-esteem will be more forgiving than people with low self-esteem.^[21]

[20] Baumeister, Roy F., et al. (2003). "Does High Self-Esteem Cause Better Performance, Interpersonal Success, Happiness, or Healthier Lifestyles?", *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4 (1), pages 1–44; May 2003. (ed: other researchers: Jennifer D. Campbell, Joachim I. Krueger and Kathleen D. Vohs)

[21] Eaton, Struthers, & Santelli, 2006.

The concept of self-esteem has been criticized by different camps but notably by figures like Dalai Lama, Carl Rogers, Paul Tillich, and Alfred Korzybski.

Perhaps one of the strongest theoretical and operational critiques of the concept of self-esteem has come from American psychologist Albert Ellis who on numerous occasions criticized the philosophy as essentially self-defeating and ultimately destructive.^[24] Although acknowledging the human propensity and tendency to ego rating as innate, he has claimed that the philosophy of self-esteem in the last analysis is both unrealistic, illogical and self- and socially destructive – often doing more harm than good. Questioning the foundations and usefulness of generalized ego strength, he has claimed that self-esteem is based on arbitrary definitional premises, over-generalized, perfectionistic and grandiose thinking.^[24] Acknowledging that rating and valuing behaviours and characteristics is functional and even necessary, he sees rating and valuing human beings' totality and total selves as irrational, unethical and absolutistic. The healthier alternative to self-esteem according to him is unconditional self-acceptance and unconditional other-acceptance and these concepts are incorporated in his therapeutic system Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy. In 2005 he released a book with a detailed analysis of the concept of self-esteem titled "The Myth of Self-esteem".

[24] Ellis, A. (2001). *Feeling better, getting better, staying better*. Impact Publishers.

Rosenberg self-esteem scale

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

SA -A -D -SD

2.* At times, I think I am no good at all.

SA -A -D -SD

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

SA -A -D -SD

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

SA -A -D -SD

5. * I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

SA -A -D -SD

6. * I certainly feel useless at times.

SA -A -D -SD

7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

SA -A -D -SD

8. * I wish I could have more respect for myself.

SA -A -D -SD

9. * All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

SA -A -D -SD

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

SA -A -D -SD

Scoring: SA=3, A=2, D=1, SD=0. Items with an asterisk are reverse scored, that is, SA=0, A=1, D=2, SD=3. Sum the scores for the 10 items. The higher the score, the higher the self-esteem. Scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: The only means by which human beings can come to a true estimate of their worth is by looking at themselves through the eyes of God. God has placed a high price on us: the blood of His Son. [Teachers Quarterly].

Sunday:

Origins – Do our beliefs regarding humanity’s origin affect our self esteem?? Should it?? How could a belief in an evolutionary beginning damage „self esteem“??

Monday:

Do we see ourselves as others see us?? Do we generally see ourselves more positively or negatively than others see us?? Matt 22: 34-40.

34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. 35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” 37 Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” [c] 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: „Love your neighbor as yourself.” [d] 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Rom 12: 1-3.

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. 3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

Tuesday:

The lesson asks an important question: “How does gender/class/nationality prejudice affect people’s self esteem??

Gal. 3: 26-28.

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.

Wednesday:

Luke 15 – Parables of the lost sheep / coin / prodigal son.

Thursday:

Eph. 4:21-24.

21if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Did you know that deceit was lustful?? Does this sound like those who love lies more than the truth?

What does this “new self” look like??

Eph. 4: 25-31.

25 Therefore, putting away lying, “ Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another. 26 “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Friday:

Thoughts on the last quote from EGW??

—We lose many and rich blessings because we neglect to seek the Lord with humble hearts. When we come to Him in sincerity of heart, asking Him to reveal our defects, He will show us a true picture of ourselves, reflected in the mirror of His Word. Then, having seen ourselves as God sees us, let us not go away forgetting what manner of men we are. Let us study critically the features of our character that are defective, and seek for grace to make them like the pattern presented in the Word of God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Lake Union Herald*, November 3, 1909.

Jesus Wept The Bible and Human Emotions Lesson 10 1Q 2011

Jealousy

SUNDAY

Where did jealousy begin? Isa 14:12-14:

- How you have fallen from heaven,
 O morning star, son of the dawn!
 You have been cast down to the earth,
 you who once laid low the nations!
- ¹³ You said in your heart,
 "I will ascend to heaven;
 I will raise my throne
 above the stars of God;
 I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
 on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.
- ¹⁴ I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
 I will make myself like the Most High."

Who is this text referring to? Lucifer – what is the problem here?
 What is the root?

What do you think of the third paragraph, what insight does this give into what led to jealousy?

Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man, and because he was not, he was filled with envy, jealousy, and hatred. He desired to receive the highest honors in heaven next to God. {EW 145.1}

What was the source of jealousy? Was it not a basic misunderstanding of God, His nature, character and government?

In Isaiah 14:14 Lucifer said, "I will make myself like the Most High."

First, can a created being make himself like God?

Second, if Lucifer were to strive to actually be like God what would that have looked like?

What do we see in the life of Jesus, humble self-sacrifice. So what does it mean that Lucifer was striving to be like God and in doing so was seeking power, authority to rule, used practices of deceit and deception? Doesn't it mean that somewhere he had distorted in his mind the truth about God?

Read fourth paragraph, "By contrast..." thoughts? How does this save us? Why was this important? Is the lesson suggesting that Jesus came to reveal the truth about God to destroy the lies of Satan and win us to trust?

Read bottom green section, thoughts? Is it wrong to look at what others have, or is the problem in the motives when looking? Can you look at what someone else has and rejoice in their skill, ability, position, talent etc.? Can you look and be thankful the other person has their position, skill etc and not be jealous?

Can you also look at another and long to be like them without being jealous of them?

What did Paul mean when he said,

"Imitate me, then, just as I imitate Christ." 1Cor 11:1

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "So often..." thoughts? How have you seen jealousy arise in families?

- It's not fair...
- Why does he get to do and I don't?
- She got to why cant I?
- You let...

How do you answer your children on such issues?

Should we treat our children the same or should we purposely seek to treat them differently?

If one of your children was suffering from diabetes would they get to eat the same foods as the other children or would they have a special diet?

If one of your children had a learning disability, speech impediment, might they get some special training the others didn't get why?

Do all of your children have the exact same temperament, attitudes, ability to learn, willingness to learn?

Should we recognize our children as individuals and seek to provide what each child needs to help them develop Christlike character?

Might one child respond well to one form of discipline while another child respond differently?

I don't apologize for treating kids differently. I tell them they are unique and get their own individualized parenting plan.

The lesson talks about the jealousy Joseph's brothers had and how that jealousy led them to sell him as a slave and tell their father he was dead. Can you imagine the level of cruelty to do such a thing? Not just to Joseph, but what about to Jacob?

Read fourth paragraph, "But Joseph's attitude..." thoughts? Do you think Joseph should have forgiven as he did, outright, or should he have required some appeasement, some legal payment, something to expiate his wrath? Is Joseph more forgiving than God? Why do we suggest that God requires a blood payment in order to forgive?

Was Jesus death necessary to get God to forgive us or did God forgive outright and then send Jesus to fulfill a different purpose in our salvation?

What happens in your attitude toward God if you believe Jesus had to die in order to get God to forgive?

THURSDAY

Jealousy toward Jesus? Was there anyone jealous of Jesus when he was on earth? Was it the common people? Who was jealous of Jesus? Why?

Why would those who have dedicated their lives to studying scripture, why would religious leaders, theologians be jealous of Jesus?

What could have led these Bible scholars to get it so wrong?

As someone told me, while we press forward in the truth we must be sure not to go so far we go over an edge and fall off.

Now I have spent several years thinking about this – is there anything that can secure us in truth and keep us from going over a theological edge of error?

- In the study of the sciences also, we are to obtain a knowledge of the Creator. **All true science is but an interpretation of the handwriting of God in the material world.** Science brings from her research only fresh evidences of the wisdom and power of God. **Rightly understood, both the book of nature and the written word make us acquainted with God** by teaching us something of the wise and beneficent laws through which he works. {CE 66.2}
- **Rightly understood, both the revelations of science and the experiences of life are in harmony with the testimony of Scripture to the constant working of God in nature.** {Ed 130.3}

What do we hear? There are three threads of evidence that are to be harmonized, scripture, science and experience.

God's kingdom is not a theoretical kingdom but a real kingdom constructed with real elements, molecules, substance, individuals.

The problem with some is that they reject two of the three evidentiary threads and cling only to scripture, which becomes unanchored and thus they go over theological edges.

What happens if we study science disconnected and divorced from scripture? We become unanchored and go over the edge of evolutionism or godlessness. What happens if we study scripture divorced from science and experience? We go over the edge of false theologies which misrepresent God – this is exactly what has happened.

God's kingdom is built in harmony with His laws, His testable laws and this is scientific. Those who reject this and insist on using scripture divorced from science and experience can twist the scriptures to say anything they want. Some of the greatest opponents to our class take the approach that divorces scripture from science and experience.

Fortunately, one of the founders of our church didn't:

Experience is said to be the best teacher. Genuine experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge, but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. **Real experience is gained by a variety of careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits.** The results are marked with careful solicitude, and an anxious **desire to learn, to improve, and to reform on every point that is not in harmony with physical and moral laws.**
{CTBH 109.1}

That which many term experience is not experience at all; it has resulted from mere habit, or from a course of indulgence, thoughtlessly and often ignorantly followed. There **has not been a fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved in the action. Experience which is opposed to natural law,--which is in conflict with the unchangeable principles of nature,--is not to be relied upon.** Superstition arising from a diseased imagination is often arrayed in

opposition to reason and to scientific principles. To many a person, the idea that others may gainsay what he has learned by experience, seems folly, and even cruelty itself. But there are more errors received and held through false ideas of experience than from any other cause. There are many invalids today who will ever remain such because they cannot be convinced that their experience is not to be relied upon. {CTBH 109.2}

There is a science of Christianity to be mastered,--a science as much deeper, broader, higher than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, trained; for we are to do service for God in ways that are not in harmony with **inborn inclination**. There are **hereditary** and cultivated tendencies to evil that must be overcome. ... Every act, every word, every thought, is to be in accord with these principles. {8T 314.1}

What anchors can we have when pushing forward in the truth?

- Jesus is the lens through which we understand God – any doctrine of God that is contrary to what we see in the life of Jesus is wrong, misunderstood
- Jesus is the lens through which we understand the OT scripture, we do not understand Jesus through the lens of the OT.
- God's testable laws, the law of liberty, law of love, law of worship, laws of nature and science. God does not violate His laws as they originate in His character. Thus theologies which have God in the position of violating liberty, being cosmic executioner, forcing, intimidating, coercing are wrong for they are contrary to testable laws.

Every law governing the human system is to be strictly regarded; for it is as truly a law of God as is the word of Holy Writ; and every willful deviation from obedience to this law is as certainly sin as a violation of the moral law. All nature expresses the law of God, but in our physical structure Jehovah has written His law with His own finger upon every

thrilling nerve, upon every living fiber, and upon every organ of the body. We shall suffer loss and defeat, if we step out of nature's path, which God Himself has marked out, into one of our own devising. {Temperance 213.5}

Perfection of character cannot be attained when the **laws of nature are disregarded; for this is transgression of the law of God. His law is written by His own finger upon every nerve, every muscle, every fiber of our being, upon every faculty which has been entrusted to man.** These gifts are bestowed, not to be abused and corrupted, but to be used to His honor and glory in the uplifting of humanity.... {OHC 266.2}

The **relation that exists between mind and body is very intimate: when one is affected, the other is always more or less in sympathy.** It is **impossible** for men, while under the power of sinful, health-destroying habits, to appreciate sacred truths. When the intellect is clouded, the moral powers are enfeebled, and sin does not look sinful. The most ennobling, grand, and glorious themes of God's Word seem but idle tales. Satan can then easily snatch away the good seed that has been sown in the heart; for the soul is in no condition to comprehend or understand its true value. It is thus that selfish, health-destroying indulgences are counteracting the influence of the message which is to prepare a people for the great day of God. {OHC 266.3}

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." **Selfishness is death.** No organ of the body could live should it confine its service to itself. The heart, failing to send its lifeblood to the hand and the head, would quickly lose its power. As our lifeblood, so is the love of Christ diffused through every part of His mystical body. We are members one of another, and the soul that refuses to impart will perish. And "what is a man profited," said Jesus, "if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" {DA 417.2}

In order to do successful work for the Lord, we must be willing to do and to suffer cheerfully for His sake. **Selfishness is death.** No organ of the body could live, should it confine its service to itself. The heart, failing to send its life-blood to the hand and the head, would quickly lose its power. We are members one of another, and the soul that refuses to impart will perish. {ST, February 3, 1904 par. 5}

Christ came to this earth "as He that serveth." The angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." **The same law of service is written upon all things in nature.** The birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the trees of the forest, the leaves, the grass, and the flowers, the sun in the heavens, and the stars of light,--all have their ministry. Lake and ocean, river and water-spring,--each takes to give. {ST, February 3, 1904 par. 6}

Any examples of how scripture divorced from God's testable laws, science and nature, result in false theologies?

- HyperCalvinism – God predetermines who will be saved and who will be lost, we have no choice – this theology is based on reading scripture divorced from the law of liberty, which is a testable law and which reveals love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom
- God will use His power to inflict pain and suffering and torment upon sinners – again, violates God's law of love and liberty, violates the evidence demonstrated in the life of Christ and thus leads to false ideas about God

Does it matter if our theology becomes twisted?

- **The position that it is of no consequence what men believe, is one of Satan's most successful deceptions.** He knows that the **truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver;** therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute false theories, fables, another gospel. From the beginning, the servants of God have contended against false teachers, not merely as vicious men, but as inculcators of falsehoods that were fatal to the soul. Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul,

firmly and fearlessly opposed those who were turning men from the Word of God. {GC88 520.2}

- The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. **There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood.** It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

Read second paragraph, "How often..." thoughts?

What evidence did Christ provide that was most convincing? What evidence is to be relied upon and what evidence is not ultimately most convincing?

What about evidence of miracles? Was this the most persuasive evidence Christ gave? Why or why not?

Can miracles be counterfeited? What about a talking serpent? What can Satan not counterfeit? The perfect selfless life of Christ in harmony with God's laws and principles. A human being living out God's character perfectly this is the greatest miracle and evidence of His identity.

The Apostles performed miracles, but they did not have perfect character!

Read third paragraph, "Perhaps because..." thoughts? Could this same thing be a problem in our day, in our church?

When a movement becomes institutionalized it often loses its mission and stops moving forward and instead becomes focused on

institutional security, protection and promotion – are we in danger of this?

What can we do to revitalize the church to fulfill its mission to get off the need to protect the institution and instead stand up to do what is right – promote the final message of mercy to the world?

TUESDAY

The lesson is about Saul's jealousy of David – thoughts or questions about this?

Why was Saul jealous? Was Saul afraid? Of what was Saul afraid?

What error in thinking led Saul to become afraid of David? Did Saul come to believe he had some right to the throne? Did Saul come to believe he was on the throne by his own authority and needed to rely on self to protect what he had?

Notice fear and selfishness is the root of jealousy. What if Saul would have remembered that he was merely fulfilling God's purpose for Israel and that he would serve as long as God wanted him to?

Do we ever come to think that our position is because of our ability or right, and forget we serve at God's will? Do you have the attitude that if God has another who can do it better that would be okay? Or do we feel we need to protect self?

Read fifth paragraph, "Jealousy generates..." thoughts?

Why does jealousy generate negative emotions? Because our consciences convict us when we act upon jealousy, in our hearts, judgment, conscience we know we are wrong. We can twist our minds as much as we want but we get no peace until we embrace the truth and stop trying to make life work out our way.

WEDNESDAY

Read fifth paragraph, "Saul, by letting..." thoughts?

Is there any sin that doesn't hurt us? Why are we injured when we sin? From where does the injury arise?

Does God send angels to punish sin? Where does the idea that God must punish sin arise?

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.** When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. **By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {1SM 235.2}

Thoughts? What impact does it have on your attitude toward God if you believe that God is required to punish sin? Why does He not have to?

What has God been using His power to do, punish sin, or hold back the full consequences that sin would have otherwise brought?

FRIDAY

Read question 2 – thoughts? The Bible says,

“Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” EX 34:14

What does this mean? If jealousy is evil, how can God be jealous?

Is there a difference between God being jealous for the good of another, for another’s happiness and being jealous for self?

Dictionary definitions of jealousy:

- 1: a** : intolerant of rivalry or unfaithfulness **b** : disposed to suspect rivalry or unfaithfulness
- 2**: hostile toward a rival or one believed to enjoy an advantage
- 3**: vigilant in guarding a possession

Read and discuss questions 1 and 4

Jesus Wept The Bible and Human Emotions Lesson 11 1Q 2011

Freedom From Addictions

SABBATH

Read memory verse – What does it mean? Does it mean that if an addict reads this verse, prays to Jesus then they will be free of their addiction?

All heaven is interested in the salvation of man, and is ready to pour upon him her beneficent gifts, **if he will comply with the conditions Christ has made:** "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean." 2 Corinthians 6:17.
{Counsels on Health 288.1}

Are there conditions to salvation? Are there conditions a sinner or addict must comply with in order to gain freedom? Or does God choose –

Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

¹⁴ What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. Romans 9:13-15

There was no arbitrary choice on the part of God by which Esau was shut out from the blessings of salvation. The gifts of His grace through Christ are free to all. **There is no election but one's own by which any may perish. . . . Every soul is elected who will work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.** He is elected who will put on the armor and fight the good fight of faith. He is elected who will watch unto prayer, who will search the Scriptures, and flee from temptation. He is elected who will have faith continually, and who will be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. **The provisions of redemption are free to all; the results of redemption will be enjoyed by those who have complied with the conditions.** {CC 71.4}

What are the conditions to salvation?

The **blessings of the new covenant are grounded purely on mercy in forgiving unrighteousness and sins.** . . . All who humble their hearts, confessing their sins, will find mercy and grace and assurance. Has God, in showing mercy to the sinner, ceased to be just? Has He

dishonored His holy law, and will He henceforth pass over the violation of it? God is true. He changes not. **The conditions of salvation are ever the same. Life, eternal life, is for all who will obey God's law.** . . . {AG 136.5}

Under **the new covenant, the conditions by which eternal life may be gained are the same as under the old--perfect obedience.** . . . In the new and better covenant, **Christ has fulfilled the law for the transgressors of law, if they receive Him by faith as a personal Saviour.** . . . In the better covenant **we are cleansed** from sin by the blood of Christ. {AG 136.6}

What do you hear? What are the conditions for salvation? Notice, Christ as our substitute did something we could not do – and how do we benefit? What is cleansed by Christ? Records? No! We are cleansed, we receive Christ, we become partaker of the divine nature, the law is written on our minds!

What are the conditions for healing and restoration? Perfect obedience to the law of God – why?

What is the condition for healing someone from sickness? Perfect harmony with the laws of health! It is the same in God's universe!

Christ came to achieve what we could not – a perfect humanity. What do we receive in union with Christ?

- I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Eze 36:26
- No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Romans 2:29 (DT 10:16, 30:6).
- This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. Heb 8:10
- Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2Co 5:17
- For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 2Pet 1:4 NASB

- When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

Can we, in union with Christ, be free from addiction? Do we have a role to play or is something done with our consent but without our effort?

- While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the **divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part.** His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}
- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).-MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . .** Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

So the balance is as follows:

- The Remedy to sin was fully achieved by Christ and no one else.
- We can do nothing to add to what Christ has done to save mankind, but, each person now must choose to open their heart in trust to receive from the Holy Spirit the benefit of Christ's victory in their life.
- When we do this a supernatural transformation of character, desire, motive, and attitude takes place.
- In this process there is a daily, ongoing, and constant cooperative work of the individual with the Divine in which the person chooses to continue to follow the direction of the Heavenly Physician until they are one day fully healed and set free to be self-controlled beings operating on the law of love, which has been fully restored into the heart. (Heb 8:10).

What is an addiction, what definition would you give?

The compulsive engagement in behaviors that have short term reward

But bring long term destruction

What can you name that fits this definition?

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Drugs
- Sex/porn
- Gambling
- Work
- Relationships
- Video games
- TV
- Food

SUNDAY

Alcohol – Read Proverbs 23:29-35:

Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
 Who has strife? Who has complaints?
 Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?
 30 Those who linger over wine,
 who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.
 31 Do not gaze at wine when it is red,
 when it sparkles in the cup,
 when it goes down smoothly!
 32 In the end it bites like a snake
 and poisons like a viper.
 33 Your eyes will see strange sights
 and your mind imagine confusing things.
 34 You will be like one sleeping on the high seas,
 lying on top of the rigging.
 35 "They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt!
 They beat me, but I don't feel it!
 When will I wake up
 so I can find another drink?"

Thoughts?

What danger is there in alcohol?

- Average age of first drink is 12
- 20% of teens 12-20 are binge drinkers
- Adolescent drinkers scored worse than non-users on vocabulary, general information, memory, memory retrieval and at least three other tests
- Perform worse in school, are more likely to fall behind and have an increased risk of social problems, depression, suicidal thoughts and violence
- Alcohol affects the sleep cycle, resulting in impaired learning and memory as well as disrupted release of hormones necessary for growth and maturation
- Alcohol use increases risk of stroke among young drinkers
 - <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/no-index/physician-resources/9416.shtml>

Alcohol while pregnant:

- Increased psychosis in offspring¹
- Alcohol tastes better to offspring²
- Mental retardation increased in offspring¹

- Multiple organ defects in offspring¹
 - Fetal alcohol syndrome¹
 - 1 drink/week or less^{4,5,6}
 - shorter children/smaller heads
 - Behavior problems
 - Delinquency
 - Emotional problems
1. . Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. Updated 5/2/06.
 2. Youngentob, S. Glendinning, J. Fetal ethanol exposure increases ethanol intake by making it smell and taste better PNAS 2009 106 (13) 5359-5364;
 4. Sood, B., et al. Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and Childhood Behavior at Age 6 to 7. *Pediatrics*, volume 108, number 2, August 2001, page e34.
 5. Sayal, K., et al. Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and Gender Differences in Childhood Mental Health Problems: A Longitudinal Population-Based Study. *Pediatrics*, volume 119, number 2, February 2007, pages e426-434.
 6. Streissguth, A.P., et al. Risk Factors for Adverse Life Outcomes in Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects. *J Dev Behav Pediatr*, volume 25, number 4, August 2004, pages 228-238.
- Low Neuropeptide Y in amygdala is associated with increased alcohol preference in animal models¹
 - NPY receptor knockout mice show alcohol preference²
 - Olling et al 2009 demonstrated that ETOH causes³
 - Decreased histone deacetylase (gene inhibitors)
 - Resulting in increased NPY in amygdala and low anxiety
 - Alcohol withdraw increased histone deacetylase thus suppressing NPY and increasing anxiety
 - Administration of a drug that blocked histone deacetylase blocked withdraw anxiety
 - 1. Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research Volume 23, Issue 6, pages 1023–1030, June 1999
 - 2. The Journal of Neuroscience, 2002, 22:RC208:1-6
 - 3. Journal of Neuroscience Research Volume 87, Issue 10, pages 2386–2397, 1 August 2009

Thoughts? Alcohol damages brain, alters gene expression, impairs thinking, increases anxiety and fear circuitry firing.

If all of this is so then what do we make of Proverbs 31:4-7:

- “It is not for kings, O Lemuel—
 not for kings to drink wine,
 not for rulers to crave beer,
 5 lest they drink and forget what the law decrees,
 and deprive all the oppressed of their rights.
 6 Give beer to those who are perishing,

- wine to those who are in anguish;
 7 let them drink and forget their poverty
 and remember their misery no more.

Thoughts? Do we follow this Biblical guidance today? How about when we give cough syrup to those who are sick and it is suspended in an alcohol solution? This is speaking of using alcohol as a medicinal agent, to reduce suffering for those who are in a state deserving of medical intervention. Fortunately we have much better medicines today than alcohol.

Read fourth paragraph, "Alcohol, as well as..." thoughts? It clearly implies that psychoactive substances have a universally negative moral influence. But don't you think this should say "other psychoactive substances of abuse"? Antidepressants and antipsychotics are also psychoactive substances which restore healthy functioning and improve moral decision making.

MONDAY

Sex addiction –

- Average American teen watches:
 - 15,000 sexual acts per year
- Children don't differentiate between reality and TV
- Media normalizes sex
- Teen programming has more sexual content than adult
- 2/3 teens have seen pornography on the internet
- 3/6 major networks will not allow advertising for condoms or birth control, yet all allow ads for male enhancement drugs
- 6 studies document that the higher exposure to media sexual content the earlier kids have sex
- \$57 billion worldwide (\$12 billion US)
 - Porn revenue is larger than all combined revenues of all professional football, baseball and basketball franchises.
 - US porn revenue exceeds the combined revenues of ABC, CBS, and NBC (\$6.2 billion)
 - Child pornography generates \$3 billion annually
- 4.2 million pornographic websites (12%)
- 68 million daily porn web searches (25%)
- 20% of men visit porn sites at work
- 47% Christians say porn is a major problem in their home

- Visitors to porn sites 72% male 28% female
- A 1996 Promise Keepers survey at one of their stadium events revealed that over 50% of the men in attendance were involved with pornography within one week of attending the event.
- 51% of pastors say cyber-porn is a possible temptation. 37% say it is a current struggle (Christianity Today, Leadership Survey, 12/2001).
- Over half of evangelical pastors admits viewing pornography last year.
- Roger Charman of Focus on the Family's Pastoral Ministries reports that approximately 20 percent of the calls received on their Pastoral Care Line are for help with issues such as pornography and compulsive sexual behavior.
- In a 2000 Christianity Today survey, 33% of clergy admitted to having visited a sexually explicit Web site. Of those who had visited a porn site, 53% had visited such sites "a few times" in the past year, and 18% visit sexually explicit sites between a couple of times a month and more than once a week.
- 29% of born again adults in the U.S. feel it is morally acceptable to view movies with explicit sexual behavior (The Barna Group).
- 57% of pastors say that addiction to pornography is the most sexually damaging issue to their congregation (Christians and Sex Leadership Journal Survey, March 2005).

Thoughts? We have a problem –

Read last paragraph, "God is willing..." thoughts? Is the problem an addict faces the problem of obtaining a legal pardon from God? Was this ever a problem?

What is the number one obstacle for the addict to find freedom?

The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness. {FLB 87.4}

Denial, I don't have a problem, I can handle it...

What do those who engage in porn always forget? To actually think about the health and welfare of the people they are exploiting.

TUESDAY

Gambling

- 85% of U.S. adults have gambled at least once in their lives, 80% in the past year. [National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, January 2011](#).
- College graduates (24%) are significantly more likely than non-graduates (14%) to gamble on sports [Gallup Poll, February 2008](#).
- Gambling occurs at a higher percentage in higher-income households (72%) versus lower-income households (55%) [Gallup Poll, February 2008](#). But problem gamblers are more likely to come from lower income households.

Card Rooms	\$1.18 billion
Commercial Casinos	\$34.41 billion ¹
Charitable Games and Bingo	\$2.22 billion
Indian Casinos	\$26.02 billion ²
Legal Bookmaking	\$168.8 million
Lotteries	\$24.78 billion
Pari-mutuel Wagering	\$3.50 billion
GRAND TOTAL	\$92.27 billion

http://www.americangaming.org/Industry/factsheets/statistics_detail.cfv?id=7

What does gambling look like? What is included in gambling?

- Casinos, lotteries, bookmaking, track
- What about Stock market?
- What about Gambling with life choices? Relationships? Russian Roulette?

What is it that fuels the behavior of gambling?

- Desire for some form of self enhancement, something to give self a boost, advantage, either money, fame, power, (selfishness), combined with....
- Self deception – creating imaginary fantasies about what winning looks like rather than honest evaluation of what is transpiring, which is reinforced by...
- Intermittent success to keep the self-deception alive

What needs to be done to resolve this? Truth, love – how might these help a gambler?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – “The Bible...” thoughts?

What leads one to have money as an idol?

Would it be fear and insecurity and seeking to protect self? Would it be a failure to see the universe as it really is and the true valuelessness of money?

Read bottom green – thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “The intensive desire to...” thoughts?

Do you think Body Dysmorphic Disorder or Anorexia Nervosa is an addiction?

They are not classified as addictions by the DSM IV TR because they are not addictions they are problems of a different nature.

BDD and Anorexia are not about worshipping the body, or making the body an idol as the lesson suggests or becoming addicted to certain treatments or behaviors, or loving self and worshipping self-

Just the opposite – these disorders are related to deep seated insecurity, fear and distorted self image typically related to some psychological traumas or problems earlier in life that were unable to be resolved and thus got channeled into these symptoms.

While the addict seeks the behavior for a high, thrill, escape stress, and calm self – the BDD and Anorexic do not get joy or highs or thrills or reward, in the classic sense, from their behaviors. These behaviors are driven primarily as an attempt to avoid some other pain and the behaviors themselves are painful to endure. These disorders are much closer to Obsessive Compulsive Disorder than Addictions.

However, there is a form of self-centeredness in which self can become an idol and we become superficial and focused on ourselves, appearance and become petty judges of those around us and going to church is a weekly beauty contest. This type of person is also not an addict but a shallow self-centered person who has yet to experience genuine love for others.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2 and 4

What can an addict do?

12 Step Programs:

- 1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addictions, that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. "Jesus Christ is the Highest Power."
- 4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5. We admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7. We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings.
- 8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
- 11. We sought, through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12. ***Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps***, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Steps to Recovery:

- Set a Date
- Stop other substances
- Trigger Identification and Replacement
- Join Forces
- Buddy Up – 12 Steps get a sponsor
- Exercise
- Right Use of Imagination
- Drink Plenty of Water and Fresh Juices
- Pray/Meditate/Higher Power
- Clean Everything

- Avoid Mental Games
- Remind Yourself the Reasons for Quitting
- Consider Medications

Jesus Wept The Bible and Human Emotions Lesson 13 1Q 2011

Partnership with Jesus

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs – “In recent years...” thoughts?

What does it mean? Why is religion a safeguard to guilt for the committed believer? Does it mean they are living healthier and holier lives?

Or could it mean religiosity produces a false security to allow people to avoid guilt while indulging in sin?

What if one adheres to a system that instructs to partake mass regularly, confess sins to a priest, pay penance, recite our fathers and hail marys, light candles and one adheres to these rules and after every sin one confess it to the priest and receive absolution, might one avoid feeling guilty while running a crime syndicate or carrying out murder?

What if one adheres to a system that instructs to worship on the seventh day, eat certain foods, dress in a particular way, don't watch certain things, pay a regular tithe and one is committed to this and strongly complies, does this mean such a one is holy? Might one harbor resentment, selfishness, pride and elitism yet not feel guilt but instead judge someone who wears earrings or worships on a different day?

Can religion provide a FALSE security in which one feels secure, avoids guilt, believes one is eternally saved, yet in which they are not?

Christ said,

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons

and perform many miracles?’²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ Matt 7:22,23

What does this mean? How can this happen?

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good,⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. 2Tim 3:1-5

Thoughts? What does this mean? Are these people irreligious? No, these are the religious, but they deny the power – what is the power?

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. Romans 1:16

What is the power? The gospel and what is the gospel? Is the gospel the good news that God is angry and wrathful over our sin and is forced, by holiness and justice to use His mighty power to torture and kill us, but Jesus loves us and pleads His blood to the Father and all those who accept this payment God won't have to kill? Would it be good news to spend eternity with a God who is as Satan alleges?

What did Satan allege?

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. DA 761

Would it be good news if this were true? The eternal gospel is the Good News, not only of eternity future, but eternity past and in eternity past Christ had not died for sinners. The eternal Good News is the Good News which has always been true and which will always be true and that is the Good News about God Himself!

The more sincerely a man believes falsehood, the more fatal it is to his own soul. He earnestly advocates this falsehood, and those who have not been sanctified through the truth accept it. **The more he advocates error, the more certain he becomes that it is truth,** and that truth is error, and must be exposed and denounced. He is imbued with a zeal that is in accordance with the zeal of his leader. {RH, May 3, 1898 par. 10}

A striking contrast is seen between those who practise the truth and those who have joined the ranks of the apostate. **Meek and lowly will those be who follow the Lamb of God.** Boastful, denunciatory, and lawless in word and deed will those be who war against the commandments of God. They are thus because they have the spirit and attributes of the dragon, who was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus. {RH, May 3, 1898 par. 11}

God's law is immutable and eternal; for it is the transcript of his character, and by it God designs to bring the family on earth into harmony with the family in heaven. God has made it possible for men to obey his requirements, by making it possible for them to be partakers of the divine nature. Thus our characters may be molded in accordance with the law of God. And by willing obedience to this law our characters are conformed to the character of God. {RH, May 3, 1898 par. 12}

What does the law require? Why? How do we become obedient to God's law? Through partaking of Christ, we are actually transformed to love God and others more than self.

What does religion do to those who have exchanged the truth of God for a lie? Paul tells us right after he tells us that the gospel is the power of God to save, that when we exchange the truth of God for a lie the mind becomes darkened, depraved and futile.

Is all religion of equal value? Will all religion result in healing of the mind/heart/character? Or can some religion cause one to feel secure while destroying the mind?

Read last paragraph, “Prayer and Bible...” thoughts? Does it matter which Jesus one is using as their example?

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, “That must have...” thoughts? What does this mean? Doesn't it mean Jesus journeyed on earth as a human, with a human physiology, strength, brain and overcame as a human being relying solely on His Father in faith and not using His own divine power?

The lesson states prayer is a positive factor in our mental and spiritual health – does it matter to whom one prays? Weren't the prophets of Baal, who opposed Elijah, praying? Was it a positive factor in their mental and spiritual health?

What about the prayers of those who live in fear of God? “God please be merciful, please don't be mad at me, please don't punish me, please God....”

How about the prayer, “Please bless mommy, daddy, the missionaries in China...” the perfunctory, rote prayer?

What kind of prayer is helpful to mental health?

MONDAY

The lesson lists a long list of benefits from regular church attendance and is it true these benefits can be associated with church attendance?

- Does this mean if you experience these benefits you are attending the “right” church?
- Does it mean all church attendance is equally healthy?
- Are there any methods to determine whether a particular group is healthy or not?
 - How about if the group doesn’t focus on mining the truth from scripture but instead promotes emotional experiences? Can you experience positive emotional benefit from a community like this? Will it necessarily result in spiritual growth?
 - What about a community in which hierarchy determines the thinking for the parishioners? Can one experience a sense of emotional peace and security from following the directions of the leader? Will it necessarily result in spiritual growth?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

What can we do to foster a healthier relationship with our local church? If there is a rift with another, individual or group, does it mean we have necessarily done something wrong? What happened to Lucifer’s relationship with God? Did God do something wrong?

But given we are not God, it is a good chance there are things we can do better than we have done thus far. Any suggestions on how we can have a healthier relationship with our local church?

TUESDAY

Forgiveness – what happens if one refuses to forgive? What does it say about the one who refuses to forgive? What happens to the person who refuses to forgive?

Unforgiveness hardens the heart, and physiologically causes activation of the stress pathways, increases physical and mental health problems.

Is this avoidable? Can a person refuse to forgive and not be damaged by this refusal? What if a person held out for some payment, some appeasement, some abasement on the part of the other before they forgave? What would that attitude do to the one refusing to forgive?

What about God? Does God forgive outright or does God withhold forgiveness until some appeasement, abasement, payment? Did God need some payment to be given to Him in order to forgive?

If He did would it be forgiveness? Can you collect a debt and forgive it also? If some owes you \$100 and you collect it after collecting the debt do you say, now that you have paid your debt I forgive your debt? Do you notice the legal model has God being paid our debt by the blood of the Son, but Jesus said the Father forgives us our debts, which is it?

Consider the parable of Jesus: Mt 18:21-35,

Thoughts? Did the king require some payment in order to forgive? Why do we say God couldn't forgive without a legal payment?

The lesson states the idea that if we do not forgive God will not forgive us, "the thought is terrifying." Why is this thought terrifying?

How do we understand the idea that God will not forgive us if we don't forgive others?

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. **It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.** David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west,

so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

Can we experience this transformation of heart if we refuse to forgive and instead hold grudges? So is God unforgiving toward us if we refuse to forgive, or is our unforgiving heart and obstacle to experience the healing that God's free forgiveness would bring?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "The SDA..." thoughts? Should these two branches be separate or should they be integrated? Why?

The medical missionary work is to be to the work of the church as the right arm to the body. The third angel goes forth proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. **The medical missionary work is the gospel in practice.** All lines of work are to be harmoniously blended in giving the invitation: "Come; for all things are now ready." {8T 77.2}

Again and again I have been instructed that the medical missionary work is to bear the same relation to the work of the third angel's message that the arm and hand bear to the body. Under the direction of the divine Head they are to work unitedly in preparing the way for the coming of Christ. The right arm of the body of truth is to be constantly active, constantly at work, and God will strengthen it. **But it is not to be made the body.** At the same time the body is not to say to the arm, "I have no need of thee." The body has need of the arm in order to do active, aggressive work. Both have their appointed work, and each will suffer great loss if worked independently of the other.--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 288. {ChS 134.4}

The health message is to be the right arm of our work because it not only opens doors, but models most powerfully the plan of salvation as God's plan to heal us from sin and restore His law of love in our minds. It is "the gospel in practice." Why? Because the

practice of medicine operates upon the law of love. Only in cooperation with God's design template are physical ailments cured and that means leading people to understand the law of love. As they see this law in nature, through the health message, their minds can be elevated to see the reality of God's character. The reason it is the "right arm" and not the "body," is that we need mental/spiritual healing, not just physical healing. We need heart/mind renewal with fear and selfishness removed and love restored within. So if we made the medical missionary work the "body," we would merely help people live longer in sin, rather than helping them experience, through the Holy Spirit, renewal of mind, heart and character.

Thoughts?

Last sentence of second paragraph states, "There's something wired in us, something not totally eradicated by six thousand years of sin, that makes us feel good, even whole, when we serve others."

Thoughts?

Is there something wired in us, or is it something else working in us?

The Lord says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." **The enmity does not exist as a natural fact.** As soon as Adam sinned, he was in harmony with the first great apostate, and at war with God; and **if God had not interfered** in man's behalf, Satan and man would have formed a confederacy against heaven, and carried on united opposition against the God of hosts. **There is no natural enmity between evil angels and evil men;** both are evil through transgression of the law of God, and evil will always league against good. Fallen men and fallen angels enter into a desperate companionship. {ST, July 11, 1895 par. 5}

Is there something wired in us, or is there a power outside of us working to deliver us from our wiring?

Why do we get healthier when we minister to others?

THURSDAY

Top question, I love this question, “What reasons do we have for putting our hope in the Lord?”

- God intercedes to hold at bay the damage which unremedied sin would bring – he intercedes in our minds/hearts, with Satanic powers, and Christ interceded in the course sin would have done to the human race and overcame.
- God revealed Himself as perfectly selfless in Christ. What does it mean that Christ had all power but wouldn't use it to save Himself? Can you trust a God like that? What happens to the evidence when people undermine the divinity of Christ?
- What about in your own life?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph,

Every ray of light shed upon others will be reflected upon our own hearts. Every kind and sympathizing word spoken to the sorrowful, every act to relieve the oppressed, and every gift to supply the necessities of our fellow beings, given or done with an eye to God's glory, will result in blessings to the giver.

Those who are thus working are obeying a law of heaven and will receive the approval of God. The pleasure of doing good to others imparts a glow to the feelings which flashes through the nerves, quickens the circulation of the blood, and induces mental and physical health. {4T 56.2}

Thoughts? Why?

Read and discuss questions 2 and 4

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 1 2Q 2011

I have heard several rumors around the community that this class is composed of a group of people who don't think for themselves, a group of people who have surrendered their thinking to Dr. Jennings and come each week to class to hear what I have to say.

This idea has been heard all over the community – we know this is not true. One thing which might inadvertently give this impression is if someone were to say, “Dr. Jennings said in class this week...”etc. I want to encourage you, as always, to believe nothing because I say it, but to think through what I have said, examine the evidence, make up your own mind, and then when you are convinced of the truth present it as your own – don't attribute it to me but say “The Bible says!” or “The evidence says!”

INTRODUCTION

Read first paragraph – “We are awash...”

The lesson is correct – we are awash in symbols – what is the danger in symbols? That we might draw the wrong meaning from the symbol.

What about the rainbow – a symbol given in the Bible to remind us of what? What about today? What message is being proclaimed by a rainbow flag or a rainbow bumper sticker? Do we have to be careful what meaning we derive from a symbol? Let's keep this in mind the entire quarter.

In the Loom of Heaven

SABBATH

Read memory verse, “Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.” Rom 4:7

Thoughts? What does this text mean? The words are symbols, what is the meaning? Do sins get covered? Is God's plan of salvation nothing more than a cosmic cover-up? Is it a great cosmetic, covering over defect and blemish?

My paraphrase of this verse is: "Happy are they whose wicked minds are restored to perfect purity, whose selfishness is eradicated.

Read first paragraph, "Christ..." thoughts? How do we understand this?

Did you notice this sentence, "Christ has made reconciliation for sin, and borne all its ignominy, reproach, and punishment..."? Where does punishment for sin arise? Notice she didn't say, bore the Father's infliction of punishment for sin.

Here we have the covering metaphor again – is it a cover-up? Is it the candy coated rotten-apple? Just cover the sin, cover the defect, paint over the rot, put a band aid over the necrosis, is that what this mean?

How have you heard this theory put forth?

Jump to MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "What hope..." thoughts?

What is generally missing from the traditional explanation of this symbolism?

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every

requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.** {COL 311.4}

Is there a difference between covering over sin and actually transforming the sinner? Is there a difference between getting a legal credit in a record book and getting transformed?

In fact, the theory typically given leads us astray because it undermines the reality of what is transpiring. They talk about Christ's perfect law keeping being applied to our record – let's use this language, and accept that the record of Christ gets applied to our record in heaven – next question how? How could Christ's perfect law keeping get applied to our records?

What is recorded in our records?

Remember, **your character is being daguerreotyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case?** Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? **Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb?** "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" [Revelation 22:12]. . . . {TSB 62.1}

So if we take this example of Christ perfect law keeping being applied to our record in heaven, what is the route such law keeping must necessarily take to get into our records?

It must go through our own hearts and minds as the records in heaven actually record the condition of our characters. We have either been won back to trust in God or we have not. This other idea of something happening in a record book outside, separate and distinct from what is transpiring in us is a fiction and a distortion. It does put God in the business of misrepresenting reality.

Classically it is taught that God says we are righteous when we are not righteous. Think about that.

Read next paragraph, “Paul said in Romans...” thoughts? Notice the lesson itself states that it was after Abraham trusted God that he was recognized as righteous. What is the natural state of our hearts?

Do we naturally “trust” God or is the carnal heart at war with God? Thus, which came first, God’s recognition that Abraham was righteous, or a change in Abraham from distrusting God to trust in God? God is working to actually cleanse, heal, restore, rebuild, renew, regenerate our hearts and minds and rewrite His law of love in us, to win us back to trust in Him. It is only when we experience that trust in Him that righteousness occurs in the life, and then subsequently in the record of the believer.

The Greek word translated imputed or credited is: *logizomai* and means:

3049 λογίζομαι [*logizomai* /log·id·zom·ahee/] v. Middle voice from 3056; TDNT 4:284; TDNTA 536; GK 3357; **41 occurrences**; AV translates as “think” nine times, “impute”

v v: verb

TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

TDNTA Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume

GK Goodrick-Kohlenberger

AV Authorized Version

eight times, “reckon” six times, “count” five times, “account” four times, “suppose” twice, “reason” once, “number” once, and translated miscellaneous five times. **1** to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over. 1A to take into account, to make an account of. 1A1 metaph. to pass to one’s account, to impute. 1A2 a thing is reckoned as or to be something, i.e. as availing for or equivalent to something, as having the like force and weight. 1B to number among, reckon with. 1C to reckon or account. **2 to reckon inward, count up or weigh the reasons, to deliberate. 3 by reckoning up all the reasons, to gather or infer. 3A to consider, take into account, weigh, meditate on. 3B to suppose, deem, judge. 3C to determine, purpose, decide.** *Additional Information: This word deals with reality. If I “logizomai” or reckon that my bank book has \$25 in it, it has \$25 in it. Otherwise I am deceiving myself. This word refers to facts not suppositions.* ¹

Thoughts? Is imputed righteousness separated from an actual change in the person or are they inextricably connected? Listen to some quotations from one of the founders of our church and see how you hear the meaning of imputed righteousness:

Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul **may be kept free from sin**; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation. . . . In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. **Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.** He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. {God’s Amazing Grace 181.4}

How do you hear this description of imputed righteousness? It is through imputed righteousness we are “made” righteous. Does

¹Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario : Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G3049

being made righteous mean something different than being “declared” righteous, or being “accounted” righteous, or being “credited” with righteousness?

Metaphor in the Bible is leprosy – when did the High Priest declare someone clean, before or after they were made clean? Leprosy was a metaphor for sin – Christ cleansed the lepers and then told them to go to the priest to be “declared” clean.

“By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him. The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. {God’s Amazing Grace 96.4}

How is “imputed” being used in this statement? Does it sound like a mere legal accounting? Is it more than that?

We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the provision of God. **We are to reflect the highest attributes of the character of God. . . . The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain through the imputed righteousness of Christ.** {OHC 364.2}

Is the imputed righteousness of Christ somehow connected to what we attain? Is attainment different than credits? What would it mean to aim to low? Would it mean we are aiming for legal pardon rather than character transformation?

He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might **counteract evil, remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness.**
TMK 206

Where does it sound like Christ's righteousness is being "imputed"? Into record books or into believers? And because the record books record what is transpiring in the character of the believer by imputing His perfect character into the believer it is recorded in the heavenly record book!

Is there a difference between legally accounting one righteous and actually transforming the believer into righteousness? Do you find EGW to be in harmony with the Biblical meaning of *logizomai*? Absolutely!

So, how might we, with this understand read Romans 4:20-24?

Here is my paraphrase:

Yet, even though, from human understanding, the promise seemed hopeless, Abraham did not waver in his confidence in God, but praised God as he ²¹ realized God was able to miraculously fulfill the promise. ²² This unwavering trust in God, in the face of scientific evidence to the contrary, was recognized as righteousness because this trust replaced distrust and opened Abraham's mind to receive the endowment of a new heart, right motives, and Christlike principles established by God's recreative power. ²³ This record of his trust being "recognized as righteousness" is not written merely for Abraham, ²⁴ but for everyone who trusts in God. For everyone who trusts in God, who raised Jesus from the dead, is recognized as righteous because distrust in God is gone and through trust he receives the endowment of a perfect heart and new motives created within. Romans 4:20-24 My paraphrase

Thoughts?

Read last paragraph "Imagine it is..."

Let's explain the symbolism – how can this be understood correctly, how could this same symbolism get misconstrued?

FRIDAY

Do we agree that God never changes, is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow?

Do we agree that God's law cannot change?

Do we agree that man was changed when man sinned?

Then does it make sense that God, through Christ, would have to effect change in man in order to save man?

Notice what the first paragraph states:

Read first paragraph- thoughts – what does this mean? What is being described? What does the law require? Does it require a payment? Why does it require a perfect life?

TUESDAY

Read first three paragraphs – “A preacher...” what is the man saying? What is the message?

Read last paragraph, “Though Paul...” thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks us to Romans 6:1-13 – thoughts? Read this section, What does this symbolic language mean?

Here it is from my paraphrase:

Romans 6:1 What, then, should we say about this amazing healing plan? Should we spread the infection of distrust and selfishness, cause more devastation and destruction so that the power of God's healing solution may be more fully displayed? ² Absolutely not! We have taken the antidote, and the infection of distrust and selfishness has been purged from our hearts and minds; how then, can we choose to be

reinfected with distrust of God and practice selfish methods again? ³ Or don't you realize that all of us who were immersed into union with Christ Jesus were immersed into selflessness and have died to self-centeredness? ⁴ We symbolically demonstrate we have joined him in dying to self by being buried in water, in order that just as Jesus arose from the dead displaying the life giving glory of the Father, we too live a new life displaying God's glorious character in our lives.

^{6:5} If we have joined him in dying to self, we will absolutely join him in his resurrection and new life! ⁶ For we know that when our old selfish hearts and fear ridden minds trust God and surrenders to be crucified with Christ, the infection of selfishness is purged, and our hearts are no longer controlled by Satanic principles – ⁷ because anyone who dies to selfishness is free from Satan's methods, principles and control.

^{6:8} Now if we join Christ in dying to self, we are confident we will live with him forever. ⁹ Because Christ was raised from the dead and cannot die again; he has secured the remedy and has revealed the truth, and death cannot touch him again. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died once destroying Satan's lies, the infection of fear and selfishness and restoring love and trust; therefore, the life he lives, he lives to glorify God.

^{6:11} In the same way recognize you are dead to the ways of Satan and alive to the ways of God as revealed in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not indulge the selfish desires and participate in destructive activities. ¹³ Do not use your physical body for evil, to indulge selfishness, but rather offer your entire being to God – revealing that Satan's principles of death have been replaced by God's principles of life. So offer your entire self to God doing what is right and healthy because it is right and healthy.

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “We must keep...” thoughts? What does this mean? Is this distinction in scripture or is this distinction created by people trying their best to understand the God’s plan of salvation?

When did this idea of atonement originate? Who were the men who conceived it? Was it not men coming out of the Dark Ages? Why has light not advanced in 500 years? Do we really believe that this is the ultimate word in understanding God’s plan of salvation?

Read last paragraph, “The understanding that...” thoughts? What does this sound like to you?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions.

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 2 2Q 2011

From Exalted to Cast Down

SABBATH

Read memory text – “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” EZ 28:15

Read first paragraph, “Today’s memory text...” thoughts?

Does this bother anyone that sin could arise out of perfection?

Does this idea tell us anything about God?

MONDAY

Lucifer means what? It is the Latin word for Morning Star, bearer of light, or bright shining light, or light bearer, it refers to the heavenly body Venus – the bright morning star – and in Scripture is used to refer to both Satan before his fall and Christ.

Why do you think Scripture gives a common name to both Satan and Christ?

This quarter the lesson is on clothing imagery – why are we discussing Lucifer in this context? What lesson do we learn from Lucifer’s clothing?

You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. Eze 28:13

Does this description remind you of anything?

⁸ They fashioned the breastpiece—the work of a skilled craftsman. They made it like the ephod: of gold, .. they

mounted four rows of precious stones on it. In the first row there was a ruby, a topaz and a beryl; ¹¹ in the second row a turquoise, a sapphire and an emerald; ¹² in the third row a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst; ¹³ in the fourth row a chrysolite, an onyx and a jasper. Exodus 39:8-14

And who is our High Priest? Do we find other parallels between Christ and Lucifer?

How was Lucifer dressed? Here is a description I found in a book called The Story of Redemption:

Lucifer in heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God's dear Son. His countenance, like those of the other angels, was mild and expressive of happiness. His forehead was high and broad, showing a powerful intellect. His form was perfect; his bearing noble and majestic. **A special light beamed in his countenance and shone around him brighter and more beautiful than around the other angels;** yet Christ, God's dear Son, had the pre-eminence over all the angelic host. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Lucifer was envious of Christ, and gradually assumed command which devolved on Christ alone. {SR 13.1}

What ideas come to your mind? What do jewels do when you shine light through them?

Can you imagine Lucifer – a being who emanates light, a being who radiates fire, clothed in pure jewels of various shades and as he speaks, or talks or sings or praises the radiance from him goes out through the stones creating magnificent rainbows of colors and patterns of different variety?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Our God..." thoughts? Which member of the Godhead was the one who actually created? Was it Jesus? How do we know?

- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made... John 1:1-3
- For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Col 1:16,17

Why was Jesus the member of the Godhead through which all things were made? Why was Jesus the one that created earth and mankind?

With whom had Satan alleged equality? With Jesus! One of the founders of our church saw it the same way -

Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. The Scripture says, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Ezekiel 28:17. "Thou hast said in thine heart, . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . I will be like the Most High." Isaiah 14:13, 14. Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. **And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired**

to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone. {PP 35.2}

To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels. To this object he was about to bend the energies of that master mind, which, next to Christ's, was first among the hosts of God. {PP 36.1}

Lucifer is jealous of Christ and undermines confidence in God by alleging equality to Christ – how could he do this? Could it be because Christ was manifesting Himself in the form of an angel?

How did God respond?

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. .. **Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will.** The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. {PP 36.2}

- Why did God have to hold a counsel to announce the rightful position of His Son?
- Do we need to have a counsel to announce that the sun is bright, or fire is hot, or that water is wet?
- When something is obvious and universally understood does it have to be announced?
- Does the announcement not indicate that it wasn't obvious, that the difference between Christ and Satan was not fully understood by the angels?

What did Satan do in response to God's announcement? What would you have done in his shoes?

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. **He worked with mysterious secrecy**, and for a time concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God. ... **The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer**, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor. If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to secure freedom for all. **But now even the liberty which they had hitherto enjoyed was at an end; for an absolute Ruler had been appointed them, and to His authority all must pay homage.** Such were the subtle deceptions that through the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts. {PP 37.1}

Was this true? Was Christ elevated to position greater than Lucifer placed as a ruler over the angels?

“There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer's envy and misrepresentation and his claims to equality with Christ had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God; but this had been the same from the beginning. Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer's deceptions.” PP 38

Does this give any insight as to why Jesus is the member of the Godhead through which earth was created? Does it give any insight as to why Jesus was the one who came as our Savior?

THURSDAY

Read middle paragraph, “Fortunately, because of the Cross...” thoughts?

What methods does Satan use to keep us from finding righteousness?

Is Satan not the father of lies? What is the primary focus of his lies?

What would happen in the heart and mind of a person who believed lies about God? What happens in the heart and mind of a person who believed lies about God, but then comes to embrace and accept the truth about God? How would you describe that experience?

If you used the Biblical metaphor of Paul, “Don’t you know you are a temple of God and God’s spirit dwells in you.” If you used this metaphor to describe the experience of having the lies about God removed from the heart/mind, how might you describe it?

What about the 2300 year prophecy? Could it be speaking of this process?

Daniel 8:14 “unto 2300 days and the sanctuary will be cleansed” or “reconsecrated” or “set right” or “justified” or “put back right” or “restored to its right state” or made righteous!

What might this be referring to? Is it referring to refurbishing a building in heaven? Is it referring to changing the record books by erasing data, facts and evidence from the accounts of the saved? Is it referring to cleansing the hearts and minds of God’s people?

One of the people involved in crafting our current sanctuary doctrine wrote:

“The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi[3:1-3], **are descriptions of the same event**; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25.” Great Controversy 426

The quotation cites Daniel 7:13 as describing the same event, what is happening in this passage?

¹³ “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Daniel 7:13,-14

What is being described? In the context of the passage, what is happening, a judicial review or something else? The text is describing a coronation, a crowning, a time in the universe in which God is on His throne and all the intelligences of the universe have gathered and Christ is brought into God’s presence and **“all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him.”**

How many languages do you think there are in heaven? Before the tower of Babel how many languages were on earth? So what is implied by the idea that men of every language worshiped him? Is it suggesting the future restored new heaven and earth, the current beings in heaven, or the humans still on earth?

What does this mean? Would it not mean that this is the time in history when the lies of God are removed from the minds of men so we can worship Him instead of some superstitious false system?

If we keep reading in Daniel seven, we are told that an evil power will arise and will war against the saints until something happens? What?

As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. Daniel 7:21,22

What does it mean, pronounced judgment? Some have concluded this means a court room is ongoing in heaven in which God is judging men on earth and thus conclude Rev 14 (Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come) is God sitting in judgment. Does the Biblical evidence support this as a judicial proceeding by God in heaven?

First, this evil power wages war against the saints but what kind of war?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Cor 10:3-5

What kind of war? Where is it being fought? In our minds!

Second, these passages have something to do with cleansing the Temple – how might the Temple be connected to this war going on in our minds? Daniel describes a little horn power that wars against the saints, Paul describes the same power and notice carefully what he says:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ²not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's **temple**, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:1-4.

In the after math of Christ death and resurrection and ascension into heaven, did this man of lawlessness ride into heaven overthrow God, set himself up in God's temple in heaven and proclaim himself to be God? No, where did this happen? In the Spirit Temple! In our minds!

Then what is Daniel 7:21,22 talking about?

The Hebrew word translated "pronounced" actually means "to give" or "to impart" and thus the KJV states:

Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Daniel 7:22

Daniel is told in vision that an evil power would arise that would lie, distort, misrepresent God and defile the Spirit Temple by getting humans to accept, worship and teach a false picture of God. That it would be 2300 years before enough truth would be recovered for Christ to empower His people on earth with judgment to break free from the lies and be cleansed in their minds and characters about Him!

This evil power is able to succeed against the saints until we are given "judgment" or "discernment" or "ability" to see through the lies and have our minds cleansed by the truth. Thus we read in Malachi 3:1-3, another passage describing the same event as Daniel 8:14:

Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.

According to Malachi, what is being cleansed by the Lord when He comes to His temple? The Levites! And who are the Levites? The priesthood of believers!

We are living in the time in earth's history where Christ is working to cleanse our minds, hearts and characters from all the lies, distortions and misrepresentations of God. This wins us to trust and in trust we open the heart, experience the indwelling of His Spirit and we partake of the divine nature, the law is written on our hearts and minds and real transformation occurs where we love others more than ourselves!

Now, what objections do you think we might hear when we present these evidences and ideas? "Don't you believe in a real temple in heaven?" My answer, Absolutely – question, "Out of what material is the heavenly temple constructed?" The Bible indicates it is a living temple constructed out of living beings:

- Paul says, "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's HOUSE [sanctuary/temple], built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building [sanctuary/temple] is joined together and rises to become a HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord. And in him YOU too [you all] are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22.
- And Peter says, "As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- YOU also, like LIVING STONES [building blocks of the Temple], are being built into a SPIRITUAL HOUSE [Temple] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." 1 Pet 2:4,5.
- And Paul says, "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building [Temple]...Don't you know that you yourselves [the church] are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy

him; for God's temple is sacred, and you [you all] are that temple.” 1 Cor 3:9,16,17.

- Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. Revelation 3:12
- Or David is Ps 23 “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Was he describing a literal building where he will be an eternal prisoner, or the fact that the saved are building blocks of the temple of God?

One of the founders of our church saw it the same way:

In order that we may become instruments fit for a valuable service, we must be prepared for our labor. **We are as rough stones from the quarry**, and we must be chiseled and hewn, until God sees that the unsightly edges are all taken off, and we are fitted and polished for a place **in the heavenly temple**. {RH, May 1, 1888 par. 11}

Most of the distortion on the heavenly sanctuary doctrine comes from studying the OT sanctuary and then projecting that idea onto the heavenly temple in an overly concrete fashion. Notice what the same founder says about the relationship between the old earthly lesson book and the real temple in heaven:

The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use. {3MR 231.3}

Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}

So how does Satan work today to obstruct people from experiencing righteousness? By distorting the truth of God, His methods, principles, kingdom, what Christ accomplished and accepting a distorted theology of God which fails to transform the believer.

TUESDAY

Read Ezekiel 28:17,18

Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching.

What does this mean? What brought Lucifer down? And what does it mean he desecrated his sanctuaries?

And what about the idea that fire comes out from him and consumes him? What does this mean?

WEDNESDAY

- How you have fallen from heaven,
 O morning star, son of the dawn!
 You have been cast down to the earth,
 you who once laid low the nations!
- ¹³ You said in your heart,
 “**I will ascend** to heaven;
I will raise my throne
 above the stars of God;
I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
 on **the utmost heights** of the sacred mountain.
- ¹⁴ **I will ascend above the tops** of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.”
- ¹⁵ But you are brought down to the grave,
 to the depths of the pit. ¹

What lessons do we learn from this?

- What does self promotion lead to? Why?
- Lucifer was jealous of Christ, he was comparing himself to Christ, he was alleging equality to Christ – how does he actually compare to Christ?

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

- ⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

¹ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996 (electronic ed.) (Is 14:12–15). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

7 **but made himself nothing,**
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

9 **Therefore God exalted him to the highest place**
and gave him the name that is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. ²

What do we learn? Satan takes six steps “up” to exalt self, but ends up going down. Jesus humbles self seven steps down and ends up being exalted.

So if Satan really wanted to be like God he would have humbled himself.

What does that say about his understanding of God? Did sin not only start with distorted ideas about self but distorted ideas about God?

Read last paragraph, “The temptation...” thoughts? How do we do this today? Refusing to forgive self? Calculating to control outcomes rather than trusting God with outcomes and merely doing what is right because it is right?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts? When is it appropriate to be in the role of God? What about parents to small children?

² *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996 (electronic ed.) (Php 2:5–11). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – “When Satan...” thoughts? How do you understand it? Is it emotional guilt or legal guilt? Did he take our place, our infirmities, our iniquities, our sinfulness, our sick condition and experience the anguish of guilt that this sick state inflicts? Or did He assume legal position of guilt in God’s universe and suffer a legal penalty imposed? Or is it both?

Well are we legally guilty? Imagine an HIV infected man and woman get together and have a baby born HIV infected – what did the baby do wrong? Is the baby legally guilty? Even though the baby did nothing wrong does the baby still have a condition if unremedied will kill it? That is our situation, God knows we “are born in sin conceived in iniquity” that we did not choose to be rebels, sinners, infected with fear and distrust. He does not blame us anymore that we would blame the baby born HIV infected.

But he “diagnosis” us accurately – i.e. He “judges” our actual condition for what it is, and prescribes a remedy that will cure and that remedy is Christ. Christ came to heal mankind and restore us back into unity and harmony with God!

But if the HIV infected baby, once old enough to decide for itself, rejects a free remedy that will cure it – the baby will be responsible for that choice. That is our situation with God!

Question # 3 – notice what character those have who overcome – they are changed such that selfishness, survival of the fittest is replaced with self-sacrificing love! This is cleansing of God’s temple!

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 3 2Q 2011

A Garment of Innocence

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to consider what the earth was like prior to sin and how our world today differs from the world God created. Any thoughts?

- No death, decay, disease, noxious or poisonous herb, predators
- No weather extremes or polar extremes
- No fatigue

The Father and the Son engaged in the mighty, wondrous work they had contemplated--of creating the world. The earth came forth from the hand of the Creator exceedingly beautiful. There were mountains and hills and plains; and interspersed among them were rivers and bodies of water. The earth was not one extensive plain, but the monotony of the scenery was broken by hills and mountains, not high and ragged as they now are, but regular and beautiful in shape. The bare, high rocks were never seen upon them, but lay beneath the surface, answering as bones to the earth. The waters were regularly dispersed. The hills, mountains, and very beautiful plains were adorned with plants and flowers and tall, majestic trees of every description, which were many times larger and much more beautiful than trees now are. The air was pure and healthful, and the earth seemed like a noble palace. Angels beheld and rejoiced at the wonderful and beautiful works of God. {SR 20.1}

Thoughts? Have you ever considered how beautiful the earth must have been? Think of it, the mountains we see now and consider so majestic and beautiful, were like bones to the earth. If you saw a person with a bone sticking out of their leg would you think, "how beautiful?"

In the days of Noah a double curse was resting upon the earth in consequence of Adam's transgression and of the murder committed by Cain. Yet this had not greatly changed the face of nature. There were evident tokens of decay, but the earth was still rich and beautiful in the gifts of God's providence. The hills were crowned with majestic trees supporting the fruit-laden branches of the vine. The vast, gardenlike plains were clothed with verdure, and sweet with the fragrance of a thousand flowers. The fruits of the earth were in great variety, and almost without limit. The trees far surpassed in size, beauty, and perfect proportion any now to be found; their wood was of fine grain and hard substance, closely resembling stone, and hardly less enduring. Gold, silver, and precious stones existed in abundance. {PP 90.1}

Can you imagine what this must have been like? Rivers with beds of various precious stones, emeralds, sapphires, rubies, or waterfall with platinum, altering with diamonds and sapphires – can you imagine the beauty?

MONDAY

Read third paragraph, “The sinless pair...” thoughts?

What garments did Adam and Eve wear before the fall? What happened to those garments? Where did they originate? Are they related to the robe woven in the loom of heaven or are these two different types of garments?

What is the robe woven in the loom of heaven? How do we wear it? Is it a covering or something within?

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. **Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character**, and this character He offers to impart to us... **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is**

what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. {COL 311.4}

Thoughts? Is this robe and the robe of light the same or are they different?

Was Moses started to “get dressed” in this clothing when he came down the mountain? What about Stephen, when his face shown like an angel?

It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony *were* in Moses’ hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that **the skin of his face shone** because of his speaking with Him.

30 So when Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw Moses, behold, **the skin of his face shone**, and they were afraid to come near him...

34 But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take off the veil until he came out; and whenever he came out and spoke to the sons of Israel what he had been commanded,

35 the sons of Israel would see **the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone**. So Moses would replace the veil over his face until he went in to speak with Him. Exodus 34:29-35

What is going on? Is this magic? Was Moses being transformed in character by his beholding of God? Was Moses putting on the robe of Christ’s righteousness? Can we experience this type of thing still in our bodies as Moses did?

When we are rebuilt by God into His image – i.e. the “character of God is perfectly reproduce in His people..” will we have such clothes?

In the time of trouble, we all fled from the cities and villages, but were pursued by the wicked, who entered the houses of the saints with the sword. They raised the sword to

kill us, but it broke, and fell as powerless as a straw. Then we all cried day and night for deliverance, and the cry came up before God. ... The Israel of God stood with their eyes fixed upwards, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of Jehovah, and rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder. It was awfully solemn. At the end of every sentence, the saints shouted, Glory! Hallelujah! **Their countenances were lighted up with the glory of God; and they shone with the glory as Moses' face did when he came down from Sinai. The wicked could not look on them for the glory...** {RH, July 21, 1851 par. 13}

What is this clothing? When do we get this clothing?

"The fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.**" Gal. 5:22, 23. This fruit can never perish, but will produce after its kind a harvest unto eternal life. {COL 68.1}

"When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." **Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.** {COL 69.1}

What happened to it? How do we get dressed in it now? Why was Christ' death necessary to dress us in this clothing?

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "A simple test..." thoughts

What does it mean "to see whether they would – in their freedom – obey the Lord"?

Did the Lord wonder? Did the Father look over to the Son and say, "Hey what do you think? Will they stay loyal or disobey? I don't know but I sure hope they stay loyal. What do you think the odds are?"

Was the tree put there “to see” if they would? Why was the tree put there?

Two reasons for the tree of knowledge – to protect – Satan could only approach at the tree - and develop them!

Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. . . . They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, **their loyalty must be tested**. At the very beginning of man's existence a check was placed upon the desire for self-indulgence, the fatal passion that lay at the foundation of Satan's fall. **The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden**, was to be **a test of the obedience, faith, and love** of our first parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. **They were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan**; but if they endured the trial, they would finally be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favor with God. . . . {CC 13.2}

God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automation. **Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character.** . . . It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. {CC 13.3}

Could Adam and Eve have developed as individuals if they had no power to make choices for or against God?

If they would have not taken from the tree, endured the test, they would have been placed beyond Satan's power. What does this mean? What would have placed them beyond Satan's power?

- Would God have removed Satan from their presence and that is what places them beyond his power?
- What is Satan’s power? Lies, what puts them beyond this power?
 - Thinking through the issues and deciding for themselves and being so settled into the truth that they could not be moved. The tree, while a “test” was a tool for their development – without it, in the context of what was transpiring in the universe, they could never grow, develop and ultimately be secure.
 - What about today? What puts us beyond Satan’s power? “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free!” John 8:32. Life eternal is knowing God – John 17:3.
 - "Just as soon as the **people of God are sealed** in their foreheads--it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, **but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved**--just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, . . . that we may know what is coming. {FLB 287.7}
 - What settles us into the truth?

Thoughts?

What about after Adam and Eve sinned – what happened to the robe of light? Why did it disappear?

What was the source of this light?

Why were they barred from the tree of life? Was God punishing them? Or was it grace – what happens to a sinner who lives forever? Will they ever find peace, happiness, joy or would such a state be perpetual torture of soul? In barring the way was God punishing or in mercy preventing the experience of eternal suffering?

Why do some insist on presenting this as God punishing when he barred the way to the tree of life?

THURSDAY

Read memory text and then second paragraph, “First we...”

Thoughts? What do you think of the idea that if fig leaves were good enough that there would be “no need to kill innocent animals”?

Does inspiration ever say, anywhere, that God killed innocent animals for their skins to cover Adam and Eve? If God could speak animals into existence could He not speak animal skins into existence? Which is harder to create the living animal or the skin? Why do some insist God killed animals to clothe them?

What would it say about God if this were so?

Do we see God in the killing business? Is God the executioner of the universe? Why does sin result in death? Is it because God must kill or that sin destroys and unremedied sin results in death?

What about “our works would have been cheaper than the death of Christ.” Is it about “expense”? Did salvation have a “price tag” on it that required a “payment” to achieve the freedom for sinners?

Is it like C.S. Lewis’ depiction of the *Lion Witch and the Wardrobe*? The White Witch has enticed a “son of Adam” and now she has the “right” to his life and Aslan makes a deal with the White Witch to pay her the price of his life to save the “son of Adam”?

Is it true that it was at great cost that God provided salvation through Christ? Yes! Was there any other way to achieve our salvation? No!

So what do we mean when we use language of “expense” or “price”?

- Is it a payment like a mortgage payment?
- Is it a price like a prison sentence?
- Or does it mean something else?
- If a father donates a kidney to save his son, did he pay a “price” did it “cost” him? What was the price? Why was there a price? Was it a legally imposed price?

Read third paragraph, “Second, what’s...” thoughts? What do we mean by blood?

We heard in the sermon last week that the death of Christ was not to appease the Father – but what was it for? What was accomplished by Christ’s death? Why was “blood” necessary to save mankind? Who demanded “blood”?

If we had the shroud in which Christ was buried today, and we had the actual dried blood of Christ upon it, would this dried blood save us? Could we present this dried blood to God as our “price” to heaven? Or does the blood have to be fresh?

When we speak of being saved by the “blood” is it red corpuscles or is this language symbolic of something else? If so what?

Where is the blood applied? Who needs the blood?

Scripture tells us that “the life is in the blood” so the blood is representative of the life.

Jesus said that unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood we can have no part with Him. John 6

What does this mean?

“In the study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life.” Fundamentals of Christian Education 378.1

“The leaven of **truth** works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By **it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb.**” Christ’s Object Lessons 102

What does the blood symbolize? Where does the truth and life of Christ get “applied” in reality? What does this application result in

when it is applied to the heart/mind of a sinner? Would it be cleansing of the sinner's heart and mind from sin? Would it not be the reproduction of Christlike character within the sinner?

Where in the OT sanctuary service was the blood applied? If the blood represents the life and truth of Jesus the what is the meaning of the ministry of blood in the sanctuary service? What is it doing? Does God need the truth presented to Him? Who needs the truth and the character of Christ? Then wouldn't the OT system be a lesson book on God's plan to actually heal and transform the sinner and bring us back into at-one-ment with God?

What questions do you have about this?

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, Notice too..." thoughts? What else is implied in the question from God? Isn't it that, "Adam who told you that you are naked? You didn't hear me saying anything did you? I am not the one criticizing, finding fault or making you feel insecure and uncomfortable. Adam that is what sin has done. You have been changed by it."

FRIDAY

Read top two paragraphs – what did we learn in the last two weeks which unlocks the symbolism of these quotes? (see COL quote under this week's Monday's lesson) What is actually going on when one is "clothed" with the robe of Christ's righteousness?

Read and discuss question 4

What is evil? What does evil look like? Is it red, horns and pitchfork? Or robes of light, priestly vestments, claiming to be your friend, while telling you lies about God? Which is most evil?

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 4 2Q 2011

The Coat of Different Colors

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs, "The seed (so to speak)... thoughts?"

How many believe it was wrong for Jacob to take more than one wife? How many think Jacob did not do wrong by taking more than one wife?

It seems obvious that Jacob should not have taken the two concubines – but what do you think about Jacob taking Rachel as his wife? What do you think he should have done after the deception practiced upon him?

Would you consider him married to Leah? Would marriage require informed consent to be considered married? What about in God's eyes – is it sex that makes one married? Is it the ceremony? Is it the voluntary commitment of two individuals to accept each other as husband and wife? Did Jacob actually do this with Leah?

Did Jacob marry Leah? When? When Jacob left the wedding ceremony and was on his way to the wedding tent, had he married Leah or Rachel? Who did he commit himself to be the husband of?

Did Jacob sin in having intimate relations with the sister of the woman he thought he was marrying?

What would you have done if you had been Jacob? Should he have returned Leah? Should he have stayed married to only Leah?

What would have happened to Leah in that society if Jacob would have said no? Is it likely she would have been shunned? Could she possibly have been expelled from her family with no inheritance, might she have been killed?

Where do we find in the scripture God chastising Jacob for having multiple wives?

Why do you think God didn't chastise him for it?

Was the sin Jacob's? Or was it Leah's and her father's? Was Jacob being merciful to this woman by not spurning her?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Life, as we all.." thoughts? How can one apply this knowledge effectively?

Where do each of us have the most power to actually effect change? Isn't over ourselves? If we change ourselves what will those around us do?

Read bottom pink section – what can we actually control? Can we control anything beyond our own choices?

The universe runs on such predictable laws that we sometimes get the illusion that we can control outcomes or even others, but can we?

Who was the first US President targeted by an assassin?
January 30, 1835, Andrew Jackson.

- Richard Lawrence, an unemployed house painter, approached Jackson as he left a congressional funeral held in the House chamber of the Capitol and shot at him.
- His gun misfired.
- Jackson, who was 67 at the time, repeatedly clubbed Lawrence with his walking cane.
- During the ensuing scuffle, Lawrence took another pistol out of his pocket and pulled the trigger. But that gun also misfired.

- Bystanders joined in, wrestling Lawrence to the ground and disarming him. One of them was Rep. Davy Crockett of Tennessee.
- In the 1930s, researchers at the Smithsonian Institution test fired Lawrence's derringer pistols. Both of them discharged normally on the first try.
 - <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0108/8184.html>

Richard Lawrence could control purchasing the guns, loading the guns, going to the capital building, pulling out the guns, pointing the guns, pulling the trigger – but could he control whether they fired or not?

Can we control how things turn out? We control our choices – but because God's laws are so predictable and reliable we come to believe we can control outcomes – we can't!

This is what it means to live by faith – to choose to do, in governance of ourselves, that which is in harmony with God's laws, methods, principles and purposes for our lives and trust God with the outcome.

What has helped you be able to trust God with outcomes in your life?

What about the last sentence in the pink section, "Ask yourself, How might these choices impact others, and is that what I really want to see happen?"

- Is this the best basis for decision making?
"They won't like it. They might be mad. They might get their feelings hurt, or be upset..." is this the best basis for decision making?
- How do we fit in our awareness of others to our decision making? What is the balance?

MONDAY

Joseph and his brothers – how would you describe their relationship?

What contributed to the tensions?

Fourth paragraph, “Finally...” thoughts? How do you understand this?

Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” Romans 9:13

Thoughts?

- Did God not love Esau?
- Was God’s love for Jacob the reason Esau rebelled?
- What does it mean God loved Jacob but not Esau?

Could it be that Jacob was receptive to God’s love, so God’s was able to actively love Jacob, but Esau would not receive or respond to God’s love?

What about Jacob and his sons?

- Is it likely Jacob didn’t love his other sons?
- Is it possible Joseph was more receptive to God’s love and therefore, the natural result was a closer unity to anyone else who also had God’s love operating in their heart, thus a closer bond between Jacob and Joseph, than Jacob and the sons who were so obviously selfish?

Let’s turn to TUESDAY’s lesson and read second paragraph, “There was one...” thoughts?

- Could Joseph’s heart, character, disposition, have had anything to do with why he was closer to his father than the other sons?
- Do you think Jacob preferred to have 10 of his son’s he couldn’t trust?
- Would Jacob have preferred to have 10 sons just like Joseph?

What about God?

- Does God love some people more than others?
- Does our response to God have anything to do with how much of His love we experience and thus how close we are to Him?

I have found this to be true in my life. When I have travelled around the world and met people who worship a God of love, as Jesus revealed, who practice those principles in their lives – I have an automatic affinity for them, we are just closer than I am with people who don't share this perspective and love for God. Haven't you found this to be true as well?

So was Jacob at fault for the difference in loving closeness between the sons and himself?

In the third paragraph it states, "Whatever the father meant by giving Joseph the coat- and it could simply have been a token of love and nothing more – it was a big mistake, for it fanned even more the flames of hatred in the brother's hearts toward Joseph."

Thoughts?

- Does this mean when God blesses His faithful children and it fans the flames of jealousy in the wicked, stirring up persecution, that God made a mistake?
- Should God withhold blessings because He doesn't want those with selfish hearts to get jealous?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Not only..." thoughts?

Is this hard to imagine? Could anyone we know do this?

The teacher can do much to discourage that evil habit, the curse of the community, the neighborhood, and the home--the habit of backbiting, gossip, ungenerous criticism. In this no pains should be spared. Impress upon the students the fact that this habit reveals a lack of culture and refinement and of true goodness of heart; it unfits one both for the society of the

truly cultured and refined in this world and for association with the holy ones of heaven. {Ed 235.3}

We think with horror of the cannibal who feasts on the still warm and trembling flesh of his victim; but are the results of even this practice more terrible than are the agony and ruin caused by misrepresenting motive, blackening reputation, dissecting character? Let the children, and the youth as well, learn what God says about these things: {Ed 235.4}

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Proverbs 18:21. {Ed 235.5}

Thoughts? Why is gossiping such a destructive behavior?

- How did the war begin in heaven?
- What happens in the minds of those who hear the gossip?
- What causes the gossip to be most influential?
- Does the esteem one holds for the person sharing the gossip cause it to be accepted more easily as fact?

What can we do to put a stop to the spread of rumor and gossip in our community? Can we commit to go to people directly and talk to them rather than "I got from a reliable source...?"

Second paragraph states, "The first thing the brothers talked about when they saw Joseph from afar was the dreams, which made their hatred for him grow." Thoughts?

- Why were the brothers mad? They didn't want to bow down to Joseph.
- What did they do to ensure they never would? Sold him as a slave.
- What did this result in? Joseph become ruler and them bowing down to him.
- What lesson is there in this?

Is there a lesson in trusting God with outcomes?

What happens when we try and plan and plot to ensure things turn out the way we want them?

- What if the brothers would have trusted God with how it turns out and merely went about choosing to govern themselves in harmony with God's principles?
- What would have happened?
- Would they have sold Joseph?

What about today?

- Should we try and plan and plot to ensure things turn out the way we want, or merely choose to practice God's methods in our lives and trust Him with how things turn out?
- Might that mean we go through a period of uncertainty? Joseph spent 13 years as a slave before he became ruler – during that time might he have had some uncertainty.

Why is it important to focus on developing healthy decision making in harmony with God's methods?

Each actor in history stands in his lot and place; for God's great work after His own plan will be carried out by **men who have prepared themselves to fill positions for good or evil**. In opposition to righteousness, men become instruments of unrighteousness. But **they are not forced to take this course of action**. They need not become instruments of unrighteousness, any more than Cain needed to. . . . {CC 371.2}

Men of all characters, righteous and unrighteous, will stand in their several positions in God's plan. With the characters they have formed, they will act their part in the fulfillment of history. In a crisis, just at the right moment, **they will stand in the places they have prepared themselves to fill**. Believers and unbelievers will fall into line as witnesses to confirm truth that they themselves do not comprehend. **All will cooperate in accomplishing the purposes of God, just as did Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod. In putting Christ to death, the priests thought they were carrying out their own purposes, but unconsciously and unintentionally they were fulfilling the purpose of God.** {CC 371.3}

God looks into the tiny seed that He Himself has formed, and sees wrapped within it the beautiful flower, the shrub, or the lofty, wide-spreading tree. So does He see the possibilities in every human being. **We are here for a purpose. God has given us His plan for our life, and He desires us to reach the highest standard of development. . . .** {CC 371.4}

What plan does God have for your life?

What do you think caused the hatred the brothers had toward Joseph?

- Was it the dreams?
- Was it the coat?
- Was there something in Joseph that was the source of such hatred?
- What about Christ? What caused the hatred of Christ? Was there something in Christ that caused hatred?
- What was the source of their hatred?

Read last paragraph, “Thus, here...” thoughts?

- Was Joseph superior to his brothers?
- In what way?
- Was his character superior to theirs?
- How did Joseph become superior to his brothers?
- Was he born this way?

Read bottom pink section, thoughts?

- What does it mean to keep our emotions under the power of God?
- What is God’s power?
- How do we experience that power?
- The gospel is the power of God according to Paul.
- Zechariah states that it is not by might nor by power but by how the Spirit works.
- How do we get our emotions under the power of God?

- Truth and Love – we must examine our feelings in light of truth, keeping reason and good judgment in charge of decisions and actions, and practice God’s methods of other centered love.

EGW had comments on emotions:

- "It is through the Word—**not feeling**, not excitement—that we want to influence the people to obey the truth. On the platform of God’s Word we can stand with safety. The living Word is replete with evidence, and a wonderful power accompanies its proclamation in our world." MS 115, 1908; *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, pp. 372-375; portions in *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, pp. 43,44; VSS 290; LDE 93; "The Ralph Mackin Story," *Review and Herald*, Aug. 17, 1972
- "I am afraid of **anything** that would have a tendency to turn the mind away from the solid **evidences** of the truth as revealed in God’s Word. I am afraid of it; I am afraid of it. We must bring our minds within the **bounds of reason**, lest the enemy so come in as to set everything in a disorderly way. There are persons of an excitable temperament who are easily led into fanaticism; and should we allow anything to come into our churches that would lead such persons into error, we would soon see these errors carried to extreme lengths, and then because of the course of these disorderly elements, a stigma would rest upon the whole body of Seventh-day Adventists. . .
- "During the years of Christ’s ministry on earth, . . . **The truth was proclaimed intelligently**, and so **plainly that all could understand**. . . Now I am afraid to have anything of a fanatical nature brought in among our people. There are many, many who must be sanctified, **but they are to be sanctified through obedience to the message of truth**. I am writing on this subject today. In this message there is **a beautiful consistency that appeals to the judgment**. We cannot allow excitable elements among us to display themselves in a way that would destroy our influence with those whom we wish to reach with the truth. . . (compare 2SG 50; 1T 66; LS 215)

What was she afraid of? Anything that would turn the mind away from “solid evidence”. What might that be? What turns the mind away from evidence?

- Emotions
- Traditions
- Blind faith
- Allowing others to think for you
- Thinking patterns in which one refuses to test one’s ideas against the evidence -

THURSDAY

Read top paragraph, “How could they...” – thoughts?

- How could they?
- What led them to act this way?
- What happened to love in their hearts?
- What took over?

Do people go from good to evil in an instant?

- Peter's fall was not instantaneous, but gradual. Self-confidence led him to the belief that he was saved, and step after step was taken in the downward path, until he could deny his Master. Never can we safely put confidence in self or feel, this side of heaven, that we are secure against temptation. **Those who accept the Saviour, however sincere their conversion, should never be taught to say or to feel that they are saved.** This is misleading. Every one should be taught to cherish hope and faith; but even when we give ourselves to Christ and know that He accepts us, we are not beyond the reach of temptation. God's word declares, "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried." Dan. 12:10. Only he who endures the trial will receive the crown of life. (James 1:12.) {COL 155.1}

Thoughts about this? What does it mean? Should we experience security in our salvation? Should we live in doubt? What is the balance?

- Could it mean that we should not consider our self “fully” saved, i.e. cured – rather than rescued from a terminal state and partaking in the cure?
- If we accept the idea we are cured, when we are not, then we have a problem. But if we recognized we are not cured, but are daily participating with God in His treatment for our condition we can have confidence in the outcome.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1, 3, 4

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 5 2Q 2011

The Priestly Garments of Grace

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “One great theme...” thoughts?

What does this mean? Did you notice how the lesson seemed to criticize those organizations which have a priesthood acting as earthly mediators?

What about our church? Do we believe in the priesthood of all believers? If so then:

- Why are women not ordained?
- Why are only ordained pastors allowed to be conference presidents?
- Why do we believe the truth must come through the seminary or those who have seminary training?
- Are all believers priests of God or just those with certain credentials?

What does the 1Tim 2:5 text mean there is “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”?

What does it mean to be a mediator?

- Go between
- Advocate
- Envoy
- Ambassador
- Representative

What is Christ’s role in mediation?

Who needs a mediator?

Do angels unfallen need a mediator?

“While we rejoice that there are worlds which have never fallen, these worlds render praise, and honor, and glory to Jesus Christ for the plan of redemption to save the fallen sons of Adam, as well as to confirm themselves in their position and character of purity. The arm that raised the human family from the ruin which Satan had brought upon the race through his temptations, is the arm which has preserved the inhabitants of other worlds from sin. Every world throughout immensity engages the care and support of the Father and the Son; and this care is constantly exercised for fallen humanity. Christ is **mediating** in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by his **mediatorial** work. Are not these themes of sufficient magnitude and importance to engage our thoughts, and call forth our gratitude and adoration to God?” {RH, January 11, 1881 par. 4}

What does this mean?

Does this change the way we think about mediation?

What does mediation mean? Is it not the work to bring reconciliation? What needs to be reconciled? What about the angels unfallen? How are they preserved by Christ’s mediatorial work?

Would it have anything to do with providing truth to destroy the lies which break the circle of love and trust? Would it have anything to do with restoring humanity to God’s original design?

TUESDAY

What is represented by the High Priest’s clothing?

Only in the Ephod, the curious girdle and the Breastplate of the High Priest do we find gold woven into the fabric.

Make the ephod of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen—the work of a skilled craftsman. ⁷ It is to have two shoulder pieces attached to two of its corners, so it can be fastened. Exodus 28:6,7

What do these colors symbolize?

- Gold – God’s divine character of love
- Blue – heavenly origin
- Purple – royalty
- Scarlet – the sacrificed life of Christ
- Fine linen – perfect human character developed by Christ

What is symbolized by the shoulder pieces being joined together? Is it merely functional or symbolic?

From which tribe was the priesthood derived? What does the name Levi mean?

Again she conceived, and when she gave birth to a son she said, “Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.” So he was named Levi. Genesis 39:34

Levi means “joined together”.

The Levites were symbolic of what? The priesthood of believers, you and me:

And thy brethren also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou near with thee [High Priest], that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall be before the tent of the testimony... ⁴And **they shall be joined unto thee**, and keep the charge of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the Tent: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. Numbers 18:2,4

Are we to be joined to Christ?

Upon the shoulders of the Ephod were engraved the names of the 12 tribes in order of their birth. What does this symbolize?

The shoulders symbolize strength and that Christ strengthens and carries humanity on His shoulders.

As we continue the High Priest garments let's jump to WEDNESDAY and then back to complete Tuesday:

Read first paragraph Wednesday's lesson, "Of all the vestments..." thoughts?

What do you hear in the description, "breastplate of judgment"?

Is it a breastplate of a judicial proceeding or a breastplate to enhance, or provide, or enable good discernment or judgment?

Fashion a breastpiece for making decisions—the work of a skilled craftsman. Make it like the ephod: of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen. Exodus 28:15 NIV.

Does it make a difference which way it is heard? What difference does it make?

If you are sick and go to the doctor, do you want a doctor with good judgment? A doctor who can make good judgments?

If you have to go to a place for judgment would you prefer to go to the doctor's office, who has the ability to heal whatever is wrong, for his examination and judgment or to the courtroom? Why?

Which of these two examples is closer to the reality of God's universe?

The Breast Plate was made from Gold and had 12 stones plus Urim and Thummin. On each stone was written the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel and the breastplate was attached via four gold chains.

Is this symbolism or is Jesus in heaven wearing such an outfit?

Any significance in this symbolism? Can we understand any of the reality it was to signify?

The names written on the stones represent the people of God who are “sealed” or “set” in the character of God, gold breastplate, and close to the heart of God, who come from every nation, tribe and people.

The breastplate was attached via four gold chains what do these represent?

Christ's believing people are to **perpetuate His love**. This love is to draw them together around the cross. **It is to divest them of all selfishness, and bind them to God** and to one another. {CS 16.2}

Meet around the cross of Calvary in self-sacrifice and self-denial. God will bless you as you do your best. As you approach the throne of grace, **as you find yourself bound to this throne by the golden chain let down from heaven to earth**, to draw men from the pit of sin, your heart will go out in love for your brethren and sisters who are without God and without hope in the world.--9T 253-256. {CS 16.3}

Do you hear anything in this passage which would indicate what the golden chain is that binds us to God?

"These things I have spoken unto you," He said, "that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Christ did not fail, neither was He discouraged, and His followers are to manifest a faith of the same enduring nature. **They are to live as He lived, and work as He worked, because they depend on Him as the great Master Worker.** Courage, energy, and perseverance they must possess. Though apparent impossibilities obstruct their way, by His grace they are to go forward. Instead of deploring difficulties, they are called upon to surmount them. They are to despair of nothing, and to hope for everything. **With the golden chain of His matchless love Christ has bound them to the throne of God.** It is His

purpose that **the highest influence in the universe, emanating from the source of all power, shall be theirs.**

They are to have power to resist evil, power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master, power that will enable them to overcome as Christ overcame. {DA 679.3}

What is the golden chain that binds us to God? What is the highest influence in the universe?

Thoughts?

What of the Urim and Thummin? What do these symbolize? Notice where they are found? They are found on the breastplate – where the stones representing the people of God are found, which is made of gold, representing the divine character, which the people of God now are settled into, and tied to God by the chains of His love. What then do these two stones symbolize?

The work of the Holy Spirit upon the conscience and minds of the believers investing them with spiritual gifts of discernment, insight, judgment, ability to know the right from the wrong.

The Lord answered him [Saul] not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. 1 Sam. 28:6. {CC 171.1}

The Lord never turned away a soul that came to Him in sincerity and humility. **Why did he turn Saul away unanswered? The king had by his own act forfeited the benefits of all the methods of inquiring of God.** He had rejected the counsel of Samuel the prophet; he had exiled David, the chosen of God; he had slain the priests of the Lord. . . . **He had sinned away the Spirit of grace,** and could he be answered by dreams and revelations from the Lord? **Saul did not turn to God with humility and repentance.** It was not pardon for sin and reconciliation with God, that he sought, but deliverance from his foes. By his own stubbornness and rebellion he had cut himself off from God. There could be no return but by the way of penitence and contrition; but the proud monarch, in his anguish and despair, determined to seek help from another source. . . . It was told the king that a

woman who had a familiar spirit was living in concealment at Endor. . . . Disguising himself, Saul went forth by night with but two attendants, to seek the retreat of the sorceress. . . .
{CC 171.2}

Thoughts?

The High Priest also had a blue robe:

And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. ³²And it shall have a hole for the head in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of a coat of mail, that it be not rent. ³³And upon the skirts of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the skirts thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: ³⁴a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the skirts of the robe round about. ³⁵And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and the sound thereof shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before Jehovah, and when he cometh out, that he die not. Exodus 28:31-38

Thoughts? What does this blue robe represent?

The High Priest also wore a white linen robe identical to the ones worn by the daily priests – does this give any clue?

What does the white linen robe represent? Perfect human character developed by Christ and given as a gift to all who accept it. Then what might the blue robe represent? His divine character, His divinity which was united with our humanity.

What about the bells and pomegranates? What do they represent attached to the blue robe?

- The bells are made of gold- gold represents God's perfect character of love – would the bells then be, the "sound" of Christ's love in action as He works as our High Priest to heal and cure mankind of sin?

- It is from heaven that Christ came thus the sound of His love originates in heaven – and He works as our High Priest in the sanctuary in heaven.
- What of the pomegranates? blue, scarlet and gold?
 - The pomegranate is a fruit full of seeds – seeds symbolize life. Christ is the Seed, Christ came to “seed” a new humanity built of His perfect character, originating in heaven and achieved through His sacrifice, from which all of His followers will spring.
 - If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:29

The High Priest also wore a miter with a gold plate:

Exodus 28:36-38:

“Make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it as on a seal: HOLY TO THE LORD. ³⁷ Fasten a blue cord to it to attach it to the turban; it is to be on the front of the turban. ³⁸ It will be on Aaron’s forehead, and he will bear the guilt involved in the sacred gifts the Israelites consecrate, whatever their gifts may be. It will be on Aaron’s forehead continually so that they will be acceptable to the LORD. ¹ NIV

And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLY TO JEHOVAH. ³⁷And thou shalt put it on a lace of blue, and it shall be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. ³⁸And it shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, and Aaron shall bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before Jehovah. ² ASV

“Make an ornament of pure gold and engrave on it ‘Dedicated to the LORD’. ³⁷Tie it to the front of the turban with a blue cord.

¹ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996 (electronic ed.) (Ex 28:36–38). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

² *American Standard Version*. 1995 (Ex 28:36–38). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

³⁸Aaron is to wear it on his forehead, so that I, the LORD, will accept all the offerings that the Israelites dedicate to me, even if the people commit some error in offering them.³ GNT

What is represented by the golden plate?

Read last paragraph, "Notice, too..." thoughts? What does it mean for Jesus to bear our sins?

The guilt of fallen humanity He must bear. Upon Him who knew no sin must be laid the **iniquity of us all**. So dreadful does sin appear to Him, **so great is the weight of guilt which He must bear**, that He is tempted to **fear** it will shut Him out forever from His Father's love. Feeling how terrible is the wrath of God against transgression, He exclaims, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." {DA 685.2}

What does it mean for Christ to be our sin Bearer? Does it mean recorded sin gets put upon Him and God metes out a certain amount of punishment upon Christ?

Notwithstanding that the sins of a guilty world were laid upon Christ, notwithstanding the humiliation of taking upon Himself our fallen nature, the voice from heaven declared Him to be the Son of the Eternal. {DA 112.3}

What does this mean?

The angels of heaven witnessed every movement made against their loved Commander. They longed to deliver Christ. 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. How easily could the angels, beholding the shameful scene of the trial of Christ, have testified their indignation by consuming the adversaries of God! But they were not

³ American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible : The Good news Translation* (2nd ed.) (Ex 28:36–38). New York: American Bible Society.

commanded to do this. He who could have doomed His enemies to death bore with their cruelty. His love for His Father, and His pledge, made from the foundation of the world, **to become the Sin Bearer**, led Him to endure uncomplainingly the coarse treatment of those He came to save. **It was a part of His mission to bear, in His humanity, all the taunts and abuse that men could heap upon Him. The only hope of humanity was in this submission of Christ to all that He could endure from the hands and hearts of men.** {DA 700.5}

Is this what it means to bear our sins?

Could it mean simply that he endured what our sinfulness brought with it and overcame restoring mankind to its perfect original ideal?

In quoting the prophecy of the rejected stone, Christ referred to an actual occurrence in the history of Israel. The incident was connected with the building of the first temple. While it had a special application at the time of Christ's first advent, and should have appealed with special force to the Jews, it has also a lesson for us. When the temple of Solomon was erected, the immense stones for the walls and the foundation were entirely prepared at the quarry; after they were brought to the place of building, not an instrument was to be used upon them; the workmen had only to place them in position. For use in the foundation, one stone of unusual size and peculiar shape had been brought; but the workmen could find no place for it, and would not accept it. It was an annoyance to them as it lay unused in their way. Long it remained a rejected stone. But when the builders came to the laying of the corner, they searched for a long time to find a stone of sufficient size and strength, and of the proper shape, to take that particular place, and **bear the great weight which would rest upon it.** Should they make an unwise choice for this important place, the safety of the entire building would be endangered. They must find a stone capable of resisting the influence of the sun, of frost, and of tempest. Several stones had at different times been chosen, but under

the pressure of immense weights they had crumbled to pieces. **Others could not bear** the test of the sudden atmospheric changes. But at last attention was called to the stone so long rejected. It had been exposed to the air, to sun and storm, without revealing the slightest crack. The builders examined this stone. It had borne every test but one. **If it could bear the test of severe pressure, they decided to accept it for the cornerstone.** The trial was made. The stone was accepted, brought to its assigned position, and found to be an exact fit. In prophetic vision, Isaiah was shown that this stone was a symbol of Christ. He says: {DA 597.5}

"Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." Carried down in prophetic vision to the first advent, the prophet is shown that **Christ is to bear trials and tests of which the treatment of the chief cornerstone in the temple of Solomon was symbolic.** "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Isa. 8:13-15; 28:16. {DA 598.1}

What was the purpose of these tests and trials which Christ was to bear? Why was He "bearing" it? Was it related to building the Temple in heaven?

Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the **Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD.** ¹³ **It is he who will build the temple of the LORD,** and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' Zechariah 6:12,13.

If the temple was already built, then why is the Branch (Christ) going to branch out to build the temple of the Lord?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Therefore, since...” thoughts?

What does this mean? Does it mean Jesus is more sympathetic than the Father? Does it mean that Jesus learned something that He or the Father didn't previously know or understand until Jesus became human?

Does it mean Jesus achieved something, in a human brain, that He previously didn't possess in His Godly form? What was that? A perfect humanity! Why is this significant?

- Remedy for human sinfulness
- Revelation of truth to destroy lies about God
- Evidence that Christ did not make a manufacturer's defect in creating mankind

Read second paragraph, “Because Christ resides...” Thoughts?

What does it mean “he ever lives to make intercession” for us? Where is Christ interceding?

- Our hearts and minds – Genesis 3
- Principalities and powers of darkness (angels holding back 4 winds of strife)
- In the course of sinfulness in mankind by becoming sin for us and curing our condition

What does it mean “we know that we stand perfect before God”?

The lesson points us to Heb 8:10-12:

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.
I will put my laws in their minds

- and write them on their hearts.
 I will be their God,
 and they will be my people.
- ¹¹ No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
 or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,'
 because they will all know me,
 from the least of them to the greatest.
- ¹² For I will forgive their wickedness
 and will remember their sins no more.

Thoughts? Is this why we stand before God perfect – because Christ lives in us and writes His perfect law on our hearts and minds?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “As we saw yesterday...” thoughts? Who needed mediation? Why was it necessary? Is it God’s preference to have someone other than God speak to us directly? Who prefers it this way?

¹⁸ When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance ¹⁹ and said to Moses, “**Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.**”

²⁰ Moses said to the people, “**Do not be afraid.** God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.” Exodus 20:18-20

Thoughts? What is God’s preference? Is it not to speak to us face to face as with a friend? Why doesn’t He? Because we can’t endure it!

Christ was about to visit our world, and to become incarnate. He says, "A body hast Thou prepared Me." **Had He appeared with the glory that was His with the Father before the world was, we could not have endured the light of His presence. That we might behold it and not be destroyed, the manifestation of His glory was shrouded.** His divinity

was veiled with humanity,--the invisible glory in the visible human form. {DA 23.1}

Why would men have been destroyed if Christ would have come with unveiled glory? Would it indicate anger and hostility on God's part? Would Jesus have had an unloving heart or was it that something is broken in sinful man that cannot survive in God's unveiled presence?

Will it be different when Christ comes a second time? Will sinful, unregenerate men now be able to live in God's unveiled presence without being destroyed?

FRIDAY

Read the two quotations on Friday - what do these mean to you?

How do you hear them? Could they be misunderstood? If so how?

Read and discuss questions 1-3

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – “Jesus said...” thoughts?

Have we as SDA's been given much? Who in history sounds like us as a group?

- Sabbath
- Health message
- Sanctuary
- Gift of prophetic writings
- Looking for the Advent
- Tithes and offerings

Was it enough to know these truths? What was missing? Could persons know all these truths and still crucify Christ? How?

Do we need to understand what these truths tell us about God? If these truths are viewed through the lens of an arbitrary or punitive God then rather than blessings these become cursings and result in harder hearts. This is what happened two thousand years ago.

Could it happen again? What can we do to prevent ourselves from being caught up into a movement that places us as enemies of God?

Is it enough to worship on the “right” day? What is essential?

Read third paragraph, “However, and here’s...” thoughts? What is the lesson? What does it say about God that he works with people who make such mistakes? What if He didn’t? What should our attitude be toward people after they have sinned?

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 6 2Q 2011

Elijah's and Elisha's Mantle

SABBATH

Memory verse – 2 Cor 7:10 “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”

Thoughts? What does it mean?

What is the difference between Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow?
Any examples?

Is Godly sorrow, sorrow for sin, sorrow for the wickedness in the heart, sorry for iniquity? And would worldly sorry be sorry for the consequences of sin?

"Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. .." This is genuine repentance. **It will lead to a transformation in the life.** It is the absence of this true sorrow for sin that makes many conversions superficial. Reformations are not made in the life. **But when sin is viewed in the light of the law of God, and its true character is realized, it will be put away from the heart and life.** {RH, June 8, 1911 par. 10}

Thoughts? What does it mean to view sin in the light of God's law, to see its true character? What is the true character of sin?

How wide the difference between those schools taught by the prophets of God, and our modern institutions of learning! How few schools are to be found that are not governed by the maxims and customs of the world! ... Superficial talk, mere sentimentalism, passes for instruction in morals and religion. The justice and mercy of God, the beauty of holiness, and the sure reward of right-doing, **the heinous character of sin, and**

the certainty of its terrible results, are not impressed upon the minds of the young. {CE 63.1}

There are but few who have an appreciation of **the grievous character of sin, and who comprehend the greatness of the ruin that has resulted from the transgression of God's law**. By examining the wonderful **plan of redemption to restore the sinner to the moral image of God**, we see that the only means for man's deliverance was wrought out by the self-sacrifice, and the unparalleled condescension and love of the Son of God. He alone had the strength to fight the battles with the great adversary of God and man, and, as our substitute and surety, he has given power to those who lay hold of him by faith, to become victors in his name, and through his merits. {CE 112.1}

What is the character of sin? What is the purpose of the plan of salvation? To restore the moral image of God in man!

Jump to Tuesday's lesson – Ahab wanted the vineyard of Naboth, Naboth would not sell. Jezebel laid a trap to kill Naboth and then Ahab took the vineyard. Elijah meets Ahab in the vineyard with a message, read third paragraph, “you shall speak...”

What do you think about this message? What does it mean? Why did God send this message to Ahab? Is God threatening Him? What is the God's goal for Ahab? Does God love Ahab? What does God want to see for Ahab? Does God want to see Ahab repent and be saved? Is this message from Elijah designed for this purpose?

And then read last paragraph, “When Ahab heard...” thoughts?

What about the “judgments” of God? What purpose do they serve? Are the judgments of God some infliction of “just desserts” on the wicked to make them pay? Or are they “God's judgments” i.e. What God judges will most likely bring people to repentance and salvation, or some action by God to protect, or to keep open the channels of blessings, or to save?

What about the judgment of no rain until Elijah gives word? Was this a punishment or a therapeutic intervention to heal and save?

It was only by the exercise of strong faith in the unfailing power of God's word that Elijah delivered his message. Had he not possessed implicit confidence in the One whom he served, he would never have appeared before Ahab. On his way to Samaria, Elijah had passed by ever-flowing streams, hills covered with verdure, and stately forests that seemed beyond the reach of drought. Everything on which the eye rested was clothed with beauty. The prophet might have wondered how the streams that had never ceased their flow could become dry, or how those hills and valleys could be burned with drought. But he gave no place to unbelief. **He fully believed that God would humble apostate Israel, and that through judgments they would be brought to repentance.** The fiat of Heaven had gone forth; God's word could not fail; and at the peril of his life Elijah fearlessly fulfilled his commission. Like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, **the message of impending judgment fell upon the ears of the wicked king;** but before Ahab could recover from his astonishment, or frame a reply, Elijah disappeared as abruptly as he had come, without waiting to witness the effect of his message. And the Lord went before him, making plain the way. "Turn thee eastward," the prophet was bidden, "and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee."
{PK 121.2}

When you think of God's judgments to you understand them as punishments for wickedness to exact proper recompense, or do you understand His judgments as wise interventions to resolve the sin problem and bring healing?

Does it make a difference?

Why did Elijah bring this message? How is this connected to:

“But before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes, I will send you the prophet Elijah. ⁶He will bring fathers and children together again; otherwise I would have to come and destroy your country.” Malachi 4:5,6

Who is this Elijah of Malachi 4?

Read top paragraph FRIDAY,

“Elijah, who had been translated to heaven without seeing death, **represented those who will be living upon the earth at Christ's second coming, and who will be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;"** when "this mortal must put on immortality," and "this corruptible must put on incorruption." 1 Cor. 15:51-53. Jesus was clothed with the light of heaven, as He will appear when He shall come "the second time without sin unto salvation." For He will come "in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." Heb. 9:28; Mark 8:38.” DA 422.

What is the message this Elijah is to bring? What did the first Elijah do? Do we have a similar role to play?

Elijah gave a message calling people back from idolatry to the true God and went to heaven without seeing death.

We are told that Elijah will present again a message before the coming of the Lord and those who give it will then be translated without seeing death – (maybe not every individual but as a group/generation).

Elijah confronted idolatry, notice the dynamics of that day:

Religious leaders in Elijah’s day were leading people to worship Baal.

- Do you think the prophets and priests of Baal thought they were worshipping a false god?

- Do you think they were thinking, “Let’s lead these people to worship a false god?” Or did they actually believe Baal was the true God?

The religious leaders, with their position, prestige, and conviction of heart, deceived the people of God into worshipping Baal.

What was the problem with worshipping Baal?

What made Baal a false God? Was it that the word “Baal” was the wrong group of letters pronounced when worshipping God? Was it because they were not saying Yahweh? Was it something else?

The Hebrew noun *ba'al* means ‘master’, ‘possessor’ or ‘husband’. Used with suffixes, *e.g.* Baal-peor or Baal-berith, the word may have retained something of its original sense; but in general Baal is a proper name in the OT, and refers to a specific deity, Hadad, the W Semitic storm-god, the most important deity in the Canaanite pantheon. ¹

Yahweh was ‘master’ and ‘husband’ to Israel, and therefore they called him ‘Baal’, in all innocence; but naturally this practice led to confusion of the worship of Yahweh with the Baal rituals, and it became essential to call him by some different title; Hosea (2:16) proposed *’iš*, another word meaning ‘husband’.²

The phenomena associated with thunderstorms were closely linked to Baal. Baal was said to appoint the season of rains. Clouds were thought to be part of his entourage. Lightning was his weapon, and it may have been his invention. The windows of Baal’s palace were thought to correspond to openings in the clouds through which rain flowed. Rain was important to Canaanite agriculture, and Baal was

¹ Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed.) (108). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

² Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed.) (108). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

consequently a god of fertility—a prodigious lover as well as the giver of abundance.

The Ugaritic literature preserves a cycle of myths in which Baal is the protagonist. They tell of his battle against Lotan (Leviathan) and of his struggles against other adversaries called Yamm (Sea) and Mot (Death). The struggle between Baal and Yamm has left its mark on Israelite literature in the form of stories about and allusions to Yahweh's encounters with watery enemies (e.g., Isa. 51:9b-10; Ps. 74:13). Through his struggles, Baal achieves the first rank among the gods. Along the way Baal perishes and revives, providing the Ugaritic literature with stirring themes and dramatic moments.³

What was the problem with worshipping a god who controlled thunder and lightening, who brought rain, sunshine, fertility, blessed with full harvest, who warred against the great serpent and death, who died and was resurrected? What was wrong with this god?

What was Elijah opposing? Is there a lesson for us if we are to give the Elijah message at this time to recognize what was wrong that caused this worship to be false?

Was it that Baal represented the characteristics of Satan's version of God? What would be central to that?

Determined to keep the people in deception, the priests of Baal continue to offer sacrifices to their gods and to call upon them night and day to refresh the earth. **With costly offerings the priests attempt to appease the anger of their gods;** with a zeal and a perseverance worthy of a better cause they linger round their pagan altars and pray earnestly for rain. Night after night, throughout the doomed land, their cries and entreaties arise. But no clouds appear in the heavens by day to hide the burning rays of the sun. No dew or rain refreshes

³ Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row, P., & Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). *Harper's Bible dictionary* (1st ed.) (84–85). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

the thirsty earth. The word of Jehovah stands unchanged by anything the priests of Baal can do. {PK 124.2}

What caused Baal to be false? Is it false to worship the creator? The giver of life? The conqueror of death? The sacrificial God? The God who wars against the great serpent? The God of the weather?

What about Malachi's prophecy regarding Elijah returning? Will we face a similar problem, a god construct, taught by religious leaders, in which people are led to believe that the god who controls the weather, the god who blesses with fertility and abundance, the god who fights against the great serpent and death, the god who died and rose again, also requires appeasement or payment in order to be just? Could this be the very lie we are to confront as Elijah did? Could those who confront this lie be the ones translated without seeing death?

Is it wrong to worship a god who must be appeased? One who requires payment? One who must have sacrifice to assuage his wrath? Is this not the heart of pagan worship and what Elijah is supposed to oppose?

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

Elijah was sent with a message that Baal is false, the true God is not like this. The proponents of the false god, outnumbered the people of God and sought their destruction.

God empowered His representative to stand firm and call to account the leaders who misrepresented Him and led the people to believe in a god who required payment and sacrifice to appease.

Do we find any parallels today? Has the idea that God requires blood to be forgiving entered Christian thought? Has the idea that Jesus died to appease the wrath of God or to assuage the wrath of God entered Christian thought? Has the idea that God requires a legal payment entered Christian thought? Is this part of what the Elijah message is to oppose?

Here is a statement from a paper called, "A Call to Evangelical Unity," from *Christianity Today*, June 14, 1999:

- We affirm that the atonement of Christ by which, in his obedience, he offered a perfect sacrifice, propitiating the Father by paying for our sins and satisfying divine justice on our behalf according to God's eternal plan, is an essential element of the Gospel.

Recently a book was recommend to shed light on what some believe are deficiencies in our class. Here are some excerpts from this book:

"Paul always speaks of people being reconciled to God (2Cor 5:19; Rom 5:10; Col. 1:20). He never refers to God being reconciled to us. **In spite of that fact**, however, we should recognize that sin affected both sides. Humanity's rebellion and sense of guilt alienated it from God, while **God was separated from humankind by His necessary hatred of and judgment on sin (His wrath). Christ's sacrificial death (propitiation) removed the barrier to reconciliation from God's side.**" Knight, *The Cross of Christ*, p. 74.

"Leon Morris writes that *if God's 'wrath is regarded as a very real factor so that the sinner is exposed to its severity, then **the removal of the wrath will be an important part of our understanding of salvation.***' Of course, 'if we diminish the part played by divine wrath we shall not find it necessary to think seriously of propitiation.' Thus Morris comments in

another connection, ‘if people are to be forgiven, then the fact of that wrath must be taken into consideration. It does not fade away by being given some other name or regarded as an impersonal process.’ **In other words, Gods’ wrath must be propitiated or turned away from the sinner. That was one aim of Christ’s self-sacrifice on the cross.**” Ibid p 64.

Here is from the SDA 27 Fundamental Beliefs:

“Christ’s self-sacrifice is *pleasing* to God because this sacrificial offering **took away the barrier between God and sinful man** in that **Christ fully bore God’s wrath on man’s sin**. Through Christ, God’s wrath is not turned into love but is turned away from man and borne by Himself.” SDA 27 fundamental beliefs page 111.

“For a loving God to maintain His justice and righteousness, the atoning death of Jesus Christ became ‘a moral and legal necessity.’ God’s ‘justice requires that sin be carried to judgment. **God must therefore execute** judgment on sin and thus on the sinner. In **this execution the Son of God took our place, the sinner’s place, according to God’s will**. Ibid.

And this has led to theologians writing things like this:

“Why did **God the Father choose** a cross to be the instrument of death? Why did He not choose to have Christ instantly beheaded or quickly run through with a spear or sword? **Was God unjust in executing judgment on Christ with a cross** when He could have done it by beheading, a noose, a sword, a gas chamber, a bolt of lightning, or a lethal injection?”

(<http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2007/February/sinners-in-the-hands-of-god.html>).

Angel Rodriguez said in December 2007 World Review “One of the fundamental problems of the Moral Influence Theory is that it rejects the substitutionary nature of Christ’s death. The idea that **God had to kill the innocent** instead of the guilty

in order to save us is considered a violation of justice.” (p 40, emphasis mine).

Did God choose to execute His Son on the Cross? Or was this done at the instigation of Satan and unholy men? Is God the source of killing, execution and death or does death arise from sin?

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, **yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.** Isa 53:4

Did God afflict Him, or did Isaiah prophecy we would misunderstand and attribute to God the murder of Christ?

What did Jesus say about what His Father did to Him? “My God, My God why have you forsaken my?”

What about EGW, who actually killed Christ?

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. **He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings.** Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

Did God execute His Son? No! Does Elijah need to stand up and oppose this view of God?

What about the idea that God needed to be appeased or have His wrath assuaged?

“The atonement **of Christ was not made in order to induce God to love those whom he otherwise hated**; it was not made to produce a love that was not in existence; but **it was made as a manifestation of the love that was already in God's heart**, an exponent of the divine favor in the sight of heavenly intelligences, in the sight of worlds unfallen, and in the sight of a fallen race. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **We are not to entertain the idea that God loves us because Christ has died for us**, but that he so loved us that he gave his only-begotten Son to die for us. **The death of Christ was expedient in order that mercy might reach us with its full pardoning power**, and at the same time that justice might be satisfied in the righteous substitute.” {ST, May 30, 1895 par. 6}

Is the message of Elijah that is to lighten the world a confrontation with paganism even more insidious than the original Elijah faced? And do we have a message which will demolish all of the false god concepts being taught?

Would it be wrong to consider this message, the final message to lighten the world for Christ's return is the message about God's character of love which will confront paganism.

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...**The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

SUNDAY

We have the Mt Carmel experience of 1 Kings 18, where Elijah confronts the prophets of Baal, calls fire down, has the prophets of Baal slaughtered and then ran ahead of Ahab's chariot for 20 miles! Then what happens – fear, panic, discouragement after being threatened by Jezebel.

Elijah runs away, later Jezebel is killed and eaten by dogs.

What do we learn from this?

Satan is a blowhard – Satan threatens, intimidates, makes noise to get us to doubt our position, standing, safety, security, to turn our mind's attention away from our mission and back onto ourselves.

Peter, while looking to Christ was walking on water, when he looked to self to show the others, look at me, he sank.

We must fix our eyes on Christ – keep our focus on mission, trust God with how things turn out, with our reputation and keep fulfilling our duty to the best of our ability.

Elijah, ran trying to save self – rather than trusting God with His life.

This is easy for me to say, thousands of years downstream and not in that situation – it is much harder to do. This is the battle with which we all struggle, how to stay surrendered to Christ, trusting Him with how things turn out in the face of threats of various kinds!

Elijah ends up at a cave and while there he sees a great wind, an earthquake and a fire – but the Lord was not in any of these. Then he hears the sound of the still small voice, and the Lord was in this.

What does this mean? What lessons do we learn from this?

- God is not found in the great shows of thunder, fire, and miracles
- God does not want to reach us through “shock and awe” Why not?
- God prefers the still small voice, why?

What happens to thinking and reasoning when we are shocked and awed? What happens to capacity to comprehend, understand, develop? What happens to love?

What does God want for us? Can His goals for us be accomplished through the exercise of might and power?

Bottom pink section asks, “How can we learn to recognize the still small voice?”

WEDNESDAY

Read top paragraph, “Whatever one can...” thoughts?

How did Elijah leave earth? In a chariot of fire – what does this mean? What lessons do we learn?

In Daniel 7 when God takes His throne what flows out from Him? Rivers of fire.

Did Elijah get hurt in the fire? Or the intelligent beings in Daniel 7?

What is the source of this fire? Why didn't it destroy Elijah?

Is the fire harmful? What about the fire that at the end of time – is it different?

Does the fire in which the wicked are consumed cause suffering and pain? Or does their unhealed sinful condition cause the suffering, pain and ultimate death?

Is God the source of life? What is the cause/source of death?

If you were Satan who would you try and get people to believe is the source of death?

What about the idea that it really doesn't matter whether God inflicts the death of the wicked by raining fire upon them, or He merely lets them reap the consequences of sin in the fire, God is the one who designed the system in which they die so God is ultimately causing it?

Who designed the system in which sin could arise? God, did God cause sin? Then can God create a system in which certain things occur which He did not want, choose or cause? Like sin and the death of the wicked in the end!

We must stop casting God in the role of cosmic executioner – how can we fulfill our mission to lighten the world for Christ's return if we don't present the truth about God's character of love!

THURSDAY

Read top dark section:

Was there something magical about the mantle? Did the mantle possess some supernatural power?

What if someone were to discover in a sealed clay jar, the actual mantle of Elijah and Elisha today? What would happen?

Do you think people touching it would experience miraculous healing? Do you think this would lead to greater understanding and enlightenment regarding God and His kingdom?

Read last paragraph, "In the end.." thoughts? What does this mean? What is faith, where does it derive?

What helps you strengthen your faith?

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 7 2Q 2011

In the Shadow of His Wings

What comes to mind from the lesson title?

- What does the eaglet feel in the shadow of the eagle's wing?
- What does the field mouse feel in the shadow of the eagle's wings?

Do some people relate to God like the eaglet? When they think of being under His wings they feel safe and secure.

Do others feel like the field mouse, terrified, afraid and looking for a place to hide – just like Adam and Eve?

Does the eagle have a different attitude toward the eaglet and field mouse?

Does God have a different attitude toward those who love Him and those who don't? If so what would that difference be?

Does God love one and hate the other? Does God want to protect the one and destroy the other?

Would God's attitude difference be more like the eagle toward the eaglet and field mouse – or would God's attitude difference be more like a parent who has one child with leukemia and one child who is healthy? Does the child with leukemia get many more restrictions, interventions, attentions, and treatments from the parent?

What lessons can we derive from the eagle? What do you think an eagle looked like before sin?

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, "At the pinnacle..." thoughts? What is the significance of understanding this point?

As we approach the end of sinful earth, the events leading to the second coming – where is the battle between good and evil fought? Is it in the mind?

What weapons are used? How does Satan get us to miss this point?

Is the battle of Armageddon fought with tanks, artillery, jets, nuclear weapons – or is it a battle for the mind? What will this battle center upon? (2Cor 10:3-5).

The lesson reports that after David's sin with Bathsheba he attempted to "cover" his sin in various ways – what ways?

- Having Uriah come home to sleep with his wife
- Having Uriah murdered

Why do we attempt to "cover" our sin? What motivates us to act in this way? Is it fear? Fear of what? What is the source of this fear?

As soon as Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid because they were afraid – where did that fear originate? Did God do something to incite this fear?

During that long time spent in communion with God, the face of Moses had reflected the glory of the divine Presence; unknown to himself his face shown with a dazzling light when he descended from the mountain. ... Aaron as well as the people shrank away from Moses, and "**they were afraid to come nigh him.**" Seeing their confusion and terror, but ignorant of the cause, he urged them to come near. **He held out to them the pledge of God's reconciliation, and assured them of His restored favor. They perceived in his voice nothing but love and entreaty,** and at last one ventured to approach him. Too awed to speak, he silently pointed to the countenance of Moses, and then toward heaven. The great leader understood his meaning. In their conscious guilt, feeling themselves still under the divine displeasure, they could not endure the heavenly light, which, had they been obedient to God, would have filled them with joy. **There**

is fear in guilt. The soul that is free from sin will not wish to hide from the light of heaven. {PP 329.5}

Did God do something to incite the fear the Israelites experienced at Sinai? Where does the fear originate?

What does the fear cause one to do?

What are we afraid of in the aftermath of sin? Are we afraid of reprisal, embarrassment, rejection, punishment, exaction, hostility, animosity?

Are we generally more afraid of the natural consequences of sin or the perceived imposed consequences?

- Is the child more afraid of teeth rotting from not brushing or a spanking?
- Is the drug addict generally more afraid of destroyed brain and health or going to prison?
- Is the child molester generally more afraid of the destruction of their character or going to prison?
- Is the sinner generally more afraid of how sin damages and destroys them or the perceived idea that God will inflict punishment?

Does society, including Christianity, distort the reality of what we are to fear?

Was there any reason, in fact, for Adam and Eve to fear God? Did God have any attitude to harm Adam and Eve? Did the children of Israel at Sinai have any reason, in fact, to fear God?

Did Adam and Eve have reasons to fear what sinfulness was doing to them?

Does Satan work to get us to place on God the consequences of what sin does?

Could the fear we experience of God all be based in lies, distortions and misunderstandings?

If you were to commit a sin – would you have fear? If not fear of God would you fear people finding out? Why?

- We wouldn't need to fear if members of our own church were to find out about our sin would we?
- No member of the church would use knowledge of a historic sin to injure another member of the church would they?
- What does it mean when this happens? If you find out a pastor has been divorced and remarried – what do you think?
- If you find out an evangelist was once a drug addict – after he finished seminary – what do you think?
- If you find out a deacon once had an intimate relationship outside of wedlock, what do you think?
- What should we think? How should we act?

Are there reasons, based on experience in our society, that teach people to “cover” their sins?

Is there a difference between David's effort to “cover” his sin and God's “covering” of our sin? – see TUESDAY

TUESDAY

Memory verse: “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Ps 32:1.

When you hear the word “cover” what do you think?

- If someone says get under cover – it means?
 - In the military concealment means to hide, cover means to get behind something that offers protection

- If someone says to a friend, who forgot their wallet at a restaurant, “Don’t worry I’ll cover it” what does it mean?
- If someone says, “I’m going to be in so much trouble with the boss for being late.” And their friend says, “Don’t worry I’ve got you covered.” What does it mean?
- If a person is in combat and their commander says, “run I’ll cover you.” What does it mean?

How is God’s covering of our sin different that our covering of our sin?

When man attempts to “cover” his sin what is he attempting to do? Is he attempting to “hide” or cover-up his sin, to conceal it, to prevent it from being known?

Is that what God does when God “covers” our sin? Does He cover over it, conceal it, cover it up? Is the plan of salvation the great “cover-up?”

Or is God’s “covering” just like in the military a protection from sin rather than a concealment of sin?

Is God’s covering the opposite of human covering, where human’s attempt to hide, God’s covering requires full exposure. What did David actually pray when he pursued God’s “covering?”

“Search me and see the wicked way in me...” does this sound like a covering over? And “create in me a clean heart oh God...”

The sinner covers over an infection without treating it, or providing remedy, God covers by exposing and curing, recreating, regenerating so the infection of sinfulness in the heart is gone.

Or do you think the last paragraph says it more clearly, “God does not overlook...” thoughts?

I received an email this week from a class member who came across a quotation which was difficult to understand and made God sound like a harsh judge. He asked how do we understand it.

The Lord Jesus Christ has prepared a **covering--the robe of His own righteousness--that He will put on every repenting, believing soul** who by faith will receive it. Said John, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). **Sin is the transgression of the law. Christ died to make it possible for every man to have his sins taken away.** {Upward Look 378.2}

A fig-leaf apron will never cover our nakedness. Sin must be taken away, and the garment of Christ's righteousness must cover the transgressor of God's law. Then when the Lord looks upon the believing sinner, He sees, not the fig leaves covering him, but Christ's own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. Man has hidden his nakedness, not under a covering of fig leaves, but under the robe of Christ's righteousness. {UL 378.3}

Christ has made a sacrifice to satisfy the demands of justice. What a price for Heaven to pay to ransom the transgressor of the law of Jehovah. Yet that holy law could not be maintained with any smaller price. In the place of the law being abolished to meet sinful man in his fallen condition, **it has been maintained** in all its sacred dignity. In His Son, God gave Himself to save from eternal ruin all who would believe in Him. {UL 378.4}

Sin is disloyalty to God, and [is] deserving of punishment. Fig leaves sewed together have been employed since the days of Adam, **yet the nakedness of the soul of the sinner is not covered. All the arguments** pieced together by all who have interested themselves in this flimsy robe will come to nought. **Sin is the transgression of the law. Christ was manifest in our world to take away transgression and sin, and to substitute for the covering of fig leaves the pure robes of His righteousness.** The law of God stands vindicated by the suffering and death of the only begotten Son of the infinite God. {UL 378.5}

The transgression of God's law in a single instance, in the smallest particular, is sin. And **the nonexecution of the penalty of that sin would be a crime in the divine administration. God is a judge, the Avenger of justice,**

which is the habitation and the foundation of His throne. He cannot dispense with His law; He cannot do away with its smallest item in order to meet and pardon sin. The rectitude, justice, and moral excellence of the law must be maintained and vindicated before the heavenly universe and the worlds unfallen.--Manuscript 145, Dec. 30, 1897, "Notes of Work." {UL 378.6}

Thoughts?

How do we understand such language? Is this literal? Is it metaphorical or some other imagery? Let's break it down to its constituent parts and see what it means.

Sin is what?

- Transgression of the law?
- Which means what?
- What law?
- What does it mean to transgress?
 - If someone jumps off a building does gravity act differently or is it constant? Would this be an example of transgressing the law?
 - If someone ties a plastic bag over their head, will the law of respiration act differently? Is this an example of transgression of the law?

What about the law of love?

- How do you understand it?
- Is it something arbitrary that God enacted and imposed and now enforces or is it the construction protocol upon which God built life to operate?
- And if one transgresses that protocol what happens?

What is justice? Doing what is right or just?

- What determines the standard of justice?
- Is it not the law of the realm?
- And what is the law of God's realm?
- Is it not the law of love?

- Then what does justice look like in God's realm?

With these points in mind, what does this paragraph mean:

Christ has made a sacrifice to satisfy the demands of justice. What a price for Heaven to pay to ransom the transgressor of the law of Jehovah. Yet that holy **law could not be maintained** with any smaller price. In the place of the law being abolished to meet sinful man in his fallen condition, **it has been maintained** in all its sacred dignity. In His Son, God gave Himself to save from eternal ruin all who would believe in Him. {UL 378.4}

- What did justice demand?
- What does the phrase "the holy law could not be maintained..." mean? Or what does "the law could not be abolished to meet sinful man" mean, why not?
- Why did it have to be maintained? Because the law is the design protocol for life, it is the way God built life to operate, it cannot be changed and life continue.
- Therefore, justice demanded that the sinner be restored to harmony with the law! Christ's death was the means whereby God could actually accomplish this outcome. Notice this statement:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. **He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law.** But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a **free gift** to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have **remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, **Christ imbues** men with the attributes of God. **He builds up the human character** after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."** Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What does the law demand? What does justice look like?

What about this section, how do we understand it:

Sin is disloyalty to God, and [is] deserving of punishment. Fig leaves sewed together have been employed since the days of Adam, **yet the nakedness of the soul of the sinner is not covered. All the arguments** pieced together by all who have interested themselves in this flimsy robe will come to nought. **Sin is the transgression of the law. Christ was manifest in our world to take away transgression and sin, and to substitute for the covering of fig leaves the pure robes of His righteousness.** The law of God stands vindicated by the suffering and death of the only begotten Son of the infinite God. {UL 378.5}

Is sin disloyalty to God? Yes, God is love, sin is violation of the law of love. It is not maintaining faithfulness to the law of love which is disloyalty. What does it mean, sin is deserving of punishment?

- If someone jumps off a tall building is that act *deserving* of pain and suffering, and possibly death?
- If someone is shot in the chest with a bullet is that *deserving* of pain, suffering and possibly death?
- Now does this mean such pain and suffering is a *requirement*, even though it is deserving? If someone jumped off a building, it would be deserving of punishment, but what if someone intervened and inflated a landing cushion to save them? Or what if the person shot in the chest had been given a bullet proof vest?
- Must every sin be punished? Who urged that idea? Satan did – DA 761 – but Romans tells us that God left the sins committed beforehand “unpunished.” (3:25).

- Sin is deserving of punishment, just like jumping off a building is deserving of pain and suffering, but what if someone intervenes to save, can the punishment be averted?

What was Christ manifested to do?

- Take away our transgressions – what does this mean?
- Take them away from where?
- Is it to take them away from history, to change historical fact so that David never had an affair with Bathsheba, and subsequently never murdered Uriah, and therefore Solomon and all his children were never born (including Christ), Absalom didn't rebel and die etc.
- Does Christ take our transgressions away from history?
- From where does He remove our transgressions?
- Is it not from our characters, minds, hearts, motives, cleansing us and healing us?

He came to remove transgression from the sinner by writing His law in our hearts and minds!

This **robe, woven in the loom of heaven**, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. .. **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

What does this covering sound like? A cover up or a cure?

And what about the final paragraph:

The transgression of God's law in a single instance, in the smallest particular, is sin. And **the nonexecution of the**

penalty of that sin would be a crime in the divine administration. God is a judge, the Avenger of justice, which is the habitation and the foundation of His throne. He cannot dispense with His law; He cannot do away with its smallest item in order to meet and pardon sin. The rectitude, justice, and moral excellence of the law must be maintained and vindicated before the heavenly universe and the worlds unfallen.--Manuscript 145, Dec. 30, 1897, "Notes of Work." {UL 378.6}

What does this mean? What would the non-execution of the penalty of sin mean? What is the result of transgression of the law upon which life was built to operate? What is the penalty? What did God tell Adam and Eve would happen? Death.

And Christ who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God – what does this mean? Christ took up our infirmities – what does this mean? Christ united His divinity with our humanity in order to destroy the carnal nature and develop a perfect human character which He offers to all of us.

Thus in Jesus, at the cross, He destroyed the infection of sin, destroyed the carnal nature and perfectly restored the law of love into His humanity, developing a perfect character and thus rose again on the third day.

If it was a legal, courtroom, type of penalty rather than a fixing, healing, process, then the penalty for sin is not paid because Christ is not eternally dead.

But because the penalty is death for that which is out of harmony with the law life is built upon, Christ was able to take upon Himself our defective and terminal condition, take that condition to the grave, leave that condition in the grave and rise again in a purified humanity!

What does it mean to be the Avenger of justice – again what is justice? Is it not doing what the law of love demands? And avenger

means to take vengeance. Can we let the Bible guide us on this or must we insist on human understanding of vengeance?

Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: “Ah, I will get relief from my foes and **avenge myself on my enemies.** ²⁵ I will turn my hand against you; **I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities.** Isaiah 1:24,25

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to **bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,** ² to proclaim the **year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,** ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion— **to bestow on them a crown of beauty** instead of ashes, **the oil of gladness** instead of mourning, and **a garment of praise** instead of a spirit of despair. Isa 61:1-3

What is the vengeance of God? Turning enemies into friends – His vengeance is not on sinners but on sinfulness. He attacks and destroys sin! This is His vengeance which purges and cleanses the sinner! The greatest vengeance God can have on Satan is healing and restoring all those who trust Him!

Thoughts?

MONDAY

What do you think about this sentence in the third paragraph, “David’s sin is covered, but the child conceived in sin must die.”

Now the child did die, but I don’t follow the idea of the “child conceived in sin must die” what are they trying to say?

Which of us in this room were not conceived in sin and born in iniquity? Is the lesson trying to help us understand that all of us born in sin, “must die” unless we are reborn?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about being whiter than snow and purging from sin – what does this mean?

What does God purge? Is it not sinners? And how does He do it?

Would it not be through the truth and relationship with Christ?

Isaiah 1:18 – come let us reason together.... Is there a connection with reasoning with God and cleansing from sin? What?

Read last paragraph, “God does...” thoughts

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Some eagles...” thoughts? From where is sin blotted out?

Was David responsible for the consequences of his sin? Was he responsible for how his children acted or responded? Were they forbidden from forgiving their father, for being gracious? Did they have no responsibility or choice in the matter?

What about today? When we sin does it have consequences? Yes, what is the balance between the consequences from sin and our freedom to choose?

Are there choices we can make to stop the consequences of sin? What about forgiving others? What about loving the sinners among us like Christ loves us?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2 and 4

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 8 2Q 2011

Garments of Splendor

SABBATH

Read memory text, Isaiah 61:10 – thoughts?

If you lived in Isaiah’s day what might this message have meant to you?

- Did the people in the OT put on a different garment of salvation than we put on?
- Did the people in the OT put the garment on differently?
- What is the garment of salvation?
- How do we put on the garment of salvation?

Let’s turn to Zechariah chapter 3:

3 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.

Who are the characters in this plot?

- Who does Joshua represent?
- Who is the angel of the Lord?
 - Read Exodus 3:1-6:

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There **the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush**. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

⁴ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, **God called to him from within the bush**, “Moses! Moses!”

And Moses said, "Here I am."

⁵ "Do not come any closer," **God said**. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ Then he said, "**I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.**" At this, Moses hid his face, because **he was afraid to look at God**.

- And Satan is obviously himself

² The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"

Who is speaking to Satan? The Lord, also known as the angel of the Lord. And which member of the Godhead is this? Jesus!

What is happening here? Why is the Lord rebuking Satan?

³ Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. ⁴ The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes."

Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you."

⁵ Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by.

⁶ The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua: ⁷ "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.'

⁸ " 'Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.

What does this mean?

In what is Joshua originally dressed? Who is accusing? Why is the devil accusing? How did Joshua get dressed in such filthy clothes? Did Joshua choose to wear such clothing? Did Joshua dress himself in such clothing? Was Joshua born with such clothing?

Who is defending Joshua? From whom is Christ defending him? Have you ever heard Jesus pleads to the Father for us?

What is taken away from Joshua when the filthy clothes are removed? Sin – what is God removing from us? Our sin –from where is sin removed? Is it removed from record books of heaven or from our hearts and minds, from our characters?

Where do the new clothes originate? What do they represent? How does Joshua get them? What does it mean for us?

It says they are symbolic of things to come – what might this mean? What things to come? Could it be the antitypical day of atonement when hearts and minds are restored into unity with God and rebelliousness, iniquity, and sin is removed from the heart and the law of God is written on the heart?

What does it mean a branch plucked from the fire? Does this text relate

- Jesus said in John 14:12, “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”
- Could this imply something about our experience?

If you were dying with cancer and a physician healed you would you be able to brag about yourself? But do you become a powerful witness for the one who healed you? What do they see in your home? Do they see the power of God, the power of love, the power of truth healing transforming and recreating you to be like Jesus?

Did Jesus reveal what perfect character looks like and that a human can live perfectly in harmony with God’s law of love? Did Jesus in His life demonstrate how God’s love, methods and

principles entering into a heart/mind damaged and ravaged by sin can heal, transform and renew that being back into perfection? Do we get that privilege?

EZE 36:22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, `This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when **I show myself holy through you before their eyes.**

EZE 36:24 " `For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; **I will cleanse you from all your impurities** and from all your idols. ²⁶ **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.** ²⁷ **And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.**

"...The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple...behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver." Mal 3:1-3

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, `Know the Lord,' because they will

all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.” Heb 8:10-11

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “Perhaps the scariest...” thoughts?

Read Isaiah 1:11-18:

- 1 “The multitude of your sacrifices—
what are they to me?” says the LORD.
“I have more than enough of burnt offerings,
of rams and the fat of fattened animals;
I have no pleasure
in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.
- 12 When you come to appear before me,
who has asked this of you,
this trampling of my courts?
- 13 Stop bringing meaningless offerings!
Your incense is detestable to me.
New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—
I cannot bear your evil assemblies.
- 14 Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts
my soul hates.
They have become a burden to me;
I am weary of bearing them.
- 15 When you spread out your hands in prayer,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even if you offer many prayers,
I will not listen.
Your hands are full of blood;
- 16 wash and make yourselves clean.
Take your evil deeds
out of my sight!

What are the children of Israel doing? Who told them to pray, come to Temple, offer sacrifices, observe Sabbath? Why is God berating them?

Could it be that they failed to understand – verse 13, stop bringing “meaningless” sacrifices.

Then in verses 17, 18:

Stop doing wrong,
 17 learn to do right!
 Seek justice,
 encourage the oppressed.
 Defend the cause of the fatherless,
 plead the case of the widow.

18 “Come now, let us reason together,”
 says the LORD.
 “Though your sins are like scarlet,
 they shall be as white as snow;
 though they are red as crimson,
 they shall be like wool.

What is the point? We must press past simple symbolic representations, understandings, teachings, activities, observances and understand God, His methods, kingdom, principles, and what is happening in the Great Controversy over His character!

God wants an intelligent people who freely agree with Him!

Are we in danger of doing the same thing today of simply going through the motions of religion and not understanding God, His methods and principles etc.?

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to contemplate Isaiah 6:

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two

they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

⁶ Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

What was Isaiah seeing? Do you think he was seeing the literal reality of heaven or a symbolic representation of heaven? Does God wear a robe that has a train so long it fills the entire temple?

Did Isaiah’s tongue get touched with a live coal? What was this symbolic of?

What does it mean your guilt is taken away your sin is atoned for? From where was the guilt taken? Was it legal guilt or was it the experience of guilt and shame that sin brings to the sinner – the conscious guilt which separates us from God?

How does a coal from the altar take away guilt and atone for sin? I thought it must be blood? What does this mean?

The Temple imagery has multiple applications – one is to Christ, “tear down this temple and in three days I will raise it up.”

Christ said, “unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no part with me.”

Could this represent the application, via the work of the Holy Spirit of Christ's character into the heart and mind of Isaiah? Could it represent the "burning" out of sinfulness and writing in of righteousness into the heart of the believer?

The lesson says his sin was "purged", but from where? From where does God purge sin?

Isaiah had denounced the sin of others; but now he sees himself exposed to the same condemnation he had pronounced upon them. **He had been satisfied with a cold, lifeless ceremony in his worship of God.** He had not known this until the vision was given him of the Lord. How little now appeared his wisdom and talents as he looked upon the sacredness and majesty of the sanctuary. How unworthy he was! how unfitted for sacred service! . . . {CC 234.2}

The vision given to Isaiah represents the condition of God's people in the last days. They are privileged to see by faith the work that is going forward in the heavenly sanctuary. "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." As they look by faith into the holy of holies, and see the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, they perceive that they are a people of unclean lips,--a people whose lips have often spoken vanity, and whose talents have not been sanctified and employed to the glory of God. Well may they despair as they contrast their own weakness and unworthiness with the purity and loveliness of the glorious character of Christ. But if they, like Isaiah, will receive the impression the Lord designs shall be made upon the heart, if they will humble their souls before God, there is hope for them. The bow of promise is above the throne, and **the work done for Isaiah will be performed in them.** God will respond to the petitions coming from the contrite heart. {CC 234.3}

We want the living coal from off the altar placed upon our lips. We want to hear the word spoken, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." {CC 234.4}

The live coal is symbolical of purification. If it touches the lips, no impure word will fall from them. {CC 234.5}

Who wants this live coal? Which means what? We want our hearts and minds purified to speak only the truth about God!

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to consider Isaiah 51:6-8:

- 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
 look at the earth beneath;
 the heavens will vanish like smoke,
 the earth will wear out like a garment
 and its inhabitants die like flies.
 But my salvation will last forever,
 my righteousness will never fail.
- 7 “Hear me, you who know what is right,
 **you people who have my law in your hearts:
 Do not fear the reproach of men
 or be terrified by their insults.**
- 8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment;
 the worm will devour them like wool.
 But my righteousness will last forever,
 my salvation through all generations.”

Thoughts? Who is it that hears God? Those with His law in their hearts, and what did God say we are not to fear? The reproach of men, nor their insults or attacks. Does this have application today?

What does it mean to have the law written in the heart? Does it mean we hold to a certain set of doctrines or worship on a certain day?

What does it look like to have the law written on the heart? Would it look like Jesus?

So, in the church if the law is written on the heart, how do we treat those who disagree with us on a point of theology? In our class how are we treating those who disagree with us?

I know I need more grace. I have been tempted to anger and frustration. How should we treat those who oppose this message?

Would those who have God's law written on their heart go behind the scenes and spread rumors or attack reputation? Should we fear those who do this?

What is the Christlike response?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "It's always..." thoughts?

Do some people worship a God who is severe and brings punishments upon people? Does it make a difference in whom we become?

This week Kathy Kiley sent me an article from the Los Angeles Times which reported on a recent research article that found there were no differences in cheating in college exams between those who believe in God and those who don't. What was surprising is that those who believed in a compassionate God were more likely to cheat than those who believe in a "angry, punitive God."

The article suggested that believing in an angry punitive God may make nicer people- thoughts about that?

<http://www.urbanchristiannews.com/ucn/2011/04/cheating-and-god-study-ties-willingness-to-cheat-viewpoint-on-what-god-is-like.html>

What is the problem? The underlying theology of both groups is that the problem with sin is God gets offended, it breaks God's rules, and He is the great judge who determines our sentences. They see sin as a legal problem. Therefore, a compassionate God doesn't

enforce consequences but puts them on Jesus and it doesn't matter what we do.

Those who believe in an angry punitive God, believe God will punish us if we keep doing bad after we know about Jesus. Thus they want to avoid punishment and don't cheat.

Is the problem with sin that God is required to punish? Or is the problem with sin that sin damages and destroys the sinner? Sin is lawlessness, choosing to operate outside the protocols God built life to operate upon.

Does the view of God taught in the class lead you to be more or less likely to cheat? Why?

THURSDAY

The lesson asks us to read Isaiah 61 and discuss

What do you hear in this passage?

What is the Lord's vengeance? What is being described?

What is the everlasting covenant? What is the garment of salvation?

Does this have any application to us today?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2

SS Lesson #9 “A Brand Plucked from the Fire”.

Some questions to consider for this weeks lesson.

What are the following symbolic of?: 1. The Accuser / Accused. 2. The Angel of the Lord. 3. The filthy rags. 4. The Fine Garments. 5. The Fire. 6. Joshua. 7. The removal of sin in one day.

Sunday

The two passages below give us some insight in to God’s anger and his “fire”.

Zech 1:12-15

12 Then the angel of the LORD said, —LORD Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which you have been angry with these seventy years?” 13 So the LORD spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. 14 Then the angel who was speaking to me said, —Proclaim this word: This is what the LORD Almighty says: I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, 15 and I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they went too far with the punishment.’

Zech 2:1-5.

1 Then I looked up, and there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand. 2 I asked, —Where are you going?” He answered me, —To measure Jerusalem, to find out how wide and how long it is.” 3 While the angel who was speaking to me was leaving, another angel came to meet him 4 and said to him: —Man, tell that young man, Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of people and animals in it. 5 And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,‘ declares the LORD, and I will be its glory within.’

Monday – The Accuser and the Accused

Zechariah 3

Clean Garments for the High Priest

1 Then he showed me Joshua[a] the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. 2 The LORD said to Satan, —The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”

3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. 4 The angel said to those who were standing before him, —Take off his filthy clothes.”

Then he said to Joshua, —See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you.”

5 Then I said, —Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by.

6 The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua: **7** —**T**his is what the LORD Almighty says: **U**f you will walk in obedience to me and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.

8 —**L**ien, High Priest Joshua, you and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. **9** See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes[c] on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,‘ says the LORD Almighty, **u**nd I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.

10 —**I**n that day each of you will invite your neighbor to sit under your vine and fig tree,‘ declares the LORD Almighty.”

In the prophecy of Zechariah is brought to view Satan’s accusing work, and the work of Christ in resisting the adversary of His people. The prophet says, “He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.” Zechariah 3:1-3. {COL 166.3}

The people of God are here represented as a criminal on trial. Joshua, as high priest, is seeking for a blessing for his people, who are in great affliction. While he is pleading before God, Satan is standing at his right hand as his adversary. He is accusing the children of God, and making their case appear as desperate as possible. He presents before the Lord their evil doings and their defects. He shows their faults and failures, hoping they will appear of such a character in the eyes of Christ that He will render them no help in their great need. Joshua, as the representative of God’s people, stands under condemnation, clothed with filthy garments. Aware of the sins of his people, he is weighed down with discouragement. Satan is pressing upon his soul a sense of guiltiness that makes him feel almost hopeless. Yet there he stands as a suppliant, with Satan arrayed against him. {COL 166.4}

***The work of Satan as an accuser began in heaven.** This has been his work on earth ever since man’s fall, and it will be his work in a special sense as we approach nearer to the close of this world’s history. As he sees that his time is short, he will work with greater earnestness to deceive and destroy. **He is angry when he sees a people on the earth who, even in their weakness and sinfulness, have respect to the law of Jehovah.** He is determined that they shall not obey God. He delights in their unworthiness, and has devices prepared for every soul, that all may be ensnared and separated from God. He seeks to accuse and condemn God and all who strive to carry out His purposes in this world in mercy and love, in compassion and forgiveness. {COL 167.1}*

Tuesday – The Angel of the Lord

There are 50 references to “The Angel of the Lord” found in Scripture [NIV], and all of them in the Old Testament. Why none in the New Testament?

Ex. 3:2-14.

There the **angel of the LORD** appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. **3** So Moses thought, —**I** will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, —**M**oses! Moses!”

And Moses said, —**H**e~~r~~ I am.”

5 —**D**o not ~~o~~me any closer,” God said. —**T**he off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” **6** Then he said, —**I** am the God of your father, the

God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

7 The LORD said, —I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

11 But Moses said to God, —Wh am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

12 And God said, —I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

13 Moses said to God, —Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

14 God said to Moses, —I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.“

Numbers 22:31

Then the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown.

Judges 6:22

When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, —Alas, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!”

1 Kings 19:6-8

6 He [Elijah] looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

7 The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, —Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

Isaiah 37:36

Then the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!

Then the Angel, who is Christ Himself, the Saviour of sinners, puts to silence the accuser of His people, declaring, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Verse 2. Long had Israel remained in the furnace of affliction. Because of their sins they had been well-nigh consumed in the flame kindled by Satan and his agents for their destruction, but God had now set His hand to bring them forth. {PK 584.1}

Wednesday – Change of Clothes

1. Filthy Rags: ?? Why this imagery. ?? Any connection to the scenes of people in repentance putting on sack cloth and ashes.

Every manifestation of God's power for His people arouses the enmity of Satan. Every time God works in their behalf, Satan with his angels works with renewed vigor to compass their ruin. He is jealous of all who make Christ their strength. His object is to instigate evil, and when he has succeeded, throw all the blame upon the tempted ones. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which have dishonored their Redeemer. All this he urges as an argument proving his right to work his will in their destruction. He endeavors to affright their souls with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement can never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield fully to his temptations, and turn from their allegiance to God. {COL 168.1}

Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, he lifts his wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying, "I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of my hands. „The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." [Psalm 51:17.] And to the accuser of his people he declares, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" [Zechariah 3:2.] Christ will clothe his faithful ones with his own righteousness, that he may present them to his Father "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." [Ephesians 5:27.] Their names stand enrolled in the book of life, and concerning them it is written, "They shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." [Revelation 3:4.] {GC88 484.2}

2. Change of Raiment / Clean clothing: **Zech 3: 4 The angel said to those who were standing before him, —Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, —See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you.** *** How does Christ "take away our sin"? ***

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

Notwithstanding the defects of the people of God, **Christ** does not turn away from the objects of His care. **He has the power to change their raiment.** He removes the filthy garments, He places upon the repenting, believing ones His own robe of righteousness, and writes pardon against their names on the records of heaven. He confesses them as His before the heavenly universe. Satan their adversary is shown to be an accuser and deceiver. God will do justice for His own elect. {COL 169.3}

Thursday – An Effectual Plea

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He “will abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7-9. **God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10. And again he says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12.** {Pr 298.1}

Zechariah’s description of Joshua, the high priest, is a striking representation of the sinner for whom Christ is mediating that he may be brought to repentance. Satan is standing at the right hand of the Advocate, resisting the work of Christ, and pleading against him that man is his property since he has chosen him as his ruler. But the defender of man, the restorer, mightier than the mightiest, hears the demands and claims of Satan, and answers him: “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by.” [Zechariah 3:2-5.] {CE 159.2}

The work of investigative judgment and blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. In the typical service the high priest came forth and blessed the congregation. So Christ, at the close of His work as mediator, will appear “without sin unto salvation.” Hebrews 9:28. {HF 299.4} The priest, in removing the sins from the sanctuary, confessed them upon the head of the scapegoat. Christ will place all these sins upon Satan, the instigator of sin. The scapegoat was sent away “unto a land not inhabited.” Leviticus 16:22. Satan, bearing the guilt of sins he has caused God’s people to commit, will for a thousand years be confined to the desolate earth and will at last suffer the penalty of fire that shall destroy the wicked. Thus the plan of redemption will reach its accomplishment in the final eradication of sin. {HF 299.5}

Additional Reading:

As Satan accused Joshua and his people, so in all ages he accuses those who are seeking the mercy and favor of God. In the Revelation he is declared to be the “accuser of our brethren,” “which accused them before our God day and night.” Revelation 12:10. The controversy is repeated over every soul that is rescued from the power of evil and whose name is registered in the Lamb’s book of life. Never is one received from the family of **Satan** into the family of God without exciting the determined resistance of the wicked one. Satan’s accusations against those who seek the Lord are not prompted by displeasure at their sins. **He exults in their defective characters. Only through their transgression of God’s law can he obtain**

power over them. His accusations arise solely from his enmity to Christ. Through the plan of salvation, Jesus is breaking Satan's hold upon the human family and rescuing souls from his power. All the hatred and malignity of the archrebel is stirred as he beholds the evidence of Christ's supremacy, and with fiendish power and cunning he works to wrest from Him the remnant of the children of men who have accepted His salvation. {CCh 350.4}

We read in the prophecy of Zechariah that when Satan with all his synagogue stood up to resist the prayers of Joshua the high priest, and to resist Christ, who was about to show decided favor to Joshua, "The Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Zechariah 3:2. {CW 59.2} **The course of Christ in dealing even with the adversary of souls, should be an example to us in all our intercourse with others, never to bring a railing accusation against any; much less should we employ harshness or severity toward those who may be as anxious to know the right way as we are ourselves.** {CW 59.3}

"In a vision in 1880 I asked, „Where is the security for the people of God in these days of peril?" The answer was, „**Jesus maketh intercession for His people, though Satan standeth at His right hand to resist Him.**" „And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" „As man's Intercessor and Advocate, Jesus will lead all who are willing to be led, saying, „Follow Me upward, step by step, where the clear light of the Sun of Righteousness shines." {LS 324.1} "But not all are following the light. Some are moving away from the safe path, which at every step is a path of humility. God has committed to His servants a message for this time; but this message does not in every particular coincide with the ideas of all the leading men, and some criticize the message and the messengers. They dare even to reject the words of reproof sent to them from God through His Holy Spirit. {LS 324.2}

Satan seeks to bring us into temptation, that the evil of our characters may be revealed before men and angels, that he may claim us as his own. In the symbolic prophecy of Zechariah, Satan is seen standing at the right hand of the Angel of the Lord, accusing Joshua, the high priest, who is clothed in filthy garments, and resisting the work that the Angel desires to do for him. This represents the attitude of Satan toward every soul whom Christ is seeking to draw unto Himself. The enemy leads us into sin, and then he accuses us before the heavenly universe as unworthy of the love of God. But "the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" And unto Joshua He said, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zechariah 3:1-4. {Pr 300.2}

God in His great love is seeking to develop in us the precious graces of His Spirit. He permits us to encounter obstacles, persecution, and hardships, not as a curse, but as the greatest blessing of our lives. **Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience and advances us in the work of character building. The soul that through divine power resists temptation reveals to the world and to the heavenly universe the efficiency of the grace of Christ.** {Pr 300.3}

In his own strength, man cannot meet the charges of the enemy. In sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. But Jesus, our Advocate, presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause, and by the mighty arguments of Calvary, vanquishes their accuser. His perfect obedience to God's law has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims from His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. To the accuser of His people He declares: 587 "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. These are the purchase of My blood, brands plucked from the burning." And to those who rely on Him in faith, He gives the assurance, "**Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.**" Zechariah 3:4. {PK 586.2}

Does the above illustration demonstrate a stronger case for a "penal substitution" model of salvation or a "healing substitution" model??

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 11 2Q 2011

Guten Morgen, Wir sind wieder da! Wir hatten eine tolle zeit in Deutschland. Danke zu unsere freunde in deutschland. Wir sind dankbar für alles, was Sie getan haben. Wir vermissen dich schon. Wir hoffen, Sie bald zu sehen

The Wedding Garment

SABBATH

Read memory text, Romans 8:1

What does it mean?

Why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ? What are the possible explanations?

- The legal price has been paid by Jesus and God cannot legally condemn us?
- Jesus stands between us and the Father and when the Father looks at us He only sees Jesus and therefore we are not condemned?
- Jesus pleads to His Father for mercy and the Father acquiesces to the pleas of His Son and doesn't condemn?
- Those "in Jesus" are "in unity" of heart and mind with Him and have been recreated in heart, mind, attitude to be like Jesus thus when the Father looks at us He sees the perfection of His Son restored within the believer?

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. 8:1. {FLB 103.1}

If sinners can be led to give one earnest look at the cross, if they can obtain a full view of the crucified Saviour, they will realize the depth of **God's compassion** and the **sinfulness of sin**. {FLB 103.2}

As **your conscience has been quickened** by the Holy Spirit, you have seen something of the **evil of sin, of its**

power, its guilt, its woe; and you look upon it with abhorrence. . . . You long to be **forgiven, to be cleansed**, to be set free. **Harmony with God, likeness to Him**-- what can you do to obtain it? {FLB 103.3}

It is peace that you need--**Heaven's forgiveness and peace and love in the soul**. Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot procure it, wisdom cannot attain to it; you can never hope, by your own efforts, to secure it. But God offers it to you as a gift, "without money and without price." Isa. 55:1. . . . {FLB 103.4}

Go to Him, and ask that He will **wash away your sins, and give you a new heart**. Then believe that He does this because He has promised It is our privilege to go to Jesus and **be cleansed**, and **to stand before the law without shame or remorse**. {FLB 103.5}

As you read the promises, remember they are the expression of unutterable love and pity. . . . Yes, only believe that God is your helper. **He wants to restore His moral image in man**. As you draw near to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw near to you with mercy and forgiveness.

What do you hear in this passage? Do you hear the healing, restoring, regenerating message of God? Do you hear from where pain, suffering and misery arise? It is sin! Let us be clear – sin severs our connection with God, damages us, and ultimately brings death. God is constantly and always working to destroy sin and save sinners. God is the source of love and life!

So why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ? Because they no longer live after the flesh but are changed, healed and renewed to live in harmony with the Spirit!

Read first paragraph, "Christian history..." thoughts? How can this happen? What would you say are the errors or missteps required for Christians to do horrible things in the name of Christ?

- Unconversion passing as conversion especially in leadership
 - What contributes to this?

- Could it be a false idea of what conversion means?
- What is conversion?
 - For the first 300 years after Christ what did it take to be a Christian?
 - What happened after that?
 - Conversion is the change of heart away from the birthright we received from Adam – the natural self-centeredness, to a heart which loves others more than self – our inheritance from Christ?
 - Is anything more than this required for conversion?
 - So those who retain selfishness as the primary motivator of their character but join the church could do such things.
- Accepting false views of God
 - What happens when people believe God will use His power to inflict “punishments” for sin?
 - What happens when people forget sin severs and destroys and instead see God as the great executioner?
- Unforgiveness, resentment, grudge holding
- Distorted ideas of justice – pigeon holing God’s government into the mold of earthly governments.

SUNDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Matthew 21...” then, last two sentences of today’s lesson, “How sad – those who should have been teachers of others were the ones who had the most to learn and, in many cases, never learned it. When they finally do, it will be too late (Rom. 14:10).” thoughts?

Do you believe this is true?

If this is true what does it mean? What would be wise application of this reality?

- **"We must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us.** We are to counsel together,

and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God." *Testimonies to Ministers* 109,110; first published in *Gospel Workers*, 1892 ed., pp. 128,129; cf. *2RH* 311:3:1 (*RH*, June 18, 1889); *CW* 45; *ST*, Feb. 6, 1893

- Would this include prophets? Should we surrender our thinking to prophets?
- "**Satan** is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He **leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides**, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. . . . (*Reflecting Christ* 369)
- "There are today **thousands of professors of religion who can give no other reason for points of faith which they hold than that they were so instructed by their religious leaders**. They pass by the Saviour's teachings almost unnoticed, and place implicit confidence in the words of the ministers. But are ministers infallible? How can we trust our souls to their guidance unless we know from God's word that they are light bearers?" *4SP* 413-415 (1884); *Great Controversy* 595-597 (1888); *RH*, June 7, 1906

We must each one study out the evidence for ourselves and come to our own conclusion based on the evidence, not on the preaching or opinion of another.

What can we do to ensure we don't fall into this group of religiously callous people?

TUESDAY

Read the second paragraph, "Have you ever..." thoughts? How can this be?

What can we do to ensure we are not among this group?

What is the difference from “playing” church, and being a church?

Would it not be love? Isn't the difference that a healthy church, a genuine church, the people love each other, they care about each other, they take care of each other, they protect each other, including their reputations – they don't turn on each other, attack each other, gossip about each other?

Friends, I want to experience real church – God's love in our lives, here and now. This is what God wants for all of us!

At the bottom of the page we read, “Who are we to judge hearts? We shouldn't judge – but God does, should, and will (Rom 14:10...). Seventh-day Adventists call it the ‘investigative judgment,’ and it is revealed in this parable.”

GO TO THURSDAY

Read last three paragraphs, “It's so important...” thoughts?

When God went into the Garden and asked Adam questions – was God conducting an “investigation”? Was God conducting a judgment? Some might argue this – He condemned the serpent to crawl, cursed the ground, pronounced birth pains and women to be subject to their husbands, and cast the pair out of the Garden.

Many have taken this as God investigating, judging and punishing, but is it?

The lesson acknowledges that God didn't need to investigate. He already knew. It rightly points out the Great Controversy – but fails to refocus our attention on what the central issue in the controversy actually is – what or who is actually being investigated?

Who did Satan make His allegations against? Are the angels and intelligences in the universe primarily concerned about Adam and Eve, or how God deals with Adam and Eve?

It is a war over the knowledge of God (2Cor 10:3-5).

Who should our focus be upon? God – He is demonstrating His character, which has been misrepresented. And what do we see in this case?

- Even though God knows where they were hiding – He doesn't use that knowledge to overwhelm, incite fear, intimidate, but instead to prevent fear He calls out to Adam. What does this say about God?
- He asks Adam questions – for what purpose? To “uncover” some facts he doesn't know, or to reveal to Adam the mess Adam was in and why? Wasn't it to help Adam to see that God was not the one condemning Him? What does this say about God?
- Mankind is now altered from God's design and is motivated by fear and selfishness, and will eternally die if God doesn't intervene to save. God pronounces a curse on the ground, was the curse an infliction by God or an announcement of what will be?
 - **Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up.** In the parable of the sower the question was asked the Master, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? how then hath it tares?" The Master answered, "An enemy hath done this." **All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares** (MS 65, 1899) [published in F. D. Nichol, Ellen G. White and Her Critics]. {1BC 1086.2}
- And why didn't God intervene to prevent the curse? Why was it permitted? To punish or to bless, to give man work to keep him busy so he will be less likely to be ruined by his own selfish nature?
 - To Adam the Lord declared: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed is the ground for thy sake**; in

sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." {PP 59.2}

Under the curse of sin **all nature was to witness to man of the character and results of rebellion against God.** When God made man He made him rule over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in subjection to him. **But when he rebelled against the divine law, the inferior creatures were in rebellion against his rule.** Thus the Lord, in His great mercy, would **show men the sacredness of His law**, and lead them, by their own experience, to see the danger of setting it aside, even in the slightest degree. {PP 59.4}

And the life of toil and care which was henceforth to be man's lot was appointed in love. It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control. It was a part of God's great plan of man's recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin. {PP 60.1}

- Does this sound like a punishment to you? What does it say about God?

Who is really being judged, us by God or are we judging God?

Paul says in Romans 3:4, "God may you be proved right when you are judged."

- **They thought themselves passing judgment on Christ; but in rejecting Him they were pronouncing sentence upon themselves.** "He that is of God," said Jesus, "heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." {DA 468.1}

The lesson is true for all time. Many a man who delights to quibble, to criticize, seeking for something to question in the

word of God, thinks that he is thereby giving evidence of independence of thought, and mental acuteness. **He supposes that he is sitting in judgment on the Bible, when in truth he is judging himself.** He makes it manifest that he is incapable of appreciating truths that originate in heaven, and that compass eternity. DA 468.2

- The people who beheld the Saviour at His advent were favored with a fuller manifestation of the divine presence than the world had ever enjoyed before. **The knowledge of God was revealed more perfectly. But in this very revelation, judgment was passing upon men. Their character was tested, their destiny determined.** {DA 475.2}

How does judgment get passed upon us? Who passes judgment upon us?

I have found it helpful to think of God's judgment like a doctor and not a lawyer. Doctors make diagnosis, which are judgments, based on the evidence of the condition of the person. It is the person's condition which determines the diagnosis, assuming the doctor doesn't misdiagnose, and with God He never does. And when the doctor diagnosis, he also makes "judgments" about what is the best treatment course. This is how we understand the "judgments" of God from the Old Testament times. God's "judgment" in cursing the ground, in casting out of the garden, in not giving rain to Israel for 3.5 years. Elijah believed through these "Judgments" Israel would be brought to repentance.

These are not punishments but are therapeutic interventions, judged to be most beneficial in the circumstance, but never removing freewill of the sinner to be rebellious and non-compliant with the treatment plan.

Imagine an HIV infected man and woman have a child born HIV infected, what did the child do wrong? Nothing, will the child have symptoms? Will the child die if not cured? Is the child held to blame for the condition of its birth? And what if a free remedy is offered

but the adult child refuses? Will he be held to blame for that rejection and thus let go to die of his disease?

Under the demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power, the Jews saw their guilt in refusing the evidence that God had sent; but they would not yield their wicked resistance. Their obstinacy became more and more determined, and worked the ruin of their souls. **It was not that they could not yield, for they could, yet would not.** It was not alone that they had been guilty, and deserving of wrath, but that they armed themselves with the attributes of Satan, and determinedly continued to be opposed to God. Every day, in their refusal to repent, they took up their rebellion afresh. They were preparing to reap that which they had sown. **The wrath of God is not declared against men merely because of the sins which they have committed, but for choosing to continue in a state of resistance,** and, although they have light and knowledge, repeating their sins of the past. If they would submit, they would be pardoned; but they are determined not to yield. They defy God by their obstinacy. These souls have given themselves to Satan, and he controls them according to his will. {TM 74.2}

What is being described?

MONDAY

The King's Invitation –

- Who is the king?
- To what is the invitation? The wedding supper –
- When does the wedding supper take place? After the wedding.
- Who is the groom?
- What is symbolized by the wedding?
- A wedding is when the groom receives the bride.
- Who is the bride of Christ?
 - In the summer and autumn of 1844, the proclamation, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," was given. The two classes represented by the wise and foolish virgins were

then developed,--one class who looked with joy to the Lord's appearing, and who had been diligently preparing to meet him; another class that, influenced by fear, and acting from impulse, had been satisfied with a theory of the truth, but were destitute of the grace of God. In the parable, when the bridegroom came, "they that were ready went in with him to the marriage." The coming of the bridegroom, here brought to view, takes place before the marriage. **The marriage represents the reception by Christ of his kingdom.** The holy city, the New Jerusalem, which is the capital and representative of the kingdom, is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife." Said the angel to John, "**Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.**" "**He carried me away in the spirit,**" says the prophet, "**and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God.**" [REV. 21:9, 10.] **Clearly, then, the bride represents the holy city, and the virgins that go out to meet the bridegroom are a symbol of the church.** In the Revelation the people of God are said to be the guests at the marriage supper. [REV. 19:9.] **If guests, they cannot be represented also as the bride.** Christ, as stated by the prophet Daniel, will receive from the Ancient of days in Heaven, "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom," he will receive the New Jerusalem, the capital of his kingdom, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." [DAN. 7:14; REV. 21:2.] Having received the kingdom, he will come in his glory, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, for the redemption of his people, who are to "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," at his table in his kingdom, [MATT. 8:11; LUKE 22:30.] to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb. {GC88 426.2}

- What do you think? Is the bride the city and the believers are the guests? Or is the church both the bride and the guests?
- What happens at a wedding, two become one, at-one-ment. Can Christ become one with inanimate nature with a building? Doesn't a marriage require love? Isn't the bride to

love the groom? Can a city love? Then is it possible the New Jerusalem is a metaphor for the redeemed?

- Christ honored the marriage relation by making it also a symbol of the union between Him and His redeemed ones. **He Himself is the Bridegroom; the bride is the church**, of which, as His chosen one, He says, "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee." {AH 26.2}
- Very close and sacred is the relation between Christ and His church,--**He the bridegroom, and the church the bride**; He the head, and the church the body. Connection with Christ, then, involves connection with His church.-- Education, p. 268. (1903) {Ev 318.1}
- **The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. She should keep herself pure, sanctified, holy.** Never should she indulge in any foolishness; for **she is the bride of a King**. Yet she does not realize her exalted position. If she understood this, she would be all-glorious within (Letter 177, 1901). {7BC 986.1}
- **The church is the bride of Christ, and her members are to yoke up with their Leader.** God warns us not to defile our garments (Letter 123 1/2, 1898). {7BC 986.2}

What do you think? Is this a contradiction or is the New Jerusalem merely a metaphor for the Church – the bride of Christ? Could the bride and New Jerusalem be one and the same?

- "And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." "Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, **which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.**" "The twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Revelation 21:2, 11, 12, 21, 22.

- **The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb....**The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. ¹⁹The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. Rev 21:14, 19-21
- Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with **God's people and members of God's household,** ²⁰**built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.** ²¹In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22
- Who makes all the wedding arrangement?
- What is our role?

Is this similar to being sick and a doctor preparing a cure and offering it free? What would our role be? To accept and receive what has been prepared for us.

FRIDAY

Read top two paragraphs, "But the plan..." thoughts?

What must we see? The difference between the character of God and the character of Satan! What would you say are the defining, demarcating differences between the two?

- God is love, Satan is selfish
- God is truthful, Satan a liar

- God is humble, Satan is proud
- God is kind, Satan is cruel
- God respects freedom, Satan coerces
- God is the source of life, Satan the source of death

Can we test our doctrines with this list?

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 12 2Q 2011 **Lesson for June 18, 2011 - "More Clothing Imagery"**
Come & Reason Sabbath School Class (June 4, 2011)

1. Stories
 - a. Hem of his garment story
 - b. Laying aside his garments to wash disciples feet
 - c. Rending of high priest's garments at Christ's inquisition
 - d. Garments of mockery before Pilate
 - e. Casting lots for his garments at the cross

2. Sabbath Afternoon Lesson: Introduction
 - a. The lesson lists the stories that are to be studied in this week's lesson along with a brief commentary. It ends by saying: "Just clothing, yes, but full of symbolism and meaning."
 - b. What are symbols?
 - c. How do we use symbols to communicate to others?
 - d. What would happen if your meaning for a symbol differed from what the person you were communicating with understood with that same symbol?
 - i. In preparation for a national based inspection of the children's hospital and our orthopaedic office, the physicians have been reminded that we are not to use certain abbreviations and symbols. There have been cases an abbreviation or symbol has been misunderstood and a patient has received 10x or 100x the appropriate dose of certain medications or the wrong medication resulting in illness and death.
 - e. Do you know of any Christian symbols that mean something different to you than a Christian friend may mean?
 - i. Is there any consequence to this difference of meaning?
 - ii. Is it important for you to correct how your friend uses those symbols?

iii. Is it important that we clarify our communication?

3. Sunday's Lesson: "Who Touched My Clothes?"

- a. Sunday's lesson goes over the story of the woman who was healed by touching the hem of Christ's robe.
- b. Why question (in red) at bottom of page: "Why would Jesus ask who touched His garment?"
 - (1) paragraph following this question there are two reasons supplied
 - (a) Witness to others
 - (b) Know it wasn't magical clothes that healed her
- c. Can you think of other Possible Reasons?
 - i. Do you think she was going to keep this a secret from those around her if Christ had not stopped?
 - (1) why?
 - (2) why not?
 - ii. **Correct her theology**
 - (1) When was she healed? Before or after her theology was correct
 - (2) Do we sometimes consider poor theology as the reason someone's prayers are not answered
 - iii. **Announce to community that she was healed** - reintroduce her to the community of believers
 - (1) Do we have trouble doing this after a sinner from amongst us repents?
 - iv. **Commend her for her faith:**
 - (1) where was she in self worth at this point
 - (a) 12 years of misery
 - (b) 12 years without community worship
 - (c) She was not to touch anything or anyone that was holy or going to the temple/synagogue

- (2) He commended her faith - praised something she had done. How long had it been since someone had done that?
 - (a) When we are God-like, Christ-like, are we more about right behavior, rules, correct theology or more about strengthening and encouraging others who are struggling with trials we little know?
- (3) **Witness to others:** (as listed in the paragraph)
 - (a) Mrs White in her discussion of this story in DA says: “**Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world.** We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be **most effectual** is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christ-like life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls. {DA 347.3}
- (4) Who was Christ with? (Jairus - the temple leader) Had he been one of those in the role of keeping her away from public contact?
 - (a) Did Jairus need this contact and revelation of healing as well as others?

(b) Jairus couldn't appreciate this at that time, (what parent could?) but later when his daughter was healed, could he appreciate someone else's daughter being healed?

(5) Celebration at healing and restoration of a church member to community.

(a) Christ said "Luke 15:7, 10 GNB In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine respectable people who do not need to repent. (10) In the same way, I tell you, the angels of God rejoice over one sinner who repents."

(b) Three stories of something lost and found: Coin, Sheep, & Son. At the end of each of the lost & found stories Christ told there was a party. How many times have you staged a party for sinners who have come home to God? (Tony Campolo's story of a birthday party for prostitutes in Hawaii)

v. Read Matt 9:22 Matthew 9:22 GW "When Jesus turned and saw her he said, "**Cheer up**, daughter! Your faith has made you well." At that very moment the woman became well." "cheer up" - he wanted her to feel better physically, socially, spiritually and mentally. Do we have that effect on those around us on a daily basis? (Sometimes I am so stressed with my life, those around me cannot see much cheer, comfort or courage.)

4. Was anyone else in the crowd energized by touching Him? No. It wasn't magical fairy dust you got from His clothes.

a. Are clothes are holy?

b. The person who wears them is.

- c. We do (or should) treat things that belong to God differently (Church sanctuary, pulpit, etc, priestly robes, etc). Think of those in Old Testament who were disciplined for irreverence. But it is God who is the object of our trust, love and reverence for His holiness, not his clothes, burial shroud, nails, cross, etc.

5. Further along in the same chapter in the book “Desire of Ages” we read: “To talk of religion in a casual way, to pray without soul hunger and living faith, avails nothing. A nominal faith in Christ, which accepts Him merely as the Saviour of the world, can never bring healing to the soul. The faith that is unto salvation is not a mere intellectual assent to the truth. He who waits for entire knowledge before he will exercise faith, cannot receive blessing from God. It is not enough to believe about Christ; we must believe in Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.” {DA 347.1}

6. **Monday’s Lesson: He “Laid Aside His Garments”**
 - a. Read the first paragraph “In the last few days. . .”
 - b. If we entered the upper room during the Last Supper when Jesus was washing the disciples feet, what would it look like?
 - i. Who was the best dressed in the room?
 - ii. Who was the best educated in the room?
 - iii. Who was the most out-spoken and verbal in the room?
 - iv. What did God look like in that room?
 - v. Do we look like that when we are interacting with our peers?

- vi. John 13:1 - 16 Verse 13 - He served them as a servant, even though he was their Lord & teacher.
 - vii. Will Christ look and act differently when he returns the second time?
- c. Why did Jesus act in the way that He did?
- i. Read John 13:1 from several translations
 - (1) He loved them to the end; very end; completely
 - ii. He loved his disciples.
 - (1) Define Love: To live/act in the behalf of another. It is an act of the will and intellect.
 - (2) Opposite of love:
 - (a) not hate
 - (b) Selfishness
 - (c) Be careful when using this definition. It is not the one found in any dictionary.
 - (3) Hebrews 10:24 “GNB Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. (25) Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.”
 - (a) Why do we go to church: it is for the benefit of those around us, not for our spiritual enrichment.
- d. Philippians 2:5-8 GW Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. (6) Although he was in the form of God and equal with God, he did not take advantage of this equality. (7) Instead, he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant, by becoming like other humans, by having a human appearance. (8) He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, death on a cross.

- (1) We are to be servants of others
- ii. 1 Corinthians 1:18 GW “The message about the cross is nonsense to those who are being destroyed, but it is God's power to us who are being saved.”
 - (1) Those who are still infected with the “survival of the fittest” virus cannot understand another way.
 - (2) 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 GW **A person who isn't spiritual doesn't accept the teachings of God's Spirit. He thinks they're nonsense.** He can't understand them because a person must be spiritual to evaluate them. (15) Spiritual people evaluate everything but are subject to no one's evaluation. (16) "Who has known the mind of the Lord so that he can teach him?" However, we have the mind of Christ.
- iii. **Read the pink section at the bottom of the page of Monday's lesson:**
 - (1) That is possibly one of the reasons we were created as human beings with the capacity to create others and care for others in our own image.
 - (2) Sacrifice:
 - (a) Is a mother feeling like she is sacrificing herself when she care for her child?
 - (i) yes - no - maybe - sometimes
 - (ii) Remember we still have an infection, Christ is the antibiotic / cure.

7. Ordinance of Humility: initiated in the Upper Room
 - a. Is the ordinance an important thing?
 - i. If so, what is important about it?
 - ii. How are our rituals / ordinances different than those of the Israelites?
 - b. Compare with Isaiah 58:5, 6
 - i. These are the fasts that God wishes for:
 - (1) Relief of suffering
 - (2) Release those in bonds
 - (3) Help the widow (helpless)
 - (4) etc.
 - ii. What is the purpose of the rituals?
 - iii. Are they beneficial if we don't have love for our fellow man as evidenced by daily actions of humility and care for others?

8. Tuesday's Lesson: "Nor Rend His Clothes"

- a. Have you ever been tempted to tear your clothes over something someone said?
 - i. Why or why not?
- b. Discuss why this was such a big deal for Caiaphas.
- c. We are not to "take the Lord's name in vain."
 - i. What does it mean to be a Christian?
 - ii. What would be modern equivalents to the prohibition of tearing a priest's clothes?
 - (1) Does it only apply to the clergy?
 - (2) What does being a priest in the New Testament church imply?
 - (3) If we are to represent Christ to the world, what cultural activities will mislead the world about what Christ / God is really like?

9. Wednesday's Lesson: Garments of Mockery
 - a. I haven't always liked to look at the crucifixion and trial scenes. They are too gory.
 - i. If, like some, you think that Christ had to suffer for your individual acts of sin, then his suffering becomes more important, emphasized. (The Passion of the Cross movie and all the explanations around its portrayal.)
 - ii. Others have read Psalms 22 and have come to the conclusion that Christ was performing a scripted drama. He did not have any choices. He was playing a role.
 - b. Who was being mocked?
 - c. Look both at Monday's lesson and combine with Wednesday's lesson:
 - i. Read the second paragraph on Monday's lesson: "As if the disciples . . ."
(1) It says "Jesus had every right to be disgusted."
 - ii. Read the first paragraph on Wednesday's lesson: "Jesus was stripped and garbed. . ."
 - iii. Did Christ have any "rights" at the time of his trial or did He just have to take it since it was prophesied to be that way?
 - d. In America we talk about "rights." Are we suppose to stand up for our rights?
 - i. For the rights of others?
 - ii. When?

- e. Read the Pink box at the bottom of Wednesday's lesson:
 "How do you respond. . ."

 - i. What does it mean to be treated unfairly?
 - (1) What is fair?
 - (2) Is not this world an unfair place?
 - ii. Does it make a difference if it is you or someone else who is being mistreated?
 - (1) Your family member?
 - (2) Your child?
 - (3) Your coworker?
 - iii. When is it appropriate to demand fair treatment?
 - iv. Was Christ active or passive during His trial?
 - (1) Was he working to save Pilate, the priests, the soldiers?
 - (2) Was he paying attention to what was going on or in his own little world trying to survive?
 - (a) Why didn't he drink the wine/vinegar combo that was offered to Him on the cross?
 - (3) Was He in control of the situation?
 - (a) Was he manipulating the situation?
 - (b) Was he in control of Himself?
 - (c) The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23) is self control.
 - (d) Did Christ ever give up His self control to the Father?
 - (i) To the situation
 - (ii) To the predictions about Him in the scriptures.

- f. Read the last paragraph "And yet, . . ."

 - i. "At least in part"
 - (1) What was the other part?

10. **Thursday's Lesson: "They Parted My Garments"**

11. Naked on the cross: Teacher's quarterly notes - "Christ, as a man, wore clothing. Lack of clothing indicated a lower station, or humiliation, to which He submitted on our behalf. Although He was our Creator and King of the universe, He humbly bore the mocking and the insults of the high priest and the pagan soldiers."

- a. We can suffer humiliation for Christ's sake - but when is that?
 - i. Few have a similar experience to that of the three Hebrews & Nebuchadnezzar in which worship of God vs worship of another god is so clearly defined.

12. **Friday's Lesson: Discussion Questions**

- a. Question #3: ". . . . Does this ignorance of what they were doing in any way excuse their actions? Why should they be punished for something they did without knowing exactly what it was? Discuss.
- b. Who will punish them?
- c. How will they be punished?
- d. Does it make a difference to the person who accidentally ingests poison, if they know what kind of poison it is? Does poison act any differently if you don't know you are ingesting it, if you are ignorant of its presence?
 - i. Will someone need to punish them to make them pay for their wrong action? Does God need to send an angel from heaven to make sure that the poison ingested does what exactly what its chemical composition should do?

- e. Will ignorance of the direction I am traveling make it any more likely that I will arrive at where I want to go? Or that I will like the destination any better when I arrive at the wrong one?
 - i. Will I be “punished” for being at the wrong place?
 - ii. Will I be “rewarded”?

Fundamentals of Christian Education: pp 364 “The disciples of Christ are not called upon to magnify men, but to magnify God, the source of all wisdom. Let educators give the Holy Spirit room to do its work upon human hearts. The greatest Teacher is represented in our midst by His Holy Spirit. However you may study, however you may reach higher and still higher, although you occupy every moment of your probationary time in the pursuit of knowledge, you will not become complete. When time is over, you would have to ask yourself the question, “What good have I done to those who are in midnight darkness? To whom have I communicated the knowledge of God, or even the knowledge of those things for which I have spent so much time and money?” It will soon be said in heaven, “It is done.” “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” When this fiat is spoken, every (pg 364) case will have been decided.”

Life Sketches pp 93 “We are not called upon to enter into controversy with those who hold false theories. Controversy is unprofitable. Christ never entered into it. “It is written” is the weapon used by the world's Redeemer. Let us keep close to the World. Let us allow the Lord Jesus and His messengers to testify. We know that their testimony is true.” {LS 93.1}

Mind, Character, and Personality Vol 1 pp 344 “No One to Live an Aimless Life.--Every soul is to minister. He is to use every physical, moral and mental power--through sanctification of the Spirit--that he

may be a laborer together with God. All are bound to devote themselves actively and unreservedly to God's (pg 345) service. They are to cooperate with Jesus Christ in the great work of helping others. Christ died for every man. He has ransomed every man by giving His life on the cross. This He did that man might no longer live an aimless, selfish life but that he might live unto Jesus Christ, who died for his salvation. All are not called upon to enter the ministry, but nevertheless, they are to minister. It is an insult to the Holy Spirit of God for any man to choose a life of self-serving.--Lt 10, 1897." (4BC 1159.) {1MCP 344.5}

Selected Messages, Book 1 pp394 "The Lord would have His people sound in the faith-- not ignorant of the great salvation so abundantly provided for them. They are not to look forward, thinking (pg 395) that at some future time a great work is to be done for them; for the **work is now complete**. *The believer is not called upon to make his peace with God; he never has nor ever can do this. He is to accept Christ as his peace, for with Christ is God and peace.* Christ made an end of sin, bearing its heavy curse in His own body on the tree, and He hath taken away the curse from all those who believe in Him as a personal Saviour. He makes an end of the controlling power of sin in the heart, and the life and character of the believer testify to the genuine character of the grace of Christ. To those that ask Him, Jesus imparts the Holy Spirit; for it is necessary that every believer should be delivered from pollution, as well as from the curse and condemnation of the law. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the sanctification of the truth, the believer becomes fitted for the courts of heaven; for Christ works within us, and His righteousness is upon us. Without this no soul will be entitled to heaven. We would not enjoy heaven unless qualified for its holy atmosphere by the influence of the Spirit and the righteousness of Christ. {1SM 394.3}

In order to be candidates for heaven we must meet the requirement of the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). We can do this only as we grasp by faith the righteousness of Christ. By beholding Jesus

we receive a living, expanding principle in the heart, and the Holy Spirit carries on the work, and the believer advances from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from character to character. He conforms to the image of Christ, until in spiritual growth he attains unto the measure of the full stature in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ makes an end of the curse of sin, and sets the believing soul free from its action and effect. {1SM 395.1}

Christ alone is able to do this, for "in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being (pg 396) tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:17, 18).

Reconciliation means that every barrier between the soul and God is removed, and that the sinner realizes what the pardoning love of God means. By reason of the sacrifice made by Christ for fallen men, God can justly pardon the transgressor who accepts the merits of Christ. Christ was the channel through which the mercy, love, and righteousness might flow from the heart of God to the heart of the sinner. "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9)."

Selected Messages, Book 2 "You can help us, my brother, in many ways. But I am commissioned of the Lord to say to you that you are not to be self-centered. Take heed how you hear, how you understand, and how you appropriate the Word of God. The Lord will bless you in drawing in even lines with your brethren. Those whom He has sent forth to proclaim the third angel's message have been working in unison with the heavenly intelligences. The Lord does not lay upon you a burden to proclaim a message that will bring discord into the ranks of believers. I repeat, He is not leading anyone by His Holy Spirit to frame a theory that will unsettle faith in the solemn messages He has given His people to bear to our world. {2SM 115.1}"

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 13 2Q 2011

Clothed in Christ

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “A fundamental law...” thoughts?

Why do we see this?

Did God design plants to die, people to age, houses to deteriorate? Did He design tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes? Did He design death? Or are all of these manifestations of the law of sin and death, of what happens when separation from God occurs?

What is the relationship between the second law of thermodynamics and the law of sin and death?

Hypothesis – God created everything and is the source of all life, energy, matter:

- He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Col 1:15-17

Therefore, it is only in connection with Him that the universe continues. The universe is designed to be perpetual, without decay, as long as connected to God – but when disconnection occurs, when energy from God does not go into the system then the system slowly decays.

Thoughts?

- Upon all created things is seen the impress of the Deity. Nature testifies of God. The susceptible mind, brought in contact with the miracle and mystery of the universe, cannot

but recognize the working of infinite power. **Not by its own inherent energy does the earth produce its bounties**, and year by year continue its motion around the sun. An unseen hand guides the planets in their circuit of the heavens. **A mysterious life pervades all nature--a life that sustains the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, that lives in the insect atom which floats in the summer breeze**, that wings the flight of the swallow and feeds the young ravens which cry, that brings the bud to blossom and the flower to fruit. {Ed 99.1}

The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. **The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same--**a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin.** {Ed 99.2}

Thoughts?

So next paragraph quotes Isaiah 51:6 "And the earth shall wax old like a garment." Why? Could it be that the earth slowly decays as it is disconnected from God? And does this explain why we age and die?

- **God is the fountain of life, and we can have life only as we are in communion with Him. Separated from God, existence may be ours for a little time, but we do not possess life.** "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." 1 Timothy 5:6. Only through the surrender of our will to God is it possible for **Him to impart life to us.** {MB 61.2}

When Adam and Eve sinned they severed their connection with God, they immediately lost their robes of light, and started to die, the plants started to decay, death was introduced into the system.

But in the transgression of man both the Father and the Son were dishonored. Man committed sin, and sin is the transgression of the law, which is holy, just, and good. Through sin the **temple of God which he had builded for his own indwelling and glory, was reduced to ruin, was fallen and in decay.** Satan beguiled the holy pair to their own destruction, and **introduced an element of character that was antagonistic to God and to their fellow-creatures.** Before the entrance of sin, the hearts of God's children had been filled with love toward their Creator, and they were in harmony with his will; **but upon yielding to the tempter a warring element began to work in the human agent.** Even the earth itself shows the curse of transgression, and signs of enmity appear. **Darkness covers the earth like the pall of death,** and will continue to shroud the glory of God until death is swallowed up in victory. {ST, December 12, 1895 par. 7}

In the creation of God before the entrance of sin, every part of nature was in perfection; **God had nothing to take down as unnecessary to his plan. He needed to set into operation no power by which to dispossess; he needed to inaugurate no opposing force.** But through the calamity of sin, **the work of disintegration was begun, and the beautiful temple of God's building was defiled and laid in ruins. God no longer was a dweller in the heart of man. To oppose and bring to naught the work of the enemy,** the promise was given, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." {ST, December 12, 1895 par. 8}

What is that principle that Satan introduced into man?

All sin is selfishness. Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self. A species of

insanity led him to seek to supersede God. And the temptation that led Adam to sin was Satan's declaration that it was possible for man to attain to something more than he already enjoyed, possible for him to be as God Himself. **The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world.** God desires every one to understand the evil of selfishness, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers. The design of the gospel is to confront this evil by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of benevolence. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 3}

Our only definition of sin is that given in the Word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the outworking of a ***principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.*** {GC88 492.2}

So God is the source of life – the law of love is the law upon which life is built. Harmony with God means His love/life flows through us and upholds and sustains all things. Sin is selfishness, a principle at war with the law of love, a principle that severs the connection with God and thus prevents God's love/life from sustaining His creation.

Therefore, the more sin and rejection of God the more separation from Him and the greater the decay and death.

As Satan gets more control then more calamities and destruction occurs because God's universe runs out of control, the law of sin and death takes over.

Rev 7:1-3 – four angels loose the four winds and destruction happens.

"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.

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

Conversely, the closer the unity the greater the healing and restoration.

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead **will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit**, who lives in you. Romans 8:11

Thoughts?

Would this mean as we come closer to unity with God that decay, aging, and deterioration would lessen?

- Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone. Dt 34:7

What do you think of the Temple references in this passage? Does it relate at all to the cleansing of the sanctuary?

Look at THURSDAY's lesson, read 2Cor 5:1-4, thoughts? What is it talking about? A house not made with human hands? Does that wording sound familiar?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “One of the great...”

Thoughts?

Is there disagreement on this issue in Christianity?

How do you think we should handle such disagreement? What is the appropriate attitude toward those who understand “how” differently than we do?

Isn't the Christlike approach to present our perspectives and understandings in love, and leave others free to come to their own conclusion?

If someone accepts Jesus as their savior and believes that we are saved through plasma energy transfers from God, through Jesus, to all who accept Him, what should our attitude toward that person be?

Should we require such a person to agree with us to fellowship with us?

Should we muzzle such a person? Should we allow them to present their understanding, evidence and perspective and leave each person free to think it out for themselves?

Read Galatians 3:26-29 – thoughts?

Next paragraph, “In verse 27...” thoughts?

Do we *claim* His character or do we *experience* His character?

Here are those same verses from my paraphrase:

Gal 3:26 Through the remedy established by Jesus Christ you reveal his character and are all sons of God, 27 for all of you who have immersed your minds and hearts into the truth of

God, as revealed by Christ, have had your characters changed, like a new set of clothing, replaced with the character of Christ. 28 Your station on earth is irrelevant; it doesn't matter whether you are Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, for you are all one in character, method, principle and motive through all that Christ has done. 29 If you are Christlike in heart and mind, then you are one of Abraham's descendents and an heir to all the promises of God. (Dr. J's paraphrase)

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "For all of Paul's..." thoughts?

Notice how they state it is not "just" about our legal status – as if it ever were about our legal status.

She's not just a woman she's also governor.

The "not just" language assumes that the legal status is obviously what Christ came to do and the healing transformation aspects are less obvious.

Notice through this lesson they provide Bible text after Bible text documenting how being clothed in Christ is about an actual change and transformation in the believer, a healing and restoration. But they never provide one text that states our legal status needed to be or was changed.

Read last paragraph, "The context..." thoughts?

Again, nice job of accurately describing that it is about character building about transformation.

What is the darkness and light referring to? Darkness about what? What is the light we now walk in? Is it not the knowledge of God?

TUESDAY

Read last paragraph, “Notice the contrast...” thoughts?

Notice how they describe so nicely that salvation is about transformation – yet somehow they still get confused over legal status.

But, let’s speak in the language Paul at times used to communicate to those who prefer to see the issue in legal terms. What causes our “legal” status to change? It is fulfilling the requirements of the law. And, what does the law require?

- **The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character;** and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}
- The law of God, as presented in the Scriptures, is broad in its requirements. Every principle is holy, just, and good. The law lays men under obligation to God; it reaches to the thoughts and feelings; and it will produce conviction of sin in everyone who is sensible of having transgressed its requirements. If the law extended to the outward conduct only, men would not be guilty in their wrong thoughts, desires, and designs. **But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.**--RH, Apr 5, 1898. (2SM 211.) {2MCP 564.1}

- **The divine law requires us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves.** Without the exercise of this love, the highest profession of faith is mere hypocrisy. . . . {A New Life NL 32.1}
- **That which God required of Adam before his fall was perfect obedience to His law. God requires now what He required of Adam, perfect obedience, righteousness without a flaw, without shortcoming in His sight. God help us to render to Him all His law requires.** We cannot do this without that faith that brings Christ's righteousness into daily practice. {2SM 380.4}
- While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. **God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.** But the Pharisees rejected Christ; "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness" (Romans 10:3), they would not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. {MB 54.2}
- The duty we owe to God is revealed in his word in unmistakable clearness. Here the obligation of man is declared so explicitly that the day of Judgment will reveal no excuse for not serving God. God's great moral standard of righteousness is to be met. **His law requires your heart's supreme affection for your Maker. It requires you to do unto others as you would have them do to you.** "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," is a positive declaration; but "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," is equally positive. {BEcho, February 15, 1889 par. 8}

- This is the voice of God to you, my brethren and sisters who profess to keep the law of God. **That law requires that you love your neighbor as yourself.** Are you doing it? {RH, March 11, 1884 par. 10}
- The Chinese New Year commences in February, and lasts one week. They have a custom of settling all quarrels between themselves and all outstanding debts; and if there are any who are unable to pay their debts, they are forgiven them. Thus the new year is commenced with all difficulties and accounts settled. This is a heathen custom that the Christian world would do well to imitate. **God's law requires all this of us, and more,--we are to love our neighbor as ourselves.** That is, we are to deal with our neighbors in everything just as we would wish them to deal with us. If we wish them to act fairly and justly toward us, then we should act fairly and justly toward them. We are simply to do as we would be done by. {RH, December 16, 1884 par. 4}
- Christ saw that that which prevented the truth from reaching many hearts was their misconception of the nature and claims of the law. They neglected to cultivate spirituality. They did not know the Lord whom they professed to serve and obey. They did not discern the relation of Jesus to the Father, neither did they know by experience the paternal character of God, or understand that **his law requires us to love God supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves.** If they would have emptied the soul of selfishness, pride, and self-love, and humbled their hearts to be instructed by the greatest Teacher the world ever knew, they would have recognized the grace of God in the gift of Jesus to our world to save those who were ready to perish. {ST, November 23, 1891 par. 5}
- **God's law requires that justice and right be exercised between man and his fellow man; it requires that we shall not injure our neighbor in his property, his feelings, his health, or his good name. It requires compassion for the afflicted, even if he be our enemy, that in all our associations with our fellow beings we shall show the same**

love and care that we would wish to have exercised toward ourselves. Who can stand before this great moral standard, and plead not guilty? {ST, January 7, 1897 par. 3}

- **Christ came to this world to live the law and represent the character of God, that the delusions which Satan had brought upon the world might be dispelled.** In the sermon on the mount, He who gave the law became an expositor of the law. That sermon, so full of what it means to love and obey God, is the unfolding of His character. **The law is shown to be a representation of God's character**, that man may see that he must render obedience to the law if he would become a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. **This law requires nothing short of perfect spiritual obedience.** {ST, February 24, 1898 par. 5}

What did we not hear in any of these passages? Did we hear the weight of these passages talking about legal penalties being paid? Did we hear the law require a legal penalty or healing and transformation?

But what about this quotation?

- **Christ saw the helpless condition of the race, and he came to redeem them by living the life of obedience the law requires**, and by paying in his death the penalty of disobedience. He came to bring us the message and means of deliverance, an assurance of salvation, not through the abrogation of the law, but through obedience made possible by his merits. {RH, April 29, 1902 par. 10}
 - Does it say the penalty is a legal penalty? Or that there is a penalty and that penalty was paid? The law requires a life of obedience, there is a penalty for sin, but the law doesn't require sin be punished, only that the infection of sin be destroyed so that a life of obedience could be obtained. Thus lawlessness results in death and Christ could only restore a life of obedience into humanity by destroying the carnal nature He assumed – thus suffering

the penalty sin brought. In so doing He destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light (2Tim 1:10).

Thoughts? What does it mean to have a change in our legal status? It means that we have a change in our character so that we are in harmony with the law? Why? Because the law is the basis upon which life is built and only in harmony with it can we be united with God and live eternally!

FRIDAY

First paragraph, thoughts? What do you think about the idea of the sun burning 7 times hotter? Where does such an idea come from?

The Bible:

The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted. Isaiah 30:26

But how could this be without destroying the earth? By having a water canopy over the earth. In such a situation the two lights, one to rule the day, one to rule the night, would keep the water, which now constitutes most of our oceans, in a suspended state above the earth. The polar extremes would disappear, the severe weather would disappear, no more rain, hurricanes, tornados, thunderstorms, no polar caps, the entire earth a pleasant warm place.

What happened to the sun and the moon? Why are they not this way now? The water came down at the flood, and if the sun were seven times hotter now or the moon was as hot as the sun the earth would be destroyed.

Read question 2 – it is an error to rely on science divorced from scripture, but it is equally erroneous to study scripture divorced from science.

WEDNESDAY

Top sentence - "No question..." thoughts? Well said!

Worship Lesson 1 3Q 2011

INTRODUCTION to the Study Guide

The first paragraph quotes the First Angel's message of Revelation 14, then second paragraph, "First, John..."

Thoughts?

What do you understand to be the everlasting gospel? Does everlasting, eternal, mean only for eternity future? Or is the good news an eternal good news that was true for eternity past? When Lucifer rebelled in heaven was it true that Jesus had died for humans? Was the gospel in existence then?

What is the eternal good news? Would it be good news that we get eternal life with God if God is like Satan in character?

Is the gospel that we get to live forever with God, or the ultimate good news is that God is not like Satan has alleged?

"Foundational then to our worship needs to be Jesus' death in our behalf."

Is this the most foundational focus of our worship – Jesus dying for us? Or is there something more foundational?

What was foundational to the worship of Adam and Eve before they sinned? Did the foundation of their worship change after sin? Did Christ's death build a new foundation or was Christ's death a further revelation of the foundation of true worship which already existed?

- This is life eternal that they might *know you, the only true God* and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent. John 17:3
- Jesus mission was to reveal the Father John 17:5

- 2 Cor 10:3-5 We wage war against everything that sets itself up against the *knowledge of God* and take captive every thought to Jesus Christ
- Romans 1:18-35 when we exchange the truth of God for a lie the mind becomes depraved, futile and darkened
- John 14:9 anyone who has seen Christ has seen the Father
- But the plan of redemption had a yet **broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man**. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; **but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe**. To this result of His great sacrifice--its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man--the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}
- It was in order that the heavenly universe might see the conditions of the covenant of redemption that Christ bore the penalty in behalf of the human race. **The throne of Justice must be eternally and forever made secure, even tho the race be wiped out, and another creation populate the earth**. By the sacrifice Christ was about to make, all doubts would be forever settled, and the human race would be saved if they would return to their allegiance. Christ alone could restore honor to God's government. The cross of Calvary would be looked upon by the unfallen worlds, by the heavenly universe, by Satanic agencies, by the fallen race, and **every mouth would be stopped**. In making His infinite sacrifice Christ would **exalt and honor the law. He would make known the exalted character of God's government, which**

could not in any way be changed to meet man in his sinful condition. {ST, July 12, 1899 par. 2}

Who is able to describe the last scenes of Christ's life on earth, His trial in the judgment hall, His crucifixion? Who witnessed these scenes?--The heavenly universe, God the Father, Satan and his angels. Wonderful events took place in the betrayal of Christ... {ST, July 12, 1899 par. 3}

... The enmity of the apostate against the Commander of all heaven must be seen. It must be shown that Satan's mercy is cruelty. What a battle was this, between Christ and Satan! It was waged up to the very time of the resurrection, yea, up to the time of the ascension. **Then it was transferred to Christ's followers, and today Satan wars against them.** {ST, July 12, 1899 par. 4}

What is foundational to our worship? It is the truth about the character of God, His nature, methods, principles and being!

What kind of war is it? And how does Satan wage it against Christ's followers today?

Third paragraph of the introduction states, "When we approach God in worship as a kind of buddy or pal, we degrade Him and place ourselves in a role in which we do not belong. Worship should be permeated by a sense of reverence and awe for our God, an attitude that will give us the humility and surrender so needed for true worship."

Thoughts?

What is another name for a buddy or pal? Comrade, chum, mate or friend?

What did Jesus say?

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. John 15:15

What about one of the founders of our church, what did she say?

If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. **Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend.** He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet, joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. . . . Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan. FLB 226

Thoughts?

Can one have reverence and awe and also friendship, be pals? Or are these mutually exclusive?

Read the next paragraph, “We are also told...”

Yes, our worship, our hearts and minds must be focused on God. Is this what the Revelation text primarily means when it says to give glory to God, that we, in our worship services talk about Him?

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that **I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ **I will show the holiness of my great name**, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. **Then the nations will know that I am the LORD**, declares the Sovereign LORD, **when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.**”

²⁴ “For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean;** I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.** ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and

move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.
Ezekiel 36:22-27

Thoughts? Don't we give glory to God by allowing Him to restore His character in us and therefore we reveal His character in the way we live?

Read next paragraph, "We are told..." thoughts?

Does Revelation 14 speak of Christ sitting on the throne in Judgment or of God Himself being judged? What did Jesus say?

"As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. ⁴⁸ There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. John 12:47,48

What does this mean? That the truth of our own condition is what judges us. If all of us are infected with a terminal illness, and a remedy is offered, and while all of us claim to have taken the remedy, only some of us have – do we have to have someone sit in judgment to determine who has really taken the remedy, or will the truth of our condition reveal itself?

Then what is the judgment of God in Revelation 14 talking about?

What did the war in heaven, initiated by Lucifer, start over? Lucifer alleged God could not be trusted. How did Satan spread his rebellion to earth? He deceived our first parents in regard to God's trustworthiness.

We are fighting a thought war and are to demolish everything that sets itself up against "the knowledge of God!" (2Cor 10:5). And in Romans 3:4 Paul tells us that God is the One on trial, the One accused and the One who will be proved innocent:

God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when **thou art judged.** KJV

May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “That You may be justified in Your words, And **prevail when You are judged.**” NASB

Certainly not! God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, “You must be shown to be right when you speak; **you must win your case when you are being tried.**” GNT

No! God will continue to be true even when every person is false. As the Scriptures say: “So you will be shown to be right when you speak, **and you will win your case.**” NCV

As we move into this quarterly let us remember the central focus of all our worship is the truth about God, as revealed in Christ!

LESSON 1 Worship in Genesis: Two Classes of Worshipers

SABBATH

Read both paragraphs, “It has been...” thoughts?

Is this the real lesson of Cain and Abel? Was Cain worshipping self? Was Cain bringing offerings to an altar with an idol of himself? Or while there was something amiss with Cain, was he still presenting his offering to God?

In MONDAY’s lesson it asks what made the difference between Cain and Abel’s offerings to God?

So what was the problem with Cain’s offering? Was Cain trying to buy God? Was Cain trying to “work” his way into heaven, as is often the case? Or was something else going on in this process?

Remember the story of the Pharisee and publican who came to worship when Jesus was on earth? One was pompous and boastful the other humble and needful? Is this the difference?

The **Pharisee and the publican represent two great classes** into which those who come to worship God are divided. Their first two representatives are found in the first two children that were born into the world. **Cain thought himself righteous, and he came to God with a thank offering only. He made no confession of sin, and acknowledged no need of mercy.** But Abel came with the blood that pointed to the Lamb of God. **He came as a sinner, confessing himself lost;** his only hope was the unmerited love of God. The Lord had respect to his offering, but to Cain and his offering He had not respect. The sense of need, the recognition of our poverty and sin, is the very first condition of acceptance with God. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:3. {COL 152.1}

What was the difference? Cain refused to accept he was sick, terminal, dying. If a patient refuses to accept he is sick, will he participate in the treatment plan? This is what the problem is in this situation. Those who think they are okay and those who recognize their need!

Remember the old movie 2001 a space odyssey? In the movie HAL was an artificial intelligence, computer, which ran the ship. On the way to Jupiter the astronauts kept dying. When the last two finally figured out what was going on, that HAL was killing them. The computer said that he was perfect, that computers never make mistakes, that anytime any error happens with a computer it is always traced back to a human being. In other words, I am perfect, but even if I did make a mistake it was because you, my creator made me this way.

This is exactly, what Cain and the class of the lost say. There is nothing wrong with us, but even if there is, it is your fault God because you made us this way. This is Lucifer's allegations, that God is the one at fault.

God could not accept Cain's sacrifice because Cain's heart was closed to God's remedy to sin! So, where was the barrier between God and Cain? Was the barrier, as some have alleged, God's wrath which needed a blood sacrifice to remove it, or was the barrier Cain's condition and closed heart and refusal to accept God's remedy?

SUNDAY

Speaks about worship in Eden and references the Sabbath – what role did the Sabbath have in Eden?

- Physical rest
- Church attendance
- Reminder of who the creator is?
- A time to fellowship with God?
- An evidence of God's character, which is worthy of our worship?

How is the Sabbath connected to worship?

One aspect of the Sabbath is to remind us of God as creator, and God's creatorship is one of the reasons often given in Scripture for our worship:

The **duty to worship God** is based upon the fact that he is the Creator, and that to him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, his claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, **there is cited the evidence of his creative power.** "All the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens." [PS. 96:5.] "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things." "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; . . . I am Jehovah; and there is none else." [ISA. 40:25, 26; 45:18.] Says the psalmist, "Know ye that Jehovah, he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves." "O come, let

us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." [PS. 100:3; 95:6.] And the holy beings who worship God in Heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to him, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things." [REV. 4: 11.] {GC88 436.2}

Why is this issue emphasized over and over again in Scripture? Thoughts? What is the significance? In a post fall world had the question of who created us arisen? Has the truth of our origins become obscured by human theories? Was this true in Eden?

So while, in our fallen world, we are thankful for the Sabbath as a reminder of our Awesome Creator, what was the purpose of the Sabbath in Eden?

Which member of the Godhead is our Creator? Does this have any significance? Why? With whom did Satan allege equality? Is it important to worship our Creator merely because He has the power to create – in other words, does creative power alone make God worthy of our worship?

- “What is the deepest in God? His power? No, for power could not make him what we mean when we say *God*. A being whose essence was only power would be such a negation of the divine that no righteous worship could be offered him; his service would be only fear.” George MacDonald, *Discovering the Character of God*, p. 29.

Thoughts? Is something more than creative power alone necessary to be worthy of our worship?

Did Satan allege God did not have creative power? Or did Satan allege God uses His power arbitrarily and selfishly?

Did Satan allege, like Hal, that if we do anything wrong it is because God made us this way so the real problem is with God?

The lesson points to Revelation 14:7 “worship him who made...” emphasizing the reality that we need to worship only the creator.

But according to Revelation in addition to being our Creator, what makes Him *worthy* of our worship?

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!” Rev 5:12

What significance is it to recognize Jesus is our Creator and our Creator let us kill Him and wouldn't use His power to stop us?

Isn't it the selfless character of Christ, proven beyond question, which makes our Creator worthy of our worship?

Is there a difference between duty – and the reason God said to worship Him? Does God say to worship Him because it is our duty?

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

Why does God say we are to worship Him? While it is our duty to worship God, why is it our duty? It is true God is Creator, Sovereign, All Powerful, but is this why God says to worship Him?

TUESDAY

The lesson points out that from Cain came one type of worshipper and from Seth another. These are referred to in the Bible as the

Son's of God and the daughters of men. And it points out that eventually they began to intermarry, and this led to degradation in worship, which resulted in degradation in character and eventually the flood.

What lessons do we learn from this history?

WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph, "As we have seen..." thoughts? What was the purpose of God asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? Was God ever going to have Abraham go through with it?

Does this stand as a representation of God killing Jesus? What is the purpose?

Abraham wanted to see God, to know Him, to understand Him, and in this task Abraham was brought more closely in union with God's heart than in any other aspect of Abraham's life. Abraham could empathize with what God would be going through when Jesus died. God did send His Son as the way and means of saving mankind and bringing sin in the universe to an end.

THURSDAY

Last paragraph, "Worship is not..." thoughts? What is God's attitude toward us? What does He want from us?

Does God want us in the closest unity and intimacy of friendship or to keep a formal Royal separation between us?

Are we not children of God, part of the heavenly royal family?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 3

Lesson 2

Worship and the Exodus: Understanding who God is.

Sabbath Afternoon

Ex. 20: 2,3. ***“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.”***

Did you ever wonder why the 10 commandments start with “I am the Lord ...” ??

If you perform a search for the phrase “I am the Lord” on a Bible search engine, you will get anywhere from 0 [Message Bible] to 249 [New International Reader’s Version] verses. Most versions I looked at have somewhere around 150 verses with this phrase in them. Most of the verses are in the books of Leviticus, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. NO texts are in the New Testament. Any thoughts as to WHY??

Think about what life was like to the children of Israel having been just delivered from bondage in Egypt. For nearly four centuries your ancestors had been in slavery – working from dawn to dark building monuments to heathen gods. [For some perspective: the first printing of the King James Bible was in 1611 – 400 years ago.] Imagine how darkened your mind would be regarding a God you could not see/touch/hear/smell/etc.

We are sometimes prone to think that if we had lived back then, things would have been very different, but do we not still have mistaken God concepts now?? even after Jesus clearly revealed his character, and we’ve had 400 years of the Word of God available [now at just the touch of a button].

Sunday – Holy Ground

At the time Moses came upon the burning bush, did he have a correct God concept??

1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” 4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” 5 “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” 6 Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

The lesson states: “Reverence, awe, and fear – these are the attitudes that are crucial it is for us in order to engage in true worship.” Really?? Fear?? I hope the author meant respect instead of fear, but ...

Adam and Eve ran and hid because they were afraid, Moses hid his face because he was afraid – later on the Mountain, he asked to see God’s face [where’s the fear now??], and God, in his wisdom covered Moses with his hand and caused his “goodness” to pass before Moses, which made his face glow, but didn’t burn it ... hmmm.

Ex. 34: 6,7. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

In the last paragraph the lesson states: “In the same way, Jesus did not come to this earth merely to represent God and help us know more about Him. No, Jesus came to die for our sins, to give His life as a ransom, to die on the cross the death that we deserve. Through His death, of course, we know more and more about the character of God, but in the end Christ came to pay the penalty for our sins and thus give us true deliverance, the deliverance symbolized in part by what the Lord did for Israel when He freed the nation from Egypt.”

While I agree Jesus came NOT ONLY to reveal the character of God, He did NOT pay any penalty. He did pay a dear price [my understanding is He gave up his omnipresence, because **Phil. 2: 5-7. Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.**

He also came to develop the **remedy** to cure our terminal condition [sin] and thus its symptoms [sins].

Monday – The Death of the Firstborn: Passover & Worship.

Let’s start at the beginning of the plagues / miracles:

1. Moses’ serpent devoured the magician’s serpents [Serpents were objects of Egyptian worship].
2. Nile turned to blood. [The Nile and its inhabitants also objects of Egyptian worship].
3. Legions of frogs. [Nile god became a source of pollution to its worshippers].
NOTE: Miracles 1-3 counterfeited by the Egyptian magicians.

4. Lice. [The pagan priests were particular about approaching the altars for worship, and an insect on one's person would prevent them from offering food or gifts to the idols. Imagine the difficulty the infestation of lice caused on pagan Egypt.]
5. Flies. This was designed to destroy the Egyptians faith in Beelzebub [the Fly god], who supposedly protected the people from flies.
6. Destruction of livestock [except those of the Israelites]. This was intended to wake up Egypt to their entire system of brute beast worship.
7. [6th plague / 7th miracle] Boils. Human sacrifice was still practiced in Egypt at this time. Often the priests would burn human victims alive, and toss the ashes into the air to appease the god Typhon, or the Evil Principle. The people believed that wherever ash would land, evil would be averted. Consider the distress when severe boils broke out from the ash that Moses threw into the air. Instead of evil being averted, the ash caused evil.
8. Hail. This [along with the 9th plague / 10th miracle] was directed against the worship of Isis and Osiris – the moon and sun gods, respectively. Egypt was not accustomed to violent storms, much less those producing large hailstones. The hail revealed that the God of heaven was able to control the weather, as well as the heavenly bodies.
9. Locusts. This plague was directed against Serapis, the god credited with protecting the country from locust. He failed.
10. Darkness. See #8.
11. Death of the first born. This was designed to reveal that God is the only source of life. Period. [Source: PP Appendix Note 5 pgs 758,9]

See the below link for an interesting take on the Passover meaning. I have no idea if it is accurate or credible, but it makes sense.

In summary: In Eastern culture at the time of the Passover, when expecting a guest, blood would be sprinkled over the doorway in an expression of *welcome*, or a covenant of hospitality, not one of unwelcome. The more honored the guest, the more costly the blood. For example, the blood of a dove or pigeon might be used for a neighbor or distant family member, but the blood of a “fatted calf” would be used when welcoming royalty.

http://www.familyfoundations.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=148%3Aunderstanding-passover-article-by-craig-hill&catid=51%3Afree-stuff&Itemid=187&lang=en

Tuesday – No other gods.

The law was not spoken at this time exclusively for the benefit of the Hebrews. God honored them by making them the guardians and keepers of His law, but it was to be held as a sacred trust for the whole world. The precepts of the Decalogue are adapted to all mankind, and they were given for the instruction and government of all. Ten precepts, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, cover the duty of man to God and to his fellow man; and all based upon the great fundamental principle of love. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” Luke 10:27. See also Deuteronomy 6:4, 5; Leviticus 19:18. In the Ten

Commandments these principles are carried out in detail, and made applicable to the condition and circumstances of man. {PP 305.2}

Why does God want “no other gods before me”?? Some would suggest He’s that insecure, as to need our worship constantly. Seriously??

Wednesday – “These be your Gods ...”

While Moses was absent it was a time of waiting and suspense to Israel. The people knew that he had ascended the mount with Joshua, and had entered the cloud of thick darkness which could be seen from the plain below, resting on the mountain peak, illuminated from time to time with the lightnings of the divine Presence. They waited eagerly for his return. Accustomed as they had been in Egypt to material representations of deity, it had been hard for them to trust in an invisible being, and they had come to rely upon Moses to sustain their faith. Now he was taken from them. Day after day, week after week passed, and still he did not return. Notwithstanding the cloud was still in view, it seemed to many in the camp that their leader had deserted them, or that he had been consumed by the devouring fire. {PP 315.1}
During this period of waiting, there was time for them to meditate upon the law of God which they had heard, and to prepare their hearts to receive the further revelations that He might make to them. They had none too much time for this work; and had they been thus seeking a clearer understanding of God’s requirements, and humbling their hearts before Him, they would have been shielded from temptation. But they did not do this, and they soon became careless, inattentive, and lawless. Especially was this the case with the mixed multitude. They were impatient to be on their way to the Land of Promise—the land flowing with milk and honey. It was only on condition of obedience that the goodly land was promised them, but they had lost sight of this. There were some who suggested a return to Egypt, but whether forward to Canaan or backward to Egypt, the masses of the people were determined to wait no longer for Moses. {PP 315.2}

*Moses in the mount was warned of the apostasy in the camp and was directed to return without delay. “Go, get thee down,” were the words of God; “**thy** people, which **thou** broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made them a molten calf, and have worshiped it.” God might have checked the movement at the outset; but He suffered it to come to this height that He might teach all a lesson in His punishment of treason and apostasy. {PP 317.4}*

God’s covenant with His people had been disannulled, and He declared to Moses, “Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.” The people of Israel, especially the mixed multitude, would be constantly disposed to rebel against God. They would also murmur against their leader, and would grieve him by their unbelief and stubbornness, and it would be a laborious and soul-trying work to lead them through to the Promised Land. Their sins had already forfeited the favor of God, and justice called for their destruction. The Lord therefore proposed to destroy them, and make of Moses a mighty nation. {PP 318.1}

“Let Me alone, ...that I may consume them,” were the words of God. If God had purposed to destroy Israel, who could plead for them? How few but would have left the sinners to their fate! How few but would have gladly exchanged a lot of toil and burden and sacrifice, repaid with ingratitude and murmuring, for a position of ease and honor, when it was God Himself that offered the release. {PP 318.2}

*But Moses discerned ground for hope where there appeared only discouragement and wrath. The words of God, “Let Me alone,” he understood not to forbid but to encourage intercession, implying that nothing but the prayers of Moses could save Israel, but that if thus entreated, God would spare His people. He “besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against **Thy** people, which **Thou** hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?” {PP 318.3}*

Love no less than justice demanded that for this sin judgment should be inflicted. God is the guardian as well as the sovereign of His people. He cuts off those who are determined upon rebellion, that they may not lead others to ruin. In sparing the life of Cain, God had demonstrated to the universe what would be the result of permitting sin to go unpunished. The influence exerted upon his descendants by his life and teaching led to the state of corruption that demanded the destruction of the whole world by a flood. The history of the antediluvians testifies that long life is not a blessing to the sinner; God's great forbearance did not repress their wickedness. The longer men lived, the more corrupt they became. {PP 325.2}

The lesson correctly points out, in the last paragraph, the principle of “by beholding, we become changed.” We understand this as the Law of Worship.

Thursday – Show me your Glory

We saw in Sunday's lesson that at the burning bush, God kind of introduced himself to Moses. A few months later, Moses was asking God “...**show me thy way, that I may know thee** ...” WHY??

Still the prophet did not cease pleading. Every prayer had been answered, but he thirsted for greater tokens of God's favor. He now made a request that no human being had ever made before: “I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.” {PP 328.2}

*God did not rebuke his request as presumptuous; but the gracious words were spoken, “I will make all My goodness pass before thee.” **The unveiled glory of God, no man in this mortal state can look upon and live;** but Moses was assured that he should behold as much of the divine glory as he could endure. Again he was summoned to the mountain summit; then the hand that made the world, that hand that “removeth the mountains, and they know not” (Job 9:5), took this creature of the dust, this mighty man of faith, and placed him in a cleft of the rock, while the glory of God and all His goodness passed before him. {PP 328.3}*

This experience—above all else the promise that the divine Presence would attend him—was to Moses an assurance of success in the work before him; and he counted it of infinitely greater worth than all the learning of Egypt or all his attainments as a statesman or a military leader. No earthly power or skill or learning can supply the place of God's abiding presence. {PP 328.4}

To the transgressor it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; but Moses stood alone in the presence of the Eternal One, and he was not afraid; for his soul was in harmony with the will of his Maker. Says the psalmist, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” Psalm 66:18. But “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant.” Psalm 25:14. {PP 329.1}

Friday

Suggested reading: Patriarchs and Prophets. Ch 1 “**Why was sin permitted**”, Ch's 22-29. “Moses, The Plagues of Egypt, The Passover, The Exodus, From the Red Sea to Sinai, The Law Given to Israel, Idolatry at Sinai, **Satan's Enmity against the Law**”.

Worship Lesson 3 3Q 2011

The Sabbath and Worship

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "As we saw..."

What does the lesson define the gospel to be? "the good news of salvation in Jesus..."

Do you agree with this as the everlasting gospel?

How would you define the gospel?

What is the eternal good news? Is it not that:

- God is good
- God is trustworthy
- God is love
- God is faithful
- God is kind, patient, loyal
- God is NOT as Satan alleged

And isn't this knowledge, knowing God, not in a Gnostic, intellectual knowing, but in an experiential knowing that results in salvation and eternal life?

John 17:3 This is life eternal that they might know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

Do you notice how the gospel has become a formula for our salvation? Is the eternal good news primarily about us, about what happens to us, or is the good news primarily about God?

What if we misidentify the gospel? Do we miss the meaning of the message? Do we miss the message we are to take to the world? Do we struggle in our ability to fulfill our purpose in this time in history?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Remember the Sabbath..." Can we make the Sabbath unholy? Can we do things that cause the Sabbath to no longer be holy?

When they mistreated and abused Jesus, the holy one of God, did their unholy treatment of Jesus make Him unholy?

Can unholy human behavior make the Sabbath unholy?

Then what does the commandment mean when it says to "keep the Sabbath Holy?"

Doesn't it mean for us to keep ourselves holy on the Sabbath?

But in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ. When the command was given to Israel, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," the Lord said also to them, "Ye shall be holy men unto Me." Ex. 20:8; 22:31. Only thus could the Sabbath distinguish Israel as the worshipers of God. {DA 283.3}

And what does it mean to be holy? Does it mean to be set apart for sacred use?

Set apart from what? Would it be from the world? What makes something of the world? Would it be selfishness? So would set apart from selfishness mean?

So does keeping the Sabbath holy mean we are to keep ourselves apart from selfishness?

Turn to WEDNESDAY, which asks us about Exodus 31:13

Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy.'

How is the Sabbath and our holiness connected? Who made the Sabbath holy? Who makes us holy?

What does it mean to be holy? Does this mean we are to avoid work? Only if it is to promote self – but if it is work to bless others, to avoid it would be to break the Sabbath.

This is why Jesus said that His Father is always at work and so is He. The Jews avoided work on Sabbath and created a long list of rules for their behavior in order to keep the Sabbath Holy. The Sabbath became a day of restriction, rather than freedom and a day which was a test of their orthodoxy, a test of their righteousness, a test of their holiness, in other words, the Sabbath became a day about them.

Jesus stated to them that the **work of relieving the afflicted was in harmony with the Sabbath** law. It was in harmony with the work of God's angels, who are ever descending and ascending between heaven and earth to minister to suffering humanity. Jesus declared, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." All days are God's, in which to carry out His plans for the human race...

Should God forbid the sun to perform its office upon the Sabbath, cut off its genial rays from warming the earth and nourishing vegetation? Must the system of worlds stand still through that holy day? ...

In such a case, men would miss the fruits of the earth, and the blessings that make life desirable. Nature must continue her unvarying course. God could not for a moment stay His hand, or man would faint and die. **And man also has a work to perform on this day.** The necessities of life **must** be attended to, the sick **must** be cared for, the wants of the needy **must** be supplied. **He will not be held guiltless who**

neglects to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. God's holy rest day was made for man, and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent. God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour's pain that may be relieved upon the Sabbath or any other day.

The demands upon God are even greater upon the Sabbath than upon other days. His people then leave their usual employment, and spend the time in meditation and worship. They ask more favors of Him on the Sabbath than upon other days. They demand His special attention. They crave His choicest blessings. God does not wait for the Sabbath to pass before He grants these requests. Heaven's work never ceases, and **men should never rest from doing good.** The Sabbath is not intended to be a period of useless inactivity. **The law forbids secular labor on the rest day of the Lord; the toil that gains a livelihood must cease; no labor for worldly pleasure or profit is lawful upon that day;** but as God ceased His labor of creating, and rested upon the Sabbath and blessed it, so man is to leave the occupations of his daily life, and **devote those sacred hours to healthful rest, to worship, and to holy deeds.** The work of Christ in healing the sick was in perfect accord with the law. It honored the Sabbath. - Desire of Ages, pp. 206-207

Thoughts?

Read third paragraph SUNDAY, "Creation and Redemption..." thoughts?

This reminds me of a time when Christie and I were visiting another church. It was Sabbath morning and for the introductory prayer the pastor prayed, "Lord we are here today, in church, on your Sabbath day, not to visit with friends, not to hear the special music, not even to hear the sermon. No, Lord, we are here for one reason and one reason only, Because you have commanded us to be here."

Is this a good reason because God has ordered it? What is your reason for valuing the Sabbath? Why are you here today?

First question – Has God ordered it? Has God commanded it?

Are not the 10 Commandments a distillation of God's law of love uniquely designed for humans in sin? Didn't Christ say the greatest commandment is to love God and second is to love man, all the law and the prophets hang on these?

Can love be commanded? So how do we understand the 10 Commandments, are they the 10 suggestions?

Is there a difference from a military order, a governmental command, a dictator's dictate, and a doctor's prescription, a doctor's order?

What is the difference?

How do you hear the 10 Commandments? As an order to obey, or as a prescription to take?

Does it make a difference?

From the White Estate:

ELLEN WHITE ONCE WROTE, "**A SULLEN SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF THE FATHER WILL DEVELOP THE CHARACTER OF A REBEL.**"--"THAT I MAY KNOW HIM," P. 120. IN WRITING THIS, GOD'S SERVANT ANTICIPATED THE NUMBER ONE PROBLEM CONFRONTING EDUCATORS AND PARENTS: HOW TO CREATE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF CHILDREN TOWARD THE CHURCH. THIS IS THE SUBJECT IN THE FOLLOWING LETTER. {PCP 45.1}

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONSTANTLY URGED TO FOLLOW THE ADVICE GIVEN IN 2 PETER 1. BUT MANY REBEL. WHY? **BECAUSE WITHOUT A POSITIVE CONCEPT OF GOD AND WHAT HE WISHES TO DO FOR THEM,** CHILDREN RELATE TO THEIR CHURCH AND TO GOD OUT OF FEAR OR SHEAR DUTY RATHER THAN ADMIRATION. RELIGION BECOMES

OPPRESSIVE, AND IT IS EVENTUALLY REJECTED. {PCP 45.2}

CLEARLY OUR DUTY IS TO INTRODUCE CHILDREN TO THE GOD WHO STANDS BEHIND THE CHURCH'S DOCTRINES AND STANDARDS. SECOND PETER HELPS US DO THIS: **THE EMPHASIS IS ON OBEDIENCE AND GROWTH BASED UPON KNOWING GOD AS A FRIEND.** {PCP 45.3}

Isn't that great! Did you experience things this way when you were growing up? I didn't – and many of my friends didn't either. And do you notice, we in our class have tried to do this very thing, and what have we experienced?

How about when it comes to the Sabbath? Is our focus on the God of the Sabbath or on the Sabbath and its do's and don'ts? What does the Sabbath tell us about God?

MONDAY

Read bottom green section, "If we truly..."

The lesson points us to the Sabbath as a reminder that we were created by God and didn't evolve from lower life forms.

I am a creationist – six literal days followed by the Sabbath, the evidence of design is too great and the idea of spontaneous generation too preposterous. Also, understanding the law of love versus survival of the fittest, makes it clear creation occurred.

I also agree the Sabbath exists because God created – if we evolved over billions of years, why a 7 day week in every culture of the world?

The year, month, day all have astronomical basis – but not the seven day week – no astronomical reason for it – why then a seven day week if no creation?

But, having said all that, what about our friends who worship the creator God on Sunday of a seven day week and call it Sabbath?

Can our Sunday keeping friends worship and appreciate the creator and redeemer each seven days on Sunday?

Can Sunday keeping remind our Sunday keeping friends of the creator God? Or when one worships on Sunday are they suddenly incapable of appreciating God as creator and believing a literal six days creation?

Do you think there are more six day creation believing people who worship weekly on Saturday the Sabbath or Sunday?

When God created Adam and Eve in Eden was the Sabbath given for Adam's physical rest? Was it given to remind Adam he didn't evolve from lower life forms? Was it given to remind Adam Jesus died to save him?

In Eden why was the Sabbath given to man – Adam? What was its purpose then? Did it only have a future purpose for fallen man? Was there no purpose for the Sabbath before the fall of man? What was that purpose?

When did it originate? Under what circumstance? What was transpiring in the universe when the Sabbath was created? What does it mean that this day exists? What is its evidence of?

Why is Christ our Creator and Redeemer instead of another member of the Godhead?

- Christ's creating us was demonstration, evidence, that God was not arbitrary in including Christ in counsels that Lucifer was not included in
- Christ built us so He can rebuild or fix any damage from sin
- Christ proves through His life on earth that there was no manufacturer's defect in the creation of man
- Christ reveals, through His life on earth, that even though He has power to create, He is completely trustworthy with that power and would never use it to coerce or control.

What makes the Sabbath Holy? Is it not the fact the Sabbath very existence is a day invested with the truth presented in love with freedom to think without coercion? What does it mean that God would use power to create the Sabbath but not use power to force His intelligent creatures into line?

How do we then keep the Sabbath holy? Is it not by incorporating God's character, methods, principles into our lives such that we present the truth in love and leave others free – this is genuine Sabbath observance, and is much more than avoiding work on the “right” day every seven.

Do you see how without proper appreciation for the Sabbath people can be religious and use Satan's methods of coercion to force others into line? How such Sabbath keepers could crucify Christ? What about today?

Could Sabbath keepers use coercive tactics?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “As we have...” thoughts? What did the Lord do to bring the people out of slavery in Egypt? What was revealed? What was the purpose of acting as He did?

Could God not have arranged for Moses to be Pharaoh and then have Moses set the people free? Why did it go this way? Was the setting of the people a legal problem? We need a ruler who has the legal right to set the people free, so God will get Moses to be Pharaoh and then he can legally set the people free.

No, the people could have been legally set free by Pharaoh, but would they have been free? What was the purpose of the way God did it? What was He really trying to free them from? What was revealed? Was it not the impotence of all the other false gods?

What was God really trying to free them from, human slavery, or free their minds from slavery to superstition and false thinking?

Did God pay a legal penalty to anyone to bring the Jews out of Egypt? Is there a lesson for us? Slavery in Egypt is symbolic of slavery to sin in this world. God acted in power to give evidence of the worthlessness of the pagan gods in order to free the minds of the people, both Jew and Egyptian.

God has acted throughout history to give evidence of the worthlessness of false gods, money, power, science, self.

A sacrificial animal was slain and the blood of the animal was applied to the door post – was this a legal penalty or symbolic of the remedy, the key to freedom?

Russell shared with you last week that the custom at that time was when a ruler came to a town the friends of the ruler would offer a sacrifice and apply the blood to the doorpost as an invitation to the king, inviting him into their home.

According to scripture the life is in the blood, so the blood on the doorpost reveals those who have internalized Christ into their hearts, thus those who are taken out of the world of sin are those who have taken the remedy of Jesus.

In other words the blood on the doorpost symbolized those whose hearts were in harmony with Christ, those who were sympathetic to God, those who were friends of God!

Where is the legal penalty in this?

The last sentence of Tuesday's lesson states, "Thus, for us the Sabbath worship experience should be a celebration of God's grace in freeing us not only from the legal penalty of sin (which fell upon Jesus in our behalf) but from the power of sin to enslave us."

The legal penalty for sin idea is projected constantly from historic pagan concepts into the sacred text. Show me a text from Scripture that says Jesus paid our legal penalty?

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Creation, Redemption..." thoughts? Is forgiveness of sin and redemption from sin different or the two ways to say the same thing?

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9. **God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin.** It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had **the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."** Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath **He removed our transgressions from us.**" Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

Read second paragraph, "Of course..." is redemption and sanctification different or are they two ways of saying the same thing?

Can God redeem without sanctifying us? Can he sanctify without redeeming?

What do you understand holiness to be?

- It is not a conclusive evidence that a man is a Christian because he manifests spiritual ecstasy under extraordinary circumstances. **Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as**

well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love. {AA 51.2}

- **True holiness is wholeness in the service of God.** This is the condition of true Christian living. Christ asks for an unreserved consecration, for undivided service. He demands the heart, the mind, the soul, the strength. Self is not to be cherished. He who lives to himself is not a Christian. {COL 48.4}

How do we experience holiness?

- The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man's sanctification, and man is to co-operate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them. {AA 532.2}

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The 'rest' Jesus offered..." thoughts?

It is true that we need a weekly rest, nightly rest for the body, weekly rest for the mind, to set aside the cares, worries, problems, trials, tasks, and come into rest with God.

How would this have worked in Eden before sin? Were they worn down from a week of trials, worries, cares, problems, struggles, burdens? Did they need to come away from the burdens of the world to rest? Or was there a different purpose in Eden?

But today, we are burdened, we do face trials, we do struggle, how is the Sabbath a blessing to us today?

Is the Sabbath a blessing only 1 day in 7 or does the Sabbath, when rightly experienced, bless us all the time? How?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question number 1

Worship Lesson 4 3Q 2011

Rejoicing Before the Lord: The Sanctuary and Worship

SABBATH

Read first and second paragraph, “Russian writer...” thoughts?

Is this the only, or even the most significant, danger of mere ritual, that one will leave religion and a belief in God?

What other dangers are there in mere ritual?

- That one can enforce ritual upon others, if you are baptized in a certain way you are shunned, ostracized, executed
- That one can conform without thinking and over time lose their individuality and ability to think

Which is worse to reject the idea of God or to adhere to a ritualistic belief system in which one loses the ability to think, reason and make informed choices without someone telling them what to do?

Which is most likely to undermine development of character and godliness, the rejection of a ritualistic god, or the worship of a ritualistic god?

"All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, **exert his mental powers to search out the truth as it is in Jesus.** Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . **We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. . . . We**

cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures." *Review and Herald*, March 8, 1887 (2RH 117:1:1 - 2:0); *The Medical Missionary*, May 1, 1892

If we mistake the wisdom of man for the wisdom of God we are led astray by the foolishness of man's wisdom. Here is the great danger of many in ----- . They have not an experience for themselves. **They have not been in the habit of prayerfully considering for themselves, with unprejudiced, unbiased judgment, questions and subjects that are new and that are ever liable to arise.** They wait to see what others will think. If these dissent, that is all that is needed to convince them that the subject under consideration is of no account whatever. Although this class is large, it does not change the fact that they are **inexperienced and weak-minded through long yielding to the enemy, and will always be as sickly as babes, walking by others' light, living on others' experience, feeling as others feel, and acting as others act. They act as though they had not an individuality. Their identity is submerged in others; they are merely shadows** of those whom they think about right. **Unless these become sensible of their wavering character and correct it, they will all fail of everlasting life;** they will be unable to cope with the perils of the last days. They will possess no stamina to resist the devil, for they do not know that it is he. Someone must be at their side to inform them whether a foe or a friend is approaching. They are not spiritual, therefore spiritual things are not discerned. They are not wise in those things which relate to the kingdom of God. Neither young nor old are excusable in trusting to another to have an experience for them. Said the angel: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." A noble self-reliance is needed in the Christian experience and warfare. {2T 129.2}

SUNDAY

Read Exodus 25:1-9 – thoughts? What are the high points of this passage?

What was the purpose of the sanctuary? The lesson reminds us it was so God could dwell amongst them? Why was the sanctuary needed for this?

How did God dwell among Abraham? Or what about the burning bush? Or on Sinai? Why the sanctuary?

- Did God need the building?
- Did the Israelites need a building? For what?
- To help focus their attention?
- Did they need rituals to help stimulate their thinking?
- Did they need routines to help order the lives?
- Did they need to come with a lamb they raised and kill it with their own hands to get some sense of how awful sin is?
- Did they need to be participants in the building to help awaken their minds to a larger reality?

God wants to dwell with His people – the Sanctuary teaches this. What prevents Him from dwelling amongst us?

Is the problem we just don't have accommodations to His liking?

If we were to build a tent with all the specification listed in the Bible would God come by for a visit? Would He dwell in the tent?

Was it God's original plan to have such a tent system, or did God go to this because the people wouldn't respond to a different plan, a more direct plan?

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by

Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

Exodus 20 the people say, after the Commandments are given, "Don't let God talk to us lest we die, Moses let God talk to you and then you talk to us."

So God wanted to dwell among His creatures, but they were afraid to have Him close. So what did God do? He instructed them to build a Sanctuary, to bring them into the process of moving closer to Him.

What about today? What does God want in relation to us? What prevents Him from dwelling amongst us today? Would it be our condition?

Is the Old Testament Sanctuary/Temple a reality or an illustration of something larger and more significant?

What did it represent?

- Christ
- The believer
- The church
- The collection of all intelligent beings in the universe loyal to God in a unity of relationship with Him

What was Moses shown on the mountain? Was he shown the sanctuary in heaven or was he shown a "pattern"?

What is this picture?



This is a pattern, diagram, depiction of DNA. Is this DNA? If, from this two dimensional pattern, we construct, with beads and rods, a three dimensional object, which exactly follows the pattern on this picture, will we now have DNA? Will we now have anything that is actually close to DNA in substance, function, ability, similarity? No! We will only have a model which teaches us something about DNA but isn't DNA nor even close to DNA.

Would it be wise to begin making medical decisions that are concretely tied to this model?

The earthly sanctuary is not a miniature of the heavenly, but a pattern of the heavenly – i.e. an illustration, a model, an object lesson, a symbolic representation, but not a direct literal concrete miniature. Would it be wise to make salvation decisions that are tied to concrete applications of the model?

Here is what one of the founders of our church said about the model:

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that **every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator.** Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the **heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One.** But by the incarnation of the Son of God, **the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.** God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the **high destiny open to every soul.** But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield **themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit.** The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, **Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,**--from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Malachi 3:1-3. {DA 161.1}

Thoughts? If we fail to understand the reality the model is trying to teach us might we misunderstand God's plan to heal and save?

MONDAY

Willing Hearts:

Why were gifts to build the sanctuary only to be from those who had a willing heart – why?

What does the sanctuary represent? Can the victory over sin be accomplished by force? Does the victory over sin require the willing heart participation of those involved?

So the willing bringing of gifts represents:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service*.
Romans 12:1 NKJV

Why is this reasonable? And does this take a willing heart? What brings us to the point we are willing to present ourselves completely to God?

Will such willingness be brought about by threat or fear? What about by the truth about God's character?

What does God want to accomplish when we surrender ourselves to Him? Is it not, what we read earlier, the cleansing our minds and transformation of character?

Can Godly character be created by a divine edict from God?

Christ was to suffer in our behalf, standing at the head of humanity as representative of the race. **He was to work out the character which every follower of His is to work out, through the provision He has made,**--His

infinite sacrifice, His life and death on earth. {The Gospel Herald, March 1, 1901 par. 4}

- A spotless character is as precious as the gold of Ophir. Without pure, unsullied virtue, none can ever rise to any honorable eminence. **But noble aspirations and the love of righteousness are not inherited. Character cannot be bought; it must be formed by stern efforts to resist temptation.** .. {Fundamentals of Christian Education 87.2}
- **The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Is a Christlike character necessary for salvation? Must we receive the mind of Christ? Must we experience the law written on the heart and mind? And is this another way of saying having the character of Christ reproduced within?

If Christlike character is a requirement for salvation, and character cannot be "bought" why do we say Christ died to purchase our salvation? What does this mean and what does it not mean?

It means it cost God/Christ dearly for Christ to become human and in His human brain overcome Satan and develop a

perfect human character! It means Christ paid a “high price” of personal sacrifice, suffering, humility, subordination, diminishment of being, loss of abilities, in order to become human and create the remedy for our sinful condition.

It does not mean that God’s government has a sin payment department and Christ shed His blood so in heaven a blood fine can be paid, collected, recorded and applied to a legal account of a sinner.

Jesus said the “blood” was to be applied into the believer, John 6. The price was the achievement of victory over sinfulness and restoration of God’s law/development of perfect character into humanity.

Read bottom paragraph, “We often...” thoughts? Do you consider helping others worship?

Have you ever heard, “Imitation is the greatest compliment?”

Then wouldn’t the greatest form of worship be to imitate Christ?

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ Matthew 24:34-40

Then where to religious rituals, ordinances, ceremonies come into worship?

- Hear the word of the LORD,
 you rulers of Sodom;
 listen to the law of our God,
 you people of Gomorrah!
- 11 “The multitude of your sacrifices—
 what are they to me?” says the LORD.
 “I have more than enough of burnt offerings,
 of rams and the fat of fattened animals;
 I have no pleasure
 in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.
- 12 When you come to appear before me,
 who has asked this of you,
 this trampling of my courts?
- 13 **Stop bringing meaningless offerings!**
 Your incense is detestable to me.
 New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—
 I cannot bear your evil assemblies.
- 14 Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts
 my soul hates.
 They have become a burden to me;
 I am weary of bearing them.
- 15 When you spread out your hands in prayer,
 I will hide my eyes from you;
 even if you offer many prayers,
 I will not listen.
 Your hands are full of blood;
- 16 wash and make yourselves clean.
 Take your evil deeds
 out of my sight!
 Stop doing wrong,
- 17 learn to do right!
**Seek justice,
 encourage the oppressed.
 Defend the cause of the fatherless,
 plead the case of the widow.**

18 **“Come now, let us reason together,”**
says the LORD.
“Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool. Isa 1:10-18

What was God tired of? Was it not religious rituals? What did He want? People to have character like His to love others more than self!

What about today? Do we still struggle with rituals over living like Christ?

TUESDAY

The morning and evening sacrifice – what was its purpose?

Were people saved by the blood of the animals sacrificed?

What was being symbolized by the shedding of the blood?

The lesson states, “Their faith was to grasp the promises of a Savior to come, the true Lamb of God who would spill His blood for the sins of the whole world.”

What does this mean? What is being cleansed by the blood?

The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, **cleanse our consciences** from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!... let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having **our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience...** Heb 10:13,14,22

Do we understand the morning and evening sacrifice related to the cleansing of sinners?

WENDESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Above the sacred ark..." thoughts

What is being represented by this symbolism?

What does the smoke represent? The prayers of the saints, and the incense represents what? The righteous character of Christ.

How does the righteous character of Christ get into the prayers of the saints? Is it added at the end when we say, "In Jesus name amen"?

But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour's promise is given on condition. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience. {DA 668.2}

So, how does the righteousness of Christ get into our prayers? Isn't by having Christ in the heart of the one praying?

Then where is Christ "interceding" with God to be patient and kind with us, or in our hearts to soften us to be like Him?

God's people, rescued from the fire by Jesus Christ, have a sense of their sin, feel humbled and ashamed. God sees and recognizes their repentance, and notes their sorrow for sin, which they cannot remove or cancel themselves. But as they pray their prayers are heard, and this is the reason that Satan stands by to resist Christ; because He hears their prayers, **He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. He regenerates**

the sinner, and pardon is written off against his name. This stirs Satan up to resistance. He steps in between the repenting, believing soul and Christ. He seeks to cast his hellish shadow before that soul, to dampen faith, and to make of none effect the words of God. . . . {UL 20.3}

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “A substantial...” thoughts? What do you think of the idea, “it was the place where Israel came to be forgiven and cleansed of sin...”

Was it the only place? Was it a required place? If one didn’t come to this place could one be forgiven and cleansed of sin?

Any examples of Jews forgiven and cleansed away from the sanctuary? What about the 70 years of captivity? Any forgiving and cleansing going on then?

Then was the sanctuary the place one went to get forgiven and cleansed of sin, or was it the place one went when one wanted to *symbolically act out* the process of getting forgiven and cleansed of sin? Is there a difference?

Read last paragraph, “An important point...” thoughts?

Who determines what is the truth? “Each person must be fully persuaded in his own mind.” Romans 14:5.

Does that mean anything goes or there are multiple truths? Or does it mean it does no good in the heart until an individual is convinced in his own mind of the truth?

What would you say are the core teaching points the sanctuary was designed to teach?

What is the key that helps us unlock the mysteries of the sanctuary service?

Jesus is the key – we look to Jesus first and His life and then understand the sanctuary, we err if we look to the sanctuary first and then try to make Jesus fit into our understanding of the sanctuary.

The significance of the Jewish economy is not yet fully comprehended. Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols. **The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries.** Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding. Far more than we do, it is our privilege to understand these wonderful themes. We are to comprehend the deep things of God. Angels desire to look into the truths that are revealed to the people who with contrite hearts are searching the word of God, and praying for greater lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the knowledge which He alone can give. {COL 133.1}

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions

Worship Lesson 5 3Q 2011

Happy Are You, Oh Israel!

SABBATH

Read memory text – Isa 5:20,21

Thoughts? To what is this referring? What, in general, would be the most heinous example of this? Would it not be attributing to God the character traits of Satan?

SUNDAY

Read last paragraph, “The tabernacle...” and then read green section.

Thoughts?

Do you think the Lord was happy with this entire situation?

Do you think God enjoys it when we fall on our faces cowering in fear before Him? Do you think this is what God wants from His creatures? Would you like your children to act this way with you?

When we look at the inspired record what do we find?

- Moses talks to God face to face as a man to a friend
- God speaks with Abraham face to face
- God came and met with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day – do you think before sin when this happened Adam and Eve fell on their face in fear? What do you imagine was the response to Adam and Eve to God’s approach before sin? Would this be more reflective of God’s ideal for our relationship with Him?
- What about in Revelation when it says the 24 elders fell on their face before the Lamb?
 - Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain,

standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and **the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb**. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.” Rev 5:6-10

○ Is this literal or symbolic?

- But Daniel chapter 7 has millions not on their face before the Ancient of Days
- What about the prophets who, when an angel would approach fell on their faces?
 - ⁵ “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.” ⁶ Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” Isa 6:5-7

What do we learn from this passage? What is Isaiah’s reaction to his experience? Fear, but why? Here is another example:

- ¹⁰ A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ He said, “Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he said this to me, I

stood up trembling.¹² Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. Daniel 10:10-12

What do you hear in this passage? Did the messenger from heaven want Daniel in fear, on his face? Then why fear?

- Aaron as well as the people shrank away from Moses, and "they were afraid to come nigh him." Seeing their confusion and terror, but ignorant of the cause, he urged them to come near. He held out to them the pledge of God's reconciliation, and assured them of His restored favor. They perceived in his voice nothing but love and entreaty, and at last one ventured to approach him. Too awed to speak, he silently pointed to the countenance of Moses, and then toward heaven. The great leader understood his meaning. In their conscious guilt, feeling themselves still under the divine displeasure, they could not endure the heavenly light, which, had they been obedient to God, would have filled them with joy. **There is fear in guilt. The soul that is free from sin will not wish to hide from the light of heaven.** {PP 329.5}

As soon as Adam and Eve sin they ran because they were afraid, fear, especially fear of God, is part of the infection of sin. Perfect love casts out fear. What does God want for us? Does He want to restore His perfect love in us? Then what will happen to fear? Does God want us afraid, cowering, falling down in terror?

When we come back into unity with God, through Jesus Christ, there is no fear of God, only complete trust and love.

Should we use the fear response that humans have after sin have toward God, specifically fear and falling down, and make that our ideal and promote it as God's desire for us? Did Adam

and Eve act this way when God approached them in the Garden before they sinned?

God is calling us back to a relationship where we really know Him and trust Him and love Him and in this relationship there is no fear. There is great admiration, awe, respect, love, adoration, and trust – but there is no fear because there is no reason to be afraid.

What should we legitimately be afraid of? Sin! We should fear sin, fear deviating from God’s design for life, fear our own selves, our own weakness, distrust and unhealthy habit patterns. But not God!

MONDAY

The lesson recounts how fire came out from the Lord and consumed the dedication sacrifice for the sanctuary. Then, how Nadab and Abihu took unauthorized fire in the sanctuary and fire came out from the Lord and consumed them.

The lesson then states, “It is hard to believe that after some things so dramatic, a terrible fall would immediately follow. One would have thought that with such a demonstration of God’s power, all the people, particularly the priests (especially priests as highly honored as these), would have fallen strictly in line.”

Thoughts?

Is it hard to believe? Look at the evidence of history:

- The flood – followed by... tower of Babel
- Sodom and Gomorrah – followed by... more hedonism
- The 10 Plagues of Egypt – followed by... golden calf
- Mt Carmel – followed by... more rebellion and eventual crucifixion of Christ

What does God want? What is He trying to accomplish? He is trying to restore love into the hearts of His creatures and can that be accomplished by power?

Zech 4:6, “Not by might nor by power but by the Spirit says the Lord.” Why?

Then why all the use of might and power? It was the only thing to which they would respond.

Read last paragraph, “The Hebrew wording in both...” thoughts?

What do you hear? Do you see the leap they made from the fire of God, to God’s wrath?

What does the evidence of Scripture actually reveal?

- What does the historic record of the gospels tell us about what Jesus experienced at the cross?
- Any record of fire raining down upon Him?
- What words did Jesus Himself speak? “Why are you burning me?”

If the lesson is true, then who does the lesson have as killing Christ? Did God kill Christ? One of the founders of our church saw it in a different light:

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. **He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God**, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last

link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

Who do you think murdered Christ, God our Father or Satan? How could Christians come to think that God killed Christ? They have accepted a false idea about God and His government and teach it to the people today.

Listen to this amazing quote from Prophets and Kings, Dennis Steele pointed this out to me last week:

“From the day the Lord declared to the serpent in Eden, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed" (Genesis 3:15), Satan has known that he can never hold absolute sway over the inhabitants of this world. 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. **During the long centuries that have followed, it has been his constant effort to intercept this communion. Untiringly has he sought to misrepresent God and to misinterpret the rites pointing to the Saviour,** and with a great majority of the members of the human family he has been successful.

“While **God has desired to teach men that from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself, the archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God as one who delights in their destruction.** Thus the sacrifices and the ordinances **designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God.**” PK 685.

According to one of the founders of our church, this idea that God’s wrath needed to be propitiated is a perversion of Satan. What do you think? Did God kill His Son in order to assuage or propitiate His wrath?

What about the fire?

- The fire consumed the dead animal sacrifice such that the matter that made up the animal was combusted into energy. What about the fire that “consumed” the sons of Aaron? Their bodies were not burned up nor even burnt as they were carried out still in their tunics.
- The lesson suggests we will never have to face the fire – what about Daniel chapter 7? What about Hebrews 12:29?
- What is the source of the fire? God and “to sin wherever it is found our God is a consuming fire.” What would have happened if God would have revealed Himself to Jesus on the Cross? Would Jesus have been consumed by the fire? What was Jesus longing for? What was He desiring? Was it not the presence of His Father?
- In fact, it was the hiding of God’s presence which was so tormenting and painful to Jesus and led to His death.
- This is exactly opposite of what the wicked in the end experience. They are consumed by the fire of God’s presence when God fully reveals Himself, “They are destroyed by the brightness of his coming.”

Satan has lied to us and gotten people to teach the place you don’t want to go and the place you don’t want to be is the place of eternal burning and it is God’s very presence in which the righteous dwell. See Isaiah 33:14,15.

Satan has lied to us and gotten people to believe God must kill in order to be just.

Satan has lied to us and gotten people to believe God killed His Son on the cross.

We are in a war – 2Cor10:3-5 over the trustworthiness of God Himself. Satan uses weapons of lies and distortion, God uses truth, love and freedom.

God is waiting for His people on earth to reject the lies, have the spirit temple cleansed and proclaim a clear message about Him to the world – then He will come.

Who will go? Are we to wait for pastors to do the work? Are we to wait for the church politic to do the work? If we want the message to go forward, each of us must begin to share it.

Our board is working on making materials to share. We have distributed over 100 of the DVD sets around the world to people who want to use them in their churches, schools, or to hold community seminars or in home study groups. I have brought some today for any in our class who would like to share with your friends and neighbors.

If any of our online class wants a set to use to minister in your community email us with your address and we will send you one.

Some might allege we are attacking the church – if you hear this, reject it. We are not attacking the church, we are attacking a distorted theology that has infected the church.

When Christ was on earth He did not attack the church of His day. He did attack the distorted ideas which obstructed people from seeing God. But when speaking to the woman at the well He told her salvation is of the Jews.

Likewise, we understand the important role the church has in preparing the world for Christ's return. But we also understand that we cannot complete our mission if we don't rid ourselves of the infection of false God constructs.

If a doctor pointed out the infection in a patient, is the doctor attacking the patient? No! He is attacking the infection to save the patient.

So don't get insecure if someone makes a false allegation that we are attacking the church – redirect them that we are

warring against “everything that sets itself up against the knowledge of God!” 2Cor 10:3-5.

TUESDAY

The lesson reminds us of the importance of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

What do you have to be thankful for? What would you like to praise God for?

- Who He is!
- What Jesus has done to bring us the truth!
- His methods, principles, government of love!
- His patience with us!
- The Bible and inspired writings!
- For our brothers and sisters who know and love God and the truth about God!
- Thankful for my wife
- Thankful that my mother’s health is improving
- Thankful for my family
- Thankful for the wisdom God has given me regarding the human mind and God’s methods that heal.

What are you thankful for?

WEDNESDAY

Read top paragraph, “Worship, in the Bible...” thoughts? What does it mean “personal taste”? Is worship of God supposed to be personal? What about personal taste? Is God offended when Handel writes the Messiah as worship? Or when Michael Angelo carves a sculpture in worship?

Does God want us to bring our personalities to bear in worship? Does He want us to bring our personal tastes into worship?

Where does personal taste cross the line and is no longer worship? Is it about personal taste, or is about heart attitude?

Does God want worship that is scripted and follows a rigid formula? Does God want to give a list of rituals and instructions on what to do and have us follow it precisely and call that worship?

What about the OT? Did God do this? But how did God respond when the people followed the script exactly? He chastised them in Isaiah and Amos and Micah. Why? Because their hearts were not in it. Yet, we find David writing songs, worshipping with his own personal style and David was a man after God's heart.

What is "true worship"?

Have you ever heard "Imitation is the greatest form of flattery"?

Would this be true worship – to imitate Christ?

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' ³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ MT 25:34-40

Would you consider this worship?

- Would going out to help victims of the tornado be worship?
- Would donating blood be worship?
- Would turning the other cheek be worship?
- Would giving of your time to help your neighbor be worship?
- Would laying down your life for a friend be worship?
- Would sharing the truth about God be worship?

Read third paragraph, “However much...” thoughts? Have you ever felt like God was a distant, far off, abstract being? Why does God seem distant and far off? Is He? Does God want to be distant and far off?

Does God keep His distance from us? Yes and no, He keeps His unveiled presence distant, but came close in Christ and the Holy Spirit. Why does God keep is unveiled presence from us?

THURSDAY

Read top dark section, “And Samuel...” the lesson draws three conclusions from this passage listed below, Read the three conclusions.

What do you think about these conclusions?

1. Is absolutely true – He wants our hearts – for what purpose?
2. Is absolutely true – depending on how you define obedience – what is obedience – humble willingness to listen
3. Were Abraham and Moses practicing idolatry when they

challenged the Lord?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "God has pronounced..." what does this mean?

Worship Lesson 6 3Q 2011

Worship and Song and Praise

SABBATH

What comes to mind when you think about the title of this week's lesson?

What songs have particularly blessed you over the years?

What about Amazing Grace? How many have been blessed by that song?

Amazing Grace was written by John Newton published in 1779. John Newton was a former slave ship captain, who had given up the belief in God, but during a severe storm in which the ship was in threat of capsizing he called out to the Lord. After that, he began to reflect on his life and wonder if it was possible for someone as sinful as he, not just a slave ship captain, but one who had rejected Christ and had mocked those who believe in him, to be saved.

He eventually taught himself Latin, Greek and theology and eventually became a minister. It was as a minister he wrote Amazing Grace.

Amazing Grace is purported to be the most famous Christian hymn, and reportedly to this day is performed more than 10 million times each year. It has appeared on top 10 charts for pop music on more than one occasion since 1960.

What is it about Amazing Grace that has made it so enduring and popular?

Read Memory Verse – Psalms 96:1 – thoughts?

What do you think the passage means by “a new song?”

Psalms 96 calls the world to praise God and give Him His rightful due – i.e. recognize Him for who He really is, creator, redeemer, source of righteousness, goodness.

Why do you think it means a new song?

Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. ³ And **they sang a new song** before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. **No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.** Rev 14:1-3

What is this new song they are singing? Why can only the 144,000 sing it?

Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire—so resplendent is it with the glory of God—are gathered the company that have “gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.” With the Lamb upon Mount Zion, “having the harps of God,” they stand, the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from among men; and there is heard, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of a great thunder, “the voice of harpers harping with their harps.” **And they sing “a new song” before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand.** It is the song of Moses and the Lamb—a **song of deliverance. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience—an experience such as no other company have ever had.** “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.” These, having been translated from the earth,

from among the living, are counted as “the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” Revelation 15:2, 3; 14:1-5.—GC 648, 649.

What is the new song? Then what is the old song? How do we learn to sing the new song? Would it require we have a new understanding, knowledge, experience with God?

Which song are we singing today?

What do you think about the Bible admonitions to shout?

In last week’s lesson, Lev 9:24 when the sacrifice was consumed the people “shouted for joy.”

Throughout the Old Testament when the Ark of the Lord was brought into the camp the people would shout with shouts of triumph.

Do we miss something when we don’t shout?

How did the people in France react when the allied troops entered the city to set it free? Did they shout? How did people all over the world react on V-E day? Was there shouting?

How do people react when their football team scores the winning goal in the final minute of the game?

When we see Christ coming in the clouds, the graves are opening, the sky is unfolding, angels are winging their way to and fro bringing saved ones to Christ, our mortal bodies are being transformed into immortal ones – will there be shouting? Or will people be going, “SHHHHUSSSH HHH BE REVERENT?”

Do we have anything to shout about? Why are we so “solemn” and reserved and afraid to shout? Do we fail to see the significance of what Christ has done for us?

Or are we too damaged by sin to react to what Christ has done? While the citizens in Europe shouted for joy when the allied troops entered their cities and set them free, the survivors of the concentration camps just stared blankly ahead, expressionless, solemn, quiet – were they reverent or just so damaged by abuse they couldn't react? Are we so damaged by spiritual abuse, being beaten up by ugly God concepts that we cannot react with joy?

Through the cunning devices of the enemy the minds of God's people seem to be incapable of comprehending and appropriating the promises of God. They seem to think that only the scantiest showers of grace are to fall upon the thirsty soul. The people of God have accustomed themselves to think that they must rely upon their own efforts, that little help is to be received from heaven; and **the result is that they have little light to communicate to other souls who are dying in error and darkness. The church has long been contented with little of the blessing of God;** they have not felt the need of reaching up to the exalted privileges purchased for them at infinite cost. Their spiritual strength has been feeble, **their experience of a dwarfed and crippled character, and they are disqualified for the work the Lord would have them to do. They are not able to present the great and glorious truths of God's Holy Word** that would convict and convert souls through the agency of the Holy Spirit. **The power of God awaits their demand and reception.** A harvest of joy will be reaped by those who sow the holy seeds of truth. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." {TM 174.2}

The world have received **the idea** from the attitude of the church **that God's people are indeed a joyless people, that the service of Christ is unattractive**, that the blessing of God is bestowed at severe cost to the receivers. By dwelling upon our trials, and making much of difficulties, **we misrepresent God and Jesus Christ**

whom He has sent; **for the path to heaven is made unattractive by the gloom that gathers about the soul of the believer**, and many turn in disappointment from the service of Christ. **But are those who thus present Christ believers? No**, for believers rely upon the divine promise, and the Holy Spirit is a comforter as well as a reprover. {TM 175.1}

Do we have the elation, relief, joy, happiness in the heart that comes with victory, freedom from oppression, experience of new love? Or are we so accustomed to Satan's view of God that we are joyless and beaten down in despair?

I have been to churches, who have in the service, a praise moment when people applaud, shout and give praise to God. The people look up toward heaven and send their shouts and praise to God. Would you be comfortable if we shouted? Why or why not?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "God chose Saul..." thoughts? What is the lesson? What matters to God? Is it abilities or character? What of a person has some defect in ability, dyslexia, blindness, paralysis, mental illness, is this what matters to God? Or does God look at the character, the heart? Can a person with disability still have a pure heart?

Can persons without apparent disability have a rebellious heart?

It is the heart attitude that matters, do we love God, do we want to do His will in our lives, do we love others, are we willing to learn and grow as God leads?

Read next paragraph, "David was..." thoughts? What do we learn from the life of David regarding qualification to serve God?

Did God know beforehand what David was going to do?
Assuming God did know, why didn't this disqualify David from serving God?

What about Noah? Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Aaron, Peter, you and me?

Is our fitness for God based on our perfection? No! None of us are perfect; our fitness for God's cause is based on our willingness, our heart attitude, our surrender to Him, not our performance per se. We may stumble, we may make mistakes, but if we remain humble, willing to learn from mistakes, willing to be corrected, reprovved, redirected, if we can unlearn things and are willing to give of ourselves for God and others, then we are useful in God's cause!

Notice, while David committed terrible sin, after the sin, while he initially compounded his sin by trying to cover it up and committing more sin, he eventually repented, learned from his mistake, experienced a change in heart and didn't treat people like that any more.

In other words, David was converted and transformed. He took the remedy and experienced a new heart and right spirit.

What about God's forgiveness? Did God withhold forgiveness from Saul? Was God unforgiving toward Saul? Was Saul forgiven?

Why did Saul not experience forgiveness?

MONDAY

Read top paragraph, "The sacrifices of God..." thoughts?

What does it mean the sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite heart? Does it mean this is what God wants rather than blood sacrifice?

Does it mean this is what was represented by the sacrifices on the altar? Does it mean the sacrifices were designed to lead us to a broken and contrite heart?

As we see the lamb slain, because of our sinful need, our hearts are broken – the sacrifice of Christ is “applied” to the broken and contrite heart, and the heart is renewed, the Holy Spirit burns within.

What about the sacrifice of Christ – was it for the purpose of procuring a broken and contrite heart in mankind?

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
 he was crushed for our iniquities;
 the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
 and **by his wounds we are healed**. ISA 53:5

What does this mean? Why was He pierced and crushed? To accomplish what? Our healing!

What does it mean to be healed? What does healing look like?

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Cor 5:21

Notice the reason He became sin, so we could become righteous – not so we could be declared righteous!

Read first two sentences of second paragraph, “As Christians, we take it as a given (or at least we should) that all of humanity is fallen, sinful, degraded. This degradation and sinfulness includes each one of us, individually.”

Thoughts? Do you agree? What does it mean?

- Is it our fault we are degraded and sinful?
- Are we guilty because we are this way?
- How did we become this way?

- When did we become this way?
- Does God hold us individually accountable because we are sinful?
- If we were born in this condition, not of our choosing what does God hold us accountable for? Does God hold us accountable for not accepting the remedy when it is available?
- Why? What does it mean to be “held accountable”?

The Lord God of heaven collected **all the riches of the universe**, and laid them down in order to purchase the pearl of lost humanity. The Father gave **all his divine resources** into the hands of Christ in **order that the richest blessings of heaven might be poured out upon a fallen race. God could not express greater love** than he has expressed in giving the Son of his bosom to this world. **This gift was given to man to convince him that God had left nothing undone that he could do**, that there is **nothing held in reserve**, but that all heaven has been poured out in one vast gift. The **present and eternal happiness of man consists in receiving God's love**, and in keeping God's commandments. Christ is our Redeemer. He is the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. He is the fountain in which **we may be washed and cleansed from all impurity**. He is the costly sacrifice that has been given for **the reconciliation of man**. The universe of heaven, the worlds unfallen, the fallen world, and the confederacy of evil cannot say that God could do more for the salvation of man than he has done. Never can his gift be surpassed, never can he display a richer depth of love. Calvary represents his crowning work. **It is man's part to respond to his great love, by appropriating the great salvation** the blessing of the Lord has made it possible for man to obtain. **We are to show our appreciation** of the wonderful gift of God **by becoming partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. **We are to show our gratitude to God by becoming a co-worker with Jesus Christ, by representing his character to the world.** In great mercy

the Lord has **rolled back the thick darkness from before his throne, that we may behold him as a God of love.**

{YI, October 17, 1895 par. 2}

What do you think of this passage? Do you agree or disagree? Why did Christ have to die? To reveal the Father's love and to restore man back into unity with God! What was needed to restore man back into unity with God? To reconcile man to God, not God to man!

Read last paragraph, "Yet, the joy..." thoughts? How about instead of credited to us by faith, "assimilated" by faith?

I found this sentence interesting, "Our worship should center not just on our own sinfulness but on God's amazing solution to it." Thoughts?

What are they trying to say? I honestly was a little confused.

WEDNESDAY

Read top Bible verse, "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Job 38:7).

Who are these stars and sons?

The stars are the angels of God and the sons are God's created beings, represented heads of the other unfallen worlds.

Biblical evidence for other worlds?

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. Heb 1:1,2

Evidence for the sons being heads of the worlds and stars being angels:

The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Rev 12:9

an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. ⁴ His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. Rev 12:3,4

the son of Enosh,
the son of Seth, the son of Adam,
the son of God. Luke 3:38

Adam was the “son of God” while all the other people in the Bible are the son of another human being. One could argue that the counsel in heaven was the representative heads of the worlds, the first beings created by God on each, and Satan comes from earth claiming a seat at the counsel as earth’s representative. God says, not so fast, Job doesn’t recognize you as his representative...

What was going on that caused the heavenly beings to shout?
What was happening in the universe?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “Over the years...” thoughts?

What determines whether music is appropriate for church or not? What determines whether music is “good” music or “bad” music?

Would the effect it has on the listeners be of any relevance in making that decision? If the music contributes to more irritability, unruliness, rebelliousness, hedonism, violence, ugliness, unkindness, vulgarity, crudeness etc. could we conclude such music is not appropriate?

How about if the music contains those things?

If the music leads to greater peace, calmness, thoughtfulness, enhances reason, comprehension, learning, and promotes themes of kindness, self sacrifice, giving, beneficence would such music be appropriate?

Is it primarily in the style or in the message?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Let the subject...” thoughts? What does this mean?

Could we simply say, “we cannot heal ourselves”?

Think of someone dying of a terminal disease, does any amount of confession, repentance, good works, help fix their terminal condition?

This is our situation, we are literally “dead” in our trespass and sin, not “legally under a death sentence” but in a condition which if unremedied is incompatible with life. No amount of confession, repentance, good works will cure our situation – only Jesus Christ can do that. He is our cure and only in a trust relationship with Him, in which we receive Him, partake of Him, experience unity with Him do we find healing for our condition.

Read and answer questions 1, 2

Worship Lesson 7 3Q 2011

Worship in the Psalms

What is your favorite Psalm and why?

Psalms 23? The psalm of the conversion experience?

What about Psalms 19? Let's examine it:

- How does the heavens reveal the glory of God?
- Why does the psalmist start out talking about creation and then talk about the law?
- What law is he talking about?
- What law makes us wise?
- Why does the law give strength?
- Why does happiness and wisdom come from the law?
- What does it mean no one can see his own errors?
- Does the law have any role here?
- Was the written law given to help us with this?

Romans 7:7-12

⁷ What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet."⁸ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.⁹ Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

Here is my paraphrase:

^{7:7} What shall we say then? Is the law evil and selfish because it increases the amount of evil and selfishness we see? Absolutely not! For I would not have known what evil and selfishness looks like if it wasn't for the diagnostic efficacy of the law. I would not have realized that coveting was evil and selfish if the law didn't say, "Don't covet."⁸ But selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the law is only a diagnostic instrument and not a remedy, magnified every covetous desire within me. For apart from the diagnostic ability of the law, sin is unrecognizable.⁹ Once I thought I was healthy and free from the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness, but then the commandment examined me, exposed how utterly infected I was and diagnosed me as terminal.¹⁰ I discovered that the very commandment given only to diagnose my condition, I had unwittingly attempted to use as a cure and thus my condition only worsened.¹¹ For selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the commandment could only diagnose and not cure, deceived me into thinking I could be cured by working to keep the commandments, but instead my terminal state only worsened.¹² So understand this, the law diagnoses perfectly, and the commandment is the standard of what is right and good, set apart by God, to reveal what is evil and destructive.

So the law helps us, diagnosis us, does the law cure us? What does?

- When the psalmist asks for deliverance over willful sins, what is he asking for?
- Is it not a change in character a new heart, a new motive a purified will?
- Where do we get a new character? Where in the universe does a perfect humanity exist? In Jesus Christ – we

- become partakers of the divine nature through our unity with Him.
- If you were a villain, and you wanted to destroy people, as many as possible, a good weapon might be a biological weapon, something like a virus that spreads to everyone.
 - And once they were all infected, if someone brought a remedy, what strategies would you employ to prevent as many as possible from partaking the remedy?
 - Misrepresent the one who brought the remedy so no one trusts Him to take what He offers
 - Offer counterfeit remedies
 - What about offer the idea that one needs to go to court and get oneself legally declared healthy?

Lets examine some sections of Psalms 22:

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from the words of my groaning?
- 6 But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by men and despised by the people.
- 7 All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults, shaking their heads:
- 8 “He trusts in the LORD;
let the LORD rescue him.
Let him deliver him,
since he delights in him.”
- 9 Yet you brought me out of the womb;
you made me trust in you
even at my mother’s breast.
- 10 From birth I was cast upon you;
from my mother’s womb you have been my God.
- 11 Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is no one to help.
- 12 Many bulls surround me;

- strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.
- 13 Roaring lions tearing their prey
open their mouths wide against me...
- 15 "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and I'm as dry as
an old piece of pottery. My tongue clings to my jaws.
You have brought me to the dust of death."
- 16 Dogs have surrounded me;
a band of evil men has encircled me,
they have pierced my hands and my feet...
- 18 They divide my garments among them
and cast lots for my clothing...
- 22 I will declare your name to my brothers;
in the congregation I will praise you.
- 24 For he has not despised or disdained
the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him
but has listened to his cry for help...
- 27 All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
will bow down before him,
- 28 for dominion belongs to the LORD
and he rules over the nations.
- 29 All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—
those who cannot keep themselves alive.
- 30 Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord.
- 31 They will proclaim his righteousness
to a people yet unborn—
for he has done it.

The Hebrew translated “encircled” actually means “crowned” and what is being said is that strong bulls, or bullheaded rebellious men have crowned me, a prophecy of the crown of thorns put on Christ’s head by the Roman soldiers.

"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and a reed in His hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews.'"

Psalm 22:15: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and I'm as dry as an old piece of pottery. My tongue clings to my jaws. You have brought me to the dust of death."

Crucifixion drains the body of fluids and literally dries one out. Remember Jesus' words, "I thirst."

They pierced "my hands and feet." Crucifixion was not yet a form of punishment when David wrote this, thus he was prophesying about the Messiah.

They gambled for His clothes.

And Jesus spoke the words of this Psalm, "Why have you forsaken me?"

But what is the ending of the Psalm? A future in which Christ will reign in love and righteousness and all will be united to Him. That is yet to come. How can we help bring that about?

What is God waiting for? Why hasn't Christ returned? What do you understand are the obstacles for the return of Christ?

- Gospel of the kingdom preached to the entire world – has this happened? What is the gospel of the kingdom? What kingdom? The kingdom of love – are we taking this gospel to the world?
- EGW says the final message of mercy to lighten the world for Christ's return is the truth about God's character of love. Is this the gospel – the good news about the King of

- the kingdom of love? Are we taking this message to the world?
- What stands in the way? 2 Cor 10:3-5 another view of God stands in the way and we are to stand up against it with the truth about God.

This week as I was preparing the lesson I received an email from one of our listeners. The listener was confused as to why I had so much difficulty with the Study Guide as they were familiar with the principle contributor and also had seen the lessons prior to their submission for publication in the Study Guide. Fortunately I was supplied with a copy of the author's original material before submission.

I want to give you a little example of the changes made by the editors. A few weeks ago Lesson five of Monday's lesson, we read:

The Hebrew wording in both Leviticus 9:24 and 10:2 was the same, "and fire came out from before the Lord and consumed" (9:24 NKJV). Consumed what? In the first case, the offering; in the other, the sinners. What a powerful representation of the plan of salvation. At the Cross, the "fire from God," the wrath of God, "consumed" the offering, and that was Jesus. Thus, all who put their faith in Him never have to face that fire, that wrath, because a substitute did it for them."

Here is what the principle contributor submitted for lesson five, Monday last paragraph:

According to vs. 21, 22, the entire congregation was in danger of being destroyed because of the rebellion of these men. Presumption breeds disobedience. Disobedience, not checked, develops into full-blown rebellion. **Rebellion self-destructs!** Moses pled with

both the congregation and the rebels. This was their opportunity, for, “Jesus, the Angel who went before the Hebrews, sought to save them from destruction.

Forgiveness was lingering for them.” Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs & Prophets*, (Mountain View, C.A.: Pacific Press, 1958) p. 401. (emphasis supplied) But they stubbornly persisted in their rebellion. God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, dared not allow them to live and continue their vicious work, which would have resulted in anarchy and an even greater loss of life.

Wow – are these the same thoughts? Are these the same conceptions of God? How can we finish our mission as a people when we don’t even present the truth about God’s character of love?

I asked Dean to do a digital analysis of the originals submitted by the principle contributor and what was actually published and assess what percent was changed.

Over 60% of the original manuscript was deleted and replaced by the editors.

I know personally two other principle contributors of the past, and both of them experienced the same thing, major changes to what they submitted.

One was so distraught that he created his own website to make available his originals, but he worked for the GC at the time and his boss ordered him to take it down.

Why is this happening? And does this have any relationship to what we have experienced here in Collegedale?

Historic Adventism valued freedom of thinking, promoted the principles of Romans 14, “let everyone be fully persuaded in

their own mind” and sought to practice the loving unity of the Apostolic church. Thus we see that EGW was a Trinitarian, while Uriah Smith and James White were Arian, but this disagreement on a major doctrinal issue, the divinity of Christ, did not disqualify any of them from leadership in the church. Why? Because they all valued the principles of God’s kingdom, truth, love and freedom, recognizing that each person must be persuaded in their own mind. As long as one realizes God is love, understands His law of love and is practicing the principles of love in their lives they can have variations on how they understand certain concepts, because they are willing to grow in truth as the Holy Spirit enlightens their minds.

Adventism historically is an open and tolerant church. Because of this history the SDA church is filled with many perspectives and beliefs and views and all have historically been accepted within a very large umbrella. But something seems to have changed.

Why do the editors delete gracious God concepts and insert punitive God concepts? Why don’t they allow a divergent view? Recently when our own local leadership had the Rainbow-Views on the Atonement, why wouldn’t they allow our views to be presented?

Is this part of a spiritual war over the nature and character of God?

Do we see this as part of the inevitable process of these two opposing views coming into more and more conflict as the world prepares to meet Christ?

When Satan comes to impersonate Christ what will separate the false from the true? Will it be the feet? Will it be the sound of the voice? Will it be the way he looks? Will it be the methods employed? What methods will the false Christ use? What

happens to those who won't receive the mark of the beast?
Coercion, imprisonment, death sentence.

What do some teach God will do to the wicked in the end?
Plagues to pressure, punish and coerce followed by torture
and imposition of a death penalty. This is the false god
concept. This is the idea Satan wants so deeply ingrained into
the mindset of people that when Satan comes claiming to be
Christ they will accept the use of such tactics and say, "This is
our god we have waited for him."

God is waiting for a people who will study for themselves, who
will think for themselves, who will not let another tell them
who God is, but as Hebrews says, will know God for
themselves, and then will take the final message of mercy, the
truth about God's character of love to the world!

Is it possible that the majority of Christians are, like the Jews
and Samaritans of Christ's day, eager, open and longing for
the truth about God as Jesus revealed, but there are many in
leadership that are stuck in another view? Thus when the
Study Guide uses the names of "principle contributors,"
misrepresents their views to teach a punitive god concept, they
are trying to make it appear that the majority of the church
sees God a certain way – when in fact, might the majority of
the church be longing for the truth as Jesus revealed?

MONDAY

Read last paragraph, "Here, too..." thoughts? What does
justice look like in God's government?

Some argue it looks like God, performing miracles, to keep
people alive in order to torture them as long as they deserve,
or some say eternally.

Hitler burned 6 million Jews in ovens in Nazi Germany, but had the decency to gas them first and we call him a monster. What kind of God do people promote when they teach God will burn people alive, and perform miracles to make sure they suffer. It is the grossest lie ever told about God and it is time we Christians stand up and reject it and call on our leaders to stop promoting it.

Top of TUESDAY's lesson we read, "All through the Bible, the Lord has warned about this exploitation of injustice. Those who are guilty of such exploitation, and who do not repent and turn away, will have a lot to answer for on Judgment Day."

Thoughts? What does this mean? How do we "answer" for it?

God has given in His word decisive evidence that **He will punish** the transgressors of His law. Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary. The death of the spotless Son of God testifies that "**the wages of sin is death,**" that **every violation of God's law must receive its just retribution.** Christ the sinless became sin for man. He bore the guilt of transgression, and **the hiding of His Father's face, until His heart was broken and His life crushed out.** All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed. **In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin.** And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgression. {GC 539.3}

God has given to men a **declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin.** "The Lord God, **merciful and gracious, long-suffering 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." Exodus 34:6, 7. "All the wicked will He destroy." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Psalm 145:20; 37:38. **The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.** {GC 541.2}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. **He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love.** He would have them obey Him because they have an **intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence.** And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and **even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited.** He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character. He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His

mercy. While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided. Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will? {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power **are not prepared to enter the presence of God.** Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become **fixed in their characters.** Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no;** years of probation were granted them, that they might **form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity;** they have never learned the language of heaven,

and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire.** They would long to flee from that holy place. **They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood **the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable.**
GC 542

What do you hear? Why do the wicked die? Is it because God inflicts death or because they are incurable, their condition is incompatible with life as God designed it to function?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The entire...” thoughts? What was the message of the sanctuary – sacrifice – what about reconciliation with God through sacrifice?

How does that work? Why was sacrifice needed? What was taught by the sacrifice? What happened after the animal was sacrifice? Where did the blood go? For what purpose?

The lesson rightly points out that it is a perversion to believe that sacrifices were designed to appease an angry god. Absolutely, then why do they in other places teach that God’s anger and wrath had to be appeased by the blood of His Son?

Read last paragraph, “The author’s...” thoughts?

What is true forgiveness?

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. {FLB 129.2}

What about the idea of moving away from symbols to reality – good idea? What about today? Do we struggle with any symbols today that impair our ability to embrace reality?

- Saved by the blood/washed in the blood
- Covered in the robe of righteousness
- Christ ministering in a heavenly sanctuary
- Prayers mingled with incense going to the Father

Others?

What is the reality behind these symbols?

THURSDAY

Why is it important we remember history?

We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history. 3 SM 162

Thoughts? What are we in danger of forgetting of our past? Could it be the openness, tolerance, freedom to think, mutual respect and love?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2

Lesson #8,

Conformity, Compromise, and Crises in Worship

Memory Verse: “But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their sense exercised to discern both good and evil.” Hebrews 5:14

I. Evil, Sabbath

What is sin or evil?

Romans 14:23 - “But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.”

How are we healed of evil? What might be included in the process?

Allowing God to heal us and following his prescriptions for the cure, which might include the following:

“Communion with God through prayer develops the mental and moral faculties, and the spiritual powers strengthen as we cultivate thoughts upon spiritual things.” {DA 70.4}

“He was wise to discern evil, and strong to resist it.” {DA 72.1}

What is true worship?

“True worship consists in working together with Christ. Prayers, exhortation, and talk are cheap fruits, which are frequently tied on; but fruits that are manifested in good works, in caring for the needy, the fatherless, and widows, are genuine fruits, and grow naturally upon a good tree.”—
The Review and Herald, August 16, 1881. {ChS 96.5}

What kind of worship does that sound like to you?

Other-centered love.

What was God’s plan for Israel?

“The children of Israel were to occupy all the territory which God appointed them. Those nations that rejected the worship and service of the true God were to be dispossessed. But it was God’s

purpose that by the revelation of His character through Israel men should be drawn unto Him. To all the world the gospel invitation was to be given. Through the teaching of the sacrificial service Christ was to be uplifted before the nations, and all who would look unto Him should live. All who, like Rahab the Canaanite, and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God, were to unite themselves with His chosen people. As the numbers of Israel increased they were to enlarge their borders, until their kingdom should embrace the world. {COL 290.1}

God desired to bring all peoples under His merciful rule. He desired that the earth should be filled with joy and peace. He created man for happiness, and He longs to fill human hearts with the peace of heaven. He desires that the families below shall be a symbol of the great family above.” {COL 290.2}

II. *In Different Eyes – Culture and Evil, Sunday*

What is the common denominator in the following texts?

Genesis 6:5 – “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 of the time.”

Jeremiah 17:5 – “This is what the Lord says: ‘Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord.’”

John 2:25 – “He did not need man’s testimony about man for he knew what was in man.”

Romans 3:9-12 – “What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that the Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written:

‘There is no one righteous, not even one;

There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, no not even one.

Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.

The poison of vipers is on their lips.

Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”

These texts seem to indicate that since the fall, man has become selfish and self-centered and this leads to self destruction. Damaged as we are by sin and our relationship or lack of one with God we may or may not see a lack of trust with God in some areas of our lives.

Some areas we have surrendered to God and allowed his Holy Spirit to begin healing us and other areas we may still be struggling to surrender so with that perspective how do we become conscious that we are embracing evil?

“God chose Israel to reveal His character to men. He desired them to be as wells of salvation in the world. To them were committed the oracles of heaven, the revelation of God’s will. In the early days of Israel the nations of the world, through corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God.” {AA 13.2}

So how do we learn about God’s character?

The word of God is the seed. Every seed has in itself a germinating principle. In it the life of the plant is enfolded. So there is life in God’s word. Christ says, “The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63. “He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life.” John 5:24. In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God. {COL 38.1}

III. *The Art (and Evil) of Compromise, Monday*

What does it mean to compromise?

Merriam - Webster:

- 1 a: settlement of differences by [arbitration](#) or by consent reached by mutual concessions
b: something [intermediate](#) between or blending qualities of two different things

Is it evil to compromise?

Of course not! How many of us would have arrived here without some compromise? How many of us have dealt with differences of desires or ways of doing things among friends or family where we have needed to compromise?

To be civilized and sociable as a member of a team we must all compromise in order that goals and objectives of society, the group, or the team are met. As long as it does not lead us to violate or misrepresent the character of God then compromise can be an important part of life.

So evil and compromise are related only in what it is that we are willing to compromise; not just in the process of compromise.

Assumption for the next question: Assuming we wish to have God's character and thus are willing to have Him heal us and we desire to live out his character because we see He is gracious, loving, kind, intelligent.

Why or what would lead us to compromise in allowing God to heal and change us and thus fail to reflect his character or ultimately even reject God?

How about fear and believing Satan's lies about God? What about failure to trust God and what He says and what He is like.

The lesson provides us a scriptural example

1 Kings 11:1-13 – ¹ King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. ² They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. ⁴ As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. ⁵ He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁶ So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

⁷ On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁸ He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

⁹ The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰ Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. ¹¹ So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of

your subordinates. ¹² Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³ Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.”

Why would God forbid Israel to follow these Gods?

I am not a psychologist so I am stepping out on a limb here and willing to be corrected; however, I have heard it stated that the highest forms of abuse a human can suffer psychologically are either sexual or religious abuse. The only form of abuse more damaging is when both sexual and religious abuse take place simultaneously.

Who were these Gods? Who was Ashtoreth?

Goddess who was derived from god Ishtar, the morning and evening star, who originated from Babylon. Ashtoreth took on the evening star form of Ishtar, or the moon depending on the group who worshipped her. The goddess also took on the feminine form of Ishtar and became the goddess of fertility, sexuality, and war. The goddess was also considered the consort of Baal who was considered male. Thus, for those who worshipped her she was the god of creation, reproduction, and successful conquest.

Who was Molek?

A god whose name means the king and required human sacrifices in the form of children placed who were place in the white hot brass arms of this idol which was heated internally. Incense was used in the service to disguise the burning flesh and drums were beaten to drown out the screams of the children.

Who was Chemosh?

A god variation of either Ashtar the male form of Ashtoreth, or Baal. Human sacrifices were part of the rites in order to secure his favor.

Who was Baal?

God of rain, fertility, and agriculture. Name means lord or master. Demonic lord of the flies if considered as part of Baal zebub. Baal did not acknowledge death. Worship included human sacrifice and prostitution.

IV. *Counterfeit Worship, Tuesday*

In 1 Kings 11 and 12 we have the dramatic story of the end of Solomon's reign and the upheaval of political change that took place after his death. We find through the story that Solomon's pagan wives lead him into pagan worship and though God appeared twice to him to counsel him he did not for a time follow God's counsel.

The results were that God's Spirit was grieved and his restraining power was removed so that enemies harassed Solomon's kingdom. God attempted to discipline Solomon so that he might reopen communication with him and Israel. He wanted to restore their friendship as well as warn and save Solomon and Israel from sin's terrible consequence should they persist in the direction they were headed. As part of that process God shared with Solomon that his kingdom was to be divided. We know that God was able to reach Solomon and communication and friendship was re-established because Solomon eventually did turn back to God. In this story, God's love, grace, and desire to heal are demonstrated in asking Solomon, who had gone from the pinnacle of wisdom and wealth to ultimate depravity, to write the wonderful book of Ecclesiastes to be included in the Bible.

Within the context of reconnecting, Jeroboam was a leader of the labor for the descendants of Joseph under Solomon's rule. Ahijah the prophet meets him going out of Jerusalem and shares with him that God intends to have him rule over ten of the twelve tribes. He apparently rebelled enough to come to Solomon's attention and runs to Egypt to save his life. He returns after Solomon's death and arrives in time for Rehoboam's coronation. During that time the people ask Rehoboam if he was going to make their lives miserable like his father did, or if he was going to ease up. Rehoboam decides he will make their lives even more difficult. As a consequence the people rebelled and killed Adoniram who is in charge of forced labor. Rehoboam escapes to Jerusalem and the ten tribes make Jeroboam king over them instead of Rehoboam.

Rehoboam feared he would lose power and influence over the people if they continued to go to Jerusalem to worship God. So he established new order of worship in that he created two golden calves, established a non-Levitical order of priests, established alternate festivals, developed new sacrificial times, placed locations of the religious services up in the pagan groves, and created new centers of worship in Dan and Bethel, north of Jerusalem.

What is idolatry?

Definition:

1. The worship of idols, images, or anything made by hands, or which is not God.

Idolatry is of two kinds; the worship of images, statues, pictures, &c. made by hands; and the worship of the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon and stars, or of demons, angels, men and animals.

2. Excessive attachment or veneration for anything, or that which borders on adoration.

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary 1828 – retrieved from University of Chicago Department of Romance Languages and Literature ARTFL Project website on August 3, 2011. .

<http://machaut.uchicago.edu/?action=search&word=idolatry&resource=Webster%27s&quicksearch=on>

What was wrong with the new system of worship that Rehoboam established and were they worshipping God?

Their worship certainly doesn't seem to be one that admired God and his character of other-centered love. It seems to have been motivated out of fear, selfishness, and distrust of God.

I am sure that for those who were unsure about worshipping golden calves, Rehoboam assured them that these were just mere representatives of the invisible true God.

Is there a problem with that line of thinking? If so, why is it a problem?

If one looks at the results of this form of worship we see Israel leaving the worship of the true God and worshipping severe, revengeful, arbitrary, and destructive deities and demons. As they worshipped these deities they took up their characters and became like them.

- 2 Corinthians 3:18 - "18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate[a] the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

Did Rehoboam's worship advocate examining the evidences of God's character of love?

It appears that this worship was based solely on the emotional and imaginative experience of the participants, an experience that might be more exciting and interesting than that found in Jerusalem.

Certainly, God wants those who worship to enjoy good emotions. Have we not felt excitement, peace, and love for God as we learn the truth about His character? Just as the two travelers to Emmaus who exclaimed "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" - Luke 24:32. We are, after all, emotional beings;

however, if emotion alone dictates what or who we worship then we may be misled to worship a false picture of God.

V. Elijah and the Prophets of Baal, Wednesday

1 Kings 17-19 we have the showdown between the gods. Here God challenges the Israelites' preferred god, Baal, as to his true divinity and power in an attempt to win those who worship Baal back to trust in Himself, the true creator and God of the universe. Baal a deity who controls thunder, lightning, storms, and rain is shown to have lost his touch over three years. During this period of time Israel is allowed to contemplate who truly is interested in their prosperity and well being and who has ultimate control of nature.

The three years of drought come to a close and Elijah extends an invitation to Ahab and his 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Ashtoreth to a challenge between God and Baal in an ultimate showdown between who is the true God. The challenge is centered on Baal's preferred strengths and his ability to control lightning. God even allows his contender to go first and to take the majority of the day to prove his abilities and truthfulness.

Baal's prophets urge their god to act with the most barbaric and torturous of acts by cutting themselves until blood flowed profusely in vain attempts to reach the attention of their god so he would act on their behalf, but he does not answer as requested.

As the quiet of the evening began to settle on the mountain top Elijah rebuilds the alter, places the wood and pieces of bull on it, digs a trench, and drenches the sacrifice with water three times until there is not even a remote chance a fire can be kindled to light the sacrifice. Then he prays a simple prayer asking God to demonstrate the truth about himself as the creator and sustainer of life. God answers with a bolt of fire that consumes the sacrifice and alter.

The prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth are shown to have been counterfeits. Elijah rounds up the prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth, and then they are killed in the valley below. Elijah returns to the mountain top then prays seven more times and the drought is broken as rain sweeps over the country and Elijah runs to lead Ahab home.

How can we compare and contrast how we worship with who we worship? In other words, in which direction is there progression in worship? Is it more important how we worship in order to receive and encourage Gods favor and love? Or is who we worship more important and the effect of who we worship influences our love and how we worship?

If we contemplate the finer points of God's character, which include:

- His respect of us even as sinners and rebels
- His care
- His numerous and ongoing attempts to re-establish friendship with us
- His desire that we are informed about how to best live within the design parameters of His universe
- His willingness to heal us and accept us back into His family
- His determination throughout the Great Controversy to see that true freedom is maintained for his created beings
- His willingness to be challenged and have open dialog with all His creatures
- His willingness to demonstrate the consequences of sin by His dying the second death
- His humility in being willing to become eternally like his created beings
- His kind treatment of His most ardent enemies
- His willingness to meet us where we are even though His actions may be misunderstood for a time
- Etc.

Then doesn't the admiration and love that springs from knowing a God who is like this naturally create a desire to offer Him respectful, reverential, joyful, and loving worship in whatever way our particular culture and background suggests is appropriate?

Think of a figure that you highly esteemed and met. Share with us your experience and how you acted and responded in their presence.

As a child I had the opportunity to meet the then President of the United States as he visited family in my small home town. I remember Marine One flying in and his walking along the short drive from the airport to the highway greeting those who had come to see and hopefully shake his hand to welcome him to our community. I remember him shaking my hand and the thrill of that moment. I certainly didn't want to embarrass myself or act crudely, it wasn't even on my mind, I was just intent on seeing and meeting him.

How do we act in the presence of someone we really love, admire, respect, and want to know better?

Are we not in reverence and awe? Yet, will we not in the presence of such a gracious Being be open, happy, joyous and wish to tell him how much we love and respect him? Will we not seek to know Him even more deeply?

“The incense of true worship, which should have been offered to God, has been mingled with the worship of self. In the place of lifting their thoughts to God, in the place of learning to know Him

better, men deny Him in their lives. Their attention is taken up with objects that conceal God from their view.“ {9MR 386.1}

“ Thus it is with the great majority of religionists. God calls for sincere heart-worship. The door to light and an intelligent knowledge of the truth is open to every sincere worker for God. In order for worship to be acceptable, it must be offered in faith and hope, and the life must be in harmony with it. God requires the devotion of heart, mind, soul, and strength. Our noblest powers are to be used to do Him homage. Our thoughts are to be conformed to His will; our affections sanctified to His service”.--Letter 143, 1904, pp. 3,4. (To Marian Davis, April 28, 1904.)

Does worship take place only in a church and at a given time on Sabbath morning?

“The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten.” It was to keep His truth ever before the minds of men that God instituted the Sabbath in Eden; and so long as the fact that he is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship him, so long the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial. Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man's thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel. The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to the true God, "him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." It follows that the message which commands men to worship God and keep His commandments, will especially call upon them to keep the fourth commandment.” {GC88 437.2}

VI. *The Elijah Message, Thursday*

Malachi 3:13-18 - ¹³(^{AB}) "Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. (^{AC}) But you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' ¹⁴You have said, (^{AD}) 'It is vain to serve God. (^{AE}) What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? ¹⁵And now we call (^{AF}) the arrogant blessed. (^{AG}) Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.'"

¹⁶"Then those who feared the LORD (^{AH}) spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and (^{AI}) a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name. ¹⁷"They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, (^{AJ}) in the day when I make up (^{AK}) my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. ¹⁸Then once more you shall (^{AL}) see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him."

What can we take away from the Mount Carmel experience and will this play out again?

As in the Mount Carmel experience, a showdown between the True God and the false god Satan will take place again at the end of time. In Revelation we see glimpses of the Mount Carmel story and we too will choose one way or the other in whom we believe. However, the fire this time will come from the false god. Here it seems miracles and displays of power are not with who has the truth.

Revelation 13:13, 14 – “13 And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. 14 Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.”

Revelation 16:16-21 – “16 Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. 17 The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, “It is done!” 18 Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. 19 The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. 20 Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. 21 From the sky huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds,[a] fell on people. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.”

So how can we know who the true God is?

The one who has not just made claims or used a show of power, but who has demonstrated his character over many various circumstances, is the true God. We will only know the true God as we seek to understand and believe the evidence we have available to us.

The one who lies can only make claims and deceive with the power he is allowed to use. The truth is not with him and in a way the evidence of his character will also be demonstrated by how he has interacted with the beings of the universe.

What will be the distinction between those who serve God and those who choose Satan and the picture of God he has presented?

For those who have believed God based on the evidence he has provided and who have asked him to heal them they will reflect and radiate his character. Those who have believed Satan's lies will reflect Satan and his character since they have rejected God's offer of healing.

What is the last day Elijah message?

Mark 16:15 – “15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

Revelation 14:6 – “6 Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people.

What is the good news and message?

God has demonstrated with evidence he is not who his accuser has made him out to be. He loves all his created beings. He is not severe, arbitrary, revengeful, and unforgiving. He has become one with the human race by becoming one of us for all eternity, and He died to show us the truth about the consequences of sin. He offers to heal us from sin and make us right again to spend all eternity enjoying and developing a friendship with Him.

Harmegeddon – the stand off between the unholy trinity and the holy trinity. Satan this time will be using the miracles and God will not.

Paulien, Jon. (2008). *Armageddon at the Door*. Hagerstown, Maryland. Autumn House Publishing.

VII. Further Study, Friday

Worship Lesson 9 3Q 2011

Trust Not in Deceptive Words: The Prophets and Worship

SABBATH

Read Memory text, Isaiah 44:7 – thoughts?

How good are we at predicting the future? How many of you have tried to prophecy the future?

- How many of you create imaginary scenarios in your mind about what the future will hold and then begin worrying about it?
 - There is no use in applying for that job, I will never get it...
 - I will be alone forever, I will never find someone to love me...
 - I will never find a career, I'll never get ahead...
 - My ex husband is going to take my kids from me...
 - My son is going to get deployed to Iraq and...
 - If I bow down to the idol I will die in a fiery furnace.
 - If I pay tithe I won't have enough money to pay bills.

Do we try and prophecy? How good are we at predicting the future? How much suffering, worry, distress do we experience because we don't realize we cannot predict the future?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Unlike every other religion..." thoughts?

What does it mean to be accepted by God? What does it take to be accepted by God? Why doesn't God accept us as we are?

Sin has caused a gap in our connection with God, why can our works not bridge it? Where does the "gap" actually exist, in man or in God? In other words, where is the defect that causes

the break in our relationship with God – is the defect in God or man?

Then, whatever the plan of salvation is designed to do, if the defect, which causes the break in our relationship with God, is not in God, is there any element of the plan of salvation that must to be applied to fix God? No! The entire Godhead are working in complete unity for the restoration and fixing of the brokenness in mankind to restore us into unity with Them and to eradicate sin from the universe.

What does “atone for sin” mean? Why can good works not “atone for sin?”

If we say “atone for sin” means to pay a legal penalty to God or the law, then where have we just suggested the problem is? Where does such a description place the application of the remedy?

Read second paragraph – thoughts? There is much good in this paragraph, particularly the idea that sin caused a problem that leads to death and only the death of Christ could solve that problem. Very nicely said. Much different that sin caused a legal problem that resulted in the Father standing as an executioner over His children and the death of Christ was designed to appease (fix) the Father’s wrath and anger.

Thus, Micah, the prophet we are studying in today’s lesson, makes it clear the Father doesn’t need any sacrifice, we need to have a change in heart, character to be back in unity with God’s design.

Micah 6:6-8:

With what shall I come before the LORD
 and bow down before the exalted God?
 Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
 with calves a year old?
 7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,

with ten thousand rivers of oil?
 Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
 the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
 8 He has showed you, O man, what is good.
 And what does the LORD require of you?
 To act justly and to love mercy
 and to walk humbly with your God.

Thoughts?

Read first sentence green section, “What do you think is more important: correct theology or correct actions?” Thoughts?

What about those with humble, loving hearts who worship on Sunday? Or those Sabbath keepers who wanted Christ down by sunset?

Read first sentence of last paragraph, “Those who claim to be children of God but who fail to show justice and mercy to their fellow men are acting out the spirit of Satan no matter how piously they may adhere to the forms of worship.” – thoughts?

This is also well said, - question – what is Bible justice?

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.** Through Christ, **Justice is enabled to forgive** without sacrificing one jot of its exalted holiness. {7BC 935.15}

Justice and Mercy stood apart, in opposition to each other, separated by a wide gulf. The Lord our Redeemer clothed His divinity with humanity, and **wrought out in behalf of man a character that was without spot or blemish.** He planted His cross midway between heaven and earth, and made it the object of attraction which reached both ways, drawing both Justice and Mercy across the gulf. Justice moved from its exalted throne,

and with all the armies of heaven approached the cross. There it saw One equal with God **bearing the penalty for all injustice and sin. With perfect satisfaction Justice bowed in reverence at the cross, saying, It is enough** (MS 94, 1899). {7BC 936.1}

Thoughts? What do you hear, what does it mean? What is God's justice?

Why is mercy the power to punish sin?

- Why is medical mercy the power to punish disease? To patient ravaged by cancer the doctor administers a remedy which punishes and destroys cancer – is this merciful? Could the mercy be expressed without the power to punish and destroy the cancer? Is punishing the cancer the same as punishing the patient?
- And thus a doctor who effectively and totally, attacks, punishes and destroys cancer will draw thousands of patients to him. Likewise, God's mercy, which is the power to punish and destroy sin, when rightly seen and understood is "the power to draw to it the love of humanity."
- But what if an enemy of the doctor started telling people that the doctor hates cancer so bad, if he ever finds even one cancerous cell in a patient his anger and rage and wrath will be felt full force by the cancer patient? Would you want to go to that doctor?
- Can a doctor heal a patient outside the laws of health? Then what does the law of health "require" if a doctor is going to heal a patient? "perfect" compliance with the law? Could we say that health "justice" requires perfect obedience to the laws of health?

What is the penalty of injustice, i.e. violations of the law, both physically and morally? How did Christ bear it?

What is sin? Lawlessness, transgression of the law, what law? The law of love, which is the law of life, which results in what? Death, how did Christ bear this? When?

Why was "justice" satisfied with what Christ achieved? What does the law of health require in order to heal, in order for justice to be fulfilled? And what does the law of righteousness require?

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have **remission of sins** that are past, through the **forbearance of God.** More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. **He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10. {DA 762.3}

As we have taken our time to slowly think through the meaning of the quotations just read, does it become clear what was necessary for our salvation and what God's justice and mercy are?

Do you ever wonder why prophets don't always say things clearly?

Was David a prophet of God? Consider the implications of the following:

The psalmist David in his experience had many changes of mind. At times, as he obtained views of God's will and ways, he was highly exalted. **Then as he caught sight of the reverse of God's mercy and changeless love, everything seemed to be shrouded in a cloud of darkness.** But through the darkness he obtained a view of the attributes of God, which gave him confidence and strengthened his faith. But when he meditated upon the difficulties and danger of life, they looked so forbidding that he thought himself abandoned by God because of his sins. He viewed his sin in such a strong light that he exclaimed, "Will the Lord cast off for ever? will he be favorable no more?" {3BC 1149.2}

But as he wept and prayed, **he obtained a clearer view of the character and attributes of God**, being educated by heavenly agencies, and he decided that his **ideas of God's justice and severity were exaggerated.** He rejected his impressions as being the result of his weakness, ignorance, and physical infirmities, and as dishonoring to God, and with renewed faith he exclaimed, "This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." {3BC 1149.3}

What implications from this passage? First, do you believe it is true, did David have various changes in perspective to God and divine things? What implication does this have when we read prophetic writings? Are all prophetic writings equally as clear and accurate regarding God's character?

What does it mean that we grow and develop our understanding?

What if we don't? What if we instead find ourselves going backward, reversing our gains and instead, cling to 500 year old theology?

This is a problem for our church today. Our church today is stubbornly clinging to theology that is 500 years old, rather than advancing in the truth. God is waiting for a people who will march forward in understanding, who will think for themselves, who will love the truth and embrace the truth rather than refuse to move forward with new insights into the reality of God and what He accomplished for us through Christ.

MONDAY

Read Isaiah 6:1-6 – then read third paragraph, “Try to imagine...” thoughts?

What did Isaiah see? Why did he react the way he did? The lesson uses the language, “Suddenly, he sees his own sins and the sins of his people...”

Where did he see this? Who is the accuser of the brethren? When we get true glimpses of God is He standing there with a list of sins with which to accuse us? When God approached Adam in Eden did Adam become acutely aware of his sinfulness? Yes, was God pointing it out to Him? From where did Adam’s awareness of his sinfulness arise?

God is the source of truth and love, in His presence we are unable to avoid the truth of our own condition. It is by contrast that we become aware of our deficiency, it is not because God stands with a list to point it out to us.

The lives of the righteous, by contrast, will bring conviction to the wicked, this is why teens doing drugs pick on, criticize and degrade the “goody too shoes” who wont.

It is sinfulness in our own hearts, characters and minds that bring fear and insecurity and uneasiness and dissatisfaction with self and causes us to feel unworthy. But, notice God’s response, God’s attitude – what did He say to Adam? Did He

condemn Adam? What does the angel say to Isaiah? What did Jesus say to the woman caught in adultery?

God does not condemn, criticize, point out our defects to hurt, humiliate or embarrass us. God searches us for defects exactly like a good doctor will search his patient for disease, never to embarrass, criticize, mock or punish, but to heal and cure!

We may “feel” insecure and unworthy as we approach God, as we get a greater sense of our defects, our need, but as we see God’s true character as revealed in Christ, the greater our awareness of our defects, then the greater our confidence in God’s desire for us to come to Him – because He is longing to heal!

Read last paragraph, “Think for a moment...” wouldn’t it be great to experience, in worship the presence of God? Why do we often not experience this?

What kind of response would we elicit from the worshippers if the worship service has been hijacked by a false god concept?

Does our modern church service have its roots in the Bible or paganism?

- Is the separation of ordained clergy from the laity Biblical or pagan? What does this idea suggest about God?
- What was the setting and “liturgy” of the New Testament church?
 - They met in homes – what was the atmosphere connoted by fellowshiping in homes? Would it generate eye to eye contact, fellowship, interaction, honest heart to heart communication, sharing and caring?
 - What about the setting of churches with pews bolted to the floor all facing forward, with tradition pressuring no eye contact, no talking, no sharing, no fellowship, but quietness, receiving a lecture,

without opportunity for discussion and interaction?
 What message is sent?

- Does it connote a authoritarian hierarchy?
 - Is this concept Biblical or pagan?
 - What did Satan allege about God?
 - What did Jesus say He wanted in regard to relationship with Him?
 - How did Jesus speak to the crowds?
 - Did He allow questions and discussion and dialogue?
- What about the church building? Do we ever get the idea that the church building is holy and say things like, this is God's sanctuary, where God dwells, we must be reverent in the sanctuary?
 - Is this idea Biblical or pagan?
 - According to the Bible what is God's sanctuary? Where does God dwell?
 - The OT sanctuary, where God dwelt, was a theater to act out a larger reality. God's presence in that sanctuary was to teach is desire to dwell somewhere else – where? Was it in buildings made by human hands?
 - When you hear “the church” do you think building or people? Which is the holy sanctuary where God dwells?
 - What impact does it have on our understanding of God to shift the idea of the church from the community of believers to a building?

Read green section- thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “It is easy...” thoughts?

Why was it necessary for prophets to speak this way to the people who had been given the written word of God and the little theater of the sanctuary? What about the church today?

Are we any better than they were? Do we understand God and His methods better than the pagans?

The lesson diagnoses correctly the problem, that the children of Israel were doing the rituals without thinking and that God called them to think through the meaning and to treat others with love, i.e. live God's law of love!

Read third paragraph, "But that is not..." well said.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, "However much..." thoughts? Why is God alone worthy?

How do we know God alone is worthy? Do we know because God said it, or because God showed it? How did God show it?

What does the death of Christ reveal regarding God's worthiness of our worship?

THURSDAY

Read last two paragraphs, "Look especially..." thoughts?

They had more light than their pagan neighbors. No doubt God had provided much more light, then how do we explain the Roman Centurion that Christ said had more faith than all in Israel?

What happened that the children of Israel failed to be blessed by the Temple and its service? They failed to understand the meaning of the symbols.

What about today? Do we as a people make the same mistake? Have we failed to understand the reality of the heavenly sanctuary?

I believe in a literal, physical temple in heaven, now let me ask you. If you use only inspired sources, out of what is the temple in heaven built?

- Paul says, “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's HOUSE [sanctuary/temple], built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building [sanctuary/temple] is joined together and rises to become a HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord. And in him YOU too [you all] are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22.
- And Peter says, “As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- YOU also, like LIVING STONES [building blocks of the Temple], are being built into a SPIRITUAL HOUSE [Temple] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet 2:4,5.
- And Paul says, “For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building [Temple]...Don't you know that you yourselves [the church] are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you [you all] are that temple.” 1 Cor 3:9,16,17.
- Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. Revelation 3:12
- The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made

with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use. {3MR 231.3}

Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}

- In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that **every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God.** Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. **But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose**

of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the **heart of man becomes again His temple.** God designed that the **temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul.** But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, **represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts.** In **cleansing the temple** from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to **cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,**--from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Malachi 3:1-3. {DA 161.1}

In the building of the sanctuary as a dwelling place for God, Moses was directed to make all things according to the **pattern of things in the heavens.** God called him into the mount, and revealed to him the heavenly things, and in their similitude the tabernacle, with all that pertained to it, was fashioned. {Ed 35.2}

So to Israel, whom He desired to make His dwelling place, **He revealed His glorious ideal of character.** The pattern was shown them in the mount when the law was given from Sinai and when God passed by before Moses and proclaimed, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Exodus 34:6... {Ed 35.3}

Through Christ was to be fulfilled the purpose of which the tabernacle was a symbol--that glorious building, its walls of glistening gold reflecting in rainbow hues the curtains inwrought with cherubim, the fragrance of ever-burning incense pervading all, the priests robed in spotless white, and in the deep mystery of the inner place, above the mercy seat, between the figures of the bowed, worshiping angels, the glory of the Holiest. **In all, God desired His people to read His purpose for the human soul.** It was the same purpose long afterward set forth by the apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit: {Ed 36.2}

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. {Ed 36.3}

There is a real, physical, material temple in heaven which Christ ministers and it is constructed out of intelligent beings. This is the temple in which Satan wanted to sit enthroned. Satan didn't want to sit in an empty temple building made out of inanimate material. He wanted to sit enthroned in the heart/mind temple of intelligent beings as the one most loved and adored. Thus the warfare we fight is a spiritual warfare over the knowledge of God and Christ came to restore in man God's law and character, to dwell again in the temple He designed without human hands!

FRIDAY

Read top two paragraphs, "In Isaiah's day..." thoughts?

Read and discuss questions 2-4.

Worship Lesson 10 3Q 2011

Worship: From Exile to Restoration

Read memory text – Haggai 1:6 – thoughts? What is the message? Is there any application for today?

Could this be reminding us not to put our energy into things that don't matter, into things that pass and fade, into things that are only about getting ahead on earth, but bring no eternal benefit?

What does it matter to gain the entire world and lose your soul?

How do we find ourselves seduced into investing into what does not matter?

What is the difference between investing in what doesn't matter and dealing with the realities of day-to-day living, food, shelter, clothing?

Read first two paragraphs, "It is very hard..." thoughts?

What was the problem they had with the Temple? Did the Temple in Jerusalem have any ability to save sinners? Was the Temple in Jerusalem the literal reality of God's kingdom, or merely a God inspired theater, lesson book, to help them learn the true reality for which it stood?

What did Jesus say or do to try and help them shift their thinking about the temple?

- Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up – designed to teach what?
- I am the bread of heaven – designed to teach what?
- Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood – designed to teach what?

- You will neither worship on this mountain nor at the Temple but in spirit and truth – designed to teach what?
- Cleansed the temple from buyers and sellers – designed to teach what?

What was the problem the Jews had with the Temple?

Do we have a similar problem when it comes to the heavenly sanctuary?

Why was the Temple in Jerusalem destroyed, twice? What caused this to happen, what led to its destruction?

Did God destroy it? Did it happen as an object lesson? What is the object lesson?

What does the Temple at Jerusalem symbolize?

- In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that **every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God...God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul.** DA 161

So, the temple is a symbolic representation of the human soul – why did the temple in Jerusalem get destroyed twice?

Because the people did what?

- But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, **represented all too truly the**

temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In **cleansing the temple** from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to **cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin**,--from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul.{DA 161.1}

Why did the temple at Jerusalem get destroyed? What does it symbolize? The destruction of the actual temple of the human soul – and why will the human soul get destroyed? What happens to the human soul if Christ is forbidden from cleansing it?

Who destroyed the temple at Jerusalem? Does this give us any insight as to the source of the destruction of the human soul?

Many argue for God to be the destroyer – Did God destroy the temple at Jerusalem? Why did it happen? Because God no longer intervened to stop the armies Satan from destroying Jerusalem – what is the lesson?

Sin destroys, sin unremedied results in death (Romans 6:23, James 1:15).

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Apostasy...” thoughts?

Apostasy doesn't happen over night, it is a gradual slow process. But, are they suggesting that less rigidity leads to apostasy? What does inspiration and history tell us regarding rigidity and apostasy?

Were the Jews in the OT given a rigid set of guidelines to abide by? What happened to them? Did they suffer with apostasy? What about in the days of Christ? Did the Jews have a rigid set of guidelines to abide by? What happened, did it result in apostasy?

What about the Apostolic church? Did they have a rigid set of guidelines or was there very loose guidelines and great openness and acceptance of a wide variety of theology and practices?

Acts 15:19,20

“It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰ Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.

- When the eunuch got baptized was there a requirement for study of the doctrines before baptism?
- What does history tell us about the theology of the early church?
 - Arians and Trinitarians both accepted and tolerated, those who were circumcised and those who were not, those who valued and practiced the Jewish feasts and those who did not.

Was there a rigid set of rules and doctrines in the Apostolic church or was their wide love and acceptance?

What about during the Dark Ages, rigid rules? Was there apostasy?

The lesson equates ancient Israel and the early church, did they start out from the same place? What was the spiritual state of Israel coming out of Egypt? What did they know? What was their attitude? What was the condition of their hearts?

How did one become a member of the camp of Israel?

What about the early church? What was the condition of the people? How did one become a member of the Apostolic church?

Did the two groups start at the same spiritual point? Did God need to deal differently with the two groups? Did apostasy occur in both groups?

How did apostasy enter the church? The greatest divergence of the church occurred in the 4th century when Constantine converted and called for the council of Nicaea. This council did not occur at a religious organization, because up to this point in church history there were no church buildings. This council occurred at Constantine's Palace and Constantine seduced church leaders and a huge list of problems began:

- Distorted ideas of God as God came to be viewed through the lens of paganism
- The church began to model itself structurally after Rome with an authoritarian head, thus misrepresenting God's character as authoritarian in nature
- Creeds were developed as tests of fellowship, orthodoxy of thought began and thought police were established, thus misrepresenting God as dictatorial, petty, and arbitrary
- Church buildings began to be built to model after Rome, designed to undermine thinking and reasoning and instead overwhelm with a sense of awe and the mystical
- A division between royalty and commoners, which was part of the Roman culture, entered the church with clergy and laity, undermining the priesthood of believers
- The church building elevated the clergy, modeled after the emperor of Rome, on an elevated platform, a elevated seat and pulpit – all designed to communicate a separation of rank, and instill a top down, authoritarian idea regarding church and God.
- The church authority became more rigid, establishing rules, requirements for behavior and tests of fellowship.
- Membership in the church became the new political party and only those in right standing with the church could wield political power or even be crowned king.

Then, once these practices became entrenched through hundreds of years, they became accepted as holy and orthodox.

And he said to them: “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! MK 7:9

Do we struggle with such problems? Has the reformation really freed us from all the infection and distorted ideas about God and the way He runs His universe?

Here is a poem I really liked, which depicts the power of tradition and the tendency of people to go along with tradition without ever considering its real value or source:

The Calf Path

by Sam Walter Foss (1858-1911)

One day, through the primeval wood,
A calf walked home, as good calves should;
But made a trail all bent askew,
A crooked trail, as all calves do.

Since then three hundred years have fled,
And, I infer, the calf is dead.
But still he left behind his trail,
And thereby hangs my moral tale.

The trail was taken up next day
By a lone dog that passed that way;
And then a wise bellwether sheep
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,
And drew the flock behind him, too,
As good bellwethers always do.

And from that day, o'er hill and glade,
Through those old woods a path was made,
And many men wound in and out,

And dodged and turned and bent about,
 And uttered words of righteous wrath
 Because 'twas such a crooked path;
 But still they followed — do not laugh —
 The first migrations of that calf,
 And through this winding wood-way stalked
 Because he wobbled when he walked.

This forest path became a lane,
 That bent, and turned, and turned again.
 This crooked lane became a road,
 Where many a poor horse with his load
 Toiled on beneath the burning sun,
 And traveled some three miles in one.
 And thus a century and a half
 They trod the footsteps of that calf.

The years passed on in swiftness fleet.
 The road became a village street,
 And this, before men were aware,
 A city's crowded thoroughfare,
 And soon the central street was this
 Of a renowned metropolis;
 And men two centuries and a half
 Trod in the footsteps of that calf.

Each day a hundred thousand rout
 Followed that zigzag calf about,
 And o'er his crooked journey went
 The traffic of a continent.
 A hundred thousand men were led
 By one calf near three centuries dead.
 They follow still his crooked way,
 And lose one hundred years a day,
 For thus such reverence is lent
 To well-established precedent.

A moral lesson this might teach
 Were I ordained and called to preach;
 For men are prone to go it blind

Along the calf-paths of the mind,
 And work away from sun to sun
 To do what other men have done.
 They follow in the beaten track,
 And out and in, and forth and back,
 And still their devious course pursue,
 To keep the path that others do.

They keep the path a sacred groove,
 Along which all their lives they move;
 But how the wise old wood-gods laugh,
 Who saw the first primeval calf!
 Ah, many things this tale might teach —
 But I am not ordained to preach.

Thoughts?

Read second paragraph, “The secret sins...” thoughts? Are we in danger of doing this very thing today? How? How can we guard against it?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “As we have...” thoughts?

What do you believe the main issue will be in this contest for worship?

- Sabbath?
- Lifestyle?
- Atonement theories?
- Beliefs about hell?
- The character of God versus the character of Satan?

Read third paragraph, “The second commandment...” thoughts?

How can we tell the difference between the two systems of worship, which is in harmony with God and which is against God?

The lesson suggests it will be in relationship to God's law? What do you think? The lesson points out that the false system and those who support the false system will support a change in God's law, do you agree?

How has the false system sought to change God's law?

The lesson suggests by changing the 10 Commandments number 2 and 4, and certainly this is a change – but is this the most significant change, or has the false system instilled another more insidious change in God's law that we miss because we focus only on number 2 and 4, but the more insidious change is the real test at the end of time and these two commandments are only expressions of that change?

What does the Inspiration tell us about God's law?

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.** Romans 13:10
- The **entire law** is summed up in a single command: “**Love** your neighbor as yourself.” Galatians 5:14
- If you really keep the **royal law** found in Scripture, “**Love** your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. James 2:8
- Jesus replied: “**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: **Love** your neighbor as yourself.’ **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**” Matt 22:37-40
- In the **way of righteousness there is life**; along that path is immortality. Pr 12:28
- He who pursues **righteousness and love finds life**, prosperity and honor. Pr 21:21
- The **law** of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7
- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. **For God is love, and love is life.** COL 258

- Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the outworking of a principle at war with **the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.** GC 493
- **The law of love being the foundation of the government of God,** the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. GC 493
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth **the great principle which is the law of life for the universe.** All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.** DA 21

According to inspiration what is God's law? The law of love? What kind of law is this? Where did it originate? Is it a natural law or an imposed law?

How did the false system seek to change this? Did the false system create an idea that the law of God is arbitrary, that God imposed it, that God enacted a law, that God created a law and put it upon His creatures and now God uses His power to enforce it?

Do we see God's law as an expression of His character of love, the design template upon which life is built, or do we see it as an imposed law He places upon His creation?

Has the beast system, the little horn, the man of perdition changed the very foundational understanding of God's law in the minds of men from the law of love, to an imposed law?

Do we as a Christian people still struggle with this distorted idea of God's law?

Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with **power and intelligence**, and could break away from **the captivity** in which he had bound him. Satan sought to intercept every **ray of light** from the throne of God. He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, **that men might lose the true views of God's character**, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth. He had caused **truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. **The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father**, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

What about the Sabbath Commandment? How does it fit in to the end time events? Has the Sabbath Commandment been

changed beyond seeking to change the day, but by changing the concept of the Sabbath to an arbitrary test of obedience?

What is the significance of the Sabbath and how does it become a test in the end time?

Is there a difference between a test given at school and a test done at a hospital? What is the difference?

Which way is God's law a test? How does the Sabbath play in?

As school, are there "examinations?" At the doctors office are there "examinations?" In the end the issue is not an examination of your heavenly records, but an examination of your character!

When people use the metaphor of a birthday and suggest we can't replace your birthday with any other day, therefore we can't replace the Sabbath with any other day. Consider this, what if your spouse said to you:

- Remember my birthday to celebrate with me and show me your love and devotion. 364 days you have to work and play and do your own thing, but the 365th day is my birthday and in it you shall only do those things that celebrate me. And if you choose to ignore my birthday and make it like all the other days of the year, then for breaking this law I have commanded you to observe, I will be forced to kill you. Now, shall we celebrate my birthday?

Is that how we understand the Sabbath? If so, even if we get the day of the week right, are we still partaking of the change in God's law instituted by the false system, specifically that God's law is imposed and thus are not Sabbath keepers?

The Sabbath is an expression of God's character of love, provided for mankind in the context of a war over God's trustworthiness. The first six days of creation we learn God has power, the seventh reveals His character, which presents

truth, in love and leaves others free. Thus true Sabbath keepers have God's law of love written on their hearts and therefore, present the truth in love and leave others free. They understand that the test is a lab test, an "examination" of the character to see if we will practice God's methods in our life. The final test is not merely a check of the calendar to see if we go to church on the right day. The Jews in Christ day wanted Him off the cross to keep the right day, but their characters were selfish and not renewed to be like God's.

So, I am suggesting that those who teach God's law is imposed, God's law is a test of behavioral obedience, that God uses His law to keep track of our misdeeds and then God imposes penalties upon His children by using His power to inflict pain, suffering and death – have accepted the changes to the law done by the false system and continue to promote the false god concept.

I am suggesting that the message which lightens the world for Christ's return is the truth about God's character of love, and the test is whether we will love others more than self! Thus true Sabbath keepers have the law written in the heart and it becomes the living expression of the character of God reproduced in the believer.

Read last paragraph, "In both cases..." thoughts?

Do we agree that the false power will resort to violence in order to get that worship, which means it will punish those who won't worship it?

What do some say God will do to those who refuse to worship Him? Who can punish more severely, the beast or God? Do we then worship the one we fear can hurt us the most? If you believe God will punish those who don't worship Him and can do it more severely than the beast power, than who is ends up more beastly?

What did Satan allege about God?

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. DA 761

Satan alleges sin has to be punished – does it? This allegation comes from Satan’s attempt, the beast’s attempt, to change God’s law from the law upon which life is built, to an imposed set of rules which requires imposed punishment. Does the law require sin to be punished? Or does the law require sinners to be healed? Will God use His power to inflict punishment?

This quotation was sent to Uriah Smith, editor of the Review, in the 1890’s he didn’t know what to do with it so he filed it and it remained in the R&H files until the 1950s when it was published in the SM. Consider what it says about the law and the idea of punishment:

The **law** of ten commandments **is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side**, as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men **the immutable principles of righteousness, seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression.** {1SM 235.1}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. **By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the**

channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

The law is an expression of God's idea. When we receive it in Christ, it becomes our idea. **It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin.** "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165)-- cause them to stumble. {1SM 235.3}

There is no peace in unrighteousness; the wicked are at war with God. But he who receives **the righteousness of the law in Christ is in harmony with heaven.** "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85:10).--Letter 96, 1896. {1SM 235.4}

Thoughts? What kind of law is being described? What happens when we break this law? What happens when we are in harmony with it? Do you see how the beast system has changed the law? And do you see how this beastly idea of the law has infected our thinking about God?

What is the first lie told in Eden? You will not surely die? How is this lie repeated today?

- We have an immortal soul/spirit
- The wicked burn forever in hell
- We reincarnate from one life to the next eternally
- Or, how about this – God *must* use His power to kill the wicked in the end. What does this by definition mean? You will not die, therefore I will have to kill you. Did God say in the day you eat I will be required to kill you, or you will die? When we say God must kill not only do we make God out to be the source of death, we support Satan's original lie that sin does not result in death.

Satan twisted everything – he twists the reality that sin, which is lawlessness, being out of harmony with the law of love upon which life is designed to operate, result in death and instead

spins it around and teaches sin is not the problem, the problem is God, who gets upset when His law is broken and His anger and wrath must destroy those breakers of the law, unless something can be done to deal with God.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “Yet, as often is...” thoughts? What do you hear?

Then from the last paragraph we read, “Again, though obedience cannot save us (it is way too late for that), there is no such thing as salvation without it, regardless of how flawed our obedience tends to be.”

Do you notice the tension they have with the role our obedience has in our salvation? Our obedience is not a means to salvation, yet we can’t be saved without our obedience?

How would you explain it? Does our understanding of the sin problem make a difference in our ability to understand where obedience fits in?

If we understand sin as a legal problem, then we have this unnatural tension where Christ did it all in His perfect obedience to accomplish salvation by paying our legal debt, and no amount of obedience we can do can provide proper payment. But, even though we accept His perfect payment, we can’t be saved without our obedience, even though our obedience adds nothing to the payment. This is why some Christians have no expectation for obedience, while others, doubt salvation if their obedience fails at a particular point – have I asked forgiveness and gotten my latest sin paid for?

If you have the healing model, and understand sin as an actual change in the heart, mind, character of the intelligent being, where the principle of love has been replaced by fear and selfishness. Then we understand no human could fix this situation, therefore Christ came to procure remedy, a remedy that we cannot add to because it is completely perfect in

Christ. But once the remedy to our condition has been perfectly procured by Christ, we still must participate, take the remedy, as Jesus said, “eat my flesh and drink my blood” or it does us no good. This requires our active participation, i.e. obedience, following the doctor’s prescription.

When we follow the doctor’s prescription we still don’t heal or save ourselves, we merely, by our freewill choice, accept the application of that remedy to our hearts and minds. Like taking an antibiotic, we take it but it does something in us we cannot do for ourselves.

TUESDAY

Read Haggai 1:5-12

What does it mean? Why does the Lord speak this way to them?

The people of Israel are as stubborn as mules. How can I feed them like lambs in a meadow? Hosea 4:6

So, why does He speak to them this way? Is it out of hate, dislike, disgust, or love, to warn and protect a people who don’t otherwise listen to gentle words?

When you read such language do you hear a God of anger or a God of love?

What is the lesson of this story? What conclusions do we draw from the fact that all their energy to promote themselves was coming to nothing as long as they failed to attend to building the temple?

- Does it mean if you don’t do what God wants He will ruin your plans?
- Is this an object lesson? What does the Temple symbolize? You and me, and what then would the lesson be? What happens when we spend our energies trying to get rich, power, good times, or whatever, while we neglect

- the care of our spirit temple? Can we grow healthier, can we experience in our lives God's blessings if the spirit temple is neglected? Why? Is it because God refuses to bless or is it because we, by abusing the spirit temple, close the channel to receive His blessing?
- Can we have healing of our spirit temple outside the law of love? Thus when we focus on selfish advancement we cannot prosper.
 - Does it make a difference in how you read the meaning of the text?

THURSDAY

The lesson turns our attention to Nehemiah, what did he and Ezra do?

I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said: "You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves. ²⁶ Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. ²⁷ Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?"
Ne 13:25-27

Ezra the priest stood up and spoke to them. He said, "You have been faithless and have brought guilt on Israel by marrying foreign women. ¹¹ Now then, confess your sins to the LORD, the God of your ancestors, and do what pleases him. Separate yourselves from the foreigners living in our land and get rid of your foreign wives." Ezra 10:10,11

Thoughts? Is there any evidence these wives were cheating with other men? Why then the instruction to get rid of them?

What were they alleged to be doing? Corrupting the priesthood, how?

Is there an object lesson here? Who is the priesthood today? Does this have any bearing on marriage and divorce? Should a Christian “put away” a spouse who is unconverted and constantly tempting the spouse away from the Lord?

EGW gave advise to a man who was head of a mission in Chicago and had married an immature, unconverted wife, who was subject to hysterical acting out if she didn't get her way. There is no evidence or record of the woman being involved with another man. The letter EGW wrote is quite long, but here is one paragraph:

His best course with this child-wife, so overbearing, so unyielding, and so uncontrollable, is to take her home and leave her with the mother who has made her what she is. Though it must be painful, this is the only thing for him to do if he would not be ruined spiritually, sacrificed to the demon of hysterics and satanic imaginings. Satan takes entire control of her temper and will, and uses them like desolating hail to beat down every obstruction. Her husband can do her no good, but is doing himself incalculable harm, and robbing God of the talents and influence He has given. 16MR page 305.

Thoughts? What is the reason cited for this action? Is this in harmony with what Ezra and Nehemiah instructed the priests of Israel to do? Should we do this today? Why or why not?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, “There is constant...” thoughts?

What does this look like? Are we talking electric guitar, drums, power point? Or perhaps is the real problem conforming to the world's concept of who God is regardless of worship style?

Does our worship style promote the idea of unity, equality of fellowship, or hierarchy, authoritarian leadership, relational disengagement, and undermine the service of member to member in the body of Christ?

Read and discuss questions 2,3,4

Worship Lesson 11 3Q 2011

In Spirit and in Truth

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "As we have seen..." thoughts?

- What is the gospel we are proclaiming?
- Is the gospel we are proclaiming different than any other Christian gospel? Should it be?
- How would you explain the gospel to others?

- What are we doing to proclaim the everlasting gospel?
- How can we be more effective?
- What obstacles do you see that impair our ability to proclaim the gospel?
- What can we, as a class, do to proclaim it more effectively?
- Who would like to be involved in proclaiming the gospel?
- What aides, materials, resources would you need to help you proclaim the gospel?
- Would you like handouts to give to people? On different topics?

To where should we look for support in spreading the gospel?

After last week's class Dennis emailed me the following:

"The Sanhedrin had rejected Christ's message and was bent upon His death; therefore Jesus departed from Jerusalem, from the priests, the temple, the religious leaders, the people who had been instructed in the law, and **turned to another class to proclaim His message**, and to gather out those who should carry the gospel to all nations. {DA 232.1}

As the light and life of men was rejected by the

ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation.

Again and again the history of Christ's withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; **but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light**, and those that bore it were **forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth**. In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented.

Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. **And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience.** {DA 232.2}

The people of Galilee were despised by the rabbis of Jerusalem as rude and unlearned, yet they presented a more favorable field for the Saviour's work. They were more earnest and sincere; less under the control of bigotry; their minds were more open for the reception of truth. In going to Galilee, Jesus was not seeking seclusion or isolation. The province was at this time the home of a crowded population, with a much larger admixture of people of other nations than was found in Judea. "{DA 232.3}

Thoughts? When I read this my heart was saddened.

Where can we focus our energies in taking the gospel to our world?

We would like to do more than just meet once a week for class, we would like to start an awakening, a movement, a reevaluation of thinking, a spark to start the investigation of

truth so that we may move forward in the truth rather than defend truths of a past generation.

Read second paragraph, “Think through...” thoughts?

Do we ever become so accustomed to the story of Jesus incarnation that we fail to be awed by it? What have you found to be effective in keeping your heart and mind in a state of wonder and admiration for what Christ has done?

How is the cross foolishness to the world? Why is it foolishness to those who are perishing?

Those who are perishing live in harmony with the prime directive of this world, which is survival of the fittest. From the perspective of our natural instinct to survive, does it make any sense to lay down your life so that you may find it?

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.” MT 16:24, 25.

What does this mean?

God’s kingdom is the kingdom of love, which is the principle of giving. The cross is where God’s principle of love destroyed Satan’s infection of survival of the fittest in the human brain of Jesus Christ. It is only as we know God, His methods of love, that the Cross make sense.

SUNDAY

The lesson is about Mary and her response to being told she would be the mother of Christ.

Lady's take a moment and consider, what would it have been like for you at age 13-16 to be told you are going to be pregnant with God's Son?

- How might you have responded?
- What do you think your parents would have said when you told them you were pregnant but had not known a man?
- How do you think your friends and classmates at school would have responded?
- What about school administration?
- What about church leaders?

Do you think there would be any social stress involved? Would you have been rejoicing to find this out?

What about Mary? What of her response? It appears it was one of joy and thanksgiving. What enabled this response?

Did Mary know something we don't?

Read bottom green section – thoughts? Anyone want to share a miracle they experienced in their lives?

MONDAY

The lesson is describing how we serve what we worship,

Read bottom paragraph, "Thus, we..." thoughts?

Healthy worship does protect our minds and develop our faculties. Thus it is essential to engage in healthy worship.

And unhealthy worship will damage our faculties and corrupt the mind and character.

Can people be members of a Christian church, be baptized, take communion, attend church weekly, hold church office, tithe and given offerings and still be an idolater? How?

What is the basis of idolatry? Is it not worshipping anything other than the true God? And what if one worships God but invests Him with the character of Satan?

Did Jesus state that people would think they were worshipping Him but He wouldn't even know them?

What can we do to enhance our ability to know God and worship Jesus in truth?

How can one tell? Would the methods one uses in living their lives change as one comes to know the true God? Do we treat others differently? How about those who disagree with us?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "As we have seen..." thoughts?

Do we agree? Is the form of worship what matters or is it the heart?

What do you think about our forms, rituals and liturgy? Do they enhance our relationship with God, or have they become an obstacle to experiencing what God wants for His people?

What does God want His church on earth to look like?

Could we use the New Testament as a guide to answer this question?

What did the church in the New Testament look like? How did it function?

Do each of you believe you are qualified to lead the church?
Do each of you believe you are ordained of God to be the church pastor?

Do each of you believe you are authorized of God to baptize, lead out in communion?

What would the New Testament say about whether you are authorized of God or not?

How was the church of God to function? Who were the priests in God's New Testament Church? Who was authorized to lead worship? Who was authorized to hold communion, baptize?

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a **holy priesthood**, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...But you are a chosen people, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1Pet 2:4,5,9,10

What impact does it have on a believer to lead others to Christ? What impact does it have on a believer to lead out in worship? What impact does it have on the body of Christ if all members are serving each other as equals?

Does our liturgy, forms, rituals enhance every member functioning in the body of Christ or undermine it?

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, **everyone** has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. 1Cor 14:26

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as **you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.** Col 3:12-16

Are we **all** to be priests of God serving each other in love or is the church to be divided into the professional clergy and the unqualified laity?

Are we **all** to be ministers to each other, serving each other in love, or are we to go to service and sit and be entertained by the professional musicians and speakers who choose for us what to sing, think and speak?

- What are we to be experiencing in our hearts?
- Does the organized church help break down the dividing wall of hostility?
- Do we experience closer intimacy, acceptance, with others? Or does the church foster a costume party in which we each dress up and present ourselves in the “right” way to ensure we will be accepted by the system and not chastised or criticized?
- Do we open our hearts, souls and selves up to each other to bear one another’s burdens and difficulties, helping each other overcome in the name of Christ or do we hide our faults and problems pretending we are victorious for fear of rejection?
- Does the church today function as God designed it to function?

How can we, in this class, break out of a man made tradition and come to know, love, support, uplift, encourage, and promote the development of God’s character in each other?

How can we in this class move beyond tradition, forms, rituals and habits and enter into the at-one-ment, the unity of heart, mind and spirit God designed for His children to experience?

WEDNESDAY

Read top Bible verse, John 4:23 – thoughts?

What does “Truth and Spirit” mean? How do we worship God in spirit and in truth?

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth **to reveal *the character of the Father to men, that they might worship him in spirit and in truth.*** Christ revealed to men the fact that the strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature. Christ came to the world to sow it with truth. He held the keys to all the treasures of wisdom, and was able to open doors to science, and to reveal undiscovered stores of knowledge, were it essential to salvation. He presented to men that which was **exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to *the character of God,*** and sought to impress upon men the paternal love of the Father, who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." [John 3:16.] He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, **enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them, who treated them spitefully. In this he was revealing to them *the character of the Father,*** who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth. Those who accepted his teaching were under the guardian care of angels, who were commissioned to strengthen, to enlighten, that the truth might renew and sanctify the soul. {CE 74.1}

What does it mean to worship in Spirit and in Truth?

Does it have anything to do with the character of God? How is the truth about God's character related to worshipping God in spirit and in truth?

What happens when we come to see God as He truly is? What impact does the "knowledge of God" have on us?

Life eternal is to "know" God, what does this mean?

This is more than intellectual knowledge, it is a personal knowing of God.

Does "spirit and truth" mean in our intellectual understanding (truth) and in our heart assimilation and experience with the truth, which changes the way we live (spirit)? Thus we must not only understand the truth, but embrace and assimilate the truth into our own individuality, identity, character?

Even so, the mighty **cleaver of truth** has taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple. **We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us.** . . . We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed, and we must be stones fitted for the building. We are brought into church capacity **with defects of character, but we must not retain them.** We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "labourers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building." In view of this we must see that the temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. **We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth.**—Manuscript 49, 1886 (Manuscript Releases, vol. 3, pp. 230-232). {CTr 155.5}

Thoughts?

Read last paragraph, “At the same time...” thoughts?

What is the balance between correct beliefs and correct attitude of the heart?

Will anyone, when Christ appears in the clouds, know correctly everything in Scripture? Will there be any human being that has 100% correct beliefs when Christ first returns?

What is essential for salvation? Is it correct beliefs, or a renewed heart?

What is the attitude of those who have a renewed heart toward their beliefs?

The heart of those who will be saved is the heart that loves truth, that wants to grow in truth, they acknowledge their own finiteness and are hungry to grow in truth as more truth is understood.

The heart of those who are not ready to meet Christ is the heart that does not love the truth, but loves their beliefs and refuses to grow in truth, but instead holds to the traditions or old beliefs and defends them to the exclusion of growing in truth.

They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 2Thes 2:10

Notice they perish, not because they don't have the right beliefs, but because they don't love the truth.

Eve really believed the words of Satan, but her belief did not save her from the penalty of sin. She disbelieved the words of God, and this was what led to her fall. **In the judgment men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth**, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth. {CC 15.7}

Why will men be condemned? Not because they have some misunderstanding on some belief, or even believe the wrong thing, but because they were not lovers of truth and thus could not be moved out of a distorted belief system.

How do we see this today? In my experience tradition, the desire to “protect” the beliefs of the past, the idea that we must hold to what previous generations understood is a great lie.

Only in theology is it a virtue to not grow in truth, knowledge understanding. In every other field of study the expectation, passion, desire is to learn and understand more, even to the point of overthrowing previously held dogma – consider medicine, physics, biology, mechanical engineering etc. All fields of study grow in knowledge – except theology, somehow in theology it has been a virtue to resist growth, to hold to old ideas and old concepts.

Churches even say things like, we don't want any change, we want things to remain like they are... How sad, what can God do for such people? Do you see how such an attitude delays the coming of Christ?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Throughout the long...” thoughts?

Was Christ fully God or was He a demi-god?

Read third paragraph, “Jesus was very clear...”

This is a great point. If Jesus was not God why did He allow Himself to be worshipped?

What is the basis for your belief that Jesus is fully God?

What do we lose in the plan of salvation if Jesus is not fully God?

Read last paragraph, “The point here...” thoughts?

What did Jesus say His purpose was in coming to earth? Who did He say He was pointing our minds toward? Did Jesus seek His own glory or that of the Father? Did Jesus want us to worship Him or the Father? Did Jesus say if you’ve seen me you’ve seen me, or you’ve seen the Father?

Jesus purpose was to reveal the Father to man and make Him known, thus when we rightly worship Jesus we put the truth about the Father at the center of all our worship!

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2

Worship Lesson 12 3 Q 2011

Worship in the Early Church

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, "At Pentecost..." thoughts?

Was this a good thing or a bad thing that 3000 were baptized this day?

How often do you see this happen now? What do you think prevents this from happening now? Do we do anything that hinders this process?

What would happen if we did a public campaign and anywhere from 1-3000 people stood up and said they wanted to become Christians? What would we do? Would we baptize them that day? Why not?

Have we substituted something for Bible baptism? Is it Biblical? If a non-Christian hears the gospel and wants to give their lives to Christ, do we take them, right then, or as soon as is physically possible, and baptize them? What do we do instead? We have them pray the sinner's prayer.

Is this God's method? What are the benefits to immediate baptism? Is there benefit to substituting prayer for baptism? Is there a problem with substituting prayer for baptism?

Why do we require a long indoctrination period before baptism?

At Pentecost did the Apostles require those who wanted to be baptized to attest to change their diet, give up smoking, stop using alcohol, or commit to pay tithes and offerings before being baptized? Why do we?

What would happen if we had a public series of meetings in Chattanooga and we began baptizing people into Christ that very day?

Would it be in harmony with Scripture or opposed to it? Would it be in harmony with the organized church?

Do you think baptizing people into Christ at a public meeting would have a positive impact on the lives or a negative impact? Would it hinder or help the work of the Spirit?

What about the way we currently do it? Any thoughts?

Should we conduct such a series of meetings?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "From a human..." thoughts?

Is there any attempt at slight revisionist history going on? I have noticed that many evangelicals are moving away from the Jews crucifying Christ and instead putting the responsibility of His crucifixion on the Romans. What do you think about this?

I want to read a little from Scripture Matt 27:19-25:

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

²⁰ But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

²¹ "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor.

"Barabbas," they answered.

²² "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked.

They all answered, "Crucify him!"

²³ “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

²⁴ When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!”

²⁵ All the people answered, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!”

Thoughts? Yes it is true that the Roman government had the legal authority to carry out and ultimately ordered the execution of Christ – but, who was responsible for orchestrating the crucifixion? Who took public responsibility for it? Who tried to resist and avoid the crucifixion of Christ?

Is it honest to present the Crucifixion of Christ as solely done by the Romans, or even the preponderance of the responsibility on the Romans?

Why is this happening? What do we lose if we go down this path? What lesson will we fail to see if we accept this line of thinking? We fail to realize that those who call themselves God’s children, but accept a false picture of God, are actually God’s enemies.

The Jewish rulers did not love God; therefore they cut themselves away from Him, ... They envied Christ's beauty of character. His manner of teaching was far superior to theirs, and they dreaded His success. He remonstrated with them, unveiling their hypocrisy, and showing them the sure results of their course of action. This stirred them to madness. They smarted under the rebukes they could not silence. **They hated the high standard of righteousness which Christ continually presented.** They saw that His teaching was placing them where **their selfishness would be uncloaked, and they determined to kill Him.** They hated His example of truthfulness and piety and the elevated spirituality revealed in all He did. **His whole life**

was a reproof to their selfishness, and when the final test came, **the test which meant obedience unto eternal life or disobedience unto eternal death, they rejected the Holy One of Israel**. When they were asked to choose between Christ and Barabbas, they cried out, "Release unto us Barabbas!" Luke 23:18. And when Pilate asked, "What shall I do then with Jesus?" **they cried** fiercely, "Let Him be crucified." Matthew 27:22. "Shall I crucify your King?" Pilate asked, and **from the priests and rulers came the answer, "We have no king but Caesar."** John 19:15. When Pilate washed his hands, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person," **the priests** joined with the ignorant mob in declaring passionately, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Matthew 27:24, 25. {COL 293.3}

Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah. {COL 294.1}

Thoughts? Who does she hold responsible for the crucifixion of Christ? Why might we want to forget this? Could this next paragraph provide a reason we want to deny what the Jews did?

The **Jewish people cherished the idea that they were the favorites of heaven**, and that they were always to be exalted as the church of God. They were the children of Abraham, they declared, and so firm did the foundation of their prosperity seem to them that they defied earth and heaven to dispossess them of their rights. **But by lives of unfaithfulness they were preparing for the condemnation of heaven and for separation from God.** {COL 294.2}

What happened to the Jewish nation because of its rejection of Christ? Why did ruin come to them?

- Were they agnostic?
- Did they deny God existed?
- Did they claim to be the true worshippers of God?
- Did they worship the Roman pantheon?
- Did they possess the oracles of God?
- Yet, despite all this did they reject God?

Could we do the same thing?

Read last paragraph, “One of the most...” thoughts?

Were they to believe in Christ with or without “proof”? What is your understanding of faith? Is our faith based on evidence, proof, facts or is our faith believing without evidence?

Read bottom green section?

What is faith? Where does it come from? How do we get more?

What undermines our growth in faith? Does evidence and experience undermine faith or strengthen it? What then would the idea that we don’t need evidence do to faith?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, thoughts? Is the protestant weekly sermon and what Peter and Paul did the same thing?

Can you think of examples of sermons from scripture?

- Jesus sermon on the mount
- Paul Mars Hill
- Peter Pentecost
- Stephen

How would you describe all of these Bible examples of

preaching?

- Who was the audience?
- Where was the forum?
- Were they regularly scheduled events?
- Were they scripted?
- Were they paid to present these speeches?
- Does it matter?
- Do we lose anything if we have regularly scheduled speaking events, scripted by professionally trained speakers?

Where did the “power” come from in the Bible preachers?

About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. ¹⁵ **The Jews were astonished at it, saying, “How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?”** ¹⁶ Then Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine but his who sent me. ¹⁷ Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. ¹⁸ **Those who speak on their own seek their own glory;** but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and there is nothing false in him. John 7:14-18

Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹ If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, ¹⁰ then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹ He is

“ ‘the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the capstone.’

¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other

name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that **they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.** Acts 4:8-13

Does the liturgy of our current church service originate in the Bible? Has the traditions we have accepted promoted the spread of the gospel, the health of the church, the finishing of the work, hindered it, or had not effect?

What about the way we observe the Lord's Supper, is it how they did it in the New Testament? Did they have a thimble full of grape juice and a tiny cracker? Did they have a professional speaker give a homily designed to focus their attention on their sinfulness and unworthiness?

But the Communion service **was not to be a season of sorrowing.** This was not its purpose. As the Lord's disciples gather about His table, **they are not to remember and lament their shortcomings.** They are **not to dwell upon their past religious experience,** whether that experience has been elevating or depressing. They are **not to recall the differences between them and their brethren.** The preparatory service has embraced all this. The self-examination, the confession of sin, the reconciling of differences, has all been done. **Now they come to meet with Christ. They are not to stand in the shadow of the cross, but in its saving light.** They are to open the soul to the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. With hearts cleansed by Christ's most precious blood, in full consciousness of His presence, although unseen, they are to hear His words, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." John 14:27.
{DA 659.1}

Was the NT a celebration love feast in which they celebrated

the victory provided by Jesus Christ?

Who is the church? What is its purpose on earth? What is its purpose when it meets together?

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, **everyone** has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. 1Cor 14:26

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as **you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.** Col 3:12-16

- Isn't the purpose of the church to spread the truth about God and to equip each of us for this mission?
- Are we not, when we meet together to be helping each other overcome sinfulness in our lives?
- What role in the process of overcoming does ministering to one another have?
- Do we benefit when we have more interaction, discussion, heart to heart communion, conversation, prayer for and with each other, or do we hinder the work of character development?

Where do you think more character development and down to brass tacks overcoming of defects occurs, in a weekly church service or a AA meeting? Where should be the #1 place on earth for a person to be able to experience help in overcoming problems in their hearts, minds and characters?

Should it not be the church? Is it? Why not? Is it because we no longer function as God designed?

Read last paragraph, “No doubt...” thoughts?

THURSDAY

Love conquers all – what does love look like in action?

I received this email this week:

Dr. Jennings,

I have a friend who has been with her husband for many years and he has cheated much of those years. He is a good father and the children love him. This woman has been an obedient child of Christ in staying with her husband.

Last year she had had enough and divorced him. He came back and wanted to mend his marriage but continues to sin with other women and every week still comes home and sleeps in another room in the house. My sister in Christ would like her marriage to heal but cannot take his cheating.

Does God want her to stay in this marriage when her husband continues like this. Role modeling evil behavior in the house.

I believe God does not want her to live in pain

What does love do? How would you respond? Here is my response:

Of course God does not want anyone to live in a deceitful, exploitive, selfish relationship where trust doesn't exist. Her husband doesn't love her and until she realizes it she will fail to be able to love him. The most loving action for

her is to hold him accountable for his untrustworthy character and throw him out. She should only allow him back when he had demonstrated, reliable, documentable, credible evidence that he is trustworthy and loves her more than himself. His words are meaningless, his actions demonstrate an immature human being who is not qualified to be a husband.

Here is the response back:

But Dr Jennings ~ Can't a person still love his wife and give into the flesh? He has to love her, why would he come back to be with her & the children. The bible says to forgive so she has forgiven and when we marry aren't we suppose to stay married ~ God wants us to keep our families together doesn't he?!

It's confusing (when there is emotional abuse) to know what God would have us do. It must be possible to have the Holy Spirit guide us out of bad relationships and focus on God.

At the same time, when emotionally leaving someone we may feel like we are hurting them but be strong and it feels like we are being unloving.

What does love do? How would you respond to this? Here is my response:

Love does what is right because it is right, not because it feels right. Love is the principle of selfless giving for the benefit of the other's welfare and happiness. In this case neither husband nor wife act upon love toward the other. The husband acts in self interests and deceives his wife with his emotional attachment he calls love and the wife deceives herself allowing him to say calling it loving as she colludes with a path that is destructive to his character and ruining him for heaven. If she loved him she would not cooperate with him by allowing him to stay

but would hold him accountable.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, He works by presenting truth to our minds. When we choose to reject the truth we close our minds to the Spirit. In this case which of them doesn't know the truth about adultery? Which of them doesn't know the truth of its destructiveness and its selfishness? Which of them doesn't know the truth that they try to hide from because it will be painful to deal with? But love does what is right because it is right, look at Gethsemane, the greatest act of love, what were Christ's emotions? They were not pleasant, love is not mere emotions but harmony with God's character despite emotions.

Here is their final response:

You are sound and correct as much as it is difficult to listen to. I will share this with her. She only wants to do what is right and needs our prayers and support. Please pray for her as I will brother Jennings. Thank you for being here for us your wisdom helped me very much I will pass all your teachings on.

And again thank you for your time.

What is love? What does it look like?

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Though we..." thoughts? We cannot rely on worship leaders, but do we? Is the system friendly to those who would forgo the worship leadership and want to have their own worship experience?

Read third paragraph, "At the same time..." thoughts?

What is the "end"? What is the purpose of worship?

Read fourth paragraph, "It is fascinating...." Thoughts?

Read last paragraph, "Again, though our..." thoughts? Could people be led, in worship, to the cross, but still not encounter Christ? How could that happen?

When we are led to the cross what are we to experience at the cross? What is it we are to attain at the cross? What are we to learn?

1) God's love for man

a. John 3:16

b. 1John 3:16

c. **Christ's death proves God's great love for man.** It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. **The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him.** With the relenting compassion of a father's love, Jehovah looks upon the suffering that His Son endured in order to save the race from eternal death, and accepts us in the Beloved. {AA 209.3}

Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. **From it shines the light of the Saviour's love,** and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy, for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain. {AA 209.4}

Through the cross we learn that the heavenly Father loves us with a love that is infinite. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Galatians 6:14. It is our privilege also to glory in the cross, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then, with the light that streams from Calvary shining in our

faces, we may go forth to reveal this light to those in darkness. {AA 210.1}

- 2) Reveal God's character – never use power to force His way or act selfishly
 - a. John 13 – all power given to Christ
 - b. On the Cross how did Christ treat those who crucified Him?
 - c. Did He use power to stop them? Could He have?
 - d. In Gethsemane did Christ use power to save self?
 - e. But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; **but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe.** To this result of His great sacrifice--its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man--the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, **will draw all unto Me.**" John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it **would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan.** It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

- 3) The Value of the human soul
 - a. The **value of a soul**, who can estimate? Would you know its worth, **go to Gethsemane**, and there watch with Christ through those hours of anguish, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. **Look upon the Saviour uplifted on the cross.** Hear that despairing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Mark 15:34. Look upon the wounded

head, the pierced side, the marred feet. Remember that Christ risked all. For our redemption, heaven itself was imperiled. **At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul.** {COL 196.4}

- 4) The security of the heavenly universe
- a. Col 1:20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on **earth or things in heaven**, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.
 - b. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, **will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels.** Fallen men could not have a home in the paradise of God without the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Shall we not then exalt the cross of Christ? **The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven.** Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God.

The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, **provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen** worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. {5BC 1132.8}

- 5) Expose Satan as a liar and fraud

- a. To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory.

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion. {DA 758}

- 6) Destroy Satan's power – lies about God
- a. Heb 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so **that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—**
- 7) Destroy the carnal nature, selfishness in the human soul
- a. 1John 3:8 The reason the Son of God appeared was to **destroy the devil's work.**
- b. Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; but **Satan has labored to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image.** LHU 48
- c. He restored God's character, law into mankind in His own person.
- 8) Destroy death
- a. 2Tim 1:10 Christ Jesus, who has **destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light**

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "In the days..." thoughts?

The lesson points out that on Mars Hill Paul did not quote the Bible but used logic, reason and their own philosophers – was this a good idea or bad idea?

Read last paragraph, “In the end...” thoughts? What would happen today if you went to scientific people, who haven’t had the gospel brought to them, but were taught to think, reason, look for evidence, and you said, “you must believe what I say. God sent His Son, He died for you, to pay for your sins. You must repent and accept this on faith, without thinking, for human reason is flawed, and don’t ask for evidence. You must believe!”

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Holiness...” is this what you typically think of when you think of holiness? So could one be holy while running in a marathon, playing basketball, baseball, cooking, cleaning, going to school? When you see daily living activities, do you see holiness? Should we? Or should we see holiness only in religious activities?

Read and discuss questions 1-4

Worship Lesson 13, 3Q 2011

Worship in the Book of Revelation

What are your thoughts about the lesson title?

When you think of worship in Revelation what comes to mind?

What is the basis of our worship? Is it not the truth about God, who He is, the experience we have and knowledge we have of Him?

While our personal journey, and thus our “song” will be different as we will each be brought through and out of different difficulties and trials, won’t we all be brought to the same God?

And, ultimately, won’t our worship be based on the same truth of who God is?

Hasn’t the entire controversy been over this issue? Is it any different in Revelation?

In general, has Revelation made it easier for most people to get a true picture about God, or has Revelation created difficulties for people?

To the degree any misunderstanding of God has come from Revelation, why has that happened? Could it be that people have failed to recognize the symbolic nature of the text and instead have taken certain passages concretely – like Revelation 14?

Do we let the Bible interpret itself or do we project into the Bible our own preconceived ideas?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Perhaps one of the greatest..."

Facts about our universe:

- Our sun is about 865,000 miles in diameter, talk about big, that makes it equivalent to about 109 planet Earths.
- It is estimated that the Milky Way galaxy contains 200-400 billion stars.
- It is estimated that the universe contains 100-500 billion galaxies, with each galaxy containing anywhere from 10 million to 1 trillion stars. If we just averaged each galaxy containing 100 billion stars, then 100-500 billion galaxies multiplied by 100 billion stars is a number I can't even imagine.
- The Andromeda Galaxy is our closest neighboring galaxy and is 2.5 million light years away. One light year equals 5,878,625,373,183 miles (about 6 trillion miles). So multiple 6 trillion by 2.5 million to get the rough distance. And it is estimated that Andromeda contains 1 trillion stars.

And, as the Study Guide points out, something greater than the cosmos built the cosmos. Can your mind even comprehend it?

God is amazing – and because He is so amazing, so infinite, so beyond our finite capacities to consider, some humans conclude God simply cannot exist. So, what do they do to deal with the origins of the universe? Rather than believe in an intelligent being who created, they postulate that at one point in universal history there was nothing, no time, energy, matter, space, gravity, molecules, life, nothing at all and from this nothing an explosion happened from which everything emerged, and they call that reasonable.

What can we do to keep our minds aware of God as our creator and our relationship to Him?

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to consider various texts in Revelation and the reasons cited for worship.

Read Revelation 4:8-11:

Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

What reason are they worshipping God?

- How is this truth under attack as time comes to a close?
 - 2006 news report:

Nearly 450 Christian churches in the United States yesterday celebrated the 197th birthday of Charles Darwin. The churches say Darwin's theory of biological evolution is compatible with faith and that Christians have no need to choose between religion and science. Some churches sang praises for "tall boiling test tubes" and "classrooms and labs." Many churches held adult education and Sunday school classes on evolution, and ministers preached that followers of Christ do not have to choose between biblical

stories of creation and evolution... A variety of denominational and non-denominational churches, including Methodist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Unitarian, Congregationalist, United Church of Christ, Baptist and a host of community churches, participated in the event... [M]ore than 10,000 Christian ministers... sign[ed] a letter urging school boards across the country to “preserve the integrity of the science curriculum by affirming the teaching of the theory of evolution as a core component of human knowledge.”ⁱ

- Is this truth under attack in the SDA church?
 - How?
 - Do you find it credible that God created by evolutionary mechanism? Why not?
 - How do you explain the age of the universe being billions of years but the Biblical record suggesting life on earth is only 6,000-10,000 years old?
 - How do we explain Carbon dating of life 50,000 years? Or rocks billions of years?
- Genesis is not a record of creation of the entire universe, only of our solar system. The universe was created before our solar system, i.e. earth and mankind. Job 38:4

Read Revelation 5:8-14:

What reason are they worshipping Christ? The Lamb was slain and what is He now worthy to receive? Power and honor and glory? What is the connection between the Lamb being slain and His being worthy to receive power and honor?

- How is this truth under attack as time comes to a close?
 - By twisting the meaning of the Cross away from a revelation of God’s character and achievement of a purified humanity, to pay a legal penalty. That God must inflict penalties and therefore executed His Son, and God will use His power to inflict pain and

suffering on all those who don't accept the legal penalty paid.

Read Revelation 7:9-12:

What reason is given for worship here?

Christ has saved humanity, saved those terminal in sin.

- How is this truth under attack as time comes to a close?
 - He isn't the Savior only, but the destroyer of those who won't love Him
 - Christ receives power to use a rod of iron to dominate and destroy His enemies
 - March 5, 2006 Louis Farrakhan We are living at a time that was described by Jesus in these words: "If those days were not shortened for his elect sake, no flesh would be saved." We know that we have now entered that period when we witnessed a tsunami killing over 200,000 people in Asia; an earthquake in Pakistan; storms raging throughout America, fire on one side, water on the other, snow, cold, ice in between...

At the townhall meeting in New Orleans, I pointed out the high Black-on-Black crime rates, rebellion against the will and law of God, and the love of partying and acting foolishness that prevails in the city. I asked them if they did not think that Allah (God) would handle the city as He did two ancient cities that lived in rebellion. I told them Allah (God) brought a punishment to America, but He also brought a punishment to Black people, and that punishment is going to spread. There will be many more disasters that we are not prepared for in this country.

This country glories in its cities and skyscrapers, but Allah (God) is going to bring

them down. We are going to know that He is God. ..

The Bible says that in His Second Coming, He will have a sword dripping with blood in His hand. He is not coming back to teach. He is coming back to kill the enemies of His teaching and set up a new government.

- o Love me or I will kill you

Read Revelation 11:15-19:

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.”

¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying:

“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.

¹⁸ The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great— and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

¹⁹ Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

Why are they worshipping here?

Because Christ kingdom consumes and puts an end to the kingdom of the world – i.e. Christ’s kingdom of love finally eradicates the infection of selfishness, an end to sin, death, disease, deviations from God’s design for life, an end to all pain and suffering!

How has this idea been corrupted and distorted as we approach the end of time?

- God’s judgment determines who will be saved and who will be lost – i.e. in a courtroom type scenario
- God’s use of power inflicts the punishment upon sinners for their behavioral crimes and causes them to suffer and die

The Greek for judging in the passage means “determining” or “selecting” or “choosing” or “to separate” or “to pick out”. So the time has come for God to separate the dead, to pick out from the dead those who are healed from those who are not, separating sheep from goats, etc. This does not mean a time when a court sits, evidence is presented, a jury debates and a decision of innocence or guilt is rendered. It does mean a time when God simply acknowledges, who has accepted Christ and experienced transformation and healing and who has not.

Thus the text says the time has come to select those from the dead who have accepted Christ so they can experience their reward of eternal life!

Regarding destroying those who destroy the earth, it means to consume, put an end to, remove sinfulness from the earth. It doesn’t say how, just that He does. So we must look to the rest of scripture to understand how God brings an end. And how does He do it?

To sin, wherever found, "our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:29. In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them. DA 107

What do you hear this passage saying? What is it that causes death? Is it the fire of God's presence? If so why can the angels and the saved live in His presence if His presence destroys? What is the only thing His presence destroys? Sin – thus is the source of death God or is the source of death, sin? God destroys death by destroying sin!

Read Revelation 15:1-4:

I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed. ² And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God ³ and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb:

“Great and marvelous are your deeds,
Lord God Almighty.
Just and true are your ways,
King of the ages.

⁴ Who will not fear you, O Lord,
and bring glory to your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship before you,
for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

What is the reason for worship in this passage?

- God's holiness
- God's justice

- God's right ways
- God's wrath is complete

How has this been distorted and misrepresented as we approach the end of time?

- God's wrath is an active process in which He inflicts pain and suffering upon His creatures
- God's justice is using power to punish
- The seven last plagues result from God using power to inflict pain upon sinners

What is the truth

- Romans 1:18-31 – God's wrath is letting go
- The seven last plagues are a result of God granting freedom and letting go, not an infliction
 - Revelation 7:1-3
 - "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, reprovcs, 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.

It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of."

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- Worship results from God using power to put down rebellion and driving all beings by fear of punishment
 - Zech 4:6 not by might nor by fear but by the spirit says the lord

Read Revelation 19:1-5:

After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting:

“Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,
² for true and just are his judgments.

He has condemned the great prostitute
 who corrupted the earth by her adulteries.

He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”

³ And again they shouted:

“Hallelujah!

The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.”

⁴ The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried:

“Amen, Hallelujah!”

⁵ Then a voice came from the throne, saying:

“Praise our God,
 all you his servants,
 you who fear him,
 both small and great!”

What is the reason for worship? God is right, His ways and methods have been proved true. The false system has been exposed and an end to sin and sinners has been experienced!

How has this been corrupted and distorted as we approach the end of time?

- The Great Controversy doesn't exist
- God was not accused by Satan
- God has no need to prove His character or trustworthiness
- Sin is a willful choice to rebel against God without Satan deceiving
- God merely must pay the legal penalty and punish those who remain in rebellion

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "From the introduction..." thoughts?

It is a matter of worship, what do you understand the main issue in this battle to be about? Why does it matter?

Read second paragraph, "From the beginning..." thoughts?

What are Satan's methods as practiced by the beast system?

What is the common Christian teaching on what Christ/God will do when He returns? What is the common Christian teaching regarding what methods God will employ in dealing with the wicked in the end? How is the common teach attributed to God different than what the Bible says the beast will use?

Is it possible the common teaching in Christianity regarding how God treats sinners in the end, is in actuality the methods of Satan, the beast system? Is it how Christianity is preparing the world to accept Satan's counterfeit to Christ?

Could our church be caught up in this?

WEDNESDAY

Middle dark section, Read, "Read Revelation 14:6-12..."

Thoughts?

What is the message of the three angels? What are we to be telling the world? Has this message been corrupted? How?

THURSDAY

The lesson calls us back to worship of the true God, and emphasizes its importance, an excellent insight in paragraph five, “And that is because...” thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

ⁱ http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_060213evolution.shtml

Lesson 1. Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles

Sabbath.

What was at the root of Saul's persecution of the early Christian church??

If we, today, believe in a similar God concept, might we be in danger of similar or worse persecution of those who do not share our beliefs??

From the teacher's quarterly.

You want to become really bad? Not bad as in "misunderstood"; not bad as in a diamond-in-the-rough kind of character with the proverbial heart of gold; but bad as in some of the world's most evil men? You must start by convincing yourself you're good. So good, in fact, that you believe you're better than anybody else. Or that you can do no wrong. Not only that, but you have God on your side and anyone who opposes you opposes God. French philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal wrote, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from a religious conviction." That could be you. It could be any of us if, in misguided devotion, we put ourselves in God's place and stop listening to the real God.

Sunday.

Acts 6:9-15.

9. Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. 10. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. 11. Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." 12. And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. 13. They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; 14. for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." 15. And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

The lesson asks of whom are we reminded with this passage [*Matt 26:59-61*].

57 And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58 But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. 59 Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, 60 but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward 61 and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in

three days.” 62 And the high priest arose and said to Him, “Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?” 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” 64 Jesus said to him, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” 65 Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, “He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! 66 What do you think?” They answered and said, “He is deserving of death.” 67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, 68 saying, “Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?”

NOTE: Both Steven and Christ are referring to the Spirit Temple / Sanctuary. Have we, today, received any grief from the current church leaders on this subject??

Read the red section at the bottom of Sunday’s lesson.

Convinced he was right, Saul was willing to put to death those whom he thought wrong. While we need to have zeal and fervor for what we believe, how do we learn to temper our zeal with the realization that, at times, we just might be wrong?

Monday.

The lesson asks, “What role did the grace of God have in this experience [Saul’s conversion]?”

Might this be why Paul later said we are “saved by grace.” [Acts 15:11, Eph 2:5, 8.]

What role did Saul play in his conversion??

The martyrdom of Stephen made a deep impression upon all who witnessed it. The memory of the signet of God upon his face; his words, which touched the very souls of those who heard them, remained in the minds of the beholders, and testified to the truth of that which he had proclaimed. His death was a sore trial to the church, but it resulted in the conviction of Saul, who could not efface from his memory the faith and constancy of the martyr, and the glory that had rested on his countenance. {AA 101.3} At the scene of Stephen’s trial and death, Saul had seemed to be imbued with a frenzied zeal. Afterward he was angered by his own secret conviction that Stephen had been honored by God at the very time when he was dishonored by men. Saul continued to persecute the church of God, hunting them down, seizing them in their houses, and delivering them up to the priests and rulers for imprisonment and death. His zeal in carrying forward this persecution brought terror to the Christians at Jerusalem. The Roman authorities made no special effort to stay the cruel work and secretly aided the Jews in order to conciliate them and to secure their favor. {AA 101.4} After the death of Stephen, Saul was elected a member of the Sanhedrin council in consideration of the part he had acted on that occasion. For a time he was a mighty instrument in the hands of Satan to carry out his rebellion against the Son of God. But soon this relentless persecutor was to be employed in building up the church that he was now tearing down. A Mightier than Satan had chosen Saul to take the place of the martyred Stephen, to preach and suffer for His name, and to spread far and wide the tidings of salvation through His blood. {AA 102.1}

According to the lesson: “The only thing Saul deserved was punishment.” Really?? Why do we keep coming back to this idea that all sinners deserve punishment?? Did any of us choose to be born?? Born a sinner??

I want to make clear that, while we do NOT *deserve* God’s grace [it’s a gift], we do not *deserve* punishment either. That is a doctrine of devils [see DA 761].

Tuesday.

The following is a quote from the teachers quarterly:

“Saul, on the other hand, did not so much turn as he was turned. Until the moment when the living Christ appears and incapacitates him, we see no sign of a change of heart in Saul. The passages in chapters 8 and 9 tell us nothing at all about his internal state. We see a lot of his external state, vividly described in terms evoking a fierce predatory animal (Acts 8:3). Was the Holy Spirit working with him? Undoubtedly, but to see it would have taken greater faith than most had then or have now.”

Did God “turn” Saul?? or merely choose the best method to get his attention?? As we have seen above from the AA 102,103 quote, Saul was struggling with the Holy Spirit before his “conversion”.

What would you have done if you were Ananias??
Do you think our ministry has been judged fairly or accurately??
Have you misjudged anyone else’s ministry??

Wednesday.

In the later centuries of Israel’s history prior to the first advent it was generally understood that the coming of the Messiah was referred to in the prophecy, “It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.” [Isa. 49:6]. PK 68

The OT is quite clear that God intended to save the “Gentiles” also. The children of Israel were his initial instrument for this, but he knew they would not live up to the task, so he included in the prophecies of the coming Messiah language to enlighten them.

Are there any “Gentiles” that we, as Adventists, think are beneath our efforts??

I attended a small Adventist church in middle TN, as a guest about 2 years ago. The SS teacher and pastor, both, referred to non-Adventists as “Philistines”. What kind of message is being sent from our pulpits??

The lesson brings out the point that persecution after Steven’s death is the catalyst for the spreading of the message of Christ to Antioch. Has the tyranny of Satan ever succeeded in destroying the Church?? Has he come close??

Thursday. Conflict within the Church.

Can we identify any rites, beliefs, and ordinances that cause conflict in the church today??

What’s the big deal about circumcision, anyway??

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God’s law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. PP 364.

Friday.

*“A general slain in battle is lost to his army, but his death gives no additional strength to the enemy. But when a man of prominence joins the opposing force, not only are his services lost, but those to whom he joins himself gain a decided advantage. Saul of Tarsus, on his way to Damascus, might easily have been struck dead by the Lord, and much strength would have been withdrawn from the persecuting power. But God in His providence not only spared Saul’s life, but converted him, thus transferring a champion from the side of the enemy to the side of Christ. An eloquent speaker and a severe critic, Paul, with his stern purpose and undaunted courage, possessed the very qualifications needed in the early church.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 124.*

Paul’s conversion is a perfect example of God’s “vengeance”. He used the best method needed to get Paul’s attention, knowing that Paul’s heart was still receptive to the Holy Spirit, and then He healed Paul. This was far more effective for the growth of the early church than just striking him dead. How do you think Satan felt, losing one of his best soldiers??

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 2 4Q 2011

Paul's Authority and Gospel

What is "authority"?

Definition of AUTHORITY

1

a (1) : a citation (as from a book or file) used in defense or support (2) : the source from which the citation is drawn
b (1) : a conclusive statement or set of statements (as an official decision of a court) (2) : a decision taken as a precedent (3) : [TESTIMONY](#)
c : an individual cited or appealed to as an expert

2

a : power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior

b : freedom granted by one in authority : [RIGHT](#)

3

a : persons in command; *specifically* : [GOVERNMENT](#)
b : a governmental agency or corporation to administer a revenue-producing public enterprise <the transit *authority*>

4

a : [GROUNDS](#), [WARRANT](#) <had excellent *authority* for believing the claim>
b : convincing force <lent *authority* to the performance>

Do any of these definitions fit Paul's "authority"?

From where does "authority" on a topic originate? Is the authority of Paul's gospel based on governmental empowerment? In other words, did God appoint Paul to an office, and by virtue of holding the office of Apostle Paul now has authority?

If authority comes from holding office – then did Peter have authority? Then when Peter began avoiding socializing with

Gentiles and Paul confronted him publicly, who was more authoritative? Was Peter still an authority on that point? Why not? Was He still an Apostle? Yet, on this point he lost authority, why?

The four servants [Paul, Barnabas, Judas, Silas] of God were sent to Antioch with the epistle and message that was to put an end to all controversy; for it was the voice of the highest authority upon the earth. {AA 195.3}

Does authority come by force? Power? Previous decisions?

So, from where does ultimate authority arise? Would it not be the truth?

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. Romans 1:16

What about this type of authority?

Notwithstanding the fact that Paul was personally taught by God, he had no strained ideas of individual responsibility. While looking to God for direct guidance, he was ever ready **to recognize the authority vested in the body of believers united in church fellowship**. He felt the need of counsel, and when matters of importance arose, he was glad to lay these before the church and to unite with his brethren in seeking God for wisdom to make right decisions. Even "the spirits of the prophets," he declared, "are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." 1 Corinthians 14:32, 33. With Peter, he taught that all united in church capacity should be "subject one to another." 1 Peter 5:5. {AA 200.2}

Do we have that mindset today? If Paul came to one of our churches would we recognize he was subject to the authority

of the body of believers? Or would we reverse it and allow one individual to be the mind for the body? What about with the writings of EGW? Do we let her be the mind for the entire church?

Does that mean, then if the church meets and the board votes an action we should submit to it?

In the presence of the monarch and the leading men of Sweden, Olaf Petri with great ability defended the doctrines of the reformed faith against the Romish champions. He declared that the teachings of the Fathers are to be received only when in accordance with the Scriptures; that the essential doctrines of the faith are presented in the Bible in a clear and simple manner, so that all men may understand them. Christ said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (John 7:16); and Paul declared that should he preach any other gospel than that which he had received, he would be accursed (Galatians 1:8). "How, then," said the Reformer, "shall others presume to enact dogmas at their pleasure, and impose them as things necessary to salvation?"-- Wylie, b. 10, ch. 4. **He showed that the decrees of the church are of no authority when in opposition to the commands of God, and maintained the great Protestant principle that "the Bible and the Bible only" is the rule of faith and practice.** {GC 243.2}

Should we submit blindly to the teachings a true Apostle? A prophet? Or a church board? Or must each one of us think for ourselves, study for ourselves, and decide for ourselves?

Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.
Romans 14:5

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs "Students at a university..." thoughts?

Was this “Paul’s” plan, or was it God’s plan that Gentiles could join based on faith?

Why did the Judiazers come to think that circumcision was necessary?

Do we struggle with any of these things today?

I received a piece of literature recently handed to me after SS by someone. As I perused the literature its entire emphasis was on making the case that Jewish feast days and holidays were still binding and that we must observe these holidays in order to prepare for the second coming. Thoughts?

Is this any different than what Paul was dealing with in regard to circumcision? Why or why not?

Is there a difference in someone freely choosing to observe the Jewish feast days, because they want to experience the event, find some personal meaning, experience an enhanced closeness with God, and making the observances a requirement for salvation, or preparation for Christ’s return?

If we begin telling people that in order to be prepared to meet Jesus we must observe the feast days what have we done? Have we not erected a barrier, a work, an obstacle to our relationship with Christ? Further, we have moved backward away from the reality the system was designed to teach, which was transformation of character and preparation of heart/mind to meet Jesus to a ritualistic set of observances, which have already proven to devolve into legalism.

Jump to Thursday’s Lesson – read second paragraph, “Why did Paul...” thoughts?

Do we struggle with this today? Do we struggle with people who want to erect barriers to people coming to Christ? I received this email two weeks ago:

i have recently had a very trying and troubling time in my church. i was asked to serve on the nominating committee ... and heard some very disturbing things about our church family... a man's name was mentioned as someone we should find a place for him to serve in the church. this same man is asking for re-baptism but is being denied this because he smokes. now, it seems contradictory to me that the pastor won't baptize him because of his smoking but yet wants us to find him a place to serve in the church. i personally feel that he should be baptized and let the Lord deal with him on his health habits or lack there of. i don't recall that Jesus or John the baptist had any such requirements before they would baptize people.

next, there is another member who, according to one of the nominating committee members, flagrantly flaunts his "addiction" to caffeine by drinking pepsi at potlucks and therefore he should not be asked to be an elder in the church. i am not sure why people feel such a need to judge on these superficial things. it is just so disturbing to me as it often will keep the very souls who need Jesus the most out and make us a very unwelcoming people. Satan is doing such a good work distracting and dividing us, isn't he. where is Christ's love to be found? it is so painful to see people treat each other like this, it makes my heart hurt and my senses recoil. i am embarrassed to be connected to such a group of people even. i don't want to leave the church by any means but still cannot support this line of thinking and have told them as much. they may ask me to leave?? (LOL) thanks for you time and i continue to feel blessed by your teachings and your groups lesson studies.

Thoughts? Was requiring circumcision a barrier that obstructed people coming to Christ to which Paul fought against? Yet, circumcision was instituted by God. Is requiring people to give up their sins, habits, and defects of character

before being baptized in harmony with the Bible? Or does it put in place obstacles that keep people away from Christ?

Who is the only one that can free us from our defects? Must we experience victory over sin in our lives before we are good enough to be baptized?

Why do we do it? Are we baptizing into Christ or into an institution? Christ doesn't require we change before we come to Him, but organizations have certain "standards" and in order to be a member of the organization then one has to achieve a certain level of performance before one can join.

Where did such thinking originate? Thankfully, not all pastors think this way. I know one, my former pastor, who would baptize people that still struggled with smoking, because he understood it was the power of God that could free them from their addiction.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "When Paul wrote..." thoughts? Was Paul writing to believers in Collegedale in 2011? Is the message of Galatians written to you and me? How do we then understand and apply what we read in Scripture?

Is it important to understand the original audience? Is it important to understand their circumstances and struggles?

Who were the Galatians?

Galatia is the area of central and western Turkey and gets its name from the Gauls who colonized the area. The Gauls were Celtic people of the Gallic tribes which occupied most of Europe and were eventually defeated in Europe by Julius Caesar in 52 BC.

The people in the Galatians churches, in western Turkey were descendants of these Gallic tribes.

Many wars were fought in this region of Turkey. Alexander the Great conquered it, after his death it became part of the Seleucus portion, and later in 63 BC Pompeii defeated Antiochus to gain Roman dominance over this region.

It is unclear which churches Paul was addressing in this Epistle, there is speculation on northern or southern churches. But what were some of the churches in Galatia?

- Antioch
- Iconium
- Lystra
- Derbe

Antioch at one time was the third largest city in the world having a population of over 500,000 second only to Rome and Alexandria. By the time Paul was writing the population of Antioch had decreased to 200,000-300,000 – roughly the size of Chattanooga.

Antioch was chosen as the capital of the Seleucus empire by ritual – an eagle, which was the bird of Zeus – and Zeus was the Greek form of Baal, was given a piece of sacrificial meat and where the bird carried the meat was where Antioch was founded.

They worshipped a pantheon of Roman and Greek gods. Slavery was an accepted practice, women had few rights, Roman Imperialism was the governmental model. Jewish legalism was pervasive.

Earthquakes were common in this area and a major earthquake hit Antioch in 37 AD causing Emperor Caligula to send two senators to investigate the damage. Another major earthquake hit the area sometime during the reign of Claudius 41-54 AD.

Galatians was written between 55-60 AD.

Was Paul writing this book of the Bible to us? How do we understand it?

MONDAY

Apostle means messenger – the lesson points out in the strictest application it would be a messenger who was personally instructed by Christ.

Some attacked Paul's ministry by attacking his right to preach, his qualifications, credentials to give a message. Read last paragraph, "Yet, they did not..." thoughts?

Why do people attack the credentials or qualifications of another person? Why do people go behind the back of others to try and undermine their ministry? Is it not because they have no argument against the truth, and therefore must try and stop the messenger who is bringing the truth?

How did Satan work in heaven? Did he work openly or behind the scenes? Did he go directly to Christ and talk with Christ about his complaints? Did he undermine Christ's authority and position?

What would have been the healthiest response from the angels? Would it have been to call Christ into the conversation and have Christ and Lucifer discuss it openly?

What about today? If someone comes to you and suggests "so and so teaches this, or doesn't believe that, or has no authority from the church to teach this..." what is the best approach? Should we invite the parties to discuss it together?

What would happen today if someone stood up and claimed to have spent three years in the desert being instructed by Christ and has a message for the church?

Would such a person be taken seriously? How should we respond to such a person? Do you think Paul's recounting of his experience made it easier for people to accept what He said?

How should we respond if someone stands up today claiming the gift of prophecy?

- Examine the message, does it present the truth about God as revealed by Jesus?
- Is it in harmony with God's testable laws?
- Does it enlighten, ennoble, promote autonomy and freedom of individuals, or does the message darken minds, reduce thinking, undermine freedoms?

WEDNESDAY

No Other Gospel – today, is there more than one gospel that is being presented in the world? Within Christianity? Within Adventism?

What other gospels are being preached?

- Eastern Mysticism – become one with the universe through emptying oneself in meditation
- Mankind is slowly evolving to ever more advanced stages
- Mankind can save itself by legislation and a unified government
- The earth is our mother and we must care for the earth and thereby save ourselves
- God is angry at the nations and will punish those who don't accept the blood payment of His Son
- Israel has a special genetic advantage over the rest of humanity and God gives them a different path to salvation than the rest of humanity

What does Paul say about those who present another gospel?

Read last paragraph, "How were the Galatians..." thoughts?

Was Paul desiring that anyone who taught another gospel be cursed?

What is Paul saying?

Here is my paraphrase:

Gal 1:6 I am shocked and amazed that you are so quick to reject the truth about God and turn away from his gracious character and methods of love as revealed by Christ and instead are turning to a different message of “good news” – 7 which really isn’t good news at all, but a grand deception which will only destroy. Evidently there are some people who are twisting and perverting the good news about God that Christ has brought and thus throwing you into all kinds of confusion. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should come and present a message of “good news” different than what we have already presented – a message that, in effect, misrepresents God and changes the meaning of what Christ accomplished – then he will be eternally lost, because he will be presenting a message without truth and with no power to heal and restore. 9 As we have said once, so that no one will misunderstand I now say it again: If anyone, from anywhere, regardless of accompanying signs or miracles, presents a so called message of “good news” different than what you already accepted, he will be eternally lost, because he will be presenting a false message with no power to heal or restore!

What do you think? Is Paul saying what he wants to happen, that he wants people to be cursed, and that if they present a false gospel God uses His power to curse and condemn, or is he describing the reality what will happen if one abandons the truth for a lie?

What happens if one is dying of a terminal condition and trades the genuine remedy for a false remedy? Does the doctor have to curse you or punish the foolish patient? Will the foolish patient be lost if that happens? This is what Paul is describing!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “One of the unique...” thoughts?

Read second paragraph, “Although...” thoughts? What is the gospel?

- How would you describe the “good news”?
- How can you know if the gospel you believe is the genuine remedy to sin or a false gospel with no power to heal and restore?

What does it mean that God sends the message of grace and peace? How is that message communicated in Christ? What is the good news that Christ has revealed?

What did Christ accomplish for us that we couldn’t accomplish for ourselves?

Read bottom pink section, “In about...” did anyone do this and want to share? Here is my paraphrase:

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an ambassador of the celestial government of God – not appointed or sent by men, but called by Jesus Christ and confirmed by God the Father, who raised Christ from the dead—2 and all the brothers with me,

To those who have partaken of God’s healing remedy in Galatia:

Gal 1:3 God our Father sends his graciousness and peace to you, as does the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who

voluntarily sacrificed himself to restore trust and heal us from the infection of fear and selfishness and thus deliver us out of this present self-indulgent, self-destructive evil age, according to the eternal purpose of our God and Father, 5 to whom be all honor and praise and glory for ever and ever. Amen

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read bottom pink section

Thoughts? Has God called you? What has He called you to? What is your purpose in His plan? How can you know?

Does God call each of us to a specific vocation? Or does God call each of us to His kingdom of love and regardless of vocation we are to reveal His character, to be salt in the earth, light in the darkness revealing the truth of God's kingdom of love and methods of truth, love and freedom!

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-4

Lesson 3 – The Unity of the Gospel

Sabbath

“Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” Phil. 2:2.

What does it mean to be in UNITY? Was this message just for the 1st century Christian church, or can we learn some principles for the 21st century church??

u·ni·ty [yoo-ni-tee]

noun, plural -ties.

1. the state of being one; oneness.
2. a whole or totality as combining all its parts into one.
3. the state or fact of being united or combined into one, as of the parts of a whole; unification.
4. absence of diversity; unvaried or uniform character.
5. oneness of mind, feeling, etc., as among a number of persons; concord, harmony, or agreement.

Which of these definitions best fits the Godhead?? Which best fits Adventism?? Which best fits our class??

Sunday

The Importance of Unity

1 Cor 1:10-13.

10 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. 11 My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. 12 What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ.” 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Paul is being branded as a “renegade” according to the lesson. He seems to just be making trouble for the church establishment. He later accuses one of Christ’s disciples [a prominent church leader] of hypocrisy. Any of this sounding familiar yet??

The pink section at the bottom of Sunday’s lesson asks: “What are some issues that threaten the unity of the church today? What issues are more important than unity itself??”

Doesn’t it matter what we are unified about?? This is from a Christian author:

There are a thousand temptations in disguise prepared for those who have the light of truth; and the only safety for any of us is in receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest prayer; and if they see no light in it, yield to their judgment; for “in the multitude of counselors there is safety.” {5T 293.1}

Monday

Circumcision and the False Brothers

Galatians 2.

1 Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. 2 I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain. 3 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. 4 This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. 5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. 6 As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message. 7 On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. 8 For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. 9 James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. 10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

Paul Opposes Cephas

11 When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. 13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. 14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? 15 “We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles 16 know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified. 17 “But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews find ourselves also among the sinners, doesn’t that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! 18 If I rebuild what I destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker. 19 “For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

What’s the big deal about circumcision anyway?? We touched on this 2 weeks ago with this quote:

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God’s law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

Tuesday Unity in Diversity.

Is this contradictory?

What does it mean to be “free” in Jesus Christ?? Are we “free” to do what we please?? Are we “free” to live our lives without fear?? Are we “free” to violate the “Laws of God” [health/worship/love/liberty/natural laws/giving/etc]?? Are we free to violate God’s Law at the risk of His character of Love and forgiveness changing toward us?? Are we free to violate God’s Law without consequence?? Have you ever really pondered what this freedom means??

Is the drug addict free?? Is the drunk free?? Is the obese diabetic free?? Is the jealous spouse free?? Is the person with a distorted God concept free??

Paul understood the concept that God’s Law was NOT something legislated after sin entered the world, but it emanates from his character; it has natural consequences for violations; and the Earth and mankind were created in harmony with the Law of God and functioned that way until Adam and Eve believed the lie that they would “not surely die.” While Paul didn’t understand anywhere near what we understand of the natural laws and the laws of health, he understood enough to write in **Romans 1: 18-20: “18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”**

Is our, present day, SDA church unified in diversity?? In diversity of culture maybe. In diversity of gender, probably. In diversity of thought, light, and wisdom, doubtfully.

Wednesday Confrontation at Antioch

This is a familiar story where Paul confronts Peter for his hypocrisy in eating with the Gentiles, except when some prominent Jews came to visit. [Thursday’s lesson shows us this was NOT the real problem.] Could/should Paul have handled the confrontation with Peter better?? Paul himself uses some pejorative language in Gal 2:15 [**15 “We who are Jews by birth and not *sinful* Gentiles...”**].

What can we learn from Peter’s behavior after he was confronted?? Have we experienced any confrontation in our family lives lately?? In our SS class?? At work?? Have we handled things like Peter did??

Thursday

Paul's Concern

Gal. 2:11-14

11 When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. 13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. 14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

How does Peter's behavior compromise the Gospel of Jesus?? The lesson, rightly, states, "From Paul's perspective, Peter's behavior implied that the Gentile Christians were second-rate believers at best, and he believed that Peter's actions would place strong pressure upon the Gentiles to conform if they wanted to experience full fellowship."

Have we treated any group or individual as "second-rate Christians"? Smokers?? Anyone of a different language or skin color?? Carnivores?? Sunday worshipers??

Friday

In the pink box, #1: "Very few people enjoy confrontation, but sometimes it is necessary. In what circumstances should a church condemn error and discipline those who refuse to accept correction?" Any thoughts on this one??

Justification by Faith Alone -- Lesson 4 of The Gospel in Galatians

Sabbath Afternoon:

Memory Text: "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20, ESV).

This week we will be looking at what it is that happens to bring broken, selfish, fearful people to the place where they can be described by the memory text for this week. What has to happen to lead an individual to "die" -- to have Christ be the one "who lives in" them -- to "live by faith in the Son of God"?

2nd paragraph : "What did Paul actually . . ."

Key words that are foundational to understanding the gospel and the rest of Paul's letter to the Galatians: justification, righteousness, works of the law, belief, faith -- faith of Jesus.

"What does Paul mean by these terms, and what do they teach us about the plan of salvation?"

Let's take a look at Friday's lesson to understand the importance of our journey today.

"The danger has been presented to me again and again of entertaining, as a people, false ideas of justification by faith. I have been shown for years that Satan would work in a special manner to confuse the mind on this point. The law of God has been largely dwelt upon and has been presented to congregations, almost as destitute of the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His relation to the law as was the offering of Cain. I have been shown that many have been kept from the faith because of the mixed, confused ideas of salvation, because the ministers have worked in a wrong manner to reach hearts. The point that has been urged upon my mind for years is the imputed righteousness of Christ. . . ."

"There is not a point that needs to be dwelt upon more earnestly, repeated more frequently, or established more firmly in the minds of all than the impossibility of fallen man meriting anything by his own best good works. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone."—Ellen G. White, Faith and Works, pp. 18, 19.

We will be studying what it means to be justified by faith or to be righteous by faith -- righteousness by faith. As we study be reflecting on why it is that Satan would "work in a special manner to confuse the mind on this point"?

Sunday: The Question of "Justification" (Gal. 2:15-16)

When you think of the word justification what do you think of?

15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 knowing that

a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. Gal.2:15, 16 NKJV

The Jews felt that circumcision was necessary to be part of God's family--to be acceptable to God. Would circumcision be one of the "works of the law"? What do we mean when we speak of "works of the law"?

What went wrong in God's universe that resulted in things being so out of place here on our earth -- so out of place in you and in me? There was war in heaven (*Rev. 12:7*). What was this war about? When the war took place in heaven the dragon--the serpent of old--the one called the Devil and Satan is said to have been cast out of heaven. He was cast to the earth--he is described as one "who deceives the whole world." Is this deception about God? Are the questions similar to the ones raised with Adam and Eve in the Garden? Is God a liar? Is He withholding things from us that would lead to our advancement, growth, elevation? Is He selfish?

This war seems to be over the character and government of God. We are born in the middle of the conflict in a world darkened by Satan's lies about God -- a world filled with misapprehension about God. What would God do to solve this problem?

Christ came to represent the Father. We behold in him the image of the invisible God. He clothed his divinity with humanity, and came to the world that the erroneous ideas Satan had been the means of creating in the minds of men, in regard to the character of God, might be removed. We could not behold the glory of God unveiled in Christ and live; but as he came in the garb of humanity, we may draw nigh to our Redeemer. We are called upon to behold the Lord our Father in the person of his Son. Christ came in the robe of the flesh, with his glory subdued in humanity, that lost man might communicate with him and live. Through Christ we may comprehend something of him who is glorious in holiness. Jesus is the mystic ladder by which we may mount to behold the glory of the infinite God. By faith we behold Christ standing between humanity and divinity, connecting God and man, and earth and heaven. {ST January 20, 1890, par. 5}

Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God. He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, that men might lose the true views of God's character, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth. He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. He was pictured as

one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature. {ST January 20, 1890, par. 6} God Made Manifest in Christ

Read the paragraph beginning, "The verb to justify . . . "
Does this legal system describe God's government? If so, how would this fix what has gone wrong in God's universe? Would we be safe in a universe filled with people ""declared innocent", "counted as righteous"? Are we or are we not "faithful members" of God's community / family?

Monday: Works of the Law

Do we perform certain acts or behaviors to get the Holy Spirit, to see miracles, to be in God's favor?

Read:

Gal. 3:1-12

1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? 2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? 4 Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? 5 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?— 6 just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”

11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith. 12 Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”

Rom. 3:9-31

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously

charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

10 As it is written:

“ There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands;

There is none who seeks after God.

12 They have all turned aside;

They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one.”

13 “ Their throat is an open tomb;

With their tongues they have practiced deceit”;

“ The poison of asps is under their lips”;

14 “ Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”

15 “ Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways;

17 And the way of peace they have not known.”

18 “ There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. 29 Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, 30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

Rom. 3:9-20 We are sick -- the law makes us conscious of our sin -- shows us our sickness.

vs. 21 -- Apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known . . .

vs. 22 -- This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

What is God looking for? Does He want certain acts of behaviors?

Deut. 10:12 "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?"

Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?

How does God get these things from broken / sick people? Can He command it -- LAW? Can He send us tablets of stone with the rules or conditions listed and solve the problem? Can He force it? How does God get LOVE, DEVOTION, RELATIONSHIP from children who are fearful and selfish?

Tuesday: The Basis of Our Justification

"And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith" (Phil. 3:9, NKJV).

Read 1st paragraph. "We should not . . ."

Were the Jewish Christians "believers in Jesus"? Did they "all have faith in Him?" What was the real problem with these Jewish Christians? What kind of god did they serve -- what was their god looking for? Love, faithfulness, a mind restored to truth, a healed relationship between them and their God? Or did their god require them to have long lists of behaviors and to be preoccupied with being sure that everything on that list was checked off? If this is the case did they serve an arbitrary, exacting God?

Maybe this is the god they believed in -- but is it the God revealed in the life and death of Jesus?

2nd paragraph "For Paul . . ." What work did Christ accomplish in our behalf? What work did He do through His faithfulness -- the "faithfulness of Jesus"? Was it something accomplished in a legal system -- bookwork, declarations? Or did the faithfulness of Jesus reveal to us the truth about God -- truth that actually brings healing and restoration to our broken relationship with Him -- to our broken condition of selfishness and fear? Does the faithfulness of Jesus SET US RIGHT -- justify us?

What is the relationship of faith to our justification? How would you explain to someone the part faith has to play?

Works of the law verses faithfulness of Jesus? Reflect on the controversy over the character and government of God. Will any effort on our part to keep a list of

rules repair our broken relationship with God? Could the faithfulness of Jesus -- the revelation of Jesus -- God made manifest -- repair our broken relationship? Could God come to us and make Himself known clear up any misunderstandings we have -- reveal that Satan's representation of God is actually a LIE? Could God's love towards us actually beget love in us?

Question in the pink : How is "Christ's faithfulness for us, His perfect obedience to God" the only basis of our salvation? How does that work?

Wednesday: The Obedience of Faith

What is faith? What does it involve?

Read Gen. 15:5,6, John 3:14-16, 2 Cor. 5:14,15, Gal. 5:6

Jesus was lifted up that all who believe in him can have life! The love of Christ compels us! Faith works through love!

Why did Abraham believe God?

Jn. 3:14-16 shows us some concrete reasons to have faith / believe in God.

faith / belief are the same Greek word -- *pisteus*

Rom. 1:16,17 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

The gospel -- the good news revealed by Christ, is the power of God to salvation -- because the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith -- "The just shall live by faith."

James 2:19 *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!*

What do the demons believe about God -- why are they trembling? Is it important to know who God is --evidence -- so that faith / belief / trust / confidence can be safely placed in our God? If we don't KNOW the true God could we end up believing like the demons do -- could we too tremble? Would that kind of belief rescue our minds from darkness, heal our characters of fear and selfishness?

Read paragraph "A careful examination . . . "

"Distorted ideas about the character of God actually can make it more difficult to have faith."

Is this true? Any words you would choose to replace in this sentence? Would it be more accurate to say that distorted ideas about the character of God make it impossible to have faith -- to trust God?

Will a restored relationship with God, a mind rescued from the lies about God

affect our behavior? Will our faith / trust / belief in God lead us to love Him, to be willing to listen to His counsel, to be will to live our lives for the one who lives for us? Reflect on any love relationship you have experienced on this earth -- did that love affect the way you moved about?

Read James 2:14-24

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

Faith / belief / trust / confidence in the true God, as revealed in Christ will lead to a life spurred on by LOVE -- a desire to follow, listen, cooperate, walk along side of! As we respond to the love of God by our "works" of love our trust in God will be made perfect -- it will grow as we walk together!

Thursday: Does Faith Promote Sin?

Does knowing that the truth about God alone can save your mind lead you to live a lawless life? When you understand the goodness of God and how free you are and that He is not arbitrary, exacting, severe, and vengeful -- does that lead you to be careless about how you live your life? Many believe that the trust / healing model leads those who believe it to be careless about how they live -- is this what you have experienced in you own life?

Why be concerned with how we live?

Does careless / lazy behavior affect our human relationships? Would it affect our relationship with God? Are we free to be careless / lazy / thoughtless / and selfish? Indeed we are that free -- we can walk away without fear that God will "punish" us or do something to hurt us or cause us to suffer. If we choose to be careless in our relationship with God, is it God's fault or are we making ourselves lawless (loveless)?

Gal. 2:17-18 *"But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! 18 For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.*

Paul's description of his union with Christ :

Gal. 2:19-21 *For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."*

Carla's paraphrase : A day came when I realized through the law just how sick I was. That realization caused me to give up the idea that there was anything that I could do to fix what was wrong with me. When that realization came to me I turned my mind to God. Seeing the life and the death of Christ has led me to understand the goodness and love and wisdom of my God. Everything is now changed -- its a new life! The old me is gone -- now I have an entire new mindset towards my God! Now the life I live day by day I live because of the trust / confidence / faith I have in God, as revealed by His Son -- the one who loved me and gave Himself for me! I'll never again live a life centered in keeping a list of rules and regulations. If my mind could be set right through rules and regulations there would be no need for Christ to have died -- in fact He wouldn't have even needed to live! None of that law - centered life for me. I love because I was first loved! :)

Read question in the pink box.

A list of rules can never set my mind right -- only God made manifest can enlighten my darkened mind and rescue me from fear / selfishness. When I see Him I trust Him because of His trustworthiness -- revealed though an abundance of evidence. I therefore rejoice -- I'm new -- my mind is rescued and the healing begins!

Friday:

Why is it dangerous to entertain false ideas of justification by faith? Why would Satan want to confuse the mind on this point?

Under the summary it says that "it is only by accepting what God has done for us in Christ that the sinner can be justified in His sight."

What are we accepting that leads us to be justified in His sight?

Good Works the Fruit of Faith

Genuine faith will be manifested in good works; for good works are the fruits of faith. As God works in the heart, and man surrenders his will to God, and cooperates with God, he works out in the life what God works in by the Holy Spirit, and there is harmony between the purpose of the heart and the practice of the life. Every sin must be renounced as the hateful thing that crucified the Lord of life and glory, and the believer must have a progressive experience by continually doing the works of Christ. It is by continual surrender of the will, by continual obedience, that the blessing of justification is retained. {1SM 397.1}

Those who are justified by faith must have a heart to keep the way of the Lord. It is an evidence that a man is not justified by faith when his works do not correspond to his profession. James says, "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was his faith made perfect?" (James 2:22). {1SM 397.2}

The faith that does not produce good works does not justify the soul. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3). {1SM 397.3}

Imputation of the righteousness of Christ comes through justifying faith, and is the justification for which Paul so earnestly contends. He says: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.... Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Romans 3:20-31). {1SM 397.4}

Grace is unmerited favor, and the believer is justified without any merit of his own, without any claim to offer to God. He is justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who stands in the courts of heaven as the sinner's substitute and surety. But while he is justified because of the merit of Christ, he is not free to work unrighteousness. Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Faith buds and blossoms and bears a harvest of precious fruit. Where faith is, good works appear. The sick are visited, the poor are cared for, the fatherless and the widows are not neglected, the naked are clothed, the destitute are fed. Christ went about doing good, and when men are united with Him, they love the children of God, and meekness and truth guide their footsteps. The expression of the countenance reveals their experience, and men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Christ and the believer become one, and His beauty of character is revealed in those who are vitally connected with the Source of power and love. Christ is the great depository of justifying righteousness and sanctifying grace. {1SM 398.1}

All may come to Him, and receive of His fullness. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Then why not cast aside all unbelief and heed the words of Jesus? You want rest; you long for peace. Then say from the heart, "Lord Jesus, I come, because Thou hast given me this invitation." Believe in Him with steadfast faith, and He will save you. Have you been looking unto Jesus, who is the author and finisher of your faith? Have you been beholding Him who is full of truth and grace? Have you accepted the peace which Christ alone can give? If you have not, then yield to Him, and through His grace seek for a character that will be noble and elevated. Seek for a constant, resolute, cheerful spirit. Feed on Christ, who is the bread of life, and you will manifest His loveliness of character and spirit. {1SM 398.2}

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 5 4Q 2011

Old Testament Faith

SABBATH

Memory verse – Galatians 3:13, read – thoughts?

What does this mean to you? What does it mean to be cursed of God? How did Christ become a curse for us?

Read paragraphs 1-3, “A little boy...” thoughts?

What are the strengths of this story?

- God did build us
- The human race was stolen by deception
- God did redeem us at great cost to Himself

What are the weaknesses of the story?

- The plan of salvation was not a simple bartering with the devil
- The plan of salvation was not a purchase or payment to a holder of some legal debt
- The story could cause misunderstanding as to what was necessary to redeem
- What was the purchase price? Why?
 - What holds us in bondage? The lies of Satan that we believe and our carnal nature – so what is the price to free us?

SUNDAY

Read top dark section, thoughts?

What do you understand legalism to be?

Here is a traditional definition of legalism:

Legalism refers to any doctrine which states salvation comes strictly from adherence to the law. It can be thought of as a works-based religion. Groups in the New Testament said to be falling into this category include the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, Judaizers, and Nicolaitans. (Wikipedia)

Thoughts?

What about the idea of God having to fulfill legal requirements in order for God to have the legal right to save us? Would that be legalism?

What about God having to pay legal penalties in order to appease the law in order to save us? Would that be legalism?

Isn't legalism anything which makes the plan of salvation a legal issue?

One form of legalism has us trying to achieve legal outcomes and the other form has God trying to achieve legal outcomes, but both are legalistic.

Read first paragraph, "Several modern..." thoughts?

Who has bewitched? The devil of course, so how has the devil tried to obstruct God from saving mankind and bringing an end to sin? What specific actions has he taken, or methods has he employed?

1. Tried to prevent Christ from coming to earth by getting every human being to close their heart to God – why would this have obstructed the plan of salvation?
 - a. Because God would not force a person against their will to be the vessel for Christ's incarnation – thus Christ could not have become human and the earth would have been lost.
2. Tried to destroy Christ as an infant?

- a. Why would this have obstructed the plan?
 - b. Christ would have been born a human. He would have been sinless. Herod would have had shed His innocent blood, and if the problem was merely the legal need to have a blood payment, why didn't God permit it? Why would the death of Christ as an infant obstructed the plan of salvation?
 - i. Because the problem was not a legal one and the shedding of blood to pay a legal penalty would have done nothing to fix the actual problem of sin – specifically:
 - ii. No evidence of God's character revealed
 - iii. No evidence of Satan's character exposed as a murderer and fraud
 - iv. No evidence that keeping the "law" behaviorally results in becoming God's enemy
 - v. The real reason sin results in death not revealed
 - vi. God's law of love not restored into a human being by the freewill choice of that human brain
 - vii. A perfect human character not developed
 - viii. The infection of selfishness not eradicated in the human brain by the free exercise of the human will to love perfectly
3. Tried to get Christ to choose to act selfishly. Why would this have obstructed the plan of salvation?
- a. Christ would have misrepresented God as selfish and sustained Satan's allegations against God.
 - b. It would have resulted in a failure to procure the remedy to sin, a revelation of truth to destroy lies and a developing of a perfect human character.
4. Tried to destroy the early church through persecution
- a. Why would this have obstructed the plan of salvation – it would not have prevented the end of sin and sinners since Christ had achieved His victory, but it would have prevented the spread of the remedy and thus reduce the number of sinners eventually saved.

5. Tried to turn the mind away from the Cross to have the Cross forgotten.
 - a. Lost the knowledge of God deforms the character, hardens the heart, and destroys the faculties that respond to truth and love.
6. Tried to twist the meaning of what Christ achieved at the Cross replacing in with a false understanding.
 - a. The creation of legal reason by changing the nature of God's law from natural to imposed, and the purpose of the Cross was not to reveal truth and achieve remedy, but to pay legal penalty to the imperial authority of the universe.

Thoughts? Do any of these infect Christianity today?

Read second paragraph, "What baffles..." thoughts? Do Christians today know salvation is rooted in the Cross? Does that mean all Christians who know this will be saved? Why not?

MONDAY

In Paul's day when he refers to the Scripture, to what is he referring?

Do Christians today value the Old Testament as Paul did? What impact has it had on our theology to forget the Old Testament?

How has the Old Testament been demeaned? Two dispensations, the dispensation of law and the dispensation of grace idea, rather than seeing the Old Testament is the dispensation of grace as well. This is what Paul is teaching when he teaches Abraham was saved by grace, not by law.

Read bottom pink section, "Do you at..." thoughts?

What portion of scripture is inspired? What does it mean? Does it mean all portions of scripture tell the truth?

- When the devil said, “you will not surely die” in Eden, was he telling the truth.
- When Job’s friends said he must have done something awful for God to punish him the way He was, were they telling the truth?
- When the Pharisees said Jesus had a devil were they telling the truth?

The Scriptures are inspired, but we must be careful to understand who is speaking as the Scriptures give us a history of the controversy between Christ and Satan and as such have portions which document the enemies allegations and actions.

TUESDAY

Top question, “Why do...” thoughts? Could it be because the people confusing everyone were Judiazers and they were introducing Jewish traditions, circumcision which started with Abraham? And, because they misunderstood the entire purpose of what was going on it was important to go to the origin and show its true meaning.

What was the position of the Jews Paul was opposing? And how is that different from modern Christianity?

- The Jews took the position – Abraham obeyed and therefore God recognized him as righteous.
- Modern Christianity’s position – Abraham believed and therefore God credited him righteousness, even though he wasn’t.
- Paul’s position, Abraham trusted God with all his heart and therefore God recognized Abraham’s heart had changed from one of distrust, unright with God, to trust or right with God. Abraham was righteous.

Thoughts?

Read third paragraph, “Whereas....” Thoughts?

Does the bank, credit to your account with funds that are not in your account? So, if we use the “credit” idea, then we still must differentiate between fiction and fact.

Are funds credited on paper, but don’t actually exist in the bank? Or, when the bank credits the funds to your account has their been an actual transfer of funds into the account?

Does God credit us righteousness on books in heaven, when no righteousness exists in the heart? Or do the record books of heaven get the notation of righteousness when such righteousness is experienced in your heart?

The Greek imputed is:

3049 λογίζομαι [*logizomai* /log·id·zom·ahee/] v. Middle voice from 3056; TDNT 4:284; TDNTA 536; GK 3357; 41 occurrences; AV translates as “think” nine times, “impute” eight times, “reckon” six times, “count” five times, “account” four times, “suppose” twice, “reason” once, “number” once, and translated miscellaneous five times. **1** to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over. *1a* to take into account, to make an account of. *1a1* metaph. to pass to one’s account, to impute. *1a2* a thing is reckoned as or to be something, i.e. as availing for or equivalent to something, as having the like force and weight. *1b* to number among, reckon with. *1c* to reckon or account. **2 to reckon inward, count up or weigh the reasons, to deliberate. 3 by reckoning up all the reasons, to gather or infer. 3a to consider, take into account, weigh, meditate on. 3b to suppose, deem, judge. 3c to determine, purpose, decide.** *Additional Information:* **This word deals with reality. If I “logizomai” or reckon that my bank book has \$25 in it, it has \$25 in it. Otherwise I am deceiving myself. This word refers to facts not suppositions.**

- Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul **may be kept free from sin**; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation. . . . In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. **Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.** He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. -- God's Amazing Grace, pg. 181.4
- But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. **By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.** The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. -- God's Amazing Grace, pg. 96.4
- We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the provision of God. **We are to reflect the highest attributes of the character of God. . . . The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain through the imputed righteousness of Christ.** - - Our High Calling, pg. 364.2
- He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might **counteract evil,**

remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness. -- That I May Know Him, pg. 206

When your heart has been changed from distrust of God, to genuine trust, such that you willingly follow where He leads, you are righteous! Such a heart is not achieved by works, but by trust, or faith, and it is received through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who reproduces Christlikeness within!

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "And the Scripture..." thoughts?

Thoughts?

Would Abraham have had the gospel preached to him at Mt. Moriah? Wouldn't that experience have been the experience in which Abraham was able to comprehend what the good news of God and the plan of salvation are truly about?

Read second paragraph, "The basis..." thoughts?

The lesson states, "We usually promise we will serve Him, if only He will do something for us in return. But that is legalism."

What if we changed the sentence to say this, "We usually say Jesus promised to serve Him, if only He will do something for us in return. But that is legalism."

Is this any less legalism than the first? Isn't this what Christianity often teaches? What does the Bible teach?

- God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself
2Cor 5:19 ASV
- For God so loved the world He gave His only son..." John
3:16
- If God is for us who can be against us...Romans 8:31
- As the Saviour is lifted up before the people, they will see his humiliation, his self-denial, his self-sacrifice, his goodness, his tender compassion, his sufferings to save fallen man, and will realize that the atonement of Christ was not the cause of God's love, but the result of that love. **Jesus died because God loved the world. The channel had to be made whereby the love of God should be recognized by man, and flow into the sinner's heart in perfect harmony with truth and justice.** {RH, September 2, 1890 par. 7}
- The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; **it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us, but in our hearts and characters.**--Letter 406, 1906. {7BC 464.2}

What is the basis of the covenant to Abraham? It is salvation by grace through faith – it is the same covenant as given to Adam after the fall, the same covenant as confirmed by Jesus' life, death and resurrection. It is the covenant written in Jeremiah and Hebrews, of writing the law of the heart and mind. It is the promise of God that through Christ He would provide remedy to our terminal condition and would apply that remedy to the hearts and minds of all who allow Him.

THURSDAY

Read Galatians 3:10-14:

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” ¹¹ Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, “The righteous will live by faith.” ¹² The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, “The man who does these things will live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” ¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. (NIV)

Thoughts?

Read second paragraph, “Paul is contrasting...” thoughts?

How would you describe what Paul is saying? Is Paul describing a legal process of salvation or is Paul attacking the fallacy of a legal process of salvation?

Gal 3:10 All who try to get well and experience unity with God by observing certain rituals or following a written script or obeying a set of rules are abandoned to their own fate, for it is written: “Abandoned to your own choice is everyone who fails in the slightest to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” ¹¹ Clearly no one is healed and set right with God by working to follow a set of rules, because “Those set right with God live by trust.” ¹² The written law, as applied by the Jews, is not based on trust; on the contrary it is based on individual performance, on attempts to heal oneself, as it is written: “The man who works to save himself will live in fear and only get worse.” ¹³ Christ saved us from where the law leaves us – diagnosed as terminal and abandoned to die, by being abandoned on the cross in order to restore us to trust and purge humanity from the infection of selfishness and death, for it is written: “Abandoned to die is everyone who is hung on a tree.” ¹⁴ He saved us from

a futile self-focused works system so that the blessings of love, life and freedom given to Abraham and achieved through trust might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, so that by trust we might receive the full enlightenment, renewal and regeneration of heart and mind that comes by the Spirit.

Thoughts? What do you think about my use of “Abandoned” for “cursed”? What is God’s curse?

What actually happened to Christ on the Cross? What did God actually do to Him?

“Because of our sins he was **given over** to die...” (Romans 4:25 – GN)

“My God, my God, why have you **forsaken me?**” Matt 27:46

Wouldn’t this be the “curse” God letting go?

When a patient is dying of a terminal condition does the doctor have to kill the non-compliant patient?

God doesn’t have to inflict death or is death what happens if we refuse God’s remedy!

Read last paragraph, “Paul introduces..” thoughts? What does this mean?

Who did Christ buy us back from? Who was the price paid to?

Does the language of “a death sentence” help or confuse? Could we say, a person with terminal cancer, who refuses the remedy is under a death sentence? Yes, but who imposed the death sentence? Is it the same as a prisoner on death row?

When we hear descriptions of sinners under a “death sentence” do we hear it as God imposing a judicial punishment, or do we hear it as a terminal condition? Which is more accurate to the problem of sin?

So what is it we are redeemed from? What is the price paid? To whom is it paid? What does a ransom do? It frees, what holds us in bondage? The lies of Satan that we believe and our terminal condition, our carnal nature. What is the price necessary to free us from this bondage? The truth about God which destroys the lies and wins us to trust PLUS a new character, a new humanity, received freely as a gift, achieved solely by Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus loves His people, and when they put their trust in Him, depending wholly upon Him, He strengthens them. He will live through them, giving them the inspiration of His sanctifying Spirit, **imparting to the soul a vital transfusion of Himself.** He acts through their faculties and causes them to choose His will and to act out His character. With the apostle Paul they then may say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me:** and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).
 . . . {TMK 78.4}

We actually become "partakers of the divine nature."

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "Upon Christ..." thoughts? What was placed upon Christ? What did He take upon Himself? It was our terminal condition!

What does it mean the guilt of every descendent of Adam was pressing upon His heart? Does that mean he felt the guilt of each individual sin, or that He was aware of our experience of guilt?

What is the significance that the psychological pain obscured the physical pain? What implications are there for our consideration of the wicked in the end?

Was his fear that He would be separated from the Father forever, the same as being separated from the Father forever?

Will the wicked be separated forever? Why was Christ not separated forever? If the legal penalty is eternal separation from the Father, has that penalty been paid merely because Christ felt like that might happen?

Amid the awful darkness, apparently forsaken of God, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. In those dreadful hours He had relied upon the evidence of His Father's acceptance heretofore given Him. He was acquainted with the character of His Father; He understood His justice, His mercy, and His great love. **By faith He rested in Him whom it had ever been His joy to obey. And as in submission He committed Himself to God, the sense of the loss of His Father's favor was withdrawn. By faith, Christ was victor.** {DA 756.3}

Is this the experience of the wicked in the end? The legal, penal substitution model is flawed, seriously. It gives a false hope because it removes the problem from our condition, to our legal account in heaven, and moves the solution from transforming us to adjusting records in heaven.

Christ redeemed humanity when He recreated humanity in His own person. In Jesus humanity was freed from the infection of sin/selfishness and rebuilt into God's original ideal!

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 6 4Q 2011

The Priority of the Promise

What do you think of God's Promises?

What promises of God can you name?

- A Savior to crush Satan – Genesis 3:15
- Never to destroy the entire world with a flood again
Genesis 9:11
- To be faithful
 - Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. DT 7:9
 - He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. DT 32:4
 -
- To never change Heb 13:8
- To save all who trust Him John 3:16
- To come again and put an end to sin John 14:1-3

Are God's promises ever misused? How?

SABBATH

Read memory verse – Galatians 3:18

Thoughts? What should this tell those who insist on having a legal model for salvation? Our inheritance is through Christ, not through the law.

I included a link to an article "Did Jesus die for our sins?" The article documents that the penal substitution model, the legal model, was not part of Christianity until the 12th century. Interestingly, not written by an SDA.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christian-piatt/did-jesus-realy-die-for-the-sins-of-humanity_b_1007345.html

Here are some quotations from early church Fathers Justin and Ireneus, from the first and second century after Christ, documenting they taught the Healing Substitution Model, calling it "recapitulation" that Christ came to fix humanity from the damage sin caused by Adam's fall.

“According to the Apology and Dialogue of Justin, **Christ accomplishes the conversion and restoration of humanity to its destination** by His teaching as to the worship of the true God and a virtuous life in faith in the eternal reward of immortality, which He will bestow at His second coming.”¹

Nevertheless we find also in Justin ideas that resemble the doctrine of Ignatius as to a Divine economy in the Incarnation whose purpose is to **overthrow of death and Satan.**

Justin Taught Christ came to do three things – overthrow death, destroy Satan and restore humanity back to God’s design providing eternal life.

“(Christ) having been made flesh submitted to be born of the Virgin, in order that through this dispensation the Serpent, who at the first had done evil, and the angels assimilated to him might be put down and death might be despised.”² In fact we find in Justin clear indications of the presence to his mind of the **recapitulation theory**, afterwards more fully developed by Irenaeus, according to which **Christ becomes a new head of humanity, undoes the sin of Adam by reversing the acts and circumstances of his disobedience, and finally communicates to men immortal life.** Compare the sentence quoted by Irenaeus from Justin’s treatise against Marcion, “The only-begotten Son came to us, recapitulating His creation into Himself.”³ Compare also

the following passage: --

1. Thomasius, D.G., I.P. 394, note by Bonwetsch
2. "Dial." 45.
3. Irenaeus "Adv. Haer." IV. 6, 2, Harvey's edition II. P. 159.

Quoted Franks page 20, 21

Here is from Irenaeus:

"We come here to the famous Irenaeian doctrine of Recapitulation. **The conception is that of Christ as the Second Adam, or second head of humanity, who not only undoes the consequences of Adam's fall, but also takes up the development of humanity broken off in him, and carries it to completion, i.e. to union with God and consequent immortality.**"

'It was God recapitulating the ancient creation of man in Himself, that He might slay sin, and annul death, and give life to man.' Also III. 18, 1: 'The Son of God, when He was incarnate and was made man, recapitulated in Himself the long line of men, giving us salvation compendiously (*in compendio*), so that what we had lost in Adam, viz. that we should be after in the image and similitude of God, this we should receive in Jesus Christ.'

Franks p 37, 38

He also teaches Christ accomplished three things – destroy death, sin and Satan and restore mankind to God's original design providing eternal life.

What does this mean? What we teach in our class is what the Christian church taught for hundreds of years after Christ's time on earth. It was centuries later that the penal idea infected Christianity and corrupted the gospel.

It is our mission, in this time in history, to present the truth about God, which will lighten the world for His return. And in order to do that we must stop representing Him as a dictator, punisher, executioner, and in need of appeasement.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph "Even if his..." thoughts? Why did God give the law four hundred years after the promise?

What was the purpose of the written law?

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹ We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim 1:8-11

The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more. Rom 5:20

The written law is like an MRI it examines and diagnoses, it does not cure. Thus the written law is not for the healthy or righteous but for the unhealthy unrighteous.

Near the end of the first paragraph the lesson states, "God's covenant was based on nothing other than His own will." What is God's will toward mankind?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Paul has argued...” thoughts?

What does it mean to be justified?

Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰ Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you: Acts 13:39,40

From the SDA Bible Commentary:

The verb translated “is justified” is not found elsewhere in Acts. In Paul’s teaching this is, in fact, the first recorded instance of the doctrine of justification, which became so characteristic of his theology (see Rom. 3:21–26). In the context of “forgiveness of sins,” the word “justified” means “acquitted,” “declared not guilty.”¹

Thoughts?

What does justify mean? Is Justification, a mere legal declaration? What are the problems with this idea?

- It is a result of a misdiagnosis of the sin problem. It is based on the idea that the sin problem is a legal problem needing legal solution
- It minimizes the awfulness, and evilness of sin, failing to appreciate how it actually damages and destroys
- It makes the sin problem a problem with the law or law giver.
- It makes God out to be a distorter of reality, declaring righteous those who are not and declaring innocent those who are guilty.

¹ Nichol, F. D. (1978; 2002). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 6* (290). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Then why do people hold to this doctrine?

- It gives a false security of claimed legal pardon without the required personal heart transformation and repudiation of selfishness in the heart.
- In other words, people can claim this type of righteousness while they are still unrighteous in heart, just as the doctrine itself proclaims God does.

What is Bible justification?

- Consider first the margins on your word document, if you “justify” the margins what are you doing? All that is out of harmony, line, or order is brought into line harmony and order.
- What is out of or harmony, line or order as a result of sin that needs to be put right? Is it God? Is it God’s law? Is it mankind’s “record”? Is it the nature/character/heart of man?
- Justification is the process of putting back to rightness with God that which is out of harmony or at enmity with God. And that is man’s heart/mind.

Thus we read –

He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; **he who is righteous, let him be righteous still**; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”²

The Greek for righteous is the exact same as “justify” and it does not say “let him who is declared righteous continue to be declared righteous”.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Cor 5:21

² *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Re 22:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Notice, we *become* the righteousness of God through Christ, not simply are declared righteous.

Notice how EGW gets this exactly right:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, **lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ **imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."**
Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What is justification to EGW? It is rebuilding in humanity the righteousness of God's character!

Explaining Jesus' parable of the branch connected to the vine notice the description in the book Desire of Ages:

So the soul dead in trespasses and sins receives life through connection with Christ. By faith in Him as a personal Saviour the union is formed. The sinner unites his weakness to Christ's strength, his emptiness to Christ's fullness, his frailty to Christ's enduring might. **Then he has the mind of Christ.** The humanity of Christ has touched our humanity, and our humanity has touched divinity. **Thus through the agency of the Holy Spirit man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is accepted in the Beloved.** {DA 675.3}

When is the sinner accepted in the beloved? When He is declared righteous, but is not, or when he becomes a partaker of the divine nature, when he has the mind of Christ?

The legal/penal idea is a fraud designed to have people rest satisfied with a legal claim of righteousness without an actual change of heart from selfish, to loving/righteous.

Read second paragraph, “Paul’s argument in Romans 3...” thoughts?

Why did Paul know that some would fear he was “abolishing the law?” Because he was dealing with people who have a legal mentality when it comes to the plan of salvation. They had misdiagnosed the problem and had created a false understanding of the solution. As Paul tried to lead them away from a legal solution, to the actual healing of mind and character, he knew they would resist.

From my paraphrase:

Romans 3:27 Where, then, is human bragging or accomplishment? It has no place, for our healing has been accomplished by God, through trust made possible by Jesus. And why is boasting not possible? Because our efforts to conform to a set of rules does not establish trust or remove the infection of selfishness from our hearts! Only trust in God eliminates fear and opens the heart to God and then he uses his divine power to apply the remedy Christ achieved in order to recreate us, in love, to be like Jesus. ²⁸ Therefore, we insist that a man is cleansed – set right with God, only by trusting in God and opening his heart to him – and this is different from keeping rules. ²⁹ Is the Creator of the entire human race the God of the Jews only? Is he not God of all humanity, including Gentiles? Of course – he is the God of all humanity, ³⁰ and he will heal the circumcised if they trust him and the uncircumcised will also be healed if they trust him. ³¹ Do we then destroy or make useless, by

our trust, the written code God gave to help us? Of course not! We show that the written code was helpful in diagnosing our sickness, revealing God's plan to heal and leading us back to trust so we could be healed.

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read top section, "In their bondage..." thoughts?

What do you hear?

- What is their condition? The law "condemns them" which means what? It diagnoses them as terminal
- What was the obstacle they had in getting well?
 - They had lost the knowledge of God and the *principles* of his covenant – what were they?
- Why did God take them to the Red Sea?
- Why did God want to reveal his power? His power to do what?
- God's power is "power to help." When you read about God's power to you *always* see His power is manifest to help us, and deliver us from sin? Or do we primarily see and teach God uses His power to punish and destroy?
 - Flood – keep open the channel to save the world and unify the universe
 - Sodom and Gomorrah to stem corruption and keep open the channel for Messiah
 - Plagues of Egypt – reveal the impotence of false gods and open their minds to their condition, leading them to healing, including the Egyptians
 - Thunder at Sinai, stop an orgy, idol worship, selfishness, and bring them to a knowledge of their condition and need
 - Power to keep scorpions and snakes out – to protect
 - Power to heal when looked at snake on pole – to heal
 - Power to provide manna and water

- Drought for 3.5 years and Fire at Mt. Carmel – to reveal impotence of Baal and again bring people back to God for healing
- Power to raise a dead man whose body touched the bones of Elisha – to reawaken the message of Elijah and Elisha and turn minds back to the true God
- Power to break Dagon when the ark was there and give hemorrhoids to the pagans – to open their minds to the impotence of their gods and lead them to the true God
- Power to stop the fire from consuming the three worthies and the lions from eating Daniel – to bring pagan rulers to a knowledge of God
- Power demonstrated by Jesus in all His miracles, to heal and restore
- Power of miracles done by Apostles to bring people to the knowledge of God

God uses His power to heal and restore, not to punish and destroy!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Some, believing...” thoughts?

Many have argued over the law in Galatians that “was added.” Some have argued it was just the ceremonial law others the 10 Commandments, others all law since sin. What do you think?

I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments... "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. {1SM 233, 234}

The lesson is absolutely right on this point!

Read the second paragraph, “Paul is not...” thoughts?

Read last paragraph, “While the ceremonial..” thoughts?

What do you think about the idea, “that shows us that sin is not just part of our natural condition but is, indeed, a violation of God’s law.”

We use the language “natural heart” or “natural condition” commonly, from our earthly vantage point – but is it really natural?

Do you see an oxymoron in this? Do you see that God’s law, or design protocol, is what defines our true “nature” or defines what is “natural” for mankind? And if that is so then all violations of God’s law are unnatural?

We might say the natural sinful heart, or what is natural for a heart infected by selfishness. But, I just wanted to point out that our condition in sin and selfishness, is not natural to God’s order or design. It is an infection to be cured and purged!

WEDNESDAY

Read top dark section, “Does Paul’s statement...”

Thoughts?

Had the 10 Commandments been in existence long before Sinai?

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would

it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

Was the written law in existence in heaven before Sinai?

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. {MB 109.2}

Read last paragraph, "The role of the law..." thoughts? This is well said.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "In Galatians..." thoughts? How do you hear this? What does it mean? Is it good news? Why?

How might you rephrase it? What would our position be if we had to rely on ourselves *to create a remedy* for sin?

Read second paragraph, "Although..." thoughts? Why is the law subsidiary to the promise? Is it because it was mediated by angels and Moses? Is that what makes it subsidiary? Or is it subsidiary by its very nature – it is a diagnostic tool, whereas Christ is the cure!

Read last paragraph, "As majestic..." thoughts?

I don't understand the sentence, "In stark contrast, God's promise was made directly to Abraham (and therefore, to all believers), for there was no need for a mediator."

What do you understand that to be saying?

While we rejoice that there are worlds which have never fallen, these worlds render praise, and honor, and glory to Jesus Christ for the plan of redemption to save the fallen sons of Adam, as well as to confirm themselves in their position and character of purity. The arm that raised the human family from the ruin which Satan had brought upon the race through his temptations, is the arm which has preserved the inhabitants of other worlds from sin. Every world throughout immensity engages the care and support of the Father and the Son; and this care is constantly exercised for fallen humanity. Christ is **mediating** in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by his **mediatorial** work. Are not these themes of sufficient magnitude and importance to engage our thoughts, and call forth our gratitude and adoration to God?" {RH, January 11, 1881 par. 4}

Thoughts?

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 7 4Q 2011

The Road to Faith

What do you think about the title?

What does “faith” mean to you?

- Christianity, a religion, - are you of the faith?
- Conviction, certainty “I have faith”
- Trust in a relationship
- Believing without evidence?

When you hear the word faith what do you hear?

What is the lesson referring to when it speaks of the road to faith?

Would it be referring to the steps or path in our life journey that leads us to a trust relationship with God?

What has led you to your faith, confidence or trust in God?

- Studying the evidence in God’s Word and Science, with application of those principles in life and seeing the results – God’s testable laws in action
- The accuracy of Bible prophecy in knowing the future
- The life of Jesus revealing perfect love
- God’s actions dealing with humanity, revealing one altogether trustworthy
- Change in lives of people who have come to know Jesus
- Answered prayers in my own life
 - Undergraduate school, taking physics – working full time, full load, big brother, giving Bible study to another student...
 - Seminar in Portland Oregon 2009

SABBATH

Read memory text Gal 3:22:

But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ESV

This is the ESV translation – what do you think of this verse?

Here is from the NIV, NKJV and GNT:

But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. NIV

But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. NKJV

But the scripture says that the whole world is under the power of sin; and so the gift which is promised on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ is given to those who believe. GNT

Thoughts? Are these the same? Do you hear the message the same? It seems the meaning is shifted slightly in these translations – and this is a good example of the problem with translation. The Greek allows for either translation to be equally accurate if one uses only the words, and doesn't think through the larger meaning of Scripture.

This means that one's biases toward the Bible influence how one translates the texts.

Which do you think is the more accurate translation of this text?

Is the world imprisoned by the Scripture? If God never provided the Scripture would humans be less imprisoned?

Or is humanity, all nature for that matter, imprisoned by sin and the Scripture describes accurately this condition?

So here is my paraphrase of this verse:

But Scripture is clear, all humanity is infected with selfishness and is imprisoned by this terminal condition. It is by trust that we experience the only cure, the one promised – Jesus Christ, who was given to mankind as the remedy to this terminal condition.

Thoughts?

The lesson for the day describes how homing pigeons can sometimes become disoriented and get lost. Then states in paragraph three:

“The same is true in the spiritual realm. Even after we accept Christ, we can get lost, or disoriented, even to the point of never returning to the Lord.”

Thoughts?

How can one tell if one is gotten lost? Any methods?

Read last paragraph, “The good news...”

What about the law? Is it helpful as a compass to keep us on track? How might the law be used beneficially? How might the law be used to keep us off track with the Lord?

- When the written law is used to diagnose selfishness in the heart, to point out failure to love God and others, and convict us of our condition and need for healing it is used properly.

- When the law is used as a list of behaviors to which we must adhere, and a measuring stick to compare our behavior to others in order for us to feel good about ourselves and our righteous condition – then it leads us away from Christ.

What could lead someone who has come to know and trust God to get disoriented and off track?

- Trauma to tragedy they struggle to understand
- Having come to know God through a belief system infected with distortion and error – having faith in the system, accepting the errors as truth and then the realities of life shatter their system, thus causing a loss of belief in God.
 - Believe that if you keep all the rules, eat the right foods, go to church on the right day, exercise, pay tithe, avoid premarital sex, don't curse, honor your parents, don't steal etc. that life will turn out okay – and then a death occurs, a divorce, a trauma – shatters the belief – Doesn't God care? I was supposed to be protected?
 - In scripture do miracles happen most often *for* (not through) the strong in faith or for the weak?
 - 10 plagues of Egypt
 - Gideon
 - Elijah
 - Daniel and the three worthies
 - Jesus and the Apostles
 - Who were the miracles for?
- Lies –
- Relationships –

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “The people believed...”

What does it mean to be “spiritually” alive or dead?

Have you ever heard that Adam and Eve, when they ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, “died spiritually”?

What does that mean?

- Does it mean their “spirit” died?
 - What is the “spirit”?
 - Intelligent apparition that lives outside the body (ghost)?
 - The breath of life received from God?
 - Wind?
 - The intelligent aspect of the human being?
 - Something else?
- Does it mean they were “sentenced to death” in the heavenly courtroom?
- Here’s what Wikipedia says about spiritual death:
 - Spiritual death is related to but distinct from physical death and the second (eternal) death. According to the doctrine of original sin, all people are born with a sinful nature and thereby spiritually dead, being separated from God. Christians believe that because Christ defeated sin and death, those who have faith in him are made spiritually alive. Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body. For the Christian, physical death means the beginning of eternal life in the presence of God but for the unbeliever, eternal death and suffering. Saint Gregory Palamas wrote very eloquently on the subject of spiritual death.

Thoughts?

- Does spiritual death mean the law of love is no longer written in the heart, therefore, we are out of harmony with God’s design for life and are in a terminal state, slowly dying?

Does this quotation have any bearing on the question?

God is the fountain of life, and we can have life only as we are in communion with Him. **Separated from God, existence may be ours for a little time, but we do not possess life.** "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." 1 Timothy 5:6. Only through the surrender of our will to God is it possible for Him to impart life to us. Only by receiving His life through self-surrender is it possible, said Jesus, for these hidden sins, which I have pointed out, to be overcome. It is possible that you may bury them in your hearts and conceal them from human eyes, but how will you stand in God's presence? {MB 61.2}

If you cling to self, refusing to yield your will to God, you are choosing death. To sin, wherever found, God is a consuming fire. If you choose sin, and refuse to separate from it, the presence of God, which consumes sin, must consume you. {MB 62.1}

Thoughts?

Read last paragraph, "His point?..." thoughts

What does this mean? Faithfulness of Christ in our behalf to do what?

MONDAY

The lesson cites Galatians 3:23 "kept under the law" and then gives various possible meanings to this idea or phrase, kept under the law – what do you think this means?

The lesson suggests:

- The law as a means of salvation
- Being under the condemnation of the law

Under number two the lesson points out that the Greek in verse 23 means to guard, to protect.

How does the law guard and protect? It sets a hedge of behavioral guidelines that guards of from self-destruction, acting on the impulses of the selfish nature, while we are on our way to experience Christ and have a new heart created within.

Here is my paraphrase of Galatians 3:21-25:

Gal 3:21 Is the written law, then, somehow in opposition to the promises of God? Of course not! The written law was simply a tool to diagnose our sickness and lead us to God for healing. If the written law could somehow cure the infection of selfishness and promote life, then healing would certainly have followed the giving of the law. 22 But Scripture is clear, all humanity is infected with selfishness and is imprisoned by this terminal condition. It is by trust that we experience the only cure, the one promised – Jesus Christ who was given to mankind as the remedy to this terminal condition.

Gal 3:23 Before Christ came we were quarantined by the written law, restrained from continual self-destruction until Christ procured the only true cure. 24 So then, the written law was provided as a safeguard to protect us and lead us to Christ – the Great Physician so that we might be restored to unity with God by, trust in and partaking of, Christ. 25 Now that trust in God has been restored and we are set right in heart, mind, character and again practice God’s methods, we no longer need the law to diagnose our condition or lead us back to God.

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Paul gives two...”

Why are these points needed? Why do Christians struggle with the relationship of the law to salvation?

Because Christianity by and large has accepted a change in the way it conceives of God's law, when Imperial Rome influenced the idea of law away from the natural laws God built His universe to run upon, to Imperial law imposed upon subjects to enforce behavioral conformity and measure out punishment.

With this change in the concept of law, God's character and universe became misunderstood, and then the Cross and what Christ accomplished came to mean appeasement of wrath and paying of legal penalty rather than the accomplishment of victory over the infection of selfishness in humanity and the destruction of Satan and sin.

When we understand God's law as the natural law and God's character as love, as Jesus revealed, then we understand the written law was added to provide a diagnostic and protective tool we needed until Christ could come and remedy the situation.

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, "Paul's description..." thoughts?

Does the law have a negative aspect? Or does sin have a negative aspect?

When the MRI points out a tumor does the MRI have a negative aspect?

Does the law condemn or does the law diagnose? Where does the condemnation come from, the law, or the condition of the person being outside the law?

And how you answer this question reveals how much you see God's law as natural or imposed?

If the law is imposed then the condemnation comes from the law. If the law is natural the condemnation comes from the very condition of being out of harmony with the law.

If someone jumps off a tall building, does the law of gravity condemn, or is it their choice to jump that condemns? If they suddenly open a parachute does the law of gravity suddenly pardon? The law of gravity never changes, it is a constant, a principle upon which the universe operates. We either live in harmony or out of harmony with these principles and it is the condition of being out of harmony that condemns.

Now the written law is like writing down in a physics book the law of gravity – writing the equations that describe and define gravity on paper, or stone, do not establish gravity. Neither does writing the 10 commandments on stone establish God's law. God's law is established in the character of God and the very fabric of the universe as God constructed it.

- **The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man.** "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: "Thy law is the truth"; "all thy commandments are righteousness" (Ps. 119:142, 172). And the apostle Paul declares: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). **Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author.** {Reflecting Christ 46.5}
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the

Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth **the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.** DA 21

- As the Supreme Ruler of the universe, God has ordained laws for the government not only of all living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything, whether great or small, animate or inanimate, is under fixed laws which cannot be disregarded. **There are no exceptions to this rule; for nothing that the divine hand has made has been forgotten by the divine mind.** But while everything in nature is governed by natural law, man alone, as an intelligent being, capable of understanding its requirements, is amenable to moral law. To man alone, the crowning work of his creation, God has given a conscience to realize the sacred claims of the divine law, and **a heart capable of loving it as holy, just, and good**; and of man prompt and perfect obedience is required. Yet God does not compel him to obey; he is left a free moral agent. {ST, April 15, 1886 par. 2}

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "First, we are..." thoughts?

Why are we no longer under the condemnation of the law?

The lesson suggests we read Romans 8:1-3, but lets read through verse 4:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, ⁴ in order that the **righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us**, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Thoughts? What does it mean? Why are we not condemned?

Because we are now in harmony with it, it is in our hearts and characters! Heb 8:10 the law is written in the heart!

What is do you think of the description in the paragraph “That gives us the liberty of serving Christ wholeheartedly, without fear of being condemned for mistakes we might make in the process”?

Does it tend to sound like our behavior is the problem? Is it? Which is the problem, the behavior or the heart motive? Where does sin occur, in the behavior or the motive of the heart?

If the heart is purified what happens to the behavior? If the heart is impure, can the behavior still appear pure?

Do we ever focus too much on mistakes? Where do mistakes fit in?

When we get a new heart do we immediately get a changed brain? Do all our old habits, reflexes, conditioned responses immediately get over written?

So, with conversion and a new motive of love for God and man in the heart, can we still find ourselves making mistakes?

What is the difference then? Now we grieve the mistakes and long to be changed and actively choose to work toward overcoming because we don't want to be like this.

Read third paragraph, "As a result..." thoughts?

How do you understand this idea of being forgiven changing our relationship to the law?

If Jeffery Dalmer gets pardoned, forgiven, by the president, his relationship to the law is changed, it can no longer hold him. But do you want him as your neighbor – no!

This analogy points out again the problem with how Imperial Rome changed Christianity's concept of law.

The president, the government, can forgive a person, and the penalty of the law can be waived – but that can only happen when we think imposed law.

A person who smokes and gets lung cancer, can have the doctor forgive them, but that doesn't change the laws of health or their relationship to the laws of health.

When we realize God's law is the law upon which life is built, and sin is a problem of our hearts and minds being out of harmony with that law, then we recognize legal pardon is not what is needed. What is needed is what God has provided, a remedy, thus we can receive a new heart and right spirit!

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 & 2

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 8 4Q 2011

From Slaves to Heirs

SABBATH

Read first paragraph – “Paul tells...” thoughts?

What are the “rights and privileges” of the sons and daughters of God?

I could think of lots of privileges but I was having a hard time thinking of “rights”? While I list some of the privileges I thought of, can you think of any “rights”?

- The privilege to love others
- The privilege to know God
- The privilege to give of ourselves to bless others
- The privilege of being transformed in character to be like Jesus
- The privilege of fulfilling a role/purpose in God’s cause
- The privilege of sharing the truth about God with others
- The privilege of seeing others freed from sin
- The privilege of eternal life
- The privilege of sharing our story of deliverance with sinless beings in the hereafter
- The privilege of experiencing God’s love
- The privilege of truth, and understanding of the GC
- The privilege of returned self-control/governance
- We have privilege of a closer intimacy with God than if mankind had never sinned –
 - Christ taken humanity, is part of this creation,
 - if your father president you would have a closer connection,
 - In foxhole, in combat, bonds are forged, we have suffered with Christ and fought the good fight of faith with him. This creates a closer connection with God than the unfallen beings experience

- While we may value and appreciate our soldiers who have fought for our freedoms, we don't have the same closeness and bonds that those who have fought together experience. The onlooking universe will be like those of us who benefit and appreciate, and support our troops, but those doing the fighting get a closer relationship with each other that we don't experience.

Read second paragraph – “No matter...” thoughts?

What is the strength of this example? Do we have to be perfect in all we do?

Read last paragraph, “We, too,...” thoughts?

Was mankind, in Eden, created as God's heir or did mankind only become an heir after sin and Christ's victory?

- Did mankind, in Eden, have an “inheritance” from God?
- Was earth given as mankind's inheritance from God?
- What would cause mankind to lose that inheritance?
- What would restore the inheritance?
- If a son has an illness, while he is sick is he still an heir to his father's kingdom?
- If he dies before his father dies, is he still an heir, will he inherit the kingdom?
- So, could we say, that mankind is an heir to God, we have an inheritance from our Heavenly Father, but we are all sick, terminal, and can only inherit our inheritance if we experience healing through Christ?
- Or, is it more accurate to say, we are not heirs, we are not sons of God, until we are first healed and then we become heirs?
- Is receiving our inheritance, then a legal process, or a healing process?

SUNDAY

Read Galatians 3:26-29:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Thoughts?

Heirs according to the promise – the promise to do what? To heal us! Thus we are heirs because we don't die eternally and thus can inherit what God has for us. Those who don't accept Christ and what He has accomplished are not heirs, because they won't inherit the kingdom because they die! It is not a legal process but a healing process!

Read third paragraph, "Paul's use..." thoughts?

What do you think of the idea of conferred? What does it mean to confer something?

grant or bestow (a title, degree, benefit, or right): *moves were made to **confer** an honorary degree **on** her.*

Is this the Biblical definition of what it means to be clothed in Christ's righteousness?

What does the Bible say?

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin

offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, ⁴ in order that the **righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us**, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Romans 8:1-3

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him **we might become the righteousness of God**. 2Cor 5:21

Here is how one of the founders of our church described what it means to be clothed in Christ:

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. **Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us.** "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "**was manifested to take away our sins;** and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4... By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

Is this "conferred" or is this "imparted"? The Bible truth is so much more wonderful that we are commonly taught. We can actually become "partakers of the divine nature"!

Read bottom red section, "Dwell..." thoughts?

Is this true? In what way?

- Both human
- Both tempted by sin
- Both suffered
- Both born into the earth from a sinful mother (except Adam and Eve)
- Both Christ and saved have unity with God
- Christ and saved reign on thrones in heaven

In what way is it not true?

- Christ never sinned, we are healed from sin
- Christ is fully God and fully man, we are only human
- Christ was pre-existent, we have a beginning
- Christ loves always – we don't

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Paul’s choice...” thoughts?

This is one reason that God may have chosen this time, are there perhaps other reasons, not from history, but from the Bible that God chose this time to come?

While the Bible is a book to reveal God to man, whom did God choose to tell this story through? Is the Bible narrative told through the Chinese, Aborigine, Anglo-Saxon, Native American? No, the Bible narrative is told through Abraham’s descendants.

Is there a reason, related to Abraham’s descendants, that God chose this particular time in history for Christ to come?

Are humans the only intelligent beings involved in the war between Christ and Satan? No, intelligent beings in heaven are also watching (Job chapter 1, Daniel chapter 10).

So, from the vantage point of heaven, what was different about the Jewish people when Christ came than previously in their history?

This was the first time that they appeared to an outside observer to be adhering to the script, following the manual, applying the blueprint to their lives. They observed Sabbath, kept the feasts, followed the dietary restrictions even straining gnats out of their food, paid tithe, no longer sacrificed to false gods. They, for all outward appearances, seemed to finally be onboard with God's plan.

Now, why might this be an important time for Christ to come? What was revealed?

That obedience to the rules, without the true picture of God makes no difference, that obedience for the wrong reasons makes one God's enemy! That outward conformity is not what God wants, what God wants is a transformed heart!

I would suggest, that God could not provide all the evidence He needed to provide had He come to earth, to Israel, at a prior time in history. Had He come when they were worshipping Baal, it would have not taught this lesson when they rejected Him.

Read fifth paragraph, "The phrase 'born under the law...' thoughts?"

What do you understand the law here to mean? It depends on how you understand law – Do you understand God's law to be like Imperial Rome, an imposed law upon His subjects which He must enforce, or do you understand God's law to be the law of love, the construction protocols He built life to operate upon.

If you believe the law is imposed then you believe he was born under legal condemnation, the legal death sentence. But if you believe the law is natural, then you understand Paul is saying

that Jesus was born, under the “law of sin and death.” That He was born with a humanity that was infected and damaged by Satan’s principle of selfishness, a humanity that could tempt Him to act in self-interest, which was evidenced in Gethsemane, and confirmed by Hebrews 2:14 and James 1:13-15.

Read last paragraph, “It was necessary...” thoughts?

When one makes the mistake of accepting the little horn’s change in God’s law from the law of love, the natural law He built the universe to run upon, to the imposed law idea, then one misconstrues what Christ did and sees things through a legal lens.

Now we believe Christ did become our substitute, but not to achieve some court room, legal requirement, but to achieve the cleansing of mankind from sin and selfishness.

Notice, because of the false idea of God’s law accepted by penal substitution theology, how they say, “He met the justice of the law, which required the death of the sinner...”

Does the law require the death of the sinner? What does the law require?

If the law is like Rome – an imposed law, what does that type of law require when it is broken? Punishment – in this case the death of the lawbreaker. It is satisfied by having the penalty, for breaking the law paid.

If the law is like God’s law, the law He built life to operate upon, what does that law require? That we are put back in harmony with it, for in no other way can it be satisfied – for in no other way can life exist.

How did one of the founders of our church see it?

- **The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character;** and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. {DA 762.2}
- **But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.**--RH, Apr 5, 1898. (2SM 211.) {2MCP 564.1}
- **The divine law requires us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves.** {A New Life NL 32.1}
- **That which God required of Adam before his fall was perfect obedience to His law. God requires now what He required of Adam, perfect obedience, righteousness without a flaw, without shortcoming in His sight. God help us to render to Him all His law requires.** We cannot do this without that faith that brings Christ's righteousness into daily practice. {2SM 380.4}
 - If the law requires the death of the sinner, should we be praying “God help *us* render to Him all His law requires?”
- **His law requires your heart's supreme affection for your Maker. It requires you to do unto others as you would have them do to you.** {BEcho, February 15, 1889 par. 8}
- This is the voice of God to you, my brethren and sisters who profess to keep the law of God. **That law requires that you love your neighbor as yourself.** Are you doing it? {RH, March 11, 1884 par. 10}

- The Lord will give ample light to all who will be true and loyal to him, but he will show no more favor to Phariseism and self-righteousness today than when he walked in his humanity in our world. The soul that encourages an atmosphere of doubt, God cannot favor with constantly increasing grace. His mercy and the gracious influences of his Spirit remain the same for all who will receive them. His offer of salvation does not change. **It is man who changes his relationship to God.** Many place themselves where they cannot recognize his grace and his salvation. ***They are under a delusion as to what constitutes Christianity.*** **And while man refuses to become pure, holy, and undefiled, as God's law requires him to do, he is walking away from Christ.** {RH, February 15, 1898 par. 10}
 - Imagine an HIV man and woman get together and have a child – what did the child do wrong? That is every human since Adam and Eve, born in sin and conceived in iniquity. We didn't do anything wrong, it is not our fault. But, even though the HIV baby is innocent, does it still have a terminal condition that if unremedied will kill it? That is also our situation. If the child grows up and there is a free remedy offered and the child refuses it will that be his/her fault? Yes, that is also our situation. What if a deceiver offers the child a false-remedy, and the child accepts the false remedy – what happens?
 - What happens when people accept the legal payment for their sins, because they haven't understood the real problem of sinfulness in the heart? They are under a delusion as to what constitutes Christianity!
- **...his law requires us to love God supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves.** {ST, November 23, 1891 par. 5}
- **The law requires us to present to God a holy character. It demands of men today just what it**

demanded of Adam in Eden,--perfect obedience, perfect harmony with all its precepts in all relations of life, under all circumstances and conditions. {ST, May 30, 1895 par. 2}

- **God's law requires that justice and right be exercised between man and his fellow man; it requires that we shall not injure our neighbor in his property, his feelings, his health, or his good name. It requires compassion for the afflicted, even if he be our enemy, that in all our associations with our fellow beings we shall show the same love and care that we would wish to have exercised toward ourselves. {ST, January 7, 1897 par. 3}**

So if the law requires us to love our enemies, wouldn't that be true of God? Then do you see the fallacy of teaching that God hates, or inflicts torture upon His enemies!

- **Christ came to this world to live the law and represent the character of God, that the delusions which Satan had brought upon the world might be dispelled.** In the sermon on the mount, He who gave the law became an expositor of the law. That sermon, so full of what it means to love and obey God, is the unfolding of His character. **The law is shown to be a representation of God's character**, that man may see that he must render obedience to the law if he would become a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. **This law requires nothing short of perfect spiritual obedience.** {ST, February 24, 1898 par. 5}

I put in the search engine of the EGW CD "Law, requires, death" and there is not one place she says the law requires death. This idea of the law requiring death is another distortion based off accepting Imperial Rome's distortion of God's law!

How can experience what the law does require?

- While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. **God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.** {MB 54.2}

Where is the law? In the believer, we don't get a new record erased of sins, we get a new heart cleansed of sinfulness!

Why do so many get confused about what the law requires? Because they have accepted the little horn's version of what God's law is like, an imposed law, and then conceive of God having to impose penalties for breaches in the law. Then they misunderstand the meaning of what they read. Consider the following:

- **Christ saw the helpless condition of the race, and he came to redeem them by living the life of obedience the law requires**, and by paying in his death the penalty of disobedience. He came to bring us the message and means of deliverance, an assurance of salvation, not through the abrogation of the law, but through obedience made possible by his merits. {RH, April 29, 1902 par. 10}
 [the law requires a life of obedience, there is a penalty for sin, but the law doesn't require sin be punished, only that the infection of sin be destroyed so that a life of obedience could be obtained. Thus lawlessness results in death and Christ could only restore a life of obedience into humanity by destroying the carnal nature He assumed – thus suffering the penalty sin brought.]

What does the law require? Does the law require the death of the sinner? NO! The law requires we be healed and restored to righteousness! Why? What does the law of respiration require? It requires we breathe! If someone breaks the law, trying to commit suicide and ties a plastic bag over their head, and they pass out, but are not yet dead, and someone removes the plastic bag, does the law of respiration require they now be killed? No, the law requires one breathes!

So mankind is infected with a terminal condition of selfishness, the law requires righteousness, because that is the basis upon which life is built. Christ could only put mankind back in harmony with God's design principles, by destroying the infection of selfishness, which is why He died!

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, thoughts?

What is it that held us in bondage? Sinful nature, lies of Satan – so what is the price to free us? The truth which destroys lies, and a new character, which Christ achieved!

Read third paragraph, “We often speak...” thoughts – this is a metaphor, but what happens when we take a metaphor and apply it concretely? We get misled, this happens when those who take the parable of Lazarus and the rich man and apply it concretely.

Those who see a legal problem and solution in the plan of salvation, use this metaphor concretely and as evidence of a legal requirement in the solution for sin. But they forget it is a metaphor, written to whom?

This was written to the Galatians, who were being infected by Judiazers, who were suggesting that Gentile converts didn't have the same rights, privileges, promises, inheritance as the Jews, unless they converted to Judaism, and practice the

Jewish customs, including circumcision. Paul, uses the metaphor of adoption, not to teach the plan of salvation for humanity is a legal process, but to show that one didn't have to be a Jew to be part of God's family and an heir of the promises to Abraham. In other words, one didn't have to get circumcised and practice feasts days – what one had to do was accept Christ and experience a new heart/mind/character. Thus the “adopted” son had all the same “rights and privileges” as the biological son. So this undercut the argument of the Judiazers who were trying to mislead the people!

THURSDAY

Read Galatians 4:9-11, thoughts?

But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? ¹⁰ You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! ¹¹ I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

The lesson argues that some mistakenly use this in regard to the weekly Sabbath, when it applies only to the ceremonial law, what do you think?

Here is my paraphrase:

But now that you have come to know God, as revealed by Jesus (or more importantly, now that Christlike character has been developing within you and you are known as God's children), how could you possibly turn back to the dark, powerless, destructive beliefs and practices of your former lives? Do you wish to have your minds destroyed and be enslaved by superstition and ignorance all over again? ¹⁰ You are actually observing ceremonial holidays as if somehow such observances could heal the mind, remove selfishness and guilt or restore the character to

Christlikeness. 11 I can hardly believe it. I am beginning to wonder if all my time with you has been wasted.

Do you think I miss the meaning? If this is the meaning, then wouldn't the weekly Sabbath be included? In other words, if we keep the weekly Sabbath as a means to save ourselves we have missed the point and are lost, correct? Or put another way, does observance of the weekly Sabbath cure sinfulness?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

MONDAY

Read Galatians 4:1-3- thoughts?

What do you hear? What does it mean?

Here is my paraphrase:

Galatians 4:1 What I am trying to explain to you is that as long as the heir remains immature, he is really no different from a slave because he needs someone to supervise his behavior, make his decisions and guide his actions, even though he owns the entire estate. 2 He doesn't have self-governance so he needs the guardians and trustees to protect him from himself until such time he can handle his own affairs. 3 Likewise, when we were childlike in character and immature in our thinking we had no self-control and were slaves to selfish impulses.

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read top paragraph, "thoughts?"

Read and discuss questions 1-3

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 9 4Q 2011

Paul's Pastoral Appeal

Read first paragraph – “As we’ve...” thoughts?

Does it matter what we believe? Why?

We have power over what we believe but what we believe has power over us:

Consider you believe your spouse is cheating on you but they are not, would this belief change you? How?

The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

Thoughts? Satan is the father of lies, as he gets us to believe lies he can change us.

- When we believe lies we experience activation of the fear circuits of the brain, which cause activation of the immune system release of inflammatory factors which damage the body and brain and lead to physical and mental health problems.
- Further, fear causes us to act in self interest which causes us relationship problems.

As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God's word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another's mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know "what saith the Lord."
 {DA 390.4}

Do our beliefs matter?

What beliefs or doctrines are important?

- God as creator?
- The nature of man?
- The Sabbath?
- The Sanctuary?
- Tithing?
- Healthful living?

Those who crucified Christ held and taught all of these doctrines – what went wrong?

What is the primary purpose of all Bible doctrine?

Bible doctrine is ONLY relevant as it is connected to, and informs us about, God! When we separate doctrine from God's character, from the Great Controversy over God's character, we actually create a distorted religion in which doctrines become a barrier to salvation!

Let's review some of our doctrines and ask, what do they tell us about God?

- Trinity –
 - God is love, love cannot exist in isolation, thus denying the trinity denies the character of God as love.
 - If Jesus isn't fully God then we learn God is willing to sacrifice someone else in His place, but He is not willing to sacrifice Himself. God without the Trinity is a selfish God!
- Creator –
 - God is love and gives of Himself to create – theories of theistic evolution deny God's character of love and instead teach a God who uses pain, suffering and death to create, all of which are Satan's principles
- God's Law
 - Natural law of love He built His universe to run upon or,
 - Imposed law He enforces upon His creatures – if we teach the law is imposed then we create a god construct who is imperialistic, imposes law, monitors behavior, imposes penalties, must have payments for justice to be served etc.
- Nature of mankind
 - Mankind is mortal, God has foreknowledge and would never create a situation in which His children would suffer for eternity
 - Mankind possess immortality - God is ignorant, foolish, capricious, callous, or sadistic as He either didn't know what was going to happen and foolishly gave immortality to beings before He knew what they would do, or He knew they would disobey and created them to suffer eternally.
- Sabbath
 - Evidence of God's character of love and the principles of freedom or,
 - An arbitrary test of obedience
- Sanctuary
 - A little theater designed to teach God's plan to heal the Spirit Temple back to God's original intent

revealing God as a gracious, patient, loving being who reaches down to meet us where we are and teach as we are able to learn

- A sacrificial system of appeasement to pay a blood payment to atone for the broken law revealing a god who is like Baal, requiring payment in order to give to his creatures
- Final End of Sin
 - God unveils the fullness of His life giving glory and those whose minds are solidified with lies and selfishness are tormented when they come face to face with themselves, in the presence of unveiled truth and love and die as a result of unremedied sin. Reveals a God who is love and has done everything in His power to save and heal His children, patiently waiting until there was no one left who would respond, and sadly grants each person the results of their free choice.
 - God uses His power to inflict pain and suffering on His children torturing them and then killing them, makes God out to be a vengeful and brutal tyrant, a sadistic monster.
 - God reveals Himself and everyone who looks is healed and transformed and saved, including Satan and no one is lost in the end. Reveals a God who minimizes the freewill choice of beings, which undermines genuine love and minimizes the malignity of sin and operating out of harmony from God's design, makes the entire history of sin a brutal charade.

SUNDAY

Second paragraph states, "Paul's concern was not simply about theological ideas and doctrinal points of view. His heart was bound up with the lives of the people who were brought to Christ through his ministry." – thoughts?

Why was Paul concerned about the lives of the people?

Paul understood God's law is a living law and must exist in the living being. Paul understood God's law is the natural law upon which He built His universe and thus teaching people the truth about God and His law, would necessarily have a real time impact on their lives, relationships and health. Thus Paul, was interested in the lives, rather than just the doctrines, because he understood God's law is a living law, not a dead set of rules, and as such has transforming power in the lives of believers.

Examples:

Pharisees saw the Sabbath as a rule to obey, Jesus understood the Sabbath as evidence of God's character of love, and thus gave of Himself to enrich and heal on the Sabbath. The Pharisees, saw the healing as breaking the rule and wanted to crucify Jesus as a law breaker.

Church school teacher is being physically abused by her deacon husband. She goes to the pastor for help. The pastor counsels the husband but he continues to beat her. So she divorces him. He goes to the church conference and complains that she divorced him without Biblical grounds because he had not committed adultery, so the conference fired her from her job. Now she is single and unemployed.

The conference and her husband saw the law as an imposed law, a set of rules to keep, rather than the Biblical truth that the law is the law of love, the design for life. Neither the conference nor her husband operated in harmony with the law of love. The Bible teaches that breaking the law in one point is breaking it in all points. The husband who beats his wife is committing adultery, because adultery is betrayal of love!

Last paragraph, "To be a follower of Christ is more than just the profession of faith; it involves a radical transformation into the likeness of Christ."

Thoughts?

What does that look like today?

January 10, 2011 13 y/o Jordan Rice, and little brother Blake were riding in the car with their mother Donna, when Donna drove the car into a flooded street in Toowoomba, Australia. The car stalled, and water began flooding into the car. The three of them climbed out onto the roof of the car and Donna called for help. Jordan was terrified of the water and couldn't swim, but when a rescuer came to rescue him he said, "save my brother first." The rescuer took Blake to safety but before he could return the car was swept away and Jordan and his mother drowned.

What does a follower of Christ look like, "Greater love has no man than he give his life for a friend." "This is how we know what love is Christ gave his life for us and we ought to give our lives for our brother."

Is this what a follower of Christ looks like? I actually don't know whether Jordan was a Christian or not – but was he revealing Christ? Can you reveal Christ without being a Christian? How? If a person loves others more than self, are they revealing Christ even if not a Christian?

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things

that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God. {DA 638.2}

How can this be? Because God's law is not a written law, it was only written on stone at Sinai, before that it was not written. It is the natural law of love! It is to be written on the heart. Any Biblical support for this idea?

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) ¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. Romans 2:12-16

Thoughts?

MONDAY

First paragraph states, "Paul offers himself as an example of how the believers in Thessalonica should work to earn their own living and not be a burden to others." Thoughts?

Why do church leaders take so literally Paul's views on leadership of women in the church, but reject his view on leaders being self-supporting?

Should the leaders in the church have to provide their own income? What advantage would it be? What would be the disadvantage?

- Advantage –
 - it would undermine the division between laity and clergy, bringing the membership closer to leadership, and opening the door for more member led ministry
 - it would provide huge amounts of monies for ministry and spreading the gospel
 - it would change the landscape of who becomes clergy, increasing the number of people who have a heart for ministry and removing the career theologians and church politicians
 - could it result in less organizational infighting and more gospel promotion?
- Disadvantage
 - Potentially a less educated clergy
 - More work for the laity (is this really a disadvantage?)

Read last paragraph, “Although Paul...” thoughts?

- What makes a religion a law centered religion?
- Does Christianity today struggle with a law centered religion?

TUESDAY

The lesson speaks of putting the gospel into the context of the audience so they can connect with and understand it, read fourth paragraph, “Paul’s own...” thoughts?

What does this mean to you?

How might you contextualize the gospel today?

What would it mean to live lawless lives?

- Would it mean going to church on the “wrong” day?
- Would it mean eating cheese?
- Would it mean not loving others – like maybe firing a school teacher who divorced her husband for beating her?

In the story of the good Samaritan, Christ illustrates the nature of true religion. He shows that it consists not in systems, creeds, or rites, but in the performance of loving deeds, in bringing the greatest good to others, in genuine goodness. {DA 497.1}

How do we contextualize the gospel? We must first know the gospel – and what is the gospel? Love, what is love? The principle of beneficence or giving – and how do we put this into a language anyone can understand?

If a person doesn't believe in God how can you contextualize the gospel for that person?

WEDNESDAY

In the middle of the lesson it asks, "What might have been God's reasons for allowing Paul to suffer?" thoughts?

Why does God allow suffering of any kind?

What are the sources of suffering?

- Sin – self inflicted deviations from God's design for life
 - Poking a pencil in your eye brings suffering
 - Smoking – suffering
 - Jumping off a building - suffering
 - Not loving others brings suffering
 - Valuing rules over people brings suffering
 - Adultery brings suffering
 - Abusing yourself with alcohol and drugs brings suffering – and not just the suffering of an imposed penalty by local law enforcement - but how do parents who use drugs treat their children?
 - When we deviate from God's design suffering is unavoidable

- Selfish/evil intentional infliction of harm on another, to injure or exploit another. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. The innocent suffer at the hands of the selfish.
- Treatment of the problem
 - Once brokenness cannot heal without pain
 - Setting a bone
 - Overcoming an addiction
 - Resolving traumatic memories
 - Overcoming selfishness in the character
- Discipline – to protect and teach
- Warfare – we are in a war zone since Adam fell Satan and his agencies work to inflict pain and suffering
 - Job and his family and estate
 - Jesus in the wilderness and crucifixion
- Accidents – randomness, flaws, since this planet no longer operates in harmony with God's design
 - A ladder breaks and someone falls
 - A tire goes flat and a car wrecks
 - A genetic defect happens and a child is stillborn (who sinned that this man was born blind him or his parents? Neither!)

Why does God allow any of this?

- What are His options?
- Does God have the power to stop all pain and suffering and evil and sin?
- Yes, what would He have to do to achieve this?
- One method is to remove freedom and make everyone a robot, which would bring an end to all suffering, evil and sin, but would also destroy what? Love!
- Will God do this?
- The fact there is suffering in the world is evidence that God is truly love – that He will not, despite the cost of suffering, including the suffering of Himself and His own Son, use His power to restrict the liberty and freedom of His intelligent creatures! What does this say about God?
- Another method to remove all pain and suffering and evil and sin, is to demonstrate the truth in order to destroy

lies and win us to trust, take our terminal condition upon Himself and achieve remedy, send His Spirit to administer His remedy into our hearts and minds, thus winning people freely to trust Him and then letting each person freely experience what they have chosen. "Let him who is righteous be righteous still. Let him who is wicked be wicked still."

So why does God allow suffering? Why doesn't He use His power to stop it right now?

THURSDAY

The lesson states, "Who hasn't experienced personally just how painful it can be to have to chastise someone, or in plain terms speak truths to them that – for whatever reason – they don't want to hear?"

When is it appropriate to chastise someone?

I saw that many have taken advantage of what God has shown in regard to the sins and wrongs of others. They have taken the extreme meaning of what has been shown in vision, and then have pressed it until it has had a tendency to weaken the faith of many in what God has shown, and also to discourage and dishearten the church. With tender compassion should brother deal with brother. Delicately should he deal with feelings. It is the nicest and most important work that ever yet was done to touch the wrongs of another. With the deepest humility should a brother do this, considering his own weakness, lest he also should be tempted. {1T 166.1}

I have seen the great sacrifice which Jesus made to sacrifice. Said Jesus: "Love one another, as I have loved you." Do you feel, when a brother errs, that you could give your life to save him? If you feel thus, you can approach him and affect his heart; you are just the one to visit that brother. But it is a lamentable fact that many who profess to be brethren, are not willing to sacrifice

any of their opinions or their judgment to save a brother. There is but little love for one another. A selfish spirit is manifested. {1T 166.2}

FRIDAY

Discuss questions 1 and 2

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 10 4Q 2011

The Two Covenants

SABBATH

What do you understand the two covenants to be?

- Old and New? Which are what?
- Dispensation of law and grace?

What is a covenant? A contract? An agreement?

What did God covenant to do after man sinned?

- Save the species
- Provide a remedy to sin freely available to anyone
- Reveal the truth
- Save all who will let Him
- Bring an end to sin
- To make the earth new again

How much of this required the cooperation of mankind? A willing woman to be the vessel for Christ, and then individual cooperation for individual salvation – but what about the rest?

If no human being ultimately accepts God's offer of salvation, didn't God still save the human race/species? Yes, via Jesus who is fully human. And didn't He provide a free remedy to sin? And didn't He reveal the truth? And won't He bring an end to sin? And won't He remake the earth?

The lesson rightly states, "The two covenants are not matters of time; instead they are reflective of human attitudes."

What are those attitudes?

- I can cure myself
- I trust myself into God's hands and accept His remedy

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “The Hebrew word...”

What do you hear being described?

A covenant is an agreement, contract, or treaty – now with this in mind read the last paragraph, “While marriage...”

Thoughts?

Several good things in this paragraph, like Adam and Eve’s natural desires were to live in harmony with God and do right, and sin was unnatural and God had to restore the relationship that was lost.

What is the major error in this paragraph, which infects Christian thought and contributes to misunderstand of God and the plan of salvation?

What is a covenant? A contract, agreement or treaty, which necessarily require what? The mutual consent of both parties. Are such agreements based on natural law or based on the desires, goals, wishes, wants of the two parties involved?

Regarding, God’s warning in Eden, “in the day you eat of the tree you will surely die.” Was this a contract, agreement, treaty i.e. “covenant of creation,” or was it a warning of how the universe is built and if you exercise your freedom to step out of harmony with this design life cannot continue?

If God had taken them to the top of the Empire State building and said, “In the day you jump you will surely die.” Is this a contract, treaty or agreement? Or is it merely the statement of reality – no agreement or contract necessary.

What happens if we believe what happened in Eden was a covenant, a contract, or treaty?

- Then we immediately put God back into the role of enforcer of breeches of the contract, or treaty.
- He now must sue, or prosecute or punish, or destroy because the contract was broken.
- Why would those who broke contracts in the ancient Near East be killed like the animal? Because it would automatically happen, or because it would be imposed upon them?
- What concept of God does the idea of “the covenant of creation” create?
- It creates the distorted idea that there is no natural consequence of sin, just as there is no natural consequence to breaking a contract, the problem with breaking a contract is the enforced penalties that come from such a breach. So, God must enforce punishment upon sinners.

But when we understand God’s law is the law of life that He constructed the universe to operate upon then we realize God’s warning in Eden was not a covenant, but a mere education on the reality of how the universe was built and what was necessary to live in harmony with life.

So specifically, the covenant of creation –

- Marriage, as God designed it in Eden, not how it functions in sinful beings – a natural law, part of God’s design, or contract law? Can love exist without someone to love? Marriage, as God designed, is not contract law, it is part of humanity’s design, just as reproduction, is built into our biology and design, and we don’t have to get a contract, or treaty to have children, neither was marriage, originally, a contract issue. This is why Adam said, “bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh.” He understood Eve was built, constructed, to be his life partner in love. The two of them were built to love each other and did so automatically, freely, without the need of a prenuptial agreement or a marriage license.

- Physical labor – a contract issue, God contracted with Adam to keep and tend the garden? Or God built His universe to exist on the principle of giving, and work, physical labor, is the giving of one's energy to tend, manage, help, etc. and in so doing the one who works gets stronger. This again is part of God's natural design for life.
- Sabbath – contract law, rule put in force to obey, or expression of natural law? The Sabbath is a gift of love from God to mankind and the onlooking universe who learn of God from what happens on planet earth (1Cor 4:9). As a gift of love it is not a contract, rule, or treaty, but an expression of love, which reveals the character of the One who gave it.

It is Satan who wants to turn every aspect of God's character of love, into some legal, contractual, rules oriented idea so that we will conceive of God as an severe imposer of law and punishing judge.

MONDAY

What did God covenant with Abraham to do? To make a great nation from Abraham's descendants and through one of his descendants bless the entire world.

Was this a new covenant with mankind, or merely a further revelation of the covenant with humanity in Eden, but now God identifies the specific gene pool through which the covenant would be fulfilled? Didn't God already make this covenant in Genesis 3 when He promised a Savior to crush the serpent's head?

So now we have God specifically announcing through which family the Savior would come, but the covenant, agreement, is not new.

And what is the agreement, treaty, or promise? It is all a promise of what God will do to save and heal mankind and destroy sin and sinners.

What did God do in order to provide Abram with confidence that God would follow through? He went through a human ritual of cutting animals in half and walking between them, symbolically saying if I break my promise let this happen to me.

What does it say about God that He would be willing to do this?

Do you like a God who is willing to stoop to meet us where we are in order to heal and save? Can you trust a God like this?

Why did Abram need this extra assurance? Abram was 75 years old and apparently doubted his and his wife's fertility, and this subsequently meant He doubted God could do what He said.

Read bottom pink section, "What are..." thoughts? Why does it seem impossible, whatever the issue is? Might it be because we are thinking through the lens of human ability, strength, perspective and limiting God with our understanding? If we understood more of God, His universe, His methods, principles, His abilities, character, nature etc. would we doubt as much? And would the things He does or ask seem as impossible?

So would our growth in understanding and knowing God undermine or strengthen our faith in God?

So the problem of doubt arises in our ignorance, or misunderstanding about God! And the solution is to know God, just as Jesus taught!

TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Hagar’s...” thoughts?

The lesson asserts that Abram failed to believe God’s promise – what promise would that be?

In Genesis 12 God promises to make a great nation from Abram’s descendants, did this promise indicate those descendants would be through Sarai?

10 years later, when Abram is 85, he has the following conversation with God. This was after rescuing Lot.

But Abram said, “O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.” ⁵ He took him outside and said, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”
Gen 15:2-5

God promises descendants from Abraham’s body, does this promise indicate it will be with Sarai?

When do we find the first word from God that the promised child would be from Sarai? After Ishmael was born. If it was accepted custom, as the lesson states, that a slave woman could legally bear a child for her mistress, how did Abram’s action fail to believe God’s promise that his descendants would be more numerous than the stars?

The lesson states Abram had a lapse in faith, given the nature of the promises, and the understanding of marriage and concubines at the time, what do you think?

Did Abram fail to believe God? If Abram didn't believe he would have descendants, didn't believe God had promised to make a great nation and bless all nations through his descendants, would he have likely taken Hagar? Wasn't it precisely because he and Sarai did believe God's promise that from Abram's body a great nation would arise, but they doubted Sarai's ability to be the mother of his child, that they acted the way they did?

So it appears Abram did believe God's promise of a great nation etc, but didn't trust God to bring it about without Abram instituting his own plan to help God achieve it.

This is another place where belief in God gets derailed in practice by human tradition! Notice, Abram believed God, but when it came time to put that belief into practice, his actions were derailed by human tradition, with devastating consequences!

This is what happened to the Jews in Christ's day. They still believed in God, but their actions had been derailed by human tradition. And what happened, devastating consequences of crucifying Christ.

And today, Christianity, believes in God but in practice has been infected with human tradition, and with what consequences? Paul says:

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.
2Tim 3:1-5.

And Jesus said,

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ Mt 7:21-23

What is the problem? Accepting traditional views of God’s character, God’s law, and God’s methods, accepting traditional views of atonement.

When we substitute God’s design, for human tradition in attempting to fulfill God’s purposes tragic results always happen – Abram did it, the Jews did it, and now Christianity is suffering with the same problem.

So, why did Paul take such a disparaging view of Hagar and her son? He is criticizing the idea that we can do anything to free ourselves from sin, it is only through the grace, miracle, intervention of God through the promised Son that we can be free of sin. It is only in harmony with God’s design, His methods, that we can be healed. Paul is making the case that one who is a slave cannot inherit the estate? And no amount of work can change that.

Thus as Isaac was the promised son of the freewoman, and therefore, able to inherit the estate, Jesus is the promised Son of God, and through His accomplishments inherits all that humanity was to receive from God when God created humanity. And it is through Christ, the promised seed of Abraham, that all nations are blessed and we, through this promised Son become partakers of the divine nature and share in that inheritance.

WEDNESDAY

Read top dark section, “What type...” thoughts?

First sentence of first paragraph states, “God desired to share the same covenant relationship with the children of Israel at Sinai that He shared with Abraham.”

If that is so, why did God say to Israel at Sinai,

“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Exodus 19:5,6.

With Abraham God promised to do everything, to make a great nation, to bless all the peoples of the earth through Him, but here God tells Moses to tell the people, “If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, *then...*” Is this same covenant He made with Abraham?

Why did God say this to them? How did they respond to this proposition by God?

The people all responded together, “We will do everything the LORD has said.” Exodus 19:8

What does this answer reveal? The lack of insight, awareness, understanding the people had about their own condition of sinfulness. They actually thought they could do it. It would be like someone coming to you and saying, if you jump out a window and fly around the building flapping your arms, then I will make a great nation out of you. And you respond by saying, “I will do that” and then jump out the window.

Why did God do this? Did God know their hearts? Did He know how they would respond? Then why did He do this? Because they needed to be brought to understand their own inability to heal themselves, change themselves, fix themselves

and thus rely wholeheartedly on God. This was designed to very quickly bring them to realize they were helpless over sin in their lives and their lives were out of control.

Read first two paragraphs from Friday's lesson and I will include the missing paragraph from between the two quoted there:

But if the Abrahamic covenant contained the promise of redemption, why was another covenant formed at Sinai? In their bondage the people had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and of the principles of the Abrahamic covenant. In delivering them from Egypt, God sought to reveal to them His power and His mercy, that they might be led to love and trust Him. He brought them down to the Red Sea--where, pursued by the Egyptians, escape seemed impossible--that they might realize their utter helplessness, their need of divine aid; and then He wrought deliverance for them. Thus they were filled with love and gratitude to God and with confidence in His power to help them. He had bound them to Himself as their deliverer from temporal bondage. {PP 371.2}

But there was a still greater truth to be impressed upon their minds. Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, they had no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God's law, and their need of a Saviour. All this they must be taught. {PP 371.3}

God brought them to Sinai; He manifested His glory; He gave them His law, with the promise of great blessings on condition of obedience: "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then . . . ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Exodus 19:5, 6. The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, "All that

the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Exodus 24:7... Yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. Now by faith and love they were bound to God as their deliverer from the bondage of sin. Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant. {PP 371.4}

Do you see how God stoops to meet us where we are, to lead us through experiences designed to open our minds to our own condition, so that we will cooperate with Him for healing and transformation?

How long was the Old Covenant at Sinai in force? Just a few weeks and it was broken and void and from that point onward all the Old Testament was to be an experience of the New Covenant!

What happened? Why didn't they experience the New Covenant?

What about today? How many look back on Sinai and fail to see its purpose and instead see a harsh, severe, punishing God who puts rules on His people and punishes disobedience?

The last paragraph in Wednesday states, "The covenant at Sinai was intended to point out the sinfulness of humanity and the remedy of God's abundant grace, which were typified in the sanctuary service."

Love the use of "remedy" by the lesson, absolutely right! But, did the people understand the meaning of the sanctuary service as a remedy for sin, or did they see it instead as a system of legal payment and appeasement?

Do we struggle with the same problem?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Paul’s brief sketch...” thoughts? Do Christians today struggle with similar misunderstanding about what makes one a true son of Abraham?

To whom do you think the great nation, multitude of descendants God promised Abram is referring? Is it the genetic descendants or those with character like Abraham?

Is it taught in some circles, that genetic biological descent from Abraham gives one some special right with God? What does the Bible say about this?

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ⁹ The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” Lk 3:7-9.

Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵ Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. ³⁸ I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you do what you have heard from your father.”

³⁹ “Abraham is our father,” they answered.

“If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would do the things Abraham did.” ⁴⁰ As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. ⁴¹

You are doing the things your own father does.”

“We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.”

Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. ⁴³ Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! ⁴⁶ Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? ⁴⁷ He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.” Jn 8:34-48

It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. ⁷ Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” ⁸ In other words, it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring. Rom 9:6-8

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. GAL 3:29

This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. Eph 3:6

We again have two messages, two views, two possibilities,

- the biological, genetic descendants of Abraham are somehow special and have a different and unique path to God from the rest of us, or
- they were blessed by God to be the family through which the Messiah would arrive on earth, yet God is the Father of all humanity, not just the Jews and all humanity is blessed through Christ and it is only through Christ that any are saved, Jew or Gentile

What do each of these views say about God? If the first is true what kind of God would God be?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 11 4Q 2011

Freedom in Christ

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “In Galatians...” thoughts?

What do you understand freedom in Christ to be?

What are we free to do?

- Are we free to smoke?
- Are we free to drink?
- Are we free to do drugs?
- Are we free to eat gluttonously?
- Are we free to commit adultery?
- Are we free to hate people who are different from us?
- Are we free to be bigots, racists, sexists, elitists?
- Are we free to believe in a God who is punitive and wrathful?
- Are we free to reject the idea of God altogether?

Do we have the freedom to do all of these things?

What is the problem with exercising one’s freedom in these ways?

Why, if we exercise our freedoms in this we are we no longer free in Christ?

Because We LOSE our Freedom!

- We become enslaved to drugs, alcohol, tobacco,
- We lose our health so we are less free to exercise, walk, ski, climb, help around the house, minister to others, witness Christ
- We become obese and are less free to bend, lift, walk, ride...

- We become enslaved in our minds to distorted concepts are unable to relate freely to others, we are imprisoned by distorted God concept and cannot represent God correctly...

But, in Christ, are we free to:

- Stop our addictions?
- Live healthier lives?
- Give of ourselves to bless others?
- Give our time, money, ingenuity, energy to promote the truth about God?
- Are we free to love others?

And what happens if we exercise our freedom of choice in this way? We gain more freedom, ability, autonomy, health, wisdom, capacity for love!

Read second paragraph, "Paul addresses..." thoughts?

The lesson points out two dangers, legalism, defined as trying to earn God's favor through works, and abusing our freedom in Christ and becoming licentious.

Thoughts?

Is one who lives licentiously actually free in Christ? How could one think one could be free in Christ while living a life of sin? If one assumes a legal model of salvation, then one can live a licentious life, violent life, arrogant, bigoted, sexist life claiming their legal penalty has been paid while they are free to continue in sinful living.

Haven't you heard things like:

- Jesus freed me from the penalty of the law
- I was saved at 14, it doesn't matter what I do now. Jesus paid for all my sins past present and future.

- When we accept Christ we don't stop sinning

How can one believe they are in Christ while continue to live sinfully?

By believing a legal model of salvation, which is what the church of the Dark Ages taught. We sin, but we can have a legal payment made, either by ourselves by paying money to the church, or doing penance, or by Christ paying His blood to the Father. Either way, we live in sin and get our legal penalty paid.

When one understands the true nature of God's universe, His law of love, then one realizes true freedom only exists in a life united with Christ in heart, mind, method and motive. True freedom exists only in those who have experienced radical transformation of heart such that they are free to love, rather than live in fear and selfishness. Freedom exists when we are united with Christ in loving God and others more than self!

When one surrenders to God, can they live a life free from sin?

We are studying Galatians 5:1-15 this week, let's read verses 13-16:

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. ¹⁴ The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵ If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

¹⁶ So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

What is this saying? Is this saying, when you accept Christ's legal payment you will continue to gratify the sinful nature, but don't worry, Christ has paid your legal debt and you are free from punishment by the Father?

Or is it saying you are free from the dominating control of your own fear and selfishness which leads us into actions which violate God's design for life – the law of love?

Is it not true that when one opens the heart to Christ, the Holy Spirit comes in and there is a heart change, a change in the desires, motives, longings of the being, so that, when a mistake happens, when an old habit presents, when we impulsively, or reflexively lose our self-control and act selfishly out of habit, preconditioned response, impulse – our HEARTS ARE NOT IN IT! We are grieved in our own hearts and fall down repentant before God asking for further healing and transformation so we won't stumble like this again?

Notice, our hearts don't go on gratify the sinful nature when we live by the Spirit – even if we do stumble, our hearts are grieved, sickened and unhappy over this and we long to be delivered from this body so weak and corrupt.

And thus we choose, as God gives us wisdom, to make intelligent choices to overcome – we remove from our environment avenues which tempt, porn materials, alcohol, tobacco – we get into support groups, 12 step groups, we engage in ministries to help others, we spend time filling our minds and hearts with God's healing word.

Just as we would following our doctors instructions and intelligently apply his treatment plan, likewise when we no longer want such sickness of heart, we follow God's plan for our healing and transformation.

SUNDAY

Read memory verse at top,

“Stand fast therefore in liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”
Gal 5:1

What do you hear? “Hold your ground! Don’t waiver! Don’t move! Don’t fall back! You are free –

- free to love,
- free from working to cure yourself,
- free from fear and insecurity,
- free from fear of God punishing you,
- free from the distortions of Satan’s lies about God.
- Don’t fall back into believing your remedy in Christ is insufficient, or God requires some work on your part to cure you, or that if you don’t accept Christ God will punish and torture you. Don’t let your minds be enslaved with falsehood, doubts, lies and distortions about God!”

Read last two paragraphs, “Paul’s words...” thoughts?

Why do you think Paul uses this phraseology? Was it to communicate that our freedom is a legal price paid to an Imperial authority to purchase our freedom from a slave master?

This idea is what Christianity communicates and this idea is what keeps millions in bondage!

We are enslaved, not primarily by our sinful condition, but by God who has imprisoned us on Cosmic Death Row, and is threatening to execute us for eternity, if someone doesn’t pay our death penalty to the Universal Executioner.

What enslaves us? God’s government? Satan? We are enslaved by our carnal natures and the lies we believe about God that prevent us from knowing and trusting Him.

Then what is the price to set us free? The truth about God which destroys the lies in our minds and wins us back to trust, AND a new, humanity, cleansed and perfected back to God’s original design, which was achieved by and in Christ!

Paul wants his audience to understand that they are really free, just as free as a slave is free. Free from what enslaves

them. The bondage of a literal slave is imposed by the rules of slavery of that government. Such slavery is arbitrary and has an arbitrary law which enforces it. We are enslaved by our own condition of sinfulness and it is our inability to heal ourselves and put ourselves back in harmony with God's design for life which enslaves us.

The people of Paul's day were familiar with slavery and what it would mean to the slave to be free, thus he uses this as an example, but we must not be overly literal. God's government is not like human governments and thus to concretize this example distorts the divine government, which is exactly what happened when Imperialism infected Christianity, and we are still trying to free ourselves from it.

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "This pattern..." thoughts? What does, "We know that our old self was crucified with him," mean?

What was crucified with Christ?

Our old self, which is what?

What does this language mean in practical terms?

Does it mean that all recorded sins, past, present and future were laid upon Christ at the Cross and judicial punishment was inflicted upon Him to punish Him in the place of all humans to exact retribution and assuage God's wrath?

Does it mean that Christ took upon Himself our sinful condition and at the Cross Christ destroyed that terminal condition? Our old self was crucified in Christ when Christ overcame as a human being by loving perfectly?

This week one of our online class members, Eric Hillis, emailed me a Hebrew literal translation of Isaiah 53, listen to verses 3-6:

3. One being despised and shunned of men. A man of pains, and **one being known of illness**. And as [we] conceal[ed] [our] faces from him, one being despised and we did not account him.

4. Surely, **our illnesses, he carried/bore** and he was **burdened with our pains**, and **we accounted him** one being touched one being smitten of God and one being humbled.

5. And he from being wounded **from** our transgressions, and from being crushed **from** our depravities. The discipline/admonition of our well-being/peace [was] upon him. And in the welts/stripes of him, he is healed **to us** (i.e. **we consider that the welts/stripes are "healing" him, or for his good**).

6. All of us, as the flock we strayed. Man, to his/our way he/we faced/turned. And **the LORD, in him, intercedes [with] all of us/our depraved/depravity**.

<http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/OTpdf/isa53.pdf>

In the fourth paragraph it states,

“The context suggests that Paul is referring to freedom from the bondage and condemnation of a law-driven Christianity.”
Do we struggle with such problems today?

How does a law-driven Christianity manifest itself today?

- Believing one cannot go to heaven if goes to church on the wrong day?
- Believing one can be saved by eating the right foods? Or one can be lost by eating the wrong foods?
- Giving tithe in order to get blessings and make more money?
- Believing your legal penalty for sin has been paid by Christ’s blood? How does such a belief affect the believer?
- Believing the records of your sins, when you accept the legal payment, are erased from heaven’s record. What does such a belief do to the believer?

Other ways we have a law-driven Christianity?

What is supposed to drive our Christianity? The law of love, which is giving, beneficence, loving others more than self!

TUESDAY

Read first sentence second paragraph, “The first consequence of trying to earn God’s favor by submitting to circumcision is that it obligates the person to keep the entire law.”

Thoughts? What do you think? What ideas are connoted in this sentence? Are there any problems with this entire thread?

Questions that came to me as I read this sentence were:

- Did we earn God’s favor by putting His Son on the Cross and offering God His Son’s blood?
- Can we earn God’s favor?
- Did Christ die in order to earn God’s favor?
- Was it ever necessary for any being to earn God’s favor?
- What does the idea imply about God to even suggest it was necessary to earn God’s favor?
- On the other side, is the lesson suggesting we are not obligated to keep the entire law?
- Is the lesson suggesting that when we accept Christ we are not expected to live in harmony with the law?
- What law?

Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matt 22:37-40

Thoughts? Are we not expected to live in harmony with all God’s law?

Are we obligated to breathe if we want to live? Are we not obligated then to keep God’s law?

So what is Paul talking about when he says that if we allow ourselves to be circumcised then we are required to keep the entire law?

Here is my paraphrase of Galatians 5:2-4:

Gal 5:2 Now listen carefully, I, Paul want to make this extremely clear: if you included circumcision as a necessary element in the remedy to sin and selfishness, then you dispel Christ and nullify the true remedy he brought. 3 I say it again, any man who is circumcised as a means of healing from selfishness and sin, is choosing a course without Christ's free remedy and thus is required to heal and cure himself. 4 Those of you who are trying to be healed and set right with God by observing a set of rules or rituals have rejected Christ and his methods which heal; you have rejected God's graciousness and accepted a false remedy.

Fourth paragraph states, "Paul's third objection to circumcision is that it hinders spiritual growth."

How? Why?

Circumcision as a means of salvation, closes the mind to God's Spirit, truth, and darkens the understanding.

What things are done in Christianity today that hinder spiritual growth?

- God said it, I believe it, that settles it
- We don't ask questions we believe on faith without understanding or evidence
- Accepting an Imperial Roman concept of God's government with an imposed law, imposed legal penalties, and a legal system of salvation in which God is required to legally pay our penalty
- Others?

Wednesday

First paragraph asks, “How should a person who is not saved by works of the law live?” thoughts?

Why?

- How should a person, with pneumonia, who is not cured by working, but by taking antibiotics, live?
 - Should they smoke?
 - Should they aspirate food?
 - Should they breathe asbestos infested air?
 - If they are healed by antibiotics, and they are taking their antibiotics, why shouldn't they smoke, aspirate food or breathe asbestos infected air?

Isn't this the same reason why those who are healed by trusting their lives and hearts into God's hand not live licentious lives?

Or is it that if one lives a “sinful” life they don't actually damage their character, warp their reason, sear their conscious and destroy the faculties sensitive to the Spirit of God, but instead they form a list of legal offenses that require punishment by the governor of the universe?

Here is a major problem for our young people with penal model substitutionary theology, and why many leave the church or end up in wild living – listen to a couple of questions submitted to me by Collegedale Academy students regarding sex.

- If God will forgive you then why can't you have sex before marriage?
- If you plan on marrying someone after being with them for a very long time is it sinful to have sex? And is God angry with us even though you love that person beyond

description? And if you pray together and love God then how is it wrong?

- What is revealed by these questions?
- What concept do these high school students have of God and sin?
- Why do they think sin is wrong?
- Because it either breaks God's law or gets God angry at us – and thus, if that is the problem, then we don't need to modify our lives, we need to fix God, and how do we do that?
- We appease Him with His Son's blood, while we go on living in sin, this is what penal substitution theology does in the minds of our young people.

So how do we answer their questions?

- Is the sin problem God's attitude or our condition?
- If your parents will forgive you for not brushing your teeth why brush them?
- I have a patient who prays for healthy lungs but smokes a pack of cigarettes per day – how could smoking be wrong if she prays?
 - I am not angry at my patient for smoking, but is my anger the problem?
 - Prayer doesn't void your choice or change God's laws
 - God's forgiveness doesn't prevent the damage from ongoing violations of His design for life (sin)

THURSDAY

Read top dark section and first paragraph, - thoughts?

What do you think of the answer to the difference between doing the law and fulfilling the law? What do you understand the difference to be?

What about the last sentence regarding trying to earn God's approval for doing what the law requires? Does God approve of doing what the law forbids?

Read the last paragraph, "Although it is..." thoughts, what would prompt such a conclusion as the last sentence? Do you hear a gross misunderstanding of God's law?

Their statement of "the law and love are not incompatible" is just like saying, "breathing and life are not incompatible." It is foolish. The reality the law is love, and until Christianity realizes that God's law is love, the design principle life is built upon, we will struggle with a confused theology and distorted picture of God. Consider the pink section at the bottom:

"What's easier, and why: to love others or simply obey the Ten Commandments?"

Again, what is the problem with this question? Love is fulfillment of the law! You cannot obey the 10 Commandment without loving others it is impossible.

FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs, thoughts? What is our role in working out our salvation?

Read question #3 – thoughts? This is like a patient who wants medications to help cure his lungs so he can smoke more, or a liver transplant so he can drink more.

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 12, 4Q 2011

Living By The Spirit

Memory Verse, “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16

Do you believe it?

What does it mean to “walk by the Spirit”?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Walking...” thoughts?

Do you like the idea that Christianity is not merely a set of beliefs, doctrines, or concepts but a way of life?

How would you describe that way of life?

Read second paragraph, “Conduct in the Old...” thoughts?

Do you agree? Was the Old Testament “walking” in the law?

Does it sound like this paragraph is supporting the idea of a split dispensation, a dispensation of law in the Old Testament, and a dispensation of grace in the New Testament? Is walking in the law different than walking in the Spirit? What if we define the law as the law of love? Walking in the Spirit, is always walking in the law of love, is it not?

But when we assume an “Imposed” law, a set of arbitrary rules, then walking in the law takes on an entire different meaning. This is how the lesson seems to understand walking in the law. And thus they see the Old Testament different than the New, but was it really?

- Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away. Genesis 5:24

- Was Enoch walking in a system of rules?
- Was he walking in the Spirit?
- Was he walking in the law of love?
- Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Genesis 6:9
 - Was Noah walking in a legal system of rules?
 - Was he walking in the Spirit?
 - Was he walking in the law of love?
- Then he blessed Joseph and said, “May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day... Genesis 48:15
 - Did Abraham and Isaac walk in a legal set of rules?
 - Did they walk with the Lord? In the law of love?
- God said to Israel,
 - Walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess. Dt 5:33-6:1

What do you think this means? Is God saying, “Walk in the legal system of rules, and if you do, then I will use my power to miraculously make good things happen for you”?

Or is, God saying, “Live in harmony with the laws I built the universe to run upon, which the ordinances are designed to teach you, and you will prosper as you thrive in harmony with my design”?

- And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul... DT 10:12

What does this mean? Does this sound like walking in the law? Where does this idea of walking in a legal system of rules come from?

Satan – Satan is a legalist. Satan has worked from the beginning to distort God’s law away from the natural law He built the universe to run upon, to a system of rules imposed by God so that he could misconstrue God’s character as one of an arbitrary judge and rule enforcer.

Now, God did give much law at Sinai – if He is not an imposer of law, if He does not want rule observance and is not a rule enforcer, than how are we to understand His use of such law in the Old Testament?

It was added to diagnose and protect, very much like a parent who sets rules for children, brush your teeth, no sweets before bedtime, no theatrical television... why?

Because children don’t understand the natural law their health is built to operate upon and will ignorantly live out of harmony with God’s design bringing pain and suffering.

Parents set rules for children, waiting for the children to grow up and understand the reasons, understand the natural law the rules were based upon and freely live in harmony with God’s design and then the rules are no longer needed.

What a wonderful God we have who would stoop to help us in such a way. Yet, Satan has twisted God’s actions and people see God through the lens of a law imposer and enforcer and live in fear and dread of Him.

MONDAY

The lesson focuses us on the conflict between the carnal nature and the spiritual nature, read first paragraph, “The struggle...”

What do you think? What is this battle about?

From my paraphrase:

Gal 5:16 So I tell you plainly: Live by the methods and power of the Spirit and you will not practice the selfish, survival-of-the-fittest methods. 17 For the selfish nature desires to promote self at the expense of everyone and everything else and this is exactly the opposite of the Spirit of love, and the Spirit of love desires to promote the good of everyone else at any expense to himself. The selfish nature and the Spirit of love are diametrically opposed to each other, so that if you follow the Spirit of love you will no longer do what your selfish nature wants. 18 Therefore, if you practice the methods of the Spirit, you no longer need to be quarantined and supervised by the written law.

How do we experience this?

Because of Adam's sin, we are born wired with fear and insecurity. Our brains are out of balance. We are wired to watch out for self, survival of the fittest. The New Testament speaks of dying to self, of having our brains rewired. In the Old Testament David wrote a Psalm that describes this process.

Ps 23:

- The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want
 - God is watching out for me and I don't need to worry about where my support will come from. He will provide all my soul needs.
- He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside the still waters
 - He will first provide soul nurturance, support, sustenance to strengthen me and prepare me
- He restores my soul
 - He will heal my inner man, cleanse my conscience, and restore my individuality
- He leads me in the path of righteousness for his name sake
 - He will lead me in the path which restores me to

righteousness, the path that makes me right inside, like He originally intended, so that He and His ways will be glorified in my life

- When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for you are with me.
 - He, then, after providing for me, strengthening me, cleansing my conscience, removing my guilt, restoring my individuality, leads me in the path to ultimate righteousness, the path which is through the valley that feels like I am going to die. The valley in which self surrenders and is crucified, the valley which frees me from the domination of fear and selfishness.
- Your rod and staff comfort me
 - He comforts me with his shepherd's rod and staff, which is used by the shepherd to beat back my attackers, and lift me out of the ditch when I fall
- You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies
 - With my critics and accusers and enemies all around He provides me a rich bounty of spiritual food to strengthen and develop my soul
- You anoint my head with oil
 - He provides His Spirit to enlighten, cleanse, renew, and give wisdom
- My cup runs over
 - My heart, renewed, cleansed, and freed from fear and selfishness runs over with love for God and my fellow man
- Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life
 - Living a life of love results in goodness and mercy following in my wake wherever I go
- I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever
 - And, having been recreated by God I will forever be a living stone in the Lord's heavenly temple!

This is God's plan, to heal and restore us, in reality!
 What counterfeits exist in the world to God's plan to overcome

through the Spirit?

Eastern mysticism, what does Eastern mysticism offer and why is it becoming so popular in the west?

We are wired with fear and insecurity because of sin. Fear results in activation of the stress pathways, which result in multiple health problems like ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, irritability, depression, dementia etc.

Eastern religions have as a primary part of their worship experience focused meditation in which the mind focuses on emptiness and nothingness. Such meditation results in calming the fear circuitry and thus results in improved physical health.

Because eastern meditation is documented to provide measurable positive effect on health it is making inroads into the west and Christianity.

Strengths of Eastern Meditation:

1. Multiple studies document it has beneficial health effects, reduces heart rate, blood pressure, anxiety, improves depression, better recovery from illness, less pain after surgery.
2. Improves attention, concentration and performance in school

These results are better than what is experienced by traditional Christianity – why?

Because traditional Christianity teaches a false system of beliefs infected by Imperial Rome, with an imposed law, imposed penalties, punishing and wrathful God, all of which incites fear and activates the fear circuits of the brain resulting in worsening physical and mental health.

Fear inducing religions, activating fear circuits, inflame the system – as soon as Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid

because they were afraid. Perfect love casts out fear. The Christianity taught by Jesus was a love based Christianity, which removed fear. But Christianity, after being infected by Imperial Rome's imposed law and government concepts, became a beastly religion of power, might, threats, and projected this concept onto God who is a cruel judge, who must use His power to torture and destroy.

Such concepts are damaging to mind and body.

If eastern meditation is inconsistent with God's principles then why do we see positive health benefits and what are its weaknesses?

The way the brain is wired is that the prefrontal cortex is designed to calm the fear circuits. Eastern meditations result in activation of the prefrontal cortex, with subsequent calming of the fear circuitry, and thus the positive benefits seen above because of the decreased activation of the stress cascade.

But, the problem is that this mediation

- doesn't enhance understanding of God's universe, provide insight into the human dilemma, or bring truth into the mind.
- It doesn't bring us to a knowledge of God, His methods, principles.
- It doesn't result in the death to "self" and the experiencing of a new heart and Christlike character.
- It doesn't resolve the distorted beliefs with the truth.
- It does not create a trust relationship with the Creator
- It promotes a greater self-centered focus on one's own ability to heal and fix oneself
- It doesn't recreate the Spirit Temple into God's dwelling place, useful for God to enlighten and shine through with saving truth in a dying world.
- Thus, its function is to stunt the growth of the individual, impair true enlightenment and avoid the experience of unity with Christ.

- It undermines individuality for the transcendent experience of unity with cosmos.
- Eastern mysticism also fails to understand the real problem, what is wrong with us, and thus its interventions come up short.

From our perspective, we understand God's law of love as the design template of life, and sin is lawlessness, or being selfish and out of harmony with God's design. We understand that in us there are two antagonistic principles at war, other centered love and survival of the fittest.

We understand that conversion is not the process of meditation to calm the fear circuitry, but following our Shepherd into the "valley of the shadow of death" in which we die to self.

This is a time of great anguish and anxiety - (Jacob's night of wrestling, Gethsemane, Peter after his denial, David after Nathan confronted him etc.). It is in this anguish, as we confront the truth, intelligently, wrestling with our own selfishness and ultimately surrender to Christ that we experience His love, supernatural regeneration, a new set of motives in the heart and freedom from fear based living.

Few Christians experience this because they have accepted the false system of legal payment instead of God's plan of recreation and regeneration of heart. Thus, the Eastern philosophies, which have the ability to actual cause calming of the fear circuitry is experienced as more "real" and beneficial in our life today than traditional Christianity, because traditional Christianity has been infected with a false "remedy."

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

In light of what we just discussed, read last paragraph, "In

this context...” thoughts?

What corrupt views of God do we struggle with that interfere with experiencing God’s healing in our lives?

Why do false views of God lead to loss of eternal life?

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust, resulting in fear and selfishness. If we don’t know God we won’t trust Him!

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The Ten Commandments...” thoughts?

Does something in this paragraph seem slightly off? Is there something about how this is stated that seems not quite right?

For instance, might it be more accurate to say, the law is love, rather than “love is not in conflict with the law”?

Do the 10 Commandments ever get voided?

Do the 10 Commandments ever become obsolete? When?

When the law is written on the heart and mind and the entire universe is cleansed from sin, the Commandments are not voided, but they are obsolete, why? Because once they are written in the Spirit Temple, they are no longer needed on stone. When everyone is healthy we no longer need the MRI.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – “Although an inward...” thoughts?

Is this exactly true, or a qualified truth?

For instance, are there times in the life of the believer where an internal battle rages, but are there other times in the life of

the believer where there is genuine peace and no internal battle?

Can we live victorious over the fears and insecurities and habits of our life of sin?

Do we have a role to play or is something done in us, with our consent but, without our effort?

Here is how one of the founders of our church put it:

- While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the **divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part.** His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}
- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that

the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding**, but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . .** Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

How do you see the relationship between Christ's work and our work?

- The Remedy to sin was fully achieved by Christ and no one else.
- We can do nothing to add to what Christ has done to save mankind, but, each person now must choose to open their heart in trust to receive from the Holy Spirit the benefit of Christ's victory in their life.
- Each person must wrestle out the truth in their own minds and confront the lies and misunderstandings they hold in their own minds.
- When we do this a supernatural transformation of character, desire, motive, and attitude takes place.
- In this process there is a daily, ongoing, and constant cooperative work of the individual with the Divine in which the person chooses to continue to follow the direction of the Heavenly Physician until they are one day fully healed and set free to be self-controlled beings operating on the law of love, which has been fully restored into the heart. (Heb 8:10).

FRIDAY

Read top paragraph, "The life of..." Why might the attacks become fiercer as we grow closer to the end? How are Satan's attacks different today than they were in the past?

The unfolding of knowledge, and scientific advancement, and increase in population all contribute to increasing temptation and damage to the human brain.

Consider:

- Designer drugs today, damage brain like never before in human history
- Alcohol, distilled spirits, more available, more forms, more potent
- Fast food, depleted of nutrients, multiple chemical additives, altering human health and physiology
- Pollution, undermining health.
- Internet and information access – increased availability of vices, gambling, perverse activities, lust for things, shopping, etc.
- Entertainment, movies, TV, altering developing brain with less developed prefrontal cortex and more impulsivity and aggression, as well as more mysticism, spiritualism, and normalizing of sinful/lawless living
- Dense cities with increased dens of crime, drugs, gangs, extortion, less time in nature, faster paced life, less time to reflect and meditate
- Normalization of non-marriage living arrangements, devaluing of marriage.
- Evolutionary theories and degradation of God
- Social isolation, families no longer living in multigenerational homesteads or towns

Others?

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 13 4Q 2011

The Gospel and the Church

SABBATH

Read the entire day starting with first paragraph, “Some potato farmers...” thoughts?

The state the farmers learned an important of the law of life, what legislation voted to enact this law?

What happens when you break such a law? Does the government have to have a court investigation, prosecution, sentencing and infliction of punishment?

Are there any lessons here regarding God’s law and sin?

Would any harm be done if we taught that a farmer who planted small potatoes would incur the wrath of God and be punished by having a poor harvest?

Does that ever happen in Christianity?

Turn to Thursday’s lesson, read Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Galatians 6:7-10

What do you hear? Is the message from Paul of sowing and reaping, a law of life? Enacted or natural?

And then the first two paragraphs, “In Galatians...”

Does it sound just like what happens to the farmer who plants small potatoes, that destruction comes from the natural result of being out of harmony with God’s law of life?

What message is suggested by, “Paul’s point is that people may ignore God or even flout His commandments, but they cannot outwit God. He is the ultimate judge, and in the end they will have to pay the price for their actions.”

Does this sound like the natural results of planting small potatoes, or more like, God will punish you by giving you a small harvest?

Do we do harm when we present such concepts?

What harm comes from such ideas? What do young people do if they are presented with such ideas?

Does it ever cause people to reject God altogether?

Do we have a responsibility as Christians to present a better message?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “While Paul...” thoughts?

I personally don’t like the use of “mistakes” in this setting; “mistakes” to me connotes things like planting a tree too close to the house, making an error in your checkbook, dialing the wrong phone number.

Is there a difference between making a math mistake in your checkbook, which results in an overdrawn account and purposely writing a check knowing there are insufficient funds because you are trying to defraud someone? Would you call both of these a mistake?

In heaven, in a sinless world, can there be mistakes without sin?

- Can a sinless being hit a wrong note on a musical instrument?
- Can a sinless being, when stretching their mind to contemplate some aspect of quantum physics generate a false hypothesis and make a calculation error?
- Can a sinless being plant a shrub in a place they later determine isn't ideal?
- Was it a mistake for Eve to wander alone in the Garden? Did she already commit sin when she did?

Are mistakes and violations of God's law always the same?

Read second paragraph, "To benefit from..." thoughts?

What is the point Paul is trying to make? Christians don't look at fellow Christians through the lens of suspicion, accusation, or criticism, but see them in the best possible light, always believing the best intents of those who have accepted Christ, and with that mindset are "shocked" or "surprised" if they find a Christian in sin. This is not a support for church witch-hunts or investigations to uncover sin in person's lives.

But also, the converted person, may have weaknesses that they are not aware of, which may present in certain situations without expectation. And this is shocking to the person. "I never thought I would do such a thing..."

When this happens what is the proper response?

Read third paragraph, "The likelihood..." thoughts?

Can anyone give examples of unintentional sin and deliberate defiant sin? Is one type of sin less damaging than another?

If a person slips off a ten-story roof or purposely jumps, does it make a difference? What difference?

What is defiant sin? Would it not simply be cherished sin, the selfishness, ego, lust, addiction for which the person clings and has no desire to be free of? Is it not the sin the person justifies, even argues isn't sin at all?

I have never met a person yet, who had an affair, that didn't know it was wrong at the time they were engaging in it. Does that mean it was defiant sin? Was it merely a mistake, "Oh my, I thought you were my spouse!"

Or, is it, a weakness, a vulnerability in them, that in a certain situation became manifest? Is it the sinful act that is the problem, or the defect of character that was already in the person, but didn't manifest until the act that was the real problem?

Example, - Peter and his denial of Christ.

- Prior to the denial, what was Peter's assessment of himself?
- When Christ told him that he would betray Christ, what was Peter's response?
- Did Peter have some defect in character that he was unaware of?
- What happened when that defect manifested in behavior – when Peter denied his Lord? It opened Peter's eyes to his true condition and he wept bitterly and was, at that point, converted.

Was Peter's sin a mistake, or a defiant sin?

- How many times did Peter deny his Lord?
- Did the Lord warn Peter ahead of time?
- Did he have time to think about it after his first denial and did he yet deny again?
- Or was Peter's denial evidence of a defect in heart that Peter was unaware of, that the act revealed to Peter?

What does this mean regarding how we see ourselves and others?

Should we not see everyone through the lens of our true condition? In what condition were we borne?

“Born in sin, conceived in iniquity.” Ps 51:5

Who chose this? Did anyone, since Adam, choose to be born a sinner?

Can a person make a choice to avoid this condition?

- All people are borne, wired with fear, and the drive to survive primary.
- This drive to survive, if unchecked leads us to act how?
- Selfishly, and selfishness is the opposite of what?
- Love, and love is the law of life.

We are borne, not by our choice, in a terminal condition of selfishness, this is why Jesus said we must be reborn. Which means what? We must have a change in the motives of the heart. Love must be planted into the heart.

This rebirth only happens to those who are brought to a realization that there is something wrong with themselves they cannot fix. Peter’s denial brought Peter to that point.

So what is defiant sin? It is an act, that one has awareness is wrong, or a heart that doesn’t want to be healed, regardless of the behavior? The behavior is secondary, the heart is primary.

And what should be our attitude toward each other when we discover an area in which a person is struggling with the infection of sin?

Read last paragraph, “The proper response...” thoughts?

Has it been your experience that the church is a place where the restoring response is predominant, where the likelihood of gossip, punishment, disfellowship, condemnation is remote?

The lesson asks at the bottom of Tuesday's lesson, "What keeps you from seeking help- pride, shame, lack of trust, a sense of self-sufficiency?"

Could it be fear of how the church will treat you?

Why is the church, so often a place where we crucify each other, rather than build each other up in love?

Could it be the "natural" result, the automatic outgrowth, of worshipping a judgmental, punishing, wrathful God? If we plant seeds in the mind of a wrathful God, a judge who inspects, finds fault, and punishes, might this not result in us experiencing the fruit of such practices in our own lives?

What would be the remedy for such problems in the church?

Would it not be the truth about God – who is, Himself, being judged, and who gave Himself for us?

How many of you would feel comfortable seeking out a member of the class to be an accountability partner for you regarding your porn addiction? Why not?

If someone came to you from the class and told you they were struggling with a drug addiction, porn addiction, or some other problem, how would you respond?

MONDAY

Read bottom paragraph, "One of the greatest..." thoughts?

Do you find it helpful to think of sin in "types"? Is there any danger to think of sin as types?

When we think of “certain types of sin,”

- Does it suggest sin is behavioral?
- Does this concept contribute to certain spiritual pride?
“I’ve never used alcohol, drugs, tobacco.” “Well, I’ve never eaten meat.” “Well, I’ve never eaten cheese.”
- Does it suggest some “sins” are worse than other sins?
- Does it obscure, in any way, the reality that sin is a condition of the heart that manifests in many ways?

What about the danger of believing we are immune to theological error?

I love this quote by one of the founders of our church. Do you think this is a healthy and reasonable attitude to have?

There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. {CW 35.2}

Is this reasonable? I strive to remember I am finite, no matter what I currently know and understand, there is always more to know and understand. I never want to “arrive” at truth, but to daily advance and grow in truth.

TUESDAY

Burden Bearing

What comes to mind when you consider the idea of bearing one another’s burdens?

What is the purpose of bearing one another’s burdens?

- Is it to remove the burden?
- Is it to relieve them of responsibility?
- Is it to help the person?
- What does it mean to help?
 - Help them feel better?
 - Make them happy?
 - Give them what they are asking for?
 - Or, is genuine helping, when we help in their development into Christlikeness?
 - And what would that mean in regard to burden bearing?

Are there any dangers to bearing one another's burdens?

Can we, by bearing one another's burdens, do harm?

If a parent carries a child and never sets them down, because they don't want to see the child injured when the child stumbles and falls as he/she learns to walk. Will carrying the child and never putting the child down help or injure the child?

Does this analogy have any application beyond childhood?

Do we ever carry burdens for people who are capable of carrying their own burdens? If we do this, do we help or injure?

I had a patient in renal failure....

This week I had a patient whose brother has a drug problem, the brother lives in the deceased parents home, he won't get a job, he doesn't pay any bills, the sister takes all his "burdens" pays his bills, tries to get him a job, won't hold him accountable.

If the sister loves him, what does she need to do?

Do we help people, who are capable of carrying their own weight, by giving handouts? By fulfilling their duties for them?

What happens inside a person who doesn't fulfill their own responsibilities, carry their own burdens, when they are capable of doing so?

I saw a another patient on Thursday, distraught and overwhelmed, because a sister with chronic illness calls her all the time to get the patient to do for her, cook, clean, pay bills, run errands, do laundry. And my patient was overwhelmed.

- We spoke of healthy boundaries, of not doing for a person that is capable of doing for themselves.
- We explored the principle of “if you don't use it you lose it.” And if we do for others, that which they can reasonably do for themselves, we may cripple them or contribute to further disability.
- She cried and asked, “But she is my sister, and my sister in Christ aren't I supposed to serve her?”
- How would you answer her?

So, while there is danger in carrying another's burdens. Are there clearly times and places where, in love, it is our duty and privilege to carry another's burden?

- How can we tell when it is time to step in and carry a burden for another, and when it is time to call the person to carry their own burden?

Let's Look at WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Paul's use of the phrase...” thoughts?

What is your understanding of what the lesson means by the term, “moral law”? Is it the 10 commandments?

What do you think of the logic and explanation of the “law of Christ” and the “moral law”?

So, what is the law of Christ? Is it the law of love?

And the 10 Commandments are an expression of the law of love, specifically adapted for humans in sin – for loving purposes. Can the law of love be annulled? Why or why not?

How would you describe the law of love?

How would you apply the law of love in relationship to others and their burdens?

Why is it okay for a mother to brush the teeth of their 18 month old, but not okay for the same mother to brush the teeth of her 18 year old?

Love seeks to build up and bless others, to help others develop their full potential, which means we don't habitually do for others that which they are capable of doing for themselves.

In the physical world strength increases as we exercise or stress our muscles against burdens or weights. No other person can exercise our muscles for us, if someone else lifts the weight they get the strength. Likewise, when it comes to character no one else can lift life's individual responsibilities for you and you get the strengthening of character. No, if someone else lifts your burdens, that you are responsible for and capable of fulfilling, they get stronger and you get weaker.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "The Spirit of God..." thoughts?

What is being described? Is there a law in evidence? What law? Is this an imposed law, or part of God's design?

What does this indicate in regard to the final end of sin and sinners?

Read second paragraph, "All should..." thoughts?

What is the agency by which the soul is destroyed? Is God the destroyer?

Why do so many put God in the role of destroying the soul?

What is the consequence to understanding that sin destroys the soul and God heals? How does such an understanding impact our decision making and relationship with God?

What happens if we wrongly conclude God is the destroyer? What impact does that have?

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 14 4Q 2011

Boasting in the Cross

FRIDAY

Read top section, “The cross of Calvary...” thoughts?

Let’s take it sentence by sentence,

“The cross of Calvary challenges, and will finally vanquish every earthly and hellish power.”

Do you typically think of the cross vanquishing earthly and hellish powers? Isn’t it generally presented that God’s might, and power, and fire from heaven will one day put down rebellion and vanquish the enemy?

But, this Christian writer claims it will be the cross which puts down “every” earthly and hellish power. How many is “every?”

What are earthly and hellish powers?

- Lies
- Selfishness

Can these be put down by might and power?

Can we defeat a lie by threatening people with punishment if they don’t change their belief? What would happen if we threatened to kill people who believe differently than us? What happened in the Dark Ages? Did such tactics bring light or more lies, confusion, and selfishness?

Can you get someone to love you by the use of force, coercion and threats?

Do you see why Satan rejoices when Christians teach God, in order to be just, must use His power to punish and kill? Satan

knows that such methods cannot eliminate his power, but in fact, when Christians present such concepts the enhance Satan's power.

Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. Zech 4:6

The Spirit is the Spirit of truth and love, it is only by presenting truth in love that lies can be destroyed and selfishness vanquished!

What Biblical support do we have that the cross will vanquish these powers?

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that **by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil**—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Heb 2:14,15

Satan's has the power of death? What is that power? And how did Christ's death destroy him and his power?

Life eternal is knowing God, John 17:3, therefore, eternal death is not knowing God, so Satan's power is the lies he tells about God that we believe that prevent us from knowing Him.

Here is an interesting comment, what do you think it means in light of Christ's death destroying Satan and his power?

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, **he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted.** Whatever attitude he might assume, **he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's**

brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

What does this mean? Why was Satan's activities restricted? Did God, after the death of Christ, put a force field in place and by use of divine might and power restrict Satan?

Or, having revealed the truth to unfallen angels, having exposed Satan for what he is, all intelligent beings in heaven, saw Satan clearly as a liar and a fraud, and they freely chose never to listen to anything he has to say again? Thus his power to deceive and spread lies was restricted by the truth closing minds to his deceit?

The Bible also tells us Christ's death vanquished death:

This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, **who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.** 2Tim 1:9,10

How did Christ destroy death? What is the cause of death? Being out of harmony with the law of love, the law upon which life was built – "sin when full grown brings forth death." James 1:15.

Christ destroyed the infection of selfishness in humanity by overcoming, in His human brain, every temptation to act in self interest and perfectly loving even to the laying down of His own life.

Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. Luke 17:33 NIV.

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. Ps 19:7

Jesus restored into mankind the law of love, and in so doing rose again in a perfected humanity.

Notice the quote above states, “This sacrifice was offered for the **purpose** of restoring man to his original perfection.”

Here is a fascinating quote from one of the founders of our church:

Sin had become a science, and vice was consecrated as a part of religion. Rebellion had struck its roots deep into the heart, and the hostility of man was most violent against heaven. **It was demonstrated before the universe that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted. A new element of life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world.** {DA 37.1}

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. **He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible.** Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. **He was ready to cast blame upon God,** and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above. **But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it.** DA 37.2

Christ did not die to pay some legal penalty to appease the wrath and anger of an offended god. He died to destroy the devil, destroy death, and restore man by destroying the devil's work:

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 1John 3:8

One of the founders of our church describes it this way:

Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; but **Satan has labored to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image.** {LHU 48.2}

Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can **fashion anew the character** that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. He came to lift us up from the dust, **to reshape the marred character after the pattern of His divine character**, and to make it beautiful with His own glory. {DA 37.3}

How did Christ destroy Satan's work? By restoring God's image in mankind in His own victorious life on earth!

Next sentence from the lesson, "Yea, more, it was offered to give him an entire transformation of character, making him more than a conqueror."

What does this mean?

What does God's law require? Does it require a death penalty? No! It requires perfect harmony with its principles? Why? Because that is how life is constructed to exist.

So Christ,

once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. Heb 5:9

Could it mean exactly what we read, that Christ came to perfect humanity and after so doing, he became the source of a new humanity to which we can, by trusting Him, experience reproduced in us by the Holy Spirit?

What do you think about the next sentence, “Those who in the strength of Christ overcome the great enemy of God and man, will occupy a position in the heavenly courts above angels who have never fallen.”?

Why? Could these mean we will have greater appreciation, from experience of God’s love, greater appreciation of the devastation caused by violations of God’s law of love, and eagerly join Christ in His ministry to the universe? Could we find ourselves eternal ministers, priests of God, sharing our experience, and the truth of God’s character with intelligent beings throughout the universe? Could our story, which glorifies God, elevate us to a position in God’s kingdom, because the truth about God transforms, develops and enhances the individual and we will have the privilege of sharing such truth with others?

What do you think of, “Christ on the cross was the medium whereby mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. This is the means that is to move the world.”?

Ps 85:10 states:

Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

What does it mean – mercy and truth met together? What is mercy? What is the truth?

The truth is that our condition is terminal, sinfulness - being out of harmony with God’s design is incompatible with life. But, in Christ our sinful state was mercifully healed. God is righteous and always does what is right, and the right thing the thing the law of God requires, is perfect harmony with it, as life was built to operate only upon this design protocol. Therefore, God’s rightness, God’s perfect law of love, was in Christ and brought peace, harmony, reconciliation of sinful man with God, by healing mankind back to God’s design!

Now that we have been put right with God through faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Romans 5:1

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Having emphasized...” thoughts

What is justification? What does it mean to be justified?

Does the lesson give a clue in the next paragraph when it states, “True religion is not rooted in external behavior but in the condition of the human heart.”?

Would justification require a change in the heart?

What does justification mean? To set right, to put right, to make right – when you justify the margins on your word document, what are you doing?

Since Adam sinned, what is wrong that needs to be set right?

- Is it God?
- Is it God’s law?
- Is it man’s legal record book in heaven than needs adjusting?
- Or is it the actual condition of mankind?

Then, would justification not simply be, doing whatever is necessary to put mankind back in a right standing, condition, with God and His universe?

So, what did sin do to mankind? It changed the heart from love, to fear and selfishness, survival of the fittest and what would need to happen to set man right?

The nature of mankind would need to be restored back to God’s original design, just like the passage above says, or the Bible say:

He condemned sin **in human nature** by sending his own Son, **who came with a nature like sinful human nature, to do away with sin.** Romans 8:3 GNT.

God made him who had no sin **to be sin** for us, **so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.** 2Cor 5:21 NIV.

Read third paragraph, “*Ktisis* is the Greek...” thoughts?

This is well said, and exactly what justification is, and the next paragraph states correctly, “Paul explains that becoming a new creation means far more than just a change in our status in the books of heaven; it brings about a change in our lives today.”

Read the last paragraph, “Becoming a new creature...” thoughts?

What do you think they mean? Was this confusing for you?

But because many people still struggle with distortions of God’s law and inappropriately infer or insert human legal constructs into their theology, they describe things in ways that can often sound confusing.

It all goes back to how one understands God’s law.

If we understand God’s law as an expression of his character, the natural law of love life is built upon, then we understand justification is the actual change in man’s nature, first achieved by Christ thus “justifying the species” or putting humanity right with God again and procuring the remedy to sin. And secondarily, on an individual level, justification is when the heart changes from enmity with God to trust in God, as Paul describes of Abraham.

So, rightly understood, what the last sentence means is this-being healthy is not what makes us healthy, this radical change from a terminal condition to health, is the unmistakable result of taking the remedy procured by Christ.

But, when you accept Imperial Rome's version of God's law, as an imposed law put upon God's creatures to control their behavior, then justification takes on a legal aspect of paying penalties, obtaining legal pardon and appeasing God, all of which stem from paganism.

MONDAY

First paragraph describes Paul's description of those who opposed him as being superficial, wearing a mask, acting righteous in order to get approval and win adherents to their side.

Read second paragraph, "Paul makes an important..." thoughts?

Paul is saying that people can be harassed, excluded, expelled, shunned, labeled, isolated, blackballed by the church and in order to avoid this his opponents would put on an act in order to get approval from the religious authorities.

Consider this dynamic for a minute, do we ever struggle today, with organizations that use such methods as condemnation, exclusion, and harassment?

What does it reveal when such methods are used? Why would the Jews in Paul's day need to resort to such methods in dealing with Paul and others who disagreed with them?

Because they didn't possess the truth and when a position or construct is built on falsehood, misunderstanding, or error, then truth will destroy it. So if you want to hold to the false construct, and someone else presents the truth, then in order

to keep the false construct, one must devalue and expel the ones bringing truth.

What would it say if we find these methods happening today? If you belong to an organization which is using such methods, then let it be a red flag that whoever is practicing such methods is afraid and insecure and doesn't know how to counter a message being brought by another.

One of the founders of our church stated,

There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that **all our expositions of Scripture are without an error**. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, **is not a proof that our ideas are infallible**. Age will not make error into truth, and **truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.** {CW 35.2}

I love this quote, consider the implications. This is not a position in which one is afraid to change an opinion or idea. EGW did not believe our church had a corner on truth and allowed for the possibility that things taught during her life were not yet fully developed, understood or even correct. How many in the church today can take such a position? How many are afraid to acknowledge a certain doctrine was incorrect? Why?

The last paragraph describes how certain religious practices provided political advantage. How much of religion is used for political means?

Has the Christian church been derailed from its mission of taking the gospel to the world and instead is wasting its energy on human politics, getting the right politicians, judges and laws passed?

Did Christ or the apostles spend any time trying to influence the politics of their world? Was their earthly government a better government that respected human rights more than ours? Why didn't they focus on this?

Are we as Christians misguided to focus the churches' energy on politics?

What would Paul say?

See memory verse top of TUESDAY

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” (Gal 6:14)

What do you understand this to mean?

Would it mean:

- We our in the world but not of it?
- Our citizenship is in heaven?
- Our priorities and loyalties are not earthly, but heavenly?

In practical terms what does this mean?

Are these just platitudes or do we live like its true?

One of my office staff, Francesca, has taken a job in Japan to teach English. While she is in Japan she will, no doubt, observe all the laws of Japan, be courteous and polite regarding their customs and culture, yet do you think she we feel, act, and think like she is Japanese? Or will her heart still be American?

While we are in the world, where is our heart? Are we loyal to America or to God? Are the goals of America and God always aligned?

We are entering another presidential campaign, do you think politicians will attempt to use religion? What should our attitude be?

Read last paragraph, “The cross of Christ...” thoughts?

Do you think Paul’s day was more evil than ours? Does our world stand in opposition to God? Can you give examples of common practices in the world which are in opposition to God and/or His design for His universe?

- War
- Capitalism
- Communism
- Evolutionism
- Terrorism
- Crime of all kinds
- Governmental attempts to control beliefs/conscience
- Non-marriage based family lifestyles
- Normalization and even promotion of tobacco, alcohol, drugs

Can you think of common practices in the church which are in opposition to God and/or His design for His universe?

- Authoritarian hierarchy
- Actions which punish free thinking
- Teaching God imposes law and punishes disobedience
- Teaching God kills, (i.e. God took your father to be with Him)

How can we free ourselves from the influence of everything that is opposed to God and His design for life?

When the Bible talks about dying to the world, or dying with Christ, what does this mean in practical terms?

Might it mean that our hearts disconnect from worldly attachments, we let go of our longing, and hold to practices, organizations, items (money, cars, houses, collections), and people, that are undermining our fitness for God's cause?

Glimpses of God Lesson 1 1Q 2012

Merry Christmas and what a great topic to start this Christmas weekend –

The Triune God

Thoughts or questions about this topic?

Have you heard questions about this? Have you heard the resurgence of those in the church or argue against the Trinity?

What arguments have you heard?

- There is no Trinity
- Jesus is not fully God
- Jesus is a created being
- Jesus came after the Father
- The Holy Spirit is only God's Spirit and extension of the Father
- The word Trinity doesn't exist in scripture
- The Trinity is a Roman Catholic belief
- The Bible doesn't teach the Trinity
- The Trinity was infused into Christianity from paganism specifically Babylon

What evidence have you heard to support the position that the Trinity does not exist?

The truth can afford to be fair and loses nothing by close investigation, so we should be willing to look at any evidence. There are three general arguments against the trinity, none of which provide evidence:

- Quotations from other theologians who wrote statements that the Bible doesn't teach the Trinity
- Documentation from history that certain pagan religions had a trinity

- Statements from history that at times in history the Trinity was not taught or understood

I actually have seen any evidence which would document the non-divinity of Christ or the Holy Spirit. So, let's look at the evidence we do have and see where it leads us.

The first question is about Christ, is He fully God, equal with the Father or some lesser being?

This is Christmas weekend, what famous text comes to mind?

Isaiah 9:6:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Who was born? Was it not Jesus? Would this text teach Jesus is less than God or fully God?

What about other Biblical Evidence?

- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made... He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him... No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known. John 1:1-3, 10, 18

What do you hear this text saying? The Word was God, who created, and became flesh – we have two entities – the Word and God. One who remained in heaven, the other who came to earth.

Who was the Word that became flesh? Jesus, and Jesus was with God from the beginning and it was through Jesus that all things were made:

- For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Col 1:16,17

Wouldn't this mean Jesus Himself is Creator God? Jesus did claim to be God:

- "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" John 8:58
- I and the Father are one." John 10:30

The Apostles recognized Jesus as God:

- Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" John 20:28
- We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. 1John 5:20

So here we find in the New Testament, from the Apostles and Jesus' own testimony, that Jesus and the Father are both God.

One of the founders of the SDA church also understood Jesus was fully God:

- Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father,--**one in nature, in character, in purpose**,--the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. "**His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace**" (Isa. 9:6). His

- "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).--Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 34. {7ABC 437.2}
- The Jews had never before heard such words from human lips, and a convicting influence attended them; for it seemed that **divinity flashed through humanity** as Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." The words of Christ were full of deep meaning as he **put forth the claim that he and the Father were of one substance, possessing the same attributes.**--The Signs of the Times, Nov. 27, 1893, p. 54. {7ABC 437.3}
 - Yet **the Son of God was the acknowledged Sovereign of heaven, one in power and authority with the Father.**--The Great Controversy, p. 495. {7ABC 437.4}
 - "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). It is not physical life that is here specified, but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. **But the life of Christ was unborrowed.** No one can take this life from Him. "I lay it down of myself" (John 10:18), He said. **In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived.** This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Saviour. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). This is the open fountain of life for the world. {1SM 296.2}

In the setting of the Great Controversy over God's law and character of love, why is it important to know Jesus is God, and what problems do we have if we suggest Jesus is not fully God?

- What were the allegations Satan made against God in heaven? Our church has historically understood the conflict as follows:
 - Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. The Scripture says, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Ezekiel 28:17. "Thou hast said in thine heart, . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High." Isaiah 14:13, 14. Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. **And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.** {PP 35.2}
 - **To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels.** To this object he was about to bend the energies of that master mind, which, next to Christ's, was first among the hosts of God. But He who would have the will of all His creatures free, left none unguarded to the bewildering sophistry by which rebellion would seek to justify itself. Before the great contest should open, all were to have a clear presentation of His will, whose wisdom and goodness were the spring of all their joy. {PP 36.1}
 - The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. **The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One**

encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng--"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. **Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will.** The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love. {PP 36.2}

- The high honors conferred upon Lucifer were not appreciated as the gift of God and called forth no gratitude to the Creator. He gloried in his brightness and exaltation, and aspired to be equal with God. He was beloved and revered by the heavenly host. Angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was the acknowledged Sovereign of heaven, one in power and authority with the Father. **In all the councils of God, Christ was a participant, while Lucifer was not permitted thus to enter into the divine purposes. "Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He thus honored above Lucifer?"** The Great Controversy, p. 495.

What are the allegations of Lucifer in heaven?

That God is unfair, arbitrary, plays favorites, doesn't love His creatures equally, biased, bigoted, prejudiced, because Christ was chosen over Lucifer to enter counsels of the Father.

Now, consider these allegations and then the question of whether Christ is fully God or not?

- If Christ is fully God, then what do you conclude of all of Lucifer's allegations?
- But, if Christ, is, as some suggest, less than fully God, what of Lucifer's allegations?

So if you believe there is a controversy over God's character and trustworthiness, then it appears, that those who argue that Christ is less than fully God, ignorantly support one of Satan's allegations against God.

What other problems exist if Christ is not fully God?

- God is selfish
- What do we learn of God, if God sends a created being to earth to die to save mankind?
 - That God is willing to sacrifice others, but He is not willing to sacrifice Himself.
 - We learn an angel is loving but God, we still don't know??
 - Our church has always understood this was another of Satan's arguments against God:
 - **“Satan had accused God of requiring self-denial of the angels, when he knew nothing of what it meant himself, and when he would not himself make any self-sacrifice for others. This was the accusation that Satan made against God in heaven;** and after the evil one was expelled from heaven, he continually charged the Lord with exacting service which he would not render himself. **Christ came to the world to meet these**

false accusations, and to reveal the Father.”
Review and Herald, February 18, 1890

- In the work of creation, Christ was with God. He was one with God, equal with him, the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, the representative of the Father. He alone, the Creator of man, could be his Saviour. **No angel of heaven could reveal the Father to the sinner, and win him back to allegiance to God. But Christ could manifest the Father's love; for God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.** {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 7}
- **Had God the Father come** to our world and dwelt among us, veiling His glory and humbling Himself, that humanity might look upon Him, **the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed** in unfolding its record of His own condescending grace. **In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God.** In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father. Letter 83, 1895.
- So, why might Satan want people to argue that Christ is not fully God?
 - Because it supports his two great allegations
 - That God is arbitrary in choosing Christ into counsels that Lucifer was not permitted to enter, AND
 - That God is selfish, willing to sacrifice others but will not sacrifice Himself for His creatures.

Realizing Christ is fully God destroys these allegations of the devil.

Questions about Jesus' divinity?

If you accept Jesus as God, then the Trinity becomes easy, because now we have Jesus (God in human form) who taught there was a third member of the Godhead called the Comforter, Counselor or Holy Spirit:

- “If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept *him*, because it neither sees *him* nor knows *him*. But you know *him*, for he lives with you and will be in you. John 14:15-17
- But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:26
- “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, *he* will testify about me. John 15:26

One of the founders of our church also taught the divinity of the Holy Spirit:

- In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart... The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail... Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the **Third Person of the Godhead**, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}

- **There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--**those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.-- Evangelism, p. 615. {7ABC 441.9}

Now what of the Old Testament? Does it teach the Trinity?

We already read Isaiah 9:6, the child born is “mighty God”.

The Old Testament teaches God is a plurality, not a singularity:

- Then God said, “Let **us** make man in **our** image, in **our** likeness... Genesis 1:26

•
Even the text quoted by Jews and Muslims that “God is one” teaches a plurality, not a singularity:

- Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: DT 6:4
 - Notice the passage in English uses “Lord” and “God”. The reading of this passage with the Hebrew names for “Lord” and “God” would go like this: “Hear, O Isreal: *Yahweh* our *Elohim*, *Yahweh* is One.”
 - What is interesting is that the word *Elohim* in Hebrew is plural and is the same word used for God in Genesis 1:26. Thus an accurate English reading might go like this: “The One is more than One yet is One”
 - Further support is that in the Hebrew there are two words for one, *Yacheed* and *Echad*. The first indicates singular unity as in one and only, the second indicates compound unity, as the oneness of two or more. In this text *Echad* is used along with the plural name of God *Elohim* indicating the oneness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament also provides texts in which all members of the Godhead are referenced:

- And now the **Sovereign Lord [Father]** has sent **me [Son]**, with his **Spirit [Holy Spirit]**. This is what the Lord says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: Isaiah 48:16,17
- “Here is **my [Father] servant [Son]**, whom **I [Father]** uphold, **my [Father] chosen one [Son]** in whom **I [Father]** delight; **I [Father]** will put my **Spirit [Holy Spirit]** on **him [Son]** and **he [Son]** will bring justice to the nations. Isaiah 42:1

The Old Testament teaches the close love relationship between them:

- Awake, O sword, against **my [Father] shepherd [Son]**, and against the man **that is my [Father] fellow [Son]**, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. Zech 13:7 KJV
 - The Man who is my friend NCV
 - The Man who is close to me NIV
- **Then I [Christ] was the craftsman at his [Father] side. I [Son] was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his [Father] presence, rejoicing in his [Father] whole world and delighting in mankind. Proverbs 8:30 NIV**
 - I was beside him like an architect, I was his daily source of joy, always happy in his presence-Proverbs 8:30 GN
 - Then I was beside Him, as a master workman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him, NASB95

So, it seems the Bible gives strong evidence for the plurality of our One God, supporting the idea that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are a perfect unity of three separate individualities.

But, for me all the above evidence is not what is most compelling. The most compelling evidence for me that God exists in plurality rather than singularity is the nature and character of God Himself.

The Bible says, “God is love.” 1John 4:8. Further the Bible teaches that this love is “not self seeking.” 1Corinthians 13:5. Love is outward moving, other-centered. Therefore, God, being love, could not be love in isolation because love requires an object to pour itself upon.

Love is other-centered! God’s nature and character of love, rightly understood, is the most powerful argument for the plurality of God and we see this in the Old Testament texts above as the Father is delighting in the Son and the Son rejoicing in the Father and the Spirit loving them both.

Therefore, when God created us in His image He created “them male and female” and the “two shall become one” united in a triune relationship – husband, wife and God indwelling their hearts via His Spirit!

Satan from the beginning of his rebellion, has sought to misrepresent the character of God, and make God out to be selfish rather than love. The arguments that seek to destroy the truth about the plurality of the Godhead seek to destroy the truth about God’s character of love and, in so doing, place an obstacle to the only healing remedy for sin: God’s “perfect love [that] casts out all fear.”

As we see the truth about God, as revealed in Jesus, the lies about Him are removed and we are won to trust and in that trust He pours His love (Himself) into our hearts (Romans 5:5) and we are transformed to be like Him!

Questions?

Some suggest, based on Jesus' prayers to His Father and other statements, that Jesus is subordinate to the Father and thus not His equal. What would you say to this argument?

First, many of the statements when Jesus prayed to His Father, were being made from His human self, during His journey on earth, while He wrought out our remedy to sin. As such, He assumed a position, lower than the angels, and from that position He fought the fight over sinfulness.

Elsewhere, in regard to His divine nature and that of the Godhead, the way I understand it, (recognizing of course that our finite minds are trying to probe the Infinite One so we will inevitably come up short of complete understanding), is that the Godhead voluntarily assumes different roles or functions for the accomplishments of Their purposes (a loving way all share together in giving for Their creation). Any of the three could have assumed any of the functions. We would err in concluding that when one of the three assumes a function that He was not capable of functioning in the role of one of the others.

As I understand their chosen roles, the Father acts as the source of all that is good. The Son is the medium, mediator, advocate, conduit, agent through which the Father reveals Himself or acts and the Holy Spirit is the actualizer or applier of what the Father and Son have achieved. Thus God was in the Son reconciling the world to Himself (2Cor 5:19). Jesus' work on earth was the acting out of the Father's heart. His completed mission and victory over sin are applied to the lives of believers by the work of the Holy Spirit. In creation we have the Father as the source, the Son as the architect, designer, and builder and the Spirit as the actualizer or implementer of Their design.

So, with this understanding we realize what Christ meant when He said, "I do nothing of myself." Christ takes from the Father to fulfill all the Father's purposes for His universe. In this sense we can see any references to Christ turning to the

Father and supplicating the Father, not as evidence of the need of the Father to be persuaded, but as evidence of the unity of the Godhead and Christ's role to receive the fullness of the Father's purpose of love for His creation and carry that purpose out in meaningful action!

THURSDAY

Read third and fourth paragraph, "Of special..." thoughts?

They are right to argue for the full divinity of Christ – no question, but their argument regarding the plan of salvation is within the framework of Imperial Rome's Imposed Law construct, which distorts the character of God.

If Christ were not fully God then, His mission doesn't inform us God is love, but of the love of a created being, and instead suggests, if not confirms Satan's allegations that God is selfish sacrificing a creature instead of Himself. Further, only the Designer, could perfectly correct all the defects to His design and restore His template of love into mankind.

But the need to restore His creation is not understood if one accepts Imperial Rome's Imposed law. Instead, one believes a penalty needs to be paid.

The lesson states, "If Christ were not fully God, then all we have is the Lord shifting the punishment for our sins from one party to another, as opposed to taking them upon Himself."

Problems with this thinking:

- Sin requires punishment be inflicted
- God becomes the punisher of sin
- Punishment is still shifted from one being to another, just not one sinful being to another sinful being
- The focus is not our condition, but our behaviors or crimes and God's attitude toward those behaviors, which is one of punishment and wrath

The next paragraph states, “Think about it: if Jesus were merely a created being, and not fully God, how could He – as a creature bear God’s full wrath against sin?”

- Yes think about it- what is the problem in their estimation?
 - God’s wrath, which must be borne by Christ
 - What did one of the founders of our church say?
 - In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan**; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. DA 761
 - While **God has desired to teach men that from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself, the archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God as one who delights in their destruction.** Thus the sacrifices and the ordinances **designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God.** PK 685.

Read next paragraph, “Were Jesus not divine...” thoughts?

How are they using the word “atone”? Does it sound like they mean at-one, unity, unify, or instead does it sound like appease, punish, propitiate, pay some penalty?

What are your thoughts about this construct? Any truth in the idea that the law needed to be “atoned” for?

If a parent tells a child never to use illegal drugs, and as an adolescent the child is at a party, in which all the kids bring pills, put them in a bowl, and everyone randomly ingests pills from the bowl. And this child takes a combination of pills which cause loss of consciousness, arrhythmia, seizure and pulmonary edema – and the child is rushed to the ER and is in the ICU on a ventilator.

- Did the child break any laws?
- What laws did the child break?
- Which laws were God's and which were man's?
- What does man's law require?
- What happens when God's law is broken?
- Does God's broken law need to be appeased?
- Does a penalty need to be paid to the broken law of health?

What if the parent went to the ICU and shot themselves to atone for their child's breaking of the laws of health? Would that solve the child's problem?

What is the child's problem? They violated the laws of health and that violation is incompatible with life and the child is dying. What would solve the problem?

What is our problem since Adam's sin? We are actually out of harmony with the law God built life to operate upon. Does God's law need to be paid, or atoned for? What does need to happen?

Would the parent in the story be wrathful at the disobedient child? As the disobedient child is seizing, frothing at the mouth, would the parent need to shoot the child to ensure justice is served?

Would the parent hate, not the child, but the breaking in the laws of health that the child engaged in and which are now destroying the child?

What does God hate? Sin, which is violations of His design for life. Why does God hate sin? Because sin destroys His creation, that which He loves!

Think about the implications of appeasing or propitiating God's wrath – it means somehow God's wrath is placated – but is it? No! God will always be wrathful – to sin, like a doctor is wrathful to disease! God wants to destroy sin, like a doctor wants to destroy disease.

Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: “Ah, I will get relief from my foes and **avenge myself on my enemies.** ²⁵ I will turn my hand against you; **I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities.** Isaiah 1:24,25

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to **bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,** ² to proclaim the **year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,** ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion— **to bestow on them a crown of beauty** instead of ashes, **the oil of gladness** instead of mourning, and **a garment of praise** instead of a spirit of despair. Isa 61:1-3

What is the vengeance of God? Turning enemies into friends – His vengeance is not on sinners but on sinfulness. He attacks and destroys sin! This is His vengeance which purges and cleanses the sinner! The greatest vengeance God can have on Satan is healing and restoring all those who trust Him!

The last paragraph states, “our assurance of salvation through what Christ has done for us – and not through our own works – comes from the fact that God Himself paid the penalty for our sins.”

Thoughts?

As I was preparing for this week's lesson, I came across a quotation from one of the founders of our church that pertained to last week's lesson in regard to the Trinity and found it quite helpful and wanted to share it:

I am instructed to say, The sentiments of those who are searching for advanced scientific ideas are not to be trusted. Such representations as the following are made: "The Father is as the light invisible; the Son is as the light embodied; the Spirit is the light shed abroad." "The Father is like the dew, invisible vapor; the Son is like the dew gathered in beauteous form; the Spirit is like the dew fallen to the seat of life." Another representation: "The Father is like the invisible vapor; the Son is like the leaden cloud; the Spirit is rain fallen and working in refreshing power." {SpTB07 62.2}

All these spiritualistic representations are simply nothingness. They are imperfect, untrue. They weaken and diminish the Majesty which no earthly likeness can be compared to. God can not be compared with the things His hands have made. These are mere earthly things, suffering under the curse of God because of the sins of man. The Father can not be described by the things of earth. The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. {SpTB07 62.3}

The Son is all the fulness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be "the express image of His person." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is shown the personality of the Father. {SpTB07 63.1}

The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fulness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. **There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--**

those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ. . . .
 {SpTB07 63.2}

Glimpses of God Lesson 2 1Q 2012

This week we will explore creation – a topic hotly debated around the world, in schools, colleges and universities, churches, courtrooms. There are four ideas put forth regarding life on planet earth:

1. Big bang, random chaos, over billions of years with forces of nature spontaneously generating life that evolved from nothing to what we have today
2. God created everything from nothing *divino* and perfect – and what we have today on earth is not the way God created earth to be, but what God created infected by an attack on His creation
3. God uses the process of evolution and billions of years to create – theistic evolution
4. Aliens seeded life on earth and let it evolve over billions of years

As we go through the lesson today, let's see if we can't find harmony between the Biblical account and the scientific record, and then determine which of the theories is most consistent with the available evidence.

In the Beginning

When you hear the title what comes to mind?

In the beginning God created the heavens and earth Genesis 1:1

OR

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. John 1:1

Which text is the ultimate beginning?

If the beginning is in John 1:1 and it is actually a time before anything existed but God, then to what is Genesis 1:1 referring?

Is Genesis referring to the creation of the entire universe or of earth and this solar system?

- Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone— **while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?** Job 38:4-7

One of the founders of our church agreed with Job that other beings were in existence before earth was created and that mankind was created after the rebellion began in heaven.

- Angels on probation had been deceived by Satan, and had been led on by him in the great rebellion in heaven against Christ. They failed to endure the test brought to bear upon them, and they fell. **Adam was then created** in the image of God and placed upon probation. He had a perfectly developed organism. All his faculties were harmonious. In all his emotions, words, and actions, there was a perfect conformity to the will of his Maker. After God had made every provision for the happiness of man, and had supplied his every want, He tested his loyalty. If the holy pair should be obedient, the race would, after a time, be made equal to the angels. As Adam and Eve failed to bear this test, Christ proposed to become a voluntary offering for man. {Con 18.2}

What are the implications from understanding this one point when it comes to understanding the Bible account of creation in light of scientific evidence?

If we conclude that Genesis describes the creation of the entire universe, what will happen to our belief when we look at science?

We will be confused by:

- Light reaching earth which took billions of years to travel the universe to reach earth
- Radio dating of non-organic rock on earth to billions of years
- How light was created on day one of creation week but the sun, moon and stars were not created until day four

But, given the evidence of John 1:1 and Job 38:7, we realize the Genesis account is not the account of the creation of the entire universe, but is the record of God's creation of life on planet earth. The universe itself, with its many worlds, was already in existence when God came to this corner of the Milky Way to terra-form planet Earth. With this in mind let us explore Genesis 1:2:

“Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep.”

The words translated formless, empty, darkness are describing a deep void, abyss, hole, emptiness in space which is so impenetrable that light cannot even escape, what we might call a black hole. On day one of the Genesis account of Creation Week, when God said, “Let there be light,” God dissipated a black hole, already in existence in the Milky Way from God's previous creation of the universe. The light from the stars of the universe could now pass through this section of the Milky Way. Thus, “let there be light”.

On day four God created the Sun, Moon and stars of our solar system (Venus, Mercury, Mars, etc.). The “evening and morning” designation or “day/night” description on day one is the Hebrew way of describing a 24 hour period, it is describing the rotation of the earth on its axis every 24 hours. It is ensuring the reader that God’s terra-forming of planet earth occurred in seven 24 hours periods, not over billions of years.

This understanding also reconciles much of the geological arguments against a young earth. The matter at the core of the black hole was created by God billions of years ago when He created the universe. But it wasn’t until approximately 6,000 – 10,000 years ago that God came to this section of the Milky Way, dissipated the black hole and used this ancient matter to create this solar system and life on earth. Thus, the inanimate material on earth dating billions of years old in no way undermines our confidence in God’s Word and His creation of life on earth approximately 6,000 – 10,000 years ago.

This is also consistent with the rock on the moon dating to billions of years, yet the of space dust on the moon consistent with 6000-10000 years of accumulation.

What about Carbon 14 dating of organic material to 50,000 years of age?

- Carbon is one of the building blocks of organic life. In our environment most of the carbon is in a stable form called carbon 12 (C12), but because of the sun’s radiation a small portion of carbon is changed into an isotope called carbon 14 (C14). When an organism is alive the carbon in the molecules of that organism is constantly being replaced and the ratio of C12 to C14 remains constant, matching the ratio in the environment. But once the organism dies no new carbon is introduced and the C14 slowly decays.
- It takes approximately 5,730 years for 50% of C14 to decay. Therefore, by measuring the amount of C14 in

dead organic material scientists calculate a suggested age of the dead organism.

- But there is one major flaw with this entire procedure, the assumption that C14 levels are the same today as they were thousands of years ago. If the atmospheric C14 levels were significantly less 5000 years ago than today, fossils from 5000 years ago would date as if they were tens of thousands of years older than they really are. And the Bible gives us every reason to believe that is exactly the case.
- In Genesis the Bible says “And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament” (1:7).
- When God created the earth He put a water layer above the atmosphere. Similar to our ozone layer this water layer would provide protection from solar radiation thus markedly reducing the amount of C14 in the atmosphere prior to the flood. Additionally, this water layer would act like a solar energy absorbing, dispersing element warming the entire earth uniformly.
- The earth, as God designed it, did not have frigid polar extremes nor equatorial hot spots. Because of this water canopy the entire earth was uniformly pleasant, lush and habitable.
- At the flood the waters above the earth came down contributing to the creation of our oceans and resulting in more C14 in the atmosphere as well as the polar extremes in weather.

What does science say? NASA's Kepler telescope has found planets in which there are water canopies over the planet, and average temperate climate of 72 Fahrenheit, exactly consistent with the Biblical account of creation of this world.

<http://news.yahoo.com/nasa-kepler-probe-finds-two-earth-sized-planets-151308770.html>

Thoughts?

Okay, let's examine the various theories.

What is the problem with Big Bang as a theory of origins and subsequently evolutionary speciation?

- From nothing – no energy, matter, space, time – nothing suddenly an explosion occurred from which everything came
- It is not scientific
- It cannot be tested or reproduced and therefore inconsistent with its own tenets of being scientific as it requires belief without evidence
- Therefore, it is pure speculation and manmade theory
- No direct evidence to support the theory
- No transitional fossils
- It requires us to believe there is no purpose for our existence
- It requires us to believe there is no right or wrong, no morality, other than what we decide as a society
- It requires us to believe that killing is good, as killing is necessary for adaptation and evolutionary advancement
- Death then is not an enemy but a friend to development

What is the problem with Theistic Evolution?

- God uses death to create
- Selfishness is part of God's creation
- Selfishness and sin are not a choice but the engine that drives us to survive, and thus adapt and develop and advance.
- God is not a being of love, but the originator of pain and suffering
- Sin is not a breach of an eternal design protocol or principle of love, instead it is a break of arbitrary rules put in place by a powerful deity.
- Conflicts with the Biblical record, undermining confidence in Scripture, and thus in Jesus and God's character of love

Bible Creation

- Cannot demonstrate this by observation, so no direct scientific evidence of creation
- Biblical Creation is consistent with itself
- Indirect evidence of science consistent with Biblical account
 - Geological dating is consistent with the Bible
 - Moon dust fits life within last 10,000 years
 - Carbon dating fits life within last 10,000 years, with the Biblical water canopy prior to the flood
 - Law of love, circle of beneficence
 - Law of liberty
 - 7 day weekly cycle
 - Genetics of Bible correct, Darwin incorrect (commandment describes epigenetic changes which is what science confirms, Darwin's theory of random mutation wrong).
 - A woman genetically could be created from a man, removing the Y chromosome and doubling the X, but a man could not be created from a woman as no Y chromosome. Interestingly, the Bible account was not a woman first, which would be all that humans had ever seen.
 - Genetic information is not introduced by mutation, but is deleted thus species don't advance by mutation, but decline.
 - Nature as we see it is not how God designed it, but infected with survival of the fittest principle, and mutations.
 - Adaptation, commonly called evolution, is consistent with Biblical record, thus no transitional fossils, things adapt, they don't change from one species to another.
 - Fear is medium of death
 - Love casts out fear and medium of life (this is true in brain circuits)

- Complex ecosystems all interdependent could not have arisen slowly over billions of years
- Geological record consistent with flood
- NASA findings of other planets with water canopy consistent with Biblical account and flood
- Biblical diet found to be healthier than non-Biblical societies – and proven by science to be so

What advantage is there to believing in Bible creation?

- Purpose for our existence
- Moral principles to guide our life
- Healthier lives if follow Biblical principles
- Knowledge of loving God
- Hope in life eternal and world without pain and suffering

What disadvantage is there in believing in Bible creation?

- May get connected to religious institutions that squash thinking and undermine freedom
- May seek to use the government to force others to honor creator or creation (i.e. forced worship, or restrict freedom to choose how one governs their body – such as contraception).

What advantage is there in believing in life originating from evolution?

- May remain a free thinker, who values evidence and avoid having the mind closed by institutional dogma
- May be more tolerant allowing others to think for themselves and hold different beliefs

What disadvantage is there in believing in life originating from evolution?

- No real purpose for our existence

- No higher morals or values other than what society creates
- No life after death, thus no hope for a future
- No principles of love overcoming fear
- No God of love
- No intelligence greater than humanity (thus far discovered)
- Inability to trust future to higher power increasing anxiety, fear and depression (which can also happen if one believes in an angry wrathful god)

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “The drama...” thoughts?

Do we think we currently see anything the way God created it?
Why is this important to remember?

When critics look at some aspect of creation and criticize God, we must remember that creation is all twisted and infected and does not currently function as God intended.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “In numerous places the Bible...” thoughts?

Why does the Bible link the Lord as Creator with the Lord as Redeemer?

Redemption is actually recreation, and can any other being than the Creator, fix, or recreate, His creation? In other words if a product is broken the manufacturer is the one who can fix it. In this case, when mankind deviated from God’s design, only God, the Designer could put man back into His design.

Do you see Christ’s mission as doing just that?

What did you think of this sentence, “But how can death be the ‘enemy’ if it was one of God’s chosen means for creating humans, at least according to the evolutionary model?”

Good question isn’t it? But could we add to this question, “How can death be the enemy, if God is the source of death, the one who must kill in order to be just?”

I had a discussion after class last week with a lovely young lady, who loves God and has a kind heart, but she insists that God is the source of death and is the one who kills and according to her He murdered the people before the flood, because sin had to be punished by God. So, if death is the enemy, which will be destroyed and swallowed up in the end, and God is the source of death – then won’t God need to be destroyed in order to destroy death?

Or another way to look at it, is Satan’s argument, that if God could just get a grip on His anger and wrath and leave sinners alone in their corner of the universe, then sinners could live eternally, because there isn’t anything wrong with sin, sin doesn’t kill, there is something wrong with God who uses His power to kill!

What is the solution to this dilemma? To recognize the truth, sin is the source of death. Death does not come out from God. As the Bible says:

The wages of sin is death Rom 6:23

Sin when full grown brings forth death James 1:15

Or as our church founders said:

We are **not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin.** The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to

transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, **cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {1SM 235.2}

Read last paragraph, “How is the idea...” thoughts?

Again, they make a good point. But could we not ask, “Does God use the process of violence, dominance of the strong against the weak in order to punish the wicked, torturing and destroying them in order to make a flawless and selfless society?”

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Creation and Re-Creation

How do you understand God brings about ending sin and recreating the earth anew?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

Exciting News – Last Quarter we had over 14,000 hits to our *Bible Study Section* of our website. Thanks everyone – who is sharing this incredible message about God with others!

Also, thanks Dean for paying better attention to the details of the NASA Kepler article than I did. I should have said, that the Kepler telescope has found evidence consistent with a vapor layer of earth like planets, and I apologize for reading hastily and overstating the certainty of what was discovered.

Glimpses of our God Lesson 3 1Q 2012

God as Redeemer

As we look again at Christ and His mission to earth – let us recognize that Christ came for the purpose of saving mankind, overcoming evil and securing the unfallen universe.

Let us recognize that He accomplished all that is necessary for the salvation of mankind. So, what we will talk about today is not whether He died to save mankind, eradicate sin and secure the universe – HE DID! No, we will explore WHY His death was necessary, what His death accomplished and work to discern the truth from Satan's counterattack of confused notions about Christ's mission and the purpose of the Cross.

SABBATH

The first paragraph quotes Ephesians 2:13, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

What does this mean? Near to what? Is it not near to God?

The question then is, how does the blood bring us near to God?

- Is the blood of Christ like some magic potion that we use to teleport ourselves into God's presence?

- Is the blood of Christ some powerful inducer that, as we approach God, we pull out show God and calm His objections to our sinfulness and thus secure a spot in God's kingdom?
- Is the blood a metaphor of Christ's life that we partake and are transformed to become close to God in character, heart, purpose, motive and love?

How do you understand the passage?

I was reading a Bible commentary on Jesus death and came across a couple of paragraphs that shared some interesting insights and thought it might be beneficial to discuss them.

Christ suffered keenly under abuse and insult. At the hands of the beings whom He had created, and for whom He was making an infinite sacrifice, He received every indignity. **And He suffered in proportion to the perfection of His holiness and His hatred of sin.** His trial by men who acted as fiends was to Him a perpetual sacrifice. **To be surrounded by human beings under the control of Satan was revolting to Him.** And He knew that in a moment, by the flashing forth of His divine power, He could lay His cruel tormentors in the dust. **This made the trial the harder to bear.** {DA 700.3}

Have you thought that Jesus' was not only tempted by the human emotions to save-self, as we see in Gethsemane – but He was also, tempted by His purity to eradicate sinfulness, as it was so revolting to Him.

- What was revolting to Him? Human beings controlled by Satan.
- Are human beings revolting to Him? No! Would a parent be revolted to see their child – under some form of mind control, like in a cult, which caused the child to do wicked things? Would the parent want to kill the child?

What would the parent want to do for the child? Rescue the child! Do you think God is different with us and sin?

- Why would divinity flashing forth lay His tormentors in the dust?
 - Had He appeared with the glory that was His with the Father before the world was, we could not have endured the light of His presence. That we might behold it and not be destroyed, the manifestation of His glory was shrouded. His divinity was veiled with humanity,--the invisible glory in the visible human form. {DA 23.1}

What things do you find revolting? A child cursing their parent? A person abusing a child? Cancer, war, terrorism, racism, gossip? Whatever it is, multiply it by 1000 fold, and then possess the power to instantly eradicate it – what would you do if you had that power?

The Jews were looking for a Messiah to be **revealed in outward show. They expected Him, by one flash of overmastering will, to change the current of men's thoughts, and force from them an acknowledgment of His supremacy. Thus, they believed, He was to secure His own exaltation**, and gratify their ambitious hopes. Thus when Christ was treated with contempt, there came to Him a strong temptation to manifest His divine character. **By a word, by a look, He could compel His persecutors to confess that He was Lord** above kings and rulers, priests and temple. **But it was His difficult task to keep to the position He had chosen as one with humanity.** {DA 700.4}

What would you have done?

They believed He was to secure His own exaltation – how many believe this about Christ today? How many believe He is coming back to do exactly what the Jews wanted done, use power and might to force people in line and punish opposition?

Why didn't Jesus use His power to force His enemies to acknowledge Him?

A man convinced against His will is of the same opinion still.

Why would they have bowed to Him if He would have done as the Jews wanted?

- Because they loved and trusted Him or because they feared Him?
- And what would happen in their heart?
- Would they operate from God's principles of love, or continue to operate on Satan's principles of fear and selfishness?
- So if they acknowledged God out of fear and threat, even though they would have been confessing loyalty to God, they would actually be vessels in which Satan's principles are in operation!
- So what happens in the hearts of intelligent beings if God were to use His power in the end to torture and kill?
 - It would demonstrate Satan was correct, God is a punishing, destroying God and instantly infect the hearts of loyal beings with Satan's principles of fear and selfishness.
 - God cannot eradicate sin by the use of might and power "Not by might, nor by power, but by the way the Spirit works says the Lord." Zach 4:6

What does Jesus' conduct, in this trying time, tell us about His character?

The angels of heaven witnessed every movement made against their loved Commander. They longed to deliver Christ. 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. How easily could the angels, beholding the shameful scene of the trial of Christ, have testified their indignation by consuming the adversaries of God! But they were not commanded to do this. He who

could have doomed His enemies to death **bore with their cruelty**. His love for His Father, and His pledge, made from the foundation of the world, **to become the Sin Bearer**, led Him to endure uncomplainingly the coarse treatment of those He came to save. **It was a part of His mission to bear, in His humanity, all the taunts and abuse that men could heap upon Him. The only hope of humanity was in this submission of Christ to all that He could endure from the hands and hearts of men.** {DA 700.5}

What does it mean Christ bore our sins at the cross?

- Does it mean all acts of sin committed by all people past present and future were placed upon Him and He was punished by His Father for those deeds?
- Or, that He took our sinfulness upon Himself, experienced temptation in all points just like we do (and more) overcoming where we could not, AND also bore the sins of men HEAPED upon Him by humanity's cruel and unjust treatment of Him?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "At the cross..." thoughts?

Which is more costly – to forgive or not to forgive? There is no question that it cost God infinitely to redeem mankind – what would it have cost God not to forgive, not to redeem, but to instead hold a grudge, be hostile and turn His back on His creation?

What do you think of the idea that God forgives sinners by "paying in Himself the price of sin"?

When Jesus prayed, "Father forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" what did He mean?

Did Jesus mean, “Father as we collect payment on our debts, as we get recompense for the wrongs done to us, and after we receive just and fair compensation for the injustices done to us, and then we forgive those who have done us wrong, so also Father you collect payment on man’s sin debt from my blood and then forgiven them”?

When I put it in those terms how does it sound? What else could it mean to say God forgives sinners by paying the debt of sin?

In fact, if you collect payment on a debt, have you forgiven the debt?

One of Satan’s strategies is to cause confusion, introduce misunderstanding, twist, distort, misrepresent and lie. This is one of those places where misunderstanding has entered.

It is correct to say, “It cost God and Christ an infinite price to save mankind.” Or, “God and Christ paid an infinite price to save mankind.” Just as a father who donates a kidney to save the life his child in renal failure, could be described as “paying a high price” so too God paid a high price for our salvation. But this is not a legal price, it is the price the situation required.

If a child is in renal failure, why is the price a new kidney? If we are sinful, why is the “price” the death of Christ?

Further, the price was not necessary to get legal pardon or God’s personal forgiveness. The donated kidney was given because the father already had love and forgiveness in his heart toward his child, likewise Christ was sent because God already loved and forgave the world. But without Christ’s mission, despite God’s forgiving heart, man could not be restored to perfection.

Read second paragraph, “Christ didn’t die...” this is very beautifully said and reminded me of an EGW quote:

The atonement of Christ was not made in order to induce God to love those whom he otherwise hated; it was not made to produce a love that was not in existence; but it was made as a manifestation of the love that was already in God's heart, an exponent of the divine favor in the sight of heavenly intelligences, in the sight of worlds unfallen, and in the sight of a fallen race. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We are not to entertain the idea that God loves us because Christ has died for us, but that he so loved us that he gave his only-begotten Son to die for us. The death of Christ was expedient in order that mercy might reach us with its full pardoning power... ST May 30, 1895.

What does this mean to you? How do you understand it?

Isn't just as we described – because of God's nature, character and love, He sent Christ to do what was necessary to heal and save mankind?

Read third paragraph, "The real tragedy..."

Yes, the real tragedy is that we have forgotten God, we have exchanged the knowledge of God for a lie, just as Paul said was happening in his day.

What did Paul, in Romans chapter one, say happens to the mind of those who forget the truth about God? Their minds become darkened, depraved and foolish.

What is being implied with, "we're not always sure about just how much we have offended God with our sins."?

Do you hear an implication that the problem with sin is that God gets offended?

- Is sin offensive to God? Absolutely – why?
- Is God personally offended by sin?
 - How did Jesus respond when He was being abused by men and crucified?
 - Did He take personal offense? “How dare you treat me like this. I am God! I am your Creator! You have no right to treat me this way you impudent rascals!” Is this how Jesus responded? Or “Father forgive them they don’t know what they are doing!”?
- And didn’t Jesus say “if you’ve seen me you have seen the Father”?
- So, do we have evidence that God does not take personal offense, but that sin is offensive and disgusting because of what it does to His creation?
- Why does Satan want us to think God takes personal offense?
 - Because in what kind of light would such an idea paint God? And it is taught that God’s offended character is angry and wrathful and must be satisfied by the blood of His Son. Satan’s view of God.

The lesson states, “Paul is not afraid to discuss the wrath of God. How does he express it in Romans 1:18?”

Well Romans 1:18 doesn’t describe God’s wrath it is verses 24, 26, 28, which are not referenced in the lesson. So let’s examine those verses.

What is God’s wrath? Letting go, stopping His gracious interventions which protect us from the consequences of unremedied sin and letting us reap the pain, suffering and destruction that sin brings!

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Genesis 3:15 which states,

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

How is the serpent crushed by the seed?

Hebrews 2:14: “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil”

So, how does Christ’s death destroy Satan?

What is Satan’s power “the power of death”? Life eternal is knowing God (John 17:3) then eternal death is not knowing God, then Satan’s power is the lies he tells about God that we believe which separate us from God, our source of life.

So, how does Jesus’ death destroy this power and ultimately Satan?

But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2Tim 1:9,10

Is death an enemy to be destroyed? Then does death come from God, as many teach, God in order to be just must kill? If death comes from God, and Christ’s death destroys death, then we have Christ destroying God, who is our last enemy.

Is it helpful to teach that God is the source of death? Does it incite or reduce fear? Does it promote or destroy love?

So, how does Christ’s death destroy death? Where does death originate?

- The wages of sin is death Rom 6:23
- Sin when full grown brings forth death James 1:15

- In being out of harmony with God’s law, or design protocols for life.
- Thus, selfishness breaks the template upon which God constructed life to operate and results in death.
- Therefore, Christ destroyed death, by, at the Cross, destroying selfishness within His assumed humanity – that drive to survive with which we are all born, and perfectly restoring God’s law of love into humanity. Thus He rose again in a new and perfected humanity! “thus when he was made perfect he became the source of salvation for all who obey him.” Heb 5:8,9.

Thoughts?

Now the lesson refers us to Romans 16:20, which states that soon we will crush the serpent under our feet. What does this mean?

Through Christ’s victory, all who trust God are imbued with the Holy Spirit who takes all Christ achieved and reproduces it in us. We get new hearts and right spirits and come to love God and others more than self, so that like Christ, we can crush lies with truth and selfishness with love!

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Isaiah 53. Let’s do that, but first read the second paragraph, “Although so much...”

The lesson suggests Isaiah 53 teaches He is paying the price for the sins of others. I didn’t see that in the passage, let’s examine it and decide.

The lesson also states “we can do nothing to make ourselves right with God.” Question – what is wrong that needs to be made right?

- Our legal standing?

- Our unpaid penalty?
- Our actual condition of character/heart/mind?

Let's read Isaiah 53 and examine the evidence:

Who has believed our message

and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

- ² He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

From ST Jan 20, 1890:

The Saviour of the world proposed that no attraction of an earthly character should call men to his side. **The light and beauty of celestial truth alone should be the drawing power.** The outward glory, the worldly honor, which attracts the attention of men, he would not assume. He made himself accessible to all, teaching the pure, exalted principle of truth as that which was only worthy of their notice.

Why? Because only truth, understood, embraced, cherished dispels lies and wins to trust. Further, Satan can counterfeit beauty, miracles, pomp, grand displays of majesty – but Satan has no truth. It is the truth, not the grand displays of light shows in the sky, which separates God from Satan.

- ³ He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.
Like one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Why was He despised? Was He a despot? Was He a Hitler, a Lenin, a Stalin, a Nero? Why was He despised? He only did good, mercy, kindness, healed. Why was He despised?

By whom was He despised? The religious leaders? Why?

- Because His ministry exposed the fallacy of their religious requirements and therefore undercut their life's work.
 - He would not use His power to punish and destroy, thus He was despised.
 - Do you think those who are waiting for God to come back and punish and torture the unrepentant will also despise Christ when they see Him?
- 4 Surely he took up our infirmities
and carried our sorrows,
yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted.

Now this text talks about substitution – but substitution for what? Does this say anything about paying penalties, or prices, or taking our legally imposed death sentence, or taking our legal standing? What did He take upon Himself? Would it be appropriate to allow the Bible writers, those who knew Jesus personally to explain this passage to us?

Matt 8:16-17

16 And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and **healed all who were ill**

17 **in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases."**

(NAS)

Bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows does not mean that Christ "paid the penalty" for our sins, but instead means that he took away from us our griefs and sorrows (ie took away our sicknesses). I'd like to think that the sickness he took away was not just physical, but also spiritual.

So He comes, takes our condition upon Himself in order to

cure and heal us – yet, we considered Him stricken and smitten of God. Have we done this? Does the Christian world teach God, in order to be just, killed His Son at the Cross?

Thus far do we find anything about paying a legal price?

- ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

What do you hear in this verse?

Because we were infected by sin, our condition of sinfulness crushed Him. In order to cure mankind, He must destroy the infection of selfishness, which was accomplished by perfect loving self surrender. Thus, by His wounds He heals us.

- ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

Christ took upon Himself the same sinful condition which all humanity inherits from Adam, our iniquity, our sinfulness was laid upon Him.

- ⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

Who was it who slaughtered Jesus? Was it His Father or was it evil men and angels confederated together?

- 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
 And who can speak of his descendants?
 For he was cut off from the land of the living;
 for the transgression of my people he was stricken.
- 9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
 and with the rich in his death,
 though he had done no violence,
 nor was any deceit in his mouth.

He was judged by human people and falsely condemned to death for there was no wickedness in Him.

- 10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

For God so loved the world he send his only son... It was Gods will to crush Jesus by doing what? Sending Him to be sin who knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God. The cause of His suffering was not inflicted by God, but was caused by God allowing or causing Christ to become human and overcome in our place sinfulness.

But God suffered with His Son. Angels beheld the Saviour's agony. **They saw their Lord enclosed by legions of satanic forces, His nature weighed down with a shuddering, mysterious dread.** There was silence in heaven. No harp was touched. Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they watched **the Father separating His beams of light, love, and glory from His beloved Son,** they would better understand how offensive in His sight is sin. {DA 693.2}

- 11 After the suffering of his soul,
 he will see the light of life and be satisfied;

by his knowledge my righteous
 servant will justify many,
 and he will bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
 and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
 because he poured out his life unto death,
 and was numbered with the transgressors.
 For he bore the sin of many,
 and made intercession for the transgressors.

Thus, through His suffering He sets right many with God,
 healing and restoring their characters to unity with God.

Do we find anything in this passage about penalties paid? No!

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The astounding...” thoughts? Would Christ’s death, as a sinless human, have been of any benefit to mankind without first living His victorious life?

Didn’t Herod try to have baby Jesus killed? Wasn’t baby Jesus now a human being and still sinless? If Herod would have had baby Jesus killed, then wouldn’t we have the shed blood of God’s sinless Son in our behalf? So if that is what is needed, the shed blood of God’s Son to pay our legal penalty, it could have happened when Jesus was still a baby.

But that wasn’t what was needed, ever! What was needed was a remedy for our condition and this required Jesus live a perfect life, and by His death destroy the infection of selfishness with which all humans are born.

“The law requires righteousness.... DA 761”

Read third paragraph, “The evening before...” thoughts?

Is the communion service a memorial of His death? It is often presented as such – but is it truly that? Or have we looked back through the wrongs lens and misunderstood?

Is it not really a reminder of our remedy to sin, a reminder of the cure we are to daily partake? A reminder of Jesus' words in John 6, “unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no part with me.” Not merely, a reminder of His death, but a reminder to us to partake of what He achieved by His death, which is perfection of humanity, that by partaking of Jesus we may possess?

- While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. **God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, *would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.*** {MB 54.2}

Having accepted a change in God's law from the natural law of love, to the imposed Imperial Roman law, the communion service is misunderstood to focus on a “death penalty” to pay our legally imposed punishment, rather than Christ's remedy to sin that we must partake.

Read bottom green section, “Look at your life...” thoughts? What do you hear in the question? How are they using the word atone? Are they using it as unity, at-one, reconciliation or appeasement?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Nothing is more destructive...” thoughts do you agree with the first sentence?

Or is accepting a pagan god construct of a being who must be appeased more destructive?

By beholding we are changed, when we accepted a pagan view of God we experience greater fear and insecurity, become more intolerant of others, and practice methods of coercion and force and will kill in the name of our god.

There are two errors, the MIT which the lesson argues against, Christ merely revealed truth and accomplished no more, and penal substitution, which stems from accepting Imperial Rome's Imposed law view. Both are in error:

- While **God has desired to teach men that from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself, the archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God as one who delights in their destruction.** Thus the sacrifices and the ordinances **designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God.** PK 685.

However, the MIT error is more benign, and will not cause the same obstruction to salvation as penal substitution why?

- A patient doesn't have to know how a doctor procured a remedy to benefit from taking it
- A patient doesn't have to know how the remedy works in order to benefit from taking it
- But a patient has to trust the doctor and take the remedy
- MIT instills trust in the doctor and undermines fear
- Penal substitution in its various forms, presents a punitive, angry, wrathful god who must be appeased, thus inciting fear and undermining trust. Undermining trust in our heavenly doctor, is an obstacle to salvation.

FRIDAY - Read and discuss questions 1

Glimpses of Our God Lesson 4 1Q 2012

The God of Grace and Judgment

This week we talk about Judgment – God’s judgment –

With what lens shall we seek to understand this Biblical concept?

If we look through the lens of Imperial Rome, with a powerful ruler imposing law upon his subjects – how do we understand judgment?

If we look through the lens of God’s eternal law of love, the design template upon which He created life to operate, how do we understand judgment?

This is the critical question – is judgment a judicial process like human governments, for the purpose of determining guilt or innocence and then determining and executing just punishments, or is God’s judgment something else entirely?

- **The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God.** Upon this battle we are now entering,—a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between **the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition.** {GC88 582.2}

And what impact does it have upon how we see God if we view the judgment through the lens of Imperial Rome or view the judgment through the lens of Jesus Christ?

Does it make a difference?

As we go through this week’s lesson I will bring us back again and again to the two lenses and ask what you see through both and which is more consistent with the totality of the inspired record and God’s law in nature.

Further, the word judgment can have different connotations. It can mean:

- a judicial finding
- an accurate diagnosis
- a mental ability of discernment
- a decision between various alternatives
- an event in time

Additionally, when we consider “judgment” we must consider who is being judged, and for what purpose?

What are the possibilities?

- God is judging sinners, both angels and humans
- Created beings are judging other created beings
- Created beings are judging God
- All three

For what purpose is the judgment? What are the possibilities?

- To determine guilt or innocence? For what purpose?
 - If God is judging us so that He can reward or punish. Then what lens is being used?
 - If we are judging God so that trust can be restored and we can be healed.
- To diagnose the actual condition? For what purpose? To provide the proper treatment, which means what lens is being used? God’s law of love.

SABBATH

Read the entire lesson – “A Soldier...” thoughts?

What lens do they see God’s judgment through? Is it not an imposed law, with an overseeing ruler, who will impose penalties?

Consider – what happens to the mind, heart, character of the person who perpetrates evil on another? Can one inflict wrong on another without being damaged in the process?

Here is how one of the founders of our church described the process:

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. **The sinner brings the punishment upon himself.** His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. **Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner**, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. **By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God**, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

Do you agree with this description? What kind of law is being described here? If this is in fact the way sin works, reacts upon the sinner damaging the sinner, then does there need to be an investigation to determine what wrongs were done for the purpose of imposing punishment?

When one accepts the truth that God is love, but accepts the false imperial Rome imposed law concept, then one finds constant contradictions in the positions put forth. For instance:

SUNDAY

Second paragraph, “Judgment and salvation...” then read THURSDAY, two paragraphs beginning, “Thus, if God...”

Do you hear grace and justice being pitted against each other here?

This is what always happens, when one believes God is the source of pain, suffering and death, that He must inflict

torture upon His creatures in order to be just. Thus there are these long convoluted explanations trying to justify that which is unjust.

We will see more of this as we go through, contrasting the two ways to view God's law.

What if we look at love and justice through the lens of God's natural law of love, the law upon which life is built. Then is there is never a contradiction, only constant harmony!

What is the real problem with breaking God's law, that God will get mad or that our souls, characters, minds will decay?

But, if we accept the imposed law concept, we believe that the problem is God's wrath, anger and He must investigate and determine who has broken His law and then inflict punishment.

Thus, if one accepts the imposed law idea, then one misconstrues God's actions as punishment for crime.

Let's look at MONDAY and we will see this.

Read first paragraph, "Think about this..." thoughts?

What does this sentence reveal, "Before sin, there was nothing to judge, nothing to condemn, nothing to be punished."?

This sentence is evidence of having accepted Imperial Rome's change of God's law as an imposed law. Notice, sin has to be punished. Where did this idea originate?

Historic Adventism saw this idea as originating with Satan:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be

pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

Satan alleged God is the imposer of law and God must impose punishment.

If we look at this through the lens of God's natural law of love, the template He designed life to operate upon, and sin as being outside that design template, then we would say, "Before sin, there was nothing to diagnose, no terminal condition that condemns, and nothing to heal."

Huge difference – **imposed law requires punishment, natural law requires healing.**

Because the imposed law has been accepted, and thus the idea that justice requires punishment, then the Old Testament gets misunderstood, read fourth paragraph, "Verse 15 is..."

Thoughts? How do you hear this idea of judgment against the serpent and judgment against the woman and the man? Do you hear it as judicial finding of guilt and need to be punished?

This is how one sees it when one comes to the text already accepting God's law as an imposed law.

But what if we read the text through the lens of God's natural law of love, which is now broken, and mankind is now in a terminal condition. Then how to we read and understand God's actions?

Does God make a “diagnosis” and after making the proper diagnosis, does God make a “judgment” as to what is the best treatment course to result in healing and salvation? So, do we see His actions as “punishment” for “sin” or do we see His actions as therapeutic interventions for redemption and salvation?

- Was the serpent capable of moral decision making?
- Was the serpent made in God’s image and given dominion over the land?
- Was the serpent instructed by God not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil?
- Was the serpent warned by God that it would die if it did eat, or crawl on the ground?
- Then, how can one suggest that the curse upon the serpent to crawl on its belly and be despised is a punishment for sin? Such an idea puts God in a terrible light, one of arbitrary imposer of punishment, without warning.
- Rather, it seems to me this is a therapeutic intervention for the need of fallen humanity to warn and protect.
- The serpent doesn’t have a soul, it doesn’t have moral decision-making capacities, and thus God’s actions are not designed to punish the serpent, but to teach humanity something. What?
 - The message is clear – cooperate with Satan and you will find yourself degraded, crawling in the dirt and despised of others – any evidence for this?
 - The demoniacs in Christ day
 - Were the demoniacs, whose minds were controlled by Satan degraded? Crawling in the dirt? Despised by the rest of humanity? Outcast? And was their condition a punishment by God? NO! Neither was the serpent’s a punishment, it was a loving intervention to help us avoid becoming demoniacs!

What about increased pain in childbearing? What does scripture say is the reason for increased pain in childbearing?

- But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety. 1Tim 2:15
- What does this mean? Was the increased pain punishment, or somehow part of a therapeutic intervention to lead to salvation?
- Childbirth metaphor for salvation (Nicodemus), and is this a painful process to die to self and be reborn, but followed by joy?
 - Childbirth a reminder of the coming incarnate Savior? Would this be a painful process, but followed by delivery from sin and joy?
 - Would painful labor and childbirth be a reminder of the pain of sin, yet the grace of God in overcoming that pain with a new life?
 - Would such a reminder be designed to punish, or instill humility, conviction of one's need and hope of eternal deliverance?
 - So, was God's "judgment" a judicial judgment with infliction of punishment, or a loving judgment of our need with therapeutic intervention?

What about subordination of Eve to Adam, punishment or therapeutic intervention?

Eve was told of the sorrow and pain that must henceforth be her portion. . . . In the creation God had made her the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God--**in harmony with His great law of love**--they would ever have been in harmony with each other; but **sin had brought discord, and now their union could be maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the one or the other.** Eve had been the first in transgression; and she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to the divine direction. It was by her solicitation

that Adam sinned, and she was now placed in subjection to her husband. . . . {CC 18.2}

What do you understand this to mean? After sin the heart and mind of humanity no longer naturally operated upon other centered love, but instead upon fear and selfishness. In such a state marriages could not exist. God, intervened, therapeutically, in love, to cause women to have a greater desire for relationships than men, thus causing women to be more likely to give in to maintain the relationship, so that marriages could sustain long enough for God's plan of salvation to be experienced. But when husband and wife experience God's love, true equality in partnership is re-experienced here and now.

What was the reason for increased work in getting food from the earth?

When God made man, He made him ruler over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in subjection to him. **But when he rebelled against the divine law, the inferior creatures were in rebellion against his rule.** Thus the Lord, in **His great mercy, would show men the sacredness of His law**, and lead them, by their own experience, to see the danger of setting it aside, even in the slightest degree. {CC 18.4}

And the life of toil and care which was henceforth to be man's lot **was appointed in love. It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion**, to develop habits of self-control. **It was a part of God's great plan for man's recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin.** {CC 18.5}

Was it punishment for sin or therapeutic intervention to heal? When we accept the Imperial Rome Imposed law concept, we misinterpret Scripture and misrepresent God as judging and

punishing sin, rather than lovingly intervening to heal and restore mankind from sin.

Read last paragraph, "At the beginning..."

Must God judge sin? Why? What makes sin, sin? Is it because God said don't do it? Or does God say don't do it because it is sin?

Is sin inherently wrong and destructive, and thus God in love says don't do it? Or is sin inherently not destructive and only becomes wrong because God says don't do it, and the destruction comes out from God as punishment?

If someone ties a plastic bag over their head and breaks the law of respiration, do we have to have a judgment to determine if they broke the law of respiration? Or, if a person breaks that law, does the break of that law inherently destroy and is self-evident?

What about God's law of love? Is such a break, ultimately self-evident?

How will such a break reveal itself?

What happens to a sinner, unhealed, in the presence of God's unveiled glory?

THURSDAY

Rev. 14:7 "Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come."

What does this mean?

Does the Revelation passage refer to God sitting in judgment of us, or is it the time when God submits Himself to our judgment?

Over what did the war in heaven, initiated by Lucifer, start? Lucifer alleged God could not be trusted. How did Satan spread his rebellion to earth? He deceived our first parents in regard to God's trustworthiness.

We are fighting a thought war and are to demolish everything that sets itself up against "the knowledge of God!" (2Cor 10:5). Jesus said that life eternal is "knowing God" (John 17:3).

And in Romans 3:4 Paul tells us that God is the One on trial, the One accused and the One who will be proved innocent:

God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when **thou art judged.** KJV

May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, "That You may be justified in Your words, And **prevail when You are judged.**" NASB

Certainly not! God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, "You must be shown to be right when you speak; **you must win your case when you are being tried.**" GNT

No! God will continue to be true even when every person is false. As the Scriptures say: "So you will be shown to be right when you speak, **and you will win your case.**" NCV

Satan lied about God and humanity believed those lies severing our connection with God. Christ came to restore that connection and reverse the damage sin caused humanity. At the end of time God is calling for a people who know Him, who have rejected the lies Satan has told about Him, who have judged God to be trustworthy and thus opened their hearts to Him and experience His healing power. Such people will be transformed to live lives of love revealing God's character in their lives thus bringing glory to God! As such they are

powerful witnesses to the world and universe of God's character of love, His methods and principles.

Thus we are in awe of God and give Him glory by revealing His character!

- The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. **The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.** {DA 671.3}
- We are examined to demonstrate the healing power of God and the effectiveness of Christ's accomplishments –
- Jesus continued: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." **By nature the heart is evil**, and "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job 14:4. **No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul.** "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Romans 8:7; Matthew 15:19. **The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure.** He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. **There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion**, a form of godliness. **The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature.** There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. **This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.** {DA 172.1}
- The Saviour was deeply anxious for **His disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united**

to humanity. He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. **His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was.** {DA 664.4}

God and His methods are being judged – and we stand as witnesses for God as we cooperate and allow His Spirit to transform us from selfishness to loving others more than self. In that state we are in awe of God and give Him glory!

WEDNESDAY

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. **The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.** ¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and **each person was judged according to what he had done.** ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Rev 20:11-15.

Thoughts?

What is recorded in the records? This is how one of the founders of our church understood it, do you agree?

In the case of each individual there is a process going forward which is far more wonderful than that which transfers the features to the polished plate of the

artist. The art of the photographer merely imprints the likeness on perishable substance; **but in the life-record the character is faithfully delineated**, and this record, however dark, can never be effaced except by the blood of the atoning Sacrifice. {Mar 340.2} [and where is the blood of the atoning sacrifice applied? To record books or to people? Therefore how is the record changed? By actual transformation of character of the individual in partaking of Christ!]

Angels of God are taking a daguerreotype [photograph] of the character just as accurately as the artist takes the likeness of the human features; and . . . **it is from this that we are to be judged!** {Mar 340.3}

When the Judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, there will be many astonishing disclosures. Men will not then appear as they appear to the human eyes and finite judgments. Secret sins will then be laid open to the view of all. Motives and intentions which have been hidden in the dark chambers of the heart will be revealed. {Mar 340.4}

All will appear as a real life-picture. {Mar 340.5}

In that solemn and awful hour the unfaithfulness of the husband will be opened to the wife, and the unfaithfulness of the wife, to the husband. Parents will then learn, for the first time, what was the real character of their children, and children will see the errors and mistakes that marked the lives of their parents. The man who robbed his neighbor through false representations, is not to escape with his ill-gotten gains. **God has an exact record in His books, of every unjust account and every unfair dealing.** {Mar 340.6}

Memory will be true and vivid in condemnation of the guilty one, who in that day is found wanting. **The mind will recall all the thoughts and acts of the past; the whole life will come in review like the scenes in a panorama.** {Mar 340.7}

What do you understand is being described? Any Bible texts to support this idea that it is by our characters we are judged?

Those who sew to the carnal nature from that nature will reap destruction. Galatians 6:8.

Or as Jesus Said,

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. **But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.**” Mathew 12:33-37.

Why is this recorded in the record? What purpose do the records serve? If the records are an accurate recording of the character for what purpose? I can think of two:

1) To resurrect the individual! Here again is what one of the founders of our church thought:

Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. **The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character.** God in His own time will call forth the dead, giving again the breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. **It lives again bearing the same individuality of features**, so that friend will recognize friend. There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him.
{6BC 1093.2}

We might say our software is the same but we get new hardware!

We have our characters preserved and returned to us and where are our characters recorded? In the heavenly record books!

What about the wicked, those lost in the end:

In that vast throng are multitudes of the long-lived race that existed before the Flood; men of lofty stature and giant intellect, who, yielding to the control of fallen angels, devoted all their skill and knowledge to the exaltation of themselves; men whose wonderful works of art led the world to idolize their genius, but whose cruelty and evil inventions, defiling the earth and defacing the image of God, caused Him to blot them from the face of His creation. There are kings and generals who conquered nations, valiant men who never lost a battle, proud, ambitious warriors whose approach made kingdoms tremble. In death these experienced no change. **As they come up from the grave, they resume the current of their thoughts just where it ceased.** They are actuated by the same desire to conquer that ruled them when they fell. {GC 664.1}

Why do they come with the same current of thoughts?
Because their characters are perfectly recorded in the heavenly record books!

2) second reason for the record books - To vindicate and bring honor to God!

- When I was in medical school there was a helicopter crash....

So how do we understand such texts as:

You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. Romans 14:10

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. 2 Cor 5:10

Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. 1Peter 1:17

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Revelation 20:12

Which lens do you read these texts through?

- Those who view them through an imposed law read them to mean that God's judgment *determines* our destiny, either saved or lost in the form of an arbitrary decision on His part.
- Those who read them through the lens of God's natural law of love understand God's judgment is merely the accurate diagnosis of our condition either healed and restored to Christlikeness or incurable. An example of God's judgment is found in Hosea 4:17:
 - Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone! Hosea 4:17

What is God's judgment in this case? Ephraim cannot be separated from his idols leave him the way he is. What determines our eternal destiny is not God's judgment upon us, but our judgment of God, which in turn makes us either fit or unfit for living in God's system of other-centered love. If we judge God trustworthy then we open the heart and His Spirit heals us from sin. If, instead, we accept Satan's lies and judge God as untrustworthy we keep the heart closed and are

eventually beyond healing. One day all will stand in God's presence and their true condition will be revealed – this is God's judgment.

What an incredible privilege is ours to become beacons of God's character in a world dark with lies about Him! Be in awe of God for the hour of His judgment has come!

TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "Critics of the Bible..." thoughts?

How about if God said, "Thou shall not make noise at night." If God had said that, then would He be required to bring the flood?

Or, what about God is cranky because the people were violent and selfish and didn't do things the way He wanted them so He became angry and wrathful and destroyed the world with a flood? Is that any better than the pagan view?

Read next paragraph, "The idea..."

What do you think about the idea that humans are so evil that they deserve death and destruction? Do they mean people deserve God to kill them, or do they mean that a person deserves to reap what they sew, and "The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction;" Gal 6:8?

Glimpses of Our God Lesson 5 1Q 2012

The Holiness of God

What do you understand God's holiness to be? How would you define holy or holiness? What does it mean?

SABBATH

Read paragraphs 3-5 "This week's lesson..." thoughts? What do you hear?

Does it sound like the lesson is suggesting God's holiness is something other than His character of love? What would that be?

- Purity? What is the standard which determines whether something is spiritual pure or not? Would it not be God's character of love?
- Righteousness? What determines whether something is righteous or not, would it not be harmony with God's character of love?
- Set apart – set apart from what? Sin, worldliness – toward what? Wouldn't it be toward God's character of love?

What is holiness if not God's character of love?

What has been your reaction to the following:

- "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy. Le 19:2
- Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Mt 5:48
- Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. Heb 12:10

- But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”
1Pet 1:15,16

What do we understand it to mean to be perfect, or to be holy? What is holiness? Is it not God’s character of love? Then what does it mean to be perfect as God is perfect or to be holy? Does this help?

- For those God foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed to the likeness of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Rom 8:29

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Even a superficial...” thoughts?

I thought this was well said, and so true – how can we guard against this happening to us? Are there objective actions we can take that will protect us?

- **Isaiah 1:18:** Come let us reason together though your sins are like scarlet they will be white as snow.
 - We must be willing to reason and think
 - God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient **evidence upon which to base our faith.** His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His Word, are all established by testimony that **appeals to our reason**; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth, will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith." *Steps to Christ* 105 (1892); *9MR* 202; compare *Education* 169
- **Romans 10:17:** So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. (*NRSV*)

- The Bible is its own expositor. **Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts.** He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand **the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy**, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. Ed. 190
- We must reason, but we must also harmonize all scripture together, we cannot take a little here and there.
- For since the creation of the world **God's invisible qualities**—his eternal power and divine nature—**have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made**, so that men are without excuse. Romans 1:20
 - In the study of the sciences also, we are to obtain a knowledge of the Creator. **All true science is but an interpretation of the handwriting of God in the material world.** Science brings from her research only fresh evidences of the wisdom and power of God. **Rightly understood, both the book of nature and the written word make us acquainted with God** by teaching us something of the wise and beneficent laws through which he works. {CE 66.2}
 - **Rightly understood, both the revelations of science and the experiences of life are in harmony with the testimony of Scripture to the constant working of God in nature.** {Ed 130.3}

- All science and scripture and experience must harmonize.
- Therefore, as we identify testable laws that God built His universe to operate upon, these become standards against which we can test our theoretical interpretations of scripture – such as the law of love, the law of liberty, the law of worship.

From these points I draw the following conclusions in regard to methods to determine truth:

- We must exercise our reasoning ability, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, to form our beliefs based on an evaluation of the evidence God has provided in His Word, nature and our experience. ALL THREE!
- All the evidence, rightly understood, harmonizes perfectly.
- We are to, as far as our finite minds can, form our beliefs from a harmonious integration of *all* the evidence.

As we practice these principles we can be guarded from being deceived.

- Those who use science separated from scripture invariable fall into many distortions and false assumptions.
- Likewise, those who use scripture severed from nature and science will also find themselves teaching theories inconsistent with God and His nature and character.

Read fourth paragraph, “At the same time...” thoughts?

What do you think of this sentence, “How does one, for instance, make sense of the sacrifice of Jesus apart from the entire sacrificial system revealed in the Old Testament?”

- What bias does this sentence reveal?
- What lens do they use to understand Jesus and His ministry?

- It sounds as if they believe that they should use the OT system to understand the mission and work of Christ.
- Just think about that for a minute – don't we say that the OT system is a shadow, pointing forward to the reality of Christ?
- Now how sensible would it be to study your shadow and use that information as the template we force our conclusions about you to conform?
- Wouldn't it make much more sense to study you and from you wouldn't we then have greater understanding of what we are seeing in your shadow?

So listen to what one of the founders of the SDA church wrote, regarding our understanding of the sacrificial system and what method we should use to understand it:

The significance of the Jewish economy **is not yet fully comprehended.** Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols. **The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries.** Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding. **Far more than we do, it is our privilege to understand these wonderful themes.**
{COL 133.1}

What is the key? The gospel and where is the gospel most fully and clearly revealed? Is it not in Jesus? So, I assert that the OT system can only be rightly understood when it is studied through the lens of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. And that when we study the OT system first, and then use that and force Jesus to conform to our understanding of that system, then we distort the meaning and purpose of Christ and the entire system.

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Genesis 2:3:

And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Then read first paragraph, “This text...” thoughts?

Is the seventh day holy because God declared it holy, or did God declare it holy because it was, by its creation, made holy? In other words, God constructed, built, or made the 7th day in such a way, that it inherently is holy, set apart, and different from all the other days, and thus God pronounced it such.

At the end of each day of creation when God said “it is good” did His declaration that it is good, make it good, or did He say it was good, because, in fact, it was good?

What about the seventh day holiness?

If it is true, that the seventh day is no different than the other six days, and God, used His sovereign power to “declare” it holy, what would this mean? It would mean God is arbitrary. He chose one day above other days, without reason, and set it apart.

This is one of the allegations that Satan made against God in heaven, that God is arbitrary and when we suggest such a thing, we undermine the holiness of God and present Him as unholy, common and earthly.

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to **forget God**, that he might secure them to himself. Therefore he has sought to **misrepresent the character of God**, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. **The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself--as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving**--that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. . . . {HP 8.2}

- When was the Sabbath created?
- What was happening in the universe?
- When God was creating earth who was watching? (Job 38)
- What did God do on days 1-6?
- What did days 1-6 reveal about God?
- What did God do on day seven?
- What is revealed about God on day seven?
- So God “blessed” the Sabbath with the investment of God’s character, the TRUTH presented in LOVE while leaving intelligent being FREE to decide for themselves.
- Therefore, the Sabbath was “made” or “built” or “constructed” inherently holy and its existence is evidence of God’s character of love!

Were Adam and Eve made or created holy?

Adam was surrounded with everything his heart could wish. Every want was supplied. There were no sin and no signs of decay in glorious Eden. **Angels of God conversed freely and lovingly with the holy pair.** {AH 26.3}

Did they stay holy?

We are to keep the Sabbath holy – what does that mean? How do we keep the Sabbath holy?

- What makes the Sabbath holy?
 - God’s character of love, truth, and freedom!
- Then how do we keep it holy?
 - By possessing the character of Christ!

Read next two paragraphs, “The Hebrew word...” thoughts?

What do you think of the idea that “God is set apart from anything else in creation.” And this setting apart of God is what constitutes holiness?

It is true that God lives in “unapproachable light” 1Tim 6:16. But why? Why does God live in unapproachable light? What does this mean? Does it mean photons? Does it mean knowledge and truth and wisdom and understanding?

And why is God unapproachable? Is it because He is aloof and exclusionary, and prefers isolation and wants to selfishly hoard power and knowledge?

Or is it that finite beings cannot ever assimilate or approach infinity? And by nature God cannot be approached by finiteness as it would be too overwhelming for the finite mind?

Therefore, God has gone out from His infinity and fellowshiped with His creation in the person of His Son!

When Jesus came and dwelt with His creation, when He was not far off and disconnected from His creation, but instead intimately connected to it, even to the point of being connected by an umbilical cord in the womb of Mary – was He less holy?

What does holiness have to do with distance, isolation, and separateness?

In heaven before Lucifer rebelled was holiness something far off and foreign?

Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; **it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love.** {FLB 140.3}

No one can be omnipotent, **but all can cleanse themselves from filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.** God requires every soul to be pure and holy. We have hereditary tendencies to wrong. This is a part of self that no one need carry about. It is a weakness of humanity to pet selfishness, because it is a natural trait of character. **But unless all selfishness is put away, unless self is crucified, we can never be holy as God is holy.** There is in humanity a tendency to suspicious imagining, which circumstances quicken into lively growth. If this trait is indulged, it spoils the character and ruins the soul. {FLB 140.4}

God requires moral perfection in all. Those who have been given light and opportunities should, as God's stewards, aim for perfection, and never, never lower the standard of righteousness to accommodate inherited and cultivated tendencies to wrong. **Christ took upon Him our human nature, and lived our life, to show us that we may be like Him. . . . We ought to be holy even as God is holy;** and when we comprehend the full significance of this statement, and set our heart to do the work of God, to be holy as He is holy, we shall approach the standard set for each individual in Christ Jesus. {FLB 140.5}

Did angels in heaven prior to Lucifer's rebellion trust God completely? And do those in heaven now trust God completely? Then are they holy?

And when we trust God completely here on earth, what happens to us? Do we open our hearts? Does the Holy Spirit come in? Is there a transformation that occurs? Does the heart become like Christ's? Is that holiness?

No man receives holiness as a birthright, or as a gift from any other human being. Holiness is the gift of God through Christ. Those who receive the Saviour become sons of God. They are His spiritual children, born

again, **renewed in righteousness and true holiness. Their minds are changed.** With clearer vision they behold eternal realities. They are adopted into God's family, and they **become conformed to His likeness, changed by His Spirit from glory to glory. From cherishing supreme love for self, they come to cherish supreme love for God and for Christ. . . . Accepting Christ as a personal Saviour, and following His example of self-denial-this is the secret of holiness. {AG 120.4}**

Wow – what is the secret of holiness? It is to be like God, like Christ in character, to love God and others more than self!

So, with this in mind, then how do we understand the idea in Scripture that holiness has something to do with cutting or separating?

Think about “circumcision of the heart by the spirit.” What is this metaphor teaching? Cutting away something – what?

We are to have cut away, within our hearts, our love for self, worldly indulgence and destructive practices, and be freed from fear, insecurity, lust, passion, habit, and every cultivated and inherited tendency toward evil.

Thus, the holiness of cutting, is actually the holiness of healing and transforming our character back into God’s ideal!

FRIDAY

Let’s read the top two paragraphs together and ask, what message do you hear being conveyed?

The confusion is hushed. The sound of traffic and bargaining has ceased. The silence becomes painful. A sense of awe overpowers the assembly. **It is as if they were arraigned before the tribunal of God to answer for their deeds.** Looking upon Christ, they behold

divinity flash through the garb of humanity. **The Majesty of heaven stands as the Judge will stand at the last day**,--not now encircled with the glory that will then attend Him, but with **the same power to read the soul**. His eye sweeps over the multitude, taking in every individual. His form seems to rise above them in commanding dignity, and a divine light illuminates His countenance. He speaks, and His clear, ringing voice--the same that upon Mount Sinai proclaimed the law that priests and rulers are transgressing--is heard echoing through the arches of the temple: "Take these things hence; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise." {DA 158.1}

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

What do you hear? What is being conveyed? What lens are you looking at this scene through? Are you looking through the lens of an imposed law, which requires a judge to impose penalties, or natural law which requires therapy and healing?

The cord "seems" terrible as a flaming sword, to whom?

Amazingly, Jesus conducted Himself with such consummate skill and grace that even when brandishing a whip only those with a guilty conscience were afraid and ran away. The blind and lame stayed by and were

healed. And the children were not afraid and sang praises to God. Such was his demeanor that, even while driving out the thieves, the children were not frightened.

(Matthew 21:14-16)

Let's keep reading, we will skip one paragraph and pick up on the same thread of thought as we just read, remembering He is standing as the Judge will stand at the end of time, let's read:

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was **designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world**. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that **every created being**, from the bright and holy seraph **to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin**, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, **the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One**. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through **saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple**. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the **high destiny open to every soul**. But the **Jews had not understood the significance** of the building they regarded with so much pride. **They did not yield themselves as holy temples** for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. **In cleansing the temple** from the world's buyers and sellers, **Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin**,--from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come,

saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and **He shall purify the sons of Levi**, and purge them as gold and silver." Malachi 3:1-3. {DA 161.1}

...No man can of himself cast out the evil throng that have taken possession of the heart. **Only Christ can cleanse the soul temple.** But He will not force an entrance. He comes not into the heart as to the temple of old; but He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." Revelation 3:20. He will come, not for one day merely; for He says, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; . . . and they shall be My people." **"He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."** 2 Corinthians 6:16; Micah 7:19. **His presence will cleanse and sanctify the soul, so that it may be a holy temple unto the Lord**, and "an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:21, 22. {DA 161.2}

What did you hear now? Is this what you heard when you read the first two paragraphs? I challenge you – it should be! This is who God is, God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his son...

What does Christ want to drive out? Sinfulness, selfishness, from our hearts!

The lens of imposed law has biased us to see God as being against us – just like last week the Genesis account was rendered as God pronouncing judgment against the serpent, woman and man, when we discovered it was God intervening to save – God is for us. Likewise, when we read Christ as standing as Judge – to do what? To diagnose properly and then cleanse, heal and restore!

This is the message of all eternity, the good news, that God is not like Satan alleges, God is not our enemy, God is not the source of suffering and death. Sin is the source of suffering and death and God is working through all His agencies, FOR US, to heal and restore! Holy Holy Holy Is the Lord God Almighty!

TUESDAY

Read last paragraph, “Even though...” thoughts?

What do you think of their reaction? What was the cause of the reaction?

How do the holy ones in heaven react to God’s presence? Don’t they fall down in front of Him, cast crowns and worship saying “Holy, Holy, Holy”?

Is this response necessarily borne of sin, or of something else? Could it be borne of awe, admiration, overwhelming majesty, awareness of such goodness it is breathtaking and humbling? Does one have to be sinful to respond this way?

In fact, when a sinful heart comes into the presence of God does it fall down in humble adoration and acknowledgement of unworthiness? Or does the sinful heart run away calling for deliverance?

What about the idea of a substitute to bridge the gap between God and sinful beings? Much is implied with this statement.

First, are sinful beings the only ones who need someone as a bridge builder with God, someone to go between them and God, someone to act as mediator? Do sinless beings need the same?

“While we rejoice that there are worlds which have never fallen, these worlds render praise, and honor, and glory to Jesus Christ for the plan of redemption to save

the fallen sons of Adam, as well as to confirm themselves in their position and character of purity. The arm that raised the human family from the ruin which Satan had brought upon the race through his temptations, is the arm which has preserved the inhabitants of other worlds from sin. Every world throughout immensity engages the care and support of the Father and the Son; and this care is constantly exercised for fallen humanity. Christ is **mediating** in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by his **mediatorial** work. Are not these themes of sufficient magnitude and importance to engage our thoughts, and call forth our gratitude and adoration to God?" {RH, January 11, 1881 par. 4}

The scripture states that "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." (Col 1:19,20)

Heavenly things were reconciled by the blood of Christ – why? What does it mean?

God lives in unapproachable light – Jesus through all eternity has been the one who left the infinity of the Godhead and went out to interact closely with creation, thus drawing as close as possible to creation.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "In the Old Testament..." thoughts?

Do they mean that God was not harsh in the OT or that He is still harsh today?

What do you think?

The lesson asks why Peter, after the miracle of the fishes in the net, fell down convicted of Christ's divinity asking Christ to

depart from him stating “I am a sinful man.” And then answer in the last paragraph, “Why this reaction?...”

And then read bottom paragraph THURSDAY “In all of the human encounters...”

What excellent points are made in these paragraphs?

- God is not changed by our sin
- We are changed by sin
- Sin causes us torment and torture of mind/heart in the presence of God’s unveiled truth
- Thus, sin is the source of suffering and ultimately death, not God

THURSDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “Although God is love...” thoughts?

Do you hear a suggestion that Holiness is something other than God’s character of love?

What would you say about this?

Glimpses of Our God Lesson 6 1Q 2012

God the Lawgiver

When you hear the title what images come to your mind?

Great peace have they who love your law,
and nothing can make them stumble. PS 119:165

The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes. PS 19:7,8

Our God is beautiful – His character is beautiful – His law is beautiful!

Satan hates the beauty of God and His law of love and Satan works to pervert our understanding of God's law and thus God's character. We will explore this today!

SABBATH

Read entire day starting with first paragraph, "As Seventh-day Adventist..." thoughts?

Any questions?

Do you agree that the law, which is an expression of God's character? What about the phrase (If so, then because God doesn't change, the law – which reveals His character – shouldn't change either.)

Would you make the language a little stronger and say, the law *cannot* change? Why can the law not change? What are the possibilities?

- God enacted a law and only God can change it
- God's character is love and He constructed His universe to operate upon certain principles or laws and change would result in destruction of His universe and God would no longer be a God of love

What do you understand God's character to be?

Does a different concept of God's law alter the way we see His character?

When it comes to law – what are the types of law of which we know?

Natural and Enacted or Imposed –

I am going to throw out examples of various laws, you tell me into which category does it fit, natural or imposed:

- Natural law
 - Health – respiration, hydration, nutrition
 - Nature – thermodynamics, motion, friction, gravity
 - Love – circuit of giving life is built upon
 - Liberty – love only exists with freedom
 - Worship – by beholding we become changed
 - Genetics – life changes gene expression and we pass these changes to our offspring
- Enacted law
 - Ceremonial – washing of priest before service in OT
 - Health – must be 21 to drink
 - Safety - speed limits
 - Criminal – robbery, rape, murder and what punishment is allowed, proscribed
 - Tax – legal and illegal deductions
 - Marital law – who can marry whom

- Civil – cannot misrepresent someone in the media

What is the purpose of the natural laws?

What is the purpose of the enacted laws?

What is the problem when one breaks one of the natural laws?

What is the problem when one breaks one of the imposed laws?

Are there any natural laws that require imposition of penalties?

If we teach God's law requires He impose penalties what have we just done? We have changed God's unchangeable law from the natural law upon which He built the universe to an imposed law.

Another layer of rules:

- School dress code
- No chewing gum in class
- No TV on school nights
- No video games if grades are not B's or better
- Must brush your teeth each night before bed

What are the purpose of these type of rules?

Is there some other law that we haven't yet included?

What about the 10 Commandments? Where do they fit?

Were they always in existence? Or were they added later, after sin entered?

- The law was added so that the trespass might increase. Romans 5:20
- It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. Gal 3:19

Now let's reason together – were the laws God constructed His universe to operate upon added so that sin might increase? Or so that we might see sin more clearly? No!

So what law was added? All imposed law – sacrifices, circumcision, ceremonial law – AND the 10 Commandments!

One of the founders of our church saw it as I do:

- I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and **the moral code of ten commandments...** "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. {1SM 233, 234}

Notice the language “moral code of the 10 commandments”. God’s law of love, the principles upon which the universe was built was always in existence, but in the 10 Commandments God “codified” the principles of love uniquely for humanity’s need.

This codification of the law was not always in existence, while the law of love was always in existence.

Angels didn’t have sins pass down the generations, nor honor mother and father, nor need to avoid adultery, nor have problems with coveting another man’s wife. Yet, the angels did have the law of love, the principle upon which life was based.

- If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would

it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, **and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone.** And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

So, the 10 commandments are not “enacted” or “imposed” law, neither are they the natural law as they were added later. The 10 Commandments are a unique “codification” of the natural law designed for our need, but for what purpose?

First – as we read above to increase the ability to see sin, to diagnose accurately, to reveal our condition to us.

Secondly, as a hedge of protection to keep us safe from self destruction while God is working to rewrite our operating systems, minds/hearts, back into harmony with His character of love. In other words, God is working to put His law of love back into our hearts and minds. Jer 31:30 and Heb 8:10.

Third, they are also a promise of what our characters will look like when God finishes His way in us. We will not have other gods before Him. We will not make images and worship them. We will not take His name in vain....

So, as we review the different types of law – what do you understand the law to be in heaven before Lucifer rebelled?

Here is the historical Adventist perspective:

In the beginning, God was revealed in all the works of creation. It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field. "His strength setteth fast the mountains." "The sea is His, and He made it." Psalm 65:6; 95:5. It was He that filled the earth with beauty, and the air with song.

And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father's love. {DA 20.1}

Now sin has marred God's perfect work, yet that handwriting remains. Even **now all created things declare the glory of His excellence. There is nothing, save the selfish heart of man, that lives unto itself.** No bird that cleaves the air, no animal that moves upon the ground, but **ministers to some other life**. There is no leaf of the forest, or lowly blade of grass, but has **its ministry**. Every tree and shrub and leaf **pours forth** that element of life without which neither man nor animal could live; and man and animal, in turn, minister to the life of tree and shrub and leaf. The flowers breathe fragrance and unfold their beauty in blessing to the world. The sun sheds its light to gladden a thousand worlds. The ocean, itself the source of all our springs and fountains, receives the streams from every land, but takes to give. The mists ascending from its bosom fall in showers to water the earth, that it may bring forth and bud. {DA 20.2}

The **angels of glory find their joy in giving**,--giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know. {DA 21.1}

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold **God in Jesus**. Looking unto Jesus we see that **it is the glory of our God to give**. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. **In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: **through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all**; through

the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the **circuit of beneficence** is complete, ***representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.*** {DA 21.2}

In heaven itself this law was broken. Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore **he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation.** With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. **Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men.** He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, **Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving.** Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world. {DA 21.3}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. **This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened.** To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work **only one Being in all the universe could do.** Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

What law was broken in heaven? It was not the 10 Commandments that Lucifer broke. They did not yet exist. Where did this law originate?

What caused it to be broken?

What is the law of life for the universe?

What does this mean? Does it mean life is constructed to exist only in harmony with this principle of giving?

What do we learn of God's character when we see the law in this way?

What happens to how we see God's character if we change the law to an imposed law? Do we see God differently?

- If we see God's law as the law of love we see God working to heal His creation from the destruction that breaking the law brings
- If we see God's law as imposed we see God working to create a means whereby He doesn't have to execute the sinner, so we set up a system in which God is working against Himself. On the one hand He is working to justly punish law breaking, on the other hand He is working to divert the punishment away from law breakers to His innocent Son. What some call the most unjust act in the universe.

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, "So, right from..." very well said, the written law was never a means of salvation, it was a diagnostic instrument to diagnose and expose our terminal state and lead us to Christ for healing!

The lesson asks us to read Romans 7:8-13, let's start with verse 7 and go through 13. I am going to read from my paraphrase:

^{7:7} What shall we say then? Is the law evil and selfish because it increases the amount of evil and selfishness we see? Absolutely not! For I would not have known what evil and selfishness looks like if it wasn't for the diagnostic efficacy of the law. I would not have realized

that coveting was evil and selfish if the law didn't say, "Don't covet." ⁸ But selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the law is only a diagnostic instrument and not a remedy, magnified every covetous desire within me. For apart from the diagnostic ability of the law, sin is unrecognizable. ⁹ Once I thought I was healthy and free from the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness, but then the commandment examined me, exposed how utterly infected I was and diagnosed me as terminal. ¹⁰ I discovered that the very commandment given only to diagnose my condition, I had unwittingly attempted to use as a cure and thus my condition only worsened. ¹¹ For selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the commandment could only diagnose and not cure, deceived me into thinking I could be cured by working to keep the commandments, but instead my terminal state only worsened. ¹² So understand this, the law diagnoses perfectly, and the commandment is the standard of what is right and good, set apart by God, to reveal what is evil and destructive.

7:13 Did the law, which did good by diagnosing what was wrong with me, become the source of my terminal condition? Of course not! It only exposed what was already in me so that I could recognize how totally decayed, putrid and near death I was, so that through the lens of the commandment I might become utterly disgusted with evil and selfishness and long for a cure.

Thoughts?

Read last paragraph, "In a sense..." thoughts?

What is the problem with sinners? Is it that they have violated God's law, or is it that they are out of harmony with God's law?

- An analogy, the law of gravity – if you purposely jump off a building, or get thrown off by another, or get tricked

- into stepping of, or slip off accidentally – does it change the way you are treated by gravity?
- Does God’s law treat us differently if we violate it knowingly or ignorantly?
 - When Eve was deceived, tricked into breaking God’s law, was she treated differently by the law, than Adam who broke the law knowingly?
 - If a person is tricked into taking LSD and another person takes it knowingly will the LSD work differently in each of them or do the same thing?
 - If God’s law is the natural law upon which He built the universe it is a constant and functions constantly, thus breeches result in the same consequence regardless of how it is broken. But if God’s law is imposed, then we can take into consideration whether someone was tricked or not and modify the consequences.
 - What about every human born since Adam? A newborn baby? Has a new born baby chosen to violate God’s law? Is that newborn baby in harmony with God’s law?
 - Imagine HIV infected man and woman have a child born HIV infected, what did the child do wrong? Nothing, but doesn’t the child still have a terminal condition, which if unremedied will kill it?
 - This is our condition, we are born in sin conceived in iniquity, Ps 51:5, we are born terminal.
 - If you had a loved one on top of a building suicidal, and they are going to jump, and you had time, would you put one of those air mattress things to catch them? What if they slipped or were pushed?
 - If you had a grandchild born HIV infected, would you condemn the child and sentence it to death, or would you, as you were able, seek a remedy and a cure?
 - When man fell into sin, what did God do? He immediately began interceding to hold the ravages of sin at bay while implementing His plan to heal and restore mankind back to His original design!
 - God is always for us – it is Satan, evil men, and sin itself that is against us.

So is the problem with sinners who have violated the law, or the problem with our condition of being out of harmony with the law which results in its violation and that only worsens the problem?

MONDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “As soon as we talk...” thoughts?

Is it true God’s law has always been in existence?

Is it true God’s law has always been codified as the 10 Commandments?

We have already read the 10 Commandments were added later, because of a need. Consider it this way –

Is it true that since God created earth the law of gravity has been at work on planet earth? When Isaac Newton finally wrote it down – did that then create the law of gravity? No! It was always in existence, but not in the form of equations written on paper.

The 10 Commandments are like that, they put in writing what was always in existence as part of the law of love, but do it in a way particularly designed for the need of sinful humanity.

Read next paragraph, “Genesis 1 and 2...” thoughts?

Really? Do you really need to write down somewhere that if you love your brother you won’t murder him, in order to know that murder is not loving?

What about this – if you have a 10 year old little brother and you love him, will you give him cigarettes, alcohol and cocaine? Would it be sin to do this?

How could we possibly know this would be sin? It isn't written in the 10 Commandments anywhere is it?

How do we know such an act is sinful if it isn't written in the 10 Commandment?

Did Cain really need the 10 Commandments to know murder is a violation of the law of love?

If you murdered someone, would you really need to have a law tell you it was wrong?

What about in times when the law says it is right to kill another human being? What happens to a person when they take the life of another human? Can they do this without consequence to themselves?

- A police officer shoots and kills an armed suspect – is there a consequence to the police officer?
- A homeowner shoots and kills a home invader – is there a consequence?
- A soldier shoots and kills an enemy combatant, is there a consequence to the soldier?

Is there something inherent in our design that convicts us it is wrong to kill another human? Or did it only become wrong once it was written on stone?

Is killing another wrong because God says it, or does God say don't do it because it is wrong – and by wrong we mean it violates God's design for life, and thus the killer gets damaged by the act.

What about if they are killing for God? What about in the OT times, David killed many people in defense of God, yet was not allowed to build the Temple because he was a man of blood. What does this mean? Just his history? Or do such actions affect the heart and mind?

It is abnormal to kill another person. We are wired to be aversive to this. We are created to love others. And we are not at peace when we kill. We have to be conditioned to do it.

Read sixth paragraph, “When Abraham lied....” Thoughts?

What do you think about their conclusion?

If the reason God rebuked Abimelech was because He held the same standard as the Decalogue, then why did Abraham have 3 concubines, Jacob 2 wives and 2 concubines, David 5 wives, Solomon 700 wives etc. yet we don’t find God rebuking them like he did Abimelech? If the reason is that God is holding them to the same standard of the 10 Commandments before it was given, then shouldn’t He be consistent?

I think God rebuked Abimelech because Sarah was the one through whom the promised child was to come, from Sarah and Abraham, not Sarah and Abimelech. Thus, Sarah had to go back to Abraham to fulfill this purpose, not because of some statement regarding the 10 Commandments existing before it was given.

Read last paragraph, “Clearly, the idea that there was no law until Sinai makes no sense in light of so much of what the Bible teaches about life before Sinai.”

Yes there was law before Sinai – but in what form?

Was there the written codification of God’s law before Sinai? No! Was the law of life, the law upon which God constructed life to operate in existence before Sinai? Yes.

So with all this in mind what do you understand Paul to be saying in Romans 5:12-14:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—**for before the law was**

given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

Paul is saying that when Adam sinned by breaking the command of God, his nature was changed from one operating upon God's design of love, and now was infected with fear and selfishness, a terminal state. And all humans born of Adam are infected with that same terminal condition, thus deviations from God's design reign, i.e. sin before the written law was given at Sinai. And since life is built to operate on God's design principles death was reigning as all were out of harmony with how God designed things to run, even in those who were dying did not choose to be that way by breaking a specific command of God as Adam did.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Contrary..." thoughts?

Can you give some examples to demonstrate how the Hebrew religion has always been a religion of grace?

- Eye for an eye – stopped people from killing for minor offenses
- Cities of refuge
- Judicial system required two witnesses to agree on every point and the Sanhedrin was 72 of the best lawyers for the defense of the accused while the offended had to prosecute on their own
- Gleaning in the fields
- Jubilees – land and slaves freed and returned to family owners
- Accommodations for the poor in temple service

- Sacrificial system designed to teach God's love – His self sacrifice to take our condition upon Himself to cure us and bring us back into unity with Himself.

Anything in the OT that makes it hard to see grace?

- The hard heartedness of the people, and their need for God to meet them where they were.

Read last paragraph, "Why, though, such..." well said and what about today? Do we teach the principles of the law, or do we get side tracked on the rules?

What can we do to protect against getting side tracked?

Take focus off self and onto God and others! How can we bless another, uplift another, help another.

If your neighbor is in need and you are thinking of helping him, but it is Sabbath, what do you do? If you are thinking about your neighbor you help, if you are thinking about yourself you don't because you must obey the law.

Jesus pointed this out as the Jews would help an ox out of the ditch on Sabbath but didn't want a man healed on Sabbath because Christ could easily heal him any other day of the week. In other words the healings Christ did on Sabbath were not emergency, life or death healings. They were treating chronic medical conditions, which could have easily waited until sundown!

Why didn't Christ wait until after Sabbath to heal them? What is the lesson here? Are we today only to help our neighbors if it is an emergency? Or should we rake the lawn of the elderly couple on Sabbath?

Should we purposely dedicate a certain number of hours each Sabbath to go out and do public service WORK, to minister

and help others, but for which we will not receive pay? Would this be keeping or breaking the Sabbath?

What would happen to the name of Christ in Chattanooga, if a group of Sabbath keepers starting committing 4 hours each Sabbath to works of community service and ministry? Work for our neighbors and community? Would this uplift or tear down the name of Christ? Would it be in harmony with the Sabbath law or break it?

Here is what one of the founders of the SDA church thought about Sabbath keeping:

The demands upon God are even greater upon the Sabbath than upon other days. His people then leave their usual employment, and spend the time in meditation and worship. They ask more favors of Him on the Sabbath than upon other days. They demand His special attention. They crave His choicest blessings. God does not wait for the Sabbath to pass before He grants these requests. Heaven's work never ceases, and **men should never rest from doing good.** The Sabbath is not intended to be a period of useless inactivity. **The law forbids secular labor on the rest day of the Lord; the toil that gains a livelihood must cease; no labor for worldly pleasure or profit is lawful upon that day;** but as God ceased His labor of creating, and rested upon the Sabbath and blessed it, so man is to leave the occupations of his daily life, and **devote those sacred hours to healthful rest, to worship, and to holy deeds.** The work of Christ in healing the sick was in perfect accord with the law. It honored the Sabbath. {DA 207.2}

Thoughts? Should we do good deeds, work, on the Sabbath intended to bless and help our community and neighbors?

THURSDAY

Read top paragraph, "From the start..." thoughts?

Much truth in this paragraph, harmony with God's design, His law does protect against ravages of sin.

Is it possible to be a "law keeper" while breaking the law and thus being damaged by sin?

Can one keep the Sabbath, observe it in such a way as they don't do any work, only do religious activities, but harden their hearts and kill their Savior?

So the law can be perverted in practice to, rather than protect, injure and hurt.

Any examples of this?

Read bottom green section? Do you see the questions through the two lenses of natural law or imposed law?

If one uses the lens of Roman Imperial Imposed law then these questions make some sort of sense – but if one sees through the lens of God's natural law – these questions are nonsense.

It would be like saying respiration without exchanging oxygen and carbon dioxide would lead to what? Or Exchanging oxygen and carbon dioxide without breathing would lead to what?

You cannot exchange these gases without respiration, without breathing. Likewise love is the law and keeping the law is love. Unless you view love as one thing and God's law as something He imposed later.

FRIDAY

Read top three paragraphs – well said, what are the points to note?

There is no negative in God's law – why? Because it is the design for life, the law of life, it restores or heals. It is a promise of life eternal.

And this law operates only in an atmosphere of freedom, coercion and threat are only part of Satan's government because they destroy love and giving. Thus, what can we know about various theologies? Any theology which suggest God, in order to be just, must inflict pain, suffering and death presents God as using coercive tactics, which violate His own character and thus such ideas are false.

The actual transformation of our hearts and minds is done by the work of the Holy Spirit within us when we trust God!

And it is in this experience we are freed from fear, insecurity, anxiety, which lead us to all the “save self” behaviors that damage and destroy.

Read and discuss Questions 3.

TUESDAY

Any questions about Sabbath before Sinai?

Created in Eden, practiced in desert before Sinai, see Exodus 16.

Was the Sabbath needed in heaven before sin? Why or why not?

What is the purpose of the Sabbath?

Glimpses of Our God Lesson 7 1Q 2012

The Lord of the Sabbath

Read memory text -thoughts?

What do you understand it to mean that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath?

Have you ever felt like it was the other way around?

If the Sabbath was made for man was it in existence before man?

Does this add further clarification to our discussion last week of the 10 Commandments being codification of the law of love that was added for human need?

Why was the Sabbath needed when man was created but not before?

Why will the Sabbath be celebrated in the new earth?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "One of the most..."

In what condition was man when the Sabbath was made?

What do you think the purpose of the Sabbath was in Eden?

Did the purpose of the Sabbath change after sin? If so how?

What do you understand it to mean, the Sabbath was "made" holy? Do you understand it to mean the Sabbath was made holy in its construction, the built into it is holiness? As in man was "made" perfect? Or simply God declared it holy so it is holy?

The lesson states, “With the Sabbath, then, we’re dealing with one of the most fundamental and foundational of all biblical truths.”

What is that fundamental and foundational truth?

- That the Sabbath is Saturday the seventh day?
- That the Sabbath is holy?
- Or, is it what makes the Sabbath holy that is foundational and fundamental, and what the Sabbath reveals about God’s character that is foundational and fundamental?

And what is that foundational and fundamental truth about God’s character, which the Sabbath reveals?

Read next paragraph, “God created a day...” thoughts?

What does it mean the Sabbath was set apart for holy uses?

- Are all the other days set apart for unholy uses?
- In Eden, before sin, were any unholy activities being done by Adam and Eve?
- In its original creation what does this mean?
- Does it mean a special time set aside to spend with God? Didn’t He come and spend time with them in the cool of every day?
- Are we introjecting some idea into our understanding of the Sabbath because of the perspective of our sinful minds?

What do you think about this portion of paragraph two, “How fascinating that God Himself rested on the seventh day.

Whatever that means, it shows how seriously the day is meant to be taken, because God Himself rested on it!”?

What does it mean God rested? Did He stop working? One Bible Commentary states the following:

Jesus stated to them that the work of relieving the afflicted was in harmony with the Sabbath law. It was in harmony with the **work of God's angels**, who are ever descending and ascending between heaven and earth to minister to suffering humanity. Jesus declared, "**My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.**" **All days are God's, in which to carry out His plans for the human race.** If the Jews' interpretation of the law was correct, then Jehovah was at fault, **whose work has quickened and upheld every living thing since first He laid the foundations of the earth;** then He who pronounced His work good, and instituted the Sabbath to commemorate its completion, **must put a period to His labor, and stop the never-ending routine of the universe.** {DA 206.3}

Should God forbid the sun to perform its office upon the Sabbath, cut off its genial rays from warming the earth and nourishing vegetation? Must the system of worlds stand still through that holy day? Should He command the brooks to stay from watering the fields and forests, and bid the waves of the sea still their ceaseless ebbing and flowing? Must the wheat and corn stop growing, and the ripening cluster defer its purple bloom? Must the trees and flowers put forth no bud nor blossom on the Sabbath? {DA 206.4}

In such a case, men would miss the fruits of the earth, and the blessings that make life desirable. Nature must continue her unvarying course. **God could not for a moment stay His hand, or man would faint and die. And man also has a work to perform on this day. The necessities of life must be attended to, the sick must be cared for, the wants of the needy must be supplied. He will not be held guiltless who neglects to relieve suffering on the Sabbath.** God's holy rest day was made for man, and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent. God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour's pain that may be relieved upon the Sabbath or any other day. {DA 207.1}

So what does it mean God rested? Did God stop working?

If God did not stop working, then what kind of rest did God do on the Sabbath? He stopped creating on planet earth. And why, after this creation week, did He announce a day of rest? What purpose would such a day serve?

What was happening in the universe? Who was watching as God created planet earth and all life on it?

God rested His presentation of evidence of His character of love and His law upon which life is built.

Consider this world, teeming with life, and everything operating perfectly upon God's law of love, ministering to another, life unto life. What a beautiful lesson book to reveal God's methods, principles and character. And the Sabbath, God rested, and we learn more of His character – He gives real freedom to His creatures to think for themselves. He doesn't coerce or pressure.

Satan hates this day. He doesn't want people to remember how God built planet earth to operate. He has infected earth with his principle of survival of the fittest. He doesn't want people stopping their drive to survive, to rest in trust with God and reflect on His original creation, His methods, His principles of love and what it means that God leaves us free, even His enemies free.

Satan doesn't mind if we keep the seventh day Sabbath, as long as we do it as an arbitrary test of obedience. Then the Sabbath, rather than revealing God's design, methods, and character, instead supports Satan's allegations against God. And with that idea of Sabbath we can kill the Creator and want Him off the Cross so we can keep what the law "requires."

MONDAY

The lesson breaks down the Sabbath commandment of Exodus into various parts – read starting “This commandment is also...”

Thoughts?

Would you say that it is sin, a violation of the commandment, to do secular work on Sabbath?

We have the command, thou shall do no work –

But what about the other express command – Six days thou shall labor and work and do all thy work?

If it is a sin to labor and work on the Sabbath, because the commandment gives us an express command, then is it a sin **not** to labor and work the other six days of the week because we also have an express command?

Did God give Adam and Eve work to do in the Garden before sin?

Are we designed to be active, to work productively? What happens when we stop working? We lose physical health, we age faster, our brains deteriorate, we lose self-respect, confidence, and our development ceases; we slowly die.

It is part of God’s design that we are active, engaged, working with our energy to give of ourselves in usefulness.

- So, is it “sin” to retire and quit working? (I don’t mean quite earning a paycheck, but to quit useful expenditure of your energy in some productive action?)
- Is it sin to take state welfare or charity when one is capable of working and has opportunity to work?

- Is it sin to live off your parents, or inheritance when one is capable of working?
- Is it sin to stand on the street corner with a sign, will work for food, and then refuse to work when someone gives an opportunity?

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, **we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle** and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. **We were not idle when we were with you,** ⁸ **nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you.** ⁹ We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, **we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."**

¹¹ **We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies.** ¹² **Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.** ¹³ And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right. 2 Thes 3:6-13

Is it sin, not to be usefully engaged in work of some kind, irrespective of whether it gains a paycheck if one is capable?

- What is your reaction to, on the Sabbath, going to work, working for self to make money on the Sabbath?
- What is your reaction to not working the other days?

Do we dishonor God with both? How?

We were made in God's image – to reveal His character, to be an example to angels and the world. Resting on Sabbath demonstrates our confidence and trust in God, celebrates His nature, character and principles of truth, presented in love, leaving others free. Working the other six days demonstrates the constant care, regard, and interest in usefulness, using

one's energies to bless, assist, be productive, and be a giver, rather than be a burden and require others to care for you.

Earthly kings expect to be waited on and served by others, God serves and gives of Himself for others. And Christ came to serve and not be served, and we are to live as Christ lived!

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read, starting in the second paragraph, "The Sabbath, on a purely practical level, offered servants some protection from the master who would work them nonstop – a protection built right into a commandment that had its origins in Creation itself." and then read the third paragraph "Of course..."

Thoughts?

Did God change His law after sin? What does it mean this element was added?

Was an element added? No! The Sabbath did not change. It is holy because it is evidence of God's character of truth, love and freedom. The explanation is just another way to state the same truth about the Sabbath – the God of truth, love and freedom made man in His image, not for slavery, delivering people from slavery is an expression of God's character of love, and the principles of freedom already inherent in the Sabbath.

Because of their personal experience with being slaves, using this meaning was designed to help them have a better appreciation for the true nature of the Sabbath. Unfortunately, rather than becoming a day filled with truth, love and freedom, the Jews burdened the Sabbath to become the day which most enslaved them.

See WEDNESDAY

Middle of the lesson it asks, "What is the context of the healing, why would Jesus have done it specifically on that day, and what is the major point that He is clearly making?"

From the Desire of Ages page 206:

Jesus had come to "magnify the law, and make it honorable." He was not to lessen its dignity, but to exalt it. The scripture says, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth." Isaiah 42:21, 4. **He had come to free the Sabbath from those burdensome requirements that had made it a curse instead of a blessing.** {DA 206.1}

For this reason He had chosen the Sabbath upon which to perform the act of healing at Bethesda. He could have healed the sick man as well on any other day of the week; or He might simply have cured him, without bidding him bear away his bed. **But this would not have given Him the opportunity He desired.** A wise purpose underlay every act of Christ's life on earth. Everything He did was important in itself and in its teaching. Among the afflicted ones at the pool He selected the worst case upon whom to exercise His healing power, and bade the man carry his bed through the city in order to publish the great work that had been wrought upon him. This would raise the question of what it was lawful to do on the Sabbath, and **would open the way for Him to denounce the restrictions of the Jews in regard to the Lord's day, and to declare their traditions void.** {DA 206.2}

Why did Christ heal on Sabbath? To remove restrictions to the freedoms we are to experience on Sabbath.

Do we suffer with any human restrictions that make the Sabbath a burden and need to be removed?

A listener online sent in the following:

Currently my church is having an issue with getting musicians to play for our services on Sabbath. We have musicians in the congregation that play but they want someone of a certain caliber to work with the various choirs that we have and sometimes those of that caliber are not Adventists even though they are Christians, well some are. Some of these persons wear jewelry and members have an issue with that plus they are paid to play on a Sabbath.

A friend of mine recently returned from Atlanta where he was paid handsomely to play on Sabbath in various churches there, so well was he paid that he didn't have to work during the week.

So, should musicians be paid to perform in church on Sabbath?

Should the church “hire” people to play for the services? Or is it okay, permissible, acceptable, honorable to pay musicians to play in church on Sabbath?

Should the church “hire” people to speak for the services or should pastors all be non-paid persons so as not to do any paid work on the Sabbath?

What about musicians? If we call the worship leaders is it okay?

What about members of the choir?

All the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives—stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. ¹³ The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise

to the LORD and sang:

“He is good;
his love endures forever.” 2Chron 5:12,13

How did the Levites get income? They were paid 1/10 of the tithe as their income. And what was their job?

Should persons be paid to participate in the worship service?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Jesus, through His Sabbath...” well said!

What do you hear in this paragraph? What is the lesson for us today?

The next sentence says, “For Jesus, the Sabbath was more about people than about rules...” thoughts?

In your life is Sabbath more about people or rules?

As parents how do we make the Sabbath about people and not about rules?

Growing up has the Sabbath ever had rules that made it a burden rather than a celebration of God’s love?

FRIDAY

Read top two paragraphs – thoughts? Does this mean just relieving physical suffering, or mental and emotional suffering too?

Does this make it harder to determine what is appropriate to do on the Sabbath, or is all behavior that helps another, all altruistic, benevolent, ministering “work” that doesn’t profit self okay on Sabbath?

If we avoid such ministry in order to “rest” on the Sabbath are we being selfish?

Read and discuss question 1

What does it mean “And they certainly will be judged for their actions”?

- Does it mean that we will look at the history of their lives and draw lessons, make judgments, that will help us live better lives?
- Does it mean they will be legally judged and punitively punished for their actions?
- Or something else?

What does the scripture say?

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” MT 12:33-37

What does this mean? Is it not saying your condition itself will be the determining factor in the judgment? In other words the judgment only accurately diagnosis the condition of one’s character.

What do you think about the latter part of someone coming along claiming light which contradicts tradition? How should we handle it?

Glimpses of Our God Lesson 8 1Q 2012

Creation Care

Before we get into this week's lesson I received the following email from an online listener regarding Sabbath ministry:

Dear Dr. Jennings,

In a recent Sabbath School class you asked the class to think of ways they might serve God in the community on Sabbath. My church, Wasatch Hills SDA in Salt Lake City, has a program started by a couple of its members called Inner-City Outreach (ICOR). Church members routinely clean out their closets and bring clothing items in good condition to a collection bin in our church coat closet. During the winter months - we have about 7 of them! - these items are taken to the city park nearest to the homeless shelter and given to the homeless. Some people choose to contribute monetarily, and these funds are used to buy new items (backpacks, thermal underwear, coats, warm head coverings and Bibles), which are also given away. Some have even conducted their own coat drives or clothing drives at their places of business or among their circle of friends to help collect needed items.

Volunteers (typically 15-25) from the church distribute items along with a smile, prayers, cookies and hot chocolate over the course of a couple of hours on Sabbath, following our morning worship services. Volunteers meet to sort the items into bins the day before distribution, which is in itself a time for sharing and getting to know each other better. The sorting makes for much easier organization and distribution, and helps better serve those looking for items. There are typically one or two planned distributions each month, allowing time for additional items to be collected and volunteers to be coordinated.

This mission has not only helped serve our community, but has been an invaluable lesson in humility for participants. The first time someone who hasn't bathed in a few days wants to give you a hug as an expression of heartfelt gratitude can be uncomfortable, but it's not long before you're the one offering the hug!

This Sabbath "work" comes with a huge paycheck: the opportunity to experience love, mercy, compassion, charity and understanding in action! God has blessed ICOR, and through ICOR we are blessed.

I thank God for you and your ministry. You have liberated my love for our wonderful God!

Sincerely,

Earl Harris

Thoughts?

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs, "What should we..."

First question, should SDAs and Christians of other faiths, have different perspective on the environment?

If so why? What makes a difference in how we understand our responsibility to the environment?

What do you understand our responsibility, as stewards to the earth, to be?

Is the earth there for our use? For what purpose?

- Air, water, and food for our health and life

- But what food? Fruits, nuts, grains and vegetables are a given
- What about dairy? Goat's and Cow's Milk, cheese, eggs?
- What about fish?
- What about raising animals for the purpose of killing them and eating them? Are there reasons not to do this? In Eden did they? Are there reasons to do it?
 - What about raising flocks in the Bible for food and for sacrifice?
 - Weren't the priests to eat the sacrificial animals?
 - Why? Was it God's original design? Then why did God have them do this?
 - Symbolically to teach internalizing Christ – but could there be other reasons?
 - Did you ever hear about the plane crash in the Andes in 1972? The survivors were stranded at over 11000 feet for over two months, with no food, so they survived by eating the dead humans. What do you think of this? While it was a necessity, would you expect them to, on some level, be sickened by it?
 - What about eating animals, should we have a similar reaction? It might, in certain situations, be a necessity, but should we relish it, or perhaps be sickened by it?
- What about harvesting trees to build houses? To use for firewood, paper, furniture? In Eden did they do this?
 - Why do we find ourselves destroying trees to make furniture, houses, paper and the like?
 - Is it because of sin? Has sin changed the environment?
- How has the environment changed because of sin?

Here is one Bible commentators view on the change after sin and why God provided clothing:

- After his transgression Adam at first imagined himself entering upon a higher state of existence. But soon the thought of his sin filled him with terror. **The air,**

which had hitherto been of a mild and uniform temperature, seemed to chill the guilty pair. The love and peace which had been theirs was gone, and in its place they felt a sense of sin, a dread of the future, a nakedness of soul. **The robe of light which had enshrouded them, now disappeared,** and to supply its place they endeavored to fashion for themselves a covering; for they could not, while unclothed, meet the eye of God and holy angels. {PP 57.1}

- In humility and unutterable sadness they bade farewell to their beautiful home and went forth to dwell upon the earth, where rested the curse of sin. **The atmosphere, once so mild and uniform in temperature, was now subject to marked changes,** and the **Lord mercifully provided them with a garment of skins** as a protection from the extremes of heat and cold. {PP 61.5}

Did it become necessary, because of sin, to use animals for clothing? To use trees for shelter, heat, furniture? And what about food? Did the food supply change after the fall?

Are these changes healthy and good, or while they allow adaptation, do they also bring destruction?

How do these changes bring destruction?

Trees, and other plants provide oxygen we need to survive, filter the air from pollutants and provide food for animals and humans. What happens if we remove large amounts of trees from the earth? Could it affect our atmosphere and if we go far enough could it kill the planet?

What about eating animals – while, it might allow survival in some situations, what are the downsides?

- Increased cancers

- Increased cardiovascular disease
- Increased autoimmune diseases

How many remember hearing about H1N1 flu?

The N – stands for a marker on the surface of cells, in this case a sugar marker Sialic acid, Neu5Gc.

Markers like this are identifiers that help our bodies immune system identify self from non-self, and can also act as hooks or latches upon which molecules can attach to enter cells.

What is interesting is that humans have the gene for this marker, but the gene is turned off so human cells do not make this marker or express it on our cells, even though we have the gene for it. All animals express the gene and make this marker, while humans do not.

But because we have the gene for this marker when we eat meat this marker gets incorporated into human tissue and expressed on human cells, which can contribute to immune problems, plus make us more susceptible to certain pathogens.

Thoughts?

Does nature today represent accurately the way God created things? Here is what one Bible commentator suggests, do you agree?

- **Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up.** In the parable of the sower the question was asked the master, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?" The master

answered, "An enemy hath done this" (Matt. 13:27, 28). All tares are sown by the evil one. **Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation** he has corrupted the earth with tares. {2SM 288.2}

Do you believe this to be true? What problems may arise from failing to recognize nature today doesn't represent God's original design, but instead is infected with an antagonistic principle?

- Misunderstand God and His principles
- Fail to believe God exists – evolutionism
- Create false theologies of eternal dualism, the eternal existence of good and evil
- Who wants good and evil to exist eternally?
- What religions teach the eternal existence of good and evil?

Thoughts?

Still talking about how the earth is changed, not only the existence of poisonous plants, but also storms, and what is the source of coal and oil?

At this time [flood] immense forests were buried. These have since been changed to coal, forming the extensive coal beds that now exist, and also yielding large quantities of oil. The coal and oil frequently ignite and burn beneath the surface of the earth. Thus rocks are heated, limestone is burned, and iron ore melted. The action of the water upon the lime adds fury to the intense heat, and causes earthquakes, volcanoes, and fiery issues. As the fire and water come in contact with ledges of rock and ore, there are heavy explosions underground, which sound like muffled thunder. The air is hot and suffocating. Volcanic eruptions follow; and these often failing to give sufficient vent to the heated elements, the earth itself is convulsed, the ground heaves and swells

like the waves of the sea, great fissures appear, and sometimes cities, villages, and burning mountains are swallowed up. These wonderful manifestations will be more and more frequent and terrible just before the second coming of Christ and the end of the world, as signs of its speedy destruction. {PP 108.2}

Thoughts? If the vast organic deposits didn't originally exist buried in the earth, then did God create earth with oil and coal deposits? Were there volcanoes on earth when God built it? What about earthquakes and fractured tectonic plates that shift? Oceans? Tidal waves? Polar extremes? Uninhabitable mountains like Mt. Everest?

What do you think about the use of fossil fuels? Should we use them for our comfort and convenience? Is it sinful to use these products because they emit carbons?

The vast forests buried in the earth at the time of the Flood, and since changed to coal, form the extensive coal fields, and **yield the supplies of oil that minister to our comfort and convenience today**. These things, as they are brought to light, are so many **witnesses mutely testifying to the truth of the word of God**. {Ed 129.2}

What lessons are we learning from the earth? Do we see harmony between the Biblical record and the large coal and oil deposits? And what do we learn from the way humans exploit the earth?

What about God's methods? What about breaking God's design? What happens when God's design is violated?

Given we live in a world of sin, which by definition means God's law is being violated, can we do anything to stop the decay and slow death of the earth?

Then what should be the number one focus of our ministry?
Revealing the truth about God in every manner possible,
including the way we live!

SUNDAY

The lesson describes people who go into restaurants and steal lobsters and loose them in the sea.

Read sixth paragraph, “All of which...” thoughts?

Should we spend time focusing on saving the planet?
What about promoting a healthy environment? What is the
difference between promoting a healthy environment and
working to “save the planet?”

Why is it appropriate to promote a healthy environment, but
not appropriate to focus on saving the planet?

A healthy environment is essential to maximize brain health
and a healthy brain is necessary to know God.

The planet in its current form cannot be saved, it is dying as it
is infected with Satan’s principles. Only God can heal us and
planet earth, thus our primary focus is to be on all activities
which promote the truth about God and bring people a
knowledge of Him.

And unhealthy environment damages the brain and obstructs
the ability to know God and work usefully for Him.

Examples:

- Lead in paint has caused numerous children to have
mental retardation – eliminating this allows children to
have healthier brains, thus healthier lives and also the
ability to more effectively come to know God and work for
Him

- Air pollution increases disease, a diseased body undermines brain health, but also impairs our usefulness in God's cause
- Water pollution causes health problems, and health problems undermine usefulness and ability to help others
- Other examples?

MONDAY

Caring for creation – does our view of God impact how we relate to creation? How?

If we view ourselves as created in God's image, to reveal God's character, and view God as Jesus who did not think equality with God was to be grasped but humbled Himself to save us, and the earth as a microcosm in which mankind stands in for God and all other life is symbolic of God's creatures, would we slaughter animals for food, if there was any other option?

If we view God like a Roman emperor, who is to be served by others and others are to sacrifice to benefit the emperor, might we view all of earth's resources for our privileged pleasures?

Read fourth paragraph, "These problems are largely due..."

If we live this way what do we say about God?

As we become like Jesus do we become less selfish and more protective of others? What about animals, how do we treat animals if we become more like Jesus? How big is the gap between Jesus pre-incarnate and humanity? How far down did Jesus step to become human? Would it be a bigger gap than if we became a rat?

What do you think of this commentator's thoughts?

It is because of man's sin that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together" (Romans 8:22).

Suffering and death were thus entailed, not only upon the human race, but upon the animals. Surely, then, **it becomes man to seek to lighten, instead of increasing, the weight of suffering which his transgression has brought upon God's creatures. He who will abuse animals because he has them in his power is both a coward and a tyrant.** {2MCP 514.2}

A disposition to cause pain, whether to our fellowmen or to the brute creation, is satanic. Many do not realize that their cruelty will ever be known, because the poor dumb animals cannot reveal it. But could the eyes of these men be opened, as were those of Balaam, they would see an angel of God standing as a witness to testify against them in the courts above. A record goes up to heaven, and a day is coming when judgment will be pronounced against those who abuse God's creatures.--PP 443 (1890). {2MCP 514.3}

Thoughts?

So, what is the principle you are hearing? What are we to be doing? Conserving and protecting God's creatures?

- Then what about culling deer populations so they don't over populate and thus starve to death? Satanic cruelty, or Godly mercy?
- What about using mice and rats in lab experiments to develop treatments for disease? Satanic cruelty, or Godly mercy?
- What about industrial farms raising animals in cages to slaughter for furs or food? Satanic cruelty or Godly mercy?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "The issue of the..."

What are the Bible principles?

- Love others more than self
- Sacrifice self to help others
- Seek to protect not exploit
- Build up not tear down
- Truthfulness
- Loyalty
- Freedom

How do these principles relate to the environment?

- Do we dump toxic waste unsafely or illegally to make more money?

WEDNESDAY

Read Proverbs 27:20 at the top – what do you understand this to mean?

Read second paragraph, “In other words...” thoughts?

In the movie matrix – Mr. Smith said to Morpheus that humans were a virus, taking and not giving anything, and that humans were destroying the planet, a disease that needed to be cured. What do you think?

Now sin has marred God's perfect work, yet that handwriting remains. Even now all created things declare the glory of His excellence. **There is nothing, save the selfish heart of man, that lives unto itself.** No bird that cleaves the air, no animal that moves upon the ground, but ministers to some other life. There is no leaf of the forest, or lowly blade of grass, but has its ministry. Every tree and shrub and leaf pours forth that element of life without which neither man nor animal could live; and man and animal, in turn, minister to the life of tree and shrub and leaf. The flowers breathe fragrance and unfold

their beauty in blessing to the world. The sun sheds its light to gladden a thousand worlds. The ocean, itself the source of all our springs and fountains, receives the streams from every land, but takes to give. The mists ascending from its bosom fall in showers to water the earth, that it may bring forth and bud. {DA 20.2}

Thoughts? Are humans diseased? Yes, and what is the cure? Jesus Christ – how?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

Did Sabbath keeping prevent the Jews from being greedy and wanting more and more?

THURSDAY

Read top section, “And God said...”

Question in the lesson, “How complete was humanity’s control over the earth to be?”

Thoughts?

- What might it have been like before sin?
- Did Adam have control over inanimate nature?
- Could he by thought affect weather?
- In the book of Job, do we have any evidence that Satan can affect weather?
- Might Adam had that control before turning it over to Satan?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

Glimpses of Our God Lesson 9 1Q 2012

The Bible and History

Thoughts about the Title?

SABBATH

Read first three paragraphs, “Is human history...”

Great point that just because God works through history doesn't mean He causes all that happens.

Is there a difference to you whether God causes something, or whether He allows something?

- If a person has kidney failure and refuses dialysis, and you know they will die, but you respect their choice and allow them to die, even though you have a dialysis machine that you could use to keep them alive, is the same thing as you taking a gun and shooting them?
- If God allows the wicked to die as a result of sin, is that the same as God executing them?
- Does it make a difference to differentiate what God allows versus what God actually does?

Do Bible writers always make this distinction clear?

Here are examples of God allowing things to happen, but the Bible sometimes makes it sound like God is causing it:

- Hardening Pharaoh's heart
- Saul's death

And God's wrath is when He allows us to reap the results of our choice to reject Him, but too many theologians have also made it sound like God's wrath is something He inflicts.

Have you ever struggled with what has happened in history, including the history of your life?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “The circular...” thoughts?

What do you think the lesson is alluding to in this paragraph?

Ancient cultures such as Incan, Mayan, Hopi, and other Native American Tribes, as well as the Babylonians, Ancient Greeks, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism believe in a wheel of time, that regards time as cyclic and over great periods of time life is relived with repeating ages that happen to every being in the Universe.

The Bible teaches a linear time line.

What is the significance to realize life is linear?

- Choices today change the course of our lives
 - Different choices result in different lives/outcomes
 - Marry a different person, have different children
 - Go to different school have different friends, maybe different career, maybe different spouse
 - Be late to work on September 11, 2001...
- No redo’s
- History cannot change – so, in God’s plan what does change? Our hearts/minds/characters
- What did Adam’s choice do to human history?
- What course was humanity on as God created them?
- What course after Adam sinned?
- God also intervened, introducing a new element, to alter the natural course of history that Adam’s choice set in motion. What did God do?
- Does that give us a new history?

Turn to THURSDAY's lesson, read third paragraph, "The whole doctrine..."

Thoughts?

Does God cancel our history? Does He rewrite history? Does He erase our history and rewrite in the record books of heaven his history? Do we all suddenly remember being born in Bethlehem in a manger?

Do you find this expressed in the most clear and effective way?

Why do you think they take the tack of changing our history?

We have been hammering this theme, but it is at the root of all these misconceptions – if you accept that God's law is imposed, and therefore the imposer of law in order to be just, must impose punishment for breaking the law. Then, the just imposer of punishment, must have an accurate record, or history of your crimes/sins, so that proper punishment can be carried out. Justice, in this system requires all crimes/sins to be punished, so if any unpaid crime remains God would have to inflict punishment, so we must have the records changed to show our crimes erased, less we still be punished.

But all this fantasy arises because of accepting Imperial Rome's version of law. Once we realize God's laws are the laws He built His universe to run upon, like the laws of health, then we realizes the records don't get erased but stand, what changes is the heart/mind/character of the sinner, who has sinfulness erased out of the heart. But the recorded history of the universe will stand.

The history of our lives will stand. And it is this history that makes what God did so much more powerful in healing and transforming us.

The lesson points out that our lives run in a line, or are linear. Is God's existence linear? In other words, is God confined

within the constraints of time, does He live within the flow of time, or is God outside the bounds of time?

Any inspiration to give insight into this?

- “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.” Rev 1:8
- I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. Rev 21:6
- I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Rev 22:13

One of the founders of our church saw it this way:

I Am means an eternal presence; the past, present, and future are alike to God. He sees the most remote events of past history, and the far distant future with as clear a vision as we do those things that are transpiring daily. We know not what is before us, and if we did, it would not contribute to our eternal welfare. God gives us an opportunity to exercise faith and trust in the great I AM (Lt 119, 1895). {1BC 1099.5}

What is the significance of this?

- What would it mean if God were constrained to a linear existence?
 - Would He then have some power which limited Him in some way?
 - Would He truly be master of everything or would time be over Him?
 - Would He be able to tell the future accurately?
 - Would He be able to apply Christ’s achievements to those who lived before Christ?
- If God is outside time, what would this mean?

- That He created time and is outside of and over the flow of time
- He can control time, thus stop the sun in its orbit to lengthen the day for Joshua, or slow time down or speed time up, or create time dilation fields in which time moves faster in one place than another. Thus, 6000 years may pass on earth, while 6 days pass in heaven, so God is not slow in keeping His promises.
- We recognize more of the sacrifice Christ made when He assumed humanity, He stepped into time and lives a linear existence
- He can take all Christ achieved and apply it to all who trust Him no matter where in time.
- He can predict accurately the decisions of all people because he sees them happening or does God not know the choices and is only a good calculator ---

Back to SUNDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “We are talking...” thoughts?

Does God know only the “possible” choices humans can and will make, or the actual choices they will make?

In other words does God know all the possible choices of all persons of all time and all the possible consequences, but doesn't know exactly which choices will be made until the person makes them, or does He know the actual choices before they are made?

I believe this view limits God to a linear existence, but with an infinite brain and thus He is a great cosmic calculator, but is constrained within the flow of time.

If we believe God is outside the flow of time then it makes sense He can observe the freewill decisions of beings in what is our future and know how events will unfold.

What evidence do we have either way?

- The number of ark's to build – how did He know only 8 would get on? Or was the preaching of Noah a fraud?
- The prediction of what choosing to have kings would do to the people of Israel
- The prophecies of Daniel
- Calling Cyrus by name 150 years before Cyrus was born to be the ruler to let Israel go
- Malachi prophecy of John the Baptist being the forerunner of Christ

MONDAY

Read second and third paragraph, “The reader...” thoughts?

First question – do we have evidence from history that history and the Bible harmonize? Is there archeological evidence that the Bible is reliable?

- Dead Sea scrolls
 - The **Dead Sea Scrolls** are perhaps the greatest archaeological find of our time. Produced by Jewish monastic Essenes, the scrolls number about 800; 200 of which are of biblical material. In 1947, shepherds discovered them quite by accident in caves above the Wadi Qumran Valley, northwest of the Dead Sea. A few of the scholars and archaeologists who contributed to their discovery and verification include E. L. Sukenik, G. Lankester Harding, Roland G. de Vaux, Yigael Yadin and William F. Albright.
 - The Dead Sea Scrolls contain at least fragments of every book in the Old Testament except the book of Esther. More than ten scrolls were beautifully preserved intact including two copies of Isaiah. [1](#) Professor Millar Burrows of Yale University assigns these copies to the first century BC. Johns Hopkins University Professor William F. Albright places

them more conservatively in the second century BC.²

- These copies of Isaiah, written 1,000 years earlier than the previously oldest known copies have proven to be "**word for word identical** with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling. [emphasis mine] " ³

1. Shanks, Hershel, The Dead Sea Scrolls After Forty Years Biblical Archaeology Society 1990. P 9.
2. Bruce, F.F., The Books and The Parchments' Fleming H. Revell Co. 1984 p. 105.
3. Archer, Gleason L., Jr., A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, Moody Press, Chicago, IL Rev. 1974, p. 25

Do the decisions of humans have a role to play in the shaping of history?

- Or is God forcing people to make decisions the way He wants?
- Or is God making decisions and changing people's memories about what happened?

How do you balance God's foreknowledge, sovereignty and human free will choices in the forging of history?

Could Jonah give us an example?

Have you ever wondered why God called Jonah to be His messenger to Nineveh? Jonah hated the Ninevites. He didn't want to go, in fact ran away when God told him to go.

Could all of this been known to God before God made His choice, and God incorporated his knowledge of Jonah's choices into why He chose Jonah?

- Do you ever do this? Do you ever anticipate a person's choices and incorporate your belief about what they will do into a choice or action you are going to take? Does

your anticipation of their choice, and utilizing that information in your choice, take away their free choice?

If we assume God knows how a person will choose, then it could very well be like this:

- God looks down upon Nineveh and sees how selfishness is running out of control.
- God loves these people and wants to turn them around, yet they are in darkness about God and worship a pagan God, Dagon – the God of the fish.
- God wants to send a message of salvation, a message to repent – who does God choose? To whom will the people of Nineveh listen?
- God looks at Jonah, looks at how Jonah will respond, sees his refusal to go and his running to the sea and God says – That is exactly who I need! (And remember Jonah is already a prophet, who has dedicated Himself to God to be God’s man, used as a soldier in God’s cause).
- So God calls Jonah – and Jonah freely chooses to flee to the sea.
- God uses His power to bring a great storm, which causes Jonah to be thrown into the sea
- God uses His power to direct a great fish to swallow Jonah, and swim to the shore near Nineveh and vomit Jonah up
- Perhaps, some persons from Nineveh were nearby, and what would they have seen? A giant fish coughing up Jonah, who then goes to the city and tells the people who worship the fish God to repent – and they do.

In this story, does God violate anyone’s free will? Does He use His knowledge to orchestrate events to bring about healing and His will, all within the bounds of free will? Did His knowledge of future events restrict the liberty of Jonah?

Do our choices then play a role in the shaping of history?

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “Of course...” This is well said, “love that is forced cannot be love.”

So, understanding this, can God, at anytime say, “If you don’t respond to my love, by loving surrender to me, I will be forced by holiness and justice to kill you?”

Do you see the fundamental problem with the idea that God must inflict suffering, punishment and death upon those who don’t surrender to Him? It destroys love and incites rebellion.

The lesson recounts the prophecies of Daniel, the rise and falls of kingdoms and then, in paragraph four states, “The amazing...” thoughts?

How did He know it way in advance? In advance of who? In advance of us, but not in advance of Himself – He lives outside the flow of time and thus He has already observed/experienced the victory over sin, which is yet in our future.

How does God interact with human free will to bring about decisions for His cause?

Read Daniel 10:12-14, 20,21

¹² Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.”

²⁰ So he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; ²¹ but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.

What do you understand is going on in this section?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “No matter...” thoughts?

What are those two antagonistic principles?

How are they revealed through history?

How are they revealed today, in our community, in our lives?

Read paragraphs 4-6, “Satanic agencies...” thoughts

Do you agree with this description? What do you find noteworthy?

First, who killed Christ at the Cross?

What did the Father do to Christ at the Cross?

What do we learn from this regarding the two antagonistic principles?

What do you make of the idea that angels still didn’t comprehend all that was involved – what more was to be revealed regarding the two antagonistic principles?

- That God’s principles applied to the lives of sinners, transforms and heals
 - Paul changed from wanting to stone, to wanting to give his life for others

- Rev 12:11 they do not love life so much as to shrink from death
- That Satan's principles unrestrained, destroy everything

Any other thought on what is more to be revealed?

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, "Our sins have been..." thoughts?

What do you hear? What does this mean?

How did Jesus become our sin bearer?

He who could have doomed His enemies to death bore with their cruelty. His love for His Father, and His pledge, made from the foundation of the world, **to become the Sin Bearer**, led Him to endure uncomplainingly the coarse treatment of those He came to save. **It was a part of His mission to bear, in His humanity, all the taunts and abuse that men could heap upon Him. The only hope of humanity was in this submission of Christ to all that He could endure from the hands and hearts of men.** {DA 700.5}

Is this what it means to bear our sins?

Could it mean simply that he endured what our sinfulness brought with it and overcame restoring mankind to its perfect original ideal?

In quoting the prophecy of the rejected stone, Christ referred to an actual occurrence in the history of Israel. The incident was connected with the building of the first temple. While it had a special application at the time of Christ's first advent, and should have appealed with special force to the Jews, it has also a lesson for us. When the temple of Solomon

was erected, the immense stones for the walls and the foundation were entirely prepared at the quarry; after they were brought to the place of building, not an instrument was to be used upon them; the workmen had only to place them in position. For use in the foundation, one stone of unusual size and peculiar shape had been brought; but the workmen could find no place for it, and would not accept it. It was an annoyance to them as it lay unused in their way. Long it remained a rejected stone. But when the builders came to the laying of the corner, they searched for a long time to find a stone of sufficient size and strength, and of the proper shape, to take that particular place, and **bear the great weight which would rest upon it.** Should they make an unwise choice for this important place, the safety of the entire building would be endangered. They must find a stone capable of resisting the influence of the sun, of frost, and of tempest. Several stones had at different times been chosen, but under the pressure of immense weights they had crumbled to pieces. **Others could not bear** the test of the sudden atmospheric changes. But at last attention was called to the stone so long rejected. It had been exposed to the air, to sun and storm, without revealing the slightest crack. The builders examined this stone. It had borne every test but one. **If it could bear the test of severe pressure, they decided to accept it for the cornerstone.** The trial was made. The stone was accepted, brought to its assigned position, and found to be an exact fit. In prophetic vision, Isaiah was shown that this stone was a symbol of Christ. He says: {DA 597.5}

"Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." Carried down in prophetic vision to the first advent, the prophet is shown that **Christ is to**

bear trials and tests of which the treatment of the chief cornerstone in the temple of Solomon was symbolic. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Isa. 8:13-15; 28:16. {DA 598.1}

What was the purpose of these tests and trials which Christ was to bear? Why was He "bearing" it? Was it for the purpose of healing and transforming mankind back into God's original ideal? And is this depicted in the Biblical metaphor of building the Temple in heaven?

Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the **Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD.** ¹³ **It is he who will build the temple of the LORD,** and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' Zechariah 6:12,13.

He bore our iniquity, sinfulness, selfishness, and bore up under the external infliction of what sinful does to another, and overcame the internal temptation to act in self interest that comes our fallen humanity, in order to heal and restore humanity back into unity with God!

Is there any way the idea of Christ bearing our sins can be presented that misrepresents what Jesus did and also misrepresents God's character?

How might that be?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 2

A reminder of what resources are available at
comeandreason.com

- Leslie Cecere, of Port St. Lucie, FL, a gourmet cook, provides us with amazing, delicious, brain health vegan recipes. If you haven't tried them, check it out under the Reasonable Recipe Section
- Our weekly lesson study with recording and notes, and soon to be video and weekly live webcasting
- Multiple lectures on a wide range of topics,
 - Recovering from sexual abuse,
 - The Mind God's design, overcoming guilt,
 - Healing a Broken Heart and many more.
 - All free for download and sharing
- Hundreds of blogs on a wide range of topics
- Radio and TV shows, with, in the near future new shows coming as we partner with Heartwise Ministries for a weekly TV program
- We invite you to take advantage of all these free resources

Glimpses of Our God Lesson 10 1Q 2012

The Promise of Prayer

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, quote from Steps to Christ, "Our heavenly Father waits..." thoughts?

What is God's attitude toward hearing our prayers?

What is prayer?

Dictionary definition:

a (1) : an address (as a petition) to God or a god in word or thought <said a *prayer* for the success of the voyage> (2) : a set order of words used in praying

b : an earnest request or wish

Thoughts?

Do you have a definition of your own?

Here is how one of the founders of our church described prayer:

Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, partaking of Him, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. **Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally.** Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him. {COL 129.3}

What do you think of the definition of prayer as conversation with a friend?

In order to have such an interaction what would be necessary? Can you have conversation as with a friend, with a stranger? Would it be necessary to get to know a person before we converse with them like a friend?

When we get to know a person, do we suddenly make an intentional choice to talk differently to them, or as we get to know them do we find our conversation becomes more open, intimate and interactive?

What happens in a relationship if you do all the talking but never stop to let the other respond?

I have many patients who pray daily, but they never stop to listen to God.

How do we listen to God?

- Reading His Word
- Meditating upon nature
- Listening to His Spirit, the still small voice
- Contemplating history, recent events, circumstances of life and God's character and principles
- Remaining open to truth
- Studying the Word with others

What do you find most helpful in getting to know God?

SUNDAY

The title is "The Power of Prayer"

During a recent US Presidential race, the candidates were in a debate and a reporter asked one if he believed in the power of prayer. His answer was, "No, but I pray every day."

Think about this answer – What was the point of this answer? To try and not offend anyone – to win the agnostics by saying he didn't believe in prayer, so don't believe in God, and to win those who do by saying, nevertheless, I pray.

If you were asked, do you believe in the power of prayer, what would you have said?

Does it depend upon to whom one is praying?

What is the power of prayer?

Read first and second paragraphs, “One day...” thoughts?

This is well said, - one of the powers, perhaps the primary power, prayer has is on the one praying. Prayer changes the person who prays. So, is it important to be sure to whom we are praying?

Do all Christians pray to the same God?

When Jesus said, “they will come to me in the last day and say, Lord Lord...” to whom is He referring? Is He referring to agnostics and atheists? No, He is referring to people who are claiming to be praying to Him, these are professed Christians, but He never knew them.

How can this be? How can a person pray to Jesus and yet not be a Christian?

In rejecting the truth, men reject its Author. **In trampling upon the law of God**, they deny the authority of the Law-giver. It is as easy to **make an idol of false doctrines and theories** as to fashion an idol of wood or stone. **By misrepresenting the attributes of God**, Satan leads men to **conceive of Him in a false character**. With many, **a philosophical idol is enthroned in the place of Jehovah; while the living God, as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, and in the works of creation, is worshiped by but few**. Thousands deify nature while they deny the God of nature. Though in a different form, **idolatry exists in the Christian world today** as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. The god of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists--the god of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, **even of some theological institutions--is little better than Baal**, the sun-god of Phoenicia. {GC 583.1}

Thoughts?

Do you believe it is possible to hold to false ideas about God, while using the right name for God, thus be worshipping a false god?

Notice, she states that it is by trampling upon God's law that one misrepresents God's character and creates a false picture of God.

What do you understand God's law to be?

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.** Romans 13:10
- The **entire law** is summed up in a single command: "**Love** your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:14
- If you really keep the **royal law** found in Scripture, "**Love** your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. James 2:8
- Jesus replied: "**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: '**Love** your neighbor as yourself.' **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**" Matt 22:37-40
- The **law** of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7
- Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the **outworking of a principle** at war with **the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.** GC 493
 - An outworking of a principle, not a specific behavior!
- **The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man.** "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: "Thy law is the truth"; "all thy commandments are righteousness" (Ps. 119:142, 172). And the apostle Paul declares: "The law is holy, and the

commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). **Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author.** {Reflecting Christ 46.5}

- Why is the law unchangeable?
- Because life is constructed to operate upon it
- Because it is not imposed, but an expression of the Creator
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth **the great principle which is the law of life for the universe.** All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.** DA 21

What is God's law? The law of love, which is the template upon which God built His universe. How has this law been changed in the minds of men?

When Constantine converted Christianity changed its idea of God's law from the principle He built life to operate upon, to the Roman concept of law, a set of rules put upon people to govern their behavior and test their obedience. And just as EGW states above, when this change in God's law was accepted, the view of God's character was changed from a being of love, to a universal emperor who must inflict punishment for disobedience.

It was stated that if we change God's law, that we change who we worship and end up worshipping a false god like Baal.

Could modern Christianity, do exactly what Jesus predicted, exactly what the GC predicted and be infected with a distortion of God's law, which changes the character of God in such a way that it becomes Baal worship?

Who was Baal?

Baal was the son of El (i.e. El-ohim or El-Shaddai). He was the god of weather. Often called, 'Almighty' and "Lord of the Earth." Baal was the god who brought rain, thunder, lightening, who fertilized the earth, controlled the sun and brought the harvest. Baal fought the great serpent leviathan as well as battled against Mot, the god of death. And most amazing of all, it was taught that Baal died in his battle with Mot and was resurrected from the dead to bring life to earth. ⁱ

So what was the problem with worshipping a god who was the "husband and protector of Israel," the son of El, who controlled the weather, who brought rain, sunshine, and fertility, who blessed with full harvest, who warred against the great serpent and death, who died and was resurrected to bring life to the earth? What was wrong with this god? What made Baal worship false?

Here is what one Christian writer, and a founder of our church, identifies as the central distortion in Baal worship:

"Determined to keep the people in deception, the priests of Baal continue to offer sacrifices to their gods and to call upon them night and day to refresh the earth. **With costly offerings the priests attempt to appease the anger of their gods;**"
PK 124.2.

And the Bible confirms this:

"So the prophets prayed louder and cut themselves with knives and daggers, *according to their custom*, until blood flowed." 1 Kings 18:28 ¹

So what is Baal like? A god who must be appeased!

If you have a law, which is the law of love, the law upon which life is built, and that law gets broken what is the problem?

- Life cannot continue in such a state, breaking the law results in death.

Then what is needed needed?

- Restoration, recreation, renewal, rewriting the law in the heart and mind, putting the person back into harmony with the law of live – which is exactly what Jesus came to do.

If you have a law that is like Rome, imposed upon subjects to control behavior and test obedience, if this law is broken what is the problem?

- The ruling authority is offended, sovereignty is questioned

What is needed?

- Punishment, legal payment, appeasement of the ruling authority

What did Satan attempt to do in regard to how we understand the sacrifice of Christ? Here is what one of the founders of our church states:

¹ Some may attempt to argue that what made Baal worship false was its gross and hedonistic practices. We assert that all such degradation is the outgrowth of worshipping a god who must be appeased, assuaged or propitiated. In the Dark Ages these ugly practices of worshipping such a god were evidenced in the inquisition and burning people at the stake. The gross forms of their worship were the fruit of the real problem, which was accepting a god who had to be paid by sacrifice to grant blessings, a god who would inflict punishment if sacrifices were not brought. And Revelation tells us that those who hold to this view of God will again torture and kill in the name of their god.

- While God has desired to teach men that **from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself**, the **archenemy** of mankind has **endeavored to represent God** as one who delights in their destruction. Thus the **sacrifices and the ordinances designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God.** {PK 685.2}

Does it make a difference if we pray to Jesus or if we pray to Baal?

What if we pray to Baal but call him Jesus?

Does it make a difference if we pray to a God who loved us so much that He gave His life to heal us and save us from our terminal condition, or if we pray to a God who is angry and wrathful and sent His Son, and executed His Son in our place, but if we don't accept that propitiation of blood, then God will kill us?

Are we changed by how we conceive of God?

What is the final message of mercy to lighten the world? The truth about God's character of love! COL 415.

Read third paragraph, "As the person wrote..." thoughts?

Why ask God for something if He already knows we need it?

Why did God take the children of Israel out of Egypt to a dead end at the Red Sea where they could be trapped by Pharaoh's army?

To give them an opportunity to put their trust in Him, so that He could demonstrate His ability to deliver them from everything, even things which appear humanly impossible.

So, why do we pray if God already knows?

Why do you talk with your spouse about stuff your spouse already knows?

If your children win a ball game, and you were watching, on the way home do the kids replay the game with you. “Hey did you see me catch that fly ball? When I stole second I bet you thought they were going to get me didn’t you?” Why do you have such a conversation if you already saw it happen?

Does it do something for the relationship? Do we draw closer to each other by sharing the experience this way? Is there joy that comes when we rejoice together, or bonding that comes when we cry together?

Does God want us to pray (talk with Him) because He wants to share life with us? He wants to bond with us, to have unity with us? Is this why we come to Him even when He already knows?

What about the question of whether our prayers will change what God will do? Or perhaps, if we pray will God help us do something He has explicitly told us not to do or that He doesn’t want us to do?

Maybe – what food did God provide for the children of Israel in the desert? Manna, what did they beg for? Fleshpots of Egypt, what did God want them to eat? Who brought the quail? Why did God bring the quail?

Did God want them to have kings? Did He warn them specifically against it? Who chose their first two kings? God did. Why did God choose their first two kings?

Does this give us pause as we put our requests before God? How are we to bring our requests before God? What about making known our hearts desires, but also saying, “But God, I

know you know what is best, if this will be harmful, if this is outside your plan, then don't grant my request, even though I really really want it." "Oh, and if you don't grant it can you give me a clue to understand so I can be at peace?"

What about such a prayer?

Read last paragraph, "No question..." thoughts?

How does prayer work?

- How does conversation work?
- How do relationships work?
- Is this not how prayer works?
- Is prayer not a vehicle of communication within a relationship and it works based on the quality of the relationship – thus the prayer of a righteous man avails much – why?
 - Because the righteous man has a close relationship with God and knows God, which will, 1) affect the quality of the prayer and 2) have a greater resonance with God's methods, principles, cause, goals, purposes and thus God rejoices in such prayers.
 - The prayers of the selfish man, limit God's actions, like a child who begs their parent to give them something the parent knows will harm the child – the parent loves the child, but such a request limits what the parent can do.

If we understand something do we lose faith? Is it that the more ignorant we are the more faith we have, but the more knowledge and experience of God we have the less our faith?

Turn to TUESDAY's lesson – read last paragraph, "To a great degree..." thoughts?

What do you think about this idea? Because we cant see God and cant see our prayers extend to heaven then we have faith? Does that mean when Christ returns and we get to see Him

face to face, and have conversation with Him face to face we will say, “Jesus before you came and I couldn’t see you or hear you, I had great faith, but now that I can see you and hear you I don’t have faith any more.”?

Is our faith based on ignorance and lack of understanding or is it just the opposite, the more understanding and evidence the stronger our faith?

MONDAY

The lesson points out that Jesus needed prayer – why?

What does it tell us about Jesus that He needed prayer?

What does it tell us about how Jesus accomplished what He did on earth?

Upon whose power did He rely to overcome temptation?

Was Jesus victorious on earth by the exercise of His own inherent divine power, or by exercising His human brain in a trust relationship with His Father?

Is there a lesson for us?

WEDNESDAY

Read bottom two paragraphs, “Notice, however...” thoughts?

What do you hear? What is it the lesson is trying to say?

Is it true that if we don’t confess we aren’t forgiven, or is it more clear to say if we don’t confess we don’t experience forgiveness?

Does God wait until we confess before He forgives? Or does He forgive first and then we confess and repent in response to His forgiveness?

What evidence from Scripture?

- While we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Rom 5:8) – which came first God’s forgiving love or our repentance
- The kindness of God leads us to repentance (Rom 2:4)
- Those who crucified Christ, Christ forgave, did they ever confess or repent?
- Do heathen gods forgive first or wait until the worshipper confesses with offerings to propitiate the wrath of the offended god and then forgive
- If we say God doesn’t forgive until we confess are we making God out to be like Baal?
- Is asking for forgiveness and repenting from sin the same?
- Pagans ask for forgiveness, do they necessarily repent?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Someone sits in...” thoughts?

What is wrong with this picture or process?

How does this type of prayer enter religion?

How about someone praying for legal pardon for their sins while they continue to live a sinful life?

Read third paragraph, “If we regard...” thoughts?

What does it mean that “the Lord will not hear us”?

Does it mean He doesn’t actually know what we prayed? Or does it mean when we regard iniquity in our hearts we really don’t want God in our lives or His plan to be actualized in our lives? Thus God reads our hearts intentions and not our words, so He doesn’t listen to what we say, but listens to what our hearts cling to or genuinely choose?

A man who beats his wife and while hitting her tells his wife he only does it because he loves her, does she hear his love? Why not is she deaf? What does she hear? He doesn't love her for his behavior overrules his words.

What this passage means if we cling to known sin, we are saying we don't want freedom from it, no matter what our words say, and God listens to our hearts intents, not our words.

What do you hear in this sentence, "Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have to a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance."

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-4

ⁱ Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary (3rd ed.)* (108). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press. Carthage, a history, Serge Lancel, p194
 Miller, Patrick (2000), *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays*, Continuum International Publishing Group, p. 32. [ISBN 184127142X](#)
 Moscati, Sabatino (2001). *The Phoenicians*, Tauris, p. 132. [ISBN 1850435332](#)
 Walbank, Frank William (1979). *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Volume 2, Clarendon Press, p. 47
Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary (1976) [ISBN 0-310-23560-X](#).
 In 1899, the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article *Baal* by W. Robertson Smith and George F. Moore states:

Glimpses of Our God Lesson 12 1Q 2012

Love Stories

SABBATH

Read memory text:

The LORD has appeared of old to me, *saying*: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. Jer 31:3

Thoughts about this passage? What do you hear?

Anyone want to share how in their life they have experienced God draw them with lovingkindness?

- God’s acceptance of me after I have fallen, made bad decisions, “sinned” yet, He gently picks me up, bandages my emotional wounds and let’s me know He loves me. I have never experienced God say, “I told you so” or rub my nose in my mistakes – have you?
- Through friends and people who know God and who know my mistakes and yet they still love me and don’t condemn me.
 - One of ways people are often drawn away from the church, is when they have made a mistake, when they have violated their own morals, values, principles, is to be “accepted” by those who don’t believe in God and don’t hold those values, while they feel judged and fear condemnation from people in the church!
- Through my wife, Christie, who shows me God’s love all the time!
- Through numerous events where God has shown His personal interest in my life

Do you hear anything in this passage about how love works?
Does this passage give any insight into what method love uses?

How does God reach us? With lovingkindness! What does that look like?

It reminds me of Romans 2:4 “The kindness of God leads us to repentance.”

Do you believe this is true? Is love always kind? Or is love ever unkind?

Consider discipline –

- If a parent loves their child, will the parent discipline or not discipline?
- Is discipline loving or unloving, kind or unkind?
- Does discipline take away freedom, or assist the child in gaining freedom? How?

So, if love always seeks to draw with loving kindness, can we use this fact as a measuring stick to test certain doctrines or theories taught about God?

Does love use power to inflict harm for the purpose of causing torture, with no hope of recovery?

- A doctor will reduce a dislocated hip, which is quite painful, is the doctor trying to inflict pain?
- Will a doctor, get a whip and beat a terminal patient to death who refuses treatment?
- A loving parent may discipline a child who is disobedient, and the discipline may be painful for the child (and parent)
- But will a loving parent torture and execute a disobedient child?

Does the fact God always acts with lovingkindness rule out certain interpretations of scripture?

Then how do we understand this passage:

And that servant, who knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*; ⁴⁸but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more. Luke 12:47,48

Is this passage suggesting God is using power to inflict torture upon unrepentant sinners at the end of time to punish them for sin?

Does the passage say the servants were killed? Were servants valuable? Did owners of slaves generally kill their slaves who disobeyed?

If we interpret this passage as infliction of punishment to destroy, what does it do to our understanding of God's character of love?

If a man says to a woman, "with lovingkindness have I drawn you" I have pursued you with patience, kindness and love, but if you don't love me, if you don't do as I say, I will beat you until you die." What happens in the heart of the woman?

Can God's kindness lead us to repentance, if He is also saying to us, "if you don't love me I will torture and kill you?"

Why do some insist God is a torturer?

Perhaps it is because of misunderstanding of the divine character, Read first paragraph, "Love, is perhaps..."

Thoughts? What do you think about the way this is stated, "Love, is perhaps, the most readily recalled attribute of God?"

I am not an English professor, so some of you help me out. Is saying “God is love,” the same as saying “love is an attribute of God?”

To me, saying love is an attribute, diminishes God’s character from love, to an admixture of various attributes, “loving” being one attribute among many.

I think this is a fundamental mistake of those who believe God will torture His children in the end. Could it be they see God’s character as something other than love, rather than seeing all aspects of His being, all His “attributes” as expressions of His character of love?

I have heard it expressed like this, “God is not only loving, He is also just.”

Think of this statement, what it means, and how severely it undermines God’s character?

- You and I can be loving, but are we love?
- To change “God is love,” to “God is loving” is an infinite diminishment of God’s character, and then to split His character and say “He is not only loving, He is also just,” diminishes Him further.

Why? Because love is always just, or another way to say it is, justice is an expression of love.

What is Biblical Justice? It is always an expression of selfless love!

- ▶ “Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy.” (Psalm 82:3)
- ▶ “Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil and learn to do right. See that justice is done---help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows.” (Isaiah 1:16-17 – GN)

- ▶ “The LORD is waiting to be kind to you. He rises to have compassion on you. The LORD is a God of justice.”
(Isaiah 30:18 – God’s Word)
- ▶ “This is what the LORD says to the dynasty of David:
‘Give justice each morning to the people you judge! Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors.’” (Jeremiah 21:12 – NLT)
 - ▶ What do you hear? Is justice punishing the oppressors, or delivering the oppressed?
 - ▶ The Jewish word for Justice is Tsedaka, and means charity, the giving of your resources, time, energy to help someone else, without expecting something in return.
 - ▶ So Biblical Justice is *delivering the oppressed NOT punishing the oppressor!*
 - ▶ Where did the idea originate that Justice is punishing the oppressor rather than delivering the oppressed?
 - ▶ Acceptance of Imperial Rome’s change to God’s law
 - ▶ If God’s law is the law upon which life is built, when someone breaks that law, the just or right action to take is to heal them, save them, deliver them.
 - ▶ If we saw a suicidal person jump off a building, it would not be right to seek to punish, them, it would be right to seek to save them.
 - ▶ if we saw a suicidal person hang themselves, i.e. breaking the law of respiration, what would the “just” or “right” action be? Would it be “right” or “just” to punish them or to save them if we could?
 - ▶ But if we accept Imperial Rome’s version of God’s law, as an imposed law, then when the law gets broken we must inflict punishment. In

this view God is no longer love, but something else, in the image Satan has cast of a god who is punishing, powers over, an authoritarian being.

Thoughts?

SUNDAY

Describes the first human love relationship – Adam and Eve, who were made in the image of God, and told to be fruitful and multiply.

God designed us to, not only experience emotional love, but physical union within that love relationship.

Why? What does it say about God that He created us this way?

God wants us to experience love, unity, intimacy, trust, peace, joy, pleasure, happiness, all of which is best experienced in relationship.

Why does He want us to experience these things? Because God is love and we are made in His image and when we live in harmony with His methods it is designed to be joyous, pleasurable, fulfilling, rewarding, happy.

How does Satan attack God's design for pleasure?

God designs us to experience pleasure as a *result* of living in harmony with His methods, design, and natural law.

- If we exercise regularly, we naturally experience endorphins, enkephalins, elevations in dopamine all of which cause elevations in mood
- If we help another person we naturally experience calming of fear circuits and activation of ACC with subsequent increase joy, pleasure, and happiness.

- If we love another person, genuinely we experience dopamine and oxytocin increase, calming of amygdala and peace, joy and pleasure
- Sex, within a healthy selfless marriage, not only brings the physical pleasure, but results in bonding, brain changes with increase oxytocin and dopamine which results in abiding trust, peace, joy, contentment and eradication of anxiety and fear.

How does Satan attack God's design for pleasure?

- By getting people to seek to simulate the pleasure circuits of the brain directly, not as a result of right doing, or a consequence of healthy action.
- Drugs cause an artificial increase in dopamine, without exercise, which damages the pleasure centers of the brain, increases activity in the fear circuits, impairs development of prefrontal cortex, causing us to be more selfish and less able to think rationally.
- Sex, outside a healthy marriage relationship, brings momentary pleasure, but also increased anxiety, worry, fear of rejection, guilt.
- Dominating another person, revenge seeking, can give a momentary sense of gratification and pleasure, but with subsequent fear, worry of retaliation, guilt, fear of getting found out etc.
- Satan's methods bring momentary pleasure, but activation of fear circuits, worsen anxiety, elevate inflammatory cascades, damage body, and ruin character as we become more and more self protective and self focused.

Read the fourth paragraph, "In verse 24..." thoughts?

Question, what happens when a spouse marries, but doesn't leave mother and father, usually emotionally, and continues to put the desires, wishes, feelings, needs, and expectations of the parents ahead of the spouse?

Do healthy relationships, with parents or spouse, result if this occurs?

Why do some people do this? Fear, not love, it is fear of rejection, fear of disappointing someone, fear of hurting someone's feelings, fear of abandonment etc., that motivates such action, not love.

Read bottom green section, "Romantic love..."

What can we do to enhance the likelihood of having healthy, Godly relationships?

1. Healthy relationships require healthy people, the number one action you can take is to, through God's grace, become the healthiest person you can be.
2. Honesty, communicate openly, truthfully in love.
 - a. If wife cooks a meal and you really don't like it, what do you do when she asks? Thank her, love her for her energy to provide, but tell her that that particular dish doesn't stimulate your taste buds in enjoyable ways.
 - b. If she asks you if you like her hair, or a dress, etc. If you don't, tell her. She might be disappointed in the moment, but if you are lovingly honest, when you do tell her she looks great, or you like you hair she will know you mean it.
 - i. Further, if you always say yes, avoid telling her things you don't like, she will lose respect for you and your ideas become meaningless.
 - ii. If you act in fear of your spouse's responses, then you are not acting in love.
3. Affirm each other regularly, purposely find aspects of each other that you genuinely appreciate and tell each other, on a daily basis.
4. Pray and study God's word together
5. Have joint mission, projects, endeavors, hobbies, recreation, share life together.

6. Respect the freedom of the other. If you disagree with your spouse on any aspect of life, diet, TV, church attendance, etc. lovingly share your concerns, but leave them free to make up their own mind. If you restrict liberty, love will be destroyed.
7. Work through problems together, don't try and protect the other by holding back on things that trouble you. All relationships have problems, what defines a relationship is how those problems are handled. If needed get professional counseling.
8. Don't try and fix your spouse, love them, share with them your understanding, ideas, perspectives, including your loving insights about them, but always leave them free to change themselves.

MONDAY

The lesson describes various Biblical romances, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, and asks what mistakes were made that caused problems in these relationships?

What mistakes were made?

- Lying
- Bringing other women into the bedroom
- Inequality
- Lack of trust in God
- Others?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Genesis shows..." thoughts?

Would you agree that God's design for human romance is one man and one woman in a marriage relationship, in which children are born? Wasn't the original instruction to be fruitful and multiply? So wasn't it God's design, not only to experience romantic love, but the production of offspring?

How has sin damaged God's original design?

- Polygamy
- Homosexuality
- Celibacy
- Infertility
- Out of marriage sexual relationships
- Adultery
- Pornography
- Paraphelias (pedophilia, voyeurism, frotteurism) etc.
- Forced marriage
- Submission of one spouse to another
- Domestic violence (spouse abuse, physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual)

All of these are a result of sin? But, are all of these sin? Some are, some are not.

What would your hypothesis be regarding domestic violence in the church – same frequency as the non-believing world, higher or lower frequency for those who claim Christ as their savior?

Research done by Rene' Drumm, Chair, Department of SWS at SAU, documents that domestic violence in the SDA church is no different than the unbelieving world.

Why might this be?

Could it be that accepting a false view of God, a god who is wrathful, punitive, authoritarian, one who requires legal payment, fails to transform the heart?

It is a law that we become like the God we worship and admire, so what happens if we worship an authoritarian god, who must be appeased?

WEDNESDAY

Read paragraphs 3 and 4, “The answer...” thoughts?

According to Jewish tradition, which book of the Old Testament Bible is considered the Most Holy Place of the Bible?

Song of Solomon – and what is this book about?

Does it bother anyone that this book of Scripture, was written by someone who had 700 wives? Did it take that many wives to figure out the wisdom of this book?

What is the message of the Song of Solomon?

Close your heart to every love but mine;
hold no one in your arms but me.

Love is as powerful as death;
passion is as strong as death itself.

It bursts into flame
and burns like a raging fire.

⁷ Water cannot put it out;
no flood can drown it.
But if anyone tried to buy love with wealth,
contempt is all they would get. So 8:6,7

What is the message of these verses?

What are we to learn about God’s love for us from the way He designed marriage and romantic love to be?

- Love sacrifices self for the object of its love
- Love knows no fear
- Love never gives up
- Love seeks the best
- Love is patient
- Love is kind
- Love finds joy in the success of others

- Love builds up
- Love heals
- Love gives the benefit of the doubt
- Love forgives before it is asked
- Love leaves free

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2

Glimpses of Our God Lesson 13 1Q 2012

The Promise of His Return

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”
Rev 22:12

Thoughts?

What do you think of the promise to return quickly?
What does it mean?

- That the actual time frame of his return will be quick? In other words very few minutes, hours, days?
- That He is doing all in His power to return as quickly as possible – in other words, He isn’t initiating any delay, but is in fact, trying to remove any obstacle that would cause delay, so He is return as quickly as is actually possible?
- But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2Pet 3:8,9

What does this mean? Is it poetic or literal?

- Has God created some type of bubble in which earth operates separated, isolated, insulated, from the rest of the universe?
- Is it possible earth is in a time dilation field, where time passes slower outside the field than inside?
- If that were the case then the Lord has been gone only 2 days since He made the promise to return quickly.

The lesson offers another possible explanation for Christ coming quickly – read THURSDAY’s last paragraph, “In one sense...”

Thoughts?

Do you think when Christ said He will come quickly He was actually meaning we will die soon, sleep in the grave, be unaware of thousands of years and so it will seem like He is returning quickly?

I personally don’t find this idea satisfying. I think it is an important idea to remember in our personal journey, that at any moment life could be cut short, so we need to live in a constant state of unity with Christ.

But – it undermines a sense of hope to think that “quickly” means when we die. In fact, if we were to promote the idea that we can be with Christ quickly by dying – might that have a potential negative outcome?

What do you think it means that He has a reward to give according to each person’s work? What work?

The SDA Bible Commentary states, on this passage:

Work. Gr. *ergon*, “an act done.” The singular number suggests that the word is used collectively of the acts that make up the life as a whole that a person has lived. The effects of the grace of Christ or of the rejection of that grace are also taken into account when the “work” of man is examined (see on Eze. 18:22, 24).¹

What do you understand this to mean?

¹ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7*. 1980 (F. D. Nichol, Ed.) (896). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

- God keeps a list of works, deeds, acts and if we do good works we earn, from God, good rewards and if we do evil works we earn, from God, punishment?
- Does it mean something else?

What about Jesus parable about workers in the field –

- Does God want us to work for Him?
- Do we have a work to do?
- Does our work achieve us rewards?
- Does God pay us for our work?

What about when they asked Christ what work they had to do?

Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.”²⁸ Then they said to him, “What must we do to perform the works of God?”²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” Jn 6:27-30

How does this fit in to the working in the Lord’s field? And what is the balance in receiving rewards?

It again goes back to how you understand God’s law:

If God’s law is natural:

- You exercise regularly – which is work to do, is there a reward for doing this? What is the reward? From where does it come?
 - The reward comes from the natural results of operating in harmony with God’s design
- If you eat healthy foods and avoid toxic substances, a diligent work, is there a reward? From where does it come?

- If you love others more than self, give of yourself to bless others, is there a reward? From where does it come?
- If you smoke two packs of cigarettes per day, is there a reward/punishment? From where does the “reward” come?
 - The punishment comes from the natural results of operating out of harmony with God’s design
- If you cheat on your spouse is there a reward/punishment? From where does the “reward” come?
 - While the spouse may leave, isn’t the true “punishment” the damage to conscience, character, that cheating inflicts? Thus the punishment comes from the natural result of operating outside God’s design for life.

If law is imposed:

- If you pay your taxes honestly, is there a reward? From where does the reward come?
 - The government - police, fire department, roads, currency, defense...
- If you cheat on your taxes or simply don’t file them, is there a “reward”/punishment? From where does it come?
 - The government – fines and imprisonment
- If you violate traffic laws by speeding, but not natural law of physics by getting in a wreck, and you are caught, is there a reward? From where does it come?

When we mix the natural and imposed laws:

- If you study regularly for school, is there a reward? From where does the reward come?
 - Natural – development of mind, brain circuits, knowledge, wisdom
 - Imposed – letter grades, diplomas
- If you cheat in school, is there a reward? From where does it come?

- Natural – damage to conscience, character
- Imposed – expelled from school, fail class
- If you train for and compete in the Olympics is there a reward?
 - Natural – better health, self discipline, improved confidence, developed brain circuits
 - Imposed – medals, endorsement contracts
- If you do illegal drugs is there a “reward”? From where?
 - Natural – damage to brain, body, character, possible death if overdose
 - Imposed – arrest, fines, jail

In God’s kingdom how does it work? Do we earn rewards or punishments that are externally imposed by God, because His law is imposed? Or when we live in harmony with His design/laws, there are natural benefits, or rewards?

What is the balance between what Christ does for and in us and our work and reward?

I thought this Christian author said it nicely in a book entitled *God’s Amazing Grace*:

In His **divine arrangement**, through His unmerited favor, the Lord has **ordained that good works shall be rewarded**. We are accepted through Christ’s merit alone; and the acts of mercy, the deeds of charity, **which we perform, are the fruits of faith**; and **they become a blessing to us; for men are to be rewarded according to their works**. It is the fragrance of the merit of Christ that makes our good works acceptable to God, and it is grace that enables us to do the works for which He rewards us. Our works in and of themselves have no merit. . . . We deserve no thanks from God. We have only done what it was our duty to do, and our works could not have been performed in the strength of our own sinful natures. {AG 244.2}

What do you hear?

- God's design, or ordained construction of the universe, is that life operates on natural law with built in inherent rewards for living in harmony with His methods and principles.
- We could do no work to create a remedy to our terminal state.
- Christ's merit, or the remedy He achieved, is the only solution to our condition. Thus God only accepts us healed, remaining in an unhealed, terminal state is unacceptable to God.
- When we partake of that remedy we get better. The improvement is not something we earn, but is evidence of having partaken of the remedy. Christ is our remedy, when we partake of Him our characters get better, and we begin to have signs or evidence of that improvement, which are the good works, or living in harmony with His kingdom of love.
- These good works themselves, bring with them built in blessings of joy, better relationships, better physical health etc. as we are again in harmony with God's design

Here is the next paragraph from the previous quotation:

We need . . . to bring the light and grace of Christ into all our works. We need to take hold of Christ and to retain our hold of Him until we know that the **power of His transforming grace** is manifested in us. We must have faith in Christ **if we would reflect the divine character**. . . Faith in the Word of God and in **the power of Christ to transform the life will enable the believer to work His works**. {AG 244.3}

What do you hear being described? A legal solution, or a healing process? What enables us? It is the transforming power of Christ in us, which we experience when we trust Him!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The description...” thoughts?

The lesson states, “The last chapters in the books of Isaiah and Revelation assure us that the destruction of sin is coming and that God’s kingdom will be restored.”

What does this mean?

- What do you understand God’s kingdom to be?
- How will sin be destroyed?
- Where does sin exist or occur?
- If sin exists in the hearts/minds of intelligent beings, then how does God eradicate it, without destroying the being?
- Can this be done by power, force, might?
- What method does God use?
- What happens to those who refuse to have their hearts, minds, characters cleansed from the infection of sin/selfishness?
- In the US Military it is illegal to commit adultery and one can be prosecuted and sent to prison for adultery.
 - What happens to a person who breaks God’s law for marriage and has unprotected sex and gets HIV infected?
 - What happens if that person believes their problem is a problem with the government, for adultery, rather than the problem being infected with HIV and so they seek a lawyer to defend them and eventually gets a legal pardon, but don’t get treatment for HIV?
- What happens to the minds, hearts, characters of persons, who are born in sin, conceived in iniquity, if they believe their problem is a legal problem with God’s government, and they accept a legal solution of having Jesus be their lawyer in heaven to defend them and their sins paid by Jesus’ blood, but never experience the actual transformation of heart and mind?

- Does this give us some insight into why God is waiting to return?
 - He wants all to be saved
 - But, many have been tricked into believing they have a legal problem, rather than an actual condition of heart/mind so they have false security believing they are saved, while their spiritual condition only worsens.
- Are our hearts and minds ready to stand in His presence?

WEDNESDAY

The first paragraph asks the question, how are we to understand the delay in the second coming of Christ?

Why has Christ delayed His return?

Is there anything we can do to speed His return?

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Mt 24:14

What kingdom?

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." Jn 18:36

What kingdom? How would you differentiate the kingdom of Christ from the kingdoms of the world?

The germ in the seed grows by the unfolding of the **life-principle which God has implanted**. Its development depends upon no human power. So it is with the **kingdom of Christ. It is a new creation. Its principles** of development are the **opposite** of those that rule the

kingdoms of this world. Earthly governments prevail by physical force; they maintain their dominion by war; but the founder of the new kingdom is the Prince of Peace. The Holy Spirit represents worldly kingdoms under the symbol of **fierce beasts** of prey; but Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. In **His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience.** The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. **But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin.** {COL 77.1}

What do you hear?

- What are the kingdoms of the world based upon?
 - Brute force, coercive power –
 - What kind of law do such governments employ?
Imposed law!
 - What then do we do to God's kingdom when we promote the idea He uses an imposed law?
 - What kind of method would God be using if He were to use His power to inflict punishment?
- What is Christ's kingdom based upon?
 - The law of love, which is the design for life emanating from God's own nature!
- What message from Christianity has gone to the world?
 - If you don't accept Christ you will burn in hell
 - God is required to use power to punish sinners
 - God will torture the wicked
 - If you worship on the wrong day you will get the mark of the beast and God will throw you in the lake of fire
 - Justice demands God inflict punishment upon sinners
- What is the true kingdom of God?

- The kingdom of selfless love
- For God so loved the world...
- Greater love has no man than he give his life...
- This is how we know what love is...
- Not by might nor by power....
- Create in me a clean heart...
- I will write my laws on their minds....

Christ delays, waiting for the *gospel of the kingdom* to go to the world. It is our time, our generation, our privilege, our opportunity to take this message to the world. God is not like Satan and tradition has made Him out to be!

We will be opposed, but we must not fail. If we would do our job, if we would take this message to the world, Christ will come! Do you believe it? Will you become a part of a movement, a team, to share this message with the world?

At the end of class today we will share how we are working to spread this message and how you can be part of this ministry!

THURSDAY

Paul states in 2Thes 2:1-4:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

What is Paul talking about?

- That Satan was going to counter attack what Christ accomplished at the Cross, and infect the spirit temple with lies about God and Christ, so that humanity would end up worshipping Satan's false view of God rather than the truth.
- But God prophesied through Daniel (8:14) that before the end comes the truth about God would be recovered and the sanctuary would be cleansed from the lies about God.
- What were those lies?
 - God's law is imposed
 - God must inflict punishment on sinners
 - Christ came and God punished Him
 - God still seeks to punish sinners but Christ pleads in our behalf
 - Jesus is our lawyer in heaven to protect us from legal punishment
 - God is returning to punish unrepentant sinners
 - We can have safety from God's anger and wrath if we accept the blood payment to our legal record in heaven.

This is the distortion that the vast majority of the Christian world accepts, because they accepted Imperial Rome's view of God's law and subsequently the law Giver.

We are privileged to share a message which will cleanse the mind of these distortions and bring people back into unity with Christ and His Father.

MONDAY

Read top Dark Section, "How does Peter..." thoughts?

If there was no second coming, would you live your life differently than you currently do? Why or why not?

- If there was no speed limit would you drive differently than you do?

- Yes, in some places, – why? Because we wouldn't have to worry about punishment
- If there was no tax law would you pay differently to the government than you do?
 - Yes, why? Because we wouldn't have to worry about punishment
- Do we do what we do only because of avoidance of punishment or hope of reward?
- Smoking is legal for adults – why don't we smoke?
- Some states have legalized certain uses of marijuana, if it were legal would you use it? Why not?
- There is no law against poking yourself in the eye with a pen, why don't you do it?
- There is no governmental reward for not poking yourself in the eye with a pen, so why avoid doing it? Or is there a reward?

So back to the question, if there is no second coming, given the way God has constructed His universe, is there really a better way to live than in harmony with His methods and principles?

So do we do what we do because of fear of punishment, or hope for reward, or because it is really the most sensible way to live?

I liked the way this was said in a book called *Christian Education*:

Let the youth be led to understand the **object of their creation**,--to honor God, and bless their fellow-men; let them see the tender love which the Father in heaven has manifested toward them, and the **high destiny** for which **the discipline of this life** is to prepare them,--the dignity and honor to which they are called, even to **become the sons of God**,-- and thousands would turn with contempt and loathing from the low and selfish aims and the frivolous pleasures that have hitherto engrossed them. **They would learn to hate sin, and to shun it,**

not merely from hope of reward or fear of punishment, but from a sense of its inherent baseness,--because it would be a degrading of their God-given powers, a stain upon their God-like manhood. {CE 69.3}

Is this what we teach our young people? Is this what the church teaches its members? Do you see how this description is based upon understanding God's law as natural, not imposed?

The lesson asks us to consider several Bible passages:

- “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. John 14:1-3
- “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. Dan 2:44
- Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, ²⁰ and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. ²¹ He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. Acts 3:19-21

What do these passages mean to you?

TUESDAY

Read last paragraph, “Of course...”

Thoughts? What do you like, or find encouraging about this paragraph?

The paragraph uses a metaphor of ransom – what does this metaphor actually mean? How would you explain it to someone who believes it is a literal blood payment?

How can the metaphor do harm?

Does it help by clarifying God’s law as natural or imposed? What difference does it make to look through these two lenses at this metaphor?

Read bottom green section SUNDAY’s lesson, “Some Christians...” thoughts?

How is this true and untrue?

- Didn’t Jesus say the kingdom of God is within you?
- What did this mean?
- Is it wrong to work with God to experience His restored kingdom within us?
- But, is this the same as God’s ultimate restoration of His universe?
- It would be a mistake to conclude the only kingdom is the internal restoration of a Christlike character within a sinful world?
- And wouldn’t it be disappointing if there was no more than this?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 2 2Q 2012

Every Member Ministry

SABBATH

Read Memory Text “But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;” 2Peter 2:9

Thoughts?

What does this text mean to you?

What are we to proclaim? His praises – which means what?

- Sing songs?
- Prayers of praise?
- Something else?

According to the dictionary, praise is the expression a favorable judgment, or to give commendation.

In light of the controversy over God’s character, does it give any insight into what our praise is supposed to be? What our praise is to achieve? What purpose it is to function?

Genuine praise from God’s representatives is not simply singing songs of praise, or thanking Him in prayer for blessings, but much more significantly is revealing the truth about God, in both our words and the way we live our lives.

It reminds me of the 3rd angels message, “Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of his judgment has come.” – the hour for Him to be praised – or judged correctly!

We are to reveal God in our lives, demonstrating that His remedy to sin works, that we are changed, by His presence,

from selfishness to love for others, thus bringing honor and glory to God in the time he is being judged.

Or, another way to say it is, as His agents, representatives, priests, we commend Him or make a good judgment about Him! Thus helping others to see Him in a commendable light so they also can judge rightly about Him.

What would the darkness we are called out of be and what is the light?

Would the darkness be the darkness of misunderstanding about God?

Jesus is the light that lightens all men (John 1) – the light about what?

Jesus said if we have seen Him we have seen the Father. Do we let our light about God's character, methods, and the principles upon which He built the universe to run, to so shine that the darkness of fear and misunderstanding are driven back?

Would anyone like to share how their view of God has changed over time and the difference that has had on their lives?

Would anyone like to share what they have found effective in revealing this light into the darkness of misunderstanding about God?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Too often..." thoughts?

Do you believe all those who have experienced God's renewal of their heart have a ministry for His kingdom?

What can we minister to spread the kingdom of God?

- Teachers and speakers
- Organizers
- Helpers
- Health care providers
- Technical people
- Writers
- Animators
- Administrators
- Accountants
- Missionaries
- Evangelists
- Builders
- Mechanics
- Electricians, plumbers, carpenters etc. etc.

Is there any honest activity that is not useful in God's cause?

What can we do with our ministry to become more effective in spreading this message outside our group?

- Webcasting starting next week – thanks Dean! Without Dean this ministry would not reach outside the room in which we meet. God has truly blessed us by bringing Dean to be part of our ministry!
- TV programming we are partners with Heartwise Ministries and the first show to air in May 2012
 - This class is financially supporting our ministry which has partnered with HeartWise ministries. The new studio is built and open house is this Thursday April 5 from 5-7 p.m. We are all invited to the open house. I invite you to come. I can tell you this is the best TV studio in Chattanooga. You will love it when you see it. God is really blessing this ministry.
 - Keep praying for this ministry. The devil has been very busy trying to stop it. You know the obstacles we have endured, well Dr. Marcum has received numerous phone calls from all over the country and visits from people locally telling him that he should

not be partnering with Come and Reason, telling him of the problems with his message of focusing on bringing people to a relationship with a God of love. He has even received some death threats. Satan is scared because he knows his time is short and lies cannot stand up to the truth!

- We will also need volunteers to help run the cameras, answer telephones each Thursday. Some of you have already volunteered. If you are interested in helping let us know.
- Books –
 - Dr. Marcum's book *The Ultimate Prescription* does a wonderful job of presenting the truth of God's character of love through the life of a cardiac patient and the laws of health
 - *Could it Be This Simple* has helped tens of thousands
 - *Change Your God Change Your Brain: How Your View of God Changes Your Brain* will be published by IntersVarsity Press late this year. God is blessing in its development. Dr. Larry Crabb, psychologist author, world renowned speaker, Dr. Michael Lyles, Christian Psychiatrist and board member of the American Association of Christian Counselors, Dr. Tim Clinton Founder and President of the American Association of Christian Counselors, Dr. Gregg Jantz, author of more than 30 books, president of founder of A Place of Hope in Edmonds WA, are all writing endorsements for this book.
- Bible Study guides – our board has voted to create new Bible study guides that will focus on the truth of God's character. Charles Mills is the editor, and we already have four principal contributors. These guides will not be dated and will be written for all Christians.
- Magazines – Fundamental Focus – our ministry has contacted Genesis Road Ministries which produced the magazine and asked that the magazine be edited for all Christians not just one denomination and then we would purchase 20,000. They have agreed and will have those

soon. We can share this with our friends regardless of denomination.

- Webcards for sharing
- Many of you invite people to listen online and come to class
- Start a Bible study in your home
 - Is anyone participating in a Bible study?
 - Has anyone ever been involved in a Bible study?
- Share what your understanding of God's character and methods has done for you
- Think for yourself, question, search for truth, don't allow others to form your beliefs for you
- Seminars – we have our first “Modern Medicine, Biblical Technology, and the Brain” Seminar scheduled for the trade center this October 13. We will need people to help us do the various administrative and preparatory activities. Kathy Kiley has agreed to help coordinate the volunteers so some of you may be hearing from her.
- Other ideas?

The second paragraph points out that Paul says the believers are to be equipped for ministry.

What can we do to help equip you for ministry? Is there anything we can provide, assist, do to prepare you for your ministry?

Would any of you like us to have some Let's Talk meetings on how to graciously answer questions that arise?

The paragraph states we are to carry a message of love and grace to the world. How is the message we are to carry different from what every other church carries to the world?

If we innocently included distortions about God's character do such distortions still undermine the message of love and grace?

Doctrines are important as they inform us about God and His character, methods principles – what doctrines help you see God more clearly?

- The law of love
- God as creator
- Jesus is fully divine
- The trinity
- The nature of mankind – mortal not immortal
- The healing model of atonement
- The healing model of the end of sin and sinners
- Others?

What traditional doctrines or ideas have made it harder to see God clearly?

- Jesus is not fully God
- God requires appeasement or payment to forgive
- God uses His power to inflict punishment on sinners
- There is no trinity
- Man is immortal and the wicked will burn in hell forever
- Jesus died to pay our legal debt
- Others?

Read last paragraph, “Jesus is not...” thoughts?

What is the difference between a serving friend and friendly service?

Does Jesus call us to service? How do we harmonize Jesus call to be a servant with John 15:15 when Jesus said,

- I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Did Jesus say in this verse we are not to serve? No! What is the difference between a servant and a friend?

Friends UNDERSTAND their master, servants do not!

- Servants, “God said it, I believe it, that settles it. We don’t ask questions if God said it that is good enough.”
- Friends, seek to understand the Master and will ask questions of the Master, especially if they are concerned the action would hurt the Master.
- Servants never consider what will hurt the Master they are concerned with not being punished by the Master.
- Friends are willing to risk punishment to protect the Master.

- Abraham, a friend of God, questioned Him about Sodom. Why? What was Abraham’s concern?

- Moses, also described as a friend of God, questioned God about destroying Israel – why? What was Moses’ concern?

Remember the movie *It’s a Wonderful Life*? In the beginning George is a young boy working for a pharmacist and the pharmacist got word his son had been killed and made a mistake filling a prescription. He ordered George to take it. George was concerned it was wrong and tried to tell the pharmacist, but the man was upset and yelled at George, George persisted and the man hit him, but he still persisted and the man finally listened and George was right and the man hugged George.

Was George just a servant, or a friend?

Why is it so many insist we remain as unthinking servants?

Why does Christ not simply order us into service?

- What kind of service does He want?

- Only the service that springs from love and love cannot be commanded.
- So, what does this mean?
- Servant mentality is not pleasing to God, only friendship mentality is what He wants!

Think about your children. When they are small, immature, they often may obey because they are told to do so. They don't understand why, they just do it. But what if your child never progressed beyond that, as an adult they continue to wait for you to tell them everything to do before they did it?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Sometimes..." thoughts?

Do you ever find you are working to undo the work of others? As a doctor, I have patients who sometimes come to me on 4,5,6 or more medications, diagnosed with illness for which I find no evidence and I will find it necessary to undo many things done by someone, before the patient gets well.

Spiritually, do we ever find we are working in fields that have been filled with weeds, distortions about God, ideas that close minds?

What kind of ideas close minds and prevent the truth from penetrating?

- Rumors and gossip about the person bringing the gospel message
 - Those who opposed Paul spread rumors about him to try and undermine his influence so people would not listen to him. Do we struggle with such tactics today?
- Belief that truth is determined by feelings rather than facts
- Belief that truth was discovered by the reformers and we only need to know what they knew

- The Jews in Christ's day believed they had Moses and the Prophets, and knew what it all meant and were not open to grow.
- Do we ever find church leaders today who hold to concepts hundreds of years old, doggedly unwilling to allow the truth to grow and advance?
- Belief that others, who were so loving and kind, like grandma, couldn't be wrong
 - Do we find good people, people with hearts oriented to do right, can still have erroneous beliefs?
- Belief that God's law is imposed

Do we need more workers in the field? Do we need more people sharing this message about God?

What can we do to have more workers in the field?

Why are we not more passionate to tell people? Do we have the same motivation to tell people the truth about God as we do to tell people our team won the Super Bowl?

We certainly would appreciate more prayer warriors, people who will pray for this ministry and people who will pray that God will bring more people to this ministry to help spread this message about Him!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "The local church..." – thoughts?

What do you understand the church to be?

How does one become part of the Biblical body?

When Martin Luther was ex-communicated from "the church" of his day, was he no longer a member of the church? Or, were the church authorities the ones who were not members of the church?

If someone today is not affiliated with a particular denomination or group, does that necessarily mean they are not part of God's church?

Where should our loyalty be – to Christ and His kingdom or to a denominational organization?

But does that mean we should not belong to a denominational church?

What is the benefit of meeting together? Could our ministry be as effective if we all stayed at home each week and studied our Bibles on our own?

The lesson suggests we need unite on areas of evangelism and witnessing – what do you think are the central points upon which we must unite?

Are there doctrinal points upon which we must unite? What are those points?

- The truth about God's character of love
- The truth about God's law of love
- The truth about what Christ accomplished
- The truth about God's calling for each of us
- The truth about our condition
- The truth about God's solution for our condition
- Others?

Are there methodological points on how we evangelize on which it is helpful we unite?

- Speak truth, in love, and leave people free – under this umbrella is not almost any specific method okay
 - TV, radio, internet, print, door to door, Bible studies, community seminars, literature sharing, visitations, health ministry, debate, music, art,

helping disaster victims, helping the disabled, etc.
etc.

- What would you like to do to help spread this message? If we can help you let us know what you need to enable, empower you!

Read second paragraph, “The apostle...” thoughts?

- Is there anything we are doing that is inhibiting your ability to contribute?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Yesterday...” thoughts?

What happens if someone doesn’t feel strongly that they are working with God – does that mean that they aren’t?

Are our feelings a good barometer of whether we are or are not working with God?

Is there a difference from knowing and feeling?

What is it we can have confidence in regardless of how we feel?

Testable truths –

- Gravity won’t change based on our feelings
- The law of entropy won’t change based on our feelings
- The law of love won’t change based on our feelings
- The law of liberty won’t change based on our feelings
- God’s character of love won’t change based on our feelings, He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow!

What *can* our feelings change? The way we feel! And if we aren’t careful, if we permit it, our feelings can lead us into temptation and we can change our beliefs, and actions based on a change in feelings. But feelings do not determine truth or change reality!

Read second paragraph, “The Scriptures...” thoughts?

What do you understand God’s amazing grace to be? How has that grace impacted your life?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “This week...” thoughts

- Would it be beneficial to have a periodic meeting to share how people are sharing this message and the response they are receiving? And then talk about what we can learn from these experiences to be more effective?
- Does anyone have a report they would like to share of how they shared this message with others?
- Russ Crear told me that he was on the plane riding back from Florida and starting talking to a woman next to him and then they mentioned Come and Reason and this class and they found out both listen to this class. The lady was Lori, Russell’s sister. Anyway, they spent the time on the plane talking about this picture of God and as they were getting off the plane Russ looked to the woman on the other side and apologized for not talking with her and she said, “Oh no, I was so blessed by your conversation. I enjoyed so much hearing about such a loving God as you were describing.”

FRIDAY

Read question number 1 and discuss?

- Is this an absolute reality stated, or a generally good idea?
- What if this were stated about the church when Christ was on earth?
- What if the church leaders won’t unite with the laity in finishing the work but insist on taking a course as the

church leaders did 2000 years ago, or the church leaders did to Martin Luther?

- Is it a dangerous position to be a leader and believe you are there to defend the traditions of the church?
- How can we reach out in a constructive way to church leaders to help them grow in their understanding when they may be afraid they will lose their job if they should start teaching this message about God?

Read and discuss question 2 - thoughts?

Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 3 2Q 2012

Spiritual Gifts for Evangelism and Witnessing

Read Memory Text – Eph 4:11, 12: “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Thoughts?

Does this text represent all the Spiritual Gifts?

1Cor 12:27,28:

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸ And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

Does this list all the Spiritual gifts?

Does a gift have to be listed in the Bible in order to be a spiritual gift?

Can you think of others not listed?

- Metal working and artistic skills
- Music
- Technical skills – working with computers, internet, TV, radio,
- Writing, editing, publishing,
- Mechanical skills
- Others?

Is there a difference between natural talents and spiritual gifts? How would you describe the difference?

The Moody Handbook of Theology describes the difference as:

COMPARISON OF NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL ABILITIES

Comparisons	Natural Talents	Spiritual Gifts
Source:	From God Through parents	From God Independent of parents
Possessed:	From birth	Probably from conversion
Purpose:	To benefit mankind on the natural level	To benefit mankind on the spiritual level
Process:	Must be recognized, developed, exercised	Must be recognized, developed, exercised
Function:	Ought to be dedicated by believers to God for His use and glory	Ought to be used to God's glory

1

Thoughts?

Any questions about the gifts listed in the texts above?

SUNDAY

Does every member of the church receive spiritual gifts?

Do you know yours, keeping in mind gifts are different from natural talents?

¹ Enns, P. P. (1997). *The Moody handbook of theology* (270). Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press.

Read second paragraph, “We have already...” thoughts?

Does the equipping with gifts come fully developed or do the gifts themselves require use, exercise, and will expand with development?

What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? Are the gifts given primarily for the development of the individual person, or are they given for the development of the body of believers?

If a person refuses to allow the gift to be manifest in them, what might happen? Might God give that gift to another, not to punish the one who didn't utilize it, but because the church needs the blessing of that gift?

Once someone receives a spiritual gift, is it like other gifts, theirs to use as they freely want? Or does the spiritual gift function by continual interaction with the Holy Spirit? In other words, it is the Holy Spirit enabling and providing the ability and only in unity and harmony with the Holy Spirit does the gift work?

Was Samson's strength a Spiritual Gift?

- What was the purpose of giving Samson strength?
- Was it for the building up, edifying of Israel?
- Did the Spirit control how Samson used this strength?
- Did Samson have great leeway in how he used this gift?
- Did it require Samson to stay in unity with God?
- Did Samson eventually lose this gift? Why?
- Why did Samson get this gift back? Was it magic hair growth? Or was it a change in heart?
- Do you think Samson regretted losing this gift?

What about Solomon?

- Did Solomon get a spiritual gift of wisdom?

- Did God control the use of that gift?
- Did Solomon have great leeway in how he used it?
- Did Solomon eventually lose that gift? How and why?
 - I would like to suggest that Solomon, like Samson, when he turned to pagan worship and sacrificing his own children had lost the gift of wisdom. And he spent many years doing foolish things.
- Did he get the gift back? Why? How?
 - In later life he repented and was inspired to write Ecclesiastes

Can a spiritual gift be lost? What about the gift of prophecy?
 Can a person be gifted with prophecy but reject it and then have that gift lost? Can other gifts be lost if not used?

- Do you think persons who lose gifts regret it?

What can we do to not lose the gifts we have been given?

What can we do to maximize the usefulness of the gifts we have been given?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph – “To a certain...” thoughts?

What does it mean to be “called?” To receive a call from the nominating committee, pastor or elder?

Is calling anything more than an invitation? When Jesus told the parable of the wedding and the heralds went out with invitation – does that represent God’s calling?

Is the invitation to salvation freely offered to all? So could we say God calls the entire human race that is capable of receiving a call?

Are some humans beyond receiving the call, in other words beyond understanding, comprehending and responding to the

invitation? Yet does the invitation still get sent to the entire world?

What about being called to the clergy? What is that calling? Is it different than any other calling? How can one know if they are called to any ministry or position in the church?

- Is it a feeling of conviction?
- Is it a desire for that office?
- Is it a sense of duty or obligation?
- James says we are tempted by our desires, so if someone has a desire to be a pastor, does that necessarily mean that desire is from God?

Do people ever believe they are called by God to a certain role when they are not?

Does God every gift someone because they asked for the gift?

Are we told to ask for wisdom and that God will honor it? Is this the only gift we are supposed to ask from God?

Does a gift of the Spirit mean character transformation? If a person has received spiritual gifts, but doesn't experience character transformation to be more like Christ, what might happen over time? Might those gifts be lost?

TUESDAY

What can we do to discover our gifts? Any idea?

Read last two paragraphs, "When someone..." thoughts?

Can you think of anything else?

What gets in the way of discovering our spiritual gifts?

- Fear?
- Anger?

- Selfishness?
- Pride?
- Hurt?
- Misconceptions about God?
- False beliefs about what the gifts are, how they work, the role of believers in the church?
 - For instance – what about a woman being gifted to be a pastor? Might this be overlooked if she has been taught her entire life only men can be pastors?
- Any other beliefs that might obstruct our recognition of a spiritual gift?
 - How about our beliefs about healthy living? Do we undermine our ability to be used by God and for the manifestation of gifts if we are unhealthy?
 - Will God override our choice to lead an unhealthy life by supernaturally giving us exceptional health?
 - Will an unhealthy brain undermine the gift we have been given?
- Television, video games?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “It is significant...” thoughts?

What church? Is it a single denominational church? Is it all denominations? Is it the church invisible?

Was Martin Luther gifted? When the organized church booted him out, did he lose his spiritual gifts?

Does that tell us something? If the gifts of the Spirit are given by God for the health and benefit of the church, and they are not lost by a person when the organized church rejects that person with their gifts, what does this mean about what constitutes the church, as far as God is concerned?

What should you do if you know what your gifts are but the organized church won't let you use your gifts?

Say you have the gift of preaching but the church won't let you preach, or teaching and the church won't let you teach?

Did Jesus have the gift of teaching? Did he wait for church leadership to recognize His gift before He taught?

Did the disciples have gifts? Did they wait for the organized church to endorse them before they began ministering their gifts in God's cause?

Should we just strike out on our own and ignore the organized church?

What is the balance between following God's leading and gifting in your life and receiving the endorsement of an organized church?

Read fifth paragraph, "Spiritual gifts..." thoughts?

Do you think Martin Luther had desire for unity? Did he seek to cause a break or to reform and purify his church?

Throughout history do we find that Spirit filled individuals led to reforms and those reforms brought division with church leadership?

Christ said:

"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn

" 'a man against his father,
 a daughter against her mother,
 a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—
³⁶ a man's enemies will be the members of his own
 household." Matt 10:34-36

What do you think about this? Was Christ not Spirit led? Did He not have gifts of the Spirit? Was He misusing His gifts

because His ministry led to breakdown of unity in the organized church of His day? Should He have succumbed to church leadership?

As I considered the next questions I found myself quite disturbed and sad as I contemplated the evidence from history. I also found myself becoming frightened, lest I find myself in such a place.

- Can anyone think of a time in history where the leadership of an established organized church stood on the right side of advancing truth?
- Does the Spirit lead individuals away from the true body of Christ? No!
- Does the Spirit lead individuals away from organized churches? What do the lessons of history say?

What would those who wrote this paragraph say to persons coming to a Revelation seminar who were currently members of a Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Catholic or other church and those members said, “Our pastor told us the Spirit doesn’t lead people away from the church?”

My view is that the Spirit always works on the heart to transform the person to be like Jesus and leads us into the unity of love, and in the practicing of Godlike methods. Then the Spirit leads the individual to the place where the Spirit wants the individual:

- Jesus filled with the Spirit was led to the wilderness, then to the Temple to confront the leaders, not to get the blessing of the leaders
- Elijah led to confront a king and spiritual leaders
- Paul led to the desert, and then to the Gentiles, and at times confronted spiritual leaders
- Stephen led to confront the Jews in Jerusalem, to confront church leaders

- John the Baptist led to confront the nation and a king and church leaders
- Timothy and Titus to churches in Greece and Asia minor, and had conflict with local leaders

Do we believe that evangelism is about making people members of one particular denomination, or leading them to a genuine healing relationship with Jesus Christ and allowing the Spirit to lead that person where the Spirit wants them?

Then, within various organizations the Spirit leads us to unite together in common purpose to make the truth about God known. Thus the Spirit seeks to cut away things that interfere with this work.

In our individual lives the Spirit “circumcises the heart” meaning He cuts away attachments to worldliness, selfishness, fears, insecurities, and relationships that would undermine our growth in Christlikeness – including relationships with organizations who teach false views of God or which undermine our spiritual growth.

In the church body it seems the Spirit would be working to cleanse the church from influences that misrepresent God and undermine the work of preparing the world for Christ’s return, i.e. undermine the presentation of the truth about God.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is making the point that not everyone is gifted with the same gifts, for a reason. As Paul uses the metaphor of the body, and the body wouldn’t be very good body if all the parts were a foot, or a mouth, or an eye, that it works best when each part fulfills its purpose.

Likewise in the church while there may be spokespersons, teachers, preachers, evangelists, they wouldn’t be very effective if there weren’t many more people working behind the scenes to organize, plan, set up, clean, prepare etc.

In the military for every soldier who carries a weapon there are many more soldiers who work behind the scenes supporting and supplying the ones in combat. Without those support soldiers the combat troops would soon become ineffective. In fact, one of the most effective strategies in stopping an advancing army is to cut their supply lines, to make ineffective the work of the non-combat forces.

In the church there are many on the front lines, but for every effective person speaking, preaching, teaching, holding seminars, conducting Bible studies there are many, many more behind the scenes and without those the work would come to a screeching halt.

How many went to the open house at Heartwise and saw the TV studio?

Our ministry and Heartwise are a good example of this. While myself, Russell, Wendell and others teach here, Dr. Marcum, myself and others will be on the TV programming, none of this would get outside the room to reach anyone if it wasn't for many of you who work behind the scenes here and at the studio.

- TV camera people,
- answering phones,
- running the computers,
- updating the websites,
- organizing, planning,
- preparing materials,
- writing the study guides
- praying daily for these ministries and the people involved,
- supporting with financial support,
- and more!

This is a team effort and we each have a role to play. If you are not currently involved and want to be, please let us know, we can always use more help.

The greatest joy in my life is to present the truth about God's kingdom and see minds that were held in captivity of fear and insecurity about God set free. To see the lights go on, to see the joy in the heart of another, to see the frantic, chaotic, living replaced with peace and self control. This brings joy. If you have never had the joy of sharing the truth about God and His kingdom and methods of love what can we do to help you experience this joy?

Anything you need from us to equip you in your circle of influence?

FRIDAY

Read comment 1 at the top. "In consultation..." thoughts?

How many would like us to develop a training seminar, put on over a weekend in which we would provide materials and courses designed to teach you how to share this message effectively?

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2.

Identification and Introduction:

Thanks for Sonrise participation:

Lisa Foote for Leading out in animal care.

Lesson # 4: Evangelism and Witnessing as a Lifestyle

1. Read for Introduction:

- a. **Key Thought:** Whether we acknowledge it or not, all believers preach a message by the example of their lives.
 - i. For you personally, does this statement provoke reassurance or guilt?
 - ii. Why?

2. **Sabbath Afternoon:**

- a. **Read Paragraph #1: It has often been said. . .**
 - i. **“That Christianity. . .a way of life, a lifestyle. . . .”**
 - ii. What is the emphasis when we talk about lifestyle?
 - (1) (Behavior, actions, what I do.)
 - iii. What is the important core of Christianity?
 - (1) (To know God)
 - (2) (John 17:3) This is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you sent.
 - (3) How do we come to know God?
 - (a) Interaction with Him
 - (b) Christianity is not a lifestyle: It is a relationship that produces a lifestyle.
 - (i) Our concentration should be on walking with Him, not on our behavior.
 - (ii) Where is our focus if we concentrate on behavior?
 - 1) (If we concentrate on our behavior, our emphasis and

focus will be on ourselves.)

(iii) Our focus should be on God and our service for others.

(c) We bring our lives to the law and to the cross for examination, but not for our witness.

3. **Second and Third Paragraph: “It is also true. . .” “Even if we don’t intend it, those who watch us do learn from us.”**

a. We are an influence.

i. Do we have to do anything to generate an influence?

ii. It is not what we do for ourselves, Love is what we do for others.

b. Matthew 7: 16, 20 “By their fruits ye shall know them”

i. God’s Word Translation: “by what they produce”

c. Matthew 7:17, 18 (Luke 6:43,44) **Mat_7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Mat_7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.”**

i. It is not what we “should” produce, but what we are able to produce as a natural act or process of who we are.

ii. Great is the work and mission of women, especially those who are wives and mothers. They can be a blessing to all around them. They can have a powerful influence for good if they will let their light so shine that others may be led to glorify our heavenly Father. Women may have a transforming influence if they will only consent to yield their way and their will to God, and let Him control their mind, affections, and being. They can have an influence which will tend to refine and elevate those with whom they associate. But this class are generally

unconscious of the power they possess. They exert an unconscious influence which seems to work out naturally from a sanctified life, a renewed heart. It is the fruit that grows naturally upon the good tree of divine planting. Self is forgotten, merged in the life of Christ. To be rich in good works is as natural as their breath. They live to do others good and yet are ready to say: We are unprofitable servants. {2T 465.1}

- iii. This is a natural law of how we are made. Just like all the other laws of respiration, nutrition, hydration, etc, this is another law of life.
- iv. Will God supernaturally produce good fruit from a bad tree?
- v. Will He supernaturally produce good behavior or outcomes from a human who is not transformed into His image?
- vi. What about (Rom 8:28) “We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose.”
 - (1) If this is true, does it matter what we do?
 - (2) What is the purpose of us doing good things?
 - (a) (we get to participate with God in His work)
 - (b) (It is a privilege - It is fun - That is how we are designed.)
 - (3) Thoughts on Romans 8:28
 - (a) all things are not good
 - (b) all men are not transformed
 - (c) all things that happen to us are not good

- (d) The end result of all things may not be good - until the earth is made new and sin is eradicated.
- (e) God is with us, even to the end of the age.

- (f) And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28. {FLB 64.1}

The fact that we are called upon to endure trial shows that the Lord Jesus sees in us something precious which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name, He would not spend time in refining us. He does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is valuable ore that He refines. {FLB 64.2}

God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. {FLB 64.3}

All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying. {FLB 64.4}

He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. The blow that is aimed at him falls upon the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord's permission, and "all things" that are permitted "work together for good to them that love God." {FLB 64.5}

Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet. {FLB 64.6}

As a little child, trust to the guidance of Him who will "keep the feet of his saints." 1 Samuel 2:9. {FLB 64.7}

As we commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps. {FLB 64.8}

- d. If we are talking about what we are doing, we can be fooled by ourselves.
 - i. **Mat 7:22** Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name? Didn't we force out demons and do many miracles by the power and authority of your name?' **Mat 7:23** Then I will tell them publicly, 'I've never known you. Get away from me, you evil people.'

- 4. “The last prayer that Christ offered for His disciples before His trial was **that they might be one in Him**. Satan is determined that this oneness shall not be; **for it is the strongest witness that can be borne that God gave His Son to reconcile the world to heaven**. But the union for which Christ prayed must exist among God's people before He can bestow on the church the enlargement and power that He longs to bestow on it.”
{Pamphlet 151 pg 85.2}

- 5. Schism and division are not the fruits of righteousness; they are of the wicked one. The great hindrance to our advancement at this time is the selfishness that prevents believers from having true fellowship with one another. The last prayer that Christ offered for His disciples before His trial was that they might be one in Him. Satan is determined that this oneness shall not be, for it is the strongest witness that can be borne that God did indeed send His Son to reconcile the world to heaven.-- Letter 41, Feb. 24, 1903, to Dr. F. E. Braucht, a physician laboring in Chicago. {UL 69.5}

- 6. **Sunday’s Lesson: Bottom Paragraph - “We must not . . .”**
 - a. Can this be hidden?
 - b. Do we have to be careful that we make sure someone will notice our good works?
 - i. We have to be careful that “we use the Law

appropriately” to diagnosis whether we are following Christ. ((1Ti 1:8 GNB) We know that the Law is good if it is used as it should be used.)

7. **Sunday’s Lesson: Grey Box at bottom of page:**

- a. Divide this box into 2 sections:
 - i. First two questions: How have you been affected by those whose actions matched their profession? How have you been affected by those whose actions didn’t match their profession?
 - (1) Are our (or other’s) assessments always correct?
 - (a) 2 Corinthians 10:7 (2Co 10:7) You are looking at the outward appearance of things. Are there some there who reckon themselves to belong to Christ? Well, let them think again about themselves, because we belong to Christ just as much as they do.
 - (b) 1 Samuel 16:7 (1Sa 16:7) But the LORD said to him, "Pay no attention to how tall and handsome he is. I have rejected him, because I do not judge as people judge. They look at the outward appearance, but I look at the heart."
 - (2) What Biblical examples can you list to illustrate this point?
 - (a) Judas
 - (b) Christ
 - (c) Hannah at the temple
 - (d) John the Baptist’s assessment of Christ
 - (i) Matthew 11:18 (Mat 11:18) When John came, he fasted and drank no

wine, and everyone said, 'He has a demon in him!'

- (ii) Matt 11:1 - 19 John mistook Jesus for someone else, yet he was the greatest prophet that ever lived.
- (iii) John 7:33 - 36 Pharisees didn't recognize him for who He was.
- (iv) John was the 'greatest prophet' ever and he made a mistake of assessment.
- (e) Isaiah 53.4 "We esteemed Him smitten of God"
 - (i) How many of us have at some time or other thought that it was God who beat up on Christ and tortured Him for our sins? That it was God who exacted the price for our sins on Him?

ii. Second Section: **What will help you to always remember that your actions will influence others, one way or another?**

- (1) What is the emphasis here?
 - (a) (Our actions and what people see.)
- (2) What should be our emphasis?
 - (a) our relationship with Christ/God
- (3) The Law (or some other external guide/instrument) is only helpful as a diagnostic aid, not a blueprint for action.
 - (a) Romans 2:15 GNB ([Rom 2:15](#)) Their conduct shows that what the Law commands is written in their hearts. Their consciences also show that this is true, since their thoughts sometimes accuse

them and sometimes defend them.

- (b) Romans 3:20 ([Rom 3:20](#)) For no one is put right in God's sight by doing what the Law requires; what the Law does is to make us know that we have sinned.
- (c) Romans 7:7 ([Rom 7:7](#)) Shall we say, then, that the Law itself is sinful? Of course not! But it was the Law that made me know what sin is. If the Law had not said, "Do not desire what belongs to someone else," I would not have known such a desire.

8. Monday's Lesson: Read the first paragraph - "Each day we all . . .

- a. Are we suppose to bring every one to a full knowledge of Christ?
- b. Do we bring every one to a full knowledge of Christ?
- c. Jesus knew that his disciples after their busy labors would derive great benefit by engaging in private communion with him and with their brethren. He knew that a season of rest and recreation, apart from the multitude and the scene of their labors, would invigorate them, and he sought to withdraw them from busy cities to a quiet resort where they might have a season of precious fellowship with him and with each other. Would that all missionaries and workers in the various branches of the cause of God would bear in mind that though Jesus could work miracles, though he had empowered his disciples to work miracles, he commanded that his worn followers should go apart into the country for rest. Self-denial is required of the disciples of Christ, and self-sacrifices must be made; but care must also be exercised lest through human infirmity and

feebleness the work of God be marred. The Lord knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are but dust. Our God is ever merciful, full of compassion, and reasonable in all his requirements. He does not require that we shall pursue a course of action that will result in the loss of our health or the enfeeblement of our powers of mind. He would not have us work under a pressure and strain until exhaustion follows, and prostration of the nerves. The Lord has given us reason, and he expects that we shall exercise reason, and act in harmony with the laws of life implanted within us, obeying them that we may have a well-balanced organization. Day follows day, and each day brings its responsibilities and duties, but the work of tomorrow must not be crowded into today. The workers in the cause of God should feel how sacred is its character, and they should prepare themselves for tomorrow's work by a judicious employment of their powers today. {RH, November 7, 1893 par. 6}

- d. All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God. In them is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and they need to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, "Be still, and know that I am God." This is the effectual preparation for all labor for God. Amidst the hurrying throng, and the strain of life's intense activities, he who is thus refreshed, will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. He will receive a new endowment of both physical and mental strength. His life will breathe out a fragrance, and will reveal a divine power that will reach men's hearts.--The

Ministry of Healing, p. 58. {ChS 249.3}

- e. Our God is ever merciful, full of compassion, and reasonable in all His requirements. He does not require that we shall pursue a course of action that will result in the loss of our health or the enfeeblement of our powers of mind. He would not have us work under a pressure and strain until exhaustion follows, and prostration of the nerves. The Lord has given us reason, and He expects that we shall exercise reason, and act in harmony with the laws of life implanted within us, obeying them that we may have a well-balanced organization. Day follows day, and each day brings its responsibilities and duties, but the work of tomorrow must not be crowded into today. The workers in the cause of God should feel how sacred is its character, and they should prepare themselves for tomorrow's work by a judicious employment of their powers today.--Review and Herald, Nov. 7, 1893.
- f. Prepare! Prepare! should be sounded in the ears of the people. For the great day of God's wrath is coming, and who shall be able to stand; and while messengers cry to God to prepare and get ready, they must be awake and have energy themselves and let it tell to all that hear them that they are standing between the living and the dead. Preachers and people who believe the third angel's message should set a holy, lively example. Their conversation and actions should show that they are looking for the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.--Manuscript 1, 1855, pp. 1,2. (Untitled, undated.)
- g. Read Monday's Lesson paragraph four (4).
 - i. God understands the need for more workers and will supply them.

- ii. Is that our job? To supply the workers?
 - iii. Is it our job to compel someone else in our church community to be a worker?

- h. The highlighted box at the bottom of the page: What is compassion?

- 9. Tuesday's Lesson:
 - a. Paul's all things to all people
 - b. Fourth paragraph: "Of course this is what Jesus did. . .
 - i. He didn't just talk in their language, but saw what they wanted / needed.
 - c. Examples: woman at the well, farmers, fisherman, etc.
 - d. Why did it not work for the rich young ruler?
 - i. (He was interested in himself only.)
 - ii. Compare to the woman at the well
 - (1) Immediately went back to town and brought others.

- 10. Wednesday's Lesson: Begins by discussing our care for others. Then the second paragraph talks about hospitality.
 - i. What is love?
 - ii. How do we convey love?
 - iii. How is hospitality different from love?
 - b. The story of the demon-possessed man in Mark 5:1 - 19.
 - i. Jesus forbid the healed demoniac from going with him and directed him to return to his village.
 - (1) What was the purpose of the command?
 - (2) Was it so that Christ would get a better reception next time he came by?
 - (3) What did this directive do for the former demoniac?
 - (4) What is the effect of other centered activity of love?
 - (a) It is how we are designed to function

- (b) We are happiest when we are helping others
 - (c) In our damaged state we do not have complete “normal” comprehension. Some people still haven’t figured out that Christmas gifts are much more fun giving than receiving.
 - c. In the fourth paragraph we are encouraged to “**have friendships outside of our circle of believers.**”
 - i. Are there dangers here?
 - ii. Is this a “tool” we are to “use”?
 - iii. What about medicine?
 - (1) Why is it described as the right arm of the gospel?
 - (2) Can good health be compelled?
 - (3) God wants us to be healed from our sickness of sin.
 - d. Read aloud: Luke 14:12 - 14 (Luke 14:12) Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your rich neighbors---for they will invite you back, and in this way you will be paid for what you did. (Luke 14:13) When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind; (Luke 14:14) and you will be blessed, because they are not able to pay you back. God will repay you on the day the good people rise from death."
 - i. What does this have to do with friendship evangelism.
 - ii. Is friendship evangelism a tool
11. Thursday’s Lesson: Widening Your Friendship Circle
- a. Read the first paragraph
 - b. What is the purpose of having friends “outside of the fellowship.”?

- c. Is it for the purpose of “reaching people with the gospel message” that we are to have such friends?
 - i. Is that truly being a friend?
 - ii. When you get married, is it the healthiest relationship if we enter into this bond with the idea that we are going to change our new marriage partner?
 - iii. Did Jesus heal the sick, just so they would listen to his depiction of the kingdom of God?
- d. What ways have you worked to form friendships with non-Christians?
- e. Does how you “keep the Sabbath” prevent you from interacting with others?
 - i. Why?
- f. Do you have any recreation?
 - i. Adventists are great at work, but traditionally have not been very good at play.

12. Friday’s Lesson:

- a. Discussion Questions:
 - i. #2: Think about your church as a whole. How integrated into the community is it? If your church vanished tomorrow, how much difference to the community would that make? Would it make any difference at all?
 - ii. When we first moved to Chattanooga,
 - (1) “they live out there and don’t come in here”
 - (2) “I don’t know much about them”

13. Quotations to consider:

- a. Character is power. **The silent witness of a true,**

unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence.

By revealing in our own life the character of Christ we co-operate with Him in the work of saving souls. It is only by revealing in our life His character that we can co-operate with Him. And the wider the sphere of our influence, the more good we may do. When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves, then will the church have power to move the world. {COL 340.2}

- b. It is not the opposition of the world that most endangers the church of Christ. It is the evil cherished in the hearts of believers that works their most grievous disaster and most surely retards the progress of God's cause. There is no surer way of weakening spirituality than by cherishing envy, suspicion, faultfinding, and evil surmising. **On the other hand, the strongest witness that God has sent His Son into the world is the existence of harmony and union among men of varied dispositions who form His church.** This witness it is the privilege of the followers of Christ to bear. But in order to do this, they must place themselves under Christ's command. Their characters must be conformed to His character and their wills to His will. {RC 222.4}

- c. Those who have genuine love for God will manifest an earnest desire to know His will and to do it. Says the apostle John, whose epistles treat so fully upon love, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3). The child who loves his parents will show that love by willing obedience; but the selfish, ungrateful child seeks to do as little as possible for his parents, while he at the same time desires to enjoy all the privileges granted to the obedient and faithful. The same difference is seen

among those who profess to be children of God. Many who know that they are the objects of His love and care, and who desire to receive His blessing, take no delight in doing His will. They regard God's claims upon them as an unpleasant restraint, His commandments as a grievous yoke. But he who is truly seeking for holiness of heart and life delights in the law of God, and mourns only that he falls so far short of meeting its requirements. [pg 82] {SL 81.1}

We are commanded to love one another as Christ has loved us. He has manifested His love by laying down His life to redeem us. The beloved disciple says that we should be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. For "every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (verse 1). If we love Christ, we shall love those who resemble Him in life and character. And not only so, but we shall love those who have "no hope," and are "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). It was to save sinners that Christ left His home in heaven and came to earth to suffer and to die. For this He toiled and agonized and prayed, until, heartbroken and deserted by those He came to save, He poured out His life on Calvary. {SL 82.1}

- d. The more we contemplate the character of Christ, and the more we experience of His saving power, the more keenly shall we realize our own weakness and imperfection, and the more earnestly shall we look to Him as our strength and our Redeemer. We have no power in ourselves to cleanse the soul temple from its defilement; but as we repent of our sins against God, and seek pardon through the merits of Christ, He will impart that faith which works by love and purifies the heart. By faith in Christ and obedience to the law of God we may be sanctified, and thus obtain a fitness for the society of holy angels and the white-robed redeemed ones in the kingdom of glory. {SL 83.2}

- e. Union With Christ Our Privilege “It is not only the privilege but the duty of every Christian to maintain a close union with Christ and to have a rich experience in the things of God. Then his life will be fruitful in good works. Said Christ, "Herein [Pg 84] is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John 15:8). When we read the lives of men who have been eminent for their piety we often regard their experiences and attainments as far beyond our reach. But this is not the case. Christ died for all; and we are assured in His word that He is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. The prophets and apostles did not perfect Christian character by a miracle. They used the means which God had placed within their reach; and all who will put forth the same effort will secure the same results. {SL 83.3}
- f. The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. 2 Timothy 2:19. Self-denial, self-sacrifice, benevolence, kindness, love, patience, fortitude, and Christian trust are the daily fruits borne by those who are truly connected with God. Their acts may not be published to the world, but they themselves are daily wrestling with evil, and gaining precious victories over temptation and wrong. Solemn vows are renewed, and kept through the strength gained by earnest prayer and constant watching there unto.

The ardent enthusiast does not discern the struggles of these silent workers; but the eye of Him who seeth the secrets of the heart notices and regards with approval every effort put forth in lowliness and meekness. It requires the testing time to reveal the pure gold of love and faith in the character. When trials and perplexities come upon the church, then the steadfast zeal and warm affections of

Christ's true followers are developed....

The humble in heart, who have daily felt the importance of riveting their souls to the eternal Rock, will stand unmoved amid the tempests of trial, because they trusted not to themselves.... A healthy man, who is able to attend to the vocations of life and goes forth day after day to his labor with buoyant spirits and with a healthy current of blood flowing through his veins, does not call the attention of everyone he meets to his soundness of body. Health and vigor are the natural conditions of his life, and therefore he is scarcely conscious that he is in the enjoyment of so rich a boon.

Thus it is with the truly righteous man. He is unconscious of his goodness and piety. Religious principle has become the spring of his life and conduct, and it is just as natural for him to bear the fruits of the Spirit as for the fig tree to bear figs or for the rosebush to yield roses. His nature is so thoroughly imbued with love for God and his fellow men that he works the works of Christ with a willing heart.

All who come within the sphere of his influence perceive the beauty and fragrance of his Christian life, while he himself is unconscious of it, for it is in harmony with his habits and inclinations. He prays for divine light, and loves to walk in that light. It is his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father. His life is hid with Christ in God.—The Sanctified Life, 11-13.

- g. Those who take pains to call attention to their good works, constantly talking of their sinless state and endeavoring to make their religious attainments prominent, are only deceiving their own souls by so doing. A healthy man, who is able to attend to the vocations of life and who goes forth day after day to his labor with buoyant spirits and with a

healthy current of blood flowing through his veins, does not call the attention of every one he meets to his soundness of body. Health and vigor are the natural conditions of his life, and therefore he is scarcely conscious that he is in the enjoyment of so rich a boon.

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All who come within the sphere of his influence perceive the beauty and fragrance of his Christian life, while he himself is unconscious of it, for it is in harmony with his habits and inclinations. He prays for divine light, and loves to walk in that light. It is his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father. His life is hid with Christ in God; yet he does not boast of this, nor seem conscious of it. God smiles upon the humble and lowly ones who follow closely in the footsteps of the Master. Angels are attracted to them, and love to linger about their path. They may be passed by as unworthy of notice by those who claim exalted attainments and who delight in making prominent their good works, but heavenly angels bend lovingly over them and are as a wall of fire round about them.

The Sanctified Life, pg 12

- h. It is not only the privilege but the duty of every Christian to maintain a close union with Christ and to have a rich experience in the things of God. Then his life will be fruitful in good works. Said Christ, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John 15:8). When we read the

lives of men who have been eminent for their piety we often regard their experiences and attainments as far beyond our reach. But this is not the case. Christ died for all; and we are assured in His word that He is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. The prophets and apostles did not perfect Christian character by a miracle. They used the means which God had placed within their reach; and all who will put forth the same effort will secure the same results. Sanctified Life, pg 83

Lesson 5 Sequential Evangelism & Witnessing

Sabbath's lesson

"I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it" (1 Corinthians 3:2, NKJV).

"In all evangelism and witnessing, it is important that we first present the simple truth of the gospel."

What is the "simple truth of the gospel"??

Sunday's lesson -- Sequential Evangelism and Felt Needs

What are "felt needs"?? are there any unfelt needs??

Luke 9:10-17. 10 When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, 11 but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing. 12 Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here." 13 He replied, "You give them something to eat." They answered, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd." 14 (About five thousand men were there. But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." 15 The disciples did so, and everyone sat down. 16 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. 17 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

Matt 25: 31-46. 31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' 41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' 44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' 45 "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' 46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Does this apply to the guy with the sign at the end of the freeway off ramp??

Monday's lesson -- Milk and Solid Food.

What is the milk of the gospel?? What is the solid food??

- Reliability of Bible Milk / Solid Food??
- Christ's mission Milk / Solid Food??
- God's Character Milk / Solid Food??
- Our Character Milk / Solid Food??
- Sabbath Milk / Solid Food??
- State of the dead Milk / Solid Food??
- Dietary restrictions Milk / Solid Food??
- 2nd Coming of Christ Milk / Solid Food??
- God's Law Milk / Solid Food??
- Sin Milk / Solid Food??
- Heaven / Hell Milk / Solid Food??
- Destruction of wicked Milk / Solid Food??
- Sanctuary [Heavenly/Earthly] Milk / Solid Food??

Does it matter where we begin??

Heb 5:11-6:3. 11 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. 6:1 Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death,[a] and of faith in God, 2 instruction about cleansing rites,[b] the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And God permitting, we will do so.

John 16: 12-16. 12 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."

Tuesday's lesson -- Testing Truths

What have been some "testing truths" in your experience??

John 6: 53-66. 53 Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. 57 Just as the living Father

sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” 59 He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. 60 On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” 61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? 62 Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! 63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit[?] and life. 64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. 65 He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.” 66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

How is this concept a “testing truth”? The lesson suggests that many who heard this message understood it, but rejected it. Any other thoughts??

John 14:15. 15 “If you love me, keep my commands.

How is this a “testing truth”? What are Jesus’ commands? Does our view of God change our perspective on “commands”?

Wednesday’s lesson -- Measuring Spiritual Growth

The lesson suggests one good way to measure growth is by asking questions [see below]. Any other ways we can think of??

“Some typical questions might be, What do you think these verses are saying to us today? How would you share this Bible truth with a friend? How do you feel about God’s promise to you? What changes do you think you need to make in your life, in your attitude toward others, and in how you live in general, because of what you have been studying? How do these truths help you to love Jesus more? Of all the things you have been learning, what impresses you the most? What gives you the most hope? *The most fear* [emphasis added]?”

If we are causing an increase in fear, might there be something that needs correcting in the message?? Certainly, some spiritual “infants” might naturally experience fear with any new concepts, but this should be short lived.

The lesson makes the great point that Bible studies and other evangelistic presentations should be orderly and logical, with the simple principles covered first, then moving to more complex issues. What should be the starting point for the vast majority of people??

Thursday’s lesson -- Preparing a Harvest

Revelation 14:15. *Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.*

As the seed sown produces a harvest, and this in turn is sown, the harvest is multiplied. In our relation to others, this law holds true. Every act, every word, is a seed that will bear fruit. Every deed of thoughtful kindness, of obedience, of self-denial, will reproduce itself in others, and through them in still others. So every act of envy, malice, or dissension is a seed that will spring up in a "root of bitterness" whereby many shall be defiled. Hebrews 12:15. And how much larger number will the "many" poison! Thus the sowing of good and evil goes on for time and for eternity. {PK 86.2}

We cannot possibly know how far reaching one word or act of kindness will be in the hands of the Holy Spirit in transforming someone's character.

Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 6 2Q 2012

Personal Evangelism and Witnessing

Read Memory text: "You are my witnesses," says the Lord, "and My servant whom I have chosen." (Is 43:10)

Thoughts?

What does it mean? Is this speaking only of the Jewish nation or would this include all those who accept Jesus as their Savior?

What does it mean we are his witnesses? About what? To whom? For what purpose?

Romans 3:4 "God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, "You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried." GNT

Is God being tried? Does He need witnesses?

Does Revelation 14 bear on this trial of God? "Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come."

Is this, rather than speaking of a time when God sits in judgment of us, speaking of a time when His witnesses are called to bear Him glory because the hour He is being judged has come?

Doesn't the Revelation 14 text go on to say we are to return to the right knowledge of God as creator? And what does Paul say we see when we look into creation?

Rom 1:20 God's eternal power and divine nature! We are called to reveal God's character of love and turn minds of men back to God as creator, not just that He is powerful, but to show them His design for life, the law of love in action in nature.

How will that help? Why is revealing God's law of love in nature needed by God at this time in earth's history?

Two grand theories have enveloped the world and hold the minds of men in bondage:

- Penal Substitution – God is a being who must kill, punish, torture and who needs to be appeased, propitiated etc. And in reaction to this distorted view of God that came out of the Dark Ages....
- Evolutionary theory and there is no God

At this time in earth's history these two distortions fight back and forth for converts and both cloud the mind. God is calling a people to show the perfect harmony that exists between His character of love and the laws of nature & science - the protocols upon which life was constructed.

We are to give God glory by revealing His character of love in our lives and teach people how God built the universe in harmony with His character of love, thus turning the minds of men back to the Creator God!

What were the allegations made against God?

- God is arbitrary makes up laws and rules because He is powerful, thus misuses His power
- Severe and unforgiving (one small mistake and poof your toast)
- Controlling
- Power over – threatens to get conformity
- Domineering
- No freedom
- Willing to sacrifice others but not self

How did God answer the allegations?

God made planet earth and mankind in His image.

- How does this planet, mankind answer the allegations?
- The law of love as the protocol upon which life was constructed – what does it reveal?

But mankind chose to follow Satan – which means what?

Our characters were changed from love to be selfishness. Who then did we reveal?

- And all nature groans under the weight of the survival of the fittest principle and
- What does nature now reveal? A clear cut revelation of God, or a battle between two antagonistic principles?

Christ came to do what?

- Reveal truth about God
- To destroy the lies of Satan (which is Satan's power) thus disarming and destroying Satan
- Destroy death
- Heal mankind to eternal life

If Christ did this, if He revealed the truth about God, if His life is the answer to the questions about God – what are we witnesses of or for or to?

Do we have something to witness to in regard to God Himself?

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. Jn 14:12

Thoughts? What could we do greater than Jesus?

Does this text have something to do with our witness?

What does a witness do?

If a doctor claims to have a cure for cancer, what would the doctor need? Medical records? Or actual patients who were sick and now well? Would there need to be patients, those who have been seen to be sick, who have been seen as ill by someone other than the one claiming to have a cure, and then wouldn't those patients need to be seen well, cancer free?

Is there a difference between presenting a person who has never had cancer and is therefore cancer free, and one who has had cancer and is now cancer free?

Is there a difference in God's healing solution in what we see in the life of Jesus and what we see in the lives of the saved?

If a patient with cancer takes a remedy that cures the patient, does the patient become a witness for that doctor and his treatment? Does the patient get to brag and take any credit to themselves? No!

This is our situation – we get to be witnesses to our incredible heavenly Physician, who loves us, woos us, draws us, gave Himself to achieve the Remedy, and then works with us, patiently, slowly healing as we are able to tolerate (i.e. allow Him). We get to tell of His character, reveal His character in our lives and to live out His love in how we treat others.

Our lives show how He is so gracious. Was there ever any reason for the Father to be disappointed with Jesus? Or did the Father say, this is my Son in who I am well pleased?

What about us? Is there ever any reason for God to be disappointed with us? Yet, how does He treat us? Does His treatment of us, despite our failings, sickness, twisted hearts, reveal something about the Father?

Consider the list of people who have been His witnesses recorded in Scripture, what do we learn about God from these witnesses:

- Adam and Eve
 - Incredible Creator
 - Giver of freedom, intelligence, individuality, procreative power, dominion, and everything for health, happiness
 - When they fell, how did God approach them – what do we learn about God?
- Noah
 - The world is dying, bent on self-destruction, what do we learn about God through Noah?
 - Did God want the world to die? Or did He warn and try to save?
- Abraham
 - What about Abraham's idols? How did God treat Abraham?
 - What about Abraham's lies? How did God treat him?
 - What about when Abraham argued over Sodom?
 - What about when Abraham took other wives?
 - What does Abraham's life witness about God?
- Lot (and his daughters) – what do we learn about God?
- Jacob/Israel
 - What do we learn about God?
- Moses
 - Moses was a murderer – How did God treat Moses?
 - When God called Moses, how did Moses respond?
 - When God said He was going to wipe out Israel what did Moses say?
 - What is Moses' witness about God?
- Gideon
 - What about Gideon's faith? Strong or weak?
 - What do we learn about God in responding to Gideon as He did?
- Samson

- What does Samson's life witness about God?
- Gives gifts but doesn't control
- Patiently waits for us to be willing to be healed
- David
 - Murderer, adulterer, violent man – How does God treat David?
 - And what do we see in David's life?
 - Does it witness something about God?
- Solomon
 - What witness does he give about God?
 - Who wrote Ecclesiastes?
- Manasseh
 - Manasseh brought prostitutes into the temple
 - Sacrificed his own son to Moloch
 - Was taken captive, but repented and God had him restored to his throne
 - What witness does Manasseh give about God?
- Your life – what do we learn about God from your life and mine?
 - If we have messed up, done awful things, can we still be witnesses for God, if we surrender to Him and allow Him to work in our lives?
 - What do we witness about God?
 - Do we witness about Him by what we tell others, how we describe Him? What about how we treat others?
 - But what if we, in our human weakness, have moments in which we don't act graciously – what then?
 - How will God treat us?
 - Will He cast us off?
 - How should we respond after a mistake?
 - Can we still be used of God if we have made mistakes?
 - How should we treat someone who has made mistakes? How would God treat them?

God takes the worst cases and heals, restores, cleanses, recreates. The weak things of the world to confound the wise!

Read Key Thought: “Those who have the joy of assurance of salvation will want to lead others to experience the same.”

Thoughts?

Does the idea of assurance of salvation bring peace or anxiety?

Do you think this is a helpful question to ask people, “Are you saved?” or “Do you have assurance of salvation?”

Would it be different if we asked, “Do you have assurance of friendship with God?”

Does that question “feel” different to you?

- If you have a restored “friendship” with God, wouldn’t that necessarily result in salvation?
- But where is the focus of the assurance of salvation question?
 - Isn’t it on self, which increases fear, because we are looking at ourselves. Whereas the friendship with God question is looking at God! This is the key.

It is like a cancer patient looking at their cancer and asking if they have assurance they are going to get well, what happens? Worry, fear, insecurity, as they see lesions and problems from the cancer, which is in the process of being healed.

But if they instead focus on their doctor, (assuming the doctor has a cure that works 100% of the time) then they see him, his confidence, smile, assurance that all is going well and fear is removed.

We are not to focus on self, our status, our “sins” but our focus is to be on God. Jesus said, “Life eternal is knowing God.” Jesus did not say, “Life eternal is getting your sins pardoned” or even “getting yourself cured.” These outcomes happen when we genuinely know and trust God!

Can the idea of “assurance of salvation” actual make it harder for some to be saved?

- Could a person accept, say the idea of “legal payment” and experience “assurance of salvation” that all their sins are paid, but still not know God and thus be lost? While feeling assured they are saved?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Our personal...” thoughts?

Can we share knowledge, facts, truths?

Can we share errors, distortions, misunderstandings?

Can we make it easier or harder for people to know God depending on what we share?

Can we tell others about our relationship with God? Can we pass on a relationship?

What is our first duty? Is it not to know God intimately for ourselves? And then represent Him as accurately as possible?

Read second paragraph, “Of course...” thoughts?

Does what we have read here mean she has left the church? If one leaves a denomination, does that mean one is not part of God’s family or true church?

Does it sound judgmental to suggest if a person leaves a denominational group they have left the faith, or are lost, or have left God?

Could God actually lead people out of a particular church?

Regardless of what church, isn’t it generally the case the people in the church who was left regard those leaving as lost?

Why? Is it because those leaving are lost, or because those staying need to justify their staying, and are afraid to consider the possibility the one leaving may be moving forward in light and truth?

This process is called devaluation. It classically happens when a woman, who having been mistreated, beaten by her husband, leaves him and he accuses her of being unfaithful. He devalues her to avoid accepting the problems in himself.

Of course, people can leave the church because they are turning their back on God and His true kingdom, but is that always the reason?

What is the reason to belong to one particular denomination over another?

Would it be because you can fulfill God's purpose for your life more effectively within that group? So that you can collaborate with others in doing what God has called you to do?

Wouldn't it be great if some denominational church, instead of trying to make other's members of that denomination, would focus its evangelistic energy on helping each person attain God's plan for their life? Helping each person find where God wants them and supporting them in that mission?

Remember the movie Miracle on 34th street? The person playing Kris Kringle was Macy's Santa and he started sending people to other stores to get what they wanted, and suddenly Macy's was getting all this great good will. He was showing genuine concern for the happiness of the customer and not seeking to promote what was best for Macy's.

What would happen if denominational churches were not focused on making people loyal to the denomination, but focused on helping people find God's will for their lives and fulfilling that purpose? Even if that meant staying in another denominational church?

Do you think in the end it would draw more people to that church because they would experience that organization genuinely interested in their welfare?

What message is sent if we imply that if you don't belong to a certain organization you will be lost, or if you don't worship on a certain day you will get the mark of the beast? Would this draw people or drive them away?

Should we presume to know where the Holy Spirit wants another person to work?

MONDAY

Read last paragraph – “The early movement...” thoughts?

Come and See – what can we invite people to come and see?

It seems there invitation was fairly easy – Jesus was on earth, come and see Jesus for yourself, watch Him, talk to Him, listen to His sermons, see Him heal the sick, feed the hungry, confront the arrogant theologians, get to know Him.

Do you think you would be able to invite people more easily if Jesus were here in person?

If we knew Jesus would be physically visiting us next week, would it be easier to invite people? Why?

What can we invite people to come and see now, today?

Can we invite people to come and reason? Come and think, evaluate and consider the truth Jesus revealed for themselves and decide for themselves whether they want to know this God?

Can we invite people to get to know us? And if they get to know us will that encourage them to know God or not?

Would you want to get to know God if the only example you knew was you?

TUESDAY

Last sentence of first paragraph states, “However, the Bible reveals to us that God is not necessarily looking for those who are the most qualified as much as those who are willing to be used, whatever their gifts or talents.”

Thoughts?

Middle of the lesson it states, “God does not focus upon past performance but upon personal potential. Each believer has tremendous potential to contribute to the Lord’s work.”

Thoughts? If we are to reveal God should we have the same attitude toward others?

Do we find that organizations, people in organizations, you and me, are willing to overlook past mistakes and value people and join with people to work for God’s cause?

Or do we focus on the past? Continue to see people through the lens of past difficulties?

What do we say about God when we behave this way?

What might cause a person to look at past mistakes rather than current condition and whether the person has experienced change of heart?

If we view a person through the lens of sickness, struggling with disease, and mistakes happen, do we consider them differently than if we view them through the lens of an imposed law?

Have they paid for what they have done yet? Or, that was a symptom of heart sickness, but they are being healed?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Do actions...” thoughts?

How does it look to act like you love God? Would it depend on the God you love?

Might a person burn someone at the stake, shoot an abortion doctor, protest a homosexual for the love of the god they serve? And might such action be in harmony with the god they worship?

But, is such a god like Jesus? Do we ever find Jesus burning people at the stake, using power to coerce, stoning the adulterer etc? Isn't God just like Jesus?

Why do people want to represent God differently than Jesus did?

Read third paragraph, “We can imagine...” thoughts? Why would one take an argumentative and nagging approach?

Could it have anything to do with the kind of god the person was converted to? Could it have anything to do with her understanding of God's law? If God's law is imposed and God is required to impose penalties, might she feel obligated to pressure her husband into conformity of behavior?

What if she saw her husband struggling with a disease? Might she express her concern, love, desire for his wellness, and yet not be argumentative?

How can we be more effective in warning others of the danger of alienation from God and His kingdom of love, without sounding threatening, condemning, critical, arrogant, mean spirited, etc.?

How do we warn of the dangers of smoking, drinking, drunk driving, drugs etc?

Is this how we should warn of alienation from God and His kingdom?

Would this require we change our view of His law from an imposed view to a natural view? And sin as a condition out of harmony with God's design for life?

THURSDAY

First paragraph asks, "Are you aware of what strategies your church has in place in its work to lead people to Jesus?"

Thoughts?

Are the strategies leading to Jesus or to church affiliation and denominational loyalty? Are these one and the same?

Jesus told the religious leaders of His day,

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are." Mt 23:15

Are we in danger of doing the same thing today?

What did Jesus mean? Doesn't it mean that they filled the minds of these converts with more distortions about God, more errors regarding God's kingdom, more confusion over God's law of love such that the person who converted was actually had more barriers to knowing God than they did before conversion.

Could this happen in churches today? Could churches bring people to know about doctrines, but those very doctrines, which might be correct in and of themselves, be presented in

ways that misrepresent God and thus add layers of barriers to knowing God?

For instance, could a person be converted to the seventh-day Sabbath, but have it presented as an arbitrary test of obedience, from an arbitrary god? So they are converted to a right doctrine, but a false god?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “While we would...” thoughts?

How can we ensure we are cooperating with the Holy Spirit?

Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 7 2Q 2012

Cooperate Witnessing and Evangelism

Read Memory Text “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” 2Tim 2:2

Thoughts? Any ideas what Paul taught Timothy that Timothy is to teach others, who are to teach others?

Could the verses that follow give any clues? Read 2Tim 2:3-7:

Here is the NIV:

Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer. ⁵ Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶ The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. ⁷ Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

Thoughts? What are the examples Paul gave? Is there a theme? A principle? Something that would give insight into what Paul taught Timothy, and that Timothy is to teach others?

Here is my paraphrase:

2Tim 2:3 Remember we are on the same team, so endure with us the hardship of advancing the Remedy as a dedicated soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No active duty soldier spends his energy on civilian matters, but carries out his orders to please his commander. ⁵ Similarly, an athlete will never win a competition if he fails to exercise, work out, or operate in harmony with the laws of health. ⁶ And

it is the farmer who is diligent, who plants, waters, fertilizes and operates in harmony with laws of nature that receives the best crop. 7 Meditate on the principles of God's kingdom I am describing, for the Lord will help you understand all of this.

Is Paul saying that God's kingdom is not arbitrary, is not built on civilian laws and rules, but has natural laws? That we should not get diverted into the governments of the world, either in their politics, or allowing their concept of law to enter out theology, but we should remember how an athlete wins, he exercises and naturally gets stronger and more proficient, and a farmer works in harmony with the laws of nature and reaps the benefits.

Is Paul actually pointing to the evidence of nature to help Timothy understand and remember God's kingdom of love is built on natural laws of giving? And we are to teach others these same principles?

SUNDAY

The lesson title is "Letting the Left and Right Hand Know."

Historically, within this church, what has been considered the "right hand" of the gospel?

The medical missionary work is to be to the work of the church as the right arm to the body. The third angel goes forth proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. **The medical missionary work is the gospel in practice.** All lines of work are to be harmoniously blended in giving the invitation: "Come; for all things are now ready." {8T 77.2}

Again and again I have been instructed that the medical missionary work is to bear the same relation to the work of the third angel's message that the arm and hand bear to the body. Under the direction of the

divine Head they are to work unitedly in preparing the way for the coming of Christ. The right arm of the body of truth is to be constantly active, constantly at work, and God will strengthen it. **But it is not to be made the body.** At the same time the body is not to say to the arm, "I have no need of thee." The body has need of the arm in order to do active, aggressive work. Both have their appointed work, and each will suffer great loss if worked independently of the other.--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 288. {ChS 134.4}

Thoughts? Why is the medical ministry to be the right arm of the gospel?

The health message is to be the right arm of our work because it not only opens doors, but models most powerfully the plan of salvation as God's plan to heal us from sin and restore His law of love in our minds. It is "the gospel in practice." Why? Because the practice of medicine operates upon natural laws of health, which are based upon the law of love.

Only in cooperation with God's design template are physical ailments cured and that means leading people to understand the law of love. As they see this law in nature, through the health message, their minds can be elevated to see the reality of God's character. The reason it is the "right arm" and not the "body," is that we need mental/spiritual healing, not just physical healing. We need heart/mind renewal with fear and selfishness removed and love restored within. So if we made the medical missionary work the "body," we would merely help people live longer in sin, rather than helping them experience, through the Holy Spirit, renewal of mind, heart and character.

Thoughts? Have we done this as a people? What has gotten in the way?

When we divorce Scripture from Science, from God's laws of health, from the laws of nature God built His universe to run

upon, then we get confused and misunderstand God's character, Word and intent.

Read first paragraph, "Most people..." thoughts?

What should our goal be as a ministry?

MONDAY

How do you define evangelism? Do you have any ideas on avenues to evangelize?

What can we do to be more effective?

What can we do to get this message to others?

Don't we have to provide a message that resonates with where people are, what they are struggling with, that makes sense to them, that meets a need they actually have?

We are going to have a Potluck followed by Let's Talk, Saturday June 16, and I will present the program on Domestic Violence in the church that I presented at the AACC and then we will have a discussion. We will plan on webcasting this so anyone can participate live and recording it for a future DVD set. Please invite friends from other churches who can't come to our class to come to this event.

Do you have ideas on what we can do to create materials which reveal the truth about God, His methods and principles in a way that connects to where people are today?

I have discovered that there are no children's materials available that teach this message. No children's books, no children's lessons, nothing for our kids. No wonder so many grow up confused, we indoctrinate the children on legal God constructs, teach them beasts, and scary scenarios of wrathful punishment and then are surprised when many leave the church or reject God.

Wouldn't it be great if we could develop children's material? It would take a team. One person couldn't do it.

TUESDAY

Working together as a team.

First I want to thank all of you who are already engaged and involved and part of our team. So many of you are active and working to make this ministry thrive.

Any ideas on how we can coordinate and work together more effectively to expand the impact and reach of this message?

Read third paragraph, "Without question..." thoughts?

Do you experience this solid team, connection, support in the church? What about in our class? If not what can we do to build this cohesion?

In the military one of the keys to success is morale and cohesion. If morale and cohesion break down then the fighting effectiveness of the unit is lost. But a unit with high cohesion and morale, even when outnumbered and poorly supplied can rally and turn a battle.

One of the methods to create morale and cohesion is to have soldiers train together and face obstacles, challenges, difficulties, which they overcome by working together. They are put in situations where they depend on each other and learn to trust each other. They must get to know each other, and actually come to love each other. The bonds of camaraderie forged in battle are some of the strongest human bonds formed.

How can we as a class, as a community, forge such bonds?

Do you notice a similar dynamic in the upper room? Christ had just been killed, the community of His followers were

under attack, their lives were in danger, and they were putting themselves in harms way meeting together, and opening their homes up to hide and protect each other.

In this state they pulled together, facing a common enemy, and reached out together for God's grace, protection and interventions.

Do we face a common enemy? Do you experience the reality of that enemy or is it more theoretical? "Oh Yeah, that old devil, he's such a trouble maker...." Or do you recognize this is a life and death struggle in which we are engaged?

Do you get riled, upset, incensed?

Which is more dangerous, and also more offensive, putting a bottle of poison in the kitchen cabinet labeled with skull and crossbones, with bold letters "POISON" or putting the poison in a juice bottle which advertises the health benefits of drinking the juice?

Which is more dangerous, and therefore more outrageous, those who reject God altogether, or those who claim to be followers of God, but who misrepresent Him?

I had a patient once, some time ago, a Christian, church attender, married to an active member in their church. The wife prior to ever meeting the man she married, had had a one time sexual encounter in her adolescence, never again. Since marriage she has been faithful, and never even considered straying from her marriage vows. Her husband, views porn regularly, and talks about other women he is attracted to, and he constantly criticizes his wife for being an adulterer for having slept with someone before they were married. He accuses her of being defiled, of deceiving him, of not being pure, of being unholy, of being unworthy, because she had sex before marriage and he never did.

Thoughts about this?

Does this offend you? Are you outraged by it? Why? Why is this offensive?

Do we have an enemy who is attacking? How does the enemy work? Do we unite together, or do we get played, used, by the enemy to attack each other?

I look back on my life and I sadly have made mistakes, found myself being critical, rather than simply focus on presenting the love of Jesus, the truth of God's kingdom. It sickens me to realize how many times I have fallen short, and I don't want to fall short any more!

I want us to pull together, to work together, to present the truth about God's kingdom of love, to drive back the distortions and lies, to knock down the strongholds of Satan.

What can we do to experience greater unity, cohesion, friendship and mutual support?

Read bottom pink section, "Eager to witness..." thoughts?

How do we balance the reality that a group can protect us from certain errors or mistakes, with not surrendering our individuality to the group?

I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth, know not what they believe. **They do not understand the evidences of their faith.** They have no just appreciation of the work for the present time. When the time of trial shall come, there are men now preaching to others, who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason. Until thus tested, they knew not their great ignorance. {CW 39.2}

And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe, but,

until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. **When separated from those of like faith, and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth.** Certain it is that there has been among us a departure from the living God, and a turning to men, putting human wisdom in place of divine. {CW 39.3}

How do we balance the safety that comes from being part of a group, with the danger that can come from surrendering our thinking to the group?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “When a unified church...” thoughts?

What is the task at hand? What is our mission at this time in earth’s history?

I love this quotation from one of the founders of our church:

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

I so much want to tell the truth about God – and I am so imperfect at it. Yet, Christ calls upon us, imperfect, sinful, human’s to be his witnesses.

What methods do you find effective in telling people about God?

What obstacles do you run into as you try and share?

- Theological –
- Business of life (yours and the society)
- Financial
- Family conflict or crisis
- Avenues to share
- Fear of rejection
- Lack of confidence in one's ability
- Human prejudice
- Personality differences
- Gossip/rumor
- Evolutionary theory

First paragraph states that we are commanded to love one another, what do you understand that to mean?

- To have positive feelings for each other?
- To act in harmony with God's methods and principles when dealing with each other?
- To actually regard, value and care about each other – more than self?

What can we do to experience this growth in love?

Read bottom pink section – “As you think...”

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “It has been..” thoughts?

What does it mean to be incorporated into the body of Christ?

Does it mean “accepted”? Does it mean to experience oneself as valuable, precious, useful, and part of something larger than oneself?

What are the obstacles to incorporating people?

- People themselves are elusive – hold back, are often spectators and afraid to commit
- We often don’t reach out and ask for involvement – why?
- Differences in people
 - Different views on what is to be done?
 - Different views on how to do it?
 - Different visions?
 - Different views about God?
 - What about different views about women leadership?
 - What about different sexual orientation? Does this paragraph about incorporating people into the body of Christ apply to homosexuals? Can they be incorporated into the body of Christ? Why or why not?
 - Is advocating for the loving outreach to homosexuals the same as promoting homosexuality as God’s design?
 - Can a church love homosexuals, even include them in ministry, choir, usher, greeter, working with visitation, helping others, and simultaneously send a message that homosexuality is not God’s design for human relationships?
 - Can a church include people with blindness, deafness, and send the message that blindness and deafness are not God’s design for humanity?
 - Can a church include sinners and send the message that sin is not part of God’s design?
 - Where is the balance between loving people in sin and sending the message that sin is destructive and not part of God’s design?

Read second paragraph, “The Christian’s...”

How can we help members mature? What can we do to foster spiritual growth?

Do we need to spend more time together?

- I know when trying to recover from injury and going to PT we often need to spend more than 1 hour a week with the physical therapist, and then do we need to spend time each day doing the exercises prescribed?
- Do we need to have activities designed to foster personal growth and victory?
- Have we fallen into complacency, business with life, have we allowed the cares of the world to begin choking out the good seed?

FRIDAY

The lesson suggests that evangelism have some form of evaluation – how can we evaluate the effectiveness of our ministry?

Churches generally use membership numbers and tithe/offering tallies to measure effectiveness.

Can you think of other measures?

Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 8 2Q 2012

Equipping for Evangelism and Witnessing

Read Key thoughts: “Whatever the important proper training, we must first be grounded in our relationship with Jesus before we can be ‘properly equipped’ to effectively witness for our faith.”

Thoughts?

What would it mean to be grounded? What would you say is necessary?

- Those Christ healed went and did what?
 - The blind man did what?
- The woman at the well went and did what?
- Did they witness about Christ?
- What was their relationship to Christ?

I am not saying we should not be grounded in our relationship with Jesus, I am only trying to establish what being grounded is?

- Is it grounded in the reality that Jesus is Savior?
- Is it grounded in the reality that Jesus is God?
- Is it grounded in the knowledge that He is not only Savior, but is also good, loving, kind, and trustworthy? That He is interested in our welfare and restoration?
- Is it grounded in a trust relationship with Him?

We are talking about witnessing and being grounded, last week someone brought to my attention Philippians 1:15-18:

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me

while I am in chains. ¹⁸ But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Thoughts? Some versions say they preach Christ for profit, why is Paul rejoicing rather than trying to stop it?

Would this be true today, should we rejoice when people preach Christ out of selfish ambition and to gain profit? Are they representing Christ and His kingdom correctly, or are they misrepresenting God and making it harder for people to come to Christ?

Why did Christ chase out the moneychangers from the Temple?

I love this description in the book Desire of Ages:

As Jesus came into the temple, He took in the whole scene. He saw the **unfair transactions**. He saw the distress of the poor, **who thought that without shedding of blood there would be no forgiveness for their sins**. He saw the outer court of His temple converted into **a place of unholy traffic**. The sacred enclosure had become one vast exchange. {DA 157.2}

Christ saw that something must be done.

Numerous ceremonies were enjoined upon the people without the proper instruction as to their import. The worshipers offered their sacrifices **without understanding** that they were typical of the only perfect Sacrifice. And among them, unrecognized and unhonored, stood the One symbolized by all their service. He had given directions in regard to the offerings. He understood their symbolical value, and **He saw that they were now perverted and misunderstood**. Spiritual worship was fast disappearing. **No link bound the priests and rulers to their God**. Christ's work was to establish an altogether different worship. {DA 157.3}

With searching glance, Christ takes in the scene before Him as He stands upon the steps of the temple court. With prophetic eye He looks into [the future], and sees not only years, but centuries and ages. **He sees how priests and rulers will turn the needy from their right, and forbid that the gospel shall be preached to the poor. He sees how the love of God will be concealed from sinners,** and men will make merchandise of His grace. As He beholds the scene, indignation, authority, and power are expressed in His countenance. The attention of the people is attracted to Him. The eyes of those engaged in their unholy traffic are riveted upon His face. They cannot withdraw their gaze. They feel that this Man reads their inmost thoughts, and discovers their hidden motives. Some attempt to conceal their faces, as if their evil deeds were written upon their countenances, to be scanned by those searching eyes. {DA 157.4}

The confusion is hushed. The sound of traffic and bargaining has ceased. The silence becomes painful. A sense of awe overpowers the assembly. **It is as if they were arraigned before the tribunal of God to answer for their deeds.** Looking upon Christ, they behold divinity flash through the garb of humanity. **The Majesty of heaven stands as the Judge will stand at the last day,**--not now encircled with the glory that will then attend Him, **but with the same power to read the soul.** His eye sweeps over the multitude, taking in every individual. His form seems to rise above them in commanding dignity, and a divine light illuminates His countenance. He speaks, and His clear, ringing voice--the same that upon Mount Sinai proclaimed the law that priests and rulers are transgressing--is heard echoing through the arches of the temple: **"Take these things [away]; make not My Father's house an house of [commerce]."** {DA 158.1}

Thoughts?

What were the spiritual leaders doing? They were doing their ministry for selfish ambition, but Christ didn't rejoice in it, why? Because they made God's house appear to be thievery, they misrepresented God.

Then how can Paul be rejoicing in the situation? And should we today?

What was the circumstance for the new Christian church?

- Was Christianity widely known and accepted?
- Did they have established synagogues/churches in every city?
- Would there be large groups waiting to book meeting halls for famous preachers?
- Was their religion approved and given protection by the state?
- Would they be risking their lives to preach Christ?
- Did the Jewish nation have an official relationship with Rome?
- Was their power still being bargained for between the Jews and Rome?
- Did the emerging Christian church, at that time, have any official relationship with the state?
- Did the emerging church have any power to bargain for?
- Could the church expect the protection of the state?

And converts, was it popular to be a Christian when Paul was writing?

Would this make a difference in why Paul was rejoicing in Christ being preached for whatever motive, but also why Christ was offended by what the Jews were doing?

What about today? Should we rejoice or grieve when people present Christ for selfish ambition or as a way to get rich?

Read first paragraph – “It is highly...” thoughts?

- Are there people in church organizations without any personal assurance of salvation?
- Are these people ever involved in evangelism?
- If a person without assurance of salvation is witnessing, to what are they witnessing?
 - What might be a problem with this?
 - What might they convert people to?
- Where is the focus when we focus on “assurance of salvation?” Is it on knowing God and Jesus or on ourselves, our condition and situation?
- When you are in love what do you want to talk about and think about, the person whom you love, or how you now have assurance that your situation is better, that you are not alone, that you have someone to help with the bills etc.
 - Is the focus on you, or on the other person?
 - Isn't the assurance you have subsumed under your love for that person?
- Yet there is a sense our joy, love, admiration, devotion derives from our awareness of being saved, delivered, rescued, etc.
 - If we were dying of cancer and then cured, wouldn't delivery from that disease give us joy, wouldn't it generate in us appreciation for those who helped get us well?
 - What would be more powerful, the promise of cure, or experiencing the cure?
 - What brings greater assurance, the promise of legal pardon, or experiencing a renewed heart/mind and trust relationship with Jesus?
 - The plan of salvation, the plan of healing, starts here and now, and as we experience the work of the Holy Spirit actually transforming us, we experience greater love for and confidence in God!
- Could a person have “assurance” and actually not be saved? How, can you think of such a situation?

What do you understand the relationship between doctrinal and spiritual to be?

- Would spiritual be the personal relationship with God, developing a love for God and others, character development?
- Would doctrinal be the specific beliefs one holds?
- But, what is the purpose of doctrine if they don't inform us about God?
- Do doctrines affect the spiritual? How?
 - Scientific studies have documented that extrinsic religiosity was a significant predictor of child abuse potential, intrinsic religiosity was not (Dyslin & Thomsen, 2005)
 - This means spiritual development reduces abuse, while doctrinal religious structure increases abuse
 - Physical abuse has a negative relationship with spiritual development, but not with religiosity (Webber & Cummings, 2003)
- When Jesus said that God is spirit and wants his followers to worship Him in spirit and in truth, to what was He referring?

What do you think of the trend to move away from doctrine and focus only on spiritual development?

- Left brain is the more analytic, facts oriented, doctrinal oriented part of the brain. The right brain is more involved with experiencing the connections with others, sense of self and others.
- The Holy Spirit focuses where?
 - Both – the Spirit of Truth and Love and truth is left brain and love/relationships/connectedness is right brained.

Is there danger in focusing on doctrine without spiritual development? What might that be?

Is there danger in focusing on spiritual development without pursuing more accurate doctrinal understanding? What might that be?

How can we achieve a proper balance?

- Make all our doctrines connect to the truth about God, as revealed in Christ, and help in our relationships with God and others?
- If some doctrine undermines what Christ revealed about God it is wrong
 - In other words if some doctrine makes God out to be different in character than Jesus revealed it is wrong!
- If some doctrine violates God's testable laws, like law of love, law of liberty, law of worship etc. then it is wrong

SUNDAY

The lesson talks about training people to witness for Christ. What training do you believe would be helpful?

- Is it training in the truths of God's kingdom?
 - The law of love, liberty, worship
 - The origin of sin
 - The purpose of creation of man
 - How Satan prosecutes his war, his methods of attack
 - God's methods of combating Satan
 - The two antagonistic principles at war in our lives
 - The purpose of Christ's mission to earth
 - What was accomplished by Christ?
 - How this translates into practical application to our lives today?
 - God's plan for the future?
- What about training on speaking skills?
- What about training regarding interpersonal dynamics?
- What about psychological training?

What training would you like so you would feel confident, comfortable and ready to tell people about God's kingdom?

If we were to have training sessions what would you want included in those sessions to help you?

How many of you would be interested in having some ready to use slide kits and programs you could use to share this message?

Where would you use them? What would you want them to contain?

Is anyone willing to help plan and organize such events?

MONDAY

Read third paragraph, "The principle of learning..." thoughts?

What did they observe? Did they see a tribunal? They observed healing, feeding, teaching, what was happening?

Jesus was imparting, giving, distributing love, resources, substance, energy from Jesus to the people. He was giving of self to heal body and mind/heart/character.

Would Jesus be doing this if He held a grudge? Would Jesus be doing this if He was against sinners?

Was Jesus carrying out His own purposes or the Father's?

Would Jesus be doing healing, feeding, giving of self to heal and uplift if the Father was against us, if the Father held grudges or was unforgiving?

Then did Jesus come with the Father's love and forgiveness to dispense, or did He come to earn, enable, or otherwise put God into a position where God was willing to forgive?

What about Jesus authority over sickness, disease, demons, evil powers? Did He have authority? What does this say the idea that Satan was the actual ruler of earth? Did Satan have any real, valid, legitimate claim to earth?

Was Jesus always the rightful ruler of earth? Did Jesus need to do anything to get His rightful rulership back, or did He need to do something to convince intelligent beings of the reality and righteousness of His rulership?

Where did Satan have to be defeated by Christ –

- In a heavenly courtroom to gain some legal verdict from His Father over Satan?
- In some actual physical confrontation to defeat Him in strength power and might?
- In the minds of intelligent beings exposing Satan as liar and fraud and confirming God and Christ as completely trustworthy, loving and honorable?
- The only place Satan has power is in the minds of intelligent beings, and Christ only needs to defeat Satan in the minds of intelligent beings. There is never a need for any courtroom, legal defeat of Satan.
- In Zech 3, when Satan is accusing the high priest, the angel of the Lord, (Christ), doesn't engage in legal arguments, doesn't plead His blood, doesn't beg His Father, doesn't even acknowledge the allegations of the devil. No! He simply heals the person, removes the sin and creates righteousness within!
- When Christ resurrected Moses and the devil attempted to debate and argue, Christ didn't give him any discussion, simply rebuked Satan and raised Moses.

Any theory which has God or Christ doing something to earn, merit, reclaim, attain, legally achieve any power from Satan is based on the false premise that Satan actually has anything to be taken.

The battle is always and only been in the minds of intelligent beings, who do we trust, what do we believe.

This is why Christ never argues with Satan, never responds to Satan's accusations, never listens to what Satan says.

Instead Christ heals, feeds, frees, raises from the dead, cleanses, restores, recreates. Christ doesn't argue with Satan, He defeats him by revealing the truth about God to win us to trust, by healing humanity in His own personhood 2000 years ago and by healing and setting people free from lies, fear, and selfishness whenever one of us will let Him.

What do we learn by observing what Christ did? To actually go out and teach the truth, heal, feed, set minds free. Don't waste time arguing over whether you have the right to do it, speak the truth in love and let the Holy Spirit bring conviction!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "No matter...." Thoughts?

What happens when we begin to put into practice what we have learned?

Ideas become behaviors, behaviors reinforce the ideas, neural circuits change, repeated behaviors become habits as neural circuits become established and reinforced and we slowly are changed and transformed.

Does this always happen in a positive direction?

WEDNESDAY

Learning through "failure" what do you think about the title?

Here are a couple of quotations attributed to Thomas Edison:

- I am not discouraged, because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward.
- I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.
- Many of life's failures are men who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.
- Nearly every man who develops an idea works at it up to the point where it looks impossible, and then gets discouraged. That's not the place to become discouraged.
- Show me a thoroughly satisfied man, and I will show you a failure.

Thoughts?

What is the point of the first quotes? Every attempt that didn't work is not a failure but a lesson learned, information gained, experience attained. If we use such experience we grow wiser with each experiment.

The last quote – did it remind you of anything in scripture? It reminded me of Laodicea – complacent and satisfied with their station and success. Are we resting satisfied with where we are as individuals, a church, as a ministry?

Read first paragraph, “Sometimes...” thoughts?

What do you think about setting baptismal goals? Do you think Peter had a goal of 3000 baptisms at Pentecost? Should our goal be on who responds, or on how well we present the truth, how well we fulfill God's purpose for us?

Moses didn't get great response from Pharaoh, Elijah didn't get a great response from Ahab and Israel, Jesus got initial amazing response, but then everyone left, Stephen didn't get a great response from his preaching –

How do we set goals? What is a healthy way to measure our effectiveness in achieving our goals?

Will everyone respond to the Lord the first time they hear a message presented?

While the Holy Spirit calls everyone to the same character development, to love God and others, does the Holy Spirit call everyone to the same organization? Why or why not?

Doesn't the Holy Spirit want men and women working for Him everywhere, to be salt to the earth? Would that mean He would want to have people loyal to Him in other organizations? Until the great shaking?

THURSDAY

What does success look like? How can we measure it?

What do we learn from success? Can you name any lessons we learn from success?

- To give God the glory and credit
- Are we not to experience any joy or happiness about our participation?
- Story of the man who bought a run down old farm, spent several years fixed it up, rebuilt barn, planted crops and turned it into a beautiful productive farm. Then a new pastor moved to town and came out to the farm and commented to the farmer, "You and God have done a wonderful job on this place," to which the farmer replied, "You should have seen it when God had it all to Himself."

What else do we learn from success?

- What works
- What resonates with people
- What gets through

FRIDAY - Read and discuss questions 1, 2.

Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 9 2Q 2012

Releasing Into Ministry

Read Memory Text – “And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!’” (Rom 10:15 NKJV)

Thoughts about the memory text?

Paul is referencing Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion,
“Your God reigns!”

What do you think about Paul not quoting exactly the reference in Isaiah? Have you noticed NT writers frequently do this? Why? What are the possibilities?

- Don't have a text available and quoting from memory and make a mistake? How do you feel about that if this is being inspired by the Holy Spirit? Does it affect your understanding of inspiration if the Holy Spirit allows mistakes into the text?
- The writer purposely changes the quote to shape it for his current audience, leaving out sections deemed irrelevant. What if we were to do that?

What is the message of good news? What is the message of peace? What is the message of salvation?

In Isaiah it has a first reference to deliverance from Babylonian captivity, but it also is a prelude to Isaiah 53, the

prophecy of the Messiah.

So, what is the good news of peace and salvation that we have to take to the world?

I was reading in a book *Rediscovering the Scandal of the Cross* by Green and Baker, the following:

We must face the reality that, even when it is articulated by its most careful and sophisticated adherents, penal substitutionary atonement remains susceptible to misunderstanding and even bizarre caricature. Accordingly, the drama of the death of Jesus becomes a manifestation of God's anger – with God as the distant Father who punishes his own son in order to appease his own indignation. One of us has received a report from a friend leading a Sunday school class in which a boy observed, “Jesus I like, but the Father seems pretty mean!” “Why is God always so angry?” another friend asked. “A policeman with a billy club writing up a ticket for yet another of my transgressions; an official at a basketball game always blowing the whistle: ‘Foul! Foul! Technical foul! You’re out of here!’ – these are the images of God I knew,” our friend observed. p. 30

They also observe:

If, at least to a significant degree, penal substitutionary atonement has been a “culture product” of life in the West, is it any surprise that proclamation of the gospel grounded in this theory has tended to fall on deaf ears in other social worlds? Christian missionaries from the West, armed with this central affirmation of the gospel – namely, the good news that Jesus has come to take away your guilt, that Jesus has been punished for you so that God can declare you not guilty – have often reported their surprise upon discovering the huge populations of the world for who guilt is a nonissue. p. 29

Thoughts?

I have contended for some time that Christ hasn't returned because the gospel of the kingdom has not gone to the world as a witness to all nations. I found it reaffirming that these authors, find the doctrine of penal substitution to be the main construct and manifestation of Christianity that has gone to the world, yet they also find it is merely a product of western culture, not based in Scripture and not effective in reaching the world for Christ.

Do we have a message that resonates for all humans? What is that message? What is the good news you would take?

The world currently operates upon two antagonistic principles, love and selfishness, good and evil, light and dark, yin and yang. Eastern philosophies, and all humans recognize these two principles:

- Plants produce fruit, grains, nuts and beautiful flowers and scents – yet also poisons, thistles and thorns
- Animals are loving, loyal, yet also ferocious and dangerous
- Rain refreshes the land, yet storms destroy
- Despots can murder millions yet love their families
- Christianity teaches battle between carnal and spiritual man

Do we have a message that addresses this? It reminds me of one of the founders of our church who said:

The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. **He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy**, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great

consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the **two antagonistic motives**; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. Ed 191

Do we understand the two antagonistic motives? Can we explain them? Can we express them in terms that connects with other cultures? Do we have any good news to address this problem?

In Eastern philosophy yin and yang is conceptualized not in moral tones, but as positive and negative in everything always balanced. They include things like male and female, back and front, light and dark, hot and cold, up and down, and that as the yin reaches its pinnacle it automatically leads to yang and vice versa.

And the two must be joined together to have a whole like male and female, or light and dark.

What is your understanding of this philosophy? Any strengths? Any weaknesses? Any obvious errors?

- There are aspects of this that are true – male and female as God designed are required to make one whole human
- Front and back of the hand are required to make a whole hand, but so are the sides
- Wheat fully grown yang – goes back to seed, yin – the cycle of life
- So the yin and yang touch on the circle of love, the law of love as God designed the universe to operate
- But the concept that there is no good or evil is, in my mind, a state of denial – there is good and there is real evil in this world. The idea that there is no good or evil actually perpetuates Satan's goal, which is the eternal existence of good and evil.
- The Eastern philosophy suggests, like the wheat, that

death is part of the cycle of life and one must perpetually die and experience reincarnation.

How do you understand the humanity's problem and the good news God has provided to solve the problem and how might you share it with someone from the East?

What about affirming the circle of life, the law of love, the giving to live as seen in nature? What about exploring with them what happens when the circle is broken? So evil would be something that interferes with the seed falling to the ground and growing again.

But is there a difference between a plant and an intelligent sentient being? How do you present eternal life, the possibility of never dying, living forever without pain, suffering, death?

And that in Christ the two antagonistic forces met head to head and love overcame selfishness.

What would you say to those who see a recycling of energy, that when we die the energy that was in us returns to the universe and when someone is born the energy that was ours is being used by them?

Does Christianity have something to say to people who think like this?

Our bodies will return to the dust of the earth, and the breath of life will go back to God, who gave it to us. Ecc 12:7 GNB

Does this have anything to say about energy returning to God? And does God dispense the energy again?

What is the error in the idea that the return of energy in the form a new life, baby being born, is reincarnation as they teach in the East?

It undermines individuality – how many individuals are there?
 With the increase in population if everyone is reincarnated
 where are the new lives coming from?

Consider water used in the body – when we die the water goes
 back into the cycle of water reused throughout the earth,
 when a new baby is born some of the water in their body may
 have been used in many people before, but does that mean the
 baby is one of those previous people?

What good news do we have for people in this view?

What about the story of creation, of the introduction of sin,
 which caused the two antagonistic principles, and a future in
 which no recurring cycles of rebirth and suffering over and
 again, but free from suffering and elimination of pain?

Another aspect is shame versus guilt. In the book,
Rediscovering the Scandal of the Cross the authors point out
 that western cultures have guilt based philosophies while
 eastern cultures have shame based philosophies.

Here are some of the differences between guilt and shame:

Shame	Guilt
Focus on self	Focus on the act
Nature of fault	
Failure to meet self-expectations	Offense against legal exp.
Internal Reaction	
Embarrassment/Disgrace	Condemnation/Remorse
Self-depreciation	Self-accusation
Fear of abandonment	Fear of punishment
Resentment	Anger
Self-isolation	Self-justification
Alienation	Hostility

Social Reaction

Ridicule & exclusion	Blame & hold responsible
Disgrace & hold in contempt	Accuse & condemn
Disapprove & reproach	Punish & retaliate

Remedy

Identification & communication	propitiation through restitution or penalty
Love banishes shame	Justification banishes guilt

Here is a story told in the book to illustrate this difference:

A tragic accident provided...[the] first clues as to why the common penal substitution explanation of atonement, so clear and logical to Western missionaries, had not satisfied this Japanese church leader. A young man from [the local] congregation was driving a company truck and accidentally hit and killed two women walking by the side of the road. The police and court demonstrated more concern for the relationships and people's responses than to written codes. They handled the case in a way markedly different from American legal processes. The young man immediately confessed that the accident was his fault because he had been going too fast. The judge put him in custody but released him to attend the funerals of the two women who had been killed. The judge attended the funerals also and carefully observed not only how the young man behaved but how the families responded to him. In the meantime the police carefully investigated and exonerated the young man. They said he could not have been going as fast as he reported, and they discovered that the company truck had a steering defect. The young man was let out of jail to do a work of public service for the rest of the year, and then he was fully released and rehabilitated. The case demonstrated...that the Japanese had a difference concept of how justice is achieved... (Green, J., Baker, M., *Rediscovering the Scandal of the Cross*, Intervarsity

Press, p. 154)

Thoughts? With this in mind do we have any Good News to take to people in Japan?

Would the message, “Jesus died to pay our legal penalty and take away guilt” reach people in this society? No! What about when Adam and Eve sinned they shamed themselves and humanity, and Jesus came to remove that shame, heal mankind and restore honor to humanity?

Here is one of many quotes that communicate such an idea, imagine sharing this with someone from a shame based society:

Christ came to give expression to the law of God, to represent the Father's character. He came to minister to man, **to restore in him the moral image of God.** Tho he was rich, **yet for our sake he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.** {ST, August 26, 1897 par. 3}

God did not create man sinful. Adam came forth from the hand of his Maker without the taint of evil. The holy pair might have retained their innocence, had they lived by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, had they refused to listen to the strange voice declaring another story than that which God had told them. **But they abused their high and holy privileges.** They were left free to choose between good and evil, and they chose the evil. **And as they chose to believe the lie of Satan and disobey the express command of God, that which was pure and godlike in their nature became perverted and defiled...** {ST, August 26, 1897 par. 4}

In his humanity, Christ lived a perfect life, thus elevating humanity in the scale of moral worth with God. With his human arm Christ lays hold of man, while with his divine arm he grasps the throne of the Infinite. Thus he imbues man with his own spiritual nature, and

lifts him to his side, to be cherished and loved as the Father loves his Son. {ST, August 26, 1897 par. 6}

There are many such quotations – what is the purpose of Christ in this view? Restoration of humanity, taking away shame, restoring humanity back to God’s original ideal, including in moral worth and station.

SUNDAY

Read first sentence, “Many church leaders...” I want to go on record I am willing to share – if you would like to help out we have so many places and opportunities to share this message.

Here are the new pamphlets we have purchased, which describes the beauty of God’s character so share with all Christians. I have several boxes here today and if you want a box to take please feel free to do so. I am putting them in my waiting room at my office. Feel free to do likewise at your office if you would like.

If you have ideas about how to promote this message let us know.

Anyone interested in working as an organizer, planner, administrator helping with all the coordination etc. let us know.

MONDAY

In the first paragraph the lesson suggest that there is fear behind the professional only mindset that a non professional might do something wrong in evangelism and turn people away from Christ and His church.

Thoughts about this?

The lesson asks us to consider what Christ said in Mt 7:17,18:

Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

How does this help us in determining who is qualified for evangelism?

The lesson asks, “How do we determine between good and bad fruit, and how should the church leadership as a whole be involved in this process? Also, how do we do this without judging others?”

Thoughts about this?

When you go to the grocery store and pick out fruit, determining the good from the bad fruit, are you judging the fruit? Or can you do that without judging which is good and which is bad?

Or perhaps they are saying we could not judge good and bad fruit, but mature and immature fruit? In other words someone may be “good” but immature and therefore not ready to lead evangelism?

But, are there bad apples in the mix? How do we determine this? Do we judge people or do we judge the ideas they put forth, the picture of God they teach, and how it affects people?

Like a remedy a doctor puts forth – could a doctor have a good heart and put forth a purported remedy, intending to help, but it is actually ineffective?

Could a profit motivated doctor put out a remedy, not interested primarily in helping but in making money, but nonetheless the remedy works?

Should we concern ourselves with the motives or the message? And what if good people, with good motives are ignorantly, but passionately, putting forth messages that don't heal, and even

perhaps harm? How should we respond?

What is our responsibility? Is it to silence them or to present a healing remedy clearly so people can choose for themselves?

The lesson points out a key – “If we give adequate attention to the leading of people into a meaningful and deepening relationship with Jesus, the Holy Spirit will ensure that they bear the right fruit.”

This is well said – how can we focus our efforts in helping this become a reality for our ministry?

TUESDAY

The lesson brings up a great point, namely that different people, from different backgrounds, cultures, generations, races will respond differently, so each of us can go places and be effective where others of us cannot. Some of you will be able to talk to and witness to people who would never listen to me. And I may be able to witness to some who wouldn't listen to you.

This is a powerful truth that I want us all to embrace, don't think you are not qualified to tell others about God as Jesus revealed. You may be the only person that a particular individual will ever listen to.

What if each one of us were constantly alert for opportunities to share the truth about God's kingdom, methods, principles and what Christ accomplished for us? Do you think we would reach more people collectively than if only a few speak publicly?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Spiritual growth...” thoughts?

What have you found has helped in your spiritual growth?

- Quiet time with God – prayer
 - How many minutes a day do you get with silence, no radio, TV, computer, ipad, iphone, just silence to think?
 - How often to you seek to quiet your mind?
- Meditation on creation
- Study God’s word
- Sharing with others and study with others
- Helping other people
- Others?

Read second paragraph, “A valid question...” thoughts?

How can you tell truth from error? What methods do you use?
What tools are helpful?

- Opinions of others? (Bible commentaries for instance?)
- It feels right?

What are the sources of information from which we can draw?

- Scripture
- God’s laws in nature
- Experience (including experience with God, revelation from God, experience with others, observation, etc)

How do we use these?

- Use all of Scripture requiring all the inspired writings to harmonize
- Require all three sources of information to harmonize – God who inspired Scripture is also the God who created nature and thus the laws of nature
- Reject interpretations that violate the laws of nature
- What is the difference between a natural law and evidence from nature?
 - Natural law – gravity, thermodynamics, law of

- liberty, law of love
- Evidence in nature – fossils, complexity of life
- Laws are constants and can be used as boundaries for our ideas. Evidence of nature is open to interpretation, when, how, why are there dinosaur fossils?
- What are some principles for interpreting Scripture correctly?
 - Pray for wisdom and don't seek to understand God on your own.
 - Have a humble heart willing to learn
 - But don't be gullible, require answers to be evidence based and sensible
 - Important to understand the context
 - But equally important not to be tied to tightly to the context – much of Scripture has meaning outside the local setting in which it was originally written. Plus, primary purpose of Scripture is God revealing himself to us. So, we must use the entire scripture to draw the fullest picture of God
 - Old Testament best understood through the lens of Jesus – not the other way around
 - Evidence texts enlighten or inform the claims texts (i.e. Christ's life inform us to the meaning of the text, "God is love.")
 - Let Scripture define itself, don't bring local, or recent definitions to the subject
- Others?

THURSDAY

The lesson discusses harmony and differences amongst those who are witnessing for the Lord.

If differences arise between people witnessing for the Lord, even publicly, and heatedly, does that necessarily mean either person is not working for the Lord? What about Peter and

Paul? Was there a heated public disagreement? But weren't both still working for the Lord?

But, was one of them in error? Does being wrong on an idea, point, interpretation, presentation, mean one is not working for the Lord?

What would move one outside the Lord's team? Would refusal to follow truth, refusal to grow, refusal to give up error and instead hold to error take one away from God's team? If Peter would have rejected Paul's redirection, and insisted on going down the path of the Judiazers, would he have remained on God's team?

We all have errors, misunderstandings, incomplete perspectives, constructs that are in some way distorted – yet this doesn't remove us from God's team. As long as our hearts remain open to truth, willing to grow, humbly willing to investigate ideas that are different, and allowing evidence to lead us and change our beliefs as new truth unfolds.

If we however, close our minds to truth what happens?

God never urges any one on in wickedness. He never leads man to become desperate in his rebellion. He will not that any should perish, but that all should be saved. **But he forces no one to accept the light.** If, after bearing long with man, God sees that he will not submit, **he leaves him to work out his natural hatred. He gives him up to the worst of all tyrants,--self.** {YI, May 25, 1899 par. 9}

From those **who will not see the light**, who are determined to go on in the hardness of their hearts, **God gradually withdraws the restraining power of his grace.** {YI, May 25, 1899 par. 10}

Today, as in the days when Christ worked his wonderful miracles, **the truth of God is made known.** Men have within themselves **the evidence of its divinity.** The Holy Spirit impresses their minds by the

manifestation of divine power. **If received, the light sent from God leads to freedom, life, and salvation. But if by resistance, preconceived opinions are strengthened, if the God-given blessing is not received, the light becomes darkness.** {YI, May 25, 1899 par. 11}

Thoughts? Does this give any insights?

Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 10 2Q 2012

A Love Response

Read memory text: “If you love me keep My commandments.”
(John 14:15)

When you hear the memory text what comes to mind? What thoughts, feelings and attitudes does it stimulate? How do you hear it?

- A nice suggestion?
- A dictator’s order?
- A manipulation “If you love me....”
- A doctor’s prescription?

What does it mean? Why would we keep his commands if we love him? How is Christ saying this different from a spouse saying, “If you love me you will obey me and do what I say?” Or is it the same? If we love our spouses should we speak to them this way? Then why does Christ speak to us this way?

If your spouse was dying of a terminal condition, and you actually had a treatment protocol that would save them. And perhaps your spouse didn’t understand anything about the seriousness of their condition or the necessity of the treatment, might you say “If you love me you will follow my directions”?

And what is the difference in saying, “If you love me you will following my directions” and “If you love me you’ll wash my car”?

Is it that the directions for cancer treatment are selfless directions, whereas wash the car is selfish commands?

What are Christ’s commands?

Read first paragraph, “Although our memory...” thoughts?

Can you name Christ's commands?

- Love God
- Love others
- Make disciples, spread Gospel, help the needy
- Ten Commandments
- Aren't all of these expressions of love?

So, what is the basis for Christ's commands? Are they not all selfless commands, instructions on how to cooperate with God to live in harmony with God's law of love?

Does it make a difference if we follow Christ's command or not? What difference does it make?

- Does it make a difference in God's attitude toward us?
- Does it make a difference in us?
- This is what science says about altruism, volunteerism or loving others:
 - Dozens of studies over several decades have examined relationships between volunteer work and health-related outcomes. Most studies have shown positive volunteering-health associations. Among, youth, evidence suggests that volunteer work is associated with a plethora of positive developmental outcomes, such as academic achievement, civic responsibility, and life skills that include leadership and interpersonal self-confidence (Astin & Sax 1998).ⁱ
- Four studies between 1996 and 2003 evaluated the effect of volunteerism and longevity in the elderly. Controlling for confounding variables, such as health when entering the study, all four studies "reported that volunteers tended to live statistically longer than those who did not volunteer."ⁱⁱ

- Not only do volunteers live longer but they live better:
 - Several studies have examined the relationship between volunteering and physical functioning. Moen, Dempster-McClain, and Williams (1989) studied 427 women who resided in upstate New York and were both wives and mothers in 1956. Over the next 30 years, compared to nonvolunteers, women who did any volunteering had better physical functioning in 1986, after adjusting for baseline health status, level of education, and number of life roles. Similarly, Luoh and Herzog (2002) found that, compared to nonvolunteers or those volunteering less than 100 hours, those who were volunteering 100 hours or more in 1998 were approximately 30% less likely to experience physical functioning limitations, even after adjusting for demographics, socioeconomic status, baseline functioning limitations, health status, paid employment, exercise, smoking and social connections. Moorow-Howell and colleagues (2003) examined data collected between 1986 and 1994 from more than 1,500 U.S. adults, finding that volunteering predicted significantly less functional disability 3 to 5 years later, after adjusting for demographics, socioeconomic status, marital status, and informal social integration.”ⁱⁱⁱ

When we give of ourselves we operate in harmony with God’s design for life and are healthier. Does it go beyond just physical benefits?

I have many patients who tell me they want to be happy. As I have looked at this, it appears to me that happiness is a by-product, a result of being healthy – Healthy physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, relationally. When we are healthy in every aspect of our lives happiness is a result, but sickness in any area undermines happiness.

What does this have to do with obeying God's commands?

God's commands are the manufacturer's maintenance instructions. Just as your automobile comes with maintenance instructions and if you follow them the car stays in better shape with less problems, so too, God has given us such instructions. When we follow them, we are healthier, and subsequently generally happier.

Does it matter if we do these things out of obligation or out of love? Does it matter what we believe when we do them?

I have a patient 38-year-old lady who has struggled with esteem issues and depression her entire life. She also has struggled with weight issues. Recently she has made some marked improvements in her life. The appointment before last we reviewed, that despite her belief that she is failure, and can't succeed, and is not any good, that she has a master's degree, works for a fortune 500 company as an executive, gets outstanding reviews, has been in a stable relationship for 7 years, and is financially stable. We reviewed that the facts of her life contradict the story she tells herself about herself.

When she came in to her most recent appointment she told me that it was really hard to change years of negative thinking but she forced herself to start telling herself that she was a good person, a responsible person, a reliable, honest, decent human being and stopped recycling the negative thoughts.

She told me that she had joined weight watchers and the first 5 weeks, before she changed her thinking she lost 5.5 pounds, but over the next 4 weeks after she started thinking positively she lost 11 pounds, double the weight loss in 1 less week.

She didn't make any more changes in her diet, in fact she said that weight watchers gives some extra points you can use if you want and during those four weeks she actually ate a little

more than the 5 weeks before, and did no more exercise, so why the greater weight loss?

First, she wasn't just telling herself positive thoughts, she was telling herself positive thoughts that were *true*. If she had been telling herself positive thoughts that were not true it would not produce benefit because she would know it was a lie.

One possible reason is this outcome: Negative thinking activates the stress circuitry of the brain, which increases stress hormones and inflammation. This causes insulin resistance, with subsequent increase release of insulin, so higher insulin levels. Insulin causes the body to store energy. And the body stores energy as fat. When she had more positive thinking she had less stress and reduced the stress hormones, and inflammatory factors reducing insulin thus reducing the pressure to store fat allowing for greater weight loss.

Truly, God's methods of truth and love are healing.

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, "Our love for God..." thoughts? How do we experience God's love?

Anyone like to share how you have experienced God's love in your life?

- From others? I have experienced love from you, from your kindness, affection, acceptance knowing my shortcomings, yet still being my friend.
- I have experienced God's love in situations in which he has provided answers, insights, and interventions, deliverance.
- I have experienced God's love in the quiet moments, the heartache, the comfort in painful times.

Do you find it hard to experience God's love? Is it harder than experiencing love from people?

What barriers have you found to experiencing God's love?

The fact we can't see and touch God? Does the fact Jesus left the earth make it easier or harder to experience God's love?

What might the situation be like if Jesus were physically on earth today? Would most of us get a chance to know him personally? Do we have a greater opportunity for personal fellowship in the current situation than most people had 2000 years ago?

Read next paragraph, "Our love for God..." very well said, thoughts about this?

What gets in the way of knowing God? What helps in knowing God?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Over the centuries..." thoughts?

Have you ever heard appeals that stimulated guilt? Have you ever lived under a church-induced burden of guilt?

Do such approaches generally work to help people find a saving relationship with God?

The next dark section states, "Read Romans 3:19,20. What did the apostle Paul mean when he said the whole world is guilty before God?"

Read Romans 3:19,20:

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (NKJV)

Thoughts? What does it mean? What do you hear by this idea of being guilty before God?

Here is my paraphrase of these two verses:

^{3:19} Now we know that the 10 Commandments are like a medical diagnostic instrument, identifying infection and diagnosing disease. It diagnoses accurately everyone who is infected with distrust of God, filled with selfishness and is dying of sin, so that everyone who claims to be sin-free or free of selfishness will be silenced and the entire world will recognize its need of God's healing solution. ²⁰ Therefore, no one will be recognized as having a healthy relationship with God and being like Christ in character by adhering to a set of rules; rather, it is through the 10 Commandments that we become aware of our sickly state of mind. (my paraphrase)

Thoughts? Does "guilty" give us the right sense of the meaning Paul is trying to convey?

Read the next paragraph: "The way Paul..."

Thoughts?

Does the law communicate a sense of accountability, or a sense of reality, what our situation actually is?

Read the next two paragraphs, "The law's function..." thoughts?

Yes the law is like a mirror which reveals our situation, or condition, but cannot cure. But what does this mean, "After we come to Christ we are no longer motivated by guilt,

because the guilt has been washed away, covered by the righteousness of Jesus.”?

If you are cleaning your house is there a difference between washing something and covering something?

Which is it? Does God wash us or simple cover our defects?

Now, what about washing of guilt? Is this legal guilt or emotional guilt? Which of us are legally guilty of being born sinners?

But, do we struggle with emotional guilt? Where does this guilt come from? From the condition of sinfulness? From bad theology? From both?

Do we need to feel guilty for being sinners? Did anyone in this room have a choice not to be born a sinner? If you were born this way without a choice is it your fault?

Then why does the lesson suggest we should experience guilt?

Maybe they are suggesting we should experience guilt for the “sins” we have committed?

Imagine an HIV infected man and woman get together and have a baby born HIV infected, did the baby do anything wrong? Should the baby feel guilty about being HIV infected?

Will the baby have symptoms of this infections? Can the child do anything, by him/herself to avoid having symptoms? Should this HIV infected child feel guilty for having symptoms? Is there anything the baby can do to cure itself, by itself? Will it need something outside itself to cure it?

We are born sinful, not by our choice, will there be symptoms of this condition? What do we call those symptoms? Sins, can anyone of us, unaided, avoid sinning? Can any of us cure ourselves? Should we feel guilty for these symptoms?

If there is a remedy that will cure the HIV child, but the child refuses to take the remedy, and instead prefers to be sick, should the child feel guilt for that?

If there is a remedy for sinfulness, and we refuse that remedy should we feel guilt for that?

So, what guilt is rightly ours? Is it not the guilt for rejecting the remedy, and choosing instead to persist in a life of sin? Can we, because of Christ's victory, because of God's interventions, experience a change in our hearts, minds, characters so that sin becomes repulsive? Can we actually long to be free of it, and when we slip up and fall short are grieved in our hearts?

He has made it possible for us to choose to say no to destructive impulses. We don't have to lie, steal, pillage, rumor monger etc. If we persistently, habitually, repeatedly, engage in those activities it is not simply because we were born sinful, but because we go about rejecting God's grace, his remedy in our lives, we are responsible for those sins, and the guilt is ours!

The real question we need to ask is, not have I sinned, but have I rejected God and his remedy for my sin condition?

Read James 2:10:

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

Then read last paragraph, "The fact that an offense..."

Thoughts?

What is the focus? What do you hear the lesson suggesting is the problem? Notice how it makes one guilty of defying "the God who commanded it." What are they saying is the problem?

Do they make it sound like this is an offense to God? Have you ever heard it suggested that it offends God when we sin?

In their book *Rediscovering the Scandal of the Cross* by Green and Baker they state:

Whatever meaning atonement might have, it would be a grave error to imagine that it focused on assuaging God's anger or winning God's merciful attention...The Scripture as a whole provides no ground for a portrait of an angry God needing to be appeased in atoning sacrifice." (p. 51)

What do you think it means to offend in one point is guilty of breaking all?

Her is my paraphrase: "For who ever loves in one area, but lives selfishly in another area is still out of harmony with God's design." James 2:10

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "What would you think..." thoughts?

Did any politicians come to mind?

Read last paragraph, "We are not just talking..." thoughts?

Would you have expressed it as "In any loving relationship our motivation is to please the one who is the object of our love."?

That might work if the one on the other side of the relationship is perfect and healthy and always does and wants what is right, but could that be a dangerous principle, if the one on the other side of the relationship is unhealthy?

If we have a person, spouse, or child, or friend, who is immature and into self-gratification, not self-improvement, then if we love them do we do what will please them?

Why or why not? What might be a problem with this idea?

Can you think of another principle? What about doing what is right, healthy and reasonable, what is in their best interest not necessarily what will please them?

Or, we will do what would please them only if they are operating upon God's principles?

What about the idea that whatever we do for God that doesn't come from a desire to please him means we don't understand what it is to have a love relationship? Because God is perfect, and he is always interested in our eternal good, it is safe to always seek to please him. Right?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

Can we bless others if our actions are not motivated strictly by love?

Can a doctor, or nurse, or PT, or dentist, or auto mechanic, or hair stylist, or repairman etc. do something that is a blessing to another, simply because they want to make money or promote their reputation?

Can a brother or sister babysit a younger sibling, rather than go out with friends, because they are ordered by their parents to do it, not out of love, yet still be a blessing to their younger sibling?

Can a person do something out of love that injures another and is not a blessing? Can a doctor, maybe a missionary doctor, not even getting paid, but motivated by love to help others, prescribe the wrong medication that causes a bad outcome?

How do we break these things down?

Regarding the character development of the person doing the action the motivation is what matters, not the specific action or outcome. If the motivation is right, and one is doing their best, then the character still develops along healthy lines, regardless of outcome.

However, if the motivation is selfish, the character is marred regardless of outcome.

Regarding others, often the outcome is more important than motive. Could a person motivated by love, affection, desire to help, be misunderstood and be accused of interfering or causing problems, or even betrayal?

This is why we are not to judge, man looks on the outward appearance but the Lord looks upon the heart.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “Legalism in the Christian...” thoughts?

Is this the only type of legalism or can you think of another?

What about the legalism of God executing Christ in our place so our legal penalty can be paid? Isn't this another form of legalism?

Read last paragraph, “A legalistic religion...”

Notice the legalism described in the lesson doesn't result in actual character transformation, but instead in a certain arrogance, Pharisaism, selfishness.

But what about the idea that our problem is legal and we need legal solution, does that result in character transformation, or instead a false security of legal pardon?

If our diagnosis is wrong our solution is wrong. If we move the problem out of our heart, mind and condition, and into a heavenly court, or heavenly record, then rather than getting healed, we build a false confidence on getting a legal declaration of innocence, which leaves us just as sick and terminal.

And in the Great Controversy, our witness for God is in being healed. If we failed to experience God's healing, but go about claiming legal pardon, or declared innocence, we will misrepresent God.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The Bible..." thoughts?

What do these terms mean to be adopted, or born again? How do you understand them?

Are these literal or metaphorical? What are they trying to teach or convey? That a change happens in us, and in our relationship to God, what change?

Is it a legal change or an actual change in us? Why are we "adopted"? If we are God's by creation, why the need for "Adoption"? What does this metaphor teach? Was it for all humans or was Paul using it to help Gentiles overcome Jewish bigotry?

Born again, means? A renewed heart and mind, and when this happens we are again united with God, loyal to him again. Who gets changed in this process? Does God's attitude toward us change or our attitude toward him change?

Consider the prodigal son, though born a son, when did he cease to function as a son? When did he again get his sonship back, the ring of family authority on his finger? Did the father change or the son?

Read second paragraph, “The effective...” thoughts?

This is well said, giving up the past, what does it mean to give up the past?

History cannot be changed, our records in heaven do not get erased, what gets changed is our hearts, we give up the past, give up:

- Trying to undo past mistakes and instead live by new principles
- Trying to have a different childhood
- Trying to change our parents
- Trying to re-parent our children
- Reliving the past over and over again in our minds

Instead we surrender ourselves, including our histories, and accept a change in inner motivation, drive, desire, principles, longings, a change of heart. We get changed, not our history, and with this change we begin choosing differently, orienting our goals, actions in Godly directions.

We give up:

- Unhealthy friends and associates
- Destructive habits and practices
- Immoral material and media

Not because we are afraid of what God will do, but because we no longer want those things infecting, dominating, controlling and destroying us!

And we establish and engage in:

- New and healthy relationships
- Church fellowship
- Fellowship and communion with God
- Bible study prayer
- Helping others
- Truth based thinking
- Evidenced based decision making
- Grace and tolerance for others
- Hope for the future
- Trusting God with outcomes
- And more...

FRIDAY

How do we keep ourselves and our ministry moving forward in God's cause?

Thoughts?

ⁱ Post, S. *Altruism and Health Perspectives from Empirical Research*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2007: p. 20, 21.

ⁱⁱ Ibid p. 22.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid p. 26.

Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 12 2Q 2012

Evaluating Witnessing and Evangelism

Read Memory Text: “To one who listens, valid criticism is like a gold earring or other gold jewelry.” (Prov 25:12 NLT)

Thoughts?

Does this mean that valid criticism should be discarded like gold jewelry? Or, is it saying that gold jewelry is something consider precious, that should be applied and worn, that can enhance us, and like such jewelry we should apply and be enhanced by valid criticism?

What would make criticism valid?

- Truthfulness
- Accuracy
 - Can someone be accurate without being truthful? No.
 - Can someone be truthful without being accurate?
 - Can a person present, honestly, what they believe to be a criticism, but from their understanding and perspective, still be inaccurate?
 - What would this mean about hearing criticism of someone you trust and you know is being very honest and sincere?
 - Would it mean that you must still filter their criticism through your own, Holy Spirit enlightened, mind and come to your own conclusion?
- Pertinent
 - Can something be pertinent without being truthful and accurate? No, but...
 - Can criticism be truthful, and accurate, but not pertinent? Examples?
 - The youth’s that criticized Elisha for being bald, it was truthful, and accurate, but it wasn’t pertinent

- Applicable or usable
 - Can criticism be truthful, accurate, and pertinent, but not applicable or usable?
 - Criticize meeting facility, and the critique is truthful, accurate, pertinent, but not applicable because the cost of changing facilities are prohibitive.
- Hearable, meaning presented in a way it can be understood and accepted – so presented in love
 - Can criticism be truthful, accurate, pertinent, and applicable, but presented in such a way that it is misunderstood, offensive, or unacceptable?

Read second paragraph, “Sometimes large sums...” thoughts?

What constitutes “minimal results”? What standard are we using to evaluate our efforts? What measuring devices are appropriate? What are inappropriate?

- Converts?
- Donations?
- Letters/emails of support and appreciation?
- TV or radio ratings?
- Number of hits on the website?
 - Can one have success in all these areas without actually be working for God’s kingdom?
 - How many pro-sports teams, movie stars, music idols, and others succeed in all of these?
 - Does that mean such measures are without merit?
- Are there any other measures to consider in our evaluation?
- What about the quality of the message itself?
- What about the transforming impact it has on the lives of people?
 - Do people become less fearful?
 - Do they love others more?
 - Do they become kinder, gentler, more altruistic?

- What about, on an individual assessment basis, the motives of those doing the ministry?
- Other measures?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Evaluation will take...”

Thoughts? Would you have chosen a different word than professionalism? “those who attend public meetings expect a high level of _____”?

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Sincerity
- Truth
- Christlikeness
- Something real, not something performed?
- Caring about the people being spoken to?

Do you think that if you heard the prophets or Apostles preach, would you have written that those presentations had a high level of professionalism?

I am not criticizing professionalism at all. I am a medical professional. We work very hard to do all of our work for the Lord to the highest standards, professionally. I think this is quite a good thing – I am only asking, is it number one?

Can you have professional presentations that don’t present the truth? Could a professional presentation mislead?

Wouldn’t the most important thing in a presentation be truthfulness, and Christlikeness, revealing the truth about God and His kingdom? And, of course, to the highest professional standards we are capable of, but I would not want any one of you here or online, who have come to know the truth of God’s kingdom, to wait for professional “training” or

some other “professional” opportunity to share this truth. If God opens an opportunity for you to speak, ask the Holy Spirit to enable you, prepare your best, and go share what you know about God!

Read second paragraph, “When God’s Word...” thoughts?

Is it important to evaluate our responses to God’s standards, directions and commands?

- But before we evaluate our responses to His standards would it be important to first evaluate God’s standards, directions and commands? Or should we just do what it says, “God said it, I do it, that settles it”?
 - What about the command to not cook a kid in its mother’s milk
 - Stone a child for cursing their parents
 - Women not being allowed to speak in church
 - Women being submissive to their husbands
 - Using the tithe to buy fermented wine to drink and rejoice before the Lord

Is it appropriate, to question and evaluate God’s instructions before acting upon them?

The next paragraph points out that Paul gave certain qualifications for deacons and elders, meaning that a certain evaluation was necessary. Why do you think Paul said that church leaders should not be given to “too much wine” rather than church leaders should not drink any wine? And then told Timothy that he should drink a little wine to help with his stomach?

Should we think about this instruction, or just accept it and have a periodic libation?

The last paragraph reminds us of our commission, instruction, to take the gospel to the entire world, should we ever stop and ask, “what message are we to be taking?”

If you were Satan, would you try to infect the gospel message with distortions so that people actually went into the world proclaiming a false gospel, thinking all the time they were taking the truth?

Has this actually happened?

How can we present the gospel in a modern world so that it becomes relevant to people today?

What barriers have you found in presenting the gospel?

Dr. Marcum and Heartwise Ministries has teamed up with Come and Reason Ministries to present the gospel, the truth about God's kingdom of love to the world, by showing how Scripture and science harmonize, how God's methods heal, how medical science confirms Bible wisdom. This fall our first annual seminar, *Modern Medicine, Biblical Technology and The Brain* will endeavor to present the gospel in simple and practical terms that has relevance to people's lives today.

What ways have you found to be helpful?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "While there..."

THANK YOU to all of you who are part of this ministry! Those who come each week to class, those who listen online, those who share this message in your community, our prayer partners, those who donate, those who are writing study guides, those helping with all the technical responsibilities.

We are a team, working together, why? Because we have found something worth sharing. We have found God beautiful, trustworthy, reliable, and reasonable. We have come to know Jesus and seen some of what He came to reveal about His Father. And we have been changed, experienced greater peace,

and joy, and love, and want to share a healing message to set other minds free from lifelong fear and insecurity.

The lesson asks us to read Heb 10:24,25:

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Thoughts?

Is it beneficial to meet together? What is the benefit?

- Love, acceptance, support, encouragement, friendship
 - To experience, after stumbling, after falling, after being caught in adultery and thrown down publicly, the grace of Christlike love and restoration!
- Growth in knowledge, learn new perspectives
 - To study together, to remove distortions, misunderstanding, to come to a clearer knowledge of God and His methods
- To pool our resources, energies, talents and skills to be more effective in reaching others

What interferes, stops, hinders, undermines, obstructs people from meeting together and helping each other?

- Fear and selfishness –
 - fear of getting hurt, rejected, embarrassed, gossiped about, laughed at, fear of not being loved,
 - anger, resentment, hurt over mistreatment or failure to be acknowledged, valued or appreciated
 - active expulsion, or rejection by others
- Lack of relevance to the daily life
- Believing church is primarily about saving you – rather than the truth that church is primarily about equipping

you and putting you to work to spread the healing message with others.

- When people believe church is primarily about their salvation then they conclude, “I don’t have to go to church to be saved.”
- Other obstacles?

How do we help each other grow spiritually?

WEDNESDAY

Read top Bible passage, “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’” (1Sam 16:7, NKJV)

Thoughts?

How do you apply this passage to your life?

First – to yourself?

- Do you judge yourself more by outward appearance or by the heart?
 - If you study in school, do your best, but get a “C” how do you judge yourself? A winner?
 - If you train diligently for a race and do your best but come in last place, how do you judge yourself?
 - If, as a parent, you did all you knew how to do for your children, your heart orientation was for their good, but they grew up and left the church and went into wild living – how do you judge yourself?
 - Are we at peace with ourselves, knowing that our heart motives are surrendered to God and seeking his will, or do we judge self as failing if events we can’t control don’t turn out the way we would like?
 - Are we judging by the heart or by the outward appearance?

Second, how do we apply this to others?

- Do we judge others by heart motive or by outward appearance?
- Dress?
- Day of week they worship upon?
- Eating at restaurants on Sabbath?
- Wearing jewelry?
- Or perhaps, following Christ, preaching the gospel, seeking to raise funds to help the poor and needy – you know, just like Judas did?
- Do we judge by outward appearance on the heart?

Read last paragraph, “How do we as sinners...” thoughts?

The lesson suggests the spiritual disciplines noted in the texts above:

- Mt 26:41 – watch and pray
- 1Thes 5:17 – pray continually
- Rom 8:6 – surrender mind to the Spirit
- Eph 6:17,18 – helmet of salvation and sword of spirit, the word of God
- 2Tim 2:15, 16 - know God’s word
- Ps 1:2 – delight in his law

Thoughts? Could someone watch, pray, study Bible, claim the helmet of salvation and a mind surrendered to the spirit, and promote God’s law and still be lost?

Did those who crucified Christ claim all of this?

And of course all of these are vital – but can you think of other evidences to evaluate?

- Do they love others?
- Are they tolerant of differences?

- Do they leave others free?
- Do they treat the fallen with grace, compassion and love?
- Do they gossip, or protect reputations?
- Seek to help people more than seeking to keep rules?
- What picture of God are they revealing?
- Do they live in harmony with God's testable laws?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The very reason..." thoughts?

How are we doing? Let's step back a minute and take lessons from the Jewish nation in Scripture:

- What was their calling, mission?
 - To prepare the world for the first advent of the messiah
- What is the mission of the SDA church?
 - To prepare the world for the second advent of the messiah
- What did God give them to help in their mission?
 - Prophetic messages
 - Sabbath
 - Health message
 - Blessings of tithing and giving offerings
 - Sanctuary message
 - School system
- What did God give the SDA church to help in their mission?
 - Prophetic message
 - Sabbath
 - Health message
 - Blessings of tithing and offerings
 - Sanctuary message
 - School system
- How did the Jewish nation do?
- How are we doing?

- What was the problem with the Jewish nation? What got in the way? Here is how one Bible commentator put it:
 - **The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. {ST, January 20, 1890}
 - Examples?
 - Sabbath burdened by human rules, Christ healed on Sabbath, but they wanted to stone him.
 - Failure to treat all men equal, Christ brought salvation to Jews and Gentiles.
 - Corban – rather than honoring parents
 - Willingness to pull an animal out of a ditch on Sabbath, but not help a human.
- Is there anything interfering with our mission to take the gospel to the world?
 - Is our problem similar? Is it over some misrepresentation of God's law, which misrepresents him?
 - **The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God.** Upon this battle we are now entering,—**a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah,** between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition. {GC88 582.2}

- What has happened to our church? We, like the Jews, have accepted the idea that God's law is imposed, rather than the truth that God's law is the law of love, the principle upon which life is built to operate.

TUESDAY

Bottom paragraph refers to Jesus critique of the Pharisees evangelism, that they made converts twice the sons of hell. What was it about their evangelism that did this? What were they doing that caused people to be more tied to Satan's kingdom? Did they teach...

- The wrong Sabbath?
- The wrong clean and unclean foods?
- Not to tithe?
- The wrong sanctuary?
- The wrong sacrifices to bring to sanctuary?
- Not to pray?
- In evolution?

What was it they taught that enslaved the mind deeper into Satan's kingdom?

That God would use his power to punish the Romans! In other words, that God uses power to force his way, inflict torment, torture, and death, that God punishes those who disagree with him. When we accept this view of God we become twice the son of hell.

Read top dark section, "Read the following..."

Thoughts? What does this mean to you?

- Fear – awe, admire, be amazed, humbled – Does God want us to be afraid he is seeking to harm us? In other words, does God want us to be terrified or afraid of him?

- Walk in all his ways – Why? What does it mean to walk in his ways? What are his ways? Aren't his ways the design parameters for life, so wouldn't it be like saying, breathe, or drink, or eat the foods God created for human nutrition, or love others?
- Love him – Why? From where does our love for God originate? Is it not in response to his love for us?
- Serve – Why? Because we are servants and the master commands, or because we are loving friends and eagerly volunteer to serve because we love and agree with him?
- Why does it say his statutes and commands are for our good? What happens if we disobey them? Will God be forced to punish or do we deviate from the law of life?

Middle of the page it says, “The texts say that God “requires” (or “asks”) these things of us. How are we to understand the meaning of this in the context of salvation by faith alone?”

Jesus achieved the remedy to sin, singly and alone, and there is nothing we can do to improve upon, create, or add to this remedy. However, we must actively participate in the application of this remedy to our lives. To experience God's healing it is a cooperative effort of the Holy Spirit applying to our lives what Christ achieved.

Can God save someone against their will?

Can a person save themselves without God?

It is a cooperative effort, that we must actively choose to participate in.

Here is how one of the founders of our church put it:

- **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who**

- would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer.** It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a **partaker of the divine nature.** Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}
- While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the **divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part.** His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}
 - We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
 - **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with

God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding**, but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}**

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "Have you ever..."

I do not want our ministry to be a one man band, I want all of you to be active participants, because what we are doing is not about me, it is about God, His kingdom of love, and its power to heal and transform lives.

Read and discuss the three questions.

Announcement:

October 13, 2012 our first annual **Modern Medicine, Biblical Technology and Your Brain, Seminar**. The event will go from 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. and our lectures will be:

The Balance in Healthcare – Jim Marcum, M.D.

The time to use modern medicine, the time to use lifestyle changes will be explored. Also, the role of the Great Physician in healing will be emphasized. Dr. Marcum will give an update on the latest technology and show non-traditional ways to change the chemistry. The importance of understanding an optimizing brain function will be introduced.

**The Developing Brain – Timothy R. Jennings, M.D.
FAPA**

Experience changes brain structure and function. Beginning before conception, continuing in utero and through life, explore how environment, experience and choice alter human DNA and impact brain structure and function. The human brain is pliable and changeable and our experience causes our brain to change. This change begins in our parents genes prior to our conception, continues in the womb and persists throughout life. In this presentation we will explore how parental choices affect the developing brain and follow that through into childhood to explore how healthy nurturing, traumatic experience, diet, addictive substances, television, and even belief in God alter our, genes, brain structure and brain function.

**The Science of Belief – Timothy R. Jennings, M.D.
FAPA**

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing.

Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Could our belief in God actually make a difference? Are some God constructs healing while others are harmful? Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew.

Prolonged Exposure – Jim Marcum, M.D.

This lecture will enlighten the audience on the cause of disease. We will show how the lectures given by Dr. Jennings is unique in modern medicine and how the brain is at the base of treatment as well as cause of illness. We will discover why 1:4 have mental health problems and how medicines may not be the answer.

Depression - Timothy R. Jennings, M.D. FAPA

Depression – Have you ever been depressed? Or known someone who was depressed? Did you know depression is a complex disorder with alterations in both brain and body, loss of brain volume with altered brain circuits and even change in genetic expression? Come discover how you can minimize your risk of depression, drug free interventions that can treat depression, and changes in your daily routines that can protect your brain.

The Aging Brain – Timothy R. Jennings, M.D. FAPA

What happens to the brain as we age? Are we doomed to lose our memories and become senile? Are there choices we can make to protect our brain from the ravages of time? Come discover science-based, Biblically sound, interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia.

Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 13 2Q 2012

A Perpetual Ministry

Read Memory text, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches." (Luke 13:18,19, NKJV)

Thoughts?

What does this parable tell you about God's kingdom? One of the founders of our church commenting on this verse and said in the book Christ Object Lessons page 77:

The germ in the seed grows by the unfolding of the **life-principle which God has implanted**. Its development **depends upon no human power**. So it is with the kingdom of Christ. It is a new creation. **Its principles of development are the opposite of those that rule the kingdoms of this world. Earthly governments prevail by physical force**; they maintain their dominion by war; but the founder of the new kingdom is the Prince of Peace. The Holy Spirit represents worldly kingdoms under the symbol of fierce beasts of prey; but Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. **In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience**. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. **But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin.** {COL 77.1}

Thoughts?

What is the principle of life? The law of love! Which emanates from where?

What are the methods of the world? What are the methods of God's kingdom?

What is God seeking to do in order to create mankind anew? To implant something in the heart, what is it? Can it be put there by force or might? If force and power, or threat and coercion are used to try and put truth/love into the heart, what gets put into the heart instead?

What does this truth do to all the theories of an angry, vengeful and punishing God? Why do so many insist that God will use the methods of Satan, coercion, force, power to punish the wicked? Continuing from Christ Object Lessons:

Not only is the growth of Christ's kingdom illustrated by the parable of the mustard seed, but in every stage of its growth the experience represented in the parable is repeated. **For His church in every generation God has a special truth and a special work.** The truth that is hid from the worldly wise and prudent is revealed to the child-like and humble. It calls for self-sacrifice. It has battles to fight and victories to win. **At the outset its advocates are few. By the great men of the world and by a world-conforming church, they are opposed and despised.** See John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, standing alone to rebuke the pride and formalism of the Jewish nation. See the first bearers of the gospel into Europe. How obscure, how hopeless, seemed the mission of Paul and Silas, the two tentmakers, as they with their companions took ship at Troas for Philippi. See "Paul the aged," in chains, preaching Christ in the stronghold of the Caesars. See the little communities of slaves and peasants in conflict with the heathenism of imperial Rome. See Martin Luther withstanding that mighty church which **is the masterpiece of the world's wisdom.** See him holding fast God's word against

emperor and pope, declaring, "Here I take my stand; I can not do otherwise. God be my help." See John Wesley preaching Christ and His righteousness in the midst of formalism, sensualism, and infidelity...{COL 78.2}

The great leaders of religious thought in this generation sound the praises and build the monuments of those who planted the seed of truth centuries ago. Do not many turn from this work to trample down the growth springing from the same seed today? The old cry is repeated, "We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow [Christ in the messenger He sends], we know not from whence he is." John 9:29. **As in earlier ages, the special truths for this time are found, not with the ecclesiastical authorities, but with men and women who are not too learned or too wise to believe the word of God.** {COL 79.1}

Wow! Did you get all of that from the parable of the mustard seed? Thoughts?

Should we be discouraged if ecclesiastical authorities don't value what we are doing, but instead accuse us of contradicting 500 years of Christian thought?

Are we presenting a message consistent with God's kingdom as represented by the mustard seed? Or, are we acting like those who reject the advancing truth, the truth for this generation?

SUNDAY

First sentence states, "It must be emphasized again that witnessing and evangelism must continue as long as there are people who need salvation."

Let's break witnessing and evangelism up and evaluate them separately – first, what about witnessing and the idea that it must continue as long as people need salvation?

Is that long enough? Will there be a purpose, a need, for witnessing beyond the time people need salvation? What need and what purpose for witnessing after the earth is made new and what evidence do we have that it will go on?

Here is one Bible commentator, from the book *Great Controversy*, see if you agree with this, remembering that much symbolic language is used:

Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire,—so resplendent is it with the glory of God,—are gathered the company that have “gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.” [Revelation 15:2.] With the Lamb upon Mount Zion, “having the harps of God,” they stand, the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from among men; and there is heard, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of a great thunder, “the voice of harpers harping with their harps.” [Revelation 14:1-5; 15:3; 7:14-17] And they sing “a new song” before the throne, a song which **no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb,—a song of deliverance.** None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; **for it is the song of their experience**,—an experience such as no other company have ever had. “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as “the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” “These are they which came out of great tribulation;” [Revelation 14:1-5; 15:3; Revelation 7:14-17.] they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God's judgments. But they have been delivered, for they have “washed their robes, and

made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” **“In their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault” before God.** “Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.”
 [Revelation 14:1-5; 15:3; Revelation 7:14-17.] {GC88 648.3}

What song are they singing? What does it mean to stand without an intercessor? What is the traditional explanation? What is your explanation?

Why are they without fault before God?

- Does their song, the song of their experience give witness to anything?
- Does their being without fault before God give witness to anything?
- To what does their song, their experience, their lives give witness?
- To whom does their lives give witness?
- Are they giving witness to those who need salvation?
- What is the purpose for witnessing for God at this time?

Consider this quotation from Desire of Ages page 26:

Of His people God says, "They shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land. For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!" Zechariah 9:16, 17. **The exaltation of the redeemed will be an eternal testimony to God's mercy.** "In the ages to come," He will "show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." "To the intent that . . . unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known . . . the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Ephesians 2:7; 3:10, 11, R. V. {DA 26.1}

Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made

known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. **Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy.** By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union. {DA 26.2}

Why can sin never rise again?

- Is there something about Christ's work that precludes sin from ever rising again?
- Does our witness have any purpose in demonstrating the effectiveness of Christ's work?
- Are we to be witnesses for God throughout eternity future of the horrors of sin and the incredible grace and goodness of God?
- Does our witness have some part to play in inoculating the universe from sin ever arising again?
- Might we travel the universe giving our witness of what God has done for us?
- Will it be a witness to those in need of salvation?

What about evangelism – as long as there are any people who need salvation it must continue?

- Will there come a time when people will not longer need salvation? When will that time be?
- What causes that time to happen?

Read second paragraph, "It seems..." thoughts? What do you think of this formula?

- How do we get people's attention about God and the gospel message?
 - Super Bowl ads?
 - Billboard about the mark of the beast?
 - Protesting abortions or homosexuals?
 - News releases that God is punishing sin every time a natural disaster strikes?

- Ideas?
- How do we secure their interest?
 - Do we have anything to offer that is actually interesting?
 - Is it interesting to discover how the universe runs?
 - Is it interesting to discover the truth about God, the GC, how mankind came into being, what happened to God's design, the infection that brings devastation, and God's healing solution?
 - Are there mysteries of the universe that we have answers to?
- Do we offer anything that people actually desire?
 - Do the answers to the mysteries we provide supply an actual need of people today?
 - Does the gospel message we present, if applied, actually transform lives for the better? Or, does the message do as Christ told the Jews in his day, make the convert twice the son of hell?
- What undermines or decreases people's desire for the gospel message?
 - Preconceived ideas – been there, done that, doesn't work?
 - Dislike for the gospel they have heard?
 - Business of life – no time?
 - Gospel they have heard isn't relevant to their lives?
 - Failure to appreciate their need?
 - Failure to appreciate what is being offered?
 - Already found something mysterious, and believe they already have secret knowledge, but have believed falsehood?
- How do we avoid getting drowned out by the background noise of so many other "gospels" being presented?
 - Present evidence based, testable truths that leave people free to think
 - Love people who disagree
- How can we present the message of God in a way that it rises above so many other messages? Or do we believe all messages are equally valuable and there isn't anything really different about what we are presenting?

- The message we present must be reasonable, evidence based, understandable, and applicable.
- The message must have a real, transforming impact on the lives of people.
 - In other words, it must be real and substantive.
- We must demonstrate the power of God's kingdom of love in our lives so that others can see the difference, in love, forgiving hearts, kindness, mercy, grace, gentleness, meekness, goodness, truthfulness, and the subsequent peace, joy, happiness, healthiness that we experience.
- People are hurting, afraid, lonely, suffering. Sin is painful, scary, and cruel. The world is hungering for something real to deliver them from the misery of this world – do we have something that is real and brings peace?
- Then we must tell people.

Bottom paragraph states, “In the end, although we are called to help people in whatever situation we find them, and to minister to their needs however we can, we must never forget that their greatest need is salvation in Jesus.” Thoughts?

How does this relate to the health message?

- What is the purpose of the health message?
 - Is it primarily to help people live a few years longer?
 - No, it is to teach the plan of salvation through the laws of health, and by living in harmony with the laws of health maintaining greater mental efficiency and usefulness for God's cause
 - What is the danger in presenting the health message disconnected from the gospel?
 - What is the danger in presenting the gospel disconnected from the health message?
- I recently heard a program which presented many scientific facts about the dangers of eating high

cholesterol foods, animal products etc, but never really connected it with our relationship with God.

- Did the antediluvians have a problem with high cholesterol, Diabetes, obesity? No! They had a problem with their relationship with God. This is the primary issue!
- If we hold to an imposed law construct does it impact how we present the health message? How?
- Will there be people in heaven who ate pork regularly, throughout their lives, even drank wine regularly?
- Will there be vegans who won't be in heaven?
- Then what is the importance of the health message? Learning how God's laws work, how He designed life to operate, and then choosing to live in harmony with His design. But if we choose to live healthfully, but misunderstand the divine character as an imposer of law and punisher of lawbreakers then we have missed all the health message is designed to teach.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "A vital part..." thoughts? What gets in the way of nurturing people who come into the church?

- Could it be misunderstanding of what the church is to do in the lives of people?
- Could the church struggle with intolerance?
- Could there be an idea that we must get conformity?
- Could the church, be like the Jews 2000 years ago, and believe God practices principles of coercion, therefore do likewise?
- Does the church ever exert pressure upon people to change, a pressure that if one doesn't conform they are not accepted?
- Do we ever send messages that our love for people is conditional based on their willingness to live by what we believe is the right way for them to live?

- Will we love people just as much if they don't go to church on Saturday or Sunday – say Friday?
- Will we love people just as much if they are gay?
- Will we love people just as much if they eat meat, or like contemporary music, or wear jewelry?
- Or do we send signals that say, you are tolerated, but not appreciated? You can attend but cannot contribute until you conform? Until you remove your jewelry we can't have you on platform?

What is the balance between loving people unconditionally and calling sin by its right name?

How would we treat someone who was blind, deaf, who was struggling with cancer, tuberculosis, HIV, tobacco addiction, drug addiction?

- If someone was struggling with any of these problems would we love them less?
- Would we treat them differently? Absolutely – how?
 - Would we provide assistance to help the blind person navigate the stairs, hallways etc.?
 - Would we provide sign language translation for the deaf?
 - Would we provide isolation masks for the TB patient?
 - Would we visit those too sick to come to church, and help with meals?
 - Would we provide support groups for the addicted?
 - Would we treat them differently? Absolutely – why? Because their condition requires it!
 - And what would all our “different” treatment be focused upon doing?
- Would we exclude them from our love? Would we judge them as unworthy to be involved? Would we ostracize them?
- Would we allow them to be in ministry? If we didn't why would we not allow it? Only if their condition precluded it

and we would work to get them to a condition in which they could be involved.

- Is this how we treat those we see in sin? Why or why not?

The next paragraph states that new Christians need to be nurtured, brought up, trained, fostered, educated in the ways of the Lord. What are your thoughts about that?

- Is there a difference in educating in the ways of the Lord and educating in the ways of the church? What differences?
- What are the ways of the Lord? Would they not be the law of love, the law of liberty, the principles of truth, love, freedom? Teaching the history of the GC over God's character? Educating on the devastation caused by deviating from God's design, the truth about God's character etc?
- Is this different from educating about church ritual?
- What can our class do to help people grow in the Lord?
- We are having our first public seminar this fall, after the seminar what kind of follow up can we provide for those who want more?

Bottom pink section, "Does your church..." thoughts?

TUESDAY

Training the trainers – who of you would be interested in helping us develop a training the trainers course/curriculum?

How many would be interested in attending a seminar designed to teach you how to teach others?

What elements would you like included in this?

- Critical thinking skills training?
- Principles of Bible study?
- God's laws?

- Public speaking skills?
- How to ask questions?
- How to hear what is not being said?
- Others?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about reaching out to those who have left the church and bringing them back into fellowship.

What did you take away from the lesson?

The lesson suggests we need to create a loving and nurturing environment that will help those who join us want to stay.

The lesson also suggests that people, at times, leave over doctrine, but usually the reason they leave is not doctrinally related, but personal. Thoughts?

I question this – I think doctrine is at the core to why people leave – that we have presented a false system of heavenly legalism, with an imposed law construct, and legal payment requirements for salvation. On this foundation we have laid, Sabbath, State of the Dead, Trinity, Creation, Sanctuary, Health Message etc. A person may not leave because they no longer agree with one of these specific doctrines, but I would like to suggest, the underlying legal construct is at the root of leaving. Why?

First, because the underlying legal construct doesn't connote a loving and nurturing atmosphere, regardless of how hard they try, its foundation is imposed rules/laws with imposed punishments and the organization will eventually act this way toward those who deviate from the "rules."

Second, such constructs ultimately make the reasons for being involved in church arbitrary, there really isn't a good reason other than God and the Bible says so. This is not compelling.

Imagine teaching your children to brush their teeth, but never teaching them why, the only reason they ever know is that “mommy said so.” Will they likely keep it up after they leave home? But if they understand the natural law behind it, and the reason for it, then they are much less likely to stop brushing when they grow up.

Likewise, presenting Sabbath and other doctrines as imposed rules, with the reason no more than God says so, is unsatisfying and increases the likelihood of people leaving, however when people understand God’s law is the law upon which life is built then they are much less likely to choose to leave it.

Thoughts?

The lesson suggests we read 2Cro 5:18-20:

All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. ¹⁹Our message is that God was making the whole human race his friends through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends.

20 Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends! (GNT)

thoughts? How do we do this? What is the message that we have that turns people from enemies to friends?

THURSDAY

The lesson talks about people going out the back door of the church and the second paragraph states, “Discovering the back...” thoughts?

What is the back door? How would you define it?

What are reasons people leave?

- They disagree with what the organization teaches and stands for
- They have been hurt
- They have gotten busy and stay away
- They have done something and are embarrassed to return
 - Divorce
 - Addiction
 - Criminal arrest
 - Gained weight
 - Disfiguring scar
 - Lost their job, lost their home, bankruptcy
- Missed a few weeks and no one noticed or called
- Others?

How can we help people from wandering off and getting lost?

How can we keep people engaged?

The US Army is organized into: Armies, Divisions, Brigades, Battalions, Companies, Squads, Individuals. At each level there is someone assigned to account for their members, all the way down to the individual squad member. If someone is missing people notice.

Should we have a more structured organization, would you prefer greater accountability so if you are not here it is noticed, or do you prefer greater anonymity?

How do we find the balance of letting people know they are missed with they are not here, with the freedom to know that they are valued and loved and there is no pressure to be here?

FRIDAY

Asks the question how can we be sure that an evangelistic event is more than just a one time event?

What would each of you like to help you prepare for follow up of our seminar in October?

Read and discuss questions 2 and 3

1 and 2 Thessalonians Lesson 1 3Q 2012

The Gospel Comes to Thessalonica

A little history of Thessalonica:

The City of Thessalonica.

The city of Thessalonica flourished for hundreds of years, partly because of its ideal location. It was situated on the banks of a hospitable harbor in the Thermaic Gulf near the northwest corner of the Aegean Sea. In the Apostle Paul's day it was the chief seaport of the Roman province of Macedonia. Thessalonica ranked with Corinth and Ephesus, the main ports of the provinces of Achaia and Asia, as a great shipping center.

Thessalonica also enjoyed another advantage. The Egnatian Way, the main Roman road from Rome to the Orient via Byzantium (modern Istanbul), passed through the city. This put Thessalonica in direct contact with many other important cities by land as well as by sea. It was one of the most important centers of population in Paul's day, occupying a strategic location both governmentally and militarily.

Estimates of the population of Thessalonica in New Testament times place it at near 200,000 (Everett F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964, p. 245). Most of the inhabitants were native Greeks, but many Romans also lived there. Orientals and Jews likewise populated the city. Wherever commerce flourished in the ancient world one would find Jewish businessmen. The Jewish synagogue in Thessalonica was influential; many Greek proselytes were present when Paul preached there (Acts 17:4).

First Thessalonians reflects the moral climate of the city. The pagan Greek religion of the largest segment of the population produced many forms of immorality but

whetted the appetites of some for spiritual reality. Evidently the higher standards of Judaism attracted disillusioned Greeks, Romans, and Orientals to the synagogue.

Thessalonica was built by Cassander in 315 B.C. near the site of an ancient city called Therma, named for the hot springs in the area. He chose this place for its excellent location and named it after his wife, Thessalonica, who was a half sister of Alexander the Great. Cassander was a Greek general under Alexander.

Many years later, when the Romans conquered the area (168 B.C.), they divided Macedonia into four districts and named Thessalonica the capital of one of these. In 146 B.C. the Romans reorganized Macedonia and made Thessalonica the capital of the new province which encompassed all four of the older districts. In 42 B.C. Thessalonica received the status of a free city from Anthony and Octavian (later called Caesar Augustus) because the Thessalonians had helped these men defeat their adversaries, Brutus and Cassius. The Romans ruled Thessalonica with a loose hand; though the Roman proconsul (or governor) lived there, no Roman troops were garrisoned in the city. The citizens were allowed to govern themselves, as in a Greek city-state, which they did through a group of five or six politarchs, a senate, and a public assembly.

In World War I the Allies based soldiers in Thessalonica, and during the Second World War the Nazis extracted 60,000 Jews from the city and executed them. Thessalonica still exists today with a population near 300,000. It is called Salonica (or Thessaloniki)¹

¹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *Vol. 2: The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (687). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Luke gave a detailed account of Paul's ministry in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1–10). Paul taught in the synagogue for three Sabbaths. He worked to bring in support (1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8) and also received offerings from the Philippian church (Phil. 4:16).

Paul was forced out of the city and went to Berea (Acts 17:11–12). Jews from Thessalonica disrupted the ministry in Berea, forcing Paul to depart (Acts 17:13–15). Paul moved on to Athens and left Silas and Timothy in Berea to continue the work. Silas and Timothy eventually joined Paul in Athens (1 Thess. 3:1–2). From there Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica. Paul had gone on to Corinth where Timothy again caught up with him and brought news from Thessalonica (Acts 18:1–5). Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians from Corinth.²

Thoughts about the history of Thessalonica?

Read Memory text 1Thes 2:13: “And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.”

Thoughts about this?

How do you think the Thessalonians knew this was the word of God?

- Checked it with OT Scripture?
- Had miraculous signs and wonders?
- Conviction in their hearts by the HS?
- It made sense?
- It was more reasonable than any other religion they had heard?

² Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). *Tyndale concise Bible commentary*. The Tyndale reference library (615). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

It was a pretty radical teaching Paul brought them, but, were they prepared because of their own prior beliefs? What were some of the common pagan concepts?

Was it surprising for them to hear that a god left heaven and became a man? Or that God was interacting with men?

What was the typical character traits of the gods of the Greeks? Weren't they fairly selfish in character? Didn't they use power, might, lightening bolts, etc. to force their way?

Did the gods of the Greeks demonstrate selflessness or did they incite fear?

Would it have been appealing to hear a message that God is actually like Jesus? Could this contrast in character have met the longing of the heart – to be loved, for a Savior to deliver, rather than a deity to demand sacrifice from the worshiper?

From *Rediscovering the Scandal of the Cross* by Green and Baker:

“Among the Greeks and Romans, then, sacrifices were offered in recognition of the supremacy of the gods and in exchange for their favors. Walter Burkert refers to this function of worship as ‘crisis management.’ Although he is aware that, in ancient Greece, sacrificial rites fostered fellowship among the worshipers who shared in the sacrificial meal, he also recognizes that ‘adversity teaches prayer.’

All the great crises that leave men helpless even when united may be interpreted as caused by the wrath of the Stronger Ones, gods and heroes: bad harvests and infertility of the soil, diseases of men and cattle, barrenness of women and abnormal offspring, civil wars and defeat by a foreign army. Conversely, if these powers are appeased, all kinds of blessings must return, rich harvests, healthy

children, and civil order. The traditional means to secure the one and prevent the other are sacrifice and prayer especially in the form of vows.

“This does not mean that the Gentiles among whom Paul proclaimed, and to whom he wrote, concerning the cross of Christ were well-prepared culturally for this message... It does mean, however, that Paul’s Gentile audiences were likely to read the story of the cross with certain guiding presuppositions. Chief among these would have been the arbitrariness of the gods, whose anger must be turned away and whose benefits must be sought. It is puzzling that many of our American readers share these same assumptions about God – in spite of the fact that neither the Scriptures of Israel nor Paul himself supports this view.” (p. 50-51)

Thoughts? How many today approach God in “crisis management” mode – trying to appease him and obtain blessings?

Do you think the Greeks, getting a glimpse of a God who sacrifices Himself, rather than demands sacrifice, resonated with this truth?

The last paragraph states, “But our confidence in God is even more solidly grounded when it is based on the clear teaching of His Word.”

Thoughts about this idea?

If the Word is so clear why are there so many Christian denominations and so many disagreements even within the same denominations?

Is it because the Word is vulnerable to the culture lens of the reader? And could it be that this vulnerability to cultural interpretation and misunderstanding is magnified because the

Word is used in isolation and other threads of evidenced are excluded?

I want to suggest a new method of studying God, let's call it the Integrative Evidence Based Approach and it requires we harmonize three threads of evidence:

- Scripture
- God's laws in nature
- Experience

Here are a couple of quotations from one of the founders of our church that supported this approach:

- In the study of the sciences also, we are to obtain a knowledge of the Creator. **All true science is but an interpretation of the handwriting of God in the material world.** Science brings from her research only fresh evidences of the wisdom and power of God. **Rightly understood, both the book of nature and the written word make us acquainted with God** by teaching us something of the wise and beneficent laws through which he works. {CE 66.2}
- **Rightly understood, both the revelations of science and the experiences of life are in harmony with the testimony of Scripture to the constant working of God in nature.** {Ed 130.3}

What do you think about an approach that requires integration of all three threads of evidence? Does it offer any benefits to approaches that use only the Scripture? What benefits?

Which is more likely to end up with erroneous beliefs – Scripture only, or an integrated approach that requires harmony of all three threads?

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Acts 16:9-40 and asks why the people reacted so negatively to the gospel.

In the account Paul presented the gospel to Lydia and her family and they accepted it quite readily. Then a slave with a demonic spirit, who was used for fortune telling, followed Paul and Silas shouting that they are bringing the truth for salvation. Paul cast out the demon and the owners of the slave aroused opposition to Paul and Silas for the loss of the slave's abilities and their means of making money.

So, why did the town get aroused against Paul and Silas? Because the owners of the slave were upset at losing their "cash cow."

When you read the story did you wonder why the demon inspired the woman to follow them and shout they were bringing the truth for salvation? What reasons could there have been?

- Demons are notorious for telling the truth and promoting the gospel?
- Demons are helpless and are compelled to tell the truth in the presence of an Apostle?
- To discredit the work of Paul – how many believed the spiritual women?
- To distract Paul and unsettle him?
- To ultimately entice them to cast out the demon so the owners would turn the city against them?

Thoughts?

Read first paragraph, "The gospel..." thoughts?

How do you hear this paragraph? Would you express it differently? How?

How do you define forgiveness? Is it God's personal pardon? Is it reconciliation with God? Is it transformation of the believer back to God's ideal?

Are people sometimes confused by this question? Could statements like this be part of the problem?

David was pardoned of his transgression because he humbled his heart before God in repentance and contrition of soul, and believed that God's promise to forgive would be fulfilled. He confessed his sin, repented, and was reconverted. In the rapture of the assurance of forgiveness, he exclaimed, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psalm 32:1, 2. **The blessing comes because of pardon; pardon comes through faith that the sin, confessed and repented of, is borne by the great Sin Bearer.** Thus from Christ cometh all our blessings. **His death is an atoning sacrifice for our sins. He is the great Medium through whom we receive the mercy and favor of God.** {OHC 83.5} 1891

What do you think? How do we understand such statements?

What about covering of sin?

In Hebrew there is something called parallelism in which one verse is followed by another which expands or elaborates on the previous verse.

Example:

"But let judgment run down as waters,
and righteousness as a mighty stream." Amos 5:24

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Ps 19:1

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psalm 32:1, 2

Do you see the parallelism? Sins forgiven parallels with the Lord not imputing iniquity – to forgive means not to hold it against someone.

And to cover parallels with “in whose spirit is no guile”

Fantastic – notice it is not a covering up, but a cleansing such that no guile is in the spirit of the forgiven.

The Hebrew translated to cover can mean – “to keep to oneself, to not respond with knowledge, i.e., keep information from others, though known and understood by oneself”³

So Happy is the man whose sin is forgiven, who isn’t exposed, humiliated, ruined, who God doesn’t find fault with and in whose spirit is no evil.

Here is a clarifying comment from the same author 5 years later:

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9.
God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by

³ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, **"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us."** Psalm 103:12.
{MB 114.1} 1896

Notice, forgiveness is not about covering up our sinful condition, but about removing sinfulness from us, so that no guile is left in our spirit!

Then why the language of pardon?

Because we need the assurance of His pardon because sin causes guilt and fear, and we doubt He could possibly love us and want us after we have sinned. Consider the evidence:

- Adam and Eve in the garden – what did they do? Ran and hid, why? They were afraid, where did the fear originate? What did God do? How did He respond?
 - Did God forgive before or after they repented?
 - But what needed to be communicated in order to bring them to repentance?
 - The truth about God's forgiveness so their fear would be removed.
 - The kindness of God brings us to repentance (Rom 2:4)
- What about the woman caught in adultery? What did Jesus do? Who do we see when we see Jesus?
 - Did God (in human form) forgive first or did she repent first?
 - What empowered her to live a better life?
- What about those who put Christ on the Cross? What did Jesus do?
 - Did Jesus forgive?
 - Did they repent?

- And the Scripture says,
 - “While we were still sinners Christ died for us.”
 - “If God is for us who can be against us...”
 - “For God so loved the world that he gave...”

The evidence reveals that God is forgiving, without any action from anyone, including Christ, but we could not be healed, reconciled, rebuilt, restored to unity with God without the action of Christ.

We need to hear the assurance from God that he forgives, pardons, doesn't condemn, to calm our sin-based fears of condemnation and rejection, but God has nothing originating in him that requires action in order for him to forgive or pardon.

Read second paragraph, “Being that the gospel...” thoughts?

This certainly is a reason some people reject the gospel – is it the only reason? Do you think this reason would be why Buddhist monks reject the gospel, for money, sex and power? Can you think of any other reasons?

- Don't believe they actually have a problem that needs fixing
- Don't believe in the gospel they have heard – because it doesn't merit belief
- Believe the problem is something other than it is and thus have another solution, like meditation, reincarnation etc.

Bottom green section asks, “What are the things of the world that, if we're not careful, can draw us away from the Lord?”

- Worries
- Bills
- Health problems
- Politics – in the civil government and in the church

- Ball teams
- Entertainment
- Substances
- Sex
- Relationships
- Education
- Career
- Worldly system of government and law accepted into the religion, such that we become controlling and Pharisaical

MONDAY

Paul's preaching strategy - what do you understand the strategy of Paul to be?

Read bottom green – “Notice that Paul...” This is correct, Paul tried to understand the minds, biases, belief, attitudes of his audience and then shape the gospel to their understanding.

Is Paul the only one who did this in Scripture?

What does this mean for how we must read and interpret Scripture?

Could the various metaphors of Scripture be crafted to the mindset of the audience being addressed? In other words, might we err in making too much out of a particular example, metaphor or angle of approach?

I am thinking particularly of any legal language, would Paul tend to use more legal examples when speaking to Jews who were very legalistic? Does that mean we should understand Paul to be promoting a legal gospel?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Since ancient times...” thoughts?

What led to the elimination of the suffering texts? Would it be a misunderstanding of the problem?

If the problem was that God was offended and God needed appeasement by sacrifice that might lead to one type of interpretation of Scripture. If understanding the problem is that mankind is defective and needs fixing, then that would lead to another type of interpretation.

Read third paragraph, “Of course, a major problem...” thoughts?

Do we as Christians do any better job of incorporating a balanced view of God’s character? Or do we present God as two faced, a god who is not only loving, but also just, a god who returns with a look of love on his face for the righteous, but a look of anger and wrath on his face for the wicked?

Will Christ come with two faces?

The Jews wanted a Messiah who would use power to destroy their enemies, and what do Muslims want in their Twelfth Imam?

- A powerful deliverer who will punish and destroy their enemies.
- And what do Christians preach about Jesus’ return?

What is the difference between what the world is waiting for today and what the Jews were wanting 2000 years ago?

Did Jesus change His character in the last 2000 years? Will He who forgave his enemies and told us to love our enemies come back with something other than love for his enemies?

The lesson suggests there is much confusion about the second coming – what is the second coming of Christ confused with or about?

Could it be the common teaching of the second coming and how Christ will treat the wicked, fits more with the beast of revelation than with the Lamb of God?

What will Christ's attitude be toward the wicked in the end? If he has a forgiving heart, why do they perish? Because their condition is not healed – they die of a terminal condition.

Bruce Reichenbach in *The Nature of the Atonement* describes that sin kills, whereas God, through Christ, heals:

Why is the death of the Servant of Physician necessary? For most atonement theories this is the heart of the problem. If God is omnipotent and merciful, why demand a route to salvation that exacts the price of the death of God's Son?

Our response can be traced to the virulence of our disease borne by the Servant. What he takes on is no trivial matter; the wages of sin are death (Rom 6:23). Death, in some form, came into the world through sin (Rom 5:12). Christ voluntarily assumes this virulent poison, so strong that it brings death, ours and his, but at the same time not so strong that death can permanently hold the Physician. The death is in the sin. Our sin, not God, kills the Physician. God's part is in mercy to send his Servant/Physician to heal and then to restore him to life and power.ⁱ

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Suffering Before Glory

What does the title mean to you?

Can you think of any examples other than Jesus?

- Olympic Gold medal winners – do they suffer before glory? How, why?
- Nobel Prize Winners – any suffering before glory? How, why?
- Great artists – any suffering before production of masterpieces? How why?
- Individual character development and victory – any suffering before glory? How and why?

Why is there suffering before glory?

What do you think of this quotation, do you agree?

A refining, purifying process is going on among the people of God, and the Lord of hosts has set His hand to this work. **This process is most trying to the soul, but it is necessary in order that defilement may be removed.** Trials are essential in order that we may be brought close to our heavenly Father, in submission to His will, that we may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. . . . **The Lord brings His children over the same ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility fills the mind, and the character is transformed;** then they are victorious over self, and in harmony with Christ and the Spirit of heaven. **The purification of God's people cannot be accomplished without suffering.** . . . He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. True grace is willing to be tried. If we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is one of peril. . . . {ML 92.2}

It is in mercy that the Lord reveals to men their hidden defects. He would have them critically examine the complicated emotions and motives of their own hearts, and detect that which is wrong, and modify their dispositions and refine their manners. **God would have His servants become acquainted with their own hearts. In order to bring to them a true knowledge of their condition, He permits the fire of affliction to assail them, so that they may be purified.** The trials of

life are God's workmen to remove the impurities, infirmities, and roughness from our characters, and fit them for the society of pure, heavenly angels in glory. . . . **The fire will not consume us**, but only remove the dross, and we shall come forth seven times purified, bearing the impress of the Divine. {ML 92.3}

Thoughts? Why is there suffering?

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, “What we can see here...” thoughts?

Why is the gospel for all people? Because all suffer with the same problem and need the same solution.

Do we ever struggle with communicating the equality of all men, the commonality of all humans, the underlying difficulty with which we all struggle?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2

¹ Beilby, J., Eddy, P., *The Nature of the Atonement*, Intervarsity Press 2006, p. 137.

1 and 2 Thessalonians Lesson 2 3Q 2012

Preserving Relationships

What are the only things we get to take to heaven? Ourselves and our loved ones – nothing else on earth goes – we don't take our houses, cars, computers, computer games, books, Bibles, websites, artwork, clothes – and thankfully we don't even take these bodies!

We only take ourselves and the people we love. Should this truth make a difference to us in how we live?

The key thought states, "True evangelism leads to relationships that can stand the test of time."

Thoughts? What is necessary for a relationship to stand the test of time?

- Trust
- Love – Godlike love

And what is necessary for trust and love?

- Individual trustworthiness of character, i.e. renewed hearts where we love others more than self – which means a relationship with God
 - Which requires coming back to the truth about God as revealed in Christ
- And this change of heart, with trustworthy character results in:
 - Honesty
 - Patience
 - Freedom – love doesn't exist in an atmosphere without freedom
 - Understanding
 - Kindness
 - Truthfulness – with ourselves and others
 - Self-control

- Genuine caring for the wellbeing of others

What causes relationships to fail?

- Selfishness is the obvious answer but can anyone give some examples of what selfishness does to relationships?
- 2 weeks ago we had a Let's Talk on Domestic Violence – we discovered that people can appear pious, righteous, devoted to God on the outside, but be selfish and demanding, and abusive.
- Insecurity – fear what does fear do in a relationship?
 - Suspiciousness
 - Accusations
 - Control
 - Monitoring
 - Jealousy
 - Envy
- Addictions
- Resentment/bitterness/unforgiveness
 - Because we are human we do make mistakes, so we will be disappointed, let down, hurt by others
 - If we don't forgive, if we hold grudges what happens to the relationship?
 - What happens to us?
 - What prevents people from forgiving?
 - Fear – of getting hurt
 - Desire for revenge/wanting to make people pay
 - False sense of justice, its not fair....
 - What enables people to forgive?
 - Experiencing forgiveness themselves
 - Understanding the true nature of God's kingdom and the true nature of sin
 - Love for others
 - And where do these attributes originate? From God
- Biases, bigotry, prejudice, false beliefs

What does God provide for us that assists us in developing relationships that last?

- Grace – forgiveness, mercy, a new start with a new heart!
- A relationship with Him and the presence of His Spirit
- A new perspective
- Purpose
- Love
- Wisdom

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “When someone preaches...” thoughts?

Have you ever experienced anything like this?

What do you think are the reasons people would do this? What are the possibilities?

- Purposeful opposition to understood truth because don’t want to accept the consequences of what the new truth would mean?
- Unwillingness to accept a new truth because the result would cause emotional distress –
 - Spent 20 years writing a systematic theology text on a certain atonement model – but new evidence demonstrates that model is wrong, would one have a difficult time accepting evidence demonstrating the model is wrong?
 - New truth results in conflict with loved ones?
 - New truth results in change in lifestyle, diet, friends, work, habits, day of worship?
 - New truth could result in loss of reputation, scientist accepts God and creation?
- Genuinely believes the lie and is convinced the truth is destructive?

What is the best way to handle such opposition?

From the book *Christ Triumphant*:

Let Christ be seen in all that you do. Let all see that you are living epistles of Jesus Christ. . . . Let your life win the hearts of all who are brought in contact with you. There is too little done at the present time **to render the truth attractive to others.** There have been some who have, in speaking to the people, felt like making a raid on the churches. They sour minds by their censoriousness [judgmental and critical attitude]. We want our hearts mellowed by the love of Jesus. That is in God's order. **If not presented in the most pleasant, acceptable form, truth will be unpalatable to many.** While we must present the truth in contrast with error, let it be presented in a manner that shall create as little prejudice as possible. . . . {CTr 329.2}

Thoughts?

Out of the book *Evangelism*:

The best way to deal with error is to present the truth, and leave wild ideas to die for want of notice. Contrasted with truth, the weakness of error is made apparent to **every intelligent mind.** The more the erroneous assertions of opposers, and of those who rise up among us to deceive souls, are repeated, the better the cause of error is served. The more publicity is given to the suggestions of Satan, the better pleased is his satanic majesty.-- Testimonies to Ministers, p. 165. (1892) {Ev 166.1}

What do you think of these ideas?

It seems when people oppose the truth the best approach is to remain Christlike, and I will admit, it is a real spiritual battle, but with God's grace, remain loving, present the truth in love and leave others free.

What about the idea of contrasting truth with error? Why is this sometimes necessary?

- In order to help those in error to understand and comprehend the difference between the truth and error
- But, we do not contrast the two in order to humiliate, demean, criticize, hurt others or to aggrandize self.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Persecution can be a two-way...” thoughts?

What would you suggest would be examples of inappropriate behavior?

- In the next paragraph the lesson points out that Paul said some of the Thessalonians were “busybodies” – what does that mean? How could that cause problems?
- What about criticizing a church group or other organization?
- Billboards calling certain behaviors Satanic or Mark of Beast?

In the 1890’s the US congress was poised to pass legislation that would require all citizens to observe Sunday as a religious day. If the government should pass laws requiring all businesses to close on Sunday and proclaim Sunday as a day of worship and spiritual renewal – what should our response be? Should we purposely stand up and draw attention or should we be cooperative?

Here is one person’s thoughts, written when congress was debating passing such laws:

To defy the Sunday laws will but strengthen in their persecution the religious zealots who are seeking to enforce them. Give them no occasion to call you law-breakers... Keep right on with your missionary work,

with your Bibles in your hands, and the enemy will see that he has worsted his own cause. One does not receive the mark of the beast because he shows that he realizes the wisdom of keeping the peace by refraining from work that gives offense, doing at the same time a work of the highest importance.--Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 232. {ChS 163.4}

Sunday can be used for carrying forward various lines of work that will accomplish much for the Lord. On this day open-air meetings and cottage meetings can be held. House-to-house work can be done. Those who write can devote this day to writing their articles. **Whenever it is possible, let religious services be held on Sunday. Make these meetings intensely interesting. Sing genuine revival hymns, and speak with power and assurance of the Saviour's love. Speak on temperance and on true religious experience.** --Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 233. {ChS 164.2}

Wow, is this how you would have responded? What are the pros and cons to doing this?

What do you think are the motives of those who wanted to legislate religious observance?

I heard on the news this week that the US park service is considering banning motorcycles from many of the parks because so many complaints, the noise from some bikes can be heard over 12 miles away in some parks. The reason they are considering this is not a desire to punish motorcycle riders, but to protect the tranquility of the parks for all who enjoy them.

Do you think those who promote Sunday legislation are motivated by a similar desire, not to make others worship or believe as they do, but to protect a day they find special from what they perceive as being polluted or desecrated?

What is the problem with this type of thinking? That other people can desecrate your spiritual experience by failing to observe your beliefs.

In Romans 14:5 Paul says “One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.”

First, what does it say about God that he gives us genuine freedom to make up our own minds?

And a few verses later Paul states, “if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.” (vs. 14)

What do you understand these passages to mean?

How can something be sin because we think it is sin?

If you believe the lie that eating cheese is sin, what will happen every time you eat cheese? Your orbital and medial PFC will fire, impairing dorsolateral PFC, activating amygdala, causing the experience of fear, guilt, anxiety, shame, insecurity, activating the body’s immune system, activating inflammatory cascade, resulting in damage to brain and body.

Further, how does the person who feels guilt, anxiety, fear and shame act? Do they feel insecure, do they run and hide from God?

So, what is the problem – eating cheese? No! The problem is believing the lie, because lies believed break the circle of love and trust, activate fear circuits, and result in selfishness, severing our trust and unity with God!

But what about if you believe a lie in the other direction, as was taught 120 years ago by doctors, that cigar smoke is good for lung disease? If you believe this lie what happens? You smoke cigars with a clear conscience, but what happens to your body, including your brain? They get damaged.

But what if you believe a lie that the apple you just ate has been poisoned? What will happen?

The belief in a lie doesn't make something harmful good, but will cause something good to become harmful.

Satan is the father of lies and he seeks to infect our minds with lies so that our internal mental, physical and spiritual health will be damaged.

What would you say if a person bought 1000 Bibles and publicly burned them to protest Christianity?

What would Muslims do if someone publicly burned Korans?

What is the spiritually mature response?

- Does the burning of a sacred book change God?
- Does the burning of a sacred book by another person change you? – It depends on what you believe in regard to the act – this is Satan's trick – if he can get another person to do something, that infects your mind with a lie, he can get you to act destructively.
 - If you believe that God is offended, that it is blasphemous, that such action requires punishment and thus we riot to burn the embassy of a particular nation or hang the person who did it, then we are damaged.
 - But if we believe that the other person is only demonstrating what is in their heart. If we cling to the truth that all sacred books are going to be burned when Christ comes anyway, and that burning a book doesn't change God, His methods, or the truth of God's kingdom, then we have compassion for the one closing their mind to truth. We speak like Jesus, "Father forgive them, they don't know what they are doing."

In the bottom section the lesson points out that the Bereans were more noble because they checked everything Paul said with the OT scripture.

Why is this a good idea? As we have said in here many times, this class is not here to tell you what to think, but is here to get you to think for yourself, to get you to examine the evidences and come to your own conclusions.

The lesson states as Christians “we have many things to learn and many to unlearn.”

What gets in the way of learning new things and unlearning old things?

- If we believe something is true how easy is it for us to “unlearn” it?
- Could it be a mindset that believes “I’ve got the answer I don’t need to be confused with any other possibilities?”
- Do we want to “arrive” at the truth, or do we want to be “growing” in the truth? Understanding that God is infinite and there is an infinity of new truth to discover?

Bottom green section asks, “What are some examples of the Christian church acting in ways that were clearly in the wrong?”

- Crusades
- Inquisition
- Burning people at the stake
- What about using church resources and energy to seek to get the “right” politicians in office? Did Jesus or the Apostles ever seek political change?
 - Is the church to focus on changing the state, or changing the hearts of men?
- What about public statements that blame God for natural disasters – accusing God of punishing cities for wickedness?

- Other examples?

TUESDAY

Read bottom green section, “How well...”

Do you think it is important to know what is being taught by other religious groups and by the non-religious community?

Why is this important?

If you don't know what the ideas, beliefs, arguments, biases of others are does it make it more difficult to present the truth effectively?

Then, with this attitude in mind, would we expect that if a Christian university, in its biology department, taught evolution, so that the students could be familiar with the way the science is presented in the non-believing community, the constituency of that Christian university would be supportive and thankful of such a good job in educating their young people?

Have you ever heard of a case in which a Christian university's faculty were attacked by their own constituency for trying to educate their students about evolution?

Why are some in the religious community afraid to have the evolution science presented?

Why are almost ALL those in the scientific community afraid to have creation science presented?

Could it be that both groups suffer from the same underlying problem – fear that evidence could undermine their beliefs?

I love this comment by one of the founders of our church:

There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. **Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.** {CW 35.2}

Do you notice that many scientist are not willing to be fair, they refuse to include evidence that undermines their preconceived ideas.

A book by Sanders, *Genetic Entropy*, does a great job of documenting the DNA evidence that the theory of evolution is wrong. He demonstrates the mutation rate in the DNA is so high that natural selection cannot eliminate the damaging mutations and over time all life on earth is in a slow state of decline. But much of the scientific community refuses to acknowledge this evidence and continues blindly down a path that is becoming increasingly exposed as wrong.

Do Christians do the same thing in any way? How?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson reviews how Paul approached people differently in different cities and affirms Paul for being flexible and not using a cookie cutter approach to evangelism.

What are different ways we can reach people with the truth about God and His kingdom of love?

- Making the truth about God's character of love the center
- Daniel/Revelation seminars
- Health fairs/seminars
- Creation science seminars
- Social events
- Bible study groups with friends/neighbors

- Book by book approach looking for truth about God
- Other ideas?

THURSDAY

The lesson points out that Paul had real heart connection and concern for the people in Thessalonica, and he longed to present the believers to Christ.

What can we do to develop closer relationships with each other and those with whom we share Christ?

Is it easier to connect with some people than with others?

If you find that it is difficult to feel a connection with some people does that mean there is necessarily something wrong with you or them?

Why is it sometimes difficult to experience a connection with others?

- Different personalities can be so different they just don't mesh – does that mean either one is necessarily “wrong”?
- Some people do have hardened hearts and are closed off
- Some people do have biological problems, which make connecting to others difficult
- Some people have been injured, hurt, abused, and have been so traumatized they are afraid to trust or get close

Is there a difference between loving others and trusting others?

What is the difference? What are we called to do?

When should we trust?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 3 and 4

1 and 2 Thessalonians Lesson 3 3Q 2012

Thessalonica in Paul's Day

Read memory text: "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible" (1Cor 9:19).

Thoughts?

Is Paul a slave? No – he states explicitly he is free – but makes himself a slave, meaning he freely chooses to act the part of a slave, but he is not a slave.

What is he trying to communicate here?

Would it have anything to do with the law of love?

Is he saying, that once he was set free from sin and death by Christ, he freely chose to become a servant, to give of himself in order to reach others so they might be free?

What kind of relationship does God want from us? That of friends or slave?

Or does he want free slaves? Those who freely choose to live lives that love others, that we freely choose to give of ourselves to help others?

This week Stephanie gave birth to Lennox Nicole – our new granddaughter – and we have already observed how both Michael and Stephanie are now slaves to that child. They have chosen to freely enslave themselves for the welfare of their child. And what motivates them?

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for

themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 2Cor 5:14,15

What compels? Love, and what does it look like? That we no longer live for self but for God and others.

Isn't that what Paul means when he says though free he is a slave? A slave to loving other people?

Could this type of language ever be misunderstood? How might it be misunderstood?

Could people actually misconstrue Paul's words to mean that God wants us to relate to him like a master and a slave, "God said it, I believe it, that settles it." And what might be at the root of such a misunderstanding?

Could it be a misunderstanding about God's character and law of love?

SUNDAY

The lesson suggests we read John 11:48-50:

If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

⁴⁹ Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! ⁵⁰ You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

And then the lesson asks, "How were the political and religious decisions regarding the ministry of Jesus impacted by the arrival of the Romans in first-century Palestine and Jerusalem? Think through the logic expressed here. In what frightening ways does it make sense?"

Thoughts?

Do you think that if the Romans were not occupying Israel when Jesus arrived, that if the leaders of Israel were independent, King Herod, Caiaphas, etc. that they would have treated Jesus differently?

Do you think Jesus was treated the way he was because of the Roman occupation?

No, then what is going on in this passage? The Romans get used as a tool to manipulate the other leaders into turning against Christ.

“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds. Jn 8:58,59

²² Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³ and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon’s Colonnade. ²⁴ The Jews gathered around him, saying, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”

²⁵ Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me, ²⁶ but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one.”

³¹ Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, ³² but Jesus said to them... Jn 10:22-32

Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. ¹⁸ Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet

him. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!” Jn 12:17-19

Were they concerned about the welfare of the nation or their own power and position?

What is going on here? These people are theologians, Bible professors, priests, pastors, leaders in the church. They have spent their entire lives promoting the “gospel” and working for God.

What would motivate people, who are leaders in the church, to want to stone someone?

- The belief that they are the bastions of truth, of orthodoxy and they must protect the poor ignorant masses from being deceived by others?
- That God wants them to act in ways that use power to coerce, pressure, stone those who present a message they don't agree with?
- That they recognize the rising popularity and are threatened with losing their own standing as the bastions for truth and thus losing power over others?

How should we treat people today who present a message that differs from ours?

Is it okay to openly debate, to openly present ideas that disagree with others, as long as one remains focused on the ideas, concepts, evidences, perspectives and continues to value the other person?

Is it okay to attack someone personally?

Why is it people will attack a person rather than the message? Is it because they can't refute the message so they want to distract away from the message onto other issues of controversy?

So what approach should we take? Present the truth in love and leave others free!

So back to the question in the lesson – was Christ treated as he was because of the Roman occupation? I don't believe so, but the Roman occupation was used to manipulate others into killing Christ.

Does the argument of the Jews make sense, better for one to die than the entire nation?

Or is it better for the entire nation to die than for us to do wrong, violate God's law and dishonor our Creator before the universe?

When we are faced with threats is it better to stay true to principle and honor our Creator or to sacrifice the innocent in order to protect ourselves, camouflaged as protecting the nation?

What happened in Nazi Germany? How many used this rationale?

What does Bible prophecy say in regard to the future? Might we be faced with decisions of compromise principle in order to save what appears to be a larger group?

How about at the end of every action, every communication, every decision, we were to end with this sign off: "To the Honor of Our Creator!"

Consider the implication, might it impact what we do? We live with the entire universe watching – do we live to honor our Creator in all that we do? Should we?

Bottom green section states, "How does the current political situation in your community affect the work of the church?"

Thoughts?

Should our churches be politically active?

- Prolife versus prochoice?
- Democrat or Republican?
- Pro-environment?
- Campaign for officials who support our values?
- Religious liberty?

Do we ever notice Christ or the Apostles focusing on politics in Rome?

Here is what one of the founders of our church said:

There is a large vineyard to be cultivated; but while Christians are to work among unbelievers, they are not to appear like worldlings. **They are not to spend their time talking politics or acting politics;** for by so doing they give the enemy opportunity to come in and cause variance and discord. {Counsels for the Church 316.5}

God's children are to separate themselves from politics, from any alliance with unbelievers. **Do not take part in political strife.** Separate from the world, and refrain from bringing into the church or school ideas that will lead to contention and disorder. **Dissension is the moral poison** taken into the system by human beings who are selfish. 570 {CCh 316.6}

Christianity. **How many there are who do not know what it is.** It is not something put on the outside. It is a life inwrought with the life of Jesus. It means that we are wearing the robe of Christ's righteousness. In regard to the world, Christians will say, **We will not dabble in politics.** They will say decidedly, We are pilgrims and strangers; our citizenship is above. {PH086 24.2}

God has warned His people not to become absorbed in politics... We are not to give our minds to

political issues. **God's people are walking contrary to His will when they mix up with politics**, and those who commence this work in the Southern States reveal that they are not taught and led by God, but by that spirit which creates contention and strife and every evil work. We are subjects of the Lord's kingdom, and we are to work to establish that kingdom in righteousness.-- Letter 92, 1899, p. 5. (To "Dear Brethren," typed June 16, 1899.) {3MR 41.1}

Neither you nor any of your brethren had any work to do in arguing or writing or taking any part whatever in politics. God was dishonored by all who acted any part in politics. God has chosen a people who are to proclaim the third angel's message to the world. They are to be a separate and peculiar people in this world of churches who are transgressing His commandments. . . .{3MR 41.3}

The Lord would have His people bury political questions. On these themes **silence is eloquence.** Christ calls upon His followers to come into unity on the pure gospel principles which are plainly revealed in the word of God. **We cannot with safety vote for political parties; for we do not know whom we are voting for. We cannot with safety take part in any political schemes.** We cannot labor to please men who will use their influence to repress religious liberty... The people of God are not to vote to place such men in office; for when they do this, they are partakers with them of the sins which they commit while in office. {FE 475.2}

Thoughts?

Is the church to spend its energy on politics? Why or why not?
Is the church to spend its energy on promoting a message that transforms the hearts of men?

What kinds of methods are used in politics? Can we achieve God's goals while using Satan's methods?

Then what do you make of this by the same author?

Every individual exerts an influence in society. In our favored land, **every voter has some voice in determining what laws shall control the nation. Should not that influence and that vote be cast on the side of temperance and virtue? . . .** {GW 387.1}

The advocates of temperance fail to do their whole duty unless they exert their influence by precept and example--**by voice and pen and vote**-- in favor of prohibition and total abstinence. We need not expect that God will work a miracle to bring about this reform, and thus remove the necessity for our exertion. We ourselves must grapple with this giant foe, our motto, No compromise and no cessation of our efforts till the victory is gained. . . . {GW 387.3}

Thoughts? What do you hear in this passage? Does it sound political? Or does it sound civic responsibility? Is there a difference?

Is there a difference from fulfilling your duty as a citizen to live in harmony with God's principles, to witness the truth of his kingdom, to be a blessing to your community, to stand up for healthy principles, and becoming politically active? Or, should we become politically active on issues that are in harmony with God's kingdom?

Is there a difference in voting for a person and voting on a particular law?

Would it be okay to become political for a policy but not a person?

I thank the Lord with heart, and soul, and voice that you have been a prominent and influential member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. In the providence of God you have been led to the light, to obtain a

knowledge of the truth. . . . This light and knowledge you need to bring into your work, as you associate with women whose hearts are softened by the Spirit of God, and who are searching for the truth as for hidden treasure. For twenty years I have seen that the light would come to the women workers in temperance lines. **But with sadness I have discerned that many of them are becoming politicians, and that against God.** They enter into questions and debates and theories that they have no need to touch. Christ said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." {DG 126.3}

What is going on – didn't we just hear admonition to be active in the temperance movement including voting, but now counsel against becoming politicians for the temperance movement?

What do you hear going on?

In this election year, what are the principles a Christian should apply to their lives in regard to politics?

MONDAY

Let's examine some of the common cults in Thessalonica in Paul's day. But before we do, let's set the context:

- Did Satan know a Messiah was promised? Yes Genesis 3
- Did Satan have a good idea when the Messiah would appear? Yes Daniel 7-9. (just like the wise men of the East)
- Did Satan have some general concept of what Christ was going to do based on the OT scriptures and Jewish practices?
- Do you think Satan sat back on a recliner waiting to see what would happen, or would he try to confuse the minds by creating various counterfeits?

Osiris:

Osiris was considered not only a merciful judge of the dead in the afterlife, but also the underworld agency that granted all life, including sprouting vegetation and the fertile flooding of the Nile River. He was described as the "*Lord of love*", "*He Who is Permanently Benign and Youthful*" and the "*Lord of Silence*". The Kings of Egypt were associated with Osiris in death — as Osiris rose from the dead they would, in union with him, inherit eternal life through a process of imitative magic. All people, not just pharaohs, were believed to be associated with Osiris at death, if they incurred the costs of the assimilation rituals.

Osiris mystery festival was celebrated in two phases, began on November 13 commemorating the death of the god, which was also the same day that grain was planted in the ground. "The death of the grain and the death of the god were one and the same: the cereal was identified with the god who came from heaven; he was the bread by which man lives. The resurrection of the god symbolized the rebirth of the grain."

The germinating seed symbolized Osiris rising from the dead.

The first phase of the festival was a public drama depicting the murder and dismemberment of Osiris, the search of his body by Isis, his triumphal return as the resurrected god, and the battle in which Horus defeated Set.

The passion of Osiris was reflected in his name 'Wennefer' ("the one who continues to be perfect"), which also alludes to his post mortem power.

Parts of this Osirian mythology have prompted comparisons with later Christian beliefs and practices.

The Egyptians of every period in which they are known to us believed that Osiris was of divine origin, that he suffered death and mutilation at the hands of the powers of evil, that after a great struggle with these powers he rose again, that he became henceforth the king of the underworld and judge of the dead, and that because he had conquered death the righteous also might conquer death...In Osiris the Christian Egyptians found the prototype of Christ, and in the pictures and statues of Isis suckling her son Horus, they perceived the prototypes of the Virgin Mary and her child... And Osirian traditions became incorporated into Christian teachings, particularly in the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus and Christ's descent into Hades.

Biblical scholar Bruce M. Metzger notes that in one account of the Osirian cycle he dies on the 17th of the month of *Athyra* (approximating to a month between October 28 and November 26 in modern calendars), is revived on the 19th and compares this to Christ rising on the "third day" but he thinks "resurrection" is a questionable description.

Serapis:

Serapis (Σέραπις) or Sarapis (Σάραπις) is a Graeco-Egyptian god. Serapis was devised during the 3rd century BC on the orders of Ptolemy I of Egypt as a means to unify the Greeks and Egyptians in his realm. The god was depicted as Greek in appearance, but with Egyptian trappings, and combined iconography from a great many cults, signifying both abundance and resurrection. His cult was spread as a matter of deliberate policy by the Ptolemaic kings. Serapis continued to increase in popularity during the Roman period, often replacing Osiris as the consort of Isis in non-Egyptian temples. The destruction of the Serapeum by a mob led by the Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria in 389 is one of the key events in the downfall of ancient paganism, and the cult ceased to exist with the abolition of paganism in 391 AD.

Critics list Serapis of Egypt with minor details as having a story "very similar to that of Christ," offering these points:

- He was called the "Good Shepherd"
- He was considered a healer
- Christianity adapted the Serapian practices of using lights, bells, vestments, processions, music, etc.
- Serapis was a sacrificial bull, as Christ was a sacrificial lamb
- Serapis was annually sacrificed for the sins of Egypt

Many Greek gods contributed to his nature, including: Zeus, Helios, Hades and Aesculapius. Zeus brought to him the attribute of presiding over nature. From Helios he received the aspects of sovereignty and sun-god. Hades linked him to the afterlife and Aesculapius gave him the art of healing.

Cabirus:

The lesson tells of a person named Cabirus who spoke up for the disenfranchised and was eventually murdered by his two brothers and became a godlike figure to the Thessalonians.

The literature seems to be split on this. There are several references to this story and concept in the historical record, but the majority of the references I could find described another god named Cabirus.

Karl P. Donfried in his article on the Cults of Thessalonica supplies reports that the city worshipped multiple cults, but most importantly that of Cabirus, who was the cities chief deity. According to Donfried, and others Cabirus was significantly connected with fertility and thus Paul mentions that the believers "turned to God from idols" (1:9) maintain personal "holiness (2:10-12) and avoid fornication (4:3). He contrasts holy living with

the "passionate lust of the heathen" (4:4). Paul's only other references to sexual immorality are found in 1 Corinthians and in a catalogue of works of the flesh in Gal. 5:19. Like Thessalonica, the city of Corinth was dominated by a sexual cult (Aphrodite). (Karl P. Donfried, "The Cults of Thessalonica And The Thessalonian Correspondence," *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (July 1985): 336-356)

Thoughts about these various gods worshipped in Thessalonica during Paul's day? How might these concepts impact the willingness of the believers to accept what Paul was teaching?

Do you see how the minds of men were confused by pagan beliefs? Do you see how Satan sought to counterfeit the truth to make it harder for the gospel to be believed?

Does this give insight as to how easy it was for pagan god constructs to enter Christianity? Especially in regard to God's character and law?

How would you approach the people knowing they believed such ideas?

Do we struggle today with any pagan constructs infecting Christian teachings?

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, "The gospel has the greatest..."

What do you think of the idea of experimentation in presenting the gospel?

And what about the idea that it works best when the gospel impacts the needs of people?

Why is it often true that the gospel advances in times of trial and strife? Is it because such difficulties make us aware of how much we need something more than self, something more than this world can offer?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson talks about the popular philosopher coming to town to share philosophy and gain a following in order to make some money.

Read the last two paragraphs, “The dark side...”

How should we handle the issue of money and the gospel today? Should we accept travel expenses to go and present the gospel message? Should we accept speaking fees?

Should we fund ourselves and pay our own way? Is there a difference between covering expenses and making a profit?

What are your thoughts about this?

THURSDAY

Why did they meet in home churches? Was it because this is the best method or because that was their only option?

Should we take home churches as the eternal model of church meeting places?

What lesson do we draw from Paul’s example of providing for his own expense?

Is there a difference in what Paul did, in a time when travel took weeks and months to get from one place to the next, and once in town one would often stay an extended period, and today in which one might fly in for a weekend and then out?

Is there a difference in speaking at an event and living in a community?

Was Paul wanting to demonstrate that he had something to give to them and was not trying to get something from them? Is that the principle? Can we demonstrate that principle today? How?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 3.

1 and 2 Thessalonians Lesson 4 3Q 2012

Joyous and Thankful

Read Memory Text 1Thes 1:2,3:

- We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, ³ remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. (ESV)
- We always thank God for you all and always mention you in our prayers. ³For we remember before our God and Father how you put your faith into practice, how your love made you work so hard, and how your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ is firm. (GNT)

Thoughts? While they are saying the same thing does one version resonate more with you?

SUNDAY

In reference to the memory text the lesson asks, “For what things are Paul, Silas, and Timothy giving thanks? What do these things mean in a practical sense? That is, how would they be manifested in the daily life?”

Thoughts?

What would it mean? Would it not mean that the people have accepted Gods Remedy to their sinful state? Would it not mean they are getting well?

If you were a parent and your children were all infected with a terminal disease, and you brought a remedy, and when you checked back you noticed the fever was down, the bleeding had stopped, the appetite had improved, their color was better, they were getting up and playing games again – would you not rejoice in all of these things? Why would you rejoice? Would it

be because all of this is evidence that they were being healed and restored?

What does it mean to be saved? Doesn't it mean to be restored to Godliness, to God's original design?

Then wouldn't we expect the symptoms of sin to remit and the signs of spiritual health to appear?

Is this what Paul is thankful for?

What are the signs of spiritual health? As the lesson asked, what does it look like to put your faith into practice?

- Stop practicing pagan rituals?
- Stop practicing worldly principles, cheating, extorting, selfishness?
- Trusting God with how things turn out?
- Seeking to help one another?
- Sharing the message of God's kingdom with others?
- Changing one's lifestyle habits to move into harmony with God's design for life?
 - Any examples?
- Change relationships?
- Others?
- Do we need to make any changes in our lives?

MONDAY

Monday's lesson talks about being chosen, elected, and if we have time we will return this idea. But let's read the second paragraph, "Some Christians have taken..." thoughts?

Does it sound like the lesson is connecting lifestyle choice with our salvation?

What is the place for lifestyle and behavior in our salvation?

Is our salvation based on our lifestyle and behavior choices?

- Eating cheese?
- Eating meat?
- Refusing to exercise?
- Drinking coffee?
- Getting Tattoos?
- Wearing Jewelry?
- Watching non-Christian TV?
- Gossip?
- Smoking cigarettes?
- Drinking alcohol?
- Owning a store/restaurant that sells alcohol?
- Working on Sabbath?
 - Nurse, ER MD, Paramedic, Fire department, Police department, Coast Guard Rescue, cook at restaurant, cook at SAU cafeteria, banker, auto-mechanic, welder, plumber, electrician?
- Smoking marijuana?
- Premarital sex?
- Viewing porn?
- Promoting porn?
- Visiting prostitutes? – How about for single persons in states where it is legal?

What impact does lifestyle choices play on our salvation?

Are some lifestyle choices inconsequential while other choices are clearly destructive and still others are healing?

- Does the circumstance matter?
- Does the heart motive matter?
- What is the balance between lifestyle choice and salvation?
- Who is to determine for each of us where the line is to be drawn?
- Is the bottom line issue one of choosing self, selfishness, self-indulgence over God and his methods of love?

WEDNESDAY

1Thessalonians 1:6 tells us that they were “imitators” of Paul, and the lesson rightly points out that Christ is our ultimate role model, but often we benefit from human role models.

What concerns should we have in following the example of others? What about following the example of Apostles and Prophets?

Should we follow the lead of an Apostle, say like Paul, without thinking for ourselves? Is it safe to disagree with a prophet?

What about when Peter wouldn't mix with Gentiles? Should his example have been followed?

What about the old prophet in 1Kings 13 who told the young prophet to come and eat with him, but he was lying?

The old prophet answered, “I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the LORD: ‘Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.’ ” (But he was lying to him.) ¹⁹ So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.

²⁰ While they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet who had brought him back. ²¹ He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, “This is what the LORD says: ‘You have defied the word of the LORD and have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. ²² You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers.’ ” 1Kings 13:18-22

Should we blindly follow the example of those inspired by God?

Last week we read some passages from the following from one of the founders of our church:

Every individual exerts an influence in society. In our favored land, **every voter has some voice in determining what laws shall control the nation. Should not that influence and that vote be cast on the side of temperance and virtue? . . .** {GW 387.1}

The advocates of temperance fail to do their whole duty unless they exert their influence by precept and example--**by voice and pen and vote**-- in favor of prohibition and total abstinence. We need not expect that God will work a miracle to bring about this reform, and thus remove the necessity for our exertion. We ourselves must grapple with this giant foe, our motto, No compromise and no cessation of our efforts till the victory is gained. . . . {GW 387.3}

Was she right? Should she have been followed on this issue, or was she, on this issue, like Peter when shrinking away from Gentiles?

- What method was she advocating?
 - Was she urging us to present the truth in love and leave others free? Or, was she urging that we use the power of the state to enforce a particular religious view on others in society that don't hold that view?
 - Don't some religious groups use alcohol in their services?
 - Is this method any different than using the state to enforce worship on a particular day?
- Prohibition was eventually passed, and how did it actually work out? Was society better for it? Or, did it result in more rebellion, conflict, violence, crime, etc? Why? What happens when liberty is violated? Love is destroyed and rebellion is incited.
- If an Apostle, like Peter, makes a mistake, as he did regarding associating with Gentiles, does that mean he is not inspired?
- What does it mean?

- Does anything we have said suggest we are in favor of alcohol? NO! Alcohol destroys. I deal with families that have been ruined by alcoholism, drunkenness, etc. We are not advocating alcohol – what are we advocating? Freedom! We present the truth in love and leave others free!

The lesson says in fourth paragraph, “God’s Word can always be trusted.” Thoughts about this? It is true – does that mean how people understand, interpret, or teach God’s Word can always be trusted?

Can the trustworthy Word of God be misunderstood? Is it easy or hard to misunderstand God’s Word?

What makes it easy to misunderstand it and what makes it hard to misunderstand it?

The lens we use to view God’s Word through.

If we view God’s Word through a lens in which God’s law is imposed, God is arbitrary, God is severe, God uses His power to inflict pain and suffering – then God’s Word is easily misunderstood.

If however, we view God’s Word through the lens of God’s law of love, the design protocol upon which life is built, through the life of Jesus who revealed selfless love perfectly, then God’s Word is hard to misunderstand.

THURSDAY

In 1Thes 1:8-10 Paul notes that the Thessalonians had become known in other regions by the way they were living. What do you think had changed that caused others to take note?

In verse 10 Paul states that Christ is going to save us from the wrath to come – what is this talking about?

What do we understand God's wrath to be? God letting go to reap what people choose. What references support this?

In *Hard Sayings of the Bible* published by IVP we read:

The human condition, which Paul describes in Romans 1:18-32, is not something caused by God. The phrase "revealed from heaven" (where "heaven" is a typical Jewish substitute word for "God") does not depict some kind of divine intervention, but rather the *inevitability of human debasement* which results when God's will, built into the created order, is violated. Since the created order has its origin in God, Paul can say that the wrath of God is now (constantly) being revealed "from heaven." It is revealed in the fact that the rejection of God's truth (Rom 1:18-20), that is, the truth about God's nature and will, leads to futile thinking (Rom 1:21-22), idolatry (Rom 1:23), perversion of God-intended sexuality (Rom 1:24-27) and relational-moral brokenness (Rom 1:28-32). (emphasis theirs)

The expression "God gave them over" (or "handed them over"), which appears three times in this passage (Rom 1:24,26,28), supports the idea that the sinful perversion of human existence, though resulting from human decisions, is to be understood ultimately as God's punishment which we, in freedom, bring upon ourselves.

In light of these reflections, the common notion that God punishes or blesses in direct proportion to our sinful or good deeds cannot be maintained... God loves us with an everlasting love. But the rejection of that love separates us from its life-giving power. The result is disintegration and death. (Kaiser, W., et al., *Hard Saying of the Bible*, Intersity Press, 1996, p. 542-543)

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

The lesson asks, “How do we gain assurance that we are right with God?”

Thoughts about this question?

What makes us “right with God?”

What makes us “not right” with God?

The lies we believe about God and our fallen natures, our selfish motives.

What makes us right? The truth about God, which destroys lies, restores to trust, and in trust we open the heart, and the HS comes and restores Christlikeness within, we become partakers of the divine nature!

Here is what one of the founders of our church said:

Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with **power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him.** Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God. He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, **that men might lose the true views of God's character,** and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth. He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. **The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. **The very attributes that belonged to the**

character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, **to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth.** Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes.** That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became **a partaker of his nature.** {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

What an incredible paragraph. What did you hear?

- When man is armed with power and intelligence we can break away from Satanic captivity – what captivity?
- Satan had misrepresented God and holds our minds captive in fear as we believe God is a cruel tyrant.
- The law of God was represented as that of Rome, burdened with rules and seen as imposed, rather than seen as the law of love
- Jesus came to reveal God, to destroy lies, to win us to trust and to provide us with his nature!

Three paragraphs later in the same article we read:

Oh, that men might open their minds to know God as he is revealed in his Son! Truth came forth from the lips of Jesus, uncorrupted with human philosophy. His words were from heaven, such as mortal lips had never spoken nor mortal ears ever heard. **His heart was an altar** on which burned the flames of infinite love. Goodness, mercy, and love were enthroned in the breast of the Son of God. He set up **his tabernacle** in the midst of our human encampment, pitched his tent by the side of the tents of men, that he might dwell among them **and make them familiar with his divine character and love.** No one could love Christ and pay homage to him without serving and honoring the infinite God. Those who had an

appreciation of the character and mission of Christ, were filled with reverence and awe, as they looked upon him and felt that they were looking upon **the temple of the living God**. Officers were sent to take the Son of God, **that the temple in which God was enshrined might be destroyed**. But as they drew near and heard the words of divine wisdom that fell from his lips, they were charmed, and the power and excellence of his instruction so filled their hearts and minds that they forgot the purpose for which they had been sent. Christ revealed himself to their souls. Divinity flashed through humanity, and they returned so filled with this one thought, so charmed with the ideas he had presented, that when the leaders of Israel inquired, "Why have ye not brought him?" they replied, "Never man spake like this man." **They had seen that which priests and rulers would not see,-- humanity flooded with the light and glory of divinity**. Those who would behold this glory would be drawn to love Jesus and to love the Father whom he represented. **Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,--to set men right through the revelation of God**. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, "I have manifested thy name." "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." **When the object of his mission was attained,--the revelation of God to the world,--the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men.** {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 9}

Thoughts? What did you hear in this paragraph?

What was the method that Christ used to reach man, to set us right with God? To reveal the truth about God.

So what is it that gives us assurance with God? Coming back to a true knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus!

What is the temple of God? The living intelligent being, where God dwells by his Spirit. Christ came so that the temple could be rebuilt and that God could again dwell in his temple.

When we speak of the cleansing of the temple, what does it mean? Does it not mean cleansing the minds of men from the lies about God, so that the hearts can be cleansed from selfishness and fear?

MONDAY

Read 1Thes 1:4

- Our brothers and sisters, we know that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own.

Top section of the lesson asks, “What does it mean that God has chosen or elected us? Does that mean we don’t really have a choice? On the other hand, does it mean that someone who is not chosen by God cannot have salvation even if he or she wants it?”

Thoughts? Any other Bible texts come to mind?

- For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. (Rom 8:29,30)

Thoughts about this text – first – if God doesn’t have foreknowledge then who was he predetermining to conform to the likeness of his Son?

If God doesn't have foreknowledge about who will be saved, then does this text have any meaning?

The Greek for foreknow is *proginōskō* from which we get prognosticate, to foretell. And means to know beforehand.

- All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do (Heb. 4:13)
- declaring the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10)

Foreknowledge is part of God's supreme omniscience – to remove it is to diminish him.

Some people get confused about this because they believe that if God foreknows then we have no choice – but the foreknown events do not occur because they are foreknown, they are foreknown because they will take place.

It is our freewill choices that provide the foreknowledge that God knows. In other words God foreknowledge is informed by our choices.

But, what about predestined – does God predetermine who will be saved? Here is what Graham Maxwell says about this passage in Romans:

- **Predestinate.** Gr. *proorizō*, “to mark off beforehand.” The word is translated “determined before” in Acts 4:28, and “ordained” in 1 Cor. 2:7. God predestinated those whom He foreknew. To use human language, as God foresaw, and thus foreknew, each generation of men that would come upon the stage of this world's action, He coupled immediately with His foreknowledge the decision to predestinate them all to be saved. God never had any other purpose than salvation for the members of the human family. For God “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). “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” (Eze. 33:11). Christ Himself said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17). “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16)...

Salvation is not forced upon us against our will. If we choose to oppose and resist God’s purpose, we shall be lost. Divine foreknowledge and divine predestination in no way exclude human liberty. Nowhere does Paul, or any other Bible writer, suggest that God has predestined certain men to be saved and certain others to be lost, regardless of their own choice in the matter.¹

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1, 3, 5

¹ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 6*. 1980 (F. D. Nichol, Ed.) (575–576). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

3rd Quarter 2012
Lesson 5 The Apostolic Example

Sabbath's Lesson

“But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts” (1 Thessalonians 2:4, ESV).

What does it mean to be approved by God?? What sort of ministry is “pleasing to God”?? What does it mean to have our hearts tested by God?? To be entrusted with which gospel?? Don't most ministers think they are approved by God?? Does He approve of all ministers?? All versions of the gospel?? How can we discern the differences since we cannot read hearts or minds??

Sunday's Lesson

Read Acts 16:16-40

16 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” 18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

19 When her owners realized that their hope of making money(was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. 20 They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar 21 by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. 23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24 When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. 27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted, “Don't harm yourself! We are all here!”

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

31 They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

35 When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: “Release those men.” 36 The jailer(told Paul, “The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.”

37 But Paul said to the officers: “They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.”

38 The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. 39 They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. 40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

Consider the experience of Paul and Silas earlier in Philippi. How many of us would have been willing to continue preaching Christ and Him crucified??

Might their visible wound lent credibility to the source of the Gospel??

Monday's Lesson

The lesson gives three [3] keys to persuading people to change their minds. *Ethos*: a valid argument based on the character of the speaker. *Logos*: the quality/logic of the argument itself. *Pathos*: The appeal of the argument or speaker to the listener's emotions.

Based on our class' approach to study, should either of these be weighed more heavily?? Which one is most important?? Least?? Should they harmonize like science, Scripture, and experience??

In I Thes. 2:3 Paul uses three [3] words to describe poor motivations for ministry. Error, Impurity, Deception.

Will it make any difference whether we are sincerely preaching an erroneous gospel, or the correct gospel based on self promotion, or if we are intentionally trying to deceive? Does the Law of Gravity care whether we step off a cliff in error, or follow someone we admire off the cliff, or if we are deceived in to jumping off the cliff?? **Does the Law of God function any differently??**

Tuesday's Lesson

Which comes first, the cart or the horse? Which comes first, the "behaviors" or a transformation of character? Which pleases God? [see Matt 7: 21-23]

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

The lesson states: “Human beings need a sense of worth in order to function. We often seek this worth by accumulating possessions, by achievements, or through the positive opinions that others express about us. But all these sources of self-worth are fragile and so temporary. Genuine and lasting self-worth is found only through the gospel. When we fully grasp that Christ died for us, we begin to experience a sense of worth that nothing in this world can shake.”

Will our “self-worth” be any different based on which gospel we believe? Consider the gospel that has Jesus standing between us and an angry God pleading for mercy because we are covered by His blood, and has paid the penalty for sin. Does that gospel do much for our “self-worth”?

Now, consider the gospel that has Jesus standing at the right hand of God pleading with us to take the healing remedy for our sinful disease, and allow Him to transform our characters in to His likeness. Would this gospel do any more for our “self-worth”?

I see a trend in society to reward everyone for “trying”. Schools don’t give out grades anymore, because if we gave a child a D or F, it might damage their self esteem. Athletic events have no “winners or losers”, because half of the participants will have damage to their self esteem. Parents try not to let their children fail for fear of damage to self esteem. Governments give people free food, housing, health care, cell phones, etc. just to please them. Does this make any sense? Which is more beneficial to self esteem? To get a D in a class, realize that you didn’t do your best, apply yourself the next semester, and raise your grade to a B or A, or to not get a grade at all? What about doing the best you possibly could, and still receive a D?

Shouldn’t we wrestle with the gospel and our salvation, and make mistakes? How will we learn anything if we don’t?

Wednesday’s Lesson

In the 3rd paragraph, the lesson states: “While Paul’s primary motivation was to please God, in verses 7 and 8 he expresses an additional motivation—his great affection for the Thessalonians themselves. Verse 8 uses the language of emotional warmth. Preaching the gospel was much more than a duty for Paul; he gave his heart, even his whole self, to the people.”

I am going to suggest that the lesson has the cart before the horse. I think that Paul’s primary motivation was revealing Christ’s love for his fellow man, and this, by default, is pleasing to God. I believe that the Pharisee’s primary motivation was to please God, and look how that worked out for them. Thursday’s, and Friday’s lesson agrees with me.

[TH] “The key is the love Paul had for his converts. He did all he could to model authenticity for them; yet, he realized that there were things that they were not ready to

handle (see also John 16:12). So, he worked with his hands and adapted his instruction, all in order to avoid putting unnecessary barriers in the way of people's acceptance of the gospel. A powerful lesson in self-sacrifice for sure. "

[FR] "No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellow men is not a true disciple of Christ. . . . He might display great liberality; but should he, from some other motive than genuine love, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favor of God."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 318, 319.

Also, in the last paragraph, the lesson states that [in I Thes. 2: 7,8] we see an appeal to the emotional bond between Paul, et. al, and the Thessalonians, and that "the gospel is at its most powerful when it touches the heart."

Are there any churches or gospels that focus only on the emotional response? Is this healthy? I'm going to suggest the gospel is at its most powerful when it **transforms** the heart in to the heart of Christ. EGW states that this is the "miracle of miracles." [AA 476]

Thursday's Lesson

We could probably have spent all day on this lesson alone. Did God ever intend for ministers to only work at ministry? Are they supposed to be entertainers 1 day a week, spending the other 6 preparing to entertain?

This is EGW's summary of Paul's education: "Though Paul sat, a diligent student, at the feet of Gamaliel, he also learned a trade. He was an educated tentmaker. It was the custom among the Jews, the wealthy as well as the poorer classes, to train their sons and daughters to some useful employment, so that should adverse circumstances come, they would not be dependent on others, but would have educated ability to provide for their own necessities. They might be instructed in literary lines, but they must also be trained to some craft. This was deemed an indispensable part of their education." {TDG 203.2}

Solomon gives us other insight. [see Prov. 14:23, 20:13, 21:5, 23:21, 24:34, 28:19]

How different would our church look if it were modeled after the early church?

1 and 2 Thessalonians Lesson 6 3Q 2012

Friends Forever

Read Memory Text: "May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones."
(1Thes 3:13)

Thoughts?

What does it mean to be "blameless"?

- Innocent?
- Not our fault?
- Healed and without residual defect of character?

What does it mean to be "holy"?

- In harmony with God?
- Love others more than self?

Here is a quotation from a book, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessings*, written by EG White one of the founders of our church:

The great principles of the law, of the very nature of God, are embodied in the words of Christ on the mount. **Whoever builds upon them is building upon Christ, the Rock of Ages.** In receiving the word, we receive Christ. And only those who thus receive His words are building upon Him. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 3:11. "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. **Christ, the Word, the revelation of God,-- the manifestation of His character, His law, His love, His life,--is the only foundation upon which we can build a character that will endure.** {MB 148.2}

We build on Christ by obeying His word. It is not he who merely enjoys righteousness, that is righteous, but **he who does righteousness. Holiness is not rapture; it is the result of surrendering all to God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father.** When the children of Israel were encamped on the borders of the Promised Land, it was not enough for them to have a knowledge of Canaan, or to sing the songs of Canaan. This alone would not bring them into possession of the vineyards and olive groves of the goodly land. **They could make it theirs in truth only by occupation,** by complying with the conditions, by exercising living faith in God, by appropriating His promises to themselves, while they obeyed His instruction. {MB 149.1}

Religion consists in doing the words of Christ; not doing to earn God's favor, but because, all undeserving, **we have received the gift of His love.** Christ places the salvation of man, **not upon profession merely, but upon faith that is made manifest in works of righteousness.** Doing, not saying merely, is expected of the followers of Christ. **It is through action that character is built.** "As many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:14. Not those whose hearts are touched by the Spirit, not those who now and then yield to its power, but they that are led by the Spirit, are the sons of God. {MB 149.2}

Do you desire to become a follower of Christ, yet know not how to begin? Are you in darkness and know not how to find the light? **Follow the light you have. Set your heart to obey what you do know of the word of God. His power, His very life, dwells in His word. As you receive the word in faith, it will give you power to obey.** As you give heed to the light you have, greater light will come. **You are building on God's word, and your character will be builded after the similitude of the character of Christ.** {MB 150.1}

Christ, the true foundation, **is a living stone; His life is imparted to all that are built upon Him.** "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." "Each

several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." 1 Peter 2:5, R.V.; Ephesians 2:21, R.V. **The stones became one with the foundation; for a common life dwells in all.** That building no tempest can overthrow; for-- "That which shares the life of God, With Him surviveth all." {MB 150.2}

Thoughts about this quotation?

- The great principle of the law is love, which is the very nature of God
- Christ is the fulfillment of God's law of love and perfect expression of his character
- He who unites with Christ chooses to live in harmony with God's principles, and thus builds upon Christ
- Holiness is not a euphoric experience, but actual state of being, of choosing, of living in harmony with God's design protocols for life.
- Our choices, works, are not motivated from fear, insecurity, need for approval, duty even, but from love and reason.
 - Why does a husband buy flowers for his wife, because if he doesn't he is afraid she will be mad? Because if he doesn't he is afraid she will reject him? Because it is his duty and he must in order to fulfill his obligations? Or because he loves her?
 - Why does he not cheat on her? Because of fear or because of both love and reason, understanding God's design template for health and realizing love is selfless and healthy relationships cannot exist in violations of God's design?
- Our choices, based on our motivations, change us
- As we choose to do what we understand is right we get healthier and understand more
 - If we are physically unhealthy we don't have to know every detail of human physiology – we need simply to start doing what we currently know is healthy for us –

- Stop smoking
 - Stop drinking
 - Start exercising
 - Stop drugs
 - Get regular sleep etc.
 - With each truth applied we get healthier and our minds improve and we discover more truth to apply
- In choosing to trust God, in choosing to act in love, in choosing to surrender to Christ, we unite with him and receive the indwelling of his Spirit, which imparts to us the life of Christ

So, this verse from my paraphrase:

May he solidify your characters in purity and love so that you will be found Christlike in God's presences when our Lord Jesus comes back with all those in unity with him.

Is it possible? Can we be blameless and holy, without defect, restored to Godliness when Jesus comes?

Would God call us to this if it were not possible?

What would that look like?

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Mt 5:43-48)

What does it look like to be holy and blameless? Would it be loving others more than self? Would it be being like Jesus in character, in the way we treat others?

Would it be in possessing a character that chooses to do right, even if it means injury to self?

- Jesus in the wilderness – tempted to turn bread to stone, chose to do right and not use power selfishly even if it meant starvation
- What about refusing to bow to Satan to save his own life?
- What about if home threatened to be foreclosed and refusing to cheat to save your home?
- What about make a mistake at work which could result in your censure, cover it up, or own up?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “With verse 14...” thoughts?

Why does persecution happen? What causes a person to persecute another because of their beliefs?

- Control and power –
 - Chinese government realizes that religious beliefs have the power to topple governments, thus they repress religion and promote atheism, with the position that the state supersedes religious belief.
 - Papal/protestant conflicts – the papal system in history was not primarily concerned with saving souls, but retaining political power, thus it worked to repress the reformation to prevent removing its funding and power base
 - England in the 16th century put do death many Catholics because of fears that they were undermining the government. The pope gave a bull (edict) that Catholics were absolved of their loyalty to the protestant English government, which incited fear in the government of Catholics

- Misguided beliefs about God
 - Saul of Tarsus – sought to persecute because he believed he was doing God’s will
 - Certainly there are those of other religions, Catholic, Protestant and otherwise who have thought they were doing God’s will while persecuting others
 - 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. ³ They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. Jn 16:2,3
 - Puritans in America persecuted those who didn’t attend Puritan services believing they were protecting society
 - Islam – uses government to enforce religious law, stoning people for conversion to Christianity.

S.P. Haynes in his book, *Religious Persecution: A Study in Political Psychology*, published in 1904 states:

“For the priest, above all, toleration is necessarily a hard virtue. One ought not to lay great stress upon the old argument of the Hallam and Macaulay school as to the strength of vested interests, though it has a certain historical importance because the priest must subsist somehow. Vested interests are, after all, merely a secondary factor. But in the priest the emotional bias of the ordinary man has tenfold strength. By a natural process men who cling most to the instinct of veneration of the past and of enthusiastic obedience to present authority are drawn to the priesthood. They are often the most loveable and the most human of their kind; but their very strength of conviction and inaccessibility to plain reasoning in certain matters makes real tolerance for them extremely difficult. Indeed, they have often frankly admitted, especially in these days, that supernatural truths are bound up with the heart and not the head.” (Haynes, S.P., *Religious Persecution: A Study in*

Political Psychology. Duckworth & Co., London, 1904 p. 4).

Thoughts?

He is saying that there is a selection bias in which people who tend to have strong convictions, who are emotionally driven, and less objectively minded are over represented in the clergy. Thus, he argues that the clergy is more vulnerable toward persecuting others while thinking they are doing right.

Thoughts?

Two general types of intolerance:

- Intolerance within an organization, where if you don't conform to the ecclesiastical authority you are censured and expelled, and
- Civil intolerance. Haynes would argue that the clergy are intolerant within their organizations more so than other people, and when the government is overly influenced by the clergy then civil intolerance occurs.

Thoughts?

Kohlberg gave other insights into why persecution develops, and it has to do with spiritual maturity – or lack there of, with spiritually immature individuals persecuting the spiritually mature.

KOHLBERG'S STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

A. PREMORAL OR PRECONVENTIONAL STAGES: Behavior motivated by anticipation of pleasure or pain.

STAGE 1: PUNISHMENT AND OBEDIENCE:

Avoidance of physical punishment and deference to power. The immediate physical consequences of an action determine its goodness or badness.

The atrocities carried out by soldiers during the holocaust who were simply "carrying out orders" under threat of punishment, illustrate that adults as well as children may function at stage one level.

STAGE 2: INSTRUMENTAL EXCHANGE:

Marketplace exchange of favors or blows. "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." Justice is: "Do unto others as they do unto you." Eye for an eye mentality. Wrong doing must be punished.

Vengeance is considered a moral duty.

B. CONVENTIONAL MORALITY: Acceptance of the rules and standards of one's group.

STAGE 3: INTERPERSONAL CONFORMITY:

Right is conformity to the behavioral expectations of one's society or peers. Individuals act to gain approval of others.

Good behavior is that which pleases or helps others within the group. "Everybody is doing it." One earns approval by being conventionally "respectable" and "nice."

Sin is a breach of the expectations of the social order.

Retribution, however, at this stage is collective. Individual vengeance is not allowed. Forgiveness is preferable to revenge. Punishment is mainly for deterrence. Failure to punish is "unfair." "If he can get away with it, why can't I?"

STAGE 4: LAW AND ORDER:

Respect for rules, laws and properly constituted authority. Defense of the given social and institutional order for it's own sake.

"Justice" normally refers to criminal or forensic justice. Justice demands that the wrongdoer be punished, that he "pay his debt to society," and that law abiders be rewarded. "A good day's pay for a good day's work."

Injustice is failing to reward work or punish demerit.

Authority figures are seldom questioned. "He must be right. He's the Pope (or the President, or the Judge, or God)."

STAGE 4 ½:

Between the conventional stages and the post-conventional Levels 5 and 6, there is a transitional stage. College-age students that have come to see conventional morality as relative and arbitrary, but have not yet discovered universal ethical principles, may drop into a hedonistic ethic of "do your own thing." This was well noted in the hippie culture of the 1960's. Disrespect for conventional morality was especially infuriating to the Stage 4 mentality, and indeed was calculated to be so.

C. POSTCONVENTIONAL OR PRINCIPLED MORALITY: Ethical principles

STAGE 5: PRIOR RIGHTS AND SOCIAL CONTRACT:

Moral action in a specific situation is not defined by reference to a checklist of rules, but from logical application of universal, abstract, moral principles. Individuals have natural or inalienable rights and liberties that are prior to society and must be protected by society.

Retributive justice repudiated.

The statement, "Justice demands punishment," which is a self-evident truism to the Stage 4 mind, is just as self-evidently nonsense at Stage 5. Retributive punishment is

neither rational nor just, because it does not promote the rights and welfare of the individual. Only legal sanctions that fulfill that purpose are imposed-- protection of future victims, deterrence, and rehabilitation.

The freedom of the individual should be limited by society only when it infringes upon someone else's freedom.

STAGE 6: UNIVERSAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES:

An individual who reaches this stage acts out of universal principles based upon the equality and worth of all human beings.

Persons are never means to an end, but are ends in themselves. Having rights means more than individual liberties.

This is the "Golden Rule" model. A list of rules inscribed in stone is no longer necessary.

At this level, God is understood to say what is right because it is right; His sayings are not right, just because it is God who said them.

Persons at this level have accepted God's invitation to "come and let us reason together".

THE FOLLOWING ARE OBSERVATIONS THAT WERE MADE BY KOHLBERG

1. STAGE DEVELOPMENT IS INVARIANT.

One must progress through the stages in order, and one cannot get to a higher stage without passing through the stage immediately preceding it.

2. IN STAGE DEVELOPMENT, SUBJECTS CANNOT COMPREHEND MORAL REASONING AT A STAGE MORE THAN ONE STAGE BEYOND THEIR OWN.

3. IN STAGE DEVELOPMENT, MOVEMENT THROUGH THE STAGES IS EFFECTED WHEN COGNITIVE DISEQUILIBRIUM IS CREATED, THAT IS, WHEN A PERSON'S COGNITIVE OUTLOOK IS NOT ADEQUATE TO COPE WITH A GIVEN MORAL DILEMMA.

4. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE FOR A HUMAN BEING TO BE PHYSICALLY MATURE BUT NOT MORALLY MATURE.

5. KOHLBERG BELIEVED THAT ONLY ABOUT 25% OF PERSONS EVER GROW TO LEVEL SIX, THE MAJORITY REMAINING AT LEVEL FOUR.

The Bible enjoins principles of modesty, humility, and wise stewardship of the money. Application of these principles might preclude the purchase of expensive jewelry, furs, flashy cars, or other items primarily for show. A person functioning at level six would have no problem applying these principles. Persons functioning at a level four on the other hand, might make rules about "jewelry" (in a church for instance) or red dresses, or cosmetics. But they might not even notice a flashy car or the lady who wears a new dress every single week. Those things aren't on the list. If Kohlberg's observation is true, then level 6 thinkers would be in the minority. They might even be misunderstood and persecuted by a level 4 majority (Christ being the primary example).

STAGE THEORY AND THE ATONEMENT

Level 1: Man sinned and offended God. God responded with angry vengeance taking the life of Jesus.

Level 2: God somehow struck a bargain with the Devil, a market place exchange of Christ's life, paid as a ransom to the Devil, in trade for the devil's releasing his hostages. In the popular version, Satan found out too late that God had conned him, when Christ rose from the dead.

Level 3-4: The Law must be kept. Man broke the Law. Someone had to pay the penalty. "The wages of sin is death." Jesus paid that penalty. The integrity of the Law was maintained.

There is an aspect of truth on the law must be kept when the law is understood as the law life is built upon.

Level 5-6: He demonstrated that separation from God is death. ("Why have you forsaken me?") Since we separate ourselves from Him, not He from us, He is not our executioner. He allowed Satan to play out his hand, exposing his selfish character for all both man and angels to see, and thus erasing all sympathy for the accusations of the fallen foe. God's character was vindicated.

Level 7: Atonement becomes at-one-ment. God did what it took to win our love and trust, destroy the infection of sin and restore us to unity with Him again. Neither God, nor His law, defined as the eternal principles upon which He bases His government, change, but our understanding of His law changes, and God speaks to us at each level of our understanding. It is a mistake to cling to expressions appropriate to an earlier age of understanding, regardless of how valid and useful they were in their own context, when more appropriate expressions exist.

We must be patient with our brethren who perhaps are just beginning their maturing process, and allow the pastor to preach for them sometimes. For even as God was laying down detailed concrete rules for the Israelites, He was already looking forward to the day when He would "write His laws on our hearts."

Why does persecution happen? Because people at one level feel a moral obligation to enforce the rules on those they believe are not following them.

The lesson asks us to read 1Thes 2:14-16:

For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, ¹⁵ who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men ¹⁶ 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.

Then the lesson points out that passages such as this have been used to justify anti-Semitism. But, also points out that Paul was not speaking about a race of people, but a specific group of people identified, not by race, but by character – that of opposing God and His kingdom of love.

The lesson then asks, "How much ethnic prejudice lingers in our own hearts?"

Thoughts?

Do we have problems with people of different ethnic backgrounds?

Is it appropriate to judge someone by the color of their skin?
No!

Can there be tensions between two groups of people that are simply a result of taste, preference, experience, and have nothing to do with judgmentalism, prejudice, bias etc.?

For instance, could one group of people not enjoy the music common to another group? Does that mean one is racist?

Could one group not enjoy the food, spices, etc. of another group? If you don't like the food, music, even clothing, its just not what you enjoy, does that mean you are racist?

Can you love people from all backgrounds, while you don't enjoy the music, food, or clothing of that culture?

How about if one culture likes church to end at noon and another culture likes church service to end at 4 p.m. – if one doesn't like church ending at 4 p.m. does that mean they are racist?

The issue is – do we love people, and how we treat them!

Are all people equal? How are people equal?

Equal in moral worth and value as human beings.

Are all people equal in abilities? Do our abilities define our worth as human beings?

Can we ever confuse the two? What about in the military when it recognizes the moral equality of men and women – but some confuse their physical inequality and ignore the limitations of women in combat roles that might require them to carry a 250 pound wounded soldier over their back to an aid station?

If one recognizes objective differences in ability, does that mean one is racist, sexist, or prejudiced?

What is our responsibility as Christians when dealing with people from different races and cultures? To love people!

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Paul wants...” thoughts?

What do you think about the idea of giving criticism under the umbrella of love and concern for the one being criticized?

Good idea, right?

Have you ever had someone take this approach and you felt it was contrived, manipulative, “John, we’re only interested in what’s best for you...”

How do you tell the difference between someone who really cares, and someone who is pretending to care?

Would it be in the ultimate decisions, actions, behaviors?

I saw that many have taken advantage of what God has shown in regard to the sins and wrongs of others. **They have taken the extreme meaning of what has been shown in vision, and then have pressed it until it has had a tendency to weaken the faith of many in what God has shown, and also to discourage and dishearten the church. With tender compassion should brother deal with brother.** Delicately should he deal with feelings. It is the nicest and most important work that ever yet was done to touch the wrongs of another. With the deepest humility should a brother do this, considering his own weakness, lest he also should be tempted. {1T 166.1}

I have seen the great sacrifice which Jesus made to sacrifice. Said Jesus: "Love one another, as I have loved you." **Do you feel, when a brother errs, that you could give your life to save him? If you feel thus, you can approach him and affect his heart; you are just the one to visit that brother.** But it is a lamentable fact that many who profess to be brethren, are not willing to sacrifice any of their opinions or their judgment to save a brother. There is but little love for one another. A selfish spirit is manifested. {1T 166.2}

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “Christian suffering...” thoughts?

What do you think about the idea of suffering?

Have you suffered? Do we have to wait until the “time of trouble” to suffer?

Have you ever been discouraged by suffering?

- Finances, too many bills, bankruptcy
- Loss of job
- Health problems
- Divorce
- Death of a loved one
- Isolation, loneliness
- Addiction,
- Betrayal
- Have you ever been misrepresented, lies told about you?
- Abused?

How do we handling suffering – as Christians? When we are tempted to despair?

Are we tempted to become angry, resentful, cynical, apathetic, give up?

Into the experience of all there come times of keen disappointment and utter discouragement--days when sorrow is the portion, and it is hard to believe that God is still the kind benefactor of His earthborn children; days when troubles harass the soul, till death seems preferable to life. It is then that many lose their hold on God. . . . Could we at such times discern with spiritual insight the meaning of God's providences we should see angels seeking to save us from ourselves, striving to plant our feet upon a foundation more firm than the everlasting hills, and new faith, new life, would spring into being.... {CC 213.3}

Thoughts?

Read bottom green “What are things...” thoughts?

- Pray
- Bible study
- Know God
- Live healthfully
- Practice our trust in God
- Surrender control of outcomes to God

WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph, “What was lacking...” thoughts?

What does it mean when we realize there is growing to do?
Does it mean we are not “right with the Lord” until we finish growing? Does it mean we are “lost” until we finished growing?

Or, does it mean, that we can only grow if we are in a saving relationship with the Lord? If spiritual growth is happening, if maturing of character is occurring, if spiritual wisdom, insight, love for others is increasing – would not all of this be evidence that one is in a saving relationship with Jesus, because such growth cannot occur outside that relationship?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph “The second coming...” thoughts?

What does it mean every act of abuse will be brought to justice?

What does it mean every act of love or kindness will be recognized and rewarded?

How would you explain it?

- God will punish the wicked?

- Sin pays its own wage, which is death if not remedied?
- God endows rewards
- The rewards are built into the kindness as we experience the transformation that comes when living in harmony with God?
- We get recognition and affirmation from other intelligent beings?
- We experience love and acceptance from other righteous beings?
- All?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

1 and 2 Thessalonians Lesson 7 3Q 2012

Living Holy Lives

SABBATH

The lesson states, “Paul speaks very clearly about the need to avoid sexual immorality. He’s very strong in his language here saying that those who reject his instruction are, in fact, not rejecting him but the Lord.”

How would you define sexual immorality?

Is it like Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart said in the 1964 case of *Jacobellis vs Ohio*, on the issue of obscenity in the public square:

I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description ["hard-core pornography"]; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But **I know it when I see it**, and the motion picture involved in this case is not that. (Justice Potter Stewart, concurring opinion in *Jacobellis v. Ohio* 378 US 184 (1964), regarding possible obscenity in *The Lovers*.)

Do we know sexual immorality when we see it?

Do you consider the following to be sexually immoral?

- Obviously sexual assault/abuse/molestation of any kind is immoral
- Paraphilia’s? (pedophilia, voyeurism, frotteurism)
 - What is not practiced but fantasized about?
 - What happens to the brain, character, if focus on such material?
- What about Adultery?
 - 22 percent of married men *admit* to having an affair
 - 14 percent of married women *admit* to having an affair

- However, a 2002 study found that 45-55% of married women and 50-60% of married men engage in extramarital sex at some time during their marriage (Atwood & Schwartz, 2002 - Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy)
- Only 46% of men believe that online affairs are adultery. (DivorceMag)
 - What do you think?
 - What would contribute to the idea that online affairs are not adultery?
 - Could it be teachings – even in the church, that the only way to commit adultery is through physical sex? What some call “violation of the marriage bed”?
- According to a private investigative company who investigated thousands of people for infidelity:
 - 99.9 percent of those who commit adultery deny they are having an affair and attempt to hide the truth! The exception is when they confess without being forced into it.
 - 70-80 percent who willingly confess to infidelity recovery and enjoy a stronger marriage in time.
 - What are the implications of these stats? Denial and deception reveal a heart continuing to operate from selfishness – thus no heart change, voluntary confession is a step toward honesty and truthfulness, with increased likelihood of repentance and heart change to live other-centered rather than self-centered lives, thus the voluntary confession increases the change of a healthy outcome.
- Prostitution – is prostitution immoral?
 - Have you heard about Logan Campbell – an Olympian from New Zealand competing in taekwondo?
 - After returning from the Beijing Olympics he had bills from travel, equipment, and training

of over \$120,000 and preparation to go to the London Olympics was going to cost another \$200,000. What to do?

- He opened a brothel – which is legal in New Zealand
 - He came under scrutiny from the New Zealand Olympic committee and the publicity resulted in large corporate donations to they taekwondo fund and therefore he sold his brothel on 2011
 - When asked about it he said, "It's a legal business in New Zealand. It's completely different from other countries in the world. There was no – I don't know – no one was forced into the industry, and they're not doing it because they are in poverty because we have a really good welfare system. It's more of like a higher-class thing than you see around the world. I think a lot of people don't understand that. As compared ... to places like Thailand [where] I know what it's like in the poorer countries, where people don't have a choice to get into that sort of industry. But in New Zealand it's completely different, so it's fine."
 - He said his parents didn't object to him running the brothel, especially after his mother met several of the women who worked for him. He said, "I've never had anyone in New Zealand be like, 'Why did you do that? That's not right,' or anything like that."
(<http://sports.yahoo.com/news/olympics--new-zealander-used-brothel-to-fund-olympic-taekwondo-training.html>)
 - Do we recognize sexual immorality when we see it?
- Premarital sex?

- According to the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found the percentage of high school students who have engaged in sexual activity to be:
 - 32.8% of 9th graders
 - 43.8% of 10th graders
 - 55.5% of 11th graders
 - 64.6% of 12th graders
- The average teen watches 15,000 sexual acts on TV and in movies per year – and studies show that the more sexual content in the programming the younger kids have sex. Is it immoral for parents to let their children watch such programming?
- Do we recognize sexual immorality when we see it?
- Playboy magazine and others like it?
- Pornographic video, internet?
 - \$57 billion annual worldwide industry
 - 25% of all web searches are for porn
 - What about if done in anime?
 - What happens to the brain, character if use porn, even anime porn?
- Sports illustrated swimsuit edition?
- Victoria Secrets TV show?
- Victoria Secret stores?
- Cheerleaders at ball games? Outfits that are sexually provocative? Is this sexually immoral?
- Advertising with sexually provocative content?
- R Rated Movies?
- Flirting with someone when married?
- Flirting with someone when single?
- Lewd jokes?
- Music with sexual references and innuendo?
- Homosexuality?
- Sex change operation?
- Self-gratification?

MONDAY's lesson at the bottom states, "The word for 'sexual immorality' is *porneia* in the Greek, which would today cover

everything from pornography to prostitution, to any sexual activity outside of marriage.”

Can you have sexual immorality within marriage?

This is a comment from a founder of this church:

- Because they have entered into the marriage relation, many think that they may permit themselves to be controlled by animal passions. They are led on by Satan, who deceives them and leads them to pervert this sacred institution. He is well pleased with the low level which their minds take; for he has much to gain in this direction. {1MCP 224.3}

He knows that if he can excite the baser passions and keep them in the ascendancy, he has nothing to be troubled about in their Christian experience; for the moral and intellectual faculties will be subordinate, while the animal propensities will predominate and keep in the ascendancy; and these baser passions will be strengthened by exercise, while the nobler qualities will become weaker and weaker.--2T 480 (1870). {1MCP 224.4}

- Thoughts? Agree, disagree? Why?
- Can sex within marriage be immoral? Can sex within marriage be damaging to husband and wife? Yes, what factors would contribute to damaging changes of sex within a marriage?
 - Selfishness – when the partner is seen as an object rather than a person
 - When sex is about self, not about loving the other
 - When domination, control, humiliation is involved
 - When sex violates the dignity of the other
 - When coercion is used
 - When sex is abusive
 - When genuine love is absent and fear is present
 - Why? – because oxytocin and vasopressin, neurochemicals that promote bonding is released

when sex happens within a loving marriage. These brain chemicals prevent negative brain changes we see in addiction, including sexual addiction. But, the release of oxytocin and vasopressin is impaired when fear circuits fire. The fear circuits fire when selfishness increases, but the Anterior Cingulate Cortex, where we experience other-centered love, turns off the fear circuits. So, sex in a loving marriage results in bonding of the two people and no pathological brain changes, but sex outside a loving marriage results in fear circuit firing, reduction in oxytocin/vasopressin and increased pathological brain changes consistent with addiction.

- What about homosexual marriage? If the states make it legal is it then okay?
 - Can a person be saved if they are actively engaged in ongoing sexual immorality? (i.e. they never give it up?)
- Polygamy?
 - Was it immoral when Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon did it?
 - Did Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon ever give it up?
 - Were they saved?
 - What does this mean? How could they be? Did they ever give it up?
 - If polygamy is immoral then how could they be saved in such relationships?
 - Is polygamy immoral if it is legal in the country where it is practiced?
 - What about David and Bathsheba? Immoral for David to have adulterous relationship with her? Why, was it not immoral, and sinful, for him to marry her?
 - Because in that culture a woman had no standing. What David did to Bathsheba, by the affair, and by murdering Uriah, was to take from her her dignity, station

in society, financial security, income, sustenance. If he would have not married her he would have acted selfishly. It was an act of redemptive love, to as far as possible restore to Bathsheba what he had taken, and he could do this only by marrying her.

- This is level six moral development thinking. Level four people can't understand this. It confuses them, because the rules say polygamy is sin, and sin is bad, and must be punished. But God operates on principles and principles of love are not bound by rules.
- So the OT people who practiced polygamy were saved because they experienced a change in heart where they died to self and loved others more than self. Thus, self-gratification no longer controlled them.
- Sexual immorality will keep someone from eternal life, if such activity prevents heart transformation – which it will do, unless overcome. In the case of polygamy, they overcame the carnal drives, but the circumstance was such that to rid themselves of their wives would have been an additional act of selfishness. So they instead loved and protected their wives.
- This has been a difficult issue in the church in places in the world where polygamy is practiced. I have read that in some regions where polygamy is legal a man cannot become a Adventist if he has more than one wife, so this has led to some individuals casting aside his least favorite wives. Others advocate for

allowing membership if all the wives voluntarily want to stay.

So, how would you define sexual immorality? Would it not be actions, thoughts, behaviors, attitudes that degrade and destroy the image of God within you or another? Activities, practices, thought processes which increase selfishness and decrease genuine other centered love?

SUNDAY

The lesson speaks of Paul's desire for the believers to abound more and more in love, holiness, and Christian unity with one another looking forward to Christ's return.

What does this love look like?

What interferes with this type of love?

- Our biological drive to watch out for self
- Misunderstanding – perceiving threat when none exists
- Miseducation – what we have learned throughout life which biases us against others
- Business of life
- The false America dream –
 - The America dream is to have your own home, car, TV, capitalism, to get stuff. The more stuff the happier, and here, you can have a car loan, a mortgage, a loan for furniture, a credit card all in order for you to fulfill your dream and get stuff.
 - It is a lie, a trap, debt enslaves, and obstructs our ability to give freely to others because we are too busy worrying about paying our bills to have time to volunteer to help others.

Paul is pointing the Thessalonians toward an eternal dream, the hope of Christ's return, a universe in which there is no selfishness, pain, suffering, debt, in which all love each other more than self.

This should be our dream, our hope, our focus, our passion!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “First Thessalonians....” Thoughts?

What do you think of the idea that sexual immorality is a bad idea because God will take vengeance upon you if you do it?

If that is true that God will use his power to exact vengeance on those who have struggled with sexual immorality? if we could just only get Jesus to persuade God not to be so vengeful, to be kind and gracious, then there would be nothing wrong with sexual immorality – right? WRONG!!!!

Is the problem with sexual immorality (or immorality of any kind) that God will be the avenger or that such actions is out of harmony with God’s design and is inherently destructive?

This idea is closely related to another myth about God and sex, namely that children come forth from God’s action, or another way to say it, God causes pregnancy, or God creates babies, or children are a gift from God.

What is the more precise truth? That procreative ability is a gift from God, which he leaves the human agent free to use as the human being chooses – in harmony with God’s design or out of harmony. As the lesson states at the bottom of the page, *sexuality* is a gift from God.

Should a woman who is raped and becomes pregnant turn to God and thank him for being raped?

Sexuality is a gift, and as all gifts, God leaves us free to use or abuse the gift. If we abuse the gift of sexuality are there damaging consequences? Like what?

- STDs

- Damaged self-respect
- Altered intimacy and ability to love others
- Damaged self image
- Pregnancy
- Children being born without loving parents
- Damaged character
- Seared conscience
- Others?

If you are interested in reading more about the impact of pornography on the brain I recommend a book, *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain* by William M. Struthers. Very well done.

TUESDAY

The lesson points out that Paul admonishes the Thessalonians not to be like Gentiles. What do you think this means?

The lesson states, “Gentile society as a whole had little or no sexual restraint in Paul’s day.”

And later the lesson states, “In today’s world many find sexual restraint of any kind distasteful.”

Thoughts?

Are we as Christians to be different than the non-believing world? Are we?

He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the darkness, each at the shrine of his own idol? They say, ‘The LORD does not see us; the LORD has forsaken the land.’” Again, he said, “You will see them doing things that are even more detestable.” (Eze 8:12-13).

What kinds of things were they struggling with in the darkness? Was it sexual immorality? And who was struggling? The elders – would this have any application to the church today?

How are Christians different than non-believers?

- Affirm a belief in God
- Practice religious observances, Sabbath, church attendance, baptism, communion, holy-days, give tithes offerings etc.
- Education?
- Beliefs about marriage

How are we not different?

- Born in a terminal condition suffering from the same problem and needing the same solution
- Church has same level of problems as the world – abuse, addiction, obesity,
- Dress?
- What we watch, read, and games we play?
- How we invest our money and time?
- Our debt to income ratio?
- Our expectations for government and community?

Are there areas we need to change to be more Godly and less worldly?

WEDNESDAY

Sexual beings according to God's design.

Have you ever thought why God made us the way he did?

What is the primary purpose of sex? Is it primarily about pleasure? Or is it about something else?

- Reproduction?
- Intimacy? “The two shall become one flesh”?
- Does this design say anything about God?
- Does the way God made Adam and Eve have any higher meaning than mere physical pleasure? Is it also an object lesson for:
 - I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that **all of them may be one**, Father, just as **you are in me and I am in you**. May **they also be in us** so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that **they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me**. May they be brought to **complete unity** to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (Jn 17:20-23)

Read last paragraph, “On the other hand...” thoughts?

Are there problems when people believe sex is primarily about pleasure?

Studies suggest that worldwide 7-39% of men visit a prostitute sometime in their life, many become long term customers of the same prostitute.

Why do men often turn to prostitutes and pornography?

- Because they want physical gratification without commitment or responsibility.
- It avoids the fear of rejection
- It is straightforward exchange with no hidden expectations, and no after experience arguments or expectations.

Sex alters one’s mood and neurochemistry, and sexual gratification with porn or a prostitute results in neurological changes increasing sexual addiction, and loss of self-control.

THURSDAY

The title for the day is “Mind Your Own Business.” What do you think about the title?

Read last paragraph states, “Paul’s solution to the Thessalonian problem was to encourage them to be ambitious (‘aspire’), not for power or influence but to live a ‘quiet life’ (4:11) that would involve minding one’s own business and working with one’s hands.”

Thoughts?

What does it mean to mind one’s own business?

- To purposely ignore the needs of those around?
- To pretend others have no issues or problems?
- To not offer to help?
- Is the idea of minding one’s own business about being a hermit, isolating from others, disengaging from others?
- Or is it about only being involved in healing, loving, redemptive, supportive, and nurturing ways – while not hurting others; we don’t gossip, rumormonger, or meddle in the free will choices of others?
- But, do we intercede in love to help someone struggling?

What about on a community level – are we to mind our own business when the government goes to war, passes laws that infringe on personal liberty?

How do the Amish stay so disengaged and uninvolved? Is there culture a healthy Christian model or is it too extreme? Why or why not?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

Lesson 8 – The Dead in Christ

Sabbath's Lesson

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

What does it mean to be “dead in Christ”? What does it mean to be alive in Christ?? How has Satan caused so much confusion regarding the subject of human death?? Might there be some connection with the first lie humans ever heard [see Gen. 3:4]?? How does God's Law fit in to any / all of this?? What does most of Christianity's understanding of human death say about God?? Is our [Adventist's] view any better? What does the Bible say “death” is??

- HELL -- Psalm 55:15, Psalm 139:8, Proverbs 5:5, Proverbs 9:18, Proverbs 15:24, Isaiah 14:9, Ezekiel 32:27]
- PIT -- Job 33:18, Job 33:22, Job 33:24, Job 33:28, Job 33:30, Psalm 28:1, Psalm 30:3, Psalm 30:9, Psalm 49:9, Proverbs 1:12
- SLEEP -- Job 14:12, Psalm 13:3, Psalm 76:5, Psalm 76:6, Jeremiah 51:39, Daniel 12:2, **John 11:11-14**, 1 Corinthians 15:51, 1 Thessalonians 5:10.

How do we estimate the damage caused by humanity's belief in the immortality of the soul? What sorts of devil's doctrines have been developed from this lie?? An eternal hell?? Abortion is murder?? Prayer for the souls of dead?? Catholic indulgences?? Jihads / Holy wars?? Departed loved ones appearing to the living bringing wisdom and guidance

Sunday's Lesson

13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Any ideas about the errors in thinking Paul was dealing with?? Were the Jews in unity regarding the state of the dead [Matt 22:23, Acts 23:8]??

The lesson asks: “What does it mean to ‘live like a Seventh-day Adventist.’”? Any thoughts??

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, teaches that the first death, or death brought about by living on a planet with sinful conditions (sickness, old age, accident, etc.) is a sleep of the soul. Adventists believe that the body + the breath of God = a living soul. Like Jehovah's Witnesses, Adventists use key phrases from the Bible, such as "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten" (Eccl. 9:5 KJV). Adventists also point to the fact that the wage of sin is death and God alone is immortal. Adventists believe God will grant eternal life to the redeemed who are resurrected at Jesus' second coming. Until then, all those who have died are "asleep." When Jesus the Christ, who is the Word and the Bread of Life, comes a second time, the righteous will be raised incorruptible and will be taken in the clouds to meet their Lord. The righteous will live in heaven for a thousand years (the millennium) where they will sit with God in judgment over the unredeemed and the fallen angels. During the time the redeemed are in heaven, the Earth will be devoid of human and animal inhabitation. Only the fallen angels will be left alive. The second resurrection is of the unrighteous, when Jesus brings the New Jerusalem down from heaven to relocate to Earth. Jesus will call to life all those who are unrighteous. Satan and his angels will convince the unrighteous to surround the city, but hell fire and brimstone will fall from heaven and consume them, thus cleansing Earth of all sin. The universe will be then free from sin forever. This is called the second death. On the new earth God will provide an eternal home for all the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, where Eden will be restored. The great controversy will be ended and sin will be no more. God will reign in perfect harmony forever.(Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 146:3, 4; John 11:11-14; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:1-10; Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Eze. 28:18, 19; 2 Peter 3:13; Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5; 11:15.)

Ref: Wikipedia – SDA’s belief on the “afterlife”.

Monday’s Lesson

Think about what it would mean to attend the funeral of a loved one WITHOUT our understanding of death / resurrection / God’s Law / etc. It’s not a comforting thought, is it?

The lesson states: “A further element is the pagan background of most of the believers to whom Paul is writing (1 Thess. 1:9). Though the mystery religions of the time offered a picture of the afterlife, most pagans had no hope of life after death.”

I’m not sure I agree with this statement. Egypt, Greece, Rome, and many other ancient religions offered some “hope” of afterlife. Is it reasonable to think that Satan would have

deceived Eve with an offer of immortality, and then stopped offering that, since it worked so well?? Hardly.

Tuesday's lesson

The lesson, correctly, points out that v. 14 has been used by those who believe in the immortality of the soul to prove that God brings the "dead in Christ" with Christ at His 2nd coming. This would contradict v. 16, where Paul states clearly, that the "dead in Christ" will rise 1st and then those who are alive will be caught up to meet Christ in the air afterward.

What sorts of parallels can we draw between Christ's death, and resurrection?? [John 20:17]. Does our understanding of God's Law give us any other perspective?

Wednesday's Lesson

Note the bottom section. The lesson would have us believe that common sense, our experience, and science do not support our belief in the events surrounding the 2nd coming of Christ. Is this accurate??

Thursday's lesson

Where is the focus, with most of humanity, at the time of a loved one's departure from this life??

How should our experience be different? What does "comfort one another" really mean??

1 and 2 Thessalonians Lesson 9 3Q 2012

Final Events

This week we tackle, what many find to be a troubling topic, how do we reconcile the idea that God is love, with judgment and punishment for sin.

Can we be honest with the Bible text and retain a loving God? How can understand references that suggest punishment and judgment without inciting fear of God?

The Bible does speak of fear – but, according to the Bible, from where does fear originate? From sin – but have you ever noticed how many people are afraid of God?

As soon as Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid because they were “afraid.” Fear is part of the infection of sin, and throughout history, sadly this fear as been misdirected at God and theologies have been constructed which attempt to resolve our fear of God, when our fear originates in sin itself.

This week’s lesson also provides a great example of how, when we accept the distortion that God’s law is imposed like that of a Roman Emperor, then we read into the Bible false ideas that the Bible does not teach and are not found in the text.

Let’s start by reading 1 Thes 5:1-11

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

⁴ But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like

others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Then SUNDAY read first paragraph, “Though the specific...”

Did you hear anything about a judgment from God in these paragraphs?

When one accepts that God imposes law, then one must conclude that the consequences one experiences for disobedience to God’s law is imposed by God, or that God’s wrath is something that he inflicts to punish for sin.

What does the Bible teach?

Romans 1:18-32 – tells us that God’s wrath is giving people up...

From *Hard Sayings of the Bible*:

In some sense, God’s wrath is built into the very structure of created reality. In rejecting God’s structure and establishing our own, in violating God’s intention for the creation and substituting our own intentions, we cause our own disintegration. P 542

The human condition, which Paul describes in Romans 1:18-32, is not something caused by God. The phrase “revealed from heaven” (where “heaven” is a typical Jewish substitute word for “God”) does not depict some

kind of divine intervention, but rather the *inevitability of human debasement* which results when God's will, built into the created order, is violated. Since the created order has its origin in God, Paul can say that the wrath of God is now (constantly) being revealed "from heaven." It is revealed in the fact that the rejection of God's truth (Rom 1:18-20), that is, the truth about God's nature and will, leads to futile thinking (Rom 1:21-22), idolatry (Rom 1:23), perversion of God-intended sexuality (Rom 1:24-27) and relational-moral brokenness (Rom 1:28-32). P 543

The expression "God gave them over" (or "handed them over"), which appears three times in this passage (Rom 1:24,26,28), supports the idea that the sinful perversion of human existence, though resulting from human decisions, is to be understood ultimately as God's punishment which we, in freedom, bring upon ourselves. P 543

In light of these reflections, the common notion that God punishes or blesses in direct proportion to our sinful or good deeds cannot be maintained... God loves us with an everlasting love. But the rejection of that love separates us from its life-giving power. The result is disintegration and death. P 543 (Kaiser, W., et al., *Hard Saying of the Bible*, Intervarsity Press, 1996)

One of the founders of our church also saw it this way:

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

Thoughts?

But some will inevitably point to the plagues of Revelation, which are to be poured out and say, "see God does punish." What do you say to those who turn to passages that say the cup on iniquity was full, God's patience reached its limits, vengeance is the Lord's, the cup of God's wrath and fury will overflow, and use the plagues of Revelation as evidence that God inflicts punishment for sin?

Here is what our church saw such issues more than 100 years ago. Do we see it the same still, or has something happened to our thinking?

God bears long with the rebellion and apostasy of His subjects. Even when His mercy is despised and His love scorned and derided, He bears with men **until the last resource for leading them to repentance is exhausted**. But there are limits to His forbearance. **From those who to the end continue in obstinate rebellion, He removes His protecting care. Providence will no longer shield them from Satan's power**. They will have sinned away their day of grace. {RH, September 17, 1901 par. 7}

God keeps a reckoning with the nations. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. Those who work evil toward their fellow men, saying, How does God know? will one day be called upon to **meet long-deferred vengeance**. In this age a more than common contempt is shown to God. Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their **cup of iniquity is almost full**. Many have well-nigh **passed the boundary of mercy**. Soon **God will show that He is indeed the living God**. He will say to the angels, "***No longer combat Satan in his efforts to destroy***". Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience; for the cup of their iniquity is full. They have advanced from one degree of wickedness to another, adding daily to

their lawlessness. **I will no longer interfere to prevent the destroyer from doing his work.**" {RH, September 17, 1901 par. 8}

What is being described in these various quotations? Here is a second quote from more than 100 years ago:

"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.**

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

thoughts?

Read the second paragraph, "Many people..."

What did you hear? Did you hear the idea that the "biblical concept of judgment" includes "threat, condemnation, and execution?" But also keeping record of your good deeds to give you rewards?

Does such a concept cause you to have greater trust in God or more fear? Does God appear more loving or more arbitrary and stern?

How do we understand judgment?

- First judgment is an ability, and God has perfect judgment, he judges, estimates, diagnoses all things exactly as they really are.

Do God's judgments cause reality to be as it is, or do his judgments simply perfectly assess what actually is? When God judges Satan as beyond healing, does God's judgment cause it to be this way, or does God's judgment merely assess and accurately conclude it is this way?

- Second, judgment as an act – judicial and medicinal? God does make interventions based on his judgments, but God's interventions are always therapeutic and beneficial, unfortunately if one looks through the lens of a false law construct then one reads punishment and fails to see healing intervention, or diagnostic assessment.

Look at the third paragraph, "The two-sided nature..."

Thoughts? How do you hear it?

The lesson uses judgment and consequences? Do you hear those the same? When the two are used together it could mean, the consequence is going before the judge and receiving your punishment, or, the judge assesses accurately the consequence that results from one's choice. Which do you believe is meant here?

Those who interpret these passages as punishment for sin do so because of misconceptions about God and his law. God had already disclosed to Adam and Eve what the punishment for sin is – death – not pain in childbirth, wife's subordination to

husband or difficulty in agriculture. These events were a result of disruption to God's design and God's interventions to save and heal mankind.

After Adam and Eve sinned, humanity no longer naturally, automatically, sought to love one another, but instead sought to put self first. And God describes how women, being weaker, would be dominated by man because of sin, not because of God. Men dominate women, not because it is godly, but because of fear, insecurity and selfishness in the heart of the men who do so.

As we experience God's healing power in our lives, as selfishness is purged and love is restored within the marriage relationship, we return more fully to God's original ideal – true and genuine equality. Each partner sacrifices himself to uplift the other, to promote the welfare of the other, and to protect the other. Look at how Jesus treated women. Quite different from the men of his day.

The pain of childbirth is a powerful object lesson allowing women to experience greater insight into the heart and mind of God. Knowing labor will be painful, why do women choose to have children? In the aftermath of labor, the pain of it, why do women rejoice? Is it not because of love? Doesn't love for their children overcome their pain and fear of labor to bring forth new life?

Likewise, the Bible says, "for the joy set before Him" Christ endured the cross (Heb 12:2). It was for our rebirth that Christ labored as a human and suffered through the cross. Thus the birthing process allows women to appreciate in a small way the pain and suffering God went through to rebirth us in newness of life and also the joy in God's heart to see us renewed.

Therefore, Genesis 3:16 does not reveal God "punishing" mankind for sin, but God diagnosing and describing how life will be different because of sin.

In Genesis 3:17 again God looks good as He works to save and heal mankind. In this verse our Savior is pronouncing the natural consequence that impacted nature when God's rule of love was replaced by Satan's rule of survival of the fittest as a result of Adam's abdication of his rule to the devil.

Paul says in Romans 8:22 that all nature groans under the weight of sin. God is announcing in Genesis 3:17, that, for mankind's sake, He would not intervene to prevent the law of sin and death from impacting the earth, but the earth was now under the curse of sin. Why did God allow this? As a protection for mankind in a world of sin.

Once Adam and Eve sinned their natural tendency was toward sin and selfishness. Industry, work, is a hedge of protection from the power of the carnal nature. Maybe you have heard the old saying, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." A powerful truth is espoused in this statement. Idleness allows the carnal mind time to wander away from the right and engage in unhealthy and destructive practices. Therefore, to protect man, to keep his time occupied, to teach self-discipline, self-mastery and diligence, God announced that it was for man's sake that He would not stop the earth from changing.

Further, there is a powerful spiritual lesson in allowing the curse of sin to change the earth, which was also for man's sake. Imagine you have a garden, one you have faithfully tended and is producing a bountiful harvest. What will happen to your garden if you stop tending it? Will it continue to produce good fruit, or will the weeds come up and eventually destroy it?

In a similar way, ever since Adam and Eve sinned, our minds naturally bring up weeds, selfish thoughts, ideas, and conceptions. It is Christ who works through the Holy Spirit to plant the seeds of truth in our minds. He then nurtures and protects the seeds of truth to grow into the fruits of a Christ-

like character. It is by utilizing the Sword of the Spirit (which is the Word of God, the truth) that we work with Christ to weed our minds; we uproot the lies and false theories that keep us captive, and instead maintain a healthy and productive mental garden.

So, we find that as soon as mankind fell into sin the natural consequence of deviation from God's law of love was destroying mankind and nature. But God was right there intervening, not to punish, but to save and heal. What an awesome God we serve!

But when we misconstrue God's law we misconstrue the meaning of what we read in Scripture and misrepresent God to be like that which Satan alleges.

What about judicial judgment, that which determines the outcome of one's life? Many point to places in Scripture like the Great White Throne judgment, or where Paul states everyone will stand before the judgment seat of God, and conclude God's government is like a human court room and God's judgments decide our destiny and punishment.

Here is what our church taught more than 100 years ago, what do you think, agree or disagree?

They thought themselves passing judgment on Christ; but in rejecting Him they were pronouncing sentence upon themselves. "He that is of God," said Jesus, "heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

The lesson is true for all time. Many a man who delights to quibble, to criticize, seeking for something to question in the word of God, thinks that he is thereby giving evidence of independence of thought, and mental acuteness. **He supposes that he is sitting in judgment on the Bible, when in truth he is judging himself.** He makes it manifest that he is incapable of appreciating

truths that originate in heaven, and that compass eternity. DA 468

The people who beheld the Saviour at His advent were favored with a fuller manifestation of the divine presence than the world had ever enjoyed before. **The knowledge of God was revealed more perfectly. But in this very revelation, judgment was passing upon men. Their character was tested, their destiny determined.** {DA 475.2}

Thoughts?

What determined their destiny? How they responded to the truth of God's character of love. Who determines your destiny? Whose decisions judge you?

Read bottom green question, "How does the truth..." thoughts?

What is the implication of the question? That when we stand in the judgment God isn't judging us he is judging Christ.

Any problems with this theory?

If you went to the doctor sick and he came in to examine you, would you shove your healthy brother in front of you and say, examine him instead and put his result in my medical record?

Had an email exchange with Brad Cole this week in which we discussed the origin of the legal model of salvation. I suggested that the legal model is not Biblical, but inspired by Satan. But another friend pointed out all the law used by God at Sinai supports the legal model of atonement, I replied that the law given at Sinai was not given as a model of atonement, but like a parent gives rules to protect their children until they grow up. So, in function the law was the healing model acted out as God sought to bring the Israelites to maturity. The model given at Sinai was the sanctuary, which is about healing.

Brad responded with:

The legal model ultimately was "inspired" by the Adversary to:

1. paint God in an arbitrary light
2. blind us to the reality of natural consequence from breaking the Law of Love (as opposed to imposed penalty for breaking an arbitrary rule)
3. blind us to what God really wants to accomplish (which is healing) and to keep us fixated on a legal fix that has no transforming power.

If you haven't visited godscharacter.com recently I encourage you to do so. Dean just rebuilt their website and it is great, and they have so much really good material there.

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "Many today feel..." thoughts?

Notice how the lesson cites Romans 1:18, but doesn't cite verses 24, 26, 28 which explains that God's wrath is letting go as we discussed earlier?

What does it mean to "pile up wrath for the day of wrath"?

Every time we sin we experience guilt, we don't like guilt so we want it to resolve. If we refuse to repent and experience regeneration of the HS, then we instead deny and distort to avoid the reality of our condition. And the next sin, lie and distort, and the next and next etc. So with each sin we are piling up more and more lies and warping our minds more and more and hiding more and more from the reality of our own condition so that when we one day stand face to face with the source of all truth, what will it be like?

Read third paragraph, "While we cannot..." thoughts?

What do you think of this idea that “The biblical concept of the wrath of God is more like a nation’s need for justice in relation to lawbreakers who abuse and oppress others.”

This statement is what in medicine we call pathognomonic—the pathology, the sickness, is named in the sign or symptom itself. A pathognomonic symptom means when you see it you know what disease you are dealing with, the symptom names the problem.

This statement reveals that those who wrote this operate under the Imperial Roman imposed law construct believing God runs his universe like Rome runs its government, like human governments, imposing law, which require the ruling authority to impose penalties lest unpunished rebellion ensue.

Here is how our church considered this more than 100 years ago:

The germ in the seed grows by the unfolding of the life-principle which God has implanted. Its development depends upon no human power. **So it is with the kingdom of Christ. It is a new creation. Its principles of development are the opposite of those that rule the kingdoms of this world. Earthly governments prevail by physical force;** they maintain their dominion by war; but the founder of the new kingdom is the Prince of Peace. The Holy Spirit represents worldly kingdoms under the symbol of fierce beasts of prey; but Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. **In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures.** They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin. {COL 77.1}

Clearly something has changed in our church. This idea that God must inflict punishment upon sinners is Satan's lie about God. It is the root of paganism, it leads to appeasement theologies. It causes fear of God and alienates people from him. We cannot lighten the world for Christ's return until we throw off such distorted God concepts!

WEDNESDAY

What does it mean to be spiritually asleep?

What can we do to stay awake and alert?

What do you think will awaken the church to give the message to the world?

What do you think of the idea of the General Conference President to mail the *Great Controversy* to every home in America?

Do you think it will win friends or create enemies and put up barriers?

Instruction has been given me that the important books containing the light that God has **given regarding Satan's apostasy in heaven should be given a wide circulation just now**; for through them the truth will reach many minds. Patriarchs and Prophets, Daniel and the Revelation, and The Great Controversy are needed now as never before. They should be widely circulated because the truths they emphasize will open many blind eyes.... Many of our people have been blind to the importance of the very books that were most needed. Had tact and skill then been shown in the sale of these books, the Sunday-law movement would not be where it is today.--CM 123. {PM 356.3} (1905)

God would be pleased to see *The Desire of Ages* in every home. In this book is contained the light He has given upon His Word... {The Publishing Ministry 357.3}

The Great Controversy should be very widely circulated. It contains the story of the past, the present, and the future. In its outline of the closing scenes of this earth's history, it bears a powerful testimony in behalf of the truth. I am more anxious to see a wide circulation for this book than for any others I have written; for in *The Great Controversy*, the last message of warning to the world is given more distinctly than in any of my other books.--CM 126, 127. {PM 358.1} (1906)

Was there something different about the US in the 19th century that would have made the book more acceptable than today?

As an example of the attitudes of the US people toward the Catholic church during that period of history, in the early 1850's Pope Pius IX contributed a block of marble for the building of the Washington Monument which was under construction. . In March 1854 members of the American Party stole the Pope's stone as a protest and supposedly threw it into the Potomac (it was replaced in 1982).

What does it tell you about the attitudes of the average American that the stone was replaced in 1982? What happened when the pope came to visit Denver a few years back?

In the 19th century a book which took a hard line toward Catholicism and its abuses during the Dark Ages had traction and much sympathy from the US reading audience. What about today?

Is the issue we need to focus people's attention upon the Catholic church, or the controversy over God's character and law of love?

MONDAY

Read the second paragraph, “The threefold...” thoughts?

What does it mean to prepare?

- Leave the city and get a house in the woods?
- Stock up on food and water?
- Be sure you have confessed all your sins?
- Get baptized?
- Become so settled into the truth of God and his kingdom of love, both intellectually and spiritually that you cannot be moved?

Could it mean preparing character ready to meet Jesus?

The five foolish virgins had lamps (this means a knowledge of Scripture truth), but they had not the grace of Christ. Day by day they went through a round of ceremonies and external duties, but their service was lifeless, devoid of the righteousness of Christ. The Sun of Righteousness did not shine in their hearts and minds, and they had not the **love of the truth which conforms to the life and character**, the image and superscription, of Christ. The oil of grace was not mingled with their endeavors. Their religion was a dry husk without the true kernel. **They held fast to forms of doctrines, but they were deceived in their Christian life**, full of self-righteousness, and failing to learn lessons in the school of Christ, which, if practiced, would have made them wise unto salvation.-- Review and Herald, March 27, 1894. {ChS 263.1}

Have you ever considered the idea that one’s Christian life deceives one into a false sense of security obstructing the work of the Holy Spirit in renewing the heart?

They [five foolish virgins] were lulled to sleep by the cry of peace and safety, and did not keep their lamps trimmed

and burning. Aroused to their darkness they plead for oil, but **it is impossible for one Christian to impart character to another soul. Character is not transferable.** Those who are ease-loving, world-loving, fashion-loving professors of Christianity will not go in to the marriage supper of the Lamb with those who are represented by the five wise virgins... {TMK 215.2}

Thoughts? Is character transferable? What about Christ's character transferred to us?

Read bottom green section "How do we live..." thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, "In these verses..." thoughts?

Will believers be surprised by the second coming of Christ?

Why not? In what light do they live?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 3

1 and 2 Thessalonians Lesson 10 3Q 2012

Church Life

When you hear the title what do you think?

- All persons who make up the body of Christ?
- A specific denomination?
- A specific local congregation?

When we think church life – do all church's have the same "life"?

Are all churches equally healthy? Can you describe a variety of experiences one might encounter in across the landscape of Christianity?

- Extremes – snake handling, poison drinking, white supremacists, those who espouse violence in the name of Christ
- Traditional – high church – formalism and rituals, Catholicism, Episcopal, Presbyterian
- Experiential – encounter churches- Pentecostalism
- Teaching/education – know the doctrines, know the Bible
- Contemporary – modern music, jeans, no pews
- Unitarian –

Where would Adventism fit?

Are all church encounters equally healthy? What would be practices that would tend toward a healthy church?

- Evidences of the Holy Spirit – which are what?
 - Truth, love and freedom
- Churches active in outreach, community, fellowship, loving others?
- Churches which engages the reason, uses an evidence based approach?

- Church which present truth, in love and leaves people free?
- Would how women are treated in the organization be an indication of spiritual health?
- If women are second class members, devalued in some institutionally sanctioned fashion, under the umbrella of holiness, would this indicate anything?
- If freedom to ask questions and hold divergent views, while still living a life of love, kindness, gentleness, patience, meekness, self-control, was not tolerated would this indicate anything in regard to the health of the church?
- If the church held power over individuals, particularly holding some element of forgiveness and salvation over the believer requiring the believer to give money or do certain rituals or else the church would not grant them rites necessary to salvation, would this be a sign of anything?
- If a church teaches a God construct that induces fear – sign of anything?

What about within the same denomination, are all congregations equally healthy places – equally alive with God's grace?

Would the picture of God that is taught impact the practices and ultimately the health of the church?

MONDAY - Read third paragraph, "In contrast..." thoughts?
How do we encourage the timid?

- Does the social environment of the church encourage or discourage people?
- If the social group is a critical, cutting, fault finding, negative, laughing at mistakes, judgmental environment, will that result in the timid being encouraged?
- Why does the church often have difficulty loving the sinner while hating the sin? Why does the church

struggle to make the sinner feel welcome, valued and cherished, while simultaneously making it clear the sin is to be hated? Why do 12 step meetings do such a better job at this?

- I believe it is because 12 step meetings operate under God's law of love, i.e. they approach the problem as a violation of the laws of health, this is a sickness to be cured.
- But churches too often operate under imposed law, and violations are crimes to be punished.

Thoughts?

SABBATH - Read Memory text: "Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good." 1Thes 5:20,21

Thoughts about this? What principle do you hear espoused? Is there a principle of openness to new ideas?

WEDNESDAY – Relating to "New Light"

Read first paragraph, "In 1 Thessalonians..." thoughts?

- What does it mean to despise prophecy?
- What is the gift of prophecy?
- Who is a prophet?
- Is it only those who make predictions of future events?
- Or is the gift of prophecy, the gift of being a spokesperson for the Lord, one who speaks the truth of God's kingdom?
 - How did the Jewish leadership treat prophets in the OT?
 - How did they treat Christ and the Apostles?
 - Would you consider Martin Luther a prophet? How was he treated?
 - What about other Reformers?
 - Jones and Waggoner? Did they bring new light? How were they treated?

Here is a comment from one of the founders of our church regarding how “new light” has been treated through history:

As the light and life of men was rejected by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation.

Again and again the history of Christ’s withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; **but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light**, and those that bore it were **forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth**. In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented.

Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. **And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience.** {DA 232.2}

Do you think this is an accurate observation of history? Do you think this continues to occur today? Why does this happen?

What about E.G. White? I have had emails and inquiries from all over the world regarding how I use EGW – “Why don’t you use here name? Why do you refer to here writings as ‘one of the founders of our church’ or ‘historic Adventism?’” Is EGW a prophet – and the answer is – what difference does it make?

Is something true because a prophet says it, or is it true because it’s true?

I have a relative who doesn't want anything to do with EGW writings because he is convinced she plagiarized some of her writings. My response is so?

If you had a loved one dying with a particular terminal illness, and a doctor wrote out a treatment that actually worked, if applied and would cure those with the illness. But sometime later it was discovered the doctor had plagiarized what he wrote from others, would you say, "well if its plagiarized then I won't use that treatment, even if it does work, or would you say, I don't care, it works!"

The question with EGW or any other writer, including Bible writers is – is what they have written true? If it is not, disregard it, if it is then utilize it. Don't get tricked into devaluing truth because of who wrote it.

Spokespersons for God, whoever they are, speak the truth, as they know it, but since truth is unfolding, then even the spokesperson, being finite, may very well change what they taught at one point and teach something else later. Any examples?

- The Levitical laws – taught by God at one point, but not later
- Others?

In what ways can we "quench the Spirit"?

The lesson gives three –

- Ignore the work of a true prophet
- Misinterpret the words of the prophet
- Give prophetic authority to someone not under the influence of the Holy Spirit

Are there other ways to quench the Spirit?

- Closing the mind to truth?

SUNDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “The language...” thoughts?

What do you think of the description of “carefully diagnose the condition of their followers...” and “apply the appropriate remedy”?

Is the lesson saying that God diagnoses and provides remedy? I like this language, don't you?

Then the paragraph finishes with “God is the model of leadership...”

Is it important to hold the right picture of God? Consider the following story and what it implies about the god being worshipped:

(CNN) -- An 11-year-old Christian girl has been arrested after being accused of blasphemy by burning pages of the Quran in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad.

According to a statement released by the president's office Sunday, the girl, identified as Ramsha, was accused by a local resident of burning pages of the Muslim holy text after she gathered paper as fuel for cooking.

Local media reports said the girl has Down syndrome. CNN was unable to confirm these reports, and a local police official said they are not true.

Qasim Niazi, the police officer in charge of the station near where the incident took place, said the girl does not have a mental disorder but is illiterate and has not attended school.

The accused girl had told him she had no idea there were pages of the Quran inside the documents she burned, he added.

Niazi said that 150 people had gathered on Friday where the neighborhood's Christian population lives and threatened to burn down their houses.

"The mob wanted to burn the girl to give her a lesson," he told CNN.

Other Christian families living in the area have fled fearing a backlash, he added.

The statement from President Asif Ali Zardari said he has called for an urgent report on the incident and added that vulnerable sections of society must be protected "from any misuse of the blasphemy law."

"Blasphemy by anyone cannot be condoned but no one will be allowed to misuse blasphemy law for settling personal scores," said the president's spokesman, Farhatullah Babar.

Critics of the controversial law say it is being used to persecute religious minorities....

The legislation makes it a crime punishable by death to insult Islam, the Quran or the Prophet Mohammed.

Pakistan is home to about 2 million Christians, who make up more than 1% of Islamic nation's population, according to government statistics.

What do you think of this report?

- What kind of a god would *want* his followers to treat others this way?
- What kind of a god would *need* his followers to treat others this way?
- Do their actions reveal anything about the kind of god they worship?
- Why is there god not capable of dealing with blasphemy on his own?

Do you think Christians or Jews have a better track record of dealing with blasphemy?

Read bottom green section, "In some cultures..." thoughts?

How should we relate to church leadership? Now this discussion we are about to have is for the spiritually mature, parental guidance is recommended.

First Question – who is the leader of the church? Who is the leader of the universe? How does God/Christ want us to relate to him? How does God relate to us? What methods has God used in leading his church? Keep this in mind as we go through the rest of the questions.

How did Christ relate to church leadership in his day?

- Did he allow church leadership to dictate his beliefs? Or,
- What he taught?
- How he treated others including women?
- How he kept the Sabbath?
- How he kept the law?
 - Does God want to dictate our beliefs, what we teach, how we treat others, how we keep the law? No! God wants us to do what's right because it is right, because we freely want to, not because he says so.
- Did Christ's teachings challenge practices that the Jewish leadership claimed were Biblical? (not stoning the woman caught in adultery, healing on Sabbath, teaching to love enemies)
- Did Jesus following the decisions of the Sanhedrin?
 - Why not?
- Did Jesus, and what he taught, cause division in Judaism?
- Do we have problems when leadership focuses on unity rather than truth, rather than allowing truth to unfold?

At the recent ASI meeting Ted Wilson, the President of the GC and, Mark Finley, the assistant to the President, were asked questions about church leadership, women's ordination and how members should relate to church leadership.

Mark Finley used the example of the meeting in Acts when Paul and others came to the leaders in Jerusalem to ask if the church should require Gentiles to be circumcised or observe feasts and the decision was to only require them to avoid idols, and food strangled and not to eat blood. Then he asked what if the various churches would have each done their own thing? And then he suggested we should follow this model because it brought unity.

Thoughts? Do you have any questions you would like to ask him?

I would ask Mark, what if the council at Jerusalem determined that the Gentiles should be circumcised and should observe feast days, and even followed Peter's advice and decide Jewish converts shouldn't associate with Gentile converts, then should the churches have followed that decision from leadership, for the sake of unity? Should Martin Luther have followed the decision of the church leaders of his day?

What he failed to make clear was that in the example from Acts the leadership in Jerusalem made the right decision, the decision which granted the most freedom and reduced restrictions. When it comes to women's ordination the leadership is making the decision with the most restriction and least freedom to more than half the church.

In Christ's day were the masses tending to follow the Jewish leaders, or was Christ drawing the masses away from what the Jewish leaders were teaching? Shouldn't Christ have taught the people to follow church leadership? Or, shouldn't the masses have said, "Well the Sanhedrin hasn't decided yet whether Jesus is telling the truth, and they say we shouldn't help people on Sabbath, so I must follow the decision of the General Conference for the sake of unity. Because it is better for one man to die than for the nation or church to fracture."

Thoughts?

The GC President said that when the church meets in General Conference session, with representatives from the entire world, that the Holy Spirit leads what is happening and when the GC votes an issue that it is a Holy Spirit led decision and thus should decide the issue and other individuals or groups should conform to the decision by the GC session. He referenced this quotation from EGW:

I have been shown that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered.
(3Testimonies, p. 492, 1875)

Should we accept this without thinking? Should we read and study and research and think?

Here is are some others quotations from EGW a little later in her life, note the change. For those who believe she was inspired, was she less inspired with these?

If it were possible, the **enemy** would clog the wheels of progress and **prevent the truths of the gospel** from being circulated everywhere. With this object **he** leads men to feel that it is their privilege to control the consciences of their fellow-men according to their own perverted ideas. **They dismiss the Holy Spirit** from their councils, and **then, under the power and name of the General Conference**, they invent regulations through which they compel men to be ruled by their own ideas and not by the Holy Spirit. . . . {Christian Leadership 31.5}

There is need of an education in regard to the rights and duties of men in authority **who have lorded it over God's heritage**. When a man is placed in a position of trust, who knows not what kind of spirit he should exercise in dealing with human minds, he needs to learn

the **very first principles** as to his authority over his fellow-men. **Right principles** must be brought into the heart, and wrought into the warp and woof of character.-- Letter 83, 1896 (May 22, 1896 to O. A. Olsen). {ChL 32.1}

Thoughts? What right principles might she be referring to? Could it be the principles of truth, love and freedom?

"It has been some years since I have considered the General Conference as the voice of God." --17MR 216 (1898). LDE 50.3

One day at noon I was writing of the work that **might have been done at the last [1901] General Conference if the men in positions of trust had followed the will and way of God. Those who have had great light have not walked in the light.** The meeting was closed, and the break was not made. **Men did not humble themselves before the Lord as they should have done, and the Holy Spirit was not imparted.** {LDE 57.1}

The voice of the General Conference has been represented as an authority to be heeded as the voice of the Holy Spirit. But when the members of the General Conference Committee become entangled in business affairs and financial perplexities, the sacred, elevated character of their work is in a great degree lost. The temple of God becomes as a place of merchandise, and the ministers of God's house as common businessmen. **Their work is brought down on a level with common things.** Business cares and perplexities unfit them for the consideration of matters relating to the spiritual interests of the work, which require the keenest perception, the most careful thought, the most delicate tact, and the deepest spiritual insight. {14MR 278.3}

How should we respond to leadership?

Remember, the purpose of our class is not to tell you what to think, but to challenge you to think for yourself, to get you to examine the evidence, to exercise your God given reasoning powers and come to your own conclusions and in so doing remove lies, distortions and come to an ever increasing knowledge of and love for the truth. Because the truth always leads back to God!

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Paul encouraged...” thoughts? What do you think of the idea of warning those who won't support themselves, when they are capable?

What warning should they be given?

- Those that don't work won't eat? 2Thes 3:10
- That failure to provide for oneself, when one is capable...?
- That their own character development is being hindered?
That they are going down a path of self-destruction?

Should social programs be designed to give away, or help restore and build up? To return a person to self-sufficiency?

What if a person would rather be homeless and beg and dumpster dive than get a job? What should we do?

What if mental illness is involved? Should we institutionalize people who are not a danger to self or others, and want to be free, but are impaired so they end up on the street?

Thoughts?

The sixth paragraph states, “But when leaders retaliate, it demonstrates that their leadership was not motivated by the spirit of Christ. It is crucial to sound church leadership to keep the good of others in mind.”

What does it look like in action when we practice Christ's methods in leadership?

What does it look like when church leaders retaliate?

- What did they do to Christ?
- How were the apostles treated?
- Martin Luther?
- What about EGW in our own organization? Was shipping her to Australia retaliation?

TUESDAY

First paragraph states, "Christians need to learn how to accept and how to offer constructive criticism."

Thoughts?

Any ideas to improve our ability to do this?

- Recognize our need – we are not perfect and always have room to grow
- Recognize the feedback you receive is the perspective of the other person and will be give through the lens of their mind, beliefs, perspectives, understanding, biases etc. which means it may be accurate or inaccurate
- Recognize the motive of the one giving the feedback, regardless of accuracy, is the person for me, or are they working their own agenda?
- Examine the methods employed in giving the feedback, is coercive pressure used, are you left free?

Any ideas on what interferes?

- Fear and selfishness – our own ego and pride
- Personality conflicts
- Misunderstanding

The lesson emphasizes the importance of rejoicing and being thankful for what Jesus has done – do we have anything to be thankful for?

Anyone what to share?

THURSDAY

End-Time Holiness

What does it mean? Why is it important?

When Christ comes what happens to those who have not experienced renewal of heart to be like him in character?

Is end time holiness real; is it achievable? Is it something declared or experienced, a reality that occurs in the believer?

What interferes with achieving this? Would it be lies about God, his law, his methods?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions

1 and 2 Thessalonians Lesson 11 3Q 2012

Promise to the Persecuted

What comes to mind when you hear this title?

The first thing I thought of was, deliverance – what about you?

Were you surprised what the lesson is actually about?

SUNDAY

Read 2Thes 1:1,2:

Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then read first paragraph, “Paul, as he does....” Thoughts?

Is there a limit to God’s grace? Does God ever stop being gracious?

What is the traditional definition of grace?

From the book, *The Cross of Christ*, by George Knight, which some of our critics have held up as the textbook for the atonement, states:

“...the basis of God’s justice is what Paul called *grace*. The simplest definition of grace is unmerited favor. In other words, *grace means that people receive what they do not deserve.*” (p. 16 emphasis theirs)

Thoughts?

Unmerited favor – if God’s favor is based on grace, and grace is unmerited favor, why do traditional theologies teach that we

are to claim the merits of Christ when we approach God? Or that we are to present Christ's merits in our behalf?

Is grace, in the traditional view, actually Christ merited favor? Doesn't the traditional view of presenting Christ's merits to the Father in our behalf, to achieve avoidance of wrath, or mercy, or salvation, undermine the entire concept of grace?

Does Christ have to earn favor with God for us? Here are a couple of further quotations from the book, *The Cross of Christ*:

"Paul always speaks of people being reconciled to God (2Cor 5:19; Rom 5:10; Col. 1:20). He never refers to God being reconciled to us. **In spite of that fact, [my comment - he just affirms the Bible nowhere refers to God being reconciled to man, yet now he denies this fact and argues that "in spite of what the Bible says" God did have to be reconciled to man]** however, we should recognize that sin affected both sides. Humanity's rebellion and sense of guilt alienated it from God, while **God was separated from humankind by His necessary hatred of and judgment on sin (His wrath). Christ's sacrificial death (propitiation) removed the barrier to reconciliation from God's side.**" (Knight, George, *The Cross of Christ*, p. 74.)

"Leon Morris writes that *if God's 'wrath is regarded as a very real factor so that the sinner is exposed to its severity, then **the removal of the wrath will be an important part of our understanding of salvation...***' **In other words, Gods' wrath must be propitiated or turned away from the sinner. That was one aim of Christ's self-sacrifice on the cross.**" (Knight, George, *The Cross of Christ*, p. 64)

Thus Revelation 19 and 20 represent Armageddon as having two significant engagements – one at the beginning of the millennium and the other at the end. The Second Armageddon engagement finds God executing His ultimate wrath not only on Satan, but on those sinners who have

refused to accept (1) His principles into their lives and (2) **Christ's vicarious sacrificial propitiation (the basis of grace) that turned aside the divine wrath (judgment on sin)**. (Knight, George, *The Cross of Christ*, p. 107).

What does traditional Christianity teach? That grace is not free, but earned at a high price by the blood payment of Christ. God, if not for the blood payment of Christ, would be wrathful – this is not a god of grace being taught, but a pagan god construct who must receive some payment to merit his grace.

But the Bible is clear – God is gracious, His mercies are freely given and Christ was given as an expression of His grace to achieve His plan to redeem, not as a means to get grace.

Here is an article, written by Ellen White, one of the founders of our church, in December 1914, less than a year before her death. Keep in mind the quotes from *The Cross of Christ* which represents the predominate view in our church today and notice how far our church has drifted from its origins in understanding God and the plan of salvation. My insertions are in red:

The law of love is the foundation of God's government, and the service of love the only service acceptable to heaven. [Why?] God has granted freedom of will to all, endowed men with capacity to appreciate His character, and therefore with ability to love Him, and to choose His service. So long as created beings worshiped God, they were in harmony throughout the universe. While love to God was supreme, love to others abounded. As there was no transgression of **the law, which is the transcript of God's character**, no note of discord jarred the celestial harmonies. [Where does the law originate? Is it imposed or, as it is an expression of God's character is as eternal as God?] {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 1}

"Kept in Silence from
Times Eternal"

But known unto God are all His works, and from eternal ages **the covenant of grace (unmerited favor) existed in the mind of God**. It is called the everlasting covenant; for **the plan of salvation was not conceived after the fall of man**, but it was that which was "kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith." Romans 16:25, 26, A. R. V. {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 2}

Redemption Not an Afterthought

The purpose and plan of grace existed from all eternity. [Why? Is it because grace is an expression of God's character who existed from all eternity? Does it remind you of the eternal gospel of the first angel?]

Before the foundation of the world it was according to the determinate counsel of God that man should be created and endowed with power to do the divine will. The fall of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent. Redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam, but an eternal purpose, suffered to be wrought out for the blessing not only of this atom of a world, but for the good of all the worlds that God had created. {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 3}

Before Him who rules in the heavens, the mysteries of the past and the future are alike outspread; and God sees, beyond the woe and darkness and ruin that sin has wrought, the outworking of His purpose of love and blessing. Though clouds and darkness are round about Him, yet righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne. {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 4}

Made Known in His Love

Through creation and redemption, through nature and through Christ, the **glories of the divine character are revealed.** [Why is this important?] By the marvelous display of His love in giving "His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," **the character of God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. Through Christ our heavenly Father is made known as the God of love.** {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 5}

Heaven in Sadness--the Angels Perplexed

When man sinned, all heaven was filled with sorrow; for through yielding to temptation, **man became the enemy of God, a partaker of the satanic nature.** The image of God in which he had been created was marred and distorted. **The character of man was out of harmony with the character of God;** for through sin man became carnal, and the carnal heart is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. [What does this mean? What does it imply? If God's law is imposed what is the result? If God's law, is as stated above the law of love, what is the result of being out of harmony with it? Then what would be needed to save mankind?] {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 6}

To the angels there seemed to be no way of escape for the transgressor. [Why do you think? Do you think the angels thought of God as severe and unforgiving? Or did they see the change in the character of man and couldn't conceive how mankind could be healed?] They ceased their songs of praise, and throughout the heavenly courts there was mourning for the ruin sin had wrought. **Out of harmony with the nature of God, unyielding to the claims of His law, naught but destruction was before the human race.** [Why was destruction before the race? Because God would impose it or because deviation from God's design, law, results in

destruction?] Since the divine law is as changeless as the character of God, there could be no hope for man unless some way could be devised whereby his transgression might be pardoned, his nature renewed, and his spirit restored to reflect the image of God.

[What do you hear? Why is the law changeless? What is necessary for man to be saved? "his nature renewed and spirit restored to reflect the image of God – why?"] {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 7}

Divine love had conceived such a plan. **It was through Satan's misrepresentation of God's character that man was led to doubt the reality of His love, and came to look upon God as his enemy.** As Satan had done in heaven, so he did on earth,--declared God's government unjust, the restrictions of His law unnecessary, and bade men, as he had angels, to throw aside the yoke and let the dictates of their own nature be their only guide and law. He promised liberty; but as he himself is the servant of corruption, he brought the race into bondage to sin, misery, and death. **He represented God as claiming all, and giving nothing,** as requiring men's service for His own glory, but denying Himself nothing for man's good. {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 8}

He Alone Could Save

In the work of creation, Christ was with God. He was one with God, equal with Him, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person, the representative of the Father. [Why is it important to realize Christ is fully God? What do we lose if we deny the Trinity and make Christ a lesser being?] He alone, the Creator of man, could be his Saviour. **No angel of heaven could reveal the Father to the sinner, and win him back to allegiance to God.** [If an angel couldn't reveal the Father who could? God himself!] But Christ could manifest the Father's love; for God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. Christ could be the "day's man" between a holy God and lost humanity, one

who could "lay His hand upon us both." {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 9}

None but Christ could redeem man from the curse of the law. **He proposed to take upon Himself the guilt and shame of sin**,--sin so offensive in the sight of God that it would necessitate separation from His Father. [What does this mean? He took our legal penalty, or our condition? Was this legal guilt or emotional guilt? Notice it is connected with shame, thus indicating it is not a legal state he took, but the actual state of our condition, guilt ridden and filled with shame. And for what purpose did he take our condition upon himself? To be legally punished by his Father or to heal and restore humanity back into harmony with God?] **Christ proposed to reach to the depths of man's degradation and woe, and restore the repenting, believing soul to harmony with God.** [What does it mean to restore "the believing soul to harmony with God"? Is it a declaration or an accomplishment, something real in the believer?] Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, offered Himself as a sacrifice and substitute for the fallen sons of Adam, though in this offering **all heaven was involved in infinite sacrifice.** [Does this sound like one member of the Godhead earning grace with his merits from another member? Or is the Godhead working in unison to achieve their common goal of the salvation of mankind?] {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 10}

He So Loved that He Gave

But the Father so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that through His smitten heart a channel might be found for the outflowing of infinite love for fallen man. Man had become so degraded by sin, his nature so perverted by evil, that it was impossible for him of himself to come into harmony with God, whose nature is purity and love. [What do you hear? What is God's attitude? What is man's condition? Where is the obstacle to reconciliation in God?

In God's law or in man's condition? Then what would be Christ's mission?] **But Christ redeemed him from the condemnation of the law, and imparted divine power, and through man's cooperation, the sinner could be restored to his lost estate.** [How did Christ redeem us from the condemnation of the law? What does the law condemn? Deviation from it – then redemption would entail restoration to harmony with the law.] {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 11}

The grace of Christ alone could change the heart of stone to a heart of flesh, make it alive to God, and transform the character, so that a degraded child of sin might become a child of God and heir of heaven. [Wow – what is being described, legal pardon, payment, or transformation and renewal?] **Man had no power to justify the soul, to sanctify the heart. Moral disease could be healed only through the power of the great Physician.** [What is justification? Being set right with God – which actually means what? Putting the heart of mankind back into harmony with God, healing!] The highest gift of heaven, even the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, **was able to redeem the lost.** [How? By fixing mankind, cleansing, renewing, developing a perfect human character in harmony with God!] {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 12}

The only hope for the fallen race was found in becoming reconciled to God. **Satan had so misrepresented God that man had no true conception of the divine character. Christ came to the world, and in carrying out the plan of salvation, revealed the fact that "God is love."** {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 13}

Thoughts?

Are you tired of this world of sin? Are you longing for your heavenly home? Why has Christ not returned? What is God waiting for? For the gospel (good news) of his kingdom of love to go to the world then the end will come. For people to realize the truth about him, and the reality that they can experience

real transformation of character here and now! Has this message of God's character of love and God's grace achieved through Christ been taken to the world, or has a pagan counterfeit been championed by Christianity – including our own church?

TUESDAY

Read the second and third paragraph, “The word...” thoughts?

What to you hear suggested? What is the lesson implying with “the people of God are vindicated and those who persecuted them receive the same kind of experience they inflicted on others...Those who persecuted the people of God will one day face the justice of God.”?

Are they suggesting that God will use his power to inflict torture, torment, punishment, pain, suffering on his children to make them pay for their sins, and they call it justice?

Read WEDNESDAY first and second paragraph, “Many people are uncomfortable...” thoughts?

What do you hear? Do you hear God being represented or do you hear Satan's lies about God being represented?

What are the problems with this view and what Scriptural, science, or experience evidence can you cite to support your concerns?

- Jesus said “my kingdom is not of this world.” (Jn18:36)
 - Paul said “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. (1Cor 3:19)
 - Earthly governments are represented as ferocious beasts which tear and destroy, Christ is the lamb of God
 - “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways

higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater...

(Isa 55:8-10)

- What is being described?
 - Earthly governments rule exactly as the lesson states by force, might, infliction, arbitrary imposed law
 - God's law is the law of love, which is the design protocol for life – punishment is inherent in the sin – not inflicted by God.
 - The lesson has taken the foolishness of worldly governments and applies it to God's government alleging God's government operates like sinful man's and then call it justice – it is a lie!
- The law of liberty – a testable principle of God's government
 - 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. (Zech 4:6)
 - When freedom is violated, love is destroyed, rebellion is instilled in the heart and individuality is eroded over time, unless freedom is restored. This is a testable law, try it and see.
 - God cannot win the war for the loyalty of hearts and minds by threats. If the punishment comes out from God then freedom doesn't exist and love cannot exist. This is one of the cores to Satan's lies about God – that no real freedom exists and thus God is not love.
 - Even Gandhi, who was not Christian understood this when he said, "An eye for and eye will make the whole world go blind."
 - Jesus taught to turn the other cheek, to freely forgiven, to not seek vengeance.
 - Some might ask then, what is Biblical vengeance doesn't Romans 12:19 "vengeance

is mine says the Lord” What does this mean? What definition do you use for vengeance, human diction or Bible?

- Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: “Ah, I will get relief from my foes and **avenge myself on my enemies**. I will turn my hand against you; **I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities**. Isaiah 1:24,25
- The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to **bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners**, ² to proclaim the **year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn**, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion— **to bestow on them a crown of beauty** instead of ashes, **the oil of gladness** instead of mourning, and **a garment of praise** instead of a spirit of despair. Isa 61:1-3
- What is the vengeance of God? Turning enemies into friends – His vengeance is not on sinners but on sinfulness. He attacks and destroys sin! This is His vengeance which purges and cleanses the sinner! The greatest vengeance God can have on Satan is healing and restoring all those who trust Him!

Isn’t it time we take the truth about God to the world? I challenge you to start confronting the lies about God with gracious presentation of the truth as Jesus revealed. Invite your friends over, have a Bible study, ask questions, expose the lies. Let’s start a spiritual fire, focusing on God’s character of love! Let’s work to set people free!

Read fourth paragraph, “Through His own experience...” thoughts?

While will the suffering not be more than is necessary? According to the lesson? Because Jesus has perfect ability to inflict only what each person deserves. What is the law concept this idea is based upon? An imposed law, just as the lesson examples of speeding and tax law, imposed by a governing authority, requiring the imposition of punishments.

Can you think of a better reason why people won't suffer more than is necessary? What if the law is the design protocol life is built upon?

- Why does a person who jumps off a building not suffer more than necessary?
- What about the person who lights themselves on fire?
- What about the person who cheats on their spouse?
- Are there inherent built in punishments for violating the law upon which life is built?
- What do you hear described in this quotation?
 - We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}
 - Those who hold to the idea God must inflict punishment claim this quotation is dealing with the inherent punishment built into nature and the laws of health, but deny this applies to sin.
 - Here is another quotation – what do you think?
 - **The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a**

transcript of the will and character of God.

Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** [What kind of law is being described here?] **God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited.** [What do you hear in this statement? What might it mean?] **He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character.** [Why can't he? Why can't you make someone healthy who smokes 2 packs per day, or someone happy who lies, cheats, steals and murders?] He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; **but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy.** While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive hour will come at last, **when their destiny is to be decided.** [Who decides their destiny?] Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will? {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his **power are not prepared to enter the presence of God.** [Why? Because they haven't had their sins legally pardoned, or is there something actually defective in them?] **Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters.** [Is this different than remain unpardoned in their record book?] Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? **Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness**

will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. **What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests?** {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity;** they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction,** that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that **the wicked are incurable.** {GC 542.3}

Wow – what is the source of suffering? Their own unhealed sinful condition!

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “The full sentence in this...” thoughts?

What do you think? How would you respond now? Why are the wicked destroyed? What causes their suffering?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions

1 and 2 Thessalonians Lesson 12 3Q 2012

The Antichrist

Read 2 Thes 1:1-2:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter **supposed to have come from us**, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. [Apparently people were going around and misrepresenting what Paul was teaching.] ³ **Don't let anyone deceive you in any way**, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the **man of lawlessness** is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, **so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.**

⁵ Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? ⁶ And now you know **what is holding him back**, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. ⁷ **For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work**; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the **Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.** ⁹ The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, ¹⁰ and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. **They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.** ¹¹ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie ¹² and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. ¹

¹ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. 1984 (2 Th 2:1–12). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Who is antichrist? I did a search on Wikipedia and here is a historic overview of what has been taught regarding antichrist:

Polycarp (ca. 69 – ca. 155) warned the Philippians that everyone who preached false doctrine was an antichrist.^[7]

Irenaeus (2nd century AD – c. 202) wrote the figure of the Antichrist was the "recapitulation of apostasy and rebellion." He uses the 666 to numerologically decode several possible names. Some names that he loosely proposed were "Evanthos", "Lateinos" ("Latin" or pertaining to the Roman Empire). In his exegesis of Daniel 7:21, he stated that the ten horns of the beast will be the Roman empire divided into ten kingdoms before the Antichrist's arrival.^[8]

Tertullian (ca.160 – ca.220 AD) held that the Roman Empire was the restraining force written about by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8. The fall of Rome and the disintegration of the ten provinces of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms were to make way for the Antichrist.^[9]

Cyril of Jerusalem, in the mid-4th century, taught that the Antichrist will reign as the ruler of the world for three and a half years, before he is killed by Jesus Christ right at the end of his three-and-a-half-year reign, shortly after which the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will happen.

John Chrysostom (c. 347–407) warned against speculations and old wives' tales about the Antichrist, saying, "Let us not therefore enquire into these things". He preached that by knowing Paul's description of the Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians Christians would avoid deception.^[13]

Jerome (c. 347-420) warned that those substituting false interpretations for the actual meaning of Scripture belonged to the "synagogue of the Antichrist".^[14] "He that is not of Christ is of Antichrist."^[15] To Jerome, the power

restraining this mystery of iniquity was the Roman Empire, but as it fell this restraining force was removed.

Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430) wrote "it is uncertain in what temple [the Antichrist] shall sit, whether in that ruin of the temple which was built by Solomon, or in the Church."^[20]

Pope Gregory I wrote to Emperor Maurice A.D. 597, concerning the titles of bishops, "I say with confidence that whoever calls or desires to call himself 'universal priest' in self-exaltation of himself is a precursor of the Antichrist."^[21]

Archbishop Arnulf of Rheims disagreed with the policies and morals of Pope John XV. He expressed his views while presiding over the Council of Reims in A.D. **991**. Arnulf accused John XV of being the Antichrist while also using the 2 Thessalonians passage about the Man of Sin, saying, "Surely, if he is empty of charity and filled with vain knowledge and lifted up, he is Antichrist sitting in God's temple and showing himself as God." This incident is history's earliest record of anyone identifying a pope with the Antichrist.^[22]

Cardinal Benno, wrote long descriptions of abuses committed by Pope Gregory VII, including necromancy, torture of a former friend upon a bed of nails, commissioning an attempted assassination, executions without trials, unjust excommunication, doubting the Real Presence in the Eucharist, and even burning it.^[24] Benno held that Gregory VII was "either a member of Antichrist, or Antichrist himself."^[25]

Eberhard II von Truchsees, Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg in 1241 at the Council of Regensburg denounced Pope Gregory IX as "that man of perdition, whom they call Antichrist, who in his extravagant boasting says, I am God, I cannot err."^[26]

Many Protestant reformers, including **Martin Luther, John Calvin, Thomas Cranmer, John Thomas, John Knox, and Cotton Mather, identified the Roman Papacy as the Antichrist.**^[30]

In calling the pope the "antichrist," the early Lutherans stood in a tradition that reached back into the eleventh century. Not only dissidents and heretics but even saints had called the bishop of Rome the "antichrist" when they wished to castigate his abuse of power.^[31]

William Tyndale, an English Protestant reformer, held that while the Roman Catholic realms of that age were the empire of Antichrist, any religious organization that distorted the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments also showed the work of Antichrist. In his treatise *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, he expressly rejected the established Church teaching that looked to the future for an Antichrist to rise up, and he taught that Antichrist is a present spiritual force that will be with us until the end of the age under different religious disguises from time to time.^[32]

Futurism, a product of the Counter-Reformation, was advanced beginning in the 16th century in response to the identification of the Papacy as Antichrist. **Francisco Ribera, a Jesuit priest, developed this theory** and **St. Bellarmine** codified this view of a personal Antichrist to come just before the end of the world and to be accepted by the Jews and enthroned in the temple at Jerusalem — thus endeavoring to dispose of the exposition which saw Antichrist in the pope. Most premillennial dispensationalists now accept Bellarmine's interpretation in modified form. Widespread Protestant identification of the Papacy as the Antichrist persisted in the USA until the early 1900s when the Scofield Reference Bible was published by Cyrus Scofield. This commentary promoted

Futurism, causing a decline in the Protestant identification of the Papacy as Antichrist.

Some US Futurists hold that sometime prior to the expected return of Jesus, there will be a period of "great tribulation"^[34] during which the Antichrist, indwelt and controlled by Satan, will attempt to win supporters with false peace, supernatural signs. He will silence all that defy him by refusing to "receive his mark" on their right hands or forehead. This "mark" will be required to legally partake in the end-time economic system.^[35] Some Futurists believe that the Antichrist will be assassinated half way through the Tribulation, being revived and indwelt by Satan. The Antichrist will continue on for three and a half years following this "deadly wound".^[36]

Latter-day Saints

In Mormonism, the *Antichrist* "is anyone or anything that counterfeits the true gospel or plan of salvation and that openly or secretly is set up in opposition to Christ. The great antichrist is Lucifer, but he has many assistants^[45] both as spirit beings and as mortals."

Islamic views: Masih Ad-Dajjal (Arabic: الدَّجَال, literally "The Deceiving Messiah"), is an evil figure in Islamic eschatology. He is to appear pretending to be God at a time in the future, before Yawm al-Qiyamah (The Day of Resurrection, Judgment Day). He will travel around the globe entering every city except Mecca and Medina obliging people to believe in him as a God. Then Isa (Jesus) will descend from the sky to the White lighthouse in eastern Damascus, Syria, placing his hands on the backs of two angels at the time of Fajr. This will happen at the time of the Dajjal and Isa will be the one to eventually defeat the Dajjal, killing him with his spear.^{[47][48]}

Ahmadiyya

The Ahmadiyya teachings interpret the prophecies regarding the appearance of the *Dajjal* (Anti-Christ) and Gog and Magog in Islamic eschatology as foretelling the emergence of two branches or aspects of the same turmoil and trial that was to be faced by Islam in the latter days and that both emerged from Christianity or Christian nations. Its Dajjal aspect relates to deception and perversion of religious belief while its aspect to do with disturbance in the realm of politics and the shattering of world peace has been called Gog and Magog. Thus Ahmadis consider the widespread Christian missionary activity that was 'aggressively' active in the 18th and 19th centuries as being part of the prophesied Dajjal (Antichrist) and Gog and Magog emerging in modern times. The emergence of the Soviet Union and the USA as superpowers and the conflict between the two nations (i.e., the rivalry between communism and capitalism) are seen as having occurred in accordance with certain prophecies regarding Gog and Magog.^[49]

1. · [^] [Cabinet 2001](#), p. [Interview with Bernard McGinn](#).
2. · [^] ["Word Search Results for "antichristos \(Strong's 500\) Strong's antichristos \(Strong's 500\)""](#). The Blue Letter Bible. Retrieved 2007-11-27.
3. · [^] See Strong's Bible Dictionary: [αὐτί](#) and the [Lexicon to Pindar](#). Related terms as noted by the Catholic Encyclopedia include: [antibasileus](#)-a king who fills an [interregnum](#); [antistrategos](#)-a [propraetor](#); [anthoupatos](#)-a [proconsul](#); [antitheos](#)-in [Homer](#), one resembling a god in power and beauty, in other works it stands for a hostile god
4. · [^] See Strong's Bible Dictionary: [χριστός](#)
5. · [^] [a b e](#) See McGinn, Bernard, *Antichrist*, 2000, Columbia University Press; <http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/5/widholm.php> accessed October 2010
6. · [^] [Jewish Encyclopedia: Armilus](#): "bald-headed, with one large and one small eye, deaf in the right ear and maimed in the right arm, while the left arm is two and one-half ells long."
7. · [^] [Polycap's Letter to the Philippians](#), paragraph 7
8. · [^] Hughes, Kevin L. (2005). *Constructing antichrist : Paul, biblical commentary, and the development of doctrine in the early Middle Ages*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic Univ. of America Press. p. 29-31. ISBN 9780813214153.
9. · [^] ["On the Resurrection, chp 24"](#). Ccel.org. 2005-06-01. [Archived](#) from the original on 28 June 2010. Retrieved 2010-06-18.
10. · [^] Hippolytus's [Treatise on Christ and Antichrist, part 2](#)
11. · [^] [Origen 1872](#), p. 386
12. · [^] from Athanasius' ["Four Discourses"](#)

13. · [^] [Chrysostom Homily 1 on the 2nd Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians](#)
14. · [^] [Jerome 1893b](#), p. 334
15. · [^] [Jerome 1893](#), p. 19
16. · [^] [Jerome 1893c](#), p. 449
17. · [^] [Jerome 1893d](#), pp. 236–7
18. · [^] [a b c d Jerome 1958](#)
19. · [^] ["Latin Tiburtine Sibyl"](#). [Http-server.carleton.ca. Archived from the original on 2 July 2010. Retrieved 2010-06-18.](#)
20. · [^] [City of God, Book 20 chapter 19](#), cited in Brug's [A Scriptural and Historical Survey of the Doctrine of the Antichrist](#)
21. · [^] quote from McGinn, Bernard, [Visions of the End. Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages](#), New York: Columbia University, 1979. p. 64., found in Brug's [A Scriptural and Historical Survey of the Doctrine of the Antichrist](#)
22. · [^] Bernard McGinn, [Antichrist: two thousand years of the human fascination with evil](#), New York: Columbia University Press, 2000 p. 100. and [Schaff & Schley Schaff 1885](#), p. 291
23. · [^] See [The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII](#) trans. Emerton, Ephraim. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990., p. 162.
24. · [^] From long quotations in [Foxye 1583](#), p. 121
25. · [^] quoted by David M. Whitford, [The Papal Antichrist: Martin Luther and the Underappreciated Influence of Lorenzo Valla](#), [Renaissance Quarterly](#), 61:26–52, Spring 2008
26. · [^] [The Methodist Review Vol. XLIII, No. 3](#), p. 305.
27. · [^] See [Daniel 7:23-25](#), [Revelation 13:1-2](#), and [Revelation 17:3-18](#)
28. · [^] [a b](#) Article on "Antichrist" from Smith and Fuller, [A Dictionary of the Bible](#), 1893, p. 147
29. · [^] [Daniel 7:8](#)
30. · [^] [The AntiChrist and The Protestant Reformation](#)
31. · [^] See [Building Unity](#), edited by Burgess and Gross
32. · [^] Tyndale, William, [Parable of the Wicked Mammon](#), c. 1526, (facsimile copy of later printing, no ISBN number, Benediction Classics, 2008) at pages 4-5
33. · [^] See ["Tyndale's Doctrine of Antichrist and His Translation of 2 Thessalonians 2"](#), R. Davis, New Matthew Bible Project. (A shorter version of this article was also published in the Tyndale Society Journal No. 36, Spring 2009, under the title *Tyndale, the Church, and the Doctrine of Antichrist*)
34. · [^] ["Matthew 24:21 \(King James Version\)"](#). BibleGateway.com. [Archived from the original on 16 January 2008. Retrieved 2007-12-03.](#)
35. · [^] ["Revelation 13:16-17 \(King James Version\)"](#). BibleGateway.com. [Archived from the original on 3 December 2007. Retrieved 2007-12-03.](#)
36. · [^] Pink, Arthur W. (1923). ["The Antichrist"](#). biblebelievers.com. pp. Chapter 6, The Career of the Antichrist. [Archived from the original on 7 July 2007. Retrieved 2007-06-25.](#)
37. · [^] ["Peter I, czar of Russia"](#). [The Columbia Encyclopedia. Archived from the original on 12 February 2008. Retrieved 2008-02-10.](#)
38. · [^] Schink, W.F. "The Scriptural Doctrine of the Antichrist." *Our Great Heritage: Vol. 3* Ed. Lange, Lyle and Albrecht, Jerome G. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing house, 1991. p. 572.
39. · [^] [a b](#) [Net Bible: Man of sin](#)
40. · [^] [St. John Chrysostom](#), Homilies on II Thess., Nicene-Post Nicene Fathers
41. · [^] [Man of Sin](#), Kurt Simmons
42. · [^] (compare [Bousset](#), [Der Antichrist](#), 93 ff, etc.)
43. · [^] See footnotes in [Revelation 7 and 13](#) in the [Scofield Reference Bible](#), 1917
44. · [^] Bell, Rob; Golden, Don [Jesus Wants to Save Christians](#) 2008.

45. · ^ Korihor is directly referred to in *The Book of Mormon* as an anti-Christ (Alma 30:6)
46. · ^ LDS, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "Bible Dictionary: Antichrist". Intellectual Reserve, Inc.
47. · ^ Sahih Muslim, 41:7023
48. · ^ Who is the evil Dajjal (the "anti-Christ")?
49. · ^ Islam and Communism
50. · ^ "Unveiling of the 'Unseen' by the Quran" in "Knowledge Revelation, Rationality and Truth" by Mirza Tahir Ahmad, hosted on Al Islam, the Official Website of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.
51. · ^ Bailey, Alice A. *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* New York:1957 Lucis Publishing Co. See under "Hitler" in index

Thoughts?

What or who is antichrist?

- The man of lawlessness – what does that mean?
 - What law? How might this be manifest?
 - Might it be manifest by replacing God’s law of love, the design for life, with imposed human law constructs?
- Daniel describes a little horn that grew great, but “not by its own power.” So where does the little horn get his power? Revelation 13:2 tells us the power comes from the dragon. But what is the dragon’s power?
 - The little horn power throws truth to the ground and causes deceit and the dragon is the father of lies (John 8:44).
 - “Since the children have flesh and blood, he [Christ] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy *him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil*” Hebrews 2:14.
 - What is the power of death? And how can the devil hold it? Christ gives us the insight we need in John 17:3 “Now this *is eternal life*: that they may *know you*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”
 - Satan’s power is the lies he tells that we believe, which alienate us from God!

- The little horn power sets itself up against the prince and the dragon fought against Michael the Prince (Revelation 12:7).
 - What kind of warfare is this? How do they fight against God?
 - 2Cor 10:3-5
- The little horn power takes away the daily sacrifice
 - What does this mean?
 - The daily sacrifice is just a metaphorical way of saying God's entire plan to heal and restore from sin. God's plan of salvation was taken away. The dragon creates a false system, a system that supplants God's plan (Mark 4:15, 2Cor 11:14, 2Thes 2:9). The dragon's false plan does not result in healing and restoration but is a plan that degrades the human being.
 - What does that false system look like? What are the elements?
- The little horn power brought the place of his sanctuary low. The dragon establishes the synagogue of Satan (Rev 2:9, 3:9) a false sanctuary, a spirit temple filled by the Satanic spirit. The man of sin sets himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God.
 - What does this mean? What is God's temple? How could this man of sin enter into God's temple? Which temple?
 - 1CO 3:16 Don't you know that **you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?** 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and **you are that temple.**
 - 2Cor 6:16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? **For we are the temple of the living God.** As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."
 - EPH 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built

on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the **whole building** is joined together and rises **to become a holy temple** in the Lord. 22 And in him you **too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit**.

- 1PE 2:4 As you come to him, the living Stone-- rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- 5 **you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood**, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone, " (see Zech chapter 4) 8 and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message--which is also what they were destined for. 9 But you are **a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation**, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.
- Heb 3:6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And **we are his house**, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

What is the temple that has been defiled? Here is what our church thought over 100 years ago:

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That **temple**, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an **object lesson** for Israel

and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that **every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God.** Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. **God dwells in humanity,** and through saving grace the **heart of man becomes again His temple.** God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to **the high destiny open to every soul.** But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. **In cleansing the temple** from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to **cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,**--from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and **He shall purify the sons of Levi,** and purge them as gold and silver." Mal. 3:1-3. {DA 161.1}

What is the temple? The human mind/soul?

And what defiles the soul temple? The lies about God that Adam and Eve believed that broke their trust and confidence and relationship with God, resulting in fear and selfishness, and the continued lies that we believe that prevent us from trusting God and being reconciled to Him.

If those persistent lies about God are not removed by the truth about God that Jesus Christ has brought, then Satan's principles of selfishness continue to grow – the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits. These destructive elements strengthen within and instead of Christlike character developing we develop the character of the rebel, the Satanic character; and the soul, the individual created with dignity, nobility of character, in God's image to represent Him to an onlooking universe, the being designed to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit instead of revealing Godlike character becomes a synagogue of Satan and the habitation of devils and reveals the Satanic character, ultimately ending in desolation and destruction.

Thoughts?

So what is antichrist trying to do? Establish his character, his methods, in the Spirit temple, which means what? Trying to make us like Satan, selfish, arrogant, mean, unkind, cruel, exploitive of others, unloving, impatient etc.

Now, here is one reference from one of the founders of the SDA church regarding antichrist:

Christ is the only true standard of character, and he who sets himself up as a standard for others is putting himself in the place of Christ. And since the Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22), whoever presumes to judge the motives of others is again usurping the prerogative of the Son of God. **These would-be judges and critics are placing themselves on the side of antichrist,** "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 Thessalonians 2:4. {MB 125.3}

The sin that leads to the most unhappy results is the cold, critical, unforgiving spirit that characterizes

Pharisaism. When the religious experience is **devoid of love, Jesus is not there...** {MB 126.1}

When men indulge this accusing spirit, **they are not satisfied** with pointing out what they suppose to be a defect in their brother. **If milder means fail of making him do what they think ought to be done, they will resort to compulsion.** Just as far as lies in their power **they will force men to comply with their ideas of what is right.** This is what the Jews did in the days of Christ and what the church has done ever since whenever she has lost the grace of Christ. **Finding herself destitute of the power of love, she has reached out for the strong arm of the state to enforce her dogmas and execute her decrees.** Here is the secret of all religious laws that have ever been enacted, and the secret of all persecution from the days of Abel to our own time. {MB 126.2}

Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. When the church begins to seek for the support of secular power, it is evident that she is devoid of the power of Christ--the constraint of divine love. {MB 127.1}

Thoughts? Agree or disagree? What methods does the antichrist power use? Deceit, criticism, judgmentalism, coercion, power to intimidate. What does revelation say about the beast power? No one can buy or sell... the use of coercive power.

What is happening in the world today? Do we find religious people, devoid of love and grace, seeking the strong arm of the state to enforce its rules? What about Islam? Are they seeking to use the state to enforce their religious rules? What about Christianity?

Given all we have read, do you have any thoughts on what Daniel 8:14, 2300 years until the sanctuary will be cleansed, is referring to?

- Would it be referring to cleansing our minds from the lies of Satan?
- Cleansing our characters from the methods of Satan?
- Cleansing a people, spirit temple, ready to meet Christ?
- “The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use. {3MR 231.3}
 Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}

What about this quotation, what is being described?

Many **exalt human reason, idolize human wisdom**, and set the opinions of men above the revealed wisdom of God. **This affords opportunity for the working of Satan, and the spirit of Antichrist** is far more widespread than any of us imagine. . . . {7BC 950.2}

The maxims of the world, that know not God, have been worked into the theories of the church. **In the eyes of men, vain philosophy and science, falsely so-called, are of more value than the Word of God.** The sentiment prevails to a large extent that the divine Mediator is not essential to the salvation of man. A **variety of theories advanced by the so-called worldly-wise men for man's elevation**, are believed and trusted in more than is the truth of God, as taught by Christ and His apostles. {7BC 950.3}

Thoughts? Are you aware of any theories based on worldly wisdom infecting Christianity? What might some of those theories be?

- Evolutionism
 - Science so called
- Penal substitutionary atonement
 - Based on worldly governmental design, logic, and principles.
 - Which leads to the “justified” use of coercive power as sin must be punished.
 - Moves the work of Christ away from the spirit temple and into a distant building hidden somewhere in the cosmos. It prevents the cleansing of the sanctuary and instead promotes a legal process in a building in heaven in which record books are examined and forgiveness stamped next to names.

What do you think of the destruction of the antichrist? How is he destroyed?

Verse 8: And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the **Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth** and **destroy by the splendor of his coming**.

What does that mean? Does it sound similar to Rev 19:19-21:

Then I saw the beast and the kings of the world and their armies gathered together to fight against the one sitting on the horse and his army. ²⁰ And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who did mighty miracles on behalf of the beast—miracles that deceived all who had accepted the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue. Both the beast and his false prophet were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. ²¹ **Their entire army was killed by the sharp sword that came from the mouth of the one riding the white horse.** And the vultures all gorged themselves on the dead bodies.

What kills the antichrist? Overthrown by the breath of his mouth and destroyed by his splendor, and killed by a sword coming out of his mouth? What does this mean?

SUNDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “no matter how...” thoughts?

I hear it frequently, “I heard Come and Reason teaches dangerous ideas, that the death of Jesus isn’t necessary for our salvation...” When asked, have you listened for yourself or gone off what someone told you? Have you asked that person who told them?

Do we believe salvation is possible without the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Absolutely not! Without what Jesus accomplished no human could be saved. Yet some misrepresent us and because of such misrepresentation prevent others from examining the evidence for themselves.

This happened to Graham Maxwell frequently and he eventually wrote a short paper entitled *The Scourge of Theological Gossip*. I have included the link to this in our notes:

<http://pineknoll.org/component/content/article/1212>

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on Paul's overview – the day of the Lord will not occur until Satan's counterattack against Christ's mission happens first.

His counterattack will focus on the cross to misrepresent it, and distort it so badly that Satan's ideas will be accepted as true into the heart/mind of God's people. He will set himself up in God's temple, and Satan's idea of God will be established there.

Thus God prophesied through Daniel (8:14) that 2300 years would pass before enough truth would be recovered for the sanctuary to be cleansed.

We are taking a message of God's kingdom to the world which is designed to free minds from the distortions about God that have infected Christianity.

Thoughts?

TUESDAY/WEDNESDAY discussed above

THURSDAY

What does it mean God sends powerful delusion? God using his power to create mental illness?

No, it is the way the Bible attributes to God the outworking of His natural laws. God is love and he built the universe to operate in harmony with his character of love. Love requires

freedom. Thus, when people choose to reject truth, what is the only option left, on any subject? A lie, they are given over to believe a lie because of their own freewill choice to reject the truth.

It is God's doing in that God chose to create a universe in which genuine freedom exists, rather than a universe inhabited by robots preprogrammed by him.

Read second paragraph, "In today's..." the lesson describes this correctly, but don't you find it interesting that when it comes to the Bible language of God making them delusional, the lesson correctly understands that it is describing God allowing them to reap what they have chosen, rather than inflicting it on them. Yet, when it comes to their eternal death they lesson can't apply this same truth and instead insists on God as the source of inflicted death?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2

1 and 2 Thessalonians Lesson 13 3Q 2012

Keeping the Church Faithful

What do you think the title means? Faithful to Christ or faithful to the denominational organization? Is there a difference? Should there be?

What does it mean for the church to be faithful to Christ?

- Teach the truth about him
- Use its resources to take the gospel to the world (the true gospel)
- Practice his methods/principles (truth, love, freedom)

In practical terms what does it look like for the church not to be faithful?

- What about the church teaching views of God that incite fear of God?
- What about the church diverting its energy and resources into politics?
- What about the church using methods of coercion?
- What about the church refusing to grow in truth?

SABBATH

Read Memory text: “So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.” (2Thes 2:15)

Thoughts?

Who decides what are the traditions to which we should hold and what are the traditions we should abandon?

Read first paragraph, “Churches are a lot...” thoughts?

Would this include the persistence on denying ordination to women?

What is present truth? Who determines it? How can we tell? What methods do we use?

Does our church today hold the following attitude that was written by one of our founders more than 100 years ago?

We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed. {RH, July 26, 1892 par. 7}

There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, **is not a proof that our ideas are infallible.** Age will not make error into truth, and **truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.** {CW 35.2}

We are living in perilous times, and it does not become us to accept everything claimed to be truth without examining it thoroughly; neither can we afford to reject anything that bears the fruits of the Spirit of God; **but we should be teachable, meek and lowly of heart.** There are those who oppose everything that is not in accordance with their own ideas, and by so doing they endanger their eternal interest as verily as did the Jewish nation in their rejection of Christ. {CW 35.3}

The Lord designs that our opinions shall be put to the test, that we may see the necessity of closely examining the living oracles to see whether or not we are in the faith. Many who claim to believe the truth have

settled down at their ease, saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." -- Review and Herald, December 20, 1892. {CW 36.1}

How shall we search the Scriptures? Shall we drive our stakes of doctrine one after another, and then try to make all Scripture meet our established opinions? or shall we take our ideas and views to the Scriptures, **and measure our theories on every side by the Scriptures of truth? Many who read and even teach the Bible, do not comprehend the precious truth they are teaching or studying.** {CW 36.2}

Thoughts?

Do you like the attitude expressed in these quotes? Do you hear the doctrine of infallibility?

Do we have minds that remain open to new ideas?

Do we have minds that, while open to new truth, are fortified against deception?

How can we be open to new truth without being overly vulnerable to deceit?

- Think for yourself, don't allow another person to do your thinking for you. Hear what others say, then study the evidence for yourself
- Build your beliefs on testable truths, not claims without evidence. Then require your beliefs to harmonize with the testable truths.
 - Law of love as a design template
 - Law of worship, we become like what we worship
 - Law of liberty, love only exists in an atmosphere of freedom
- Use the life of Jesus as a lens which theories of God must conform
- Understand God's law as natural not imposed and examine theories through the law of love

How should we handle diversity of belief, opinion, and tradition?

If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking.

George S. Patton

Do we want everyone thinking alike? What do we want?

- Everyone operating from the same principles, motives of love, beneficence, kindness...
- We want everyone to have character like Jesus
- But we do not want everyone to have the same thoughts, ideas, talents, ways of thinking, skills, personalities... etc.
- When people have the character of Christ, loving others more than self, but also have differences of personality, ways of thinking etc. what will that look like?
 - What about when it comes to questions of music?
 - Church liturgy?
 - Dress?
 - The color of carpet for the church?
 - Women's ordination?
 - Why Christ had to die?
 - How are such things handled?
 - Are all issues equally important?
 - Do we change our view on truth in order to maintain peace?
 - What do we do? We present the truth in love and leave others free to decide for themselves. Which means will still love others, we don't work behind the scenes to injure, hurt, or damage the reputation of others.
 - We still want those who see things different than us to be our friends and neighbors in heaven.
 - Think about your own family members who see things differently, regardless of whether they believe the same as you, don't you want them to be in heaven?

- Shouldn't we cultivate such an attitude toward all people?
- Even those who burn our embassies?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "The lives of..." thoughts? The lesson states, "Though salvation is a gift, the believer experiences it through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth."

I am not disagreeing with this statement, just wondering if it is easily understood? What do you understand this means?

How would you say the believer experiences the gift of salvation?

Here is a statement from one of the founders of our church, do you agree?

Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, gave himself for a fallen world, and **in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**. No greater gift can be bestowed upon man than that which is **comprehended in Christ**. And yet men wait, refusing to give to God **the allegiance of the heart**. But let the impenitent look to the plan of redemption, and ask themselves, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" [what does this mean? Escape what? The inflicted wrath of an offended God, or our own terminal condition? Does it make a difference which way you understand it?] It is perilous to neglect to render to God the **full consecration of all our powers**, for he has given them to man in trust. Will you not ask yourself, "How is it with my soul?" The great **gift of salvation has been placed within our reach** at an infinite **cost to the Father and the Son**. **To neglect salvation, is to neglect the knowledge of the Father and of the Son** whom God hath sent in order that **man might become a partaker of the divine nature**, and thus, with Christ, an heir of all things.[what

did you hear? The gift of salvation cost BOTH Father and Son. Why is to neglect salvation to neglect the knowledge of Father and Son? What was Christ's purpose? To somehow enable human beings to partake the divine nature, which means what?] **A neglect** to lay hold of the priceless treasure of salvation, **means the eternal ruin of your soul.** [why does it mean this?] The peril of indifference to God and neglect of his gift, is measured by the greatness of salvation. **God has done to the uttermost** of his almighty power. The **resources of infinite love have been exhausted** in devising and executing the plan of redemption for man. **God has revealed his character in the goodness, the mercy, compassion, and love manifested to save a race of guilty rebels.** What could be done that has not been done in the provisions of the plan of salvation? **If the sinner remains indifferent to the manifestation of the goodness of God,** if he neglects so great a salvation, rejects the overtures of divine mercy, refuses the gift of life purchased by the precious blood of Christ, **what could be done to touch his hard heart?** {RH, March 10, 1891 par. 2}

Thoughts? What do you hear being described? What problem is being addressed? Is it in harmony with 2Cor 10:3-5, that the war is over the knowledge of God?

So how does the sinner experience salvation? Is the description above in harmony with John 17:3, life eternal is knowing God?

What about his one:

The heart must be cleansed from its impurity; self-will must be exchanged for God's will; God's ways must be chosen before our own ways. Many names are registered on the church books that have no place in the Lamb's book of life. Let the question be asked with

deepest concern, "Is my name written there?" {ST, December 15, 1887 par. 9}

The great gift of salvation is freely offered to us, through Jesus Christ, on condition that we obey the law of God; and individually we are to accept the terms of life with the deepest humiliation and gratitude. [what does it mean to obey the law of God? To keep the rules? To avoid work on a certain day? Or to be in harmony with the design template upon which life was built? What are the terms of life? "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death." (1JN 3:14) For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. (MT 16:25)] **None will ever enter the city of God who do not reverence the statutes of its government;** and now is the time allotted to us to **gain the mastery**, through divine grace, over every rebellious thought and action; to work out our own salvation, not with boasting self-confidence, but with fear and trembling. [How do we work out our own salvation?] **We are not to pander to the prejudices and customs of this world** at the expense of our obligations to God. We should live as in the sight of Heaven, with no other object for our ambition and toil than the glory of our Creator and Redeemer; live, believing that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." We should ask ourselves, **Am I fashioning my character after the Pattern God has given me?** Is my eye fixed on Jesus? and are my actions controlled by the influences of Heaven? ... We are to be in the world but not of it -- shining with the reflected light of Jesus. **We must not live for self**, blending into the darkness of the world; but kept from its evil **we must give our lives into an active, earnest service, as faithful soldiers for the Captain of our salvation. This will sanctify the soul.** While we seek the salvation and benefit of others, we shall be workers together with God, **learning his methods and partaking of his power.** {ST, December 15, 1887 par. 10}

Thoughts? What do you hear being described regarding salvation?

Why does living, through God's grace, to serve others result in sanctifying the soul? Does this mean we save ourselves? What does it mean? What is the balance between what Christ did for us and what we must do?

Do you hear Christ did something for us, which brings us the knowledge of God? And with that knowledge we respond with choices to align ourselves with him, in trust, we value and cherish his law of love. In trust we open the heart, experience his Spirit, which enlightens, and convicts, and gives us new desires. Then we exercise our power of choice to choose to harmonize with God's methods in the actions we take, in so doing we are empowered by the Spirit to live a life of love.

But, when we exercise our choice to love, we often will confront our own feelings of fear, or conflict with others. It is in choosing to do what is right, because it is right and we know it is right, that we experience growth and maturity.

The next paragraph states, "People's grasp of truth often slips with the passage of time, which is why we must always be affirmed by those who preach and teach us."

Thoughts? A lot of truth in this, our minds are so weak, we forget so easily, and if we don't use and reinforce it then we forget.

How can we help ourselves not forget?

Is there a difference in forgetting what your spouse asked you to pick up at the grocery store, and forgetting you love your spouse, or who your spouse is?

Is there a difference in forgetting what nations the 10 horns represent and forgetting your love for God, or who God is?

But, we can't forget who God is, if we never actually knew him. Is it possible for people to be raised in Christian families and churches and never actually know God? We can't forget something/someone we never knew.

What do you think about the idea that oral tradition is less subject to unintentional distortion than written tradition as it contains gestures, tone of voice etc.?

While it is true that it contains these gestures and tones which convey a richer meaning and detail, it remains subject to the accuracy of human memory. Maybe video tradition is less subject to distortion?

Last paragraph states, "But written tradition, as in the letters of Paul, is less subject to intentional distortion by those who would alter the gospel for their own purposes." Thoughts?

Do you agree with this? If we are talking about whether you get the information from the Bible yourself, or from the oral report of someone purposely twisting it, then yes written is less subject to distortion. But what if you are getting your Bible study from your preacher, commentary, theology professor and not studying for yourself?

How many tracts, books, and sermons are filled with Bible quotes, yet misrepresent God?

Does having the exact words of Scripture ensure the message will not be distorted?

Does it matter with what lens we come to the Scripture?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "In today's..." thoughts?

While many laugh at the idea of Satan, others live in fear of Satanic and demonic powers. Do we need to fear the power of Satan? Why or why not?

The fourth paragraph states, “The good news is that, though Satan is more powerful than we are, the Lord is more powerful than Satan, and we can find safety and power in the Lord.”

Thoughts?

Nothing false stated here – but is there a slant that might be misunderstood?

Is the controversy between Christ and Satan over who has the most power? Or was it over the use of power?

When we think of God’s power – what comes to mind? What is God’s power? Is the God’s power that Scripture talks about merely the power of physical might or something else?

Paul speaks of the power of the gospel – what is that power? Where does the gospel wield its effect?

Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment. – Mahatma Gandhi

I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him. – Napoleon Bonaparte

Paul talks of the divine weapons which demolish Satanic strongholds – where are those strongholds and what are the weapons?

Which is stronger – hate or love?

- Hate is powerful, no doubt, look at all the pain, suffering, and destruction that has come because of hate. But love is more powerful, love will destroy hate.
- Why does a soldier voluntarily get out of a foxhole under fire, and intentionally put themselves in harms way? Is it because of hate for the enemy or love for their friends?

Which is strong – lies or truth?

- Lies are powerful, no doubt, the Great Controversy and all the pain and suffering is due to lies – but what destroys lies – the truth and the truth is more powerful!

Which is stronger – slavery or freedom?

- What wins the loyalty of the heart? Slavery or freedom? Which has more power to build loyalty, threat of punishment or delivery from bondage, without anything expected in return?
- Greater love has no one than to give his life for a friend!

God doesn't need to coerce, or trick, or threaten, or impose his way, he has won our hearts, he has achieved our Remedy, and he has given it to us freely. He just longs for us to partake!

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “By the time Paul...” thoughts?

What do you think of authority?

What makes the teachings of Christ and the Apostles authoritative?

They are true, they are right, they are the expressions that the universe was constructed upon.

Then, do we take it because it they said it, or because it is true?

Then does it require we think about what they said and ensure we accurately understand what they meant, lest we take an authoritative instruction and turn into a lie?

Read last paragraph, “Paul was not idle...” thoughts?

Disorderly - anyone who did not follow the teachings and practices of the apostles?

Thoughts?

Any practices come to mind?

- Like not baptizing people at the moment of conversion and instead substituting the sinners prayer and putting someone through six months indoctrination first?
 - I would like to suggest that the way tradition currently handles conversion undermines the work of the Holy Spirit. That first love, which led to conversion, was in Bible times immediately validated with public baptism and the person was accepted, as they are, validated only on their acceptance of and love for Christ. It was grace – accepted into full membership, without works.
 - But we have interposed something between the believer and their “first love.” Tradition has put the barrier of indoctrination, required doctrinal learning, attestation to loyalty to an institutional church, change of lifestyle, jobs, diet, and dress all before baptism, which says you are not accepted as a Christian until you work to change. By this time

love is driven out of the heart and replaced with a burden of do's and don'ts.

- I have a hypothesis that if we returned to the Biblical model, baptizing people at conversion, then mentoring them in love, the church would be filled with people on fire for God and who love each other.
- Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read last sentence of third paragraph and then fourth and fifth paragraphs, "If anyone is not willing..." thoughts?

How should we deal with members who are capable but won't work? What about non-members, those along the interstate with signs, "will work for food?"

Where do we draw the line between loving support and allowing someone to go hungry?

If the people on the interstate actually want only some money for food how long do you think they need to stand there to get enough for a meal?

Have you noticed when food bank certificates started being available where people could stop and give a certificate to such a person for a free meal, that the signs started changing around town to "out of town and car broke down" "Disabled and need rent money"

How do we minister to the genuine needy without becoming cynical because of the many scams going on?

What about this group Paul described who didn't contribute to the church but sat around criticizing what others were doing? How do we respond to such people?

Who is being damaged by such behavior? First themselves, and then any who are sucked in to their duplicity, and those whose reputations and ministry they are able to undermine.

But is there a difference in the type of damage done?

- What type of damage is done to the one gossiping?
- What type of damage is done to the one gossiped about?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “The matter of church...” thoughts

What issues are appropriate for church discipline?

- Open ongoing sin
- Open rebellion against the principles of the gospel
- What about: “The hasty, reckless use of the faculty of speech lies at the foundation of nearly all the church troubles that exist. Evilspeaking should be dealt with as a misdemeanor that is subject to church trial and separation from church membership if persisted in; for the church cannot be set in order in any other way.”--Ms 74, 1897. {VSS 31.2}

Read second paragraph, “Matthew 18...” thoughts?

How about if the offender is an influential church leader and the offended is a timid young woman? Should the offended then go? What if the offender swore her to secrecy and convinced her it would be sin to say anything of his action toward her?

Read the third paragraph, “Here is the problem...” thoughts?

Which do you understand it to be? Is it the second, forgiveness, love, compassion – but what is not included? Trust – until when?

Isn't the goal of church discipline, the same as family discipline, to teach, heal, redeem and save the person from themselves, to help them overcome weakness in their character?

Do we still love our children when we discipline them? Were you ever disciplined as a child? Do you know you were still love?

Do we treat members of our church in such a way that they know we still love them when we discipline them?

How can we achieve this?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1, 2

Announcements:

- October 20, at the Trade Center, Chattanooga 9a.m.-5p.m. *Modern Medicine, Biblical Technology and Your Brain*. Seats limited sign up at our website.
- We need 13 more volunteers to help with the webcasting so that people can only do it once every 3-4 weeks. Please see Dean if you are willing
- Come and Reason Ministries, in partnership with Heartwise Ministries has started a weekly TV program *Heart of Health*. In order to get our signal onto the satellites for broadcast a \$10,000 encoder was needed. Thanks to your generosity Come and Reason Ministries was able to purchase this piece of equipment and on October 4 the signal will go nationwide on WTNB and My FamilyLife TV. We are negotiating with other networks also. Keep us in your prayers.

Growing in Christ Lesson 1 4Q 2012

Introduction – read first paragraph, “Everyone believes...” thoughts?

We have power over what we believe, but what we believe has power over us – power to heal and power to destroy – the question is what you believe.

Satan’s power is the power of deception, to get us to believe lies, and getting us to believe lies changes us.

Everyone is free to believe as they choose, but all beliefs are not equally healthy. Believing the truth that God is love and exactly as Jesus revealed him to be is healing, while believing God is angry and wrathful is actually destructive.

What kind of a belief must one hold if they believe their god is honored when they riot and kill people because of a cartoon or movie?

Read next paragraph, “For Seventh-day Adventists...” thoughts?

- Is it our common beliefs that hold us together?
 - Common beliefs can hold people together, no doubt
 - Political parties and cults hold common beliefs
- Should there be something more holding us together just our common beliefs?
 - What about the Holy Spirit?
 - What about experiencing renewal of heart?
 - What about practicing God’s methods of truth, love, freedom – the respect for all people, the principles of peace?
 - What about bonds of love?
 - What about common purpose, common mission?
- Can one hold to all 28 fundamentals, to the point they would die for them, and still be God’s enemy?
 - Were many of the Jews in Christ’s day, held together by common beliefs? And were many of them willing to die for their beliefs?
 - Were many of those same Jews enemies of Christ?
- How is it that one can believe the right “doctrines” and still be God’s enemy?
 - Read next paragraph, “Some argue that...” thoughts?
- How can one believe right “doctrines” and still be God’s enemy?
 - By making the assumption that truth and one’s doctrines are synonymous – what is the danger in this idea?
 - Did you notice the shift from doctrine to truth? Are these two statements the same:
 - What matters is your love for Christ not doctrine AND
 - What matters is your love for Christ not truth?
 - OR

- The Bible never separates love for Christ from love for truth AND
- The Bible never separates love for Christ from love for doctrine?
- By making doctrine stand alone beliefs, proving each and every doctrine as if each doctrine stood on its own, rather than recognizing, presenting and experiencing each true doctrine is simply a manifestation of God's character of love!
 - If the doctrine is disconnected from God's character of love and made stand alone beliefs then it and the organization that does this, becomes warped and the doctrine becomes what is worshipped and not God.
- Does knowing doctrine result in a love for God?
 - It depends on what doctrine you know AND how you understand the purpose of doctrine.

Read next paragraph, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church..." thoughts?

What is a creed?

I looked up the definition on Webster's online dictionary and this is what the definitions of a creed are:

- 1:** a brief authoritative formula of religious belief
- 2:** a set of fundamental beliefs

Okay, if a creed is a set of fundamental beliefs, why is it so necessary to claim our fundamentals are not a creed?

Has something changed in the SDA church since its inception that we are trying to deny? In previous lessons we have identified a stark difference in what our founders taught about the purpose of Christ's mission to earth and what is taught today.

But what about creeds, did our founders have a different idea in regard to setting out a list of fundamental beliefs as a test of fellowship? And if so why? And what are the dangers of making creeds?

- **Rome withheld the Bible from the people**, and required all men to accept her teachings in its place. **It was the work of the Reformation to restore to men the Word of God**; but is it not too true **that in the churches of our time men are taught to rest their faith upon their creed** and the teachings of their church rather than on the Scriptures? Said Charles Beecher, speaking of the Protestant churches: “They shrink from any rude word against creeds with the same sensitiveness with which those holy fathers would have shrunk from a rude word against the rising veneration for saints and martyrs which they were fostering. . . . The Protestant evangelical denominations have so tied up one another's hands, and their own, that, between them all, a man cannot become a preacher at all, anywhere, without accepting some book besides the Bible. . . . **There is nothing imaginary in the statement that the creed power is now beginning to prohibit the Bible as really as Rome did, though in a subtler way.**” {GC88 388.2}

Do you think creed power is prohibiting the Bible in our church?

- When God's Word is studied, comprehended, and obeyed, a bright light will be reflected to the world; new truths, received and acted upon, will bind us in strong bonds to Jesus. **The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony.** The Review and Herald, Dec. 15, 1885. {1SM 416.2}

What is suggested happens when the Bible alone is our creed? New truth are received and incorporated into practice and lighten the world. What do the new truths do? Bond us to

Jesus! What is the concern with having creeds or fundamental beliefs? They obstruct the receipt of unfolding truth?

Have we actually seen this happen?

Here is another concern regarding creeds from our founders:

- **Christ was not exclusive**, and He had given special offense to the Pharisees by departing in this respect from their rigid rules. He found the domain of religion fenced in by high walls of seclusion, as too sacred a matter for everyday life. **These walls of partition He overthrew.** In His contact with men **He did not ask, What is your creed? To what church do you belong?** He exercised His helping power in behalf of all who needed help. *Desire of Ages*, p. 86.
 - He didn't ask on what day you worship, what food do you eat, to what atonement model do you ascribe
 - He lived God's law of love!
 - Creeds cause division, how many SDAs are afraid to interact with those who worship on Sunday?
 - How many people of other denominations shrink back from interacting with each other?

- Oh, how Christ longed to open to Israel the precious treasures of the truth! But such was their spiritual blindness that it was impossible to reveal to them the truths relating to His kingdom. **They clung to their creed and their useless ceremonies when the truth of Heaven awaited their acceptance.** DA 241
 - Can creeds, fundamental beliefs, become an end in themselves and thus close the mind to truth about God's character?
 - This is why we have purchased and are distributing *Fundamental Focus* because it takes the 28 Fundamental Beliefs and refocuses them all back on the central truth – God's character of love!

If our church founders held the attitude toward creeds as I have read, do you see how some might become defensive about establishing a creed?

The lesson states it well in the second to last paragraph of the introduction: “Doctrines, then, are not as an end in and of themselves. They are a *means* to an end, and that end is Jesus, knowing Jesus for ourselves and growing in Him.”

Nothing wrong knowing what one believes, or being able to identify those beliefs clearly, but the true purpose of each and every belief is enlighten us about God, connect us to God, reveal God to us. If separated from God our beliefs, even if factually correct, become obstructions to salvation (like the Jews wanting Christ off the Cross to keep Sabbath. Their belief in the Sabbath obstructed love for God).

Lesson 1 The Great Controversy: The Foundation

When you hear this title, what comes to mind?

What is the Great Controversy? How would you describe it? Here are some questions to consider as we go through the lesson:

- What is the controversy about or over?
- Is it about who is most powerful?
- Is it fought with physical arms or might?
- Where is the battleground?
- What are the weapons employed?
- Who are the chief antagonists?
- How does Satan win?
- How does God win?
- How do you and I fit in?
- Whose side do we want to be on?
- Whose side are we on?
- How can you tell?

SABBATH

Memory text, “ ‘ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Gen 3:15)

Thoughts? What does this mean?

What was the sin of Adam and Eve?

- Taking the fruit OR believing lies about God which resulted in distrusting God and the subsequent taking of the fruit?
- The introduction of the quarterly talked about the power of what we believe – Satan’s power is in lies, as we believe lies we are changed. Here is how one of our founders saw it:
 - “When we speak of unbelief, we do not mean that a person believes nothing. The mind must rest upon something; and when it does not grasp truth, it lays hold of error. All men in one sense believe, and the effect produced upon the heart and character is according to the things believed. **Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors,** and it was only by repentance toward God and faith in the promised Messiah that they could hope ever to **regain the lost image of God.** {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}
 - **Through belief in Satan's misrepresentation of God, man's character and destiny were changed, but if men will believe in the Word of God, they will be transformed in mind and character, and fitted for eternal life.** To believe that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16), will change the heart, and reproduce in man the image of God.
{1SM 346.1}

Thoughts?

Do these quotations remind you of any Scripture?

- 2Cor 10:3-5 – waging war over the knowledge of God
- Romans 1:18-32 – believing lies about God damages the mind
- John 17:3 – life eternal is knowing God
- John 8:32 – truth will set you free
- Isa 1:18 – Come and Reason with God and be cleansed

SUNDAY

The first paragraph reminds us that there are “radically different views regarding what the conflict is about, who’s involved, what’s at stake, and how it is going to end.”

Thoughts?

What are some of the different views?

- Yin/Yang – good and evil are not opposites and against each other, but two sides of the same energy, required for balance in the universe, there are no individual evil or good beings opposing each other, every living being contains both good and evil in balance and – thus the end is an eternity in which good and evil exist for eternity. A concept known as eternal dualism.
 - This is Satan’s goal a universe in which good and evil exist eternally
 - But the Bible teaches there was a time in eternity past when no evil existed, only good
 - That evil originated in Satan and spread to earth

- And that a future will arrive in which evil will be exterminated and the entire universe will again be good, in perfect harmony with God.
- How has the idea of eternal dualism, the eternal existence of both good and evil infected Christianity?
 - A universe in which we have heaven and an eternal burning hell in which the devil and sinners exist and suffer forever – (eternal dualism)
 - A universe in which God is the source of pain, suffering and death which he inflicts upon unrepentant sinners to exact justice to make them pay for their sins, thus God good and evil exist eternally in the character of God.
- Another view of the GC is, some allege the Bible teaches myths and the players are interpreted as concepts or forces of good and evil rather than real sentient beings.

Read last paragraph, “In fact, while secularism...” thoughts?

How might you present the ideas in a way that a scientific mind would be more open to consider?

What about instead of using the terms angels and demons, we use “extraterrestrials” and talk about intelligent life not originating on planet earth caught up in a conflict in the universe? Aren’t angels “extraterrestrials” Does it take away from anything if we call them that?

Is the issue over what we call angels, or over God’s character and methods versus Satan’s?

MONDAY

What do you understand led to Lucifer’s fall?

- The lesson states, “pride, autonomy, and independence” thoughts?

- Read second paragraph, “At least three issues...” thoughts?
- Is there something wrong, sinful, about autonomy and independence? I hear these words synonymous with freedom, how do you hear them? Maybe the lesson means instead of autonomy and independence, rebellion and defiance?
- What is “lawlessness”?
- So Satan was in rebellion and defiance of what? God’s design for life, God’s methods and principles, and ultimately God himself.
- What about instead of “pride, autonomy and independence” we use, Pride, selfishness, jealousy, rebellion and defiance?
- We do have autonomy and independence in all our choices, we just are not free of the natural consequences of those choices. We are free to break any of God’s laws, we just can’t avoid what happens when we do.
- So what is the restraining power? God’s imposed punishment, or the design protocols of life?
- In the end why will there be no more wickedness? What does God “give” to the obstinately rebellious? Freedom, independence and autonomy – He gives them what they have insisted upon, complete freedom to experience what it is like separated from him and to step outside his law of love – and what exists there? NOTHING! And thus they cease to exist!

How did Lucifer get 1/3 of other angels to follow him?

- By convincing the angels that God’s law is imposed and God is therefore arbitrary, and the only consequences to disobedience are those punishments inflicted by God. Thus, if we resist him, and get enough followers God will be forced to accept our terms.
- “Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence,

and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God. He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, **that men might lose the true views of God's character**, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth. He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and **God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God.** Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes.** That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature.” {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

thoughts? Agree? What does arbitrary mean?

Webster’s online dictionary has the following definitions for “arbitrary”:

- 1:** depending on individual discretion and not fixed by law <the manner of punishment is *arbitrary*>
- 2:** marked by or resulting from the unrestrained and often tyrannical exercise of power
- 3: a:** based on or determined by individual preference or convenience rather than by necessity or the intrinsic nature of something
- b :** existing or coming about seemingly at random or by chance or as a capricious and unreasonable act of will

Thoughts? If God is like this, could he be trusted? What teachings do we hear today that make God out to be this way?

- Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience?
- God is required to inflict punishment?
- God said it, I believe it, that settles it?
- God's way or the highway?

What happens when we use methods that are severe, exacting and arbitrary? Listen to this, which is a letter from EGW to a church member over 100 years ago. Consider if you have ever known of a family like this:

Brother M, you have not taken a judicious course with your family. Your children do not love you. They have more hatred than love. Your wife does not love you. You do not take a course to be loved. You are an extremist. **You are severe, exacting, arbitrary, to your children.** You talk the truth to them, but do **not carry its principles into your everyday life. You are not patient, forbearing, and forgiving.** You have so long **indulged your own spirit**, you are so ready to fly into a passion if provoked, that it looks exceedingly doubtful whether you will make efforts sufficient to meet the mind of Christ. You do not possess the power of endurance, forbearance, gentleness, and love. These Christian graces must be possessed by you before you can be truly a Christian.

What is being described? What is suggested will happen when we interact with those who practice methods that are severe, exacting and arbitrary? Does love grow?

So, if Satan can get us to believe God is severe, exacting and arbitrary, what kind of Christians might we become? Could we become like those who put Christ on the cross?

WEDNESDAY

Read first two paragraphs beginning at: “God worked through the...” thoughts?

Fought over what issues?

Are they saying the fight is over understanding or misunderstand God and what he is doing? And that the tools God has provided to enlighten us the devil tries to twist to misrepresent God, or something else?

How has the sanctuary been misrepresented?

- That the blood of animals atones for sin – in OT times
- That God requires sacrifice as an appeasement or propitiation of his anger and wrath
- That the barrier between God and man is God’s inability to look upon sin
- That the plan of salvation is a market place transaction, one member of the Godhead bribing or paying off another member to with his blood
- That there is a smoke filled building in heaven in which Christ lights incense and mixes it with prayers and pleads to his Father to be merciful to us
- That there is a golden chest in heaven with stone tablets carved out of rock from earth
- That when God attempts to look at our records Jesus intervenes to obstruct his view by replacing what is recorded there with his record.
- That committees sit in heaven reviewing the sins of the wicked and voting on how long each person must burn in the flames before they are executed.

Read last paragraph, “Meanwhile, the book of Hebrews...”

Read Hebrews 9:24: “For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he

entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.” (NRSV)

What does this mean? Do you think 2Cor 5:1 has any bearing?

“Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.”

Is the sanctuary in heaven, the one not built with human hands, constructed out of inanimate material or living beings? Who is to dwell in the Sanctuary? Where would the living God of love abide? A lifeless, cold, inanimate edifice? Or within the hearts, minds of living beings?

Created beings can build inanimate builds, only God can construct living beings!

Does the following passage have any bearing on this:

Eze 28:14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub,
 for so I ordained you.
 You were on the holy mount of God;
 you walked among the fiery stones.
 15 You were blameless in your ways
 from the day you were created
 till wickedness was found in you.
 16 Through your widespread trade
 you were filled with violence,
 and you sinned.
 So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God,
 and I expelled you, O guardian cherub,
 from among the fiery stones.
 17 Your heart became proud
 on account of your beauty,
 and you corrupted your wisdom
 because of your splendor.
 So I threw you to the earth;
 I made a spectacle of you before kings.

¹⁸ By your many sins and dishonest trade
you have desecrated your sanctuaries.
 So I made a fire come out from you,
 and it consumed you,
 and I reduced you to ashes on the ground
 in the sight of all who were watching.
 Eze 28:14-18 NIV

What do you think it means? What are his sanctuaries? What of the following is it connected?

These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. ⁹ I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who **say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.** Rev 2:8,9

What are the synagogue or sanctuaries of Satan? Here is what one of the founders of our church thought, do you agree?

Satan has a large confederacy, his church. Christ calls them the synagogue of Satan because the members are the children of sin. The members of Satan's church have been constantly **working to cast off the divine law, and confuse the distinction between good and evil.** Satan is working with great power in and through the children of disobedience, to exalt treason and apostasy as truth and loyalty. And at this time the power of his satanic inspiration **is moving the living agencies** to carry out the great rebellion against God that commenced in heaven. {Christian Experience and Teaching 207.1}

What is the synagogue of Satan constructed out of? If the synagogue of Satan is the people who identify with him, who operate by his principles, who have his character reproduced within, then wouldn't the heavenly sanctuary be built out of God's loyal children?

What does Scripture teach?

We went through this a few weeks ago, so I am not going to relist the texts, but the sanctuary is built out of living stones, together to be a house for the Lord. We are a temple for the Lord where he dwells. Jesus said destroy this temple and he would raise it in three days.

EGW in DA 161 says when Christ cleansed the earthly temple he announced his mission to cleanse the human soul from sin. That temple was an object less that every being was created to be a dwelling place for God.

All through inspiration it is the same!

Satan wants to direct us away from the high calling God created us to be, beings to be temples where God dwells, to an idea of a smoky building in heaven where records are being reviewed. An idea that books are cleansed not people. It is time we grow out of the metaphor and step into the reality of God's kingdom and fulfill the purpose for which we were created, to be a dwelling place for God and reveal his character to the world!

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Prophecy provides..." thoughts?

What are Satan's tactics? Flattery, inducements, coercion, death penalty.

What do Christians say Christ will do when returns? Offer the inducement of salvation, use power to inflict punishment for disobedience, and then execute those who remain rebellious, who does this sound like?

The third paragraph references the message of the three angels, what is that message? Can anyone tell me in clear terms?

- A first messenger from God came with the message to Admire God and reveal his true character of love in your life
- To Remember him who created all things, and the principles upon which life was designed to operate – the law of love, the principle of giving, which reveals God’s true character of love
- Because the hour in which he will be judged is at hand and
- A second messenger from God came saying, do what the first angel said because, the churches have fallen into Satan’s lie about God and teach an imposed law construct in which God is the imposer of law and the imposer of penalties, a being represented as arbitrary and severe and have made all the nations think God is like this.
- A third messenger came and said, if anyone agrees with this beastly picture of God, or practices such monstrous methods their characters will be permanently warped and they will experience the full force of their choice when God returns and they are bathed in the fire of his presence. Then unremedied sin will not be restrained and they will be tormented and consumed in the presence of the angels and the lamb.
- And the memory of their choice, and how unremedied sin tortures and kills will be recalled by the saved forever and ever.

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The cryptic language...” thoughts?

Does this passage have any affect on how we view and understand the OT Scripture? Should it? How?

In light of this passage, how do we understand the flood, Sodom, the first born of Egypt and the rest? What is going on behind the scenes?

What does Genesis 3:15 tell us about God's plan?

- That Christ is coming – why?
- Why is God going to send Christ?
- What if God doesn't send Christ?
- Does Satan know the implications of Christ's planned condescension?
- What do you think Satan's reaction was to hearing Genesis 3:15?

Do you think the OT is a history of how mankind was caught up in the war between God and Satan? How Satan was working to cut mankind off from God permanently, and how God was working to keep contact with man, and the channel open for the Messiah?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

Announcements:

Next week is the *Modern Medicine, Biblical Technology and Your Brain* Seminar at the Trade Center in Chattanooga starting sharply at 9 a.m.

Most of you have already signed up; we have about 100 seats left, please invite those who you think would be interested and willing to come. We want to have a full audience, as we will be making a DVD series from these presentations. If some of you teach at the college this would be a great seminar to invite some college students to attend. People can sign up at our website comeandreason.com home page.

Because of the seminar next week we will not meet here for class. Today we will do lesson 4 at our regular time and lesson 5 at 11:30 – 12:30. We will record lesson 5 and webcast it next week at our regular class time.

Update on Heart of Health Live, the TV program we have partnered with Heartwise Ministries to produce, is currently broadcasting every Thursday at 6 pm on:

- Charter Channel 5 WTNB in Cleveland/Dayton/Athens
- Channel 10 in Dalton/Calhoun/ Ft. O/ Northern GA
- Digital 51.1 WDNN in Chattanooga
- Nationwide on Myfamilytv.tv
- heartwiseministries.org.
- We will go live worldwide on 3ABN the first Thursday in January.
- LifeTalk radio wants to air the program live on their radio stream.
- The program is rebroadcast on Legacy and we will send to SmartLifestyle as well.

Pray that God will use this show to reach millions with the message about Him!

Growing in Christ Lesson 4 4Q 2012

Salvation: The Only Solution

SABBATH

In the first paragraph the lesson describes salvation beautifully:

“God’s part in the controversy has been to stop, and ultimately eliminate, the deleterious effects of sin, not just on the earth but on the creation as a whole. God’s action to rescue the creation from the destructive results of sin constitutes the doctrine of salvation.”

Thoughts?

Isn’t that well said? Do you notice how sin is described as destructive, and the destruction is a result of sin not an infliction by God? And God is described as a deliverer, rescuer or healer? Well done!

Where is sin? If we want to find sin where do we have to look?

- Is the decay we see in nature, what Paul describes as all nature groaning under the weight of sin, sin?
- Or is the decay we see the result of sin? Like fever the result of disease but the fever isn’t the disease?

So, if God is going to eliminate sin from his creation from where does it need to be eliminated? The hearts, minds and characters of intelligent beings?

What if we are afraid of God – what impact will that have on his ability to eliminate sin? Does our fear or distrust of God impact God’s ability to eliminate sin?

What method does God use to eliminate sin?

Christ! Christ is God's method, vehicle, means to eliminate sin from his creation. How?

- By revealing truth, which destroys lies and restores to trust
- By cleansing humanity from the infection of sinfulness in his own mission in humanity on earth

With Christ's victory in hand, how does God eliminate sin from us? Truth, presented in love, leaving us free to choose to enter into a relationship with him, to trust him. Can sin be eliminated from our hearts and minds without our voluntary choice to cooperate with God?

So God works to restore us to trust so we will voluntarily open the heart and cooperate with him for our healing and restoration.

- The Holy Spirit presents truth to our minds in ways we can comprehend
- We are left free to choose what we will do with that truth
- When we choose to act in harmony with the truth we receive divine power to enable us to succeed with the choice
- Christ procured the remedy to sin, single handedly, and there is nothing we can do to add to that remedy
- But we must choose to participate in the remedy Christ achieved, to trust God, to open the heart, to act on what we know is right.
- Our personal, individual choices will have no bearing on the salvation of the human species – that was achieved by Christ
- Our personal individual choices will have no bearing on the eternal elimination of sin from the universe, that will be achieved by Christ
- Our personal choices do have a direct bearing on our eternal destiny, and can impact specific other people influencing their eternal destiny

SUNDAY

What is the “scope” of the sin problem?

- John 2:25 - He did not need man’s testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.
 - Which means what?
 - That he knew man believed lies about God, didn’t understand the truth of God’s methods, and that selfishness and fear were the primary motives in man?

- Ps 59:2 - Deliver me from evildoers and save me from bloodthirsty men.
 - Which means what?
 - That mankind is defective, and selfish, and even if Satan were eliminated mankind is still in a terminal condition.

- Jer 17:9 - The human heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?
 - Which means what?
 - Our motives are deviant from God’s design and we will lie to ourselves

- Rom 5:12 - Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—
 - Which means what?
 - Our condition is terminal, but it is not our fault, we were born with this terminal condition. But despite it not being our fault if we don’t experience remedy we will die eternally.

- James 1:13-15 - When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵

Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

- Which means what?
 - Our defective minds, filled with fear and insecurity tempt us to be selfish and live out of harmony with God's design, and this results in death
- 2 Thes 2:10 - and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.
 - Which means what?
 - Truth heals and if we refuse the truth we cannot be healed.
 - Why does truth heal? Because truth displaces lies, leads us back to God and God's design protocols for life.

Thoughts? What do these text reveal about the scope of the sin problem?

Where does sin occur? In our hearts and minds! Then what needs to be cleansed? Our hearts and mind!

What about the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, that 2300 years and the sanctuary will be cleansed? What is to be cleansed?

Do record books in heaven contain sin? When we hold a Bible in our hands and read of David's misdeeds do we possess sin in our hands? If we were to burn the Bibles, or use an eraser to erase what is recorded there would we be destroying sin?

If Christ were to erase records in heaven would he be destroying sin? No! Sin happens in hearts and minds and it is hearts and minds that God wants to cleanse, not the recorded history of the universe.

MONDAY

The lesson points out that sin needed immediate attention – why? If penal substitution is correct, and the problem is that the governing authority must inflict punishment, then why did sin need immediate attention?

But, what was the immediate attention that God provided? Right in Eden? Gen 3:15 – “I will put enmity between you and the woman...”

What does this action by God tell us about what needed immediate intervention? Did God need immediate appeasing, placating or propitiating, or did mankind need something done within him immediately? What did God do and why?

God put a desire for good in the heart of man, a conviction of wrongdoing, a longing for something better. If God had not intervened in our hearts humanity would have a perfect unity with Satan. Paul puts it this way:

the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. Rom 8:7,8

What is Paul saying? What would be the condition of our hearts and minds if not for God’s grace intervening in our hearts to cause enmity with Satan?

Is the heart of humanity the only place God intervened or interceded after Adam’s sin? Where else?

With the principalities and powers of darkness, God sends his agencies to hold in check evil forces:

- hedge of protection around Elisha
- angels fighting for mankind in Daniel chapter 10
- four angels holding back the four winds of strife

And one other place, God intervenes/intercedes with sin in man's behalf. Christ interceded with the natural course sin would take within mankind when "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2Cor 5:21) In other words, sin would have destroyed humanity, but Christ stepped into humanity and intervened to change the trajectory and alter the outcome of what sin should have done to the species by overcoming sin and curing humanity.

So, what kind of intervention/intercession is this? God intervening with God not to punish? Or God intervening with the enemy of good, and with the natural consequences of what unremedied sin does to God's creation in order to heal and save?

TUESDAY

Read middle dark section, "Christ's sacrificial death..." thoughts?

This is a most important question, for how one answers this question impacts how one understands the character and trustworthiness of God.

The lesson uses words like justification, sanctification and glorification.

I liked how in Tuesday's lesson they equated justification with reconciliation and sanctification with regeneration. This is well done.

But in THURSDAY's lesson, things get a little confusing. Let's read first paragraph of Thursday's lesson:

"The experience of justification..."

And then in the third paragraph it states, "His perfect life is credited to you as if it were yours."

Thoughts?

This is a proffered solution, but what is this solution to address? In other words, what is the problem this solution is designed to fix?

This solution is addressing something called retributive justice, and is the basis of penal substitution theory. The idea that justice requires the infliction of punishment for breaking the law and that the ruler must inflict such punishment lest unpunished rebellion persist.

The concept of penal substitution originated sometime after Constantine, when the idea of God's law was changed from the law of love to an imposed law construct. It arose during the Middle Ages when people thought it was just to:

- Publicly beat people who broke some social rule
- Beat children at school
- Imprison people who honestly couldn't repay a debt
- To burn people at the stake who believed differently

I want to recommend a new book that just came out in August 2012 - *Healing the Gospel: A Radical Vision for Grace, Justice and the Cross* by Derek Flood

He opens the book describing his experience as a teen having a personal encounter with Jesus and the experience of peace, love, joy and renewal and acceptance with Christ. He goes on to describe how he wanted to share this incredible experience of being loved by God with everyone so he went to church, but something was different. I quote:

I quickly discovered that the message I was taught to share with others was very different from what I had actually experienced. It seemed more like bad news, and led to all sorts of awkward conversations like this:

Jesus died for you!

Why did Jesus have to die?

Because of our sin.

What if we haven't sinned?

"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." No one can keep the law.

But if no one can keep it how can we be blamed for that?

Because "the wages of sin is death" and so justice requires that you be sent to be tormented in Hell for all eternity.

That's awful!

Yes, but there's good news: God has provided a way out by sacrificing his Son.

God kills his own son?

Yes, that's how much he loves you.

Why would that make things better?

Because it satisfies God's need for punishment. Sin must be paid for with blood because "without blood there is no forgiveness."

I feel ill.

Can't you see this is God's mercy and love? Don't you want to open your heart and let him into your life?

I think I have to go now. (p 1,2)

He goes on to say:

I was taught to tell people that they *deserved* to be punished by God forever. Taught that we should see ourselves as *worthless, totally depraved, capable of nothing good* apart from God. I was taught that the reason Jesus died was because God demanded that someone had to suffer the penalty of sin, someone had to be punished to appease God's wrath. No wonder I got a cold shoulder when I tried to share this "good news" with people. (p 2)

Behind all of this lies an image of God as a judge who is primarily concerned with satisfaction of punitive justice. (p 3)

Thoughts? Have you ever been presented with such concepts? And do such ideas engender trust or undermine it? Who would want to undermine trust in God by presenting him like this?

Now listen to this from the same book:

...we think that the gospel is rooted in the idea that Jesus had to die to fulfill the 'demands' of (punitive) justice. This is an understanding of the atonement known as *penal substitution*, "penal" meaning punish, and "substitution" meaning that Jesus is punished instead of us...

What I propose is that the above is not at all what the Bible teaches, and instead is a result of people projecting their worldly understanding of punitive justice onto the biblical text. The New Testament, in contrast, is actually a *critique* of punitive justice. It presents it as a problem to be solved, not as a means to the solution. The problem of wrath (that is, punitive justice) is *overcome* through the cross, which is an act of restoration – restoring humanity to a right relationship with God. In other words, restorative justice is how God in Christ acts to heal the problem of punitive justice.

Love is not in conflict with justice, love is how justice comes about because the New Testament understanding of justice is ultimately not about punishment, but about *making things right again*. (p 8)

Thoughts? Justice is about making things right again. Notice in this view justice is doing what is just or right, which is an expression of love. This stands in stark contrast to human governments which conceive of justice as inflicting punishment.

In Chapter Two Flood states:

Beginning in chapter two [of Romans], Paul has been criticizing the assumption of his religious audience who are calling out for justice in the form of retribution and punishment. Now he proposes that God's justice really comes through God's action in Christ to restore all humanity in love. Restorative justice instead of punitive justice...

Paul then goes on to explain how God's **restorative justice** in Christ comes about: God acts in Christ to make us good. A key concept here is "justification" which normally refers to legal acquittal, i.e., declaring a person innocent in court, and has often been **mistranslated** as such in Romans. But if that were the case then Paul's entire argument would fall apart. **He is arguing that it was just for God not to punish sinners** as his audience wished. If his only reason was that God had declared these sinners innocent, this would have been seen by his audience as a profound injustice – the acquittal of the guilty... **God brings about true justice, Paul tells us, by making sinners into saints**. This act of redemptive transformation is nothing short a miracle and happens through relationship – through being loved by God, and God's goodness making us good. Paul goes on to explain in Romans 7-8 that as God's Spirit indwells us, as we

experience Christ's indwelling love, we are relationally transformed into his likeness. This way of the Spirit brings life, Paul says, but the way of law (i.e. the way of retributive justice) brings death.

Thoughts?

I recommend this book to you. It is quite well done. We see this message appearing all over as the Holy Spirit is awakening the world from its slumber so the way may be prepared from the coming Bridegroom!

Read fourth paragraph, "The experience of forgiveness..." thoughts?

What are they saying? To what are they saying the sinner is vulnerable? Are they saying that sinners are vulnerable to God wrathfully actions to injure and destroy them? And that forgiveness protects us from God?

Are they saying that the barrier removed is a barrier of God's wrath?

"Christ's self-sacrifice is *pleasing* to God because this sacrificial offering **took away the barrier between God and sinful man** in that **Christ fully bore God's wrath on man's sin**. Through Christ, God's wrath is not turned into love but is turned away from man and borne by Himself." (*Seventh-day Adventist Believe* 27, p. 111)

Thoughts?

Do such constructs engender trust in God? Do you see the root problem? Those who think this accept the idea that God's law is like human law, imposed and therefore God must act like human governments and impose punishment or there is no justice.

How can we free our church these ideas and help our church leaders extricate themselves from these distortions? We can't take the gospel to the world when we are embracing Satan's view of justice.

Read last paragraph, "Repentance is a prerequisite..." thoughts?

What does this mean?

- God is willing to forgive but won't forgive until sinners repent?
- God remains unforgiving, resentful, a grudge holder until sinners repent?
- God forgives everyone, but not everyone opens their hearts to experiences the forgiveness which would lead them to repentance?

Which comes first, God's forgiveness or sinner's repentance?

"God's kindness leads you toward repentance" (Rom 2:4)

If God is unforgiving would that lead toward repentance?

Read bottom paragraph WEDNESDAY's lesson, "We are told..."

The lesson supports that it is God's kindness, love that leads us to repentance, then is there a problem if we suggest that forgiveness is not given before repentance?

Is there a difference between being forgiven by God and "experiencing" forgiveness?

Those who put Christ on the cross, what did Christ say? "Father forgive them..." did Christ forgive them? Did Christ have authority on earth to forgive sins? Did they open their hearts to experience this forgiveness? Were they saved? Were they now Jesus' friends?

Do the wicked in the end die forgiven or unforgiven by God?

Does God spend eternity holding grudges, resentful and with an unforgiving heart?

Read bottom pink section Wednesday's lesson, "What are some..." thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read top paragraph, "The plan for our redemption..." thoughts?

What does it mean an unfolding of the principles that are the foundation of God's throne?

Is this suggesting something about how God's character, government, kingdom operate?

Read and discuss questions 2, 3

Growing in Christ Lesson 5 4Q 2012

Growing in Christ

Read Memory Text: “Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” (Colossians 2:15).

Thoughts?

What does it mean to disarm principalities and powers, to expose them publicly and to triumph over them?

The lesson in the first paragraph states, “Jesus has defeated satanic powers and evil forces; through Christ, victory over these powers, including their past manifestations in a person’s life, is possible; and finally, there are conditions in order for these victories to be realized in a person’s experience.”

Thoughts?

What are the principalities?

What are the powers of these principalities?

How did Jesus expose them, triumph over them and disarm them?

How does that benefit us?

What do you think the lesson means by “through Christ, victory over these powers, including their past manifestation in a person’s life, is possible?”

Does it mean victory over habits, addictions and patterns of sinfulness, which would actually be ongoing struggles rather than past manifestations?

Does it mean victory over the punishment God must inflict for past sins?

Let's examine our memory text in detail starting in Col 2:8

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

What does it mean to be taken captive? What is being utilized to take people captive? False ideas, lies, misrepresentations, distortions, addictions (self indulgence), fear, abusive power structures. So, what kind of warfare is this? What weapons are used? Where is the battle fought?

Does this give any insight into what might be necessary to "disarm" the powers?

Does verse 8 give any insights as to what the lies might look like?

- They are based on human traditions and basic principles of the world.
- What are the basic principles of the world? Survival-of-the-fittest, retribution, kill or be killed, justice requires enforcement of punishment.
- In other words, isn't the Bible telling us we will be deceived when we conceive of God and his government to operate like worldly governments on the same principles?
- And how do such governments work?
 - The person must work to overcome on their own, prove their innocence, or in Jewish tradition, keep a bunch of ceremonial laws, and in our day our minds are taken captive when we teach God, like a Roman emperor must inflict punishment, be appeased, have payments made etc.

Verse 9,10:

⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in

bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

What is important to note in this passage?

- Jesus is God, complete and full.
- What we see in Jesus is true of God.
- And because Jesus became human, we are given fullness, or health, or restoration via Christ who is over all things.

But notice in verse 11 and 12 how we are give fullness in Christ:

¹¹ In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

What does this mean? Is this describing a legal accounting of one's historic records, or is this describing an actual change occurring within the heart/mind of the believer?

Someone emailed me this week and was asking what Christ was doing in the heavenly sanctuary, would this passage have application to Christ's work in the sanctuary? Notice, Christ is doing something inside the heart and mind of the believer, would that be considered "cleansing" of the heart and mind? And are we not a temple of God?

Or is the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary unrelated to the work of Christ to cleanse the heart and mind?

When people talk about Christ cleansing the records in heaven, what do they mean? Can we give a better description?

What is the way Christ cleanses heavenly records? The answer typically given is, "by his blood." But Jesus said in John 6 the

blood needed to be ministered where? Into us – so how do we connect the blood going into us with the cleansing of our records?

The records in heaven are like medical records, they keep an accurate record of our actual condition, I even believe it is a perfect copy of our individuality and identity. So, the pathway to change the records in heaven is through the heart/mind of the believer. As Christ works in us to heal and restore the record of the condition of our characters is changed, why? Because we are actually changed by the internalization of Christ into the heart.

What about verses 13-15:

¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

What does it mean dead in sin and uncircumcision of our sinful nature?

Isn't this describing an actual condition of being, rather than a legal predicament? Doesn't it mean living out of harmony with God's design for life? Having selfishness as the primary motivator of action in our hearts rather than love? Would it be saying you were in a terminal state, out of harmony with how God constructed life to operate? But God sent Christ, to take our condition and cure it!

But there is another level of understanding to Christ cancelling the written code and it has to do with having cancelled the fallen way the written code was used.

In his book, *Healing the Gospel: A Radical Vision for Grace, Justice and the Cross*, Derek Flood describes how God ordained entities, structures, or elements became fallen and how Christ's mission was also to redeem these things as well as individual people. He speaks of how families have become fallen and often injure, how conscience is fallen and gives cruel oppressive guilt. And how God's law had become understood in a fallen way. He writes:

To speak of the law only as 'abolished' and 'destroyed' does not take into account the large purpose of restorative justice, which ultimately seeks to restore these systems to serve their proper role under Christ. Second, at the same time—especially because of the church's history of collusion with abusive power—we dare not whitewash over the New Testament's very real critique of the abuse of religious authority exemplified in Jesus' confrontation with the Pharisees, and in Paul's critique of the law which the early church picked up on in the language of 'abolishing' the powers. Just as we need to be self-aware and introspective, we also need to be aware of how authority can become fallen. As history shows, the church has not been particularly good at this, often defending the status quo rather than those on the margins.

Thoughts?

The written code itself, given to help teach and lead people to a right knowledge of God, had become perverted and misused to misrepresent God and actually damage people. Thus the system had to be taken away and God's law put in its proper place – which is “written upon the heart and mind” and the organized church was to operate from God's methods of love, including loving one's enemies, and not as a hierarchical top down authoritative dictator.

What does the passage mean “he forgave our sins?” The Greek means literally our shortcomings and mistakes, our falling

short of God's ideal wasn't held against us, and that God's grace, forgiveness, not holding it against us preceded the change and healing brought about by Christ in us.

So, it isn't we repent, experience a transformation and then God doesn't hold our mistakes and shortcomings against us. But it is very much like a doctor, with a patient who is sick, coughing, vomiting, spitting up blood etc. and the doctor doesn't hold any of those symptoms, those evidences of coming up short of good health, against the sick patient. Rather the doctor acknowledges the symptoms as evidence of sickness and sets about healing the condition. This is what God is doing in Christ, healing and restoring.

What about cancelled the written code that was against us?

Paul is dealing with a mindset of people, who operate in a legal framework of ordinances to be done to merit, achieve, or earn salvation. They misunderstood the purposes of the OT sacrificial system with its rules and regulations.

What was the purpose of that system? Was that system devised as a means to bring salvation? Did that system heal sinners? Did the blood of animals achieve restoration with God? No!

That entire system was a primitive method of teaching, for primitive minds. It was a theater, a drama, a play to act out with symbols the future reality to be achieved by Christ. But it had a deeply visceral purpose as well, to bring sin and God's plan home to the heart. Flood states in his book:

We cannot truly understand something when we observe it "objectively" from a distance. We understand when it pounds in our chest, when it *impacts* us. We only truly know something when we are in the middle of it. These are vital matters of life and death that cannot be captured in a simplified formula, but must be articulated

narratively and poetically as living ideas that move and touch us at the core of who we are.

Do you see how the OT sacrificial system would have made salvation issues pound in your chest? If you had to put the knife to the throat of the lamb, as the lamb looks into your eyes and then you have to cut its throat?

Did that experience save, or was that experience designed to reach into the substance of a person and make real what is transpiring for their salvation?

But the Jews forgot the purpose of the symbols and thought they somehow had merit in themselves and had come to misconstrue the meaning as appeasement. Thus the system had to be replaced, so when Christ achieved the reality that the symbolic play was to teach, there was no longer any purpose in continuing on the play, drama, symbols as they would only obscure the reality achieved in Christ. Thus, Christ put an end to the drama, play, or script, nailing it to the cross as fulfilled.

Now, as we go to verse 15, what do we understand thus far?

- We are in a war waged in our minds/hearts with weapons of deceit, distortion, fear and selfishness which promote methods of the world, survival-of-the-fittest, and principles of earthly governments projected upon God and heaven
- When we believe God is like earthly governors we are taken captive by evil forces and our healing is obstructed
- God battles with truth, love, freedom and actual restoration achieved through Christ in order to heal us and cleanse his universe
- When we trust Christ we experience actual transformation of our hearts and minds and have the worldly methods cut away and are renewed with God's law of love within

- The old system of symbols is replaced with the reality of Jesus

And thus in verse 15 how did Christ disarm the powers of evil, triumph over them and expose them?

- At the cross love and selfishness stood face to face, Satan was exposed as a liar and fraud
- Christ was revealed as love and Satan as selfish and malevolent
- Death was revealed to come out from Satan and his methods NOT from God
- Christ was revealed to be safe with all power as he wouldn't use power to protect self, thus Satan's lies about God abusing power were destroyed
- Christ destroyed the infection of selfishness in man thus restoring mankind back to God's original ideal, within the human brain Christ assumed
- Christ victory, achieved by the exercise of his human brain also revealed there was nothing wrong with mankind when God created him, i.e. no manufacturer's defect – God wasn't to blame for Adam's fall. If Christ could choose perfectly in a humanity defective by sin, Adam could have done so in Eden in a perfect humanity.
- Therefore:
 - Satan's weapons of deceit were destroyed by the revelation of truth at the cross,
 - his weapon of selfishness within mankind was destroyed by perfect love chosen and exercised by Christ's human brain at the cross.
 - Thus Satan's methods were exposed as the source of suffering, pain and death, while God's methods were revealed as the basis for life, health and happiness.
- Satan's power has been broken

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Christianity is...”

Thoughts?

I found the language interesting as it appears to be a mixture of legal and healing language, which to me wasn't as clear as it could have been.

What does it mean that the people without Christ are enslaved to sin and “under a death sentence”? Does it mean that death sentence is a legal imposed punishment, or that is the death sentence of a terminal condition? Does it make a difference which way we understand it? Why?

I like very much how the lesson states “The sinner’s plight required outside intervention, and this intervention comes at a price.” When you hear this what comes to mind?

A person in renal failure requires outside intervention, and that intervention comes at a price – means what? Is that what is happening with sinful mankind?

The lesson rightly points out that the price of our salvation was “the death of Jesus on the cross.” But it doesn't explain why. Why is that the price?

The paragraph rightly points out we are enslaved to sin, so if our salvation requires freedom from such enslavement what would Christ's death need to accomplish?

We are talking about the “price” for our salvation. To whom is the price paid?

What is the price to save someone in renal failure? Is it simply the medical bills? What about in a society where all medical care was provided freely, is there still a price to pay to save

someone in renal failure? What is that price? Isn't it a new kidney – and to whom is that price paid?

What is the price of our freedom from sinfulness? Is it not a new heart and right spirit, and new nature, having the law written on the heart, having the mind of Christ, being circumcised in the inner man? Who achieved this perfect human condition? Christ! And to whom is this condition given or paid?

Is it given to God? Did God need a new humanity, a new nature, to have the law written on his heart? Or is it given FREELY to human beings!

And besides our own sinful/selfish natures that enslave us, what else entraps us? Lies about God! And Christ is the truth, and brought us the truth, and exposed the truth at the Cross at great expense to himself. To whom was this truth “paid”?

Who is the only being in the universe who did not need this truth? God! The only being in the universe who DID NOT NEED the death of Christ is God! All the other intelligences did, yet Christianity teaches Christ's death was for God, how twisted.

What are Bible metaphors for truth?

- Light
- Sword
- Salt
- Blood

Here is what one Christian author wrote:

- In the *study of the Bible* the converted soul eats the *flesh* and drinks the *blood* of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life. (Fundamentals of Christian Education 378).

- The leaven of *truth* works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it [*the truth*] the impure are cleansed, washed in the *blood of the Lamb*. (Christ's Object Lessons 102).

Who is the only being who did not need truth presented to him? God – then if we understand the truth is symbolized by blood, we realize God is the ONLY being in the universe who didn't need the blood of his Son.

We need to “eat the flesh and drink the blood” but the Father didn't need it.

Col 1:19,20 states: “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

Notice heavenly things were reconciled to God at the cross, through the shed blood. Heavenly beings needed to see the truth about God as revealed in Christ, to see Satan exposed, to see what humanity can be when in perfection as God designed. Thus, the only being in the universe who didn't need the Cross is the one we have the “blood” of the Cross being directed toward.

Do you see how backward it is to suggest Jesus is in heaven ministering his blood to the Father?

Do you see a problem with this? Why do we do it? Because we have accepted exactly what the Paul is warning us against, we have accepted human tradition and the principles of the world as models for God's character and government.

Read the second paragraph, “From the New Testament...” thoughts?

This is right- Christ did take our place, our condition and suffered in our place for the purpose of exposing Satan, destroying Satan's lies about the Father, revealing the truth about God's character and government AND curing and healing our condition!

In his book Derek Flood writes of the early church fathers in the first few centuries after Christ:

For example, Athanasius writes, "The death of all was consummated in the Lord's body; yet, because the Word was in it, *death and corruption were in the same act utterly abolished.*" Here we have substitutionary language, "the death of all was consummated in the Lord's body," understood in the context of Christus Victor, resulting in "death and corruption" being "utterly abolished." The death sentence is not fulfilled, it is erased. Athanasius writes that Christ "assumed a human body, in order that in it death might once for all be destroyed, and that men might be renewed according to the Image." Similarly, Gregory of Nazianzus writes, "For my sake he was called a curse, who destroyed my curse." Again vicarious language (Christ cursed "for my sake") is coupled with a Christus Victor theme (the curse – that is, the sentence of the law—is "destroyed" not satisfied)....

Here the medical paradigm, prevalent among the church fathers, is helpful: Seen through the lens of the patristics' image of salvation as *healing*, we can think here of a doctor who, while recognizing that certain behaviors can lead to injury and sickness, nonetheless seeks to heal the patient. We have a grave wound, but Christ is a greater physician. As Augustine puts it, "Of my own so deadly wound I should despair, unless I could find so great a Physician." Punitive justice wounds, but restorative justice heals. The purpose of Christ's taking on human wretchedness, suffering, and sin, was for the sake of our healing and renewal.

This view of salvation as healing, sanctification, and re-creation is captured well by Gregory's well known formulation, "What is not assumed is not healed, but what is united to God is saved." ... It is succinctly stated in the classic formula of Irenaeus: *God became what we are, so we could become what he is* (i.e. Christlike).

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Read top paragraph, "When we understand..." thoughts?

How would you answer this question?

Does the answer to this question give insight as to Christ's purpose and what he accomplished for us?

Are we bound by God's anger and wrath at sin? Is God angry and wrathful at sin? Yes, why? Because sin binds and destroys his children! So where is God's anger and wrath focused as the sinner or the sin?

Does God need to have his anger at sin propitiated, assuaged, or in any way mollified? No! God's anger at sin will NEVER change. God's anger at sin is like a doctor's anger and wrath at cancer, or Ebola, or HIV – Doctors never lose their anger and wrath at disease, and will always want to destroy disease. But doctors NEVER want to destroy their patients.

So, if we are not bound by God's anger and wrath at sin, did Christ need to do anything to free us from God's anger and wrath? No! Christ's entire mission was the express will and acting out of the Father's purpose to destroy sin and restore humanity back to unity and at-one-ment with God!

Read fourth paragraph, "What makes it so bad..." thoughts?

How do we experience freedom from temptations that originate within us?

Let's discuss practical and real actions we can take to experience victory!

- Can we free ourselves? Do we need outside help? Then what is the first step to freedom? Admitting we have a terminal condition, that we didn't choose, that we cannot fix ourselves. Then, we must find the outside solution
- Where do we find the solution to our condition? In Christ. What does this require of us? We must trust God/Jesus, but what does trust require? That we must actually know him, not merely know about him. Then what is required to know Jesus? We must actually spend time with him. How do we do that?
 - Bible study, thoughtful exploration of the meaning
 - Examine nature and science studying God's character revealed there, harmonizing it with scripture
 - Experience – what impact does love, altruism, someone genuinely putting you first, loving you, forgiving and accepting you despite knowing your shortcomings have upon you? What impact does it have when you love others like this? What impact does it have to forgive? What impact does it have to act selfishly, to hold grudges, to seek revenge? What impact does it have to leave others free? What impact does it have to try and control others?
 - Which methods heal and restore, which methods damage and alienate?
- Pray, talk to God daily as with a friend
- Care for the spirit temple, with healthful living and regular sleep and rest for mind. Not because such actions merit or earn you salvation points, but because such actions keep your brain healthier and reduce the pressure of insecurity, fear, doubt, anxiety, and allow you to think more clearly and stay calmer. And the mind can

comprehend truth and a higher order of thinking when healthy, thus grow and expand.

- Exercise our choice to do what we know is healthy, right and reasonable because we know it to be so, regardless of how it feels or what others think
- Avoid filling our minds with material that is contrary to God's principles. By beholding we are changed, our neural networks rewire based on the materials we spend time thinking about and focusing upon.
- Guard our hearts, what we love and attach to, whether it be political parties, sports teams, property, money, stocks, movie stars, alma maters, family, friends, religious organizations, or missions.
- Build your belief systems upon evidence-based truths and don't believe non-sense.
- Think for yourselves and don't let others think for you, as Paul said, "every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind."
- After examining the evidence of God's trustworthiness as revealed by Christ. After examining the evidence of beneficence versus selfishness and the consequences to both. After examining your own experiences in light of Scripture, do you find God trustworthy, his methods perfect, supreme, and utterly desirable? Do you find yourself in need of a change? Then, humble yourself before God and invite him into your heart to enlighten, transform, renew, ennoble, guide, strengthen, direct.
- Then choose, to act upon the truth you understand and practice in your daily life the principles of God's government, ever expanding your thinking and understanding of God's character and government.
- This would include living to give, sharing what you know and have to bless and reach others to set their minds free.
- After choosing to do in governance of self that which you understand is right, is in harmony with God's design and purpose, then trust God with how things turn out.

- Finally, don't confuse feelings and temptations with being renewed. We will experience temptation until glorification, but temptation is not the same as love for sin and selfishness.

Thoughts?

WENDESDAY

Read third paragraph, "In Isa. 24:21..." thoughts?

How were they subjugated in Christ? What does that mean?

That their weapons were effectively neutralized with the truth Christ revealed and the perfection of character he achieved? In other words once vaccinated we don't fear a disease? The truth about God as revealed in Christ, once solidified in the character inoculates the mind from deception, our trust in God becomes grounded and we become so settled into the truth both intellectually and spiritually that we cannot be moved.

Our hearts become changed that we love God and others more than self, we stop acting on fear based self first mode and trust God with our lives, our families, our futures, our finances, our very being and instead focus, moment by moment of living in harmony with God's methods. Like Job, in the face of trial, understanding only partly, we still trust God!

What do you think it means that evil men and angels will suffer punishment? How do you understand such an idea?

Are there ways to teach this that actually serve Satan's agenda, that obstruct God's healing plan? How?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Christ came into the world..." thoughts?

What are the works of the devil?

- Lies, primarily about God
- Distrust in God
- Selfishness (lawlessness)
- Fear of God
- Death
- Others?

How does Christ destroy these works?

- Reveals truth, which destroys lies and restores trust
- Loves perfectly with his human brain thus destroying selfishness in the humanity he assumed, thereby perfecting humanity and destroying death, which results from being out of harmony with God's design for life (lawlessness).

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Many people..." thoughts?

What do you understand this to mean? What do you understand naturalistic or naturalism to mean?

It means there is no God, therefore all things happen naturally without any supernatural input.

I have had discussions recently with people who don't believe in God. Those who take the naturalistic approach claim they are being scientific. They claim they are going on the scientific evidence, which means evidence which can be reproduced and verified by experiment.

Can we currently, by scientific experiment show anyone God?

Can scientists show us the big bang?

Neither can show us evidence of the origination points for the universe in a scientific reproducible way.

But what about the premises upon which each theory is built, which is more “scientific” evolution or creation?

Evolution: Something comes from nothing – can we demonstrate this in any experiment? No, not scientifically valid premise.

Creation: Something comes from something else – can we demonstrate this in an experiment? Yes, scientifically valid premise.

Evolution: Life comes from non-living matter. Can we demonstrate this in an experiment? Not scientifically valid premise.

Creation: Life comes from living matter. We can demonstrate this over and over again. Scientifically valid premise.

Evolution: Complexity comes from chaos without any intelligent input whatsoever. Can we demonstrate this in an experiment? No, so not a scientifically valid premise.

Creation: Complexity comes from chaos with intelligent input. We can demonstrate this over and over again. So, this is a scientifically valid premise.

Evolution: Random mutation of the genetic code, which happens through unintelligent random forces, combined with natural selection, results in advancement of a species over time. Can we demonstrate this with experiments? No, thus scientifically invalid premise.

Creation: Random mutation of the genetic code, which happens through unintelligent random forces, results in slow

degradation of a species over time. Can we demonstrate this with experiments? Yes, thus a scientifically valid premise.

So, what we find is that the premises upon which evolutionary theory are based are not scientific, while the premises upon which creation is based are all testable, reproducible and thus scientific.

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Discuss questions 1, 3, 4

Growing in Christ Lesson 6 4Q 2012

Victory Over Evil Forces

Read Memory Verse

“Now, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” Romans 8:37

Thoughts?

What does this mean? What does it look like to be more than conquerors?

Does it mean that, if we eat right, rest on the right day, pray before our contest that we will win our Olympic event?

Does it mean that we will be voted into whatever office for which we run?

Does it mean we will get the job for which we apply?

Does it mean we will avoid bankruptcy, imprisonment, perhaps even torture or death?

Do people ever get discouraged because they read this text, claim this promise for such matters, but don't get the outcome they expect? Is this promise to guarantee us earthly victories – or conquering of self, fear, selfishness despite the difficulties we experience?

Were the following conquerors?

- Job
- Joseph
- Daniel and the 3 worthies
- Jesus
- The Apostles
- Stephen

What about these?

- Pilate
- The Caesars
- Caiaphas
- Annas

What determines whether one was a conqueror or not? Is it earthly success? What was it?

What about today – what does this text mean to us today? Do we sometimes, in the middle of health problems, financial problems, family problems, legal problems feel that we are failing?

Is success determined by the problems we face or how we face the problems?

Is success determined by the obstacles in life or by how we live while going through those obstacles?

Do we look beyond the immediate to the eternal?

Do we see obstacles as opportunity to reveal God's power in our lives? And what is that power? The power to love, the power to serve, the power to forgive, the power to lay down our lives for our enemies?

How do we obtain victory over evil forces? What methods do we use? Can we obtain victory over evil forces by the exercise of might and power?

What type of victory is genuine victory?

- Is it domination of our enemies?
- Is it occupation of our enemy's lands?
- Is it extermination of our enemies?

Or, is it winning our enemies to become our genuine friends?

I want to read you a passage from Scripture – it is powerful, it illuminates how we are to view and understand reality, it discloses God’s methods for victory, why Christ came to earth and how we can participate in that victory – listen carefully (2Cor 5:16-21)

No longer, then, do we judge anyone by human standards. Even if at one time we judged Christ according to human standards, we no longer do so. ¹⁷Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. ¹⁹Our message is that God was making the whole human race his friends through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends.

²⁰ Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends! ²¹Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made him share our sin in order that in union with him we might share the righteousness of God.

Notice we don’t use human standards of determination – because man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

God does not want to simply change behavior, to have a group of conquered people, submissive beings, passive beings, mindless servants or slaves who cower in the corner of his almighty presence waiting for him to command them to action – NO! God wants to change the hearts of people so that we are actually his friends!

And notice Christ came to share in our terminal condition in order that we might partake of his perfection, in order that we might be healed!

How do we gain the victory? By force, might, political intrigue? Or by truth, love and freedom – listen to these two quotes:

I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. That is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.
Martin Luther King Jr.

Do to us what you will and we will still love you...But be assured that we will wear you down by our capacity to suffer, and one day we will win our freedom. We will not only win freedom for ourselves; we will appeal to your heart and conscience that we will win you in the process; and our victory will be a double victory. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Read first paragraph, “In some parts of the world...” thoughts?

What is the Christian notion of salvation from sin taken to the world? Is it one that represents the truth about God, or do we make it harder for people to find healing of heart and peace of mind?

When Christ was on earth he counseled the religious leaders of his day that when they found a convert they made him twice the son of hell than they were. Are we in danger of doing the same? How?

I received the following on our ministry facebook page yesterday:

Tim I posted this: Whenever God has disciplined us, it has never been for punishment, but always for redemption. He does not seek to destroy, but to heal and save. Got a good deal of positive responses, but my pastor responded with: "This implies punishment and redemption are mutually exclusive concepts." I have been praying for a clear response. Don't want to mess up an

opportunity. ONLY if it is easy for you, do you have a brief response you could suggest.

How would you respond?

My response:

You could respond by saying, "it depends on what one means by punishment" if one means "discipline" action taken to heal, restore, correct, teach, redirect then they are not mutually exclusive, but if you mean actions designed to exact vengeance, inflict pain and suffering then yes, they are mutually exclusive because such punitive action actual obstructs the avenues through which God heals and saves.

The teaching of a scrutinizing, punishing God is one of the greatest obstacles to salvation - here's why. Consider the example of someone struggling with paraphelia (sexual perversion) when under scrutiny they rarely if ever act out. Why? For the same reason people don't speed when a police officer is following - fear! But, when parapheliacs have scrutiny removed they almost all relapse into their destructive behavior - why? no heart change. Just like what happens when the police officer turns off and leaves one alone.

When people worship a God who incites a sense of "scrutiny" with fear of punishment, (angels recording misdeeds which will be dealt with in the judgment) it can result in behavioral modification - classic religious person. But no actual heart change, thus no conversion - i.e. no salvation despite the many rituals and religious meetings and sermons preached.

It is only when God is presented as a God of love that a person willingly opens their heart to him to come in and cleanse, restore, and recreate in righteousness, true conversion and salvation.

So, yes, a punishing God construct incites fear, shuts down trust, and closes the avenues for salvation. Whereas, a God of love, as Jesus revealed instills trust, opens hearts and results in genuine transformation and healing.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The Christian would...” thoughts?

What are the ungodly “powers”? How did Christ’s death expose them? How do we experience the victory over those powers?

Some theorize that the battle between Christ and Satan had legal ramifications of who had the right to rule on earth, and Christ gained a legal victory over Satan and thus took away Satan’s legal claim to be ruler of earth Thoughts?

Some permutations of the Christus Victor theology has ideas that suggest Satan has some real power, either legal or physical, which required Christ to actually defeat Satan either legally, physically, or both, in order to reclaim earth, thoughts?

Where is the battle fought? In the hearts, minds and characters of intelligent beings. Then, what is Satan’s power that holds us? Is it a legal power? Do we need a legal victory in some cosmic court? Is it physical power that holds us; do we need someone to physically fight Satan and take the strong man captive and let us go?

Or, is it a battle waged inside of us, and we need delivery from lies and delivery from our own fear and selfishness, which finds Satan and his methods desirable and resists God and his methods?

- How difficult would it be for God to physically defeat one of his created beings in a combat of physical might and power?
- Is there any evidence that Satan could ever compete with God on the level of physical might and power?
- Is there any evidence Satan could compete with God in creative power?

So, God could defeat Satan physically as easily as a child throws a penny to the ground – but that is not the problem, thus models that suggest a physical conflict distract us from the real issue.

What about legal battles – did Satan make legal claims to planet earth and the souls of human beings? Yes –

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, **for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.** ⁷ So if you worship me, it will all be yours.” LK 4:5-7

But does he have legal claims?

Is there a difference between making a claim and actually having a claim? Was Satan telling the truth? Or, was he lying when he said the earth was his?

Here is one Christian commentators view, which I agree with:

When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his **own purpose of deception.** Satan's dominion was **that wrested from Adam,** but Adam was the **vicegerent of the Creator.** His was not an independent rule. **The earth is God's, and He has committed all things to His Son. Adam was to reign**

subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King. Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "**The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men,** and giveth it to whomsoever He will." Daniel 4:17. Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits. {DA 129.4}

When the tempter offered to Christ the kingdom and glory of the world, **he was proposing that Christ should yield up the real kingship of the world,** and hold dominion subject to Satan. This was the same dominion upon which the hopes of the Jews were set. They desired the kingdom of this world. If Christ had consented to offer them such a kingdom, they would gladly have received Him. But the curse of sin, with all its woe, rested upon it. Christ declared to the tempter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." {DA 130.1}

If someone came into your house and stole your child, and then later made a legal claim that the child is theirs? Would that claim actually be true and make the child theirs?

Does Satan have a legal claim? No! It is a lie and a fraud and thus Christ did not have to defeat Satan legally.

So Christus Victor is not a legal victory it is not a victory over Satanic physical might and power – then what is it?

If someone stole your child and made a claim it was theirs, and raised the child to believe it, while the claim would be false, what would need to happen for the child to return to you? The truth would need to penetrate the lies and set them free. They would need to get to know you and bond with you.

Where does Satan actually have power, at least three places?

- power of lies, that we believe that hold us in bondage and

- the power of our carnal nature – we have bonded to sin or sinful things and like sin and don't want to let it go
- the power of the law of sin and death, which is the law of being outside of God's design for life.

What happens if someone holds your head under water? The law of respiration is being broken and that broken law holds a power over you which is non-compromising and will destroy you unless you are put back in harmony with the law.

Satan's power is the power to get us to deviate from God's law, by deception and temptation.

We have no enemy without that we need to fear. Our great conflict is with unconsecrated self. **When we conquer self, we are more than conquerors through Him who has loved us.** (Counsels on Stewardship 21)

What do you think of this statement? Where is the battle fought? Where does Christ work to achieve victory today?

In the hearts and minds of men!

The second paragraph states that those who accept Jesus will "know by experience the power of God in their lives."

What do you think this means? What is the power of God? What does it look like in the life? How will it impact those who experience it?

- Will it result in greater ability to discern truth from error?
- Will people become more thoughtful and intelligent or more mindless and robotic?
- Will it result in greater love for others and less selfishness?
- Will it result in willingness to help, give, put self in harms way for another?
- Will it result in greater peace in the face of adversity?

- Will it result in a larger perspective of reality?
- Will it result in a loving concept of God?

Read last paragraph, “As a consequence....” Thoughts?

Subjection means to be placed under the authority and control of another – was the universe not under the authority of Christ before the Cross? Is it under greater authority now than before?

At the Cross did Christ add to his inherent abilities? Or was his divine self already infinite in all abilities?

Then what happened at the Cross? Christ perfected humanity, he merged his divine nature permanently to human nature, and revealed the truth which exposes Satan and his methods in the minds of all who love truth, thus casting Satan out of the sympathy of all heavenly beings.

Truth and love defeated lies and selfishness at the Cross, where? In the hearts and minds of intelligent beings!

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on Romans 8, lets read verses 26,27:

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.

What does this mean? How do you understand it?

Would it be like a person in the hospital, sick, writhing in pain, knowing something is wrong but not knowing what, and a doctor intercedes for him because the doctor knows exactly

what to do and makes the interventions necessary to bring healing?

What is the message of Romans 8? Is it that we have one member of the Godhead working to intercede with another member of the Godhead, or instead, the entire Godhead working together to intercede with the destructiveness of sin in order to heal and restore us?

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1-2

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Romans 8:31-34

Notice we have Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Father all interceding in our behalf – interceding with what or whom, and to what purpose? How do you understand the meaning?

God intercedes with us, in our hearts and minds, with Satanic powers to protect, and with the course of sin by becoming sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God!

The lesson states the Spirit helps us in our trials – are trials different that abuse?

Jesus warned “And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck.” Mk 9:42

Abuse is not a trial from God to develop character- abuse is an attack from Satan to destroy people! But, despite abuse God's grace can still heal.

TUESDAY

Read James 4:7: "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

What does this mean?

How does Satan wield power?

- Christ on the Temple tower, display of wealth – to achieve what?
- Job – Natural disasters – to achieve what?
- Job – loss of health – to achieve what?
- Jesus – attacked by the mob, mocked, beaten, crucified, to achieve what?

In all of Satan's attacks, what his goal? What is he trying to achieve? What is his target? Your power of choice! To get people to choose selfishness, to get people to distrust God! He works to confuse minds, discourage, dishearten, darken, and incite selfishness, hatred and vengeance.

What causes the devil to flee?

Surrendering to God, Jesus, does something that causes the devil to flee – what?

When we surrender to Jesus what happens in us? We are changed to be more like Christ – How? truth replaces lies in our minds and love destroys selfishness, thus we are fortified against his weapons.

But, what does it mean the devil will flee? Does it mean that if you are tight with the Lord you won't be bothered with

troubles? That the devil will leave you, your family, your health, your finances, your house, your car, your friends alone?

What does it mean he will flee? Does it mean that a particular temptation, if not given in to will lose attraction, appeal, power in your heart and mind and thus the devil leaves that approach, looking for another? Or something else?

WEDNESDAY

Examples of Victory – when we think about Christian victory, what comes to mind? What do Christian victories look like?

- Victory over fear
- Victory of bigotry, bias, prejudice
- Victory over selfishness
- Victory over addiction
- Victory over destructive habits
- Victory over self
- Victory over lies
- Victory over resentment, bitterness and hurt
- One day victory over disease and ultimately death
- What about victory over enemies – how? By love, by turning them into friends.

Read second paragraph, “It is quite interesting...” thoughts?

What do you think it means power over demons and unclean spirits?

Are demons and unclean spirits different? Why use two words?

The Greek for demons is a word which refers to demons, devils, the Greek for spirits is “pneuma” from which we get pneumonia, and in Scripture is the same word used for Holy Spirit, Christ’s Spirit, spirit of men, wind, breath, and Christ’s

last breath, giving up the ghost and ghost as an apparition on the lake.

Is it possible that the word demon refers to evil fallen angels, the sentient beings of angelic nature who operates in league with Satan and opposed to God, whereas evil spirit refers to the evil motive, attitude, longing, desire in the heart of the person?

Have you ever heard of someone delivered from an addiction that actually had the desire taken away miraculously? Could that have been removing the “evil spirit” which had been developed within the person?

How does Satan gain “possession” of a human being?

What is the actual avenue, gateway, access point to the human being? The human nervous system, ultimately the brain.

If that is so – then what methods might be necessary to get possession of the human being? Would it require affecting the human brain?

And can we describe what a human being looks like who is under demonic influence or control and contrast it with what a human being looks like under Holy Spirit control?

Holy Spirit Control: Fruits of the spirit, kind, patient, honest, loyal, loving, self-controlled, forgiving, gracious, merciful, understanding, seeking to uplift and heal others, lover of truth, respectful, loves enemies and seeks peace, humble, protects the reputation of others...

Demonic influence or control: Angry, resentful, bitter, hostile, selfish, addicted, loss of self-control, agitated, impulsive, impatient, given to fits of rage, cruel, unkind, unforgiving, exploits and injures others, bigoted, sexist, arrogant, prejudice, manipulative, deceitful, malicious, gossip...

And in general, could we categorize the types of influences upon the human brain as healthy, neutral or harmful?

And which type of influence would you surmise would move a human brain toward demonic control and thus for the person to look like the description above?

- Alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco – why?
- Believing lies – why?
- Holding resentment – why?
- Acting selfishly – why?
- Exploiting others –why?
- Rock, rap, country music? why?
- Television and movies – why?
- Sexual promiscuity – why?
- Gossip – why?
- Lying – why?
- Cheating – why?
- Sleep deprivation – why?
- Failing to rest – why?
- Junk food diet – why?
- Sedentary lifestyle – why?
- Overwork – why?
- No Bible study, prayer, meditation – why?
- Social isolation –why?

What kinds of choices, actions fortify the brain against demonic influences?

- Surrender mind to the Holy Spirit, which requires what?
- We come to a knowledge of God such that we trust him, which requires what?
- We love the truth and develop minds that are willing to pursue the truth
- Avoiding toxins (alcohol, tobacco, drugs)
- Avoiding unhealthy food choices
- Get rest

- Learn to solve problems
- Forgive others
- Set healthy boundaries
- Don't lie, cheat, steal, gossip
- Be judicious with your entertainment
- Exercise
- Bible study, prayer, meditation, fellowship

Do we see there are sound reasons to following the principles God has given us – reasons that protect the brain, the access point to demonic influences. We can open avenues or close avenues based on the choices we make, thus we gain self-mastery as we come under the influence of the Holy Spirit, or we lost self-control as we come under the influences of demonic forces.

Are there some symptoms which can present in both groups, those influenced by demons and those filled with the Holy Spirit?

- Schizophrenia
- Epilepsy
- Blindness
- Deafness
- Anxiety/depression/bipolar etc.

Can unhealthy spirituality and demonic influences be a causative factor to these problems?

Can someone who is Spirit filled have these problems?

What does this mean? Don't use these as evidences of demonic influence.

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, "Acts 16:16-18 presents an..." thoughts?

Could this same thing happen today when various people perform miraculous healing in the name of Jesus but the Jesus they are pointing people to is not the Jesus of the Bible?

How can we tell?

How can one tell the work of the true Spirit from false spirits?

FRIDAY

Read Friday's lesson and discuss the paragraphs and questions.

What is the tempter's power? Lies, fear, selfishness?

What does it mean find refuge in the name of Jesus? Name refers to character, so we find refuge in the character of Jesus. When we surrender the heart to Jesus the Holy Spirit comes in and reproduces in us the character of Christ and the principles of Satan lose their appeal and thus the avenues of the heart become closed to Satanic attack.

SS Lesson 7 Arming for Victory

Sabbath's / Sunday's Lessons

“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Eph 6:13.

What is the purpose of “armor”?

1. Protection.
2. Recognition of a soldier.
3. To instill fear in the opposition [armored vehicles / tanks / etc.]. See James 2:19.

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.** ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

³ **For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.** 2 Cor. 10:3-5 ESV.

- Belt [Girdle] of Truth. Belt serves as an anchor for other parts of the armor. Girdle ?? covering our nakedness.
- Breastplate of Righteousness – guarding our hearts. Changing our hearts from the inside out.
- Shoes for the Gospel of Peace [NOT the gospel of anger and punishment].
- Shield of Faith [to extinguish flaming darts]
- Helmet of Salvation [note Salvation is occurring in our minds [hearts]]
- Sword of the Spirit [Word of God] Note Heb. 2:12 and Rev. 19:15.

Does this struggle involve Christians only or is every human part of this warfare??

Jer. 31:33 ESV For this is the covenant that I will make with the **house of Israel** after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Rom. 2:13-16. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. ¹⁴ For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires,

they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵ They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them ¹⁶ on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

Monday's lesson

The 4th paragraph states: "At the same time, though this righteousness includes living a righteous life, we must always remember the other aspect of righteousness, and that is the righteousness of Christ, **which covers the believer** and remains the believers only hope of salvation.

What would be better on the battlefield, a vest made of Kevlar, or to be made completely bullet-proof yourself?? What would be better to the HIV patient, to live life in quarantined in a plastic tent, or to be disease free??

Tuesday's Lesson

"[Ephesians 6:15](#) may be translated in different ways: feet shod with the *preparation* of the gospel of peace, having feet fitted with the *readiness* of the gospel of peace, or having shod your feet with the *equipment* of the gospel of peace. The key is a Greek word that can mean preparedness, as in a prepared foundation or base. Hence, the gospel of peace as a prepared foundation is the peace a Christian experiences as a result of having been reconciled with God through the blood of Christ. This reconciliation gives the Christian a firm foothold from which to engage in the spiritual battle that we all face."

I think this is well said if understood correctly. We have been reconciled with God through the blood [life, death, resurrection] of Christ. The really good news is God is exactly as Jesus revealed him to be. How many people did Jesus condemn to hellfire when He was here on earth?? How much "wrath" was displayed during his ministry??

The lesson next mentions the "shield" which was typically made of wood, covered in leather, which would extinguish the fiery arrows that hit it. [Last paragraph / pink section] – "This kind of faith is primarily faith in action, a faith that, while including doctrinal truth, goes beyond mere belief. It is a faith that manifests itself in an active defense against the assaults of the enemy. Of course, we can't save ourselves, and we can't fight the devil ourselves; our battle is to daily choose the Lord and His ways over anything the devil will throw before us." See James 2:17.

Wednesday's Lesson

Isa. 59:14-17. **"Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. ¹⁵ Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. ¹⁶ He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. ¹⁷ He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak."**

The lesson suggests that God is wearing the helmet of salvation. I see this more of a messianic prophecy where God provided a Man to bring salvation, and righteousness to the rest of humanity. Note the garments of "vengeance", and remember all of the references to removing our "dirty rags" and covering us with a robe of pure white.

As mentioned above, the helmet of salvation is covering the head. Isn't this where our healing [salvation] occurs??

It's very compelling that these metaphors were written, by inspired men, some 2000 years ago, long before "science" knew about the location and purpose of the pre-frontal cortex in the brain. Of course, our Creator knew this, and inspired these specific ideas. This is one of many reasons I believe that Scripture is the Word of God, and not some nice history book or fanciful literature.

Sword of the Spirit.

Heb. 4:12. ***¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.***

Rev. 19:11-16. ***¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.***

John 1:1-5. ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.***

Thursday's Lesson

What does it mean to be "praying always"?? Are we to get on our knees, and turn toward Jerusalem 3X/day, like Daniel?? Are we to always close our eyes?? [I think some people actually drive like this –I see them every day]. Does a soldier, caught behind enemy lines, risk capture if he lets his guard down, even for a moment?? Are we not in enemy territory?? Are we not at war [see Friday's lesson]??

The lesson asks a great question: "Why is praying for ourselves more important for us spiritually than having others pray for us (however important that is)? What does personal prayer do for you that the prayers of others just can't?"

Growing in Christ Lesson 8 4Q 2012

The Church: In Service to Humanity

What do you think about the title?

What does church service to humanity look like?

- Preaching the gospel
- Health care
- Child care – adoption, orphanages, etc.
- Help to the homeless and poor
- Agricultural education and development
- Social development
- Education
- Prison ministry
- Food banks
- Toys for tots
- Addiction programs
- Others?

What do all of these specific interventions have in common? What methods do they practice? What motive? Is the church to reveal God? And what do such service reveal about God's methods?

If the church is to reveal God in our service:

- Should the church require the people in need to get an intercessor to plead with the church before we minister to them?
- Should the church require some payment before we minister?
- Should the church seek to punish those who refuse our ministry?
- Why would such actions be inappropriate?
- But, what if a church teaches God does such things?
 - Crusades

- Inquisition
- Witch trials
- Sunday laws
- Saturday laws
- Political activism – AKA modern day crusades

Can every one of the diversions be presented as a service to humanity? What makes the difference?

Method – I heard a Methodist educator give a sermon once, and he described how he and a group of students were going into the Soviet Union during the height of the Cold War. He reported how they had packed Bibles into their suitcases to distribute once in country. When they came to the boarder crossing they were to be inspected and a discussion arose – should they lie – should they tell the truth? What should they do?

He said, “We cannot win battles for God by using Satan’s methods.” This is brilliant!

So when they got to the boarder, no one lied, but what happened when they were inspecting the passports many of the men had grown beards during the travels and the guards required them to shave in order to match their pictures. The guards were so caught up in laughing at the men shaving they never asked nor inspected the luggage.

“We cannot win battles for God by using Satan’s methods.”

This is brilliant – but sadly too often forgotten, Satan is much more concerned about method that specific conduct. He doesn’t care upon which day you worship, as long as the method and mode of worship is forced, coerced, obligatory, like those who put Christ on the Cross. Once freedom is violated, either by an external human governmental force, or by ones belief in a punitive God, “obey or I will kill you” then right behavior results in destruction of character and Satan wins.

This is why many young people rebel and leave the church, they cannot separate the method from the specific action. Their God given judgment rebels against ungodly methods, and distortions of God's motive, but when such satanic methods are applied to one of God's truths, both often get tossed.

We must present the truth in harmony with God's character and methods.

Thus, as Christians when we consider service to humanity, we must think beyond mere specifics, but to methods and principles we utilized to implement our plans.

When we think about Godly service, using Godly methods, what is the greatest service we can provide to humanity, that stands above all others? Revealing the truth about God – why?

- Because the goal is eternal healing, not mere temporal healing. Temporal deliverance is to open the mind to an eternal deliverance. And only the truth about God can set the mind free, restore to trust and result in eternal life.

And what are ways to reveal this truth?

- Preaching and teaching
- Healing ministry – the right arm of the gospel
- Helping people in need
- Giving of self for the benefit of others
- And perhaps the most difficult - How we conduct ourselves when attacked and mistreated

In other words, acting out, living out, God's methods of love in our lives – this reveals God to people.

What are ways we are serving humanity in our class?
 What more can we do? Is there something **you** would like to do to add to our ministry to humanity?

Read first paragraph, “For many...” thoughts?

Satan works hard against organized religion? Really?

- Who led the people into apostasy in OT times? Was it the soldiers? The tax collectors? The doctors? The artisans? Or was it the priests?
- Who led the people to reject and crucify Christ? Was it the Romans? The prostitutes? The tax collectors? Or was it the leaders of the organized religion?
- Who led the nations to military conflict in the Dark Ages?
- Who led out in persecuting the Reformers?
- Who do we believe the Bible prophecies will organize the world to oppose the remnant? Organized religion.

So is Satan against organized religion? Not at all, he loves organized religion – what is he against? He is against the truth about God’s character of love, God’s methods of love.

So, when people rail against organized religion, could it be they are railing against how organized religion gets misdirected into misrepresenting God and abusing power?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “When we speak...” thoughts?

From what was the church called out of?

- Paganism?
- Agnosticism?
- Hinduism?
- Judaism?

Called into what?

Called out for what purpose?

The lesson states in the third paragraph that the Jews were called out to be God's special people – for what purpose were the Jews called out?

Were the Jews called out for exclusive salvation? In other words did one have to be a Jew in order to find salvation?

Then why were the Jews called out? Were they called for a specific mission? What was that mission? Were they given any blessings, tools, equipment to accomplish that mission? Such as what?

And what did Jesus say 2000 years ago to those who were seeking to convert people to this “God called out” people?

What would cause someone who was called out of paganism, into “God's chosen” to become twice the son of hell? Can we articulate and specify what would happen in the mind to cause that? Are there specific ideas or beliefs that if brought into the mind, darken the mind and make it harder to find God? What might some of those be, specifically as taught in Judaism?

- God is arbitrary – the Sabbath an arbitrary test of obedience
- God is a respecter of people, meaning he is a racist and prefers descendants of Abraham to others
- God is punitive, don't do what God wants and he punishes
- God requires appeasement – blood must be brought in order to get forgiveness
- God is unfair, he cheats at the temple by exchanging an unfair rates.
- God is a manipulator, there are loopholes to get what one wants, corban to avoid responsibility
- God is selfish, wants to get praise and attention for himself, priests make a show in order to be seen,

- God is sexist and demeans and abuses women requiring them to be subordinate and under the rulership of men

Do we struggle with any of these problems today? Could we convert an atheist to Christianity and actually make them more entrapped into Satan's lies about God?

Read last paragraph, "*Ecclasia* is the..." thoughts? Are they saying that the church is not a particular denomination but each denomination is part of the church?

Then what does it mean to be called out of Babylon because Babylon is fallen? From what are people being called out of? Is it not religious systems, including Christianity, that has lost the truth about God's character of love and his methods of love and replaced the truth with Satan's view that God imposes law and must punish the lawbreaker?

And what are they being called into? A movement that promotes the everlasting Good News that God is love and his methods are the methods of love, exactly as Jesus revealed them to be.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "The church as..." thoughts?

What was Christ's mission?

John 17:4-6:

"I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word."

I found this article while trolling through old documents

written in the 19th century. I found it profound, lets go through it and see what was being published and put forth in 1897 regarding Christ's mission to earth, and think if the church continues to present this message, or has something changed:

January 21, 1897 Christ's Mission to Earth.

It is important that we each study to know the reason of the life of Christ in humanity, and what it means to us,--why the Son of God left the courts of heaven,--why he stepped down from his position as Commander of the heavenly angels, who came and went at his bidding,--why he clothed his divinity with humanity, and in lowliness and humility came to the world as our Redeemer. {YI, January 21, 1897 par. 1} [Do we know why? Does the reason make a difference? What reasons have you heard?]

It was the marvel of the heavenly hosts that Christ should come to earth and do as he did,--that his life here should be one of poverty, in such incomparable contrast with his glory in the heavenly courts. He might have come attended by the angelic throng; for the heavenly angels would have regarded themselves as honored in being his body-guard, in serving and worshiping him. But we read that "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Christ's entire life was one of self-denial. He received of his Father that he might impart to others. {YI, January 21, 1897 par. 2} [what is being described? Is a certain "law" being described? And what did Christ reveal about his character? And who did he reveal? Why was it necessary to reveal this? Was this part of the reason he came?]

Before the universe of heaven, Christ condescended to take upon him the form of humanity, and stand among the lowly ones of earth, that he might reach them where they were, and by precept and example teach them, that though among the poor and oppressed, they might be pure, and true, and noble. [why did he come as a

human? To reach us because we couldn't comprehend him and to teach us what?] He came to reveal to the world that the life and character need not become contaminated amid poverty and lowliness. The lily that rests upon the bosom of the lake may be surrounded with weeds and unsightly debris, yet, unsullied, it opens its fragrant white blossom to the sunlight. It strikes its channeled stem down through the mass of rubbish to the pure sands beneath. Refusing everything that would defile, it gathers to itself only those properties that will develop into the spotless, fragrant flower... {YI, January 21, 1897 par. 3} [Do we believe this is true for us? Can we choose to act as Christ acted? Can we choose to fill the mind with truth, wholesome things and refuse the defiling stuff?]

We would ask you, dear young men and women, Will you accept this Jesus as your personal Saviour? Will you consider the life of Christ? His was a life of perfect obedience. He came to live the holy law of God in human nature. {YI, January 21, 1897 par. 5} [what did Christ reveal in his life about God's holy law? Is the obedience of Christ different than that of the Pharisees who prided themselves on obedience to the law? Were they proclaiming obedience to two different laws? What then was the difference?]

The subject of obedience involves eternal interests. **Through his misrepresentation of God, Satan had made the law appear as an arbitrary exaction, enforced by God to keep his creatures from a higher education in the knowledge of good and evil.** [what did Satan do? He misrepresented God and did what to the law? Made it appear imposed, arbitrary, which means what? It was no longer understood as the law upon which life was built. And God is presented as an enforcer of law. Do we find this depiction of God going on in Christianity today?] It was this knowledge of evil that the Lord did not wish our first parents to obtain. He wanted them to be wise through understanding only that which it was for their happiness to know. But by the

disobedience of Adam, the flood-gates of woe were opened upon our world. It was then that Christ offered himself as man's substitute and surety, and consented to come to earth, and meet the tempter, **who, through falsifying the character and purposes of God, had caused the ruin of our first parents.** {YI, January 21, 1897 par. 6} [How did Satan ruin our first parents? Then would Christ's mission need to deal with those falsifications? And who did Christ come to meet on the field of battle? He came to defeat Satan, Christ did not come to confront his Father and pay his Father with a sacrifice.]

Adam received the commandments of God, and disobeyed them. In this he became disloyal to God; he dishonored him, and was classed as one with the first apostate. In yielding to temptation, he forfeited the light and favor of God. [what does forfeited mean? In tying weights on his legs and jumping in the ocean he forfeited the light of the sun and the favor of oxygen] But though Adam broke away from its claim, **the law of God did not lose one jot or tittle of its force. The Lord did not change one precept of his law, in order to meet man in his fallen condition. [Why?] ... But in order to meet its claims, the Lord made an offering for sin, in the person of Jesus Christ, thus demonstrating to the world the immutability of his law.** While he expressed his love for men, in giving his Son to die for them, he declared that its divine statutes cannot be changed or abolished. {YI, January 21, 1897 par. 7}

What does this mean? Meet the claims of the law? What did Christ need to do to meet the claims of the law and why was it necessary?

From the same author:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and

developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, **through the forbearance of God.** More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Thoughts? What is being described? Christ's mission is just as Scripture teaches to:

- Reveal the truth about the Father John 17:4-6
- Destroy him who holds the power of death that is the devil Heb 2:14
- Destroy death and bring life and immortality to light. 2Tim 1:9,10
- Destroy the devil's work 1Jn 3:8, and the devil's work is to destroy the image of God in man and replace it with the image of Satan (set himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God)

Christ came to reveal the truth to win us to trust, reveal Satan as liar and fraud, and to fix mankind, to restore the human species back into what God created mankind in Adam to be.

Why is the truth of God's character and the work of Christ so poorly understood? I found this in my trolling through old material, and it humbled me. And I pray not to allow myself to become like this, but realize I am tempted to be just like this:

Christ had many truths to give to His disciples, of which He could not speak, **because they did not advance with the light** that was flashed upon the Levitical laws and the sacrificial offerings. **They did not embrace the light, advance with the light,** and follow on to still greater

brightness as Providence should lead the way. {16MR 123.1}

And for the same reason Christ's disciples of 1897 do not comprehend important matters of truth. So dull has been the comprehension of even those who teach the truth to others that many things cannot be opened to them until they reach heaven. It ought not to be so. But as men's minds become narrow, they think they know it all, and set one stake after another in points of truths of which they have only a glimpse. **They close their minds as though there were no more for them to learn, and should the Lord attempt to lead them on, they would not take up with the increased light.** They cling to the spot where they think they see a glimmer of light, when it is only a link in the living chain of truths and promises to be studied. They know very little of what it means to follow in the footsteps of Christ. {16MR 123.2}

The harmonious relation of truth, like links in a chain, will, just as fast as the mind is quickened by the Spirit of God to comprehend light and in humbleness of mind appropriate it, **be dispensed to others**, and give the glory back to God. The development of truth will be the reward to the humble-hearted seeker, who will fear God and walk with Him. **The truth which the mind grasps as truth is capable of constant expansion and new developments. While beholding it, the truth is seen in all its bearings in the life and character, and becomes more clear and certain and beautiful. As the mind grasps it in its preciousness, it becomes elevated, ennobled, sanctified.** -124- {16MR 123.3}

Thoughts?

Last paragraph in Tuesday's lesson tells us that evangelism is the mission of the church – what do you understand evangelism to be?

Is it first and foremost bringing people the truth about God and Christ, to convert them to Christ? Or is it about

converting people to denominations? Is there a difference or is it the same thing?

MONDAY

The lesson talks about unity in the church, that we should be one as Jesus and the Father are one, that in Christ there is neither slave or free, Jew or Gentile, but all made one in Christ.

What does this mean on a practical level? What does it look like in the world today?

Read bottom pink section – “Some people...” thoughts?

What do you think about this analogy? Does the church ever turn on its own?

In the body when autoimmune reactions happen is there something wrong with the body or the immune system or could it be either?

Often, something happens that legitimately triggers an immune response, but then once the offending agent is dealt with by the immune system cannot calm itself down and begins attacking the body.

In the church, could it be that a legitimate issue needed to be addressed, but the process of addressing a particular problem changes the focus away from Christ and once our eyes are off Christ we start seeing more and more human foibles, problems, defects and go ever deeper into the “clean up the other people” mode of action?

What about ecumenicalism? If we are to be united, why do many oppose ecumenicalism?

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, “There is no question...” thoughts?

Are there points that, if held in common, enhance and promote unity? What might those be?

- God’s character of love
- The law of love as the design template of life, the principle of giving
- Sin as a deviation of the design for life that inherently causes pain, suffering and death
- That love only exists in an atmosphere of freedom
- That all people are infected with the same terminal condition
- That all people are of equal value and moral worth
- Others?

Are there beliefs that have as a consequence the incitation of division?

- God is authoritarian and uses power to rule over
- God’s law is arbitrary
- God requires appeasement or payment
- God plays favorites, likes Jews better than Gentiles and men better than women, and whites better than blacks

What did Jesus reveal about God when he was here?

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, “We need to remember...” thoughts?

What does it mean to respect church authority? Where do we draw the line between bowing to church authority and refusing to do so?

Did church authorities come to Christ and attempt to direct his ministry? Did he surrender to church authority?

Okay, what about the followers since?

Should Martin Luther have surrendered to church authority when he was ordered to recant? Why or why not?

What about other reformers?

What if today a church board voted for a member to stop teaching a Bible Study Class – what action should a person take?

Can a church exercise authority in violation of the truth? So if a church board votes to take action against advancing truth, should a member follow that directive?

Where does genuine authority come from?

If someone in office speaks a lie are they speaking with authority? Which was more authoritative, Bill Clinton's denial of a relationship, or Monica's dress?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-4

Growing in Christ Lesson 9 3Q 2012

The Church: Rites and Rituals

Thoughts about the title?

Key thought: “God has instituted ordinances that, properly understood, help to reinforce our faith.”

What is the “key” to the key thought? “properly understood”

What happens if the ordinances, rituals, and rites, instituted by God are not properly understood?

Any examples of problems with such rituals not being properly understood?

Isaiah 1:10-20

- ¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD,
you rulers of Sodom;
listen to the law of our God,
you people of Gomorrah!
- ¹¹ “The multitude of your sacrifices—
what are they to me?” says the LORD.
“I have more than enough of burnt offerings,
of rams and the fat of fattened animals;
I have no pleasure
in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.
- ¹² When you come to appear before me,
who has asked this of you,
this trampling of my courts?
- ¹³ Stop bringing meaningless offerings!
Your incense is detestable to me.
New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—
I cannot bear your evil assemblies.
- ¹⁴ Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts
my soul hates.
They have become a burden to me;

I am weary of bearing them.
 15 When you spread out your hands in prayer,
 I will hide my eyes from you;
 even if you offer many prayers,
 I will not listen.
 Your hands are full of blood;
 16 wash and make yourselves clean.
 Take your evil deeds
 out of my sight!
 Stop doing wrong,
 17 learn to do right!
 Seek justice,
 encourage the oppressed.
 Defend the cause of the fatherless,
 plead the case of the widow.
 18 “Come now, let us reason together,”
 says the LORD.
 “Though your sins are like scarlet,
 they shall be as white as snow;
 though they are red as crimson,
 they shall be like wool.
 19 If you are willing and obedient,
 you will eat the best from the land;
 20 but if you resist and rebel,
 you will be devoured by the sword.”
 For the mouth of the LORD has
 spoken.

What do you hear in this passage? What does it mean? What are the take home points?

- Were the rituals they were doing made up on their own, or were instituted by God?
- Was God happy with them performing the rituals, he instructed them to carry out?
- Why not?
- What does God NOT have pleasure in?
 - The blood of bulls and lambs and goats
- What does God have pleasure in?

- Loving others, helping people
- What is it in the beginning of this section God calls them to pay attention to?
 - His law – which is what?
- What then does he call them to act like later in the section?
 - To do justice – which is what?
 - Why is this justice and not the infliction of punishment?
 - Because God’s justice is restorative, not punitive!
 - If you haven’t read the book *Healing the Gospel* by Derek Flood, I highly recommend it. It does such a powerful job of making it clear the Bible teaches restorative justice, not punitive justice.
- What does reasoning have to do with pleasing God?
- Did you notice that reasoning and cleansing are linked? Why?
- Why will they be blessed if they obey, but destroyed by the sword if they don’t? Is God threatening them?
 - If a doctor said, “if you stop smoking, drinking, using IV drugs, and start eating healthy, exercising, and loving God and others you will get healthier, feel better, have less disease, but if you don’t you will die miserably” – would the doctor be threatening?

When we think of Rituals and Rites, what are some of the legitimate purposes of these ordinances?

- Teaching – education
- Group unity and cohesion
- Increase trust as adherents to rituals communicate their intentions and commitments to the group and their ideals
- Change of mindset, empowerment, mental health improvement, increased confidence, commitment
 - Does being knighted have an impact on one’s mindset?

- Does receiving a military commission and taking one's oath of office have an impact?
- How much more if that ritual is also accompanied by a belief of divine empowerment?
- A review of 850 studies conducted during the 20th century on religious ritual and mental health found:
 - “The majority of well-conducted studies found that higher levels of religious involvement are positively associated with indicators of psychological well-being (life satisfaction, happiness, positive affect, and higher morale) and with less depression, suicidal thoughts and behavior, drug/alcohol use/abuse. Usually the positive impact of religious involvement on mental health is more robust among people under stressful circumstances (the elderly, and those with disability and medical illness).” (Rev. Bras. Psiquiatr. vol.28 no.3 São Paulo Sept. 2006 Epub Aug 10, 2006)
- What about improving moral order in society? Do religious rituals improve social morality?
 - An article, God's, Rituals and the Moral Order, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* Volume 40, Issue 4, pages 619–636, December 2001, found that in a study of 427 societies, moral order was only improved when rituals were carried out by those who also held a belief in “powerful, active, conscious, morally-concerned gods.”
 - Which means what? The rituals were meaningless in and of themselves to improve morality, it was the connection to the intelligent, moral higher power that had the impact on societal improvement.

Have you been through any rituals that impacted you?

- Graduation? Does it make a difference to graduate, to get that diploma or not get that diploma? Does it change, in

any way, your mindset, your sense of self? How is it different to get the education, but be one music class short of the degree, and to actually get the diploma?

- What about religious rituals? Have you experienced any of those that impacted your life?

Does one have to participate in a ritual in order to experience salvation?

Then what is the purpose of the ritual?

SUNDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “During the early...” thoughts?

What do you understand the difference between the common understanding of sacrament versus ordinance to be?

A sacrament, is some type of mystical, magical, process in which divine power gets infused into a person because of the sacrament.

Does it sound kind of like, hocus pocus?

According to the Oxford English Dictionary – the term Hocus Pocus is a term used by jugglers and magicians to make things appear and disappear. And, it is thought to have its origins in the Latin, *hoc est corpus*, which was said by the priest as he places the communion wafer upon the lips, transubstantiating it from bread to the literal flesh of Christ – as they taught it.

From the Oxford English Dictionary:

“1655 Ady *Candle in the Dark* 29, I will speak of one man... that went about in King James his time.. who called himself, The Kings Majesties most excellent Hocus Pocus, and so was called, because that at the playing of ever Trick, he used to say, *Hocus pocus, talontes, vade celeriter jubeo*, a dark composure of words to blinde the

eyes of beholders to make his Trick pass the more currently without discovery. 1694 Tilloston sermon xxvi (1742) II. 237 In all probability those common juggling words of *hocus pocus* are nothing else but a corruption of *hoc est corpus*, by the way of ridiculous imitation of the priests of the Church of Rome in their trick of Transubstantiation.” (Oxford English Dictionary, second edition, 1989 Vol. VII, p 281).

Thoughts?

Is there a difference between a symbol and a sacrament?

- Do the symbols have the ability to infuse “grace”?
- Does the symbols possess some power, or ability to change the life?
- What if a person believes in the symbol, the ritual, can the symbols, if believed in, actual result in a transformation in function in a person, including biological changes in neurochemistry?

Have you heard of a placebo and/or nocebo effect?

What we believe has power to change us, neurologically and psychologically.

In an article published in 2002 in the Am Journal of Public Health, voodoo death is documented throughout various cultures in the world (Cannon WB. “Voodoo” death. *Am Anthropologist*. 1942: 44 (new series):169–118., Am J Public Health. 2002 October; 92(10): 1593–1596.)

- In Brown’s *New Zealand and Its Aborigines* there is an account of a Maori woman who, having eaten some fruit, was told that it had been taken from a tabooed place; she exclaimed that the sanctity of the chief had been profaned and that his spirit would kill her. This incident occurred in the afternoon; the next day about 12 o’clock she was dead.

- At a Mission at Mona Mona in North Queensland were many native converts, but on the outskirts of the Mission was a group of non-converts including one Nebo, a famous witch doctor. The chief helper of the missionary was Rob, a native who had been converted. When Dr. Lambert arrived at the Mission he learned that Rob was in distress and that the missionary wanted him examined. Dr. Lambert made the examination, and found no fever, no complaint of pain, no symptoms or signs of disease. He was impressed, however, by the obvious indications that Rob was seriously ill and extremely weak. From the missionary he learned that Rob had had a bone pointed at him by Nebo and was convinced that in consequence he must die. Thereupon Dr. Lambert and the missionary went for Nebo, threatened him sharply that his supply of food would be shut off if anything happened to Rob and that he and his people would be driven away from the Mission. At once Nebo agreed to go with them to see Rob. He leaned over Rob's bed and told the sick man that it was all a mistake, a mere joke—indeed, that he had not pointed a bone at him at all. The relief, Dr. Lambert testifies, was almost instantaneous; that evening Rob was back at work, quite happy again, and in full possession of his physical strength. . . .
- In an article which included a section on death from malignant psychic influences, Dr. Cleland mentions a fine, robust tribesman in central Australia who was injured in the fleshy part of the thigh by a spear that had been enchanted. The man slowly pined away and died, without any surgical complication which could be detected. Dr. Cleland cites a number of physicians who have referred to the fatal effects of bone pointing and other terrifying acts. In his letter to me he wrote, "Poisoning is, I think, entirely ruled out in such cases among our Australian natives. There are very few poisonous plants available and I doubt whether it has ever entered the mind of the central Australian natives that such might be used on human beings." . . .

- [E]vidence of the possibility of a fatal outcome from profound emotional strain was reported by Mira in recounting his experiences as a psychiatrist in the Spanish War of 1936–39. In patients who suffered from what he called “malignant anxiety,” he observed signs of anguish and perplexity, accompanied by a permanently rapid pulse (more than 120 beats per minute) and a very rapid respiration (about three times the normal resting rate). These conditions indicated a perturbed state deeply involving the sympathico-adrenal complex. As predisposing conditions Mira mentioned “a previous lability of the sympathetic system” and “a severe mental shock experienced in conditions of physical exhaustion due to lack of food, fatigue, sleeplessness, etc.” The lack of food appears to have attended lack of water, for the urine was concentrated and extremely acid. Towards the end the anguish still remained, but inactivity changed to restlessness. No focal symptoms were observed. In fatal cases death occurred in three or four days. Postmortem examination revealed brain hemorrhages in some cases, but, excepting an increased pressure, the cerebro-spinal fluid showed a normal state. The combination of lack of food and water, anxiety, very rapid pulse and respiration, associated with a shocking experience having persistent effects, would fit well with fatal conditions reported from primitive tribes.

Dr. Marin Samuels, world renowned Neurologist from Harvard University, wrote an article published in the journal *Circulation* entitled Contemporary Reviews in Cardiovascular Medicine: The Brain-Heart Connection. (*Circulation*. 2007; 116: 77-84).

In the article he wrote:

- ...evidence has accumulated to support [Dr. Cooper’s] concept that “voodoo” death is, in fact, a real phenomenon but, far from being limited to ancient peoples, may be a basic biological principle that provides an important clue to understanding the phenomenon of

sudden death in modern society as well as providing a window into the world of neurovisceral disease (also known as psychosomatic illness).

George Engel collected 160 accounts from the lay press of sudden death that were attributed to disruptive life events. He found that such events could be divided into 8 categories: (1) the impact of the collapse or death of a close person; (2) during acute grief; (3) on threat of loss of a close person; (4) during mourning or on an anniversary; (5) on loss of status or self-esteem; (6) personal danger or threat of injury; (7) after danger is over; (8) reunion, triumph, or happy ending. Common to all is that they involve events impossible for the victim to ignore and to which the response is overwhelming excitement, giving up, or both.

Thoughts?

Any examples of this in Scripture? What about Ananias and Sapphira? Could they have died of a similar cause?

What does scripture say about Satan's power?

- Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil – Heb 2:14

What is Satan's power? He is the Father of lies, and to the degree he can get us to believe lies, falsehood, he has power over us.

Does this have any implication for religion and religious beliefs?

Does it have any impact on rituals and rites? Do rituals, sacraments and rites, have power because they impact the beliefs of the person? - Yes, this is exactly how they exert their power.

And what did Jesus said, would set us free?

Read bottom paragraph, “However much importance...” thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

The Lord’s Supper – Communion

What festival did the Communion replace? Who is the one who made this change? Jesus himself.

What did the Passover symbolize? What was the meaning of putting the blood on the doorpost of the home?

- We have made the proper ritual sacrifice, so God won’t come in here and destroy? The blood will be seen by God and God will pass over us and leave us alone?
- Or, we have sacrificed an offering to show our love and respect, and placed the blood on the door symbolizing that we have placed God’s character on our home, our lives, our being and we invite you in to dwell with us and protect us from all that would destroy? Thus the destroyer passes by because we are at-one with God?

Are we destroyed by uniting with God and inviting him into our lives, or when we go our own way and separate from him?

So, what does the Communion service symbolize? The internalization of Christ into the heart, affections, and character, becoming one with him in method, purpose and motive.

I was emailed a link in which a Catholic priest and a protestant theologian discussed the Eucharist and transubstantiation:

<http://amazingdiscoveries.org/12.10.24-debate-about-the-mass-and-transubstantiation>

They went back and forth over things like whether a priest could stand if for Christ, over sacrificing Christ again and again, over it being a violation of the law to eat blood etc.

But the real issue was uncovered when The Catholic priest said:

“There are two elements to any sacrifice the immolation and the offering. The immolation is a bloody death. The lamb is slain, what is precious about that is the life in the blood of the lamb is precious and that pays back God. That’s how the Old Testament rituals used to work. The immolation happened once but the offering is something Christ does for all eternity. He is right now in the presence of the Father, in the holy of holies, in the eternal presence, offering himself to the Father for the forgiveness of our sins.... Christ isn’t killed again and again and again, he is offered [in the Eucharist] in the same eternal presence as Christ offers himself.”

The priest said it was in this offering of his sacrifice over and over again that the sins were paid for. So each time we sin, we must take mass in order to have the sacrifice of Christ pay for that sin.

How do you think the protestant theologian responded? The protestant theologian responded, with the argument that Christ is not in heaven offering his sacrifice over and over, but offering his merits to the Father over and over. So to the protestant theologian, each time we sin we don’t need to go to a priest and take mass to have Christ’s sacrifice presented to the Father to pay for our sins. Our sins were paid for, past, present and future, all at the Cross. No, when we sin we go to Christ, who presents his merits to the Father, reminding the Father that he has already paid for our sins so the Father can forgive us and not punish us.

Thoughts? Don’t you see Satan laughing? Here we have Catholics and Protestants arguing, for centuries, whether

Jesus is offering his sacrifice to God over and over again to pay for our sins, or whether he is offering his merits to remind the Father that our sins are paid for.

What is the problem?

Daniel 7, the little horn power would seek to change God's law – how? By getting us to replace the truth that God's law is the law of love, the design protocol upon which life was built, with the idea that God's law is like a Roman emperor, put upon us to test our obedience.

Catholic and Protestant alike have accepted this change in God's law and both teach that Christ needed to die to pay for our sin, and both teach that Christ works to present something to the Father so the Father won't punish us.

But, the truth is God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. That God so loved the world he sent his son. That the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ bodily, so that even though he knew no sin, he became sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God.

When we accept the lie that God's law is imposed, then we create false doctrines that breaking the law requires the lawgiver to punish and Christ died to offer himself to the Father to pay the penalty for our sin.

When we accept the truth that God's law is the principle of love upon which life was built, we realize that breaking the law is incompatible with life and Christ died to destroy the infecting principle of selfishness and actually restore humankind back into harmony with God's design for life.

We have a message that is to lighten the world, to free minds from this insidious distortion of God and his character of love and people need this message, including many well meaning, sincere, good-hearted church leaders.

Read third paragraph, “Here we see...” thoughts?

How would you explain the idea of substitution?

TUESDAY

The ordinance of humility, or foot washing – read second paragraph, “Our world is so...” thoughts?

Do you think that our world gets it backward? Is getting it backward restricted to the world, or has such backward thinking entered the church? Any examples of getting it 180 degrees backward?

- Hell – the place of eternal burning and consuming fire is the place you don’t want to be, but Scripture teaches that place is God’s presence “our God is a consuming fire” and the righteous will spend eternity there (Isa 33:14,15)
- Christ as mediator is pleading his blood to the Father in our behalf – but scripture teaches that God was in the Son reconciling the world to himself. That Christ is God’s ambassador, envoy, and mediator to his intelligent beings to bring created beings into an ever-closer relationship with God. Christ mediates God’s grace to man, not to God.
- Justice – God is required by justice to punish sinners – but the Bible teaches that God’s justice is restorative, healing the damage, turning enemies into friends, not punishing the fallen.
- Judgment – that “fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come.” Is taught to mean that God is sitting in judgment and determining who will be saved and who will be lost. When the Bible actually teaches, God has been falsely accused, and at the end of time, before Christ returns, God calls people to make a right judgment about him and trust him. Thus Paul says, in Romans 3:4, “You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.”

Have we struggled with a backward view? What underlies this? Misunderstanding God and his character of love, his law of love, his methods of love. When we project earthly, worldly, human governmental concepts onto God we get it backward.

So, what about the ordinance of humility. In God's kingdom the first will be last, and the least will be the greatest – why?

What is God's law? The law of love, the principle of giving and the more you give the more you receive. This is how it operates, give little receive little, give much receive much.

Thus those who are the greatest in serving others are the greatest in the kingdom of God.

MONDAY

Baptism – what do you understand baptism to be and what is its significance?

Read second paragraph, “Baptism symbolizes a...” thoughts?

What did circumcision represent in the Old Testament? What kind of circumcision are we to have today?

No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Rom 2:29

What does this text mean? Can a ritual act as an infant result in healing of the character? No, and if the ritual act was required, what about women? Were only men saved?

What was the purpose of this act? Why not something different? What was the benefit?

- Walking around in the community can you tell who is circumcised and who is not? Why not? Because the “change” is in a place that is not viewable publicly.
- Walking around in the community can you tell who is circumcised in heart, i.e. converted and who is not? Why not?
- Circumcision, would it be painful?
- Is conversion painful? Why?
- Did people circumcise themselves?
- Do we cut the ties from our own hearts?
- Circumcision typically happened as infants
- We are to have our hearts cut away from the ties to the world when we are babes in Christ, reborn into his kingdom
- Were some circumcised as adults? Was it harder?
- Are there some who are in the church for years before their hearts are circumcised, is it often harder on them?
- And symbolically, God created us as sexual beings, to reveal things about his nature. As two beings come together in love, they join together and create beings in their image. Circumcision could represent removing any barrier to that union.
- Likewise circumcision of the heart is to remove any barrier to our intimacy and union with God.
- Was circumcision, perhaps, instituted by God, because he knew the nature of the temptation the Jews would face in the fertility cults around?

Did the physical act of circumcision, do anything to the heart? Or was the heart to change and be committed to God first and then the act of circumcision was performed?

What about baptism? What is the baptism that actually heals? It is the immersing of the mind, heart, self into oneness with God via the Holy Spirit. Being washed and renewed by the Holy Spirit, which is then followed by baptism in water.

Read the third paragraph, “Many years...” thoughts?

Any thoughts on infant baptism?

One of the arguments for those who practice infant baptism is that, as the lesson states, baptism replaced OT circumcision, and circumcision was done on infants, therefore baptism is done on infants of believers, and on new converts at any age.

Thoughts?

From the Catholic Catechism:

"Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called . . . The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth" (p 1250).

What truths are presented in this theology, and what problems are presented?

- Truth - That since Adam all humanity is fallen, born with a condition they didn't choose, but which operates outside God's design and if not remedied will result in death
- Problem – a ritual, done by the church, with ceremonial water, has some transforming, healing, or saving power. That the problem is something other than what happens in the mind, heart, character.
- Problem – The idea that a ritual done by the church to a child who is unaware results in “rebirth”.
- Problem – if this ritual isn't performed and a child dies their salvation is in jeopardy.
- What does this say about God?

THURSDAY

Anticipating the second advent – are we? Are we really anticipating it?

This past week after the election I had several patients quite distraught over the outcome, and worrying about the future of our nation. Should we worry about the future of our nation? Why or why not?

What did Jesus say would happen before his return?

Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains. MT 24:4-8

When a woman goes into labor, does she turn to her husband and say, “Can’t we put this off for 9 more months?”

How many today say they want to put off the coming of the Lord?

Does a woman going into labor expect it to be pleasant? Then why does she want to do it? What comes at the end of labor? Do we expect delivery? Do we expect celebration and joy?

Is there any thing we can do to hasten the day of his coming?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2-4

This Thursday was Thanksgiving in the United States, a holiday that traces its origins back to the Pilgrims in 1621 in Plymouth Massachusetts.

It is a time where the nation pauses to give thanks for all that God has done for us, and I would like to give thanks,

- For Jesus Christ, who brought us the truth and overcame what we never could.
- For the Holy Spirit who takes all Christ achieves and works constantly to reproduce Christ in us.
- For the Father and his methods of truth, love and freedom.
- For God's angels who minister to us and protect us
- For the freedom and opportunities we have in this country
- I wanted to give thanks to God for you – As Paul wrote to those in Thessalonica, telling them how he always thanked God for them.
- I thank God for you. For your love of this message, for your generosity in supporting the spread of this message, for your attendance, for your volunteer work in set up, broadcast, sharing materials, for sharing with others, for your love and support.
- I want to thank God for Dr. Jim Marcum and his ministry, and all the work he has done and is doing to tell the truth about God.
- I am thankful for all the avenues God is opening to share this message, the speaking opportunities, the broadcast opportunities, the publishing opportunities, and the friends we are making in various organizations to spread this message.

Thank You –

And are there any who would like to express their thanks to God for something this a.m.?

Growing in Christ Lesson 10, 4Q 2012

The Law and the Gospel

What do you think about when you hear this title?

Memory Text: “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (1Jn 2:3,4 NKJV)

Thoughts?

What does the passage mean? What is the relationship between knowing God and keeping his commandments?

Why do you think the NKJV was chosen? Listen to some other versions?

- We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. ⁴The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (NIV)
- If we obey God’s commands, then we are sure that we know him. ⁴Those who say that they know him, but do not obey his commands, are liars and there is no truth in them. (GNT)

Do you think the lesson authors are trying to tie the gospel, not to Christ’s commands, or instructions, or methods, but to the list of 10 Commandments?

Here is my paraphrase:

We can be confident that we have come into unity with him when we practice his methods, live his principles and obey his teachings. The man who says, “I am a Christian,” but does not love others and does not put

Christ's commands into practice misrepresents God and his entire life is a lie. There is no truth in such a person.

Thoughts?

Read first paragraph, "The law and the character of God..." thoughts?

What is the relationship between God's law and God's character?

What do you understand the law of God to be?

There are two general types of law – natural, intrinsic, and imposed, enacted.

Which type is God's? What difference does it make?

Position Statement of our Class:

- God is love and God's law is the law of love, which is the law of life. The law of love cannot be arbitrary, created, enacted, or legislated. God's law of love originates in the heart and character of God and thus has no beginning point and no ending point. It is immutable and can never be changed. God's law of love is the design template for life. All life is constructed to exist only in perfect harmony with this law. Deviations will bring the natural results of pain, suffering, and death, unless remedied by God Himself.

This is a strong position – upon what do we base such a position? I would suggest we should be able to provide evidence that this position is true from inspired sources, such as Scripture, from science and from experience.

Let's start with Scripture – any evidence to support this from Scripture?

Evidence from Scripture that the law of God is the law of love which is the law of life:

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.** Romans 13:10
- The **entire law** is summed up in a single command: “**Love** your neighbor as yourself.” Galatians 5:14
- If you really keep the **royal law** found in Scripture, “**Love** your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. James 2:8
- Jesus replied: “**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘**Love** your neighbor as yourself.’ **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**” Matt 22:37-40
- In the **way of righteousness there is life**; along that path is immortality. Pr 12:28
- He who pursues **righteousness and love finds life**, prosperity and honor. Pr 21:21
- The **law** of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7

Evidence from other Christians who have studied God’s Word and come to the same conclusion that God’s law is the law life is built upon, which is an expression of his character of love:

- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. **For God is love, and love is life.** COL 258
- Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the outworking of a principle at war with **the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.** GC 493
- **The law of love being the foundation of the government of God**, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. GC 493

- **The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man.** "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: "Thy law is the truth"; "all thy commandments are righteousness" (Ps. 119:142, 172). And the apostle Paul declares: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). **Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author.** {RC 46.5}
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth **the great principle which is the law of life for the universe.** All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.** DA 21
- As the Supreme Ruler of the universe, God has ordained laws for the government not only of all living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything, whether great or small, animate or inanimate, is under fixed laws which cannot be disregarded. **There are no exceptions to this rule; for nothing that the divine hand has made has been forgotten by the divine mind.** But while everything in nature is governed by natural law, man alone, as an intelligent being, capable of understanding its requirements, is amenable to moral law. To man alone, the crowning work of his creation, God has given a conscience to realize the sacred claims of the divine law,

and **a heart capable of loving it as holy, just, and good**; and of man prompt and perfect obedience is required. Yet God does not compel him to obey; he is left a free moral agent. {ST, April 15, 1886 par. 2}

- In some sense, God's wrath is **built into the very structure of created reality**. In rejecting God's structure and establishing our own, in violating God's intention for the creation and substituting our own intentions, we cause our own disintegration. Kaiser, W., et al., *Hard Saying of the Bible*, Intervarsity Press, 1996, P 542
- The human condition, which Paul describes in Romans 1:18-32, is not something caused by God. The phrase "revealed from heaven" (where "heaven" is a typical Jewish substitute word for "God") does not depict some kind of divine intervention, but rather the *inevitability of human debasement* which results when God's will, **built into the created order**, is violated. **Since the created order has its origin in God**, Paul can say that the wrath of God is now (constantly) being revealed "from heaven." It is revealed in the fact that the rejection of God's truth (Rom 1:18-20), that is, the truth about God's nature and will, leads to futile thinking (Rom 1:21-22), idolatry (Rom 1:23), perversion of God-intended sexuality (Rom 1:24-27) and relational-moral brokenness (Rom 1:28-32). Kaiser, W., et al., *Hard Saying of the Bible*, Intervarsity Press, 1996, P 543

Evidence From Science: As cited above, nature reveals the law of love, giving, as the principle upon which life is built, and violations automatically result in disintegration and death.

- The circle of giving – the sun gives energy to plants, which, through circles internal to the plants (Kalvin Benson cycle), converts the energy to chemical energy and produces the by product of oxygen for us. We eat the plants and the chemical energy is utilized via internal circles (citric acid cycle) and we give back to the plants

CO2 and by-products of digestion. A never-ending circle of giving that life is built to operate upon.

- In Ezekiel 10 God's throne sits upon the rotating wheels within wheels, a fit pictograph of the multiple layers of circles of giving that God built life to operate upon.

Evidence from Experience:

- When you give of yourself for the wellbeing of others what happens within you?
- When you take for yourself at the expense of others what happens in you?
- “Dozens of studies over several decades have examined relationships between volunteer work and health-related outcomes. Most studies have shown positive volunteering-health associations. Among, youth, evidence suggests that volunteer work is associated with a plethora of positive developmental outcomes, such as academic achievement, civic responsibility, and life skills that include leadership and interpersonal self-confidence (Astin & Sax 1998).” (Post, S. *Altruism and Health Perspectives from Empirical Research*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2007: p. 20, 21).
- Four studies between 1996 and 2003 evaluated the effect of volunteerism and longevity in the elderly. Controlling for confounding variables, such as health when entering the study, all four studies “reported that volunteers tended to live statistically longer than those who did not volunteer.” (Ibid p. 22).
- “Several studies have examined the relationship between volunteering and physical functioning. Moen, Dempster-McClain, and Williams (1989) studied 427 women who resided in upstate New York and were both wives and mothers in 1956. Over the next 30 years, compared to non-volunteers, women who did any volunteering had better physical functioning in 1986, after adjusting for baseline health status, level of education, and number of life roles. Similarly, Luoh and Herzog (2002) found that, compared to non-volunteers or those volunteering less

than 100 hours, those who were volunteering 100 hours or more in 1998 were approximately 30% less likely to experience physical functioning limitations, even after adjusting for demographics, socioeconomic status, baseline functioning limitations, health status, paid employment, exercise, smoking and social connections. Morrow-Howell and colleagues (2003) examined data collected between 1986 and 1994 from more than 1,500 U.S. adults, finding that volunteering predicted significantly less functional disability 3 to 5 years later, after adjusting for demographics, socioeconomic status, marital status, and informal social integration.” (Ibid)

Thoughts? Do we find evidence from Scripture, science and experience that confirms God’s law is the law of love, the principle of giving upon which life is built to operate?

How is this tied to the gospel- the good news?

What did Satan say about God and God’s law?

That God’s law is not the law upon which life is built, and that breaking God’s law doesn’t result in death?

- You won’t die if you eat the fruit – there isn’t anything wrong with sin, there is certainly something wrong with God, he might lash out and kill, but you won’t die if you eat the fruit. God’s law is not the principle life is built upon, but God is an arbitrary taskmaster who puts rules on us. God might inflict the punishment of death, but you won’t die from eating the fruit.

And what has Christianity taught? That God is required to kill, that you don’t die from breaking the law you die from the law giver imposing punishment upon you to kill you.

One of the founders of our church said it explicitly:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. DA 761

Notice the type of law that Satan alleged in Eden, what he suggested?

What is taught today?

In the book the Cross of Christ, by George Knight we read:

- “The dual facts of the necessity of cosmic moral stability and the **divinely decreed death penalty** for rebellion against the divine government placed God in a predicament, because His nature consisted of mercy as well as justice.

“The same God.’ Loraine Boettner writes, ‘who is a God of mercy and who **in virtue of His justice must punish sinners...For Him to fail to punish sin would be for Him to remove the penalty against it,** to consent to it or to become partaker in it, and therefore to violate His own nature and to destroy the moral order of the universe....’

“In that context, Satan set off a new barrage of charges against the God who would like to forgive, but was ‘stuck’ with enforcing the penalty of the broken law.”
(p. 20,21)

Thoughts?

What is the underlying assumption, which these authors have accepted that take them down this line of thinking? God’s law is imposed – having accepted this lie, then they are stuck in Satan’s view of God’s character.

What kind of God is God if he must use his power to inflict punishment, i.e. kill his children? Who made this argument? Satan – this is Satan’s view of God and it is rife in Christianity.

One of the founders of our church said something quite profound:

In seeking to cast contempt upon the divine statutes, Satan has **perverted the doctrines of the Bible, and errors have thus become incorporated into the faith of thousands** who profess to believe the Scriptures. **The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God.** Upon this battle we are now entering--**a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition.** {GC 582.2}

Do we believe God’s kingdom, government, law is an expression of His character of love, or do we believe God is like a Roman emperor, who uses power to impose laws upon his subjects? It is “a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition.”

Derek Flood in his book, *Healing the Gospel: A Radical Vision for Grace, Justice and The Cross* he writes:

Love is not in conflict with justice, love is how justice comes about because the New Testament understanding of justice is ultimately not about punishment, but about *making things right again.* (p 8)

Paul then goes on to explain how God’s **restorative justice** in Christ comes about: God acts in Christ to make us good. A key concept here is “justification” which normally refers to legal acquittal, i.e., declaring a person innocent in court, and has often been **mistranslated** as such in Romans. But if that were the case then Paul’s

entire argument would fall apart. **He is arguing that it was just for God not to punish sinners** as his audience wished. If his only reason was that God had declared these sinners innocent, this would have been seen by his audience as a profound injustice – the acquittal of the guilty... **God brings about true justice, Paul tells us, by making sinners into saints.** This act of redemptive transformation is nothing short a miracle and happens through relationship – through being loved by God, and God’s goodness making us good. Paul goes on to explain in Romans 7-8 that as God’s Spirit indwells us, as we experience Christ’s indwelling love, we are relationally transformed into his likeness. This way of the Spirit brings life, Paul says, but the way of law (i.e. the way of retributive justice) brings death. (p.12)

Thoughts?

When we believe the lie that God’s law is imposed, we believe Satan’s lie that God much punish sinners. When we believe the truth that God’s law is the design protocol upon which life is built, then we recognize death is inevitable for all out of harmony with the law, and God’s justice is restorative, healing, putting his creation back into harmony with himself and his design for life.

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to differentiate the various types of laws in Scripture – any thoughts?

What are the different and types of law and what are their purposes?

- Ceremonial
 - Deals with the script for the play, drama, to reenact the plan of salvation
 - A teaching tool

- Civil
 - Social order
- Health
 - To minimize disease
- Moral
 - Diagnose our defect of character
 - Set a hedge of protection

Ways Satan has used the laws that God has given to cause confusion and harm?

- Law as a remedy – i.e. we can keep it and be right with God
- No difference between the types of law, God said it, therefore we must do it all
- All law has been done away with at the cross, including the laws of health therefore we eating anything is okay
- The law is a codification of behaviors, which we must adhere to, lest we get punished
- God's love for us is dependent upon our keeping the law
- If I break the law, I need Jesus to protect me from God's just punishment
- God's law is impossible to obey, therefore God sent Christ to pay the penalty, and today we can't keep the law, we continue to live in sin, breaking the law of God, until Christ comes
- People who don't keep the law, the way we keep the law, are not saved
 - When I was stationed at Fort Stewart, Georgia there was not a church within 50 miles for me to attend. On base a small group of SDAs would meet in the military chapel. About 20-30 people would meet, 5-10 were military the rest were local people from the community. There were no musicians amongst the group, so one of the radiology technicians from the hospital, who was a lovely Baptist lady, volunteered her time to play the piano for song service and special music every week.

- One week, the Bible Study portion the lesson was going over Matthew 5 and Jesus comments about not coming to change the law but to fulfill it. The local person who was leading the lesson began speaking about the Sabbath and the Sabbath commandment. He then began berating this volunteer for being a Sabbath breaker and not loving God because she was breaking the commandments.
- Who was actually keeping the commandments – the woman who sacrificed her time to help others or the Sabbath keeper who condemned her? It smacked so much of the parable of the Good Samaritan who helped the beaten man while the Sabbath keepers walked by.

MONDAY

The Moral Law – refers to what? The 10 Commandments – when did the 10 Commandments come into existence?

Were they always in existence? Or were they added because of sin?

Did angels need a commandment to honor mother and father, to not commit adultery?

How do we measure the Sabbath? By the rotation of earth around a sun that didn't exist until day 4 of creation of this solar system.

For whom did Jesus say Sabbath was created? It was created for man – then did it exist prior to creation of this world? No Biblical evidence it existed before earth was created. One of the founders of our church didn't think it did:

- If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of

circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

- But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. {MB 109.2}

Paul taught in Galatians that the law was added, which law?

- I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments... "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. {1SM 233, 234}

Then why was the law added?

- The law was added so that the trespass might increase. Romans 5:20

Why was this necessary?

Then for whom was the law given?

- We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹ We also know that the **law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels**, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim 1:8-11

Who is the written law, moral law, 10 Commandments for?
The wicked, the sinner, the trespasser –why?

Who is the MRI for? Those who are sick? Why? To diagnose, for what purpose? To condemn so we can punish? No to convict so the person will go to the doctor for healing.

The commandments were given to expose sin and lead us to a Savior, to convince us how terrible our condition is, how we can do nothing to fix it ourselves, so we will stop trying and surrender to the One who has the remedy!

Did God take risks in the use of law? What risks? What does it say about God that he would take such risks?

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The law...”

The lesson agrees that the law was only to diagnose and not cure.

Other thoughts?

Read first paragraph, “Though many...” thoughts?

What does it mean the law remains binding? How would you explain it?

How is it good news that the law remains binding?

Because God built his universe to operate on very reliable, predictable, and unchanging principles. This brings security and peace to our lives. Think how awful and terrifying life would be if the laws of nature suddenly were inconsistent, changing from moment to moment?

But what about the idea that the 10 Commandments remain binding? That the law of love is the design principle for life and deviations are destructive and harmful. But could such a statement connote an erroneous idea?

What if one believes that the Commandments are imposed, and therefore keeps them because they are obligated to what might happen? Here is one description, do you agree or disagree? Why?

- The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a **sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey.** When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}
- **A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel.** By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

What happens in a relationship if your spouse smokes, and you condemn it, and they quit, not because they agree it is harmful, or want to, but only because they feel obligated to? Will love grow in that relationship? Or does resentment grow, and ultimately rebellion?

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “Yet, as we know...” thoughts?

What do you think about obeying because we are “obligated?”

Why should we obey?

Would the people who wrote this paragraph, tell a woman in the church, whose husband steals from her to get money for gambling, drugs, alcohol – that because he is violating the commandment in one place he is violating it everywhere, including the adultery commandment and she has Biblical grounds for divorce?

What do you think? If they can make their argument to condemn Sabbath breaking, then doesn't their argument hold true for adultery? If they wouldn't make the second argument, but promote the first what does this reveal? Perhaps a legalistic, arbitrary view of God's law?

Do we render obedience to a commandment, or do we render obedience to God?

What is the difference?

What about healing on Sabbath? The Jews didn't like Jesus healing on Sabbath, because they were being obedient to the commandment. Jesus, on the other hand was being obedient to God and healed on the Sabbath. But, please take special note of what Jesus did – did He heal only emergency cases on Sabbath?

One person was paralyzed for decades, could it not have waited one day? What does it tell us Jesus wouldn't wait one day to heal on the Sabbath?

It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day, and in fact it is a violation of the law of love to avoid doing good in order to keep the Sabbath – this is rendering obedience to the Sabbath and disobedience to God.

Has Satan ever succeeded in using the Sabbath to promote disobedience to God, to obstructing the truth about God, to creating a barrier to fulfilling God's will on earth? How?

So, what does genuine Sabbath keeping look like?

Does it not look like Jesus? We live the truth in love and leave others free?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "Since the divine law..." thoughts?

What does this mean, how would you explain it?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

Growing in Christ Lesson 11 4Q 2012

The Christian Life

Read Memory Text: “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (1Jn 3:16 NKJV)

Thoughts about the memory text? What does it tell us about love?

God is love, so does it tell us anything about God?

Do you know anyone who loves you enough to lay down their life for you?

What is your attitude toward that person? If you know someone loves you that much, does it increase trust or decrease trust?

Do we know God and his love for us?

Why do many adolescents fail to trust their parents, despite the fact their parents would lay down their life for them?

Guilt, engaging in activities for which they feel guilt and shame, and this results in fear – fear of what the parents will say or do.

Just as Adam and Eve ran as soon as they sinned, because they were afraid, so too when we sin we often run not only from God, but from those closest to us because we are afraid, afraid of what they will think, of seeing disappointment in their eyes, of being rejected, or perhaps of being punished.

What is your reaction when it is suggested to lay down your life for others?

Do you get a cognitive dissonance? Do you get your brain going, “that is a beautiful ideal,” but your gut going, “no way”?

From where is that gut reaction coming?

How do we overcome such a gut reaction that we are willing to give for others?

Just after midnight on Feb. 3, 1943, when the Army ship *Dorchester* was torpedoed by the Germans just south of Greenland, its passengers and crew had 25 minutes to get off the boat. As 902 people went for the life jackets, it quickly was discovered there weren't nearly enough. Of the 13 lifeboats, only two functioned.

In the ship's final minutes, Methodist senior chaplain George Lansing Fox, Rabbi Alexander Goode, Dutch Reformed minister Clark V. Poling and Roman Catholic priest John P. Washington, were helping passengers leave the vessel. Then four men appeared, all of them without life jackets.

The chaplains quickly gave up their own vests and went down with the ship, perishing in the freezing water. Survivors saw them, locked arm in arm, praying and singing the Navy hymn, “Eternal Father, Strong to Save” just before the ship dove beneath the waves.)Read more: [DUIN: Self-sacrifice tale one for the ages - Washington Times](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/feb/01/self-sacrifice-tale-one-for-the-ages/#ixzz2DLDSMeID) <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/feb/01/self-sacrifice-tale-one-for-the-ages/#ixzz2DLDSMeID>)

How could these men so calmly make this choice?

What brings a person to, as Revelation 12:11 says, “Not love their own life so much as to shrink from death?”

Was it easier for those men to make the choice together rather than alone?

Are those who have surrendered to Christ ever truly alone?

But what if we worship a God who is arbitrary and severe and seeking primarily to punish?

Naturalists argue that it is normal to seek to save self, even kill to save self, how can people go against their own nature?

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
Gal 2:20

What does this mean? This is really the rubber on the road, the root issue, the bottom line, have we had a fundamental change in heart motive such that we would give our lives for others? Have we entered into the joy of living a love-life?

It is Christmas season, a time when we have opportunity to give of self to bless and help others. Have you found a place to give?

Read second paragraph, "The Bible emphasizes..." thoughts?

While knowing the truth, the reality of how the universe works, what some might call right doctrine, is important, aren't they suggesting that it is more important to "live right"? Aren't they suggesting one could even live right while not knowing right doctrine, and conversely, one could know right doctrine and not live right?

Could someone who isn't a Christian, i.e. they haven't accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, still live a Christian life?

For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be

declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) Rom 2:13-15

Thoughts?

Do we have any concerns about what Paul is saying? Can someone be saved without Jesus Christ? Absolutely not!

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

Then what is Paul talking about?

Is there a difference between being saved by Christ, and knowing one is being saved by Christ?

How many people on earth is God trying to save?

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1Tim 2:3,4)

Then, isn't God working to save people before they even know it is him? Isn't the Holy Spirit striving in the hearts of men, even if those men have not had the blessing of Scripture to inform them it is the Holy Spirit?

And if those men respond to the Holy Spirit, and love God's methods, principles, and laws, even if they haven't heard about Christ – will the Holy Spirit still write the law into their hearts and minds? And, will they still benefit from all Christ has done for them?

If someone asks him, ‘What are these wounds on your body?’ he will answer, ‘The wounds I was given at the house of my friends.’(Zech 13:6)

What is the implication of this passage? Is it that some might not know what happened Jesus was wounded?

What are the implications for evangelism? What is the central most important truth to bring people to know? The truth about God!

What about the Sabbath, the state of the dead, baptism, and all the other doctrines? One can believe the right thing about all of this and still hold to Satan’s view of God and thus be God’s enemy. The most basic truth that evangelism must start with is, the truth about God in the setting of the Great Controversy and all doctrines must connect to the truth about God and make it more visible to see and understand.

Read next paragraph, “The Christian is saved...” thoughts?

Can we reveal the truth about God, if we focus only on the right doctrines? Have many with right doctrine actual obscured the truth about God? To whom are we to reveal the truth about God?

SUNDAY

Read last paragraph, “The Bible teaches...” thoughts?

What does it mean to glorify God? Does it mean singing praise songs, waving palm branches, shouting hosannas?

Why does God want us to glorify him? Does he need our praise? For whose need is it? Who benefits from our glorifying God with our lives?

It is for our good, and the good of other created beings, for us to glorify God – why?

Any Bible texts come to mind when we think about glorifying God?

“Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come.” Rev 14:7

Is there any connection between this message in Revelation and God’s original purpose in the creation of man?

In whose image was humanity created? Was there any special purpose for this?

What has Satan sought to do in regard to the image of God in man?

The Bible describes demoniacs, those who have been taken over by demons, what kind of character do they reveal?

God is working to restore his image in us, is there a last day purpose for this? Does it have anything to do with fulfilling the gospel commission?

Is God’s purpose of restoring his image in us impaired by distorted God constructs?

How could Satan take Revelation 14:7, the call to glorify God and turn it into an action that fosters his agenda?

What if we misconstrue God as a God who imposes law, and as the imposer of law he must sit in judgment over his subjects in order to mete out just punishments upon him? What would such a construct do? What impact does such an action have on intelligent beings?

What method does the beast system of revelation utilize to achieve its end? Threat, coercion, force and punishment. What method is attributed to God by one type of interpretation of

Revelation 14:7, the same as the beast – is there something wrong?

MONDAY

Speaks of tithes and offerings, if the cattle on a 1000 hills are God's, why does he instruct us to give tithes and offerings?

Does God need our money? Do we need to give?

Consider the analogy of the water pipes in your home – connected to a municipal source, fresh and clean abundant water – but what if you walk away and don't come back for 20 years, what is the quality of the water as you turn on the tap?

God's love is abundant and pure and it only flows into our hearts as we give it away. Tithes and offerings are prescriptions from God to teach us how to give and how to trust him with outcomes.

Read question 2 in Friday's lesson: "Dwell more on the whole..." thoughts?

What is the purpose of the tithe? It is for the purpose of spreading the gospel, to win souls to God's kingdom.

To whom should the tithe be paid? Here is one view from one of the founders of our church:

"There are ministers' wives--Sisters Starr, Haskell, Wilson, and Robinson--who have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers, giving Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that they receive nothing for their labors because their husbands receive wages. I tell them to go forward and all such decisions will be revised. The Word says, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." Luke 10:7. When any such decision as this is made, I will, in

the name of the Lord, protest. **I will feel it my duty to create a fund from my tithe money to pay these women** who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, and **this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers, hunting for souls, fishing for souls.**{DG 106.1}

It has been presented to me for years that my tithe was to be appropriated by myself to aid the white and colored ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient properly to support their families. When my attention was called to aged ministers, white or black, it was my special duty to investigate into their necessities and supply their needs. This was to be my special work, and I have done this in a number of cases. No man should give notoriety to the fact that in special cases the tithe is used in that way... {2MR 99.3}

I have myself appropriated my tithe to the most needy cases brought to my notice. I have been instructed to do this, and as the money is not withheld from the Lord's treasury, it is not a matter that should be commented upon, for it will necessitate my making known these matters, which I do not desire to do, because it is not best. {2MR 99.5}

Some cases have been kept before me for years, and I have supplied their needs from the tithe, as God has instructed me to do. And if any person shall say to me, Sister White, will you appropriate my tithe where you know it is most needed, I shall say, Yes, I will; and I have done so. I commend those sisters who have placed their tithe where it is most needed to help to do a work that is being left undone. If this matter is given publicity, it will create a knowledge which would better be left as it is. I do not care to give publicity to this work which the Lord has appointed me to do, and others to do. {2MR 100.1}

I send this matter to you so that you shall not make a mistake. Circumstances alter cases. I would not advise that anyone should make a practice of gathering up tithe

money. **But for years there have now and then been persons who have lost confidence in the appropriation of the tithe, who have placed their tithe in my hands, and said that if I did not take it they would themselves appropriate it to the families of the most needy ministers they could find. I have taken the money, given a receipt for it, and told them how it was appropriated.** {2MR 100.2}

Thoughts?

What is the purpose of the tithe? It is to promote the gospel message.

According to EG White when she didn't give her tithe to the organized church, but used it to help those promoting the gospel, did the money get put into the "Lord's treasury"?

Why does she say she didn't want to broadcast this around? Because the church organization would falter if everyone felt free to do anything with the tithe.

What is the point? That each person has their own relationship with God, the tithe is God's and he can direct its use and some persons may come under conviction, as EGW and others she worked with did, to direct their tithe toward other laborers who are not funded by the church, and we should not condemn them or judge them for it.

I also think this is another great example of how God doesn't set up cookie cutter rules that apply to all people, in all circumstances, but operates upon principles, and those principles can be applied differently depending on situation.

But far too many people don't like to think, and get confused, and feel more secure if they are simply given a "rule" do this, they do it and feel good about doing "right". No work on Sabbath, great, sorry can't heal on Sabbath, the rule says don't do it. "I fell so good that I am doing what is right..." The

rule says, give your tithe to a systemized organization, great, give blindly, never question what message, what picture of God the organization is spreading with the tithe, but we can feel good we are keeping the rule.

Does God want more from us than mere rule keeping? Does he want us to enter into an intelligent relationship with him, in which we understand who he is, what he is trying to accomplish and use our energies to work along with him?

Just to be clear, lest someone take this discussion and suggest things I have not said. I have not soliciting for anyone to send their tithe to our ministry. I am advocating for each person to become an intelligent friend of God, to stop blindly following rules without thinking, to use all your resources to promote the spread of the truth about God that will lighten the world, in the places you know God would have you use those resources.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “To define something...” thoughts?

I agree with this, but had several questions – has it been your experience that within Christianity genuine equality between husbands and wives, men and women is promoted?

Does this mean that if Christianity fails to promote genuine equality between husband and wife they are violating God’s plan for marriage?

What is the purpose of emphasizing these truths about marriage? Could it be some feel marriage is under attack? From where?

Read fourth paragraph, “Together with issues...” thoughts?

The lesson asks what biblically based counsel can we bring to these issues?

How many of these issues are confused because of how the church and local culture interact?

For instance, polygamy – culture practiced this and so did God's children for centuries. What about cohabitation? What is the difference between cohabitation and marriage? Does culture make a difference?

According to Wikipedia, in ancient Greece, no special civil ceremony was required for marriage, only mutual agreement and the fact the couple regarded each other as husband and wife. In other words, they cohabitated. Greek men married in their late 20's and women late teens.

In ancient Roman there were several types of marriages. The traditional form called *conventio in manum* required a ceremony with witnesses and was also dissolved with a ceremony.^[44] In this type of marriage, a woman lost her family rights of inheritance of her old family and gained them with her new one. She now was subject to the authority of her husband. There was the free marriage known as *sine manu*. In this arrangement, the wife remained a member of her original family; she stayed under the authority of her father, kept her family rights of inheritance with her old family and did not gain any with the new family.^[45] The minimum age of marriage for girls was 12.^[46]

From the early Christian era (30 to 325 CE), marriage was thought of as primarily a private matter, with no uniform religious or other ceremony being required.^[48] However, bishop Ignatius of Antioch writing around 110 to bishop Polycarp of Smyrna exhorts, "[I]t becomes both men and women who marry, to form their union with the approval of the bishop, that their marriage may be according to God, and not after their own lust."^[49]

In the 12th century, women were obligated to take the name of their husbands and starting in the second half of the 16th century parental consent along with the church's consent was required for marriage.^[50]

With few local exceptions, until 1545, Christian marriages in Europe were by mutual consent, declaration of intention to marry and upon the subsequent physical union of the parties.^{[51][52]} The couple would promise verbally to each other that they would be married to each other; the presence of a priest or witnesses was not required.^[53] This promise was known as the "verbum." If freely given and made in the present tense (e.g., "I marry you"), it was unquestionably binding;^[51] if made in the future tense ("I will marry you"), it would constitute a betrothal. One of the functions of churches from the Middle Ages was to register marriages. There was no state involvement in marriage and personal status, with these issues being adjudicated in ecclesiastical courts. During the Middle Ages marriages were arranged, sometimes as early as birth, and these early pledges to marry were often used to ensure treaties between different royal families, nobles, and heirs of fiefdoms. The church resisted these imposed unions, and increased the number of causes for nullification of these arrangements.^[50] As Christianity spread during the Roman period and the Middle Ages, the idea of free choice in selecting marriage partners increased and spread with it.^[50]

The average age of marriage for most Northwestern Europeans from the late 14th century into the 19th century was around 25 years of age;^{[54][55][56]} as the Church dictated that both parties had to be at least 21 years of age to marry without the consent of their parents, the bride and groom were roughly the same age, with most brides in their early twenties and most grooms two or three years older,^[56] and a substantial number of women married for the first time in their thirties and forties, particularly in urban areas,^[57] with the average age at first marriage rising and falling as circumstances

dictated. In better times, more people could afford to marry earlier and thus fertility rose and conversely marriages were delayed or foregone when times were bad, thus restricting family size;^[58] after the Black Death, the greater availability of profitable jobs allowed more people to marry young and have more children,^[59] but the stabilization of the population in the 16th century meant less job opportunities and thus more people delaying marriages.^[60]

Thus far marriage through western society has been primarily a church institution, without any state involvement. Divorce, annulment was not done by the state, but by the church. Something changed, what?

As part of the Protestant Reformation, the role of recording marriages and setting the rules for marriage passed to the state, reflecting Martin Luther's view that marriage was a "worldly thing".^[61] By the 17th century, many of the Protestant European countries had a state involvement in marriage.

As part of the Counter-Reformation, in 1563 the Council of Trent decreed that a Roman Catholic marriage would be recognized only if the marriage ceremony was officiated by a priest with two witnesses. The Council also authorized a Catechism, issued in 1566, which defined marriage as, "The conjugal union of man and woman, contracted between two qualified persons, which obliges them to live together throughout life."^[63]

In the early modern period, John Calvin, and his Protestant colleagues reformulated Christian marriage by enacting the Marriage Ordinance of Geneva, which imposed "The dual requirements of state registration and church consecration to constitute marriage"^[63] for recognition.

Thoughts? Do you find it interesting that marriage was a strictly religious institution until the Reformation, and it was the Reformers who merged church and state on this issue?

Are we now finding that the merger of church and state is causing problems? Christians invited the state into the marriage institution, and now the state is redefining it, and many Christians are unhappy about this. Should this be another lesson in church/state relations?

Does it trouble you that this is an example of church/state union orchestrated by Protestantism? What is the lesson?

How should we deal with this issue today?

Is there a difference between what you choose to do in your personal life, and what one should seek government to do in regard to marriage?

Is there a difference between Biblical marriage and marriage as sanctioned by a human government, i.e. legal marriage?

- Should the church seek to get the state to enforce the church's view of marriage?
- Would you be happy Muslims became a majority and legalized polygamy?
- What about in the days past when in Utah polygamy was legal?

- Is there a difference in spiritual union, marriage blessed by God, and legal marriage?
- Do the state and the church serve the same master?
- Do the state and the church have the same agenda?
- Do the state and the church concern themselves with the same elements of marriage?
- Church is concerned with God's blessing, unity of two individuals in a holy covenant, spiritual wholeness, honoring God with one's life, revealing the truth of God's character as he designed marriage to do, family integrity, raising children in Godly ways, etc.
- Is the state concerned about any of these? With what is the state concerned? Legal contracts, who inherits whose

- property, who is the legal guardian, who makes legal health care decisions, not who is united by God.
- Should, adults, in our society be allowed to enter into legal contracts regarding the disposition of their property, guardianship, medical decision-making etc.? What if those adults are homosexual?
 - Can we live in peace with those who enter into such contracts, even if they call in marriage?
 - But, is every “marriage” blessed by God?
 - Can people get legally married, but not experience the marital union as God designed?
 - Read third paragraph, “Of course....”
 - Is every marriage a marriage that has been united by God?
 - Are some marriages actually traps of Satan?
 - Can two people get married legally, and not be married in God’s eyes?
 - What about homosexual marriage?
 - What about some heterosexual marriages?

So, is there a difference between a church sanctioning an action, and the state sanctioning it?

What system do you prefer – the one in which such matters are decided by the church – as in the Middle Ages, the one we have in which these matters are decided by the state, or a mixed system in which one has to get both the state and church to agree?

What about divorce? Last week the lesson stated that a judge who broke the Sabbath commandment was guilty of breaking all 10 because if you break in one point you break in all points. Does that mean a spouse who steals from their spouse to support a drug habit is guilty of adultery?

Yes or no? What is adultery? Betrayal, selfishness, giving your heart to another, a break down of love.

Is this another issue where we are to think for ourselves?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Jesus tells us...” thoughts?

What does it mean to love someone as we love ourselves?

- To love automatically?
- To do unto others as we want done to us?
- Other insights?

I read this in Derek Flood’s book, *Healing the Gospel*, and found it gave a particular insight:

“C.S. Lewis once commented that he found the distinction of ‘loving the sinner but hating the sin’ to be absurd. How can you separate the two? How can you hate what someone does, but not hate them? Until it occurred to him that there was one man who he had been doing this with his entire life- himself. Loving our enemies simply means loving others the way we love ourselves.” (Flood, D. *Healing the Gospel: A Radical Vision for Grace, Justice, and the Cross*).

Thoughts? Do we love self by recognizing who we are is not defined by the mistakes we make, not defined by the struggles we battle, or the sinful nature with which we are encumbered, but we know, we are God’s creation, made in his image, and when he we see ourselves past the difficulties, and love ourselves in spite of our shortcomings?

Does it mean to love others for who they were designed to be, and when we see someone who is “evil” that we don’t hate them, we experience compassion, pity, sadness for them as they don’t know the joy of God’s kingdom? And does that lead us to treat them with love, with kindness, and thus heap burning coals on their head?

But are there some, who rather than loving their selves, they hate their own selves? They spend years in self-flagellation

and self-punishment, guilt ridden, with self-loathing and self-disgust?

What would you say to someone like this?

Read last paragraph, "The redemption that the sinner..." thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read fourth paragraph, "Parents cannot..." thoughts?

Do you agree, disagree? Why or why not?

Read next paragraph, "2. Civic Duties..." thoughts?

If we model ourselves after Christ and the Apostles, how did they go about fulfilling their civic duty? How did they go about opposing discrimination? What about slavery? Didn't they go about it by working to change the hearts of men so that people loved others more than self?

FRIDAY

Question 1, any further discussion?

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- labour markets in the North Sea region in the late medieval and early modern period. Wiley Online Library. p 17
61. [^]  "History of Marriage". *Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. 1913.
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Kelley Lorencin (the author of the Fundamental Focus magazine) is coming to the McDonald Road SDA Church. She will be doing vespers on Sabbath, Dec 15, 2012, starting at 4:30pm. This would be a wonderful opportunity for your members to come and invite their friends to enjoy some good music and some good news about God.

Growing in Christ Lesson 12, 4Q 2012

Last Things: Jesus and the Saved

Read memory text, Acts 3:19-21: “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that the time of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

Thoughts?

From where will our sins be blotted out? Recorded history or our characters/hearts/minds?

And what is being refreshed? Is there a connection between blotting out our sin and refreshing? Is refreshing another way of saying renewal, recreation, regeneration? And from where does this refreshing come? The presence of Jesus – Jesus is the source of our renewal.

And when does this refreshing come, this renewal of heart, this healing of character, before or after the second coming?

And what imagery does the Bible use to teach God’s plan to regenerate mankind back into his original ideal and then bring us back into perfect fellowship with him? The sanctuary.

SUNDAY & MONDAY

The Heavenly Sanctuary

What is the heavenly sanctuary? We talk about this a lot, but we make assumptions that are not in evidence, so let's take a minute and examine the evidence for the heavenly sanctuary.

The whole point of what we are saying is that we have such a High Priest, who sits at the right of the throne of the Divine Majesty **in heaven**. ²He serves as High Priest **in the Most Holy Place, that is, in the real tent which was put up by the Lord, not by human hands**.

³ Every High Priest is appointed to present offerings and animal sacrifices to God, and so our High Priest must also have something to offer. ⁴If he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer the gifts required by the Jewish Law. The work they do as priests is really **only a copy and a shadow** of what is in heaven. It is the same as it was with Moses. When he was about to build the Sacred Tent, God said to him, "Be sure to make everything **according to the pattern** you were shown on the mountain." Heb 8:1-5
GNT

What does this text tell us, that there is a sanctuary in heaven, and what Moses built was a shadow of it, built after what Moses saw, and what did Moses see? Did Moses see the sanctuary in heaven?

Moses saw a "pattern" of the sanctuary in heaven. When you see a pattern for a dress, are you seeing the dress? When you see blueprints, are you seeing the building?

So, should we conclude, that in heaven we have a giant tent made out of goatskins, acacia wood, gold, and silver?

No, this would be a false conclusion – all the old symbolism was merely to teach us a greater reality.

First, there is a sanctuary in heaven, it is greater and grander than anything on earth, and *what we see on earth is not a miniature duplicate of what is in heaven, but a symbolic representation of what is in heaven.*

Next question, according to Scripture, out of what is the sanctuary in heaven built?

- 1Cor3:9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, **God's building.**
- 1Cor 3:16 Don't you know that **you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?** 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and **you are that temple.**
- 2Cor 6:16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? **For we are the temple of the living God.** As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."
- EPH 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the **whole building** is joined together and rises **to become a holy temple** in the Lord. 22 And in him you **too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.**
- 1PE 2:4-7 As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- **you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood**, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says:
 "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be

put to shame." Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone, "

- Heb 3:6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And **we are his house**, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

What do these text tell us about the sanctuary? Does it give us any indication from what the heavenly sanctuary is constructed?

So we believe there is a sanctuary in heaven, we have two options regarding what type of temple this is, one made of inanimate material, gold, pearls, wood, stone, etc. or one made of intelligent living beings.

So far, which do you think is most likely?

Let's look at other scripture and ask, does this scripture make more sense if the heavenly sanctuary is made out of intelligent beings, or inanimate material:

Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will **branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD**.¹³ It is he who will **build the temple** of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' Zech 6:12,13

Intelligent beings or inanimate material? If the temple is a building built out of inanimate material, why would Christ have to leave heaven in order to build it? What does this mean? If the heavenly sanctuary is constructed from intelligent beings, including humans, then does it make sense he had to leave heaven in order to build it?

2CO 5:1 Now we know that if the **earthly tent** we live in is destroyed, we have **a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.** ² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our **heavenly dwelling,** ³ because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴ For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. (2Cor 5:1-4)

More consistent with an inanimate building or living being?
And which type of sanctuary can a human being build? Which type is only built by God without human hands?

HEB 8:10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

What temple is the law being put into in the new covenant, an inanimate building or living being?

- Heb 9:9 This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to **clear the conscience of the worshiper.**
- Heb 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, **cleanse our consciences** from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!
- Heb 10:2 “If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For **the worshipers would have been cleansed** once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.”

- Heb 10:22 sprinkled to **cleanse us from a guilty conscience** and having our bodies washed with pure water.

What type of sanctuary, inanimate, living being?

Daniel 8:14 – 2300 days and the sanctuary will be cleansed?
Inanimate building or living being?

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, **so that he sets himself up in God's temple**, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:1-4

Mal 3:1-3 The Lord will come to his **temple**; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? **For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.** Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness...

What type of temple? Inanimate or living being?

REV 21:9 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, **"Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."** **10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a**

mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. 11 It shone with **the glory of God**, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a **jasper**, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall with **twelve gates**, and with twelve angels at the gates. **On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.** 13 There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. 14 **The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

To what is this referring? What does the city represent? The Bride of Christ, which is what? The Church, which is made out of what? People, living beings. This is symbolic, describing the people of God. The city is built upon the Apostles with Christ the chief cornerstone. The gates are the 12 tribes, symbolizing it is build out of the people of God.

- The church is the bride of Christ, and her members are to yoke up with their Leader. God warns us not to defile our garments (Letter 123 1/2, 1898). {7BC 986.2}
- God calls the church His body. The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. God is the Father of the family, the Shepherd of the flock. But a mere outward connection with any church will not save a man. It is personal faith in a personal Saviour which brings the soul into spiritual union with Christ. This truth Christ plainly teaches in the sixth chapter of John.-- Ms 121, 1899, p. 17. {16MR 277.1}
- I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband. 2Cor 11:2 RSV

The city is measured and is in the shape of a cube, and the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary is, in the shape of a cube – any clue to what it means?

- The New Jerusalem is made of gold, the Most Holy Place is lined with gold, and Malachi 3 says Christ comes to the Temple to purify the priesthood of believers like gold

and silver, and Christ said to the church of Laodecia to buy from Him gold tried in the fire.

- The city has the names of the 12 tribes on the gates and the 144,000 are from the 12 tribes
- The foundation of the New Jerusalem is the 12 Apostles and the Lamb, and the foundation of the church is the 12 Apostles and the Lamb
- The wall of the city is made of Jasper and Christ in Rev 4:3 appears as Jasper, thus the city is “covered” or dressed in Christlikeness
- The city shines with the glory of God, and what is that glory? Who is to “give glory to God”?

The city comes down to where? A great mountain!

In the last days the **mountain** of the LORD's **temple** will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. (Isa 2:2, Mic 4:1)

What is the temple? From what is it constructed? Upon what is it built? A great mountain, then what is the mountain?

ISA 30:29 And you will sing as on the night you celebrate a holy festival: your hearts will rejoice as when people go up with flutes to the **mountain** of the LORD, to the **Rock** of Israel.

Who is the Rock of Israel? Jesus is the mountain that the temple is built on – the temple is the church of which Christ is the chief cornerstone!!!

Daniel 2:35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the **rock** that struck the statue became a huge **mountain** and filled the whole earth.

From what is the temple constructed?

Rev 3:12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the **temple** of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will **write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem**, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

Why will we never leave the temple? Because the temple is constructed out of living beings, we are the temple!

Comparison of the Old to the New:

- In the old – blood ministered throughout; in the new – blood to be ingested by believer (Jn 6)
- In the old – priests ate the meat of the sacrificial animal – in the new the priesthood of believers are to eat ingest Christ's flesh (Jn 6)
- In the old the law was written on stone and kept in the most holy place – in the new the law is written on the heart and mind and kept in the holy place of the heart
- In the old the MH place covered in gold, in the new the believer is to buy gold from Christ
- In the old the Priests wore robes of white, in the new the priesthood of believers are to be arrayed in the perfections of Christ's character
- In the old the Priests took the blood from point to point, in the new the priesthood of believers takes the truth from person to person
- In the old the priests washed in the water from the laver before they ministered the blood, in the new the priesthood of believer is washed by the Holy Spirit before they minister the truth about God
- In the old the priests, and only the priests, met every Sabbath in the Holy Place and ate the showbread, in the

new the priesthood of believers meet every Sabbath in the church and eat the word of God.

God's law could not be kept/deposited/written in a building either in heaven or on earth because God's Law is the Law of Love and Liberty. It is a living Law; a Law that cannot be contained on stone, a Law that cannot be understood by words merely, a Law that in order to be seen and understood could only be kept/deposited/written in a living being – ADAM.

Adam was created to be the temple of God to be the repository of God's living Law of Love and Liberty. Adam was created to be the living showcase of God's character. Mankind is God's temple – the very creation designed by God to be the repository of His great Law of Love and Liberty.

But this temple has been defiled by lawlessness, by replacing God's Law of Love and Liberty with the Law of sin and death. God is working to cleanse the temple of humanity and restore His Law of Love and Liberty in us so that we can once again take our place in God's order, as the living Temple of God, the place where the Law of Love and Liberty is written and revealed.

But the Temple (mind) was defiled, God's Law displaced. So Christ came to rebuild the temple. "But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His TEMPLE. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul." DA 161. Christ is working to cleanse our hearts and minds. To cleanse the temple of our minds! Not some building in heaven!

A few quotes from one of the founders of our church:

In the building of the sanctuary as a dwelling place for God, Moses was directed to make all things **according to**

the pattern of things in the heavens. God called him into the mount, and revealed to him **the heavenly things**, and in their similitude the tabernacle, with all that pertained to it, was fashioned. {Ed 35.2}

So to Israel, whom He desired **to make His dwelling place, He revealed His glorious ideal of character. The pattern was shown them in the mount when the law was given from Sinai** and when God passed by before Moses and proclaimed, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Exodus 34:6. {Ed 35.3}

But this ideal they were, in themselves, powerless to attain. The revelation at Sinai could only impress them with their need and helplessness. **Another lesson** the tabernacle, through its service of sacrifice, was to teach--the lesson of pardon of sin, and power through the Saviour for obedience unto life. {Ed 36.1}

Through Christ was to be fulfilled the purpose of which the tabernacle was a symbol--that glorious building, its walls of glistening gold reflecting in rainbow hues the curtains inwrought with cherubim, the fragrance of ever-burning incense pervading all, the priests robed in spotless white, and in the deep mystery of the inner place, above the mercy seat, between the figures of the bowed, worshiping angels, the glory of the Holiest. **In all, God desired His people to read His purpose for the human soul.** It was the same purpose long afterward set forth by the apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit: {Ed 36.2}

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. {Ed 36.3}

We are God's great building. Every stroke, every stone put into the building is only a part of the whole. Every worker is himself to become just what God designs he should be in building his own life with pure, noble,

upright deeds, **that at the end he may be a symmetrical structure, a fair temple, honored by God** and man... Each is to stand upon his watchtower and listen attentively to that which the Spirit has to say to him, for every word and act leaves an impress not only on our characters, but upon the characters of others engaged in the work. The Lord would have you stand forth as Daniel, every phase of your character under His own ministrations, that day by day you may **grow into a structure** that will stand forth, **not as a perfect whole in itself, but connected with the work of other chosen workmen, as a beautiful temple for the Lord, a living witness** to the value, stability, and nobility of the man who keeps his eye single to the glory of God.

Your faculties are separate and distinct, yet each is dependent for its success upon the other. **So each day God works with His building, stroke upon stroke, to perfect the structure, which thus grows into a holy temple for the Lord.** One stone mislaid affects the whole building. **This figure represents human character, which is to be wrought upon, point by point. There is not to be a flaw in it, for it is the Lord's building.** Every stone must be perfectly laid, that it may endure the pressure placed upon it. God warns you and every worker to take heed how you build, **so that your building may bear the test of storm and tempest because it is riveted to the eternal Rock.** Take heed how you build. Every hour may be spent in placing the stone on the sure foundation, ready for the day of test and revelation, when we shall be seen just as we are. This warning God presents to me as essential in your case. He loves you with a love that is immeasurable. He loves your brethren in the faith, and He works with them to the same end that He works with you. **His church upon the earth is to assume divine proportions before the world, as a temple composed of living stones, every stone emitting light. This building is to be the light of the world, a city set on a hill, which cannot**

be hid. It is composed of stones laid close together, stone fitting to stone, making a solid building. All the stones are not of the same form or shape. Some are large, some are small, but each has its own crevice to fill. And the value of each stone is determined by the light it reflects to the world. This is God's plan, and He would have all who profess to believe His word fill their respective places in the great, grand work for this time.

We are, dear and much-beloved brother, living amid the perils of the last days. Every mental and physical power is to be cultivated, **for all the powers are essential to make the church a building which will represent the wisdom and character of the great Designer.** We are to cultivate the talents given us by God. They are His gifts, and are to be used in their right relation to each other, so as to make a perfect whole. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; man makes the character. The mind is the Lord's garden, and man must cultivate it earnestly in order to form a character after the divine similitude. The Lord has wrought with you, my much-respected brother, enabling you to act your part as His workman; but there are other workmen who must act their part as God's agents, His members, who help to compose the whole body. Bear in mind, all are to be united as parts of a great machine. **The Lord's church is composed of His living, working agencies who derive their power to act from the Author and Finisher of their faith. The great work resting upon God's individual workers is to be carried forward in symmetrical harmony.** *Manuscript Releases, Volume 2 [Nos. 97-161, 1958-1964]. 1993; 2002 (339). Ellen G. White Estate.*

The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together

without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use. {3MR 231.3}

Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}

So, when we speak of the heavenly sanctuary what are we speaking about?

Does this impact how we interpret the meaning of the symbolism? Do you have any questions about the symbolism?

What is Christ doing in heaven? He is directing his agencies for the healing of his people on earth!

TUESDAY

Read the third paragraph, "The second coming..." thoughts?

Satan will seek to deceive people before Christ's return – any thoughts on how he will do this?

What would Satan do that would cause people to believe he is Jesus?

What if people believed that Jesus/God imposes law, and even though he is patient, and kind, and loving, eventually, as a just ruler, he must punish rebellion? If people believe this about God, is it not a setup to be deceived by Satan?

When Satan comes pretending to be Christ and he speaks melodious words, he heals disease and appears to raise the dead, then he speaks about the need to come into unity. He states rebellion must be done away with. He reminds everyone of all he has done, including dying for their sins, but if people refuse to come to him, he will sadly be forced to execute, but before he does he will discipline with limitations on buying and selling, sanctions, imprisonment, and then, only the most obstinate will be sentenced to a just execution by a "holy" god.

How many will be duped by this?

How can you tell if it is Satan or Christ?

- By his feet? If the feet don't touch?
- By every eye seeing him? What does it mean? Every eye sees him at once, or wherever he goes he heals blindness so every eye sees him?
- What about the brightness of his coming, if he had some of his angels come in brightness, could you tell they weren't quite as bright as God's angels? "They are only 60 watts we are waiting for the 100 watt angels?"
- By the Sabbath? (Then why weren't the Jews 2000 years ago able to recognize Jesus? They had the Sabbath!)

The only way to tell is to know God, his law of love, his character, His methods, to understand how God actually works, to reject Satan's idea of who God is and how God

works. Those who promote the idea that God, in justice, must use his power to inflict punishment are setting the world up to accept Satan's counterfeit.

I like this description of why the wicked are not in heaven and God's attitude toward them:

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power **are not prepared** to enter the presence of God. Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become **fixed in their characters**. Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven.** Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. **They would welcome destruction,** that they

might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves**, and just and merciful on the part of God.
{GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that **the wicked are incurable**. They have no disposition to submit to divine authority. Their will has been exercised in revolt; and when life is ended, **it is too late to turn the current of their thoughts in the opposite direction, too late to turn from transgression to obedience, from hatred to love**.
{GC 543.1}

THURSDAY

Do we go to heaven when we die? If the dead are not in heaven, where are they?

Death and Resurrection – read 1Thes 4:13-18

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him**. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, **will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep**. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Who does the Lord bring with him when he returns? Those who have “fallen asleep” in Jesus, then where were they? Were they in heaven with Jesus?

Then what about:

the dust returns to the ground it came from,
and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Ecc 12:7

Thoughts?

When God formed Adam’s body out of the dirt of the earth, the body wasn’t alive until God breathed into Adam the “breath” of life and Adam *became* a living being. (Gen 2:7) The “breath” breathed into Adam is the Hebrew *neshamah*, the same “breath” of life the animals receive. (Gen. 7:21, 22; Eccl. 3:19) And, when a person dies there is “no breath [*neshamah*, life] left in him” (1 Kings 17:17). But, interestingly, even though this “breath” is no longer in the dead body, the Scripture uses a different word to describe what returns to God at death.

Ecclesiastes tells us that, at death, the *ruach* returns to God who gave it. (12:7) *Ruach* occurs 377 times in the Old Testament and is translated “breath” of the body 33 times as in Eze 37:5. So, on the surface, one could argue that God gave the “breath” of life and at death it returns to God. Yet, *ruach* is also translated as “spirit” or vitality 76 times (Jdg 15:19), “courage” (Jos 2:11), “temper” (Jdg 8:3), the seat of emotions 3 times (1Sam 1:15), moral character 16 times (Eze 11:19), and the “mind” 9 times (Eze 11:5). What this suggests is that the “breath” given to Adam became personalized and what returns to God is more than just life energy, it is the individuality of the sentient being.

Jesus said in Matthew 10:28 don’t fear the one who destroy the body, but the one who can destroy both body and soul.

The Greek for soul is $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ *psuche*, from where we get “psyche,”

which is the root for words like psychiatry and psychology, and it means the individuality or consciousness of the person.

Do these text give us insight into what Paul is talking about when he says Christ brings with him those who have fallen asleep?

I have electronic medical records in my office. I use a laptop connected via a wireless connection to a server in another room. Everything I record on my laptop is automatically backed up on the server in the other room. If someone were to destroy my laptop, smash it, melt it, we could say that my laptop is “dead.” But if I get a new piece of hardware (a new laptop) and connect it to my server and download all the stored information I have just “resurrected” by laptop.

I believe this is what the Jesus and the Bible are teaching. During our life everything we do, all the choices we make are forming our characters, our individualities. And everything going on in the mind is recorded (backed up) perfectly in the “Lamb’s book of life,” God’s heavenly “server.” If someone kills us, “destroys the body” they cannot touch the “*psuche*” our individuality which is stored perfectly safe in heaven. When we die, the spirit (*ruach*), our unique individuality, returns to God, safely stored awaiting download into a new body. Then when Christ returns he brings with him the stored individualities of all the saints and downloads them into perfect bodies created by Christ and thus they are resurrected to live eternally, joining those who are alive and transformed in a twinkling of an eye. We will discuss the end of the wicked in a later chapter.

Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. **The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved.** In the resurrection every man will have his own character. God in His own time will call forth the dead, giving again the

breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend. There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him. {Hvn 40.1}

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Awaiting the advent – how should we utilize our time and resources while we await the advent?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

Growing in Christ Lesson 13 4Q 2012

When All Things Become New

Read Memory Text: “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Rev 21:4

When will all tears be wiped away? Before or after the millennium? Wouldn't it be after since it is in conjunction with there being no more death?

What about the sentence there will be no more sorrow or crying – if this is true, wouldn't it rule out the possibility of an eternal burning hell?

In other words, if there were an eternal burning place of torment, then wouldn't there be sorrow and crying by some of God's children for all eternity, so this verse would not be true?

As we talk about the events in Revelation 20-22 – what should we keep in mind?

- Do we know for certain what everything means?
- Or, is this both highly symbolic language and events that have not yet happened, therefore, we must remain open to possible change in our understanding?
- If someone believes differently than we do about these events does that mean they are not saved?
- Should we make certain interpretations of these verses a test of fellowship?
- Should we get upset or angry if someone understands these verses differently than we do?
- Can we explore different ideas, about the future, than what we have always been taught without getting upset?
- Are there any baseline points or ideas that we can use to know whether certain interpretations are true or not?

- God's character of love? Can we use the law of love and liberty to determine whether certain interpretations are accurate or not?

SUNDAY

Let's read Revelation chapter 20 together.

The Millennium – what do you understand this to be?

What have you heard regarding the teaching of the millennium?

When does it begin? When does it end?

Read the last paragraph, "That beginning..." thoughts?

What is this bottomless pit? How is Satan bound? Is it an action of force, or is he bound by circumstances?

Why doesn't God leave the wicked humans alive on earth for the 1000 years? Could they actually live? What would it be like to live on earth with no Holy Spirit, with Satan in full control, with nothing but evil in the heart and no righteous to attack? How is the earth described? Is it described as a great abyss, which is the same description as the earth in Genesis 1:1, the earth was void, without form and darkness covered the face of the deep. Could it be, without God here to sustain earth, that things revert back to chaos and human life is not sustainable in the vacuum of a black hole?

Does it make a difference to our salvation to be certain on this?

What difference does it make to understand this one way or another? Does it have any bearing on how we understand God and his methods?

Last week we explored some of the symbolism of the sanctuary service – this week we explore more symbolism, symbolism of prophecy. Do you think there could be a connection?

Is the millennium referenced anywhere OT sanctuary service?

What about the Day of Atonement – what happens on that day, what is symbolized and then what is the feast that follows?

The High Priest goes into the MH place and then comes out to where the people are and puts his hands on the head of the scapegoat and the scapegoat is taken into the wilderness – then, later in the cycle of events is the feast of tabernacles, which ends the yearly cycle.

What does this represent? Christ in heaven working to bring his people into “at-one-ment” unity, reconciliation with God, working to cleanse the people from everything that separates them from God. This would include removing the lies from our minds about God, exposing Satan as the deceiver he is, and transforming our characters to be like Christ’s.

Then, after his work in the MH place is done, he comes out, to where the people are, he comes back from heaven to where we are, and Satan is recognized, seen to be the true source of the lies, and rebellion, and he is held accountable by all living intelligences and is left alone in the wilderness of this world for 1000 years. Then, sometime later, God and the saved return and the final events take place, the earth is renewed, and we dwell on earth with God forever – we tabernacle with the Lord on earth forever.

Thoughts?

The scapegoat – were sins placed on the scapegoat – i.e. bad deeds, or was the acknowledgement that he is the source of lies placed on the scapegoat. In other words, we see the scapegoat for what he is and thus hold him responsible for the

unwarranted attack on God, the deception of man, and the pain and suffering he has caused? “It is you Satan, that caused this, not God!”

- 12 How you have fallen from heaven,
 O morning star, son of the dawn!
 You have been cast down to the earth,
 you who once laid low the nations!
- 13 You said in your heart,
 “I will ascend to heaven;
 I will raise my throne
 above the stars of God;
 I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
 on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.
- 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
 I will make myself like the Most High.”
- 15 But you are brought down to the grave,
 to the depths of the pit.
- 16 Those who see you stare at you,
 they ponder your fate:
**“Is this the man who shook the earth
 and made kingdoms tremble,
 17 the man who made the world a desert,
 who overthrew its cities
 and would not let his captives go home?”** ISA 14:12-17

Thoughts?

Notice, the description is that the people awaken and recognize Satan for what he is, a deceiver, the responsibility for sin is placed back on Satan.

What does the laying on of hands symbolize? Some suggest it is the transfer of sin – what do you think?

Could it mean anything else?

Take the blasphemer outside the camp. All those who heard him are to **lay their hands on his head**, and the entire assembly is to stone him. Lev 24:14

What is being symbolized here? Were the people transferring sins to the person? What were they doing?

Were they perhaps saying, your fate is on your own head, what happens to you is based on who you are, we recognize you for what and who you are?

Could the symbolism of the High Priest represent the recognition that Satan's demise is on his own head, we see him for who and what he is?

MONDAY

Read Revelation 20:4 – thoughts? What does it mean?

Read last two paragraphs, “One of the three....”

Thoughts?

What does this mean? What are they going to be judging?

Let's read Rev 20:4 from a variety of versions:

- I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. NIV
- Then I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given the power to judge. GNT
- And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them ASV
- And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. NKJV

Thoughts?

- Does it mean we are judicial agents, determining guilt and innocence and meting out proper imposed punishments?
- Or, does it mean we are given the ability, the power, to rightly judge what has happened in the Great Controversy and why the wicked experience what they do?
- In other words, our minds are healed and we understand things correctly now?
- If the judgment is actually created beings, sitting around in committee, weighing the evidence for and against individuals, determining either guilt/innocence, or accepting God found them guilty and we are merely determining the length of their fiery punishment before execution – what would this mean about God and his law?

Is God's law imposed or natural? Does God's law have built in consequence or are the consequences for breaking God's law externally imposed by God?

Does it make a difference regarding the kind of being God is and our ability to trust him?

Which view increases trust in God, which view undermines trust in God?

If you had broken both the imposed law of not speeding, and the natural law of physics by running off the road and having your body impact a fixed object at high speed, do you want to see law enforcement or a judge? Do you want to see EMTs and the doctor?

Does it make a difference how we view God in our ability to trust him? Why do so many religious teachers insist on presenting God as a law enforcer? Who benefits from this?

When we think of the judgment described in Rev 20, who benefits from this judgment?

So what do you understand happens during the 1000 years?

What does it mean that death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire? Does it mean death was killed? How does one kill death? Would it be through life? What is the lake of fire?

Is sin composed of material substance, matter? Can fire burn sin? What is sin composed of? What consumes it? Where does the fire originate? Does it have any connection with Bible description of God's presence being a fire?

TUESDAY

What do you understand happens at the end of the 1000 years?

The New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, filled with the saints of God, with God and Jesus, and angels, and the wicked humans are raised to life and are on earth with wicked angels and Satan.

The gates of the New Jerusalem are open and Satan and his evil hoard go about making implements of war – for some period, then when they march on the city to attack it the gates are closed.

What are the implications of this? Why resurrect the wicked to do this? What is revealed by this experience?

When they march on the city, God unveils himself and the fire of his presence begins to flow over the earth – the fire of love and truth. The wicked, who had been deceived, are no longer deceived and realize they have been lied to. They turn on those who have lied to them and many are killed in the slaughter. Then, the fires of truth continue to burn through the minds of people and they come face to face with unremedied sin in their characters and this causes terrible agony as they experience themselves for what they are and, eventually die.

Then, fires of combustion consume all nature that has been polluted, deformed, and defective from sin, and the earth is made new.

Here is one description from a book called *Early Writings*:

Then Jesus and all the retinue of holy angels, and all the redeemed saints, left the city. The angels surrounded their Commander and escorted Him on His way, and the train of redeemed saints followed. Then, in terrible, fearful majesty, Jesus called forth the wicked dead; and they came up with the same feeble, sickly bodies that went into the grave. What a spectacle! what a scene! At the first resurrection all came forth in immortal bloom; but at the second the marks of the curse are visible on all. The kings and noblemen of the earth, the mean and low, the learned and unlearned, come forth together. All behold the Son of man; and those very men who despised and mocked Him, who put the crown of thorns upon His sacred brow, and smote Him with the reed, behold Him in all His kingly majesty. Those who spit upon Him in the hour of His trial now turn from His piercing gaze and from the glory of His countenance. Those who drove the nails through His hands and feet now look upon the marks of His crucifixion. Those who thrust the spear into His side behold the marks of their cruelty on His body. And they know that He is the very one whom they crucified and derided in His expiring agony. **And then there arises one long protracted wail of agony, as they flee to hide from the presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords.** {EW 292.1}

All are seeking to hide in the rocks, to shield themselves from the terrible glory of Him whom they once despised. And, **overwhelmed and pained with His majesty and exceeding glory**, they with one accord raise their voices, and with terrible distinctness exclaim, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" {EW 292.2}

Then Jesus and the holy angels, accompanied by all the saints, again go to the city, and the **bitter lamentations and wailings of the doomed wicked** fill the air. Then I saw that Satan again commenced his work. He passed around among his subjects, and made the weak and feeble strong, and told them that he and his angels were powerful. He pointed to the countless millions who had been raised. There were mighty warriors and kings who were well skilled in battle and who had conquered kingdoms. And there were mighty giants and valiant men who had never lost a battle. There was the proud, ambitious Napoleon, whose approach had caused kingdoms to tremble. There stood men of lofty stature and dignified bearing, who had fallen in battle while thirsting to conquer. **As they come forth from their graves, they resume the current of their thoughts where it ceased in death. They possess the same desire to conquer which ruled when they fell.** Satan consults with his angels, and then with those kings and conquerors and mighty men. Then he looks over the vast army, and tells them that the company in the city is small and feeble, and that they can go up and take it, and cast out its inhabitants, and possess its riches and glory themselves. {EW 293.1}

Satan succeeds in deceiving them, and all immediately begin to prepare themselves for battle. There are many skillful men in that vast army, and they construct all kinds of implements of war. Then with Satan at their head, the multitude move on. Kings and warriors follow close after Satan, and the multitude follow after in companies. Each company has its leader, and order is observed as they march over the broken surface of the earth to the Holy City. **Jesus closes the gates of the city,** and this vast army surround it, and place themselves in battle array, expecting a fierce conflict. Jesus and all the angelic host and all the saints, with the glittering crowns upon their heads, ascend to the top of the wall of the city. Jesus speaks with majesty, saying, "Behold, ye sinners, the reward of the just! And

behold, My redeemed, the reward of the wicked!" The vast multitude behold the glorious company on the walls of the city. And as they witness the splendor of their glittering crowns and see their faces radiant with glory, reflecting the image of Jesus, and **then behold the unsurpassed glory and majesty of the King of kings and Lord of lords, their courage fails.** A sense of the treasure and glory which they have lost rushes upon them, and they realize that the wages of sin is death. They see the holy, happy company whom they have despised, clothed with glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life, while they are outside the city with every mean and abominable thing. EW 293

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

The New Earth – how do you think God will recreate the earth, in one quick moment, or will he do it in six days and rest on the seventh?

Which would you prefer? Would you like to see it done all over again as he did in the beginning?

Read second paragraph, "The word translated..." thoughts?

What was God's purpose in Genesis? A showcase for his law of love, in a living being, an entire civilization and ecosystem governed by his methods and principles of love. Adam and Eve were to govern earth, now Jesus governs the universe from earth. Any thoughts or implications?

Read Rev 21:9-22:5 then read last paragraph, thoughts?

I believe there is a literal city, a physical place we will dwell. But, do you believe this is literal or metaphorical?

Can someone, including God, marry an inanimate object? Doesn't marriage require two consenting beings? Does marriage, as God designed and would participate in, require love, affection, unity of heart and mind? So, could the marriage of the lamb really be to an empty city made out of inanimate material?

Note the city is adorned like a bride, what adornments would a city need? Would it not be adorned with the living beings who are in unity with God?

So, while I believe there is a literal city, in which we will live, and a literal earth, upon which we will dwell, I believe this description is highly metaphorical to describe the people of God, built together into a dwelling place for God.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Perhaps there isn't..." thoughts?

What did sin do that caused a separation between God and man?

What is changed such that the separation no longer exists?

Read second paragraph, "Also, true fellowship..." thoughts?

What do you think the fellowship, relationship, between man and nature will be?

If we are to be a dwelling place where God dwells by his Spirit, if we are to be in such unity with God that we can communicate with him at all times, share our thoughts and know his presence, and if we were created in his image to reveal him, do you think we will be able to commune with nature, animals in a similar way? Do you think we will be able to have awareness of what is going on in a plant? Will we have ability to control inanimate nature?

Read last two paragraphs, thoughts?

Isn't the size of the universe amazing? Isn't the God who built it amazing?

Is the size of the universe alone, sufficient reason for God to be worthy of our worship? 19th century theologian George MacDonald said:

What is the deepest in God? His power? No, for power could not make him what we mean when we say *God*. A being whose essence was only power would be such a negation of the divine that no righteous worship could be offered him; his service would be only fear.¹

Thoughts?

Isn't it God's character of love that merits our humble devotion and love?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "In the typical..." thoughts?

What do you think this means? Does it make a difference to you if you believe the heavenly sanctuary is built out of mortar and brick, versus built out of living beings?

¹ George MacDonald, *Discovering the Character of God*, p. 29.



Origins Lesson 1 1Q 2013

Jesus, Creator of Heaven and Earth

Thoughts about the focus of this quarter? Any questions you would like to have answers for this quarter?

Any conundrums, problems, mysteries, regarding Origins, that you would like to discuss this quarter?

SUNDAY

The lesson contrasts the Bing Bang theory with Biblical Creation – which is more reasonable, which has more evidence to support it, which is more scientific?

Read first paragraph, “There are many...” thoughts?

Do you agree the universe has a beginning? Do you think Genesis 1:1 is the best Scripture to use for the beginning of the universe?

If not, what scripture would you use?

- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. Jn 1:1-3
- In the past, God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one through whom God created the universe, the one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end. Heb 1:1,2
- By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. Heb 11:3
- He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Col 1:15-17

What is different about these texts than the Genesis 1:1 text?

Could the Genesis 1 text be referring only to the creation of earth and our solar system, whereas the other texts are more encompassing?



“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?
Tell me, if you understand.
5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?
6 On what were its footings set,
or who laid its cornerstone—
7 while the morning stars sang together
and all the angels shouted for joy? Job 38:4-7

What does this indicate? That angels were already in existence before earth was created – meaning what about the universe? There was something already here when earth was created, so Genesis 1 likely doesn’t refer to the creation of the universe but the creation of our solar system.

One of the founders of our church understood Scripture to teach that the universe was already in existence when earth was created.

Angels on probation had been deceived by Satan, and had been led on by him in the great rebellion in heaven against Christ. They failed to endure the test brought to bear upon them, and they fell. **Adam was then created in the image of God and placed upon probation.** He had a perfectly developed organism. All his faculties were harmonious. In all his emotions, words, and actions, there was a perfect conformity to the will of his Maker. {Con 18.2}

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng-- "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. **Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants.** But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love. {PP 36.2}

Thoughts?

What do you think of the last parenthetical statement, “scientific views, even those once deemed sacrosanct, are often changed or refuted.” Is this a bad thing or a good thing?

What about religion, theology, should we in our religious beliefs have a willingness to refute previously held beliefs, if the evidence supports it, even if they are “sacrosanct”?



But as **real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth.** Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative and seek to avoid discussion.

"There is no excuse for any one in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years **by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible.** Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. **No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation."** *Review and Herald*, Dec. 20, 1892 (*2RH* 623:1:1); *CWE* 35; compare *RH* July 26, 1892; *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* 991

"However long men may have entertained certain views, **if they are not clearly sustained by the written word, they should be discarded.**

"I have been shown that **many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth know not what they believe.** They do not understand the evidences of their faith. . . . When the time of trial shall come, there are **men now preaching** to others who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason. Until thus tested they knew not their great ignorance. And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith, and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth. . . .

"**Experience** is said to be the best teacher. **Genuine experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge,** but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. Real experience is gained by a variety of **careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude.** . . .

"That which many term experience is not experience at all. . . . There has not been a **fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved in the action.** . . .

"**Here is where we have met the greatest difficulties in religious matters.** The plainest facts may be presented, the clearest truths, sustained by the word of God, may be brought before the mind; but the ear and the heart are closed, and the all-convincing argument is, 'my experience.' Some will say, 'The Lord has blessed me in believing and doing as I have; therefore I cannot be in error.' 'My experience' is clung to, and the most elevating, sanctifying truths of the Bible are rejected. . . .

"Many examples might be given to show how people have been deceived by relying upon what they supposed to be their experience." *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* 109-110



(1890 - Originally written in 1865 in a series "How to Live"); *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 71; *RH* July 27, 1886; *The Health Reformer*, June 1, 1872; *Australasian Signs of the Times*, Dec. 19, 1904; *The Watchman*, Sept. 1, 1908

Thoughts about this attitude?

How are we to determine what we believe? The Integrative Evidence Based approach, which integrates three threads, Scripture, Science and Experience, finding the answer in which all three harmonize.

Read the 2nd and 3rd paragraphs, “As with Genesis 1:1... thoughts?”

The Big Bang postulates that the universe came from nothing, from no pre-existing matter. So what is the difference between this and the Big Bang?

While God was not dependent upon pre-existing matter, as the lesson points out, did the universe come from absolutely nothing, or from something? Is God nothing? Or is God something real? Is God pre-existent? So if everything came from God then did it come from nothing or from something? This is a critical difference between the Big Bang and Creation.

What evidence to you cite that supports creation over evolution?

- Evolution is contrary to natural laws (without exception) whereas creation is consistent with natural laws—for example, creation is consistent with the laws of thermodynamics and law of biogenesis. Evolution violates those laws.
 - The fundamental premises to each theory:
 - Something comes from nothing, or something comes from something (1st law of thermodynamics, energy is conserved)
 - Complexity comes from chaos without intelligent input, or with intelligent input (2nd law of thermodynamics, without energy put into a system it decays)
 - Life comes from non-life, or life comes from life? (the law of biogenesis)
- There are no known biological processes for evolution into higher levels of organization and complexity—mutations are degenerative and none have been documented to actually advance a species. Read *Genetic Entropy* by Sanford for documentation of this.
- Geologic landforms and sedimentary features are consistent with a worldwide flood as described in the Book of Genesis.
- There is no credible technique for establishing the age of sedimentary rock—fossil dating used to establish the age of sedimentary rock suffers from circular reasoning and guesswork, all based on the assumption of evolution.
- The standard geologic column with transitional creatures evolving toward more complex forms, as depicted in most science textbooks, is *fictitious*, and cannot be found anywhere in the real world.



- There are *no* transitional forms—there is not one single example of evolution! There should be billions of examples of transitional forms with transitional structures if evolution were true, but there are *none*. The bottom line, speciation has *never been observed* to occur within living populations. Therefore the idea of one life form evolving to another higher life form is not scientific, it is fiction or fantasy. Science requires observable, reproducible results. This idea has neither.
- Carbon-14 has been found in coal and diamonds supposedly hundreds of millions of years old. (C-14 has a relatively short life-span dissipating completely in 50,000 years.)
- Abundant daughter isotopes are indicative of accelerated nuclear decay associated with creation and *not slow and gradual processes over billions of years*.
- Evidences of accelerated nuclear decay in igneous rocks found worldwide are helium in zircon crystals, radiohalos and fission tracks, and rapid magnetic field reversals and decay.
- The seven day weekly cycle in all cultures of the world, no natural phenomenon can explain it. The Bible does.
- The law of love, as the circle of giving that all life is created to operate upon, and is observable and testable.

So, which theory is more scientific? Creation is abundantly more consistent with the evidence. Therefore, creation is more scientific than evolutionary theory of origins.

MONDAY

Read paragraphs 1-4 “Not just...” thoughts?

Any questions?

Do you agree with the idea that everything is carefully balanced? Is it consistent with a designer?

Where did all the water for the flood come from?

A water layer above the earth – okay, and if so, what does this also explain? The apparent age of organic material that existed before the flood. C14, is used to date organic material, and C14 is created from solar radiation. If there was a water layer above the earth before the flood then living matter before the flood would appear much older as it starts with less C14.

But, then what do we do about the last paragraph, that the earth is positioned in the exact right temperate zone from the sun? If there was a water layer above the earth, reducing solar radiation, then would the earth still be in the right zone? And how did such a water layer stay above the earth?

Perhaps, the Bible gives us an answer:



- The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted. Isa 30:26

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Though we cannot...” thoughts?

Here is a description from the book *Education*:

- **Upon all created things is seen the impress of the Deity.** Nature testifies of God. The susceptible mind, brought in contact with the miracle and mystery of the universe, cannot but recognize the working of infinite power. **Not by its own inherent energy does the earth produce its bounties**, and year by year continue its motion around the sun. **An unseen hand guides the planets in their circuit** of the heavens. **A mysterious life pervades all nature--a life that sustains the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity**, that lives in the insect atom which floats in the summer breeze, that wings the flight of the swallow and feeds the young ravens which cry, that brings the bud to blossom and the flower to fruit. {Ed 99.1}

The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. **The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same--**a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will.** To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin. {Ed 99.2}

Thoughts?

This is very significant, scientists can take a seed and study it, break it down to its various chemical and biological components, but science cannot take those base elements and build a seed that actually grows. There is something science cannot explain, create, reproduce – life. The spark that makes things reproduce and grow. That life energy originates in God.

Read third paragraph, “Many scientists...” thoughts?

Is this perhaps a straw man set up by scientists? Of course God is not “restricted” by the laws of nature, why? Because all natural law originates with the builder of the universe.



Does God violate his laws? Is God restricted by the laws of nature?

Is walking on water a violation of natural law? Or could it be an exercise of natural law beyond our understanding?

If all things originate from God, hold together by his constant care, then, does he know how the laws work beyond our ability?

When God exercises his power, does he ever exercise it in ways that violate his nature and character of love?

Is nature built to operate in harmony with God's character of love?

Then whatever God is doing, it is in harmony with natural law, as natural law is an expression of God's character of love God doesn't operate contrary to his own character.

Can God express his character in "laws" or methods not yet understood by humans?

So it is a straw man to argue God is restricted by natural law- but in reaction, could it be an error to argue God operates contrary to natural law?

WEDNESDAY

Jesus, Creator of Heaven and Earth – why do you think the Scripture makes it clear that Jesus is the member of the Godhead through whom the universe was created?

Were the Father and Holy Spirit not capable? Of course they were, so was there a specific reason it was Jesus?

And is this reason also connected to why Jesus was the member of the Godhead who became human and died to save us?

With whom did Lucifer allege equality? Do we have any indications of this from Scripture?

- 12 "How you are fallen from heaven,
 O Lucifer, son of the morning!
 How you are cut down to the ground,
 You who weakened the nations!
- 13 For you have said in your heart:
 'I will ascend into heaven,
 I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
 I will also sit on the mount of the congregation
 On the farthest sides of the north;



- 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
I will be like the Most High.⁷
15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol,
To the lowest depths of the Pit. Isa 14:12-15 NKJV

To whom is this referring? Satan before his fall – how do other versions render verse 12, what NKJV call Lucifer?

- How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! NIV
- How you are fallen from heaven, Day Star, son of Dawn! NRSV

Does this suggest anything in your mind?

And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the **morning star** rises in your hearts. 2Pet 1:19

The morning star refers to who? Jesus – and the Greek is phosphoros, which in the Latin is Lucifer.

φωσφόρος [*phosphoros* /foce·for·os/] adj. From 5457 and 5342; TDNT 9:310; TDNTA 1293; GK 5892; AV translates as “day star” once. **1** light bringing, giving light. **2** the planet Venus, the morning star, day star. **3** metaph. Christ.¹

Lucifer means light bearer, and who does John say is the light which lightens all men?

And throughout Scripture Jesus, prior to His incarnation is described as appearing in the form of an angel.

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea.² They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.³ They all ate the same spiritual food⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual **rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ**. 1Cor 10:1-4

The member of the Godhead who led the children of Israel through Moses was Jesus Christ.

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.² There **the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush**. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.³ So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

⁴ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, **God called to him from within the bush**, “Moses! Moses!” Exodus 3:1-4

Notice the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the flames and God called to him from the bush.

The point is simple, God is infinite, beyond the understanding and engagement of finite beings and is described as living in “unapproachable light” 1Tim 6:16,17. Therefore, God, longing intimacy with his creatures has always had one member of the Godhead interact on the level of his creation, that member is Jesus and prior to his incarnation Jesus *manifested* himself in the form of an angel. He **was not** an angel, but manifested as an angel.

Jesus was/is God. Lucifer, however alleged equality with Jesus and claimed no difference between the two. This is the distortion he used to cause disaffection and jealousy in heaven and undermined trust in the Father suggesting the Father played favorites in allowing Jesus to enter into counsels with the Father Lucifer could not.

With this perspective do we gain any insight into why Jesus was the member of the Godhead that created?

THURSDAY

The Creator Among Us

After Lucifer started his lies about God, what did God in heaven do? He announced the truth that Jesus was equal with the Father and then Christ went about showing his equality by creating earth and life on earth.

How did Lucifer respond in heaven to that?

We have a ruler over us, someone who abuses power, someone who Lords over, someone who will not sacrifice himself for others. I like the description found in the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, do you like it or have problems with it?

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng--"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King **declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes**, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. **The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven**; and to Him, as



well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love. {PP 36.2}

The angels joyfully acknowledged the supremacy of Christ, and prostrating themselves before Him, poured out their love and adoration. Lucifer bowed with them, but in his heart there was a strange, fierce conflict. Truth, justice, and loyalty were struggling against envy and jealousy. The influence of the holy angels seemed for a time to carry him with them. As songs of praise ascended in melodious strains, swelled by thousands of glad voices, the spirit of evil seemed vanquished; unutterable love thrilled his entire being; his soul went out, in harmony with the sinless worshippers, in love to the Father and the Son. But again he was filled with pride in his own glory. His desire for supremacy returned, and envy of Christ was once more indulged. The high honors conferred upon Lucifer were not appreciated as God's special gift, and therefore, called forth no gratitude to his Creator. He gloried in his brightness and exaltation and aspired to be equal with God. He was beloved and revered by the heavenly host, angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. **Yet the Son of God was exalted above him, as one in power and authority with the Father. He shared the Father's counsels, while Lucifer did not thus enter into the purposes of God. "Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He honored above Lucifer?"** {PP 36.3}

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, **Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels.** He worked with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God. He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of the worlds, angels, being more exalted, needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide. They were not beings that could bring dishonor to God; all their thoughts were holy; it was no more possible for them than for God Himself to err. **The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor.** If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to **secure freedom for all. But now even the liberty which they had hitherto enjoyed was at an end; for an absolute Ruler had been appointed them,** and to His authority all must pay homage. Such were the subtle deceptions that through the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts.

{PP 37.1}

There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer's envy and misrepresentation and his claims to equality with Christ had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God; but this had been the same from the beginning. Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer's deceptions. {PP 38.1}

What do you think of this description? Does it give some sense to what the struggles were in heaven? Does it give some reason as to why Christ was the member who created? What does it reveal? It demonstrates that Christ and Lucifer are not the same. Christ is fully God, the creator. Lucifer is a created being.



Does it also give insight into why Christ came to save us? He created us, we are evidences of His creatorship, Satan may allege, he can't create things right, look how messed up this is. And, Satan alleged that Christ was no a ruler over them. Suggesting Christ was selfish and wouldn't sacrifice himself for others. He was projecting his own evil character upon God and Christ.

“Satan had accused God of requiring self-denial of the angels, when he knew nothing of what it meant himself, and when he would not himself make any self-sacrifice for others. This was the accusation that Satan made against God in heaven; and after the evil one was expelled from heaven, he continually charged the Lord with exacting service which he would not render himself. Christ came to the world to meet these false accusations, and to reveal the Father.” RH, February 18, 1890

Thoughts?

The lesson describes Christ's miracles, which are phenomenal to be sure- but seems to use these as evidences to prove Christ is the creator – what is the problem with this argument?

Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.”²

So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that **I do nothing on my own** but speak just what the Father has taught me.”³

Jesus lived as a man and overcame as a man, and the miracles he performed were not done by exercising his own divine ability but by trust in his Father. Just as other humans have done. In fact, one of the great points of Jesus temptations was to use his own divine ability to perform miracles, thus doing something no other human could do.

Many humans were used by God to perform miracles, Elijah raised the dead child, Elisha floated an axe head, Moses parted the sea, the Apostles healed many diseases – yet none of these miracles proved they were the Creator.

Read bottom question, “Miracles...” thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs, thoughts?

² *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. 1984 (Jn 5:19). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

³ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. 1984 (Jn 8:28). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.



Origins Lesson 2 1Q 2013

Creation: Forming the World

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “Some scholars...” thoughts?

Any concerns with the arguments of this paragraph?

Why do you think they chose the word “impose”? Would you have described it differently?

Is “impose” a purpose, and “created for a purpose” the same?

Does “impose” connote a certain lack of freedom, a certain constraint, and/or control, almost sounding as if it is a big puppet show?

Where is the line drawn between God’s design, God’s parameters for operation, even God’s intention and planned purpose for his creation, and freedom within God’s creation?

Does “nature” have freedom? What does one define as nature? Is humankind part of “nature”? Are animals part of nature?

Do birds have “freedom” to choose where to build their nest, or is God deciding where they build their nests?

Does God create an environment, atmosphere, design for the health and welfare of his creation based on constants, protocols, “laws,” and then give real freedom for his creation to operate within those parameters or not? OR does God impose his will upon creation enforcing things go his way?

If it is the second, then why did sin happen? Was it God’s imposed way?

Are we then arguing for theistic evolution? In other words, if we argue God imposes his way, then aren’t arguing that the way events unfolded was in harmony with God’s way, and he therefore uses the methods of evolution for his purposes?

Theistic evolution has arisen as people have attempted to merge ideas from science and the Bible. But, why is theistic evolution an impossible concept to derive if one uses the Bible?

Theistic Evolution Untenable:

- Days were created in 24 hour periods- evolution cannot happen that fast
- If days are interpreted to mean eons of time, then no life could have evolved because the plants were created on day three and sun on day four



- Theistic evolution is a direct assault on God's character and law – how?
 - God is love and his law is the law of giving and beneficence
 - Theistic evolution is built upon the law of death, me first, kill or be killed, the strong destroying the weak in order to save self. This is an argument based on Satan's lies about God.
- If theistic evolution is true then sin is undefinable, because there is never a time when exploiting others to advance self is not needed to continue our growth and improvement. When does a mollusk become accountable for survival? When is a rodent accountable for killing to survive? Etc. etc. When does accountability begin? With the gorilla, homo erectus, Neanderthal, or homo sapien? Again part of Satan's strategy is to confuse facts and make sin something "arbitrary." So Satan would allege that sin "began when God said it does because he is God and God does what he wants." This obscures the truth that God built his universe upon unchangeable protocols, and violations of those protocols are destructive.
- Without an atmosphere solar radiation would be so intense that life couldn't evolve – how did an oxygen rich atmosphere evolve without plants that produce oxygen?
- If we suggest an oxygen rich primordial soup, how did living cells evolve in an oxidizing, high radiation environment?

Can you think of any Bible texts that reveal God's foreknowledge regarding how people would question creation and begin thinking that things came along naturally on their own?

First of all, you must understand that in these last days some people will appear whose lives are controlled by their own lusts. They will mock you⁴ and will ask, "He promised to come, didn't he? Where is he? Our ancestors have already died, but everything is still the same as it was since the creation of the world!" They purposely ignore the fact that long ago God gave a command, and the heavens and earth were created. The earth was formed out of water and by water, and it was also by water, the water of the flood, that the old world was destroyed. 2Pet 3:3-6

Do you hear a prediction, that at the end of time people would forget about creation, and purposely choose to believe that things continue along naturally? Doesn't this sound like a prediction that evolutionary theory would come along at the end of time?

What is the difference between the theory of evolution and adaptation as God designed?

- Evolution states no God, no Intelligent Creator, only natural random forces involved in creation of the cosmos and life.
- Evolution states that random forces cause random mutations, that along with selection pressure result in a slow gradual advancement of the species.
- Creation says, that God created the universe and then life, and he built into his design for life the ability to change and adapt based on one's own choices and experiences. In other words,



God didn't design us like we design wind up toys, that have the appearance of life, but only do the exact same thing over and over again. No, God built us with ability to actually change ourselves, down to our DNA and then create beings in our own image, for good or for bad as we decide.

- Thus, adaptation, neural rewiring, physical change, DNA change, based on choice and experience, epigenetic modification and transposons, which change the person and their offspring, is exactly how God created life to operate. This is not speciation, one species becoming another species, but the same species changing and adapting based on choice and need.
- Any examples of adaptation?
 - Darwin's famous finches – with all the different beaks, didn't happen over millions of years due to random mutation, but happened in 1-2 generations due to environment and epigenetic modification. Amazingly, Darwin's finches are evidence of creation, not evolution.¹
 - Not all changes, since humankind deviated from God's design are adaptive and consistent with how God designed life to operate.
 - Telomere shortening, which contributes to aging
 - Epigenetic modification in response to famine, which contributes to obesity in offspring
 - Epigenetic modification related to alcohol, which results in offspring of mothers who drink while pregnant have change in taste receptors such that alcohol tastes better than if mother didn't drink while pregnant
 - And a recent study found that epigenetic modification of how the brain responds to testosterone may contribute to homosexuality. Females get an epigenetic marker that prevents their brains from masculinizing when exposed to testosterone. Male brains don't have this epigenetic change. Sometimes, however, the epigenetic modifier, which should be removed from mother's DNA doesn't get removed and her son's brain doesn't respond to testosterone normally, and thus doesn't masculinize.²

So, when Adam and Eve sinned, they actually changed themselves, in character, but because of the way God built them, they changed biologically as well. Thus God's healing plan involves both, we get

¹ Abzhanov, Arhat; Meredith Protas, B. Rosemary Grant, Peter R. Grant, Clifford J. Tabin (September 3, 2004), "[Bmp4 and Morphological Variation of Beaks in Darwin's Finches](#)", *Science* (USA: AAAS) **305** (5689): 1462–1465, [doi:10.1126/science.1098095](#), [ISSN 0036-8075](#), [OCLC 1644869](#), [PMID 15353802](#), retrieved 2008-03-08

Abzhanov, Arhat; Winston P. Kuo, Christine Hartmann, B. Rosemary Grant, Peter R. Grant and Clifford J. Tabin (August 3, 2006), "[The calmodulin pathway and evolution of elongated beak morphology in Darwin's finches](#)", *Nature* (UK: Nature Publishing Group) **442**(7102): 563–567, [doi:10.1038/nature04843](#), [ISSN 0028-0836](#), [OCLC 1586310](#), [PMID 16885984](#), retrieved 2008-03-08

² Rice WR, Friberg U, Gavrillets S. Homosexuality as a consequence of epigenetically canalized sexual development. *The Quarterly Review of Biology*. Published [[Online](#)] 11 December 2012.



new hearts and right spirits, i.e. a renewed character where we love others more than self, and we one day get new biology, new bodies free of the inherited defects that have accumulated over the years.

SUNDAY

Read Bible text at top and then first paragraph, “The Bible starts...” thoughts?

What does it sound like is being described? Does it sound like a black hole in space?

If this is so, does it strengthen the Biblical case for creation or weaken it? Why?

Read last two paragraphs, “When the earth...” thoughts?

MONDAY

Read top dark section “Then God said...” thoughts?

What points do you take from this passage?

What are the possible meanings to “Let there be light”?

- God was presenting truth and thus it was the light of truth that we revealed on day one
- God lives in unapproachable “light” thus it was the light of God’s presence showing up to create
- It was some form of physical light with photons, heavenly flashlights, to give light to God’s workspace
- It was God dissipating a black hole in the Milky Way and light from the rest of the suns in the Milky Way was now flowing
- Other possible meanings?

Which do you like best and why? Which fits the available evidence best and what are the weaknesses with each position?

- God was presenting truth but this week is about creation, was God creating truth? The text goes on to describe night and day, light and dark, which seems to lean away from a metaphorical interpretation to something happening more literally.
- God does lives in unapproachable “light” but again, the context is about creating or doing something creative, was God creating the light that always emanates from his presence?
- It was some form of physical light with photons, heavenly flashlights, to give light to God’s workspace. Physical light would be consistent with God creating, or acting to cause something not already happening to happen, thus physical light seems likely, but there is no account in the Bible or natural world of a new source for this light being created.



- It was God dissipating a black hole in the Milky Way and light from the rest of the suns in the Milky Way was now flowing in this newly created solar system. This fits the context of the description of earth before creation, it fits with God acting with creative power to do something, it fits with the physical reality of the universe with the light of millions of suns being seen, it fits with Scripture's account of angels singing when earth was created.

What do you think about the idea that God divided the light from the darkness and called the light day and the darkness night, so that the evening and the morning were the first day, yet the Sun of our solar system wasn't created until day four?

What are the possible explanations?

- Moses was writing to a group of people who were familiar with night and day, and he wanted to be sure they understood the time period involved in each creation day was a normal 24 hour earth day and not some expanse of time
- God's presence, was more brilliant than the sun and as the earth was created it rotated on its axis and as it turned in relationship to God, it had a light and dark phase lasting 24 hours since its rotation was set at a constant rate. God then named these periods day and night, and on day four created the sun to light it when God's physical presence wasn't here.
- Other?

What are the reasons you like one over the other? Any evidence for either?

TUESDAY

Read top section, "Then God said..." thoughts?

What do you find important about this?

Do you notice the water was divided into that above the atmosphere and that below it? Why is this important? Does it give us any insight regarding the condition of the earth today and how to understand geology and dating of the earth?

This provides a sound basis for the Biblical flood, the geological changes based on the flood, and the explanation for why C14 dating cannot be trusted to give reliable dates. The waters above the earth would have provided protection from solar radiation, reducing C14 in the atmosphere before the flood and for many years after the flood thus, one of the assumptions required for C14 reliability is that C14 in the atmosphere be in steady state is false. So the older something actually is, its age is falsely magnified as it starts with less C14 than we have in the atmosphere today.

Imagine if this water above the earth had some type of circulatory pattern – what might that have resulted in? Would it have distributed the heat from the sun creating a uniform temperature around the globe? There would have been no rain, just heavy dew. Do you think the water above the earth was in



some liquid state, or was it in a vapor? If in a liquid state do you think the atmosphere thinned at higher altitudes as it does now? Would trees grow taller if the atmosphere didn't thin? Would birds fly higher? Do you think any birds or other animals could have flown in and out of that water canopy? What might the sun have done if a bird flew threw it, causing shimmers? Might the sky have been a kaleidoscope of incredible beauty?

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read top dark section – “Try to envision...” thoughts?

Certainly, it was an amazing display of might and power, incredible, awesome. Did God take any risks in doing so? How might Satan have used this against God and what was God's answer for it?

Might Satan have alleged God was just trying to intimidate, to use force, to pressure his intelligent beings into conformity? If this idea was believed what would have been the result? Would love have grown or been lost?

How did God deal with such an allegation?

The Sabbath – which reveals what? God's character of love, truth, presented in love, leaving his intelligent beings free! Day 1-6 we learn God has power, it is day seven that reveals the true nature of the one wielding the power, and confirms he is reliable and trustworthy!

So what does genuine Sabbath observance look like? Is it confined to avoidance of work and church attendance? No, those who put Christ on the cross wanted him off to keep the Sabbath. Genuine Sabbath observance only happens when the individual has God's law written upon the heart and they practice God's methods in their lives, presenting the truth, in love and leaving others free!

On day three of creation – what did God do? He created land and plants – what do you think it was like?

And consider the earth, before the flood, before the upheaval, with beautiful stones and precious metals used by God to create. Were river beds mud, or rubies, sapphires, diamonds, with gold and platinum? With a million kaleidoscopes of light shimmering and glimmering across them – amazing beauty.

Here is one description I like:

In the days of Noah a double curse was resting upon the earth in consequence of Adam's transgression and of the murder committed by Cain. Yet this had not greatly changed the face of nature. There were evident tokens of decay, but the earth was still rich and beautiful in the gifts of God's providence. The hills were crowned with majestic trees supporting the fruit-laden branches



of the vine. The vast, gardenlike plains were clothed with verdure, and sweet with the fragrance of a thousand flowers. The fruits of the earth were in great variety, and almost without limit. The trees far surpassed in size, beauty, and perfect proportion any now to be found; their wood was of fine grain and hard substance, closely resembling stone, and hardly less enduring. Gold, silver, and precious stones existed in abundance. {PP 90.1}

Thoughts?

Do you think the earth, when God formed it, had mountains so high a human couldn't survive there? Do you think there were mountains with sharp, ragged, rocky projections?

Listen to this description and see if you think this is reasonable or not?

When God had formed the earth, there were mountains, hills, and plains, and interspersed among them were rivers and bodies of water. The earth was not one extensive plain, but the monotony of the scenery was broken by hills and mountains, not high and ragged as they now are, but regular and beautiful in shape. The bare, high rocks were never seen upon them, but lay beneath the surface, answering as bones to the earth. The waters were regularly dispersed. The hills, mountains, and very beautiful plains, were adorned with plants and flowers, and tall, majestic trees of every description, which were many times larger, and much more beautiful, than trees now are. The air was pure and healthful, and the earth seemed like a noble palace. Angels beheld and rejoiced at the wonderful and beautiful works of God. {3Spiritual Gifts 33.1}

If this is true, what does it say about our minds? When you see mountains, like the Rockies, do you see beauty? But, when you see a person with a bone sticking out of their leg to you think, "how beautiful?"

What does this say about our viewpoint?

THURSDAY

The lesson asks us to read 2Cor 4:6, lets start in verse 1 and read through verse 6:

Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.



Thoughts about this passage? What do you hear? What is Paul talking about? What is he using as a reference or object lesson?

Here are some high points; let's see if this makes a picture for us:

- God is merciful and sent Christ to provide what we need for salvation
- This provides hope for a real solution to our condition
- We respond by choosing to give up the destructive ways of the world
- Thus we don't lie, deceive, distort
- We instead are lovers of truth
- But, the Remedy, the gospel, is "veiled" – what is this referring to? Veiled where and by what?
- Veiled in the minds of those who have not accepted the truth and their minds are blinded to God and his methods and character by believing lies
- And what is it that shines into the heart that frees the mind? The light of the truth of God, his character, methods and principles as revealed by Jesus
- What metaphorical, symbolic, system is Paul utilizing to teach this?
- The Sanctuary service
 - The priests are the believers, who enter the Holy Place, which symbolizes the church, where the lamp of God's Word, and the Bread of life – Jesus is, and the golden altar – representing the hearts renewed with love for God that offer prayers to God are. The Holy Place is where the daily priests, those dressed in white robes would go each Sabbath to eat the showbread, which symbolizes the believers having renewed characters to be like Jesus worshipping together each Sabbath and partaking of Christ. But as we long to see God, we look to the Most Holy and something obstructs us – what?
 - A veil – and on the veil? Angels – and what is Satan? An angel, who is the Father of what? Lies, about who? God and what do those lies to in our minds? Veil our minds to the truth about God. And what did Jesus do? He destroyed those lies, and what happened at the Cross when Christ died? The veil was torn and the obstruction between the believers and God was removed and we can see past the lies and see the truth about God clearly now.

Thoughts?

Read third paragraph, "Yet, the 'gods' of evolutionary..." thoughts?

I agree with this. It makes an excellent point – but what does this excellent point also indict? The idea that God kills, or God is the source of death, or that God executes the wicked.

Notice how they rightly say, death "came as a natural result of rebellion against His good rulership."



Isn't it interesting when exposing the weakness of evolution they see the problem with making God out to be the source of death, but some who embrace this truth will still defend the idea of God being the source of death when it comes to the destruction of the wicked and call it "justice"?

Why? What does it reveal?

FRIDAY

Read Questions 1: "Identify..." thoughts

- The balance in the ecosystem – we provide CO₂ to the plants and the plants provide O₂ to us. How did the plants survive for millions of years with no CO₂? How did any O₂ requiring organism survive without the plants providing oxygen?
- What about chlorophyll producing plants? Which convert sun's energy to usable chemical energy? How did life begin before the mechanism to convert the sun's energy to chemical energy was in place?

Read and discuss questions 2 and 3



Origins Lesson 3 1Q 2013

The Creation Completed

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The fourth day...” thoughts?

The lesson suggests three possibilities:

- God’s presence was a source of physical light, the earth rotated at its same constant rate and thus had a light, dark phase.
 - This is consistent with the text and other Scriptures that describe God as living in unapproachable light.
- The Sun, Moon, Stars were “appointed their functions” at that time?
 - Which means what? They were not functioning before they were appointed? So before they were appointed, their light didn’t travel the universe and shine onto the planets? Or does it mean they didn’t have light until they were appointed? Which would mean they weren’t a sun, moon or stars, so then we are back to the same problem.
- That volcanic dust or clouds obscured the view until day four
 - Which means what? That the earth had hot, volcanic disruptions etc. Does that fit with creation account?

Any other possibilities? That day 1-3 were written this way by Moses as a means to communicate to humans these periods were 24 hours in length, a normal earth day, and not some expanse of time.

Which do you like best?

MONDAY

Creation of air and water animals – thoughts?

Read last paragraph, “Few living creatures...” thoughts?

Do we really think, these incredibly engineered, living animals, evolved on their own by random chance?

What about eagles, hawks, and falcons – what do you think they were like before sin? Or vultures, buzzards, and condors, what did they eat before sin?

Do you think God created animals to kill each other, or animals that fed on carcasses?



In fact, what did the carrion birds eat before the flood? Do you think animals were dying frequently before the flood?

Evolutionary theory would point to these animals and the Biblical account and attempt to suggest that the Bible is wrong; it takes millions of years for a species to evolve into the efficient killing machines of eagles and falcons. Therefore, the evolutionist argues either the Bible is wrong and God didn't create, or God created through evolution, or God created animals to kill each other, which means God isn't a God of love.

What do you say to such an argument?

Two main arguments which are consistent with Scripture:

1. Given what we know about epigenetic modification of the Darwin's finches, it is not unreasonable to believe these changes occurred after sin and in a very short time span. (See last week's notes)
2. Adam's sin gave satanic agencies access to life on planet earth and Satan began messing with the code. Jesus said that an enemy planted the tares in the field, meaning purposeful intent
 - a. One commentator wrote the following in 2Selected Messages page 288:

Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up. In the parable of the sower the question was asked the master, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?" The master answered, "An enemy hath done this" (Matthew 13:27, 28). All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares. {2SM 288.2}

Thoughts?

I really don't know what a bird of prey would look like without a beak ideal to tear flesh or talons ideal to kill, but these changes are consistent with a creation designed to modify itself based on need, choice, exposure, environment etc. and one infected by selfishness and sin.

TUESDAY

Creation of Land Animals

Read last paragraph, "The phrase..." thoughts?

Does this mean one species can become another species? Or is it saying that genetic design allows for recombination within certain limits? Or are there no limits?



Does one species change into another species? Can new species be created through natural selection?

What about through intelligent, purposeful, manipulation? Some Christian writers have thought this has happened:

Every species of animals which God had created was preserved in the ark. **The confused species which God did not create, which were the result of amalgamation**, were destroyed by the flood. Since the flood, there has been amalgamation of man and beast, as may be seen in the almost endless varieties of species of animals, and in certain races of men. {1Spirit of Prophecy 78.2}

Does this suggest there were species that were not created in Eden? Where did they come from? What does this mean about the “fixity” of the species?

What species were not on the ark? Dinosaurs? Science would tell us that dinosaurs are life forms from an evolutionary path of millions of years. But, what different conclusions might we draw if we consider the possibility that dinosaurs are actually hybrid organisms?

Amalgamate means: to unite in, as if in an amalgam; *especially* : to merge into a single body.

Do you think this idea of amalgamated species is reasonable or pure fiction?

1991 geneticists inserted human genes into pigs and pigs produced human blood.

2003 Pig human chimeras were developed in which pig embryos had human cells injected into them and piglets were born that had both human and pig cell lines.

2003 FDA approved Glowfish for sale in the US, which are Zebra fish, that have a foreign gene, derived from jellyfish, inserted into its genome that causes it to fluoresce.

In 2011 news services reported that researches in Great Britain had created 155 human/animal embryos, in which animal and human DNA had been mixed. This was done under the stated purpose of research to find cures for various diseases.

Thoughts?

If we believe the Bible account, prior to the flood people lived almost 1000 years, compared to most not even reaching 100 years today. So, prior to the flood, living beings had approximately 10 times the vitality that we have today. Does this have any implication in regard to the ability to get amalgamated species to live? Would it be more difficult or easier before the flood?

Additionally, do we believe the humans before the flood would have had brains less developed and capable than ours, or more efficient than ours?



Then, given what we can do, with the weakened genetics and weakened mental abilities, is the conclusion about amalgamated species before the flood unreasonable? Not at all. It is the best explanation for such things as dinosaurs and also could explain some other fossils such as Neanderthal and other “subhuman” type remains.

What is a soul? From where does a soul come? When does a soul come into existence? If we clone a human from a skin cell, will the new human have a soul? From where did will it come?

The Greek for soul is “psuche” or psyche, and means the identity, individuality, personhood of the being.

So, when does individuality come into existence?

If a baby is born without a brain, does it have a soul? Does it have individuality?

Does a soul operate outside the brain?

Here is one person’s perspective:

The brain nerves which communicate to the entire system are the only medium through which Heaven can communicate to man, and affect his inmost life. Whatever disturbs the circulation of the electric currents in the nervous system, lessens the strength of the vital powers, and the result is a deadening of the sensibilities of the mind.-- T., V. II, p. 347. {Healthful Living 54.3}

Thoughts? Do you agree? Do you think there is some other organ through which God can communicate to man? Do you think that the “soul” can operate independently of a brain?

Science has found no avenue to affect an individual that does not utilize or go through the brain. Science has found no evidence of individuality operating outside the brain.

Consider the analogy of a computer – can software operate without hardware? Software is the individuality, it is what makes the computer unique – and the software can be stored without operational hardware, but it cannot operate without hardware.

Likewise our individualities can be stored without a brain, but cannot function without a brain.

Thus Scripture teaches that at death our individualities are safely stored with God in heaven, that we don’t need to fear the one who can destroy the body (hardware) but cannot destroy the soul (psyche, individuality, or software), and that when Christ returns he “brings with him” those who have fallen asleep, and “downloads” them into new bodies at the resurrection. Thus, they begin to “operate” or live again.

What about near death experiences NDE?



Reports of NDE experiences go back almost 2000 years and are reported by approximately 20% of people who suffer a heart attack and are revived.

Interestingly, however, a person does not have to be near death to experience a NDE. A 1990 study at the University of Virginia Health Sciences Center in Charlottesville of 58 people who had experienced NDEs found that half would have survived without medical care. Something as innocuous as fainting can produce an NDE.

There are many theories about the cause of NDEs to include hypoxia (lack of oxygen to the brain), which could trigger seizures in the temporal lobes and cause the symptoms of NDE, hypotension (loss of blood pressure to the brain), endorphin and enkephalin (brain produced mood elevators and pain killers) release, drugs injected during resuscitation, low blood sugar and other metabolic processes.

Recently, Kevin Nelson a neuropsychologist at the University of Kentucky has done research into NDEs and offered a most reasonable explanation. NDEs are actually a form of sleep disorder called REM intrusion in which dreams occur in a non-sleep state. During this time a person is awake but paralyzed, may experience the sensation of floating, will have vivid dreams that would be experienced more like a hallucination and have out of body experiences. All of this will be remembered quite vividly after the event is over with a sense of conviction to the veracity of the experience.

A study published in 1994 by Thomas Lempert, then at the Rudolph Virchow Clinic in Berlin, Germany, documented how volunteers made themselves faint through a combination of hyperventilating, standing and breath-holding. Many of them experienced euphoric NDE-like sensations such as floating out of their body, entering another world, or encountering supernatural beings. This is thought to be due to activating the vagus nerve which stimulates the brainstem to cause these NDEs. This would explain the high occurrence of NDE in people being resuscitated from a heart attack as vagal nerve stimulation occurs during this process.

The Bible is silent on near death experiences. In fact the Bible record would tell us the dead know nothing (Ecclesiastes 9:5,6). Jesus said that His friend Lazarus was “asleep” and He was going to wake him up (John 11:11). Once Jesus resurrected Lazarus, after four days in the grave, the Bible provides no report that Lazarus had anything to tell about what happened to him while he was dead. In fact, in 100% of the cases in the Bible where a person died and was resurrected the Bible records nothing from them of their experience while dead. Therefore, given the Biblical and scientific evidence I would conclude that NDEs are not spiritual experiences of someone crossing over to the other side, but physiological experiences of a stressed and near failing brain.

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The Hebrew word...” thoughts?



The paragraph said, “God’s special blessing rests on the seventh day.” What is that special blessing? What is it that one can experience on the seventh day, or gets from the seventh day that they cannot experience or get on the sixth day, or the first day?

The lesson suggests, “Thus, God gave special significance to the Sabbath in the context of the relationship between God and humans.” And in the last paragraph states, “God rested from His acts of creation and devoted His time to relationship with His creatures.”

Thoughts?

Is it true that God is a relational being and created his intelligent beings for relationship with him? Absolutely!

Is this reason the reason for the Sabbath? Does this reason separate the Sabbath from the other six days of the week?

Does God only engage in relationship on Sabbath? Does God not associate, visit, relate with his creatures on the other days of the week? If people work on Sabbath and rest on a different day of the week, seeking to spend time with God on another day, will God be unavailable? Will God refuse?

While it is true that God is love, and enjoys spending time with his children, and does spend time with us on Sabbath, is this reason exclusive to the Sabbath? Then does this “separate” the Sabbath from other days? So, I would suggest that while we can definitely experience a blessing of relationship with God on the Sabbath, the special blessing of the Sabbath is not the fact we can spend time with God as we can do that every day – then what is the special blessing?

What about the stated purpose that the Sabbath was created for man to rest? Is that the special blessing? Can man only rest on Sabbath? For the millions of people who rest on a different day of the week, will their bodies not experience rejuvenation and refreshing? Is it only on Sabbath that one can experience rest? So, does the idea of the Sabbath being created for humans to rest separate it from the other days?

The blue section at the bottom states, “God commands us to give one-seventh of our lives to the remembrance of the act of Creation.” Thoughts about this?

Do you agree with this? Are we commanded to do this?

Any problems with this idea?

- Reminds me of one Sabbath we went to church, the opening prayer the pastor prayed, “Lord we are here today, not to hear the special music, not to visit with friends, not even to hear the sermon. No, Lord, we are here for one reason, and one reason only, because you commanded us to be here.”



- Really? If this were the reason what is the problem? What happens to love in an environment when obedience is forced or coerced?
- What kind of God does such a teaching make God out to be?
- What then happens to our treatment of others on the Sabbath?
- Why wouldn't the Jews help others on the Sabbath? Because they were commanded not to do any work! They wanted to obey the rule!
- Was the Sabbath created before or after sin entered the universe? After, what does this mean?
- Were there created beings in existence before the Sabbath? Did those beings appreciate God as creator, or only after the Sabbath?
- Is the issue in the GC who has the power to create? Or is the issue in the character of the one who wields the power?
- If we make the Sabbath only about God being creator what danger do we run?
 - 19th Century Theologian George MacDonald said, "What is the deepest in God? His power? No, for power could not make him what we mean when we say *God*. A being whose essence was only power would be such a negation of the divine that no righteous worship could be offered him; his service would be only fear."¹
- Why did the Commandment say in Exodus to remember God as creator?
 - To whom was it written? To the Jews who just came out of Egypt, and what were their minds filled with?
 - What were the 10 plagues of Egypt designed to do? The plagues were all designed to show that the gods of Egypt were false, and the commandments were given to these people because they had forgotten so much.
 - They had forgotten God, his character, methods, principles and that he was creator. So the Sabbath was given first to remind them of this. But God gave them the 10 Commandments again, this time the Sabbath reminded them of something else:
 - "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. **Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.** Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. Dt 5:12-15

Why don't we say that the Lord gave the Sabbath to command us to spend one seventh of our time remembering he delivered us from slavery in Egypt? Because this was written to the Jews – was the version written in Exodus written to a different group?

Now, what is the point of all of this? Is it to say that because the 10 Commandments were written to the Jews that it is okay for us to have other gods before the true God, or it is okay to take God's name



in vain, or it is okay to murder, commit adultery etc. No, of course not, and neither are we in any way undermining the Sabbath when we recognize these 10 Commandments were written to the Jews.

What we are doing is recognizing that the reasons given to that group spoke to a particular need and significance they had. We need to understand the truth about God, his character, methods and purposes in creating the Sabbath in its context to fully appreciate it.

We absolutely want to remember God as creator, but why? Which member did the creating? Why do we want to remember that? Why was that in question?

And what was the context in which the Sabbath was created?

Is there any evidence that there was a weekly Sabbath before creation of this planet?

Why wasn't there one? Because it wasn't needed before Satan made his allegation against God.

Before Satan alleged God abuses his power, and that God doesn't grant real freedom there was no need for God to make a special demonstration of the freedom that has always been there, thus no need for a Sabbath created for his creatures to consider the evidence God has provided. But after sin, after the questions about God's character were raised, the Sabbath became a necessary gift to reveal the truth about God's character that has always been true- that God operates with truth, presented in love, leaving beings free!

Notice, God provided evidence that Christ is fully God when Christ revealed his creatorship and then God "rested" for the universe to consider what had just happened and been revealed. But the second great work Christ accomplished, our redemption at the Cross, was immediately again followed by Christ "resting" in the tomb for the Sabbath and giving the universe time to reflect and considered consider what Christ had just done.

What does the existence of the Sabbath reveal about God? More than he is creator, it reveals the character of the one who creates! It reveals His methods, of truth love and freedom!

THURSDAY

The lesson emphasizes that the days of creation week were 24 hour time blocks and not eons of time. What evidence do you find most persuasive of this?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "As stated..." thoughts?

What is the problem with the argument of using the Bible to suggest a day is like a 1000 years, and extrapolating that creation days were like 1000 years?



Peter's point is that "For the Lord" a day is like a 1000 years and a 1000 years is like a day, *not* for the creation. He is saying that God is not bound by time; God doesn't live in a linear existence. But created beings are constrained by time. Thus creation was built into the fabric of space/time by a creator who lives outside of space/time. So to suggest that space time doesn't operate with an earth day being a 24 hour earth day, is like saying water doesn't contain oxygen. In some other reality perhaps there is something called water that doesn't contain oxygen, but not in this reality. And in some other place a planet's light/day cycle might be a 1000 years, but not on earth, on earth it is 24 hours. And on earth, space time operates in constant ways.

Read last paragraph, "But the infidel..." thoughts?

Why is this the worst kind of infidelity? Because it masquerades as righteousness!

Read question 2: "Why is it important to understand that science, for all the good that it does, is still merely a human endeavor?"

Thoughts about this question?

What about this question, "Why is it important to understand that church attendance, for all the good that it does, is still merely a human endeavor?"

Can church attendance be a merely human endeavor? Can church attendance be blessed by God and accompanied by the working of the Holy Spirit?

Can science be merely a human endeavor? Can science be blessed by God and accompanied by the working of the Holy Spirit?

What is science? It is conducting careful experiment, with reproducible evidence and following where the evidence leads.

I read this two weeks ago, but in response to what appears to be an attack against science, I thought it deserved to be read again:

"Experience is said to be the best teacher. **Genuine experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge**, but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. Real experience is gained by a variety of **careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude.** . . .

"That which many term experience is not experience at all. . . . There has not been **a fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved in the action.** . . .



"Here is where we have met the greatest difficulties in religious matters. The plainest facts may be presented, the clearest truths, sustained by the word of God, may be brought before the mind; but the ear and the heart are closed, and the all-convincing argument is, 'my experience.' Some will say, 'The Lord has blessed me in believing and doing as I have; therefore I cannot be in error.' 'My experience' is clung to, and the most elevating, sanctifying truths of the Bible are rejected. . . .

"Many examples might be given to show how people have been deceived by relying upon what they supposed to be their experience." *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* 109-110 (1890 - Originally written in 1865 in a series "How to Live"); *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 71; *RH* July 27, 1886; *The Health Reformer* , June 1, 1872; *Australasian Signs of the Times*, Dec. 19, 1904; *The Watchman*, Sept. 1, 1908

thoughts?

¹ George MacDonald, *Discovering the Character of God*, p. 29.



Origins Lesson 4 1Q 2013

Creation, a Biblical Theme

Before we get started an announcement. I want to thank Dean, for doing research regarding one of the speculative ideas I have suggested several times in class. Specifically, the idea that on day one of creation week of planet earth that God may have dissipated a black hole in space and used the matter from the black hole to make the earth, sun, moon and planets of our solar system.

Dean has done some research and the current science of physics and astrophysics does not provide a basis to support the idea that structural, formed, matter exists within a black hole.

Therefore, I want to emphasize when I suggest such an idea it is speculation and not fact. And because we want to be consistent with the integrative evidence based approach where Scripture, science and experience harmonize I plan to back off this speculation unless science one day provides other evidence. Perhaps then the best explanation is that day one describes an interstellar space with a large planetary mass/asteroid/comet etc.

The point where Scripture and science agree is that Genesis one doesn't describe the creation of the entire universe, but the creation of earth and our solar system. This is the main point of the suggested idea that a black hole might be involved.

Thanks – Dean for making sure our speculative ideas are clearly delineated from more certain facts.

SABBATH

Read memory text:

“Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. ⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” Rev 14:6,7

Thoughts?

What are the key points of this passage? What is the meaning?

- A message is to be broadcast around the world
- To be in awe and amazement and admiration and adoration of God and
- To have your hearts and minds healed to reveal his character, i.e. give him glory
- Because the hour in which he is being judged has come, and he needs his witnesses, those who demonstrate his methods and principles work to heal and restore



- Because only the one who created life to begin with is capable of taking sinners and recreating, healing, restoring them back to their original design

What are the reasons that Revelation 14 draws our attention to God as creator?

- Is it as simple as some suggest, ensuring we attend church and close business on one particular day of the week? Didn't the Jews who crucified Christ do that?
- To draw our attention to his original creation, i.e. his protocols for life the law of love
- To distinguish God from false gods who cannot create
- To instill hope, the creator can fix what is broken in us. Don't be afraid, God can fix us!

SUNDAY

The creation of man, any questions or thoughts about what happens in Genesis two?

What is the significance of man being created first and woman being created from the "rib" of man?

It goes against nature – where in the natural world do you find a human male giving birth to a female? Do we find females giving birth to males? Might it imply something regarding Moses' inspiration for this text? If he was working only from human knowledge would he have likely written it this way?

Any significance to the fact that it is written this way? What about the genetics of males and females? Does a woman have the genetics to make a man? Does a man have the genetic material to make a woman?

Isn't it interesting, that Moses wrote this in a way that is consistent with advanced scientific knowledge, something that wasn't known when he wrote Genesis.

Do facts like this make the Bible account more credible to you?

What is the significance that God chose to make Eve from tissue taken from Adam's side?

She was to be a helper one who walks along side – does this sound like anything else in Scripture – a helper that walks along side? A paraclete? This is a description also used for the Holy Spirit, the "helper" who walks along side.

Do you think it is mere coincidence that the Holy Spirit is described as a helper, one who walks along side us to help us, and woman was created from the side of Adam to be a helper to walk along side?

What is the Holy Spirit to help us with? The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of truth and love – what was woman created to help man with?



Truth and Love? Could Adam know the fullness of Godlike love without someone for him to serve, without someone for him to give himself for? And then someone to receive that love and give of herself in return? And don't women have the ability to draw out love from our hearts? And do spouses serve as mirrors for each other, to reflect and reveal things in each other that we would not see in ourselves?

In whose image was mankind made? As the Father Son and Spirit live in a triune perfection of love, God made human beings to be dwelling places for his Spirit, thus Adam, Eve and God are to exist in a triune perfection of love.

This can only happen when the heart has been healed, when we die to self, when we experience recreation within, when we love others more than self.

And this only happens when the lies about God are removed.
Here is what one Christian author wrote in Patriarchs and Prophets:

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided "an help meet for him"--a helper corresponding to him--one who was fitted to be his companion, **and who could be one with him in love and sympathy**. Eve was created from **a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal**, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was **his second self**, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it." Ephesians 5:29. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one." {PP 46.2}

God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. "Marriage is honorable" (Hebrews 13:4); it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the Fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. **When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature.** {PP 46.3}

Thoughts?

What do you think of that last section, when the divine principles are recognized and obeyed, the marriage relationship elevates the physical, intellectual and moral nature?

Science has shown that healthy marriages result in better physical and mental health and longer life than living single, but conflictual marriages result in worse physical and mental health than living single.



Do you think marriage is under attack? How? What do you think is the most serious attack on marriage?

- Cohabitation without marriage
- Polygamy
- Homosexual marriage
- Godless marriage, i.e. no God, just evolved, humanism
- Marriages amongst those who believe in God but who believe in a punishing God, and husbands dominate and control their wives who are treated as less than equals? (Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Eastern)
- Others?

My view is the greatest attack on marriage is when people profess to represent Christ and then men dominate, abuse, mistreat, demean, and belittle their wives, or treat them as inferior and require their submission, including church sponsored tenants of inequality.

The more we are healed and become like God designed, the more equality is experienced between men and women, husband and wife.

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on the Psalms and how the Psalmist credits God with creation – did you have questions about any of these texts?

Should these texts be taken literally, as in each detail is accurate, or poetically, in that God is recognized as creator but every detail may not be accurate?

Ps 24:1,2:

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;
for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

Thoughts?

Does it sound like Genesis 1:1, that there was something here, watery and deep before God terraformed planet earth? There is a harmony in the Scripture that supports the idea that Genesis doesn't describe creation of the universe, but terraforming earth and this solar system.

Ps 74:16,17:

The day is yours, and yours also the night; you established the sun and moon. It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter.



Thoughts? Is this literal or poetic, recognizing God as creator and the source of the laws of nature that result in the seasons changing, but not necessarily that God created summer and winter, or is it literal God created summer and winter?

In other words, did God “create summer and winter” or are summer and winter part of the change that came with sin? I read this in Patriarchs and Prophets, do you agree or think this is off base?

In humility and unutterable sadness they [Adam and Eve] bade farewell to their beautiful home and went forth to dwell upon the earth, where rested the curse of sin. The atmosphere, once so mild and uniform in temperature, **was now subject to marked changes**, and the Lord mercifully provided them with a garment of skins as a protection from the **extremes of heat and cold**. {PP 61.5}

Do you think there were extremes in weather before sin? Would winter, with freezing snow be an extreme of whether?

Were there seasons with fall, with leaves falling off and dying before sin?

I read the following in the book Conflict and Courage – do you agree, or is this just wild speculation?

Although the earth was blighted with the curse, nature was still to be man's lesson book. **It could not now represent goodness only; for evil was everywhere present, marring earth and sea and air with its defiling touch.** . . . {CC 19.2}

In drooping flower and falling leaf Adam and his companion witnessed the first signs of decay. Vividly was brought to their minds the stern fact that every living thing must die. Even the air, upon which their life depended, bore the seeds of death. {CC 19.3}

As Adam witnessed the first signs of decay in the falling leaf and in the drooping flowers, he mourned more deeply than men now mourn over their dead. The dying flowers were not so great a cause of grief, because they were more tender and delicate; but when the tall stately trees cast off their leaves to decay, it presented before him the general dissolution of beautiful nature, which God had created for the especial benefit of man. {CC 22.3}

Thoughts?

Does it sound like they had seasons? So, does it sound like God created summer and winter? Or is summer and winter a result of sin changing God's creation?

This lets us explore a variety of questions – how do we understand Scripture? Do we take it concretely and literally? Do we understand the intent, that nature, life, the planet etc. was created by God, but nature, as Paul says in Romans 8 groans under the weight of sin, thus nature doesn't reveal itself to us as God created it. So we see God's handiwork, but that handiwork is marred by sin?



Then why did the Bible writer attribute to God summer and winter?

- Was it just a poetic description of attributing to God all that exists?
- Was it an ignorant mind who didn't understand how nature changed since sin?
- Was he perhaps attributing to God the flow of time, the changing of seasons, i.e. the changing of events, that God doesn't hold us in stasis, but things unfold over time?
- Was the expression literal or poetic?

Is there a danger in reading Scripture and taking it concretely and holding to it obstinately? How about those Scriptures which describe God as angry or punishing?

Does it trouble you to discover that not everything in Scripture is to be taken literally, that we are to think and reason?

Last week we spoke of changes in the animal kingdom, as I was reading the references above regarding the dying leaf, I read the following:

Continually they [Adam and Eve] were reminded also of their lost dominion. Among the lower creatures Adam had stood as king, and so long as he remained loyal to God, all nature acknowledged his rule; **but when he transgressed, this dominion was forfeited. The spirit of rebellion, to which he himself had given entrance, extended throughout the animal creation.** . . . {CC 19.4}

Does this make sense, that God created earth as a microcosm of the universe, a “theater unto angels and men” (1Cor 4:9), with Adam and Eve representing the Godhead to govern earth with love, and that their rebellion against God, then resulted in nature demonstrating that rebellion with the animals rebelling against them, and all nature infected with selfishness?

TUESDAY

Read Job 38:4-7

- “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?
Tell me, if you understand.
5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?
6 On what were its footings set,
or who laid its cornerstone—
7 while the morning stars sang together
and all the angels shouted for joy?”

What do you think? What is the implication of the fact angels were singing for joy? That the universe already existed when earth was created.



The Hebrew for “angels” in this passage is *ben* and means son and in some versions is translated not as angels but as the sons of God. What might this imply?

In the genealogy of Christ in Luke 3:38 we have each person listed as the son of, son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

What might this imply?

That God’s representative “sons” from other worlds came together before God, Job 1:6 references this. And they watched as God created earth, and they sang for joy at its foundation – why?

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

¹¹ “You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being.” Rev 4:9-11

What is going on that the intelligent beings in heaven sing together for joy when earth is created, that the intelligent beings shout worthy is the Lord for creating all things? Is it more than just appreciation of a new creation? Is there something bigger happening?

Do you get the imagery of the Great Controversy being played out with intelligences through the universe watching?

I continued looking, in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and there was a **holy watcher**, coming down from heaven.... The sentence is rendered by decree of the **watchers**, the decision is given by order of the holy ones... (Daniel 4:13,17)

Did you know the Bible teaches that there are intelligent beings watching? What are they watching? Are they really watching you and me, merely, or are they watching something bigger being played out upon the landscape of planet earth? What Paul said, we are a spectacle to angels and men (1Cor 4:9)?

Can you see the stadium filled with adoring fans, watching as the two opponents take the field, the challenger, Lucifer the light bearer versus the champion Jesus - The Bright and Morning Star. Cheering and joyous shouting is heard as Jesus, the reigning and undefeated champion speaks and earth is created. Dismay from Lucifer, the challenger, and cries of unfair, unfair, cheater echo from his fanbase.

What do you think about this scene? Why did the sons of God sing for joy? What did Jesus create?



Psalms 8:4-9:

When I look at the sky, which you have made, at the moon and the stars, which you set in their places- what are human beings, that you think of them; mere mortals, that you care for them? **Yet you made them inferior only to yourself**; you crowned them with glory and honour. You appointed them rulers over everything you made; you placed them over all creation: sheep and cattle, and the wild animals too; the birds and the fish and the creatures in the seas. O LORD, our Lord, your greatness is seen in all the world! GNB

what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have **made them a little lower than God**, and crowned them with glory and honor. Ps 8:4,5 NRSV

thoughts? He created human beings, a little lower only than himself, not lower than angels, above angels, with dominion and creative powers – why? To be his answer, to be his evidence, to reveal the truth about him in the controversy with Satan. We are to reveal God’s character and methods of love, this is our purpose!

WEDNESDAY

Read memory verse, Isa 45:18:

For this is what the Lord says— he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—he says: “I am the Lord, and there is no other.”

Thoughts? Why do the prophets, over and over again, emphasize God as creator? At that time, were there competitor gods that vied for their worship?

On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. 1Kings 11:7

Before we look at these detestable gods, does anyone remember where the Moabites and Ammonites came from?

³⁰ Lot and his two daughters left Zoar and settled in the mountains, for he was afraid to stay in Zoar. He and his two daughters lived in a cave. ³¹ One day the older daughter said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is no man around here to lie with us, as is the custom all over the earth. ³² Let’s get our father to drink wine and then lie with him and preserve our family line through our father.”

³³ That night they got their father to drink wine, and the older daughter went in and lay with him. He was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up.



³⁴ The next day the older daughter said to the younger, “Last night I lay with my father. Let’s get him to drink wine again tonight, and you go in and lie with him so we can preserve our family line through our father.” ³⁵ So they got their father to drink wine that night also, and the younger daughter went and lay with him. Again he was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up.

³⁶ So both of Lot’s daughters became pregnant by their father. ³⁷ The older daughter had a son, and she named him Moab; he is the father of the Moabites of today. ³⁸ The younger daughter also had a son, and she named him Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites of today. Gen 19:30-38

Thoughts? What do you learn from this?

Did you notice it was written to make Lot to look out the best? He was seduced and tricked by his daughter, the “roofied” him. But they didn’t have roofies, they just used alcohol.

What does it say about Lot that he would be willing to get drunk? What does this say about the daughters?

And what does this story say about God? Why were Lot and his daughters living in a cave? Because their city burned, but why weren’t they burned in the city? Because God sent angels to deliver them from the city. What does this mean?

If these people could live like this, why did God consider them righteous enough to bring out of Sodom?

What is God looking for in us in order for him to send angels to deliver us? Perfection? Sinlessness? That we eat the right foods and avoid certain drinks? Or is God looking at the heart for one specific finding - Healability? Something left in us that is healable? And a willingness to allow him to work in our lives to heal and restore us?

God isn’t viewing the world through a legal lens. He isn’t viewing the world through a lens of keeping a list and checking it twice, searching to see whose naughty or nice – No!

He is viewing the world through a lens of his Creatorship, how he built life to operate, where it deviates from his design and what needs to be done to restore it. Then in our individual lives he is assessing, *is our condition treatable*, or have we so persisted in rebellious living, living outside his design, that we have destroyed the faculties that respond to love and truth i.e. are beyond healing. Evidently, as bad as Lot and his daughters appear, they were not beyond healing! Do you find, that while Lot and his daughters look terribly sick, God looks amazingly good!

So back to these false gods, Chemosh and Molech. They shared a common origin, they started out as one god, but over the course of years denominated into two different gods one for the Moabites and one for the Ammonites, but they shared basically the same characteristics. Both Chemosh and Molech



were gods of fertility and believed to have characteristics similar to Baal, and both of these gods, required, at times, human sacrifice.

Dagon was god of the Philistines. The Philistines rejoiced to Dagon when Sampson was captured. When they captured the ark they put it in front of Dagon and Dagon was face down in front of the ark one day and then his hands and head broke off the next. When king Saul was killed in battle they took his armor and head and put it in front of Dagon. Dagon was the god of grain and fertility, and it is debated to be related to fish. Some have his consort a fish goddess and over the centuries some cultures may have adapted him to serve their seafaring needs.

Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." 1Kings 18:19

Who was Asherah and Baal?

Asherah as a goddess of fertility and was the consort of El, the high god of the Canaanite pantheon of gods and El is the father of Baal.

Ēl is called again and again *Tôru* 'Ēl ("Bull Ēl" or "the bull god"). He is *bātnyu binwāti* ("Creator of creatures"), *'abū banī 'ili* ("father of the gods"), and *'abū 'adami* ("father of man"). He is *qāniyunu 'ōlam* ("creator eternal"), the epithet *'ōlam* appearing in Hebrew form in the Hebrew name of God 'ēl 'ōlam "God Eternal" in Genesis 21:33. He is *ḥātikuka* ("your patriarch"). Ēl is the grey-bearded ancient one, full of wisdom, *malku* ("king"), *'abū šamīma* ("father of years"), and *'ēl gibbōr* ("Ēl the warrior"). (from Wikipedia)

Under Ahab Israel built temples to both Asherah and Baal. Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, who had Isaiah sawed in half, worshipped Asherah and offered his own son as burnt offering to Molech. Josiah later cleansed Jerusalem of these gods.

Baal worship involved many animal sacrifices and priests acting as intermediaries. Baal was also known as Baal-Hadad and was the god of thunder, lightning, storms and weather, the god of fertility. At their temples were "holy prostitutes" both male and female.

"The Hebrew noun *ba'al* means 'master', 'possessor' or 'husband'. Used with suffixes, e.g. Baal-peor or Baal-berith, the word may have retained something of its original sense; but in general Baal is a proper name in the OT, and refers to a specific deity, Hadad, the W Semitic storm-god, the most important deity in the Canaanite pantheon.

"Yahweh was 'master' and 'husband' to Israel, and therefore they called him 'Baal', in all innocence; but naturally this practice led to confusion of the worship of Yahweh with the Baal rituals, and it became essential to call him by some different title; Hosea (2:16) proposed 'îš, another word meaning 'husband.'" ¹



Baal was the son of El (i.e. El-ohim or El-Shaddai). He was the god of weather. Often called, 'Almighty' and "Lord of the Earth." Baal was the god who brought rain, thunder, lightning, who fertilized the earth, controlled the sun and brought the harvest. Baal fought the great serpent leviathan as well as battled against Mot, the god of death, who was his brother another son of El. And most amazing of all, it was taught that Baal died in his battle with Mot and was resurrected from the dead to bring life to earth. ⁱⁱ

Do you notice any common theme amongst all these pagan gods? What did they all claim? That they had power over life, fertility, produce, harvest, weather. In other words, they claimed they were creator. Thus we have God repeatedly reminding the people that he is the true creator.

Do you see the similarities between the true and the false? Do you see how Satan attempts to impersonate the true with his distortion of the true?

Does it bother you that these pagan religions have so much in common with the truth? Don't be bothered. Think about it, any counterfeit attempts to approximate or appear genuine – so are counterfeit dollars printed in pink? Why not? The closer to the genuine the better able to deceive.

So, what was the problem with worshipping a god who was the "husband and protector of Israel," the son of El, who was worshipped as the creator, who controlled the weather, who brought rain, sunshine, and fertility, who blessed with full harvest, who warred against the great serpent and death, who died and was resurrected to bring life to the earth? What was wrong with this god? What was Elijah opposing? What made Baal worship false? Was it that they had the wrong set of syllables? No, as they called Yahweh baal, husband and protector. Then why did God get so upset with this?

Was it only because they had fertility associated? Or was it something else?

Here is what one Christian writer identifies as the central distortion in Baal worship:

"Determined to keep the people in deception, the priests of Baal continue to offer sacrifices to their gods and to call upon them night and day to refresh the earth. **With costly offerings the priests attempt to appease the anger of their gods**;" (Prophets and Kings 124)

And the Bible confirms this:

"So the prophets prayed louder and cut themselves with knives and daggers, according to their custom, until blood flowed." 1 Kings 18:28

The root, core problem with all the false gods, is that they represent God's character falsely. They represent God as a being who requires payment, appeasement, sacrifice. This is paganism at its root.

So what is the problem with worshipping a false, punitive god-construct? Failing to remember God as creator, and the protocols of love upon which he creates?



But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the LORD their God. They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them. **They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless.** They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, “Do not do as they do,” and they did the things the LORD had forbidden them to do. 2Kings 17:14-15

We become like the God we worship and admire. This is why God continually calls us back to the knowledge of him. It is not because he needs our worship, it is because we need to worship him! Satan is the father of lies, and as he gets us to believe lies about god, to worship false god constructs he has power over us and we destroy ourselves and become worthless.

Today, we don't have problems with fertility rites in the church, but do we have problems with appeasement theologies misrepresenting God?

If we want to gospel to go to the world, to do our mission so that Christ will return, we as members in the church must rise up and present the truth about God's character of love, lovingly meet with our pastors and leaders and show them the truth, but we must stop taking pagan God constructs to the world!

THURSDAY

Paul is in Athens and appeals to the philosophers there, on what basis does he approach them?

He reaches out to them with one of their gods, the unknown god, he uses one of their god constructs and then introduces the creator through that.

What does it say about his approach? Did he start by condemning their false gods?
How might we use Paul's approach today?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

ⁱ Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary (3rd ed.)* (108).

ⁱⁱ Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary (3rd ed.)* (108).

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Walbank, Frank William (1979). *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Volume 2, Clarendon Press, p. 47

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Lesson 5: Creation and Morality

Sabbath's Lesson

¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. For in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

Did God tell our 1st parents that He would kill them for eating the forbidden fruit?? Did He tell them they would immediately keel over dead?? Or, was He telling them something about how His government functions, and how they were made in relationship to that government??

The lesson speaks of "Human rights". Do humans have any rights?? Are not "rights" based on some form of government?? Does God's government grant humans rights or privileges?? Or both?? Or neither?? Do the differences between imposed vs natural laws give us any clarity with regard to human rights??

Is it our "right" to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves?? Is it our privilege?? Or, is it the foundation of life itself??

Let's review some Laws:

1. The Law of Love – The Cornerstone of God's government. All of the following laws are an expression of the Law of Love.
2. Physical Laws – Gravity, Thermodynamics, Momentum, Motion, Chemical Laws.
3. Health Laws – Healthy diet, plenty of water, exercise, fresh air, 7-8 hrs sleep, etc. Note: Health laws are intimately linked to physical laws.
4. Worship Laws – By beholding, we become changed.
5. Law[s] of Liberty – Love cannot exist without freedom / liberty.

Do we have any "rights" under these sets of Laws??

Where do humans get their "moral compass" from?? Answer this question, and you will have a powerful argument against the religion of evolution.

Search "Evolution of morality" sometime, and see what you come up with. I found the results dizzying.

If, as the humanist, would have us believe, morality has evolved over millions of years, doesn't that invalidate the theory of evolution itself?? If survival of the fittest is the "norm", than morality has no



place to exist. Human's moral code is a pillar to support our being made in the image of a loving, intelligent Creator.

Sunday's Lesson – Dependence on the Creator

Consider the type of Creator we have. One powerful enough to speak our solar system into existence, yet loving/caring enough to kneel down and form man [with our infinitely complex systems – skeletal, muscular, nervous, circulatory, endocrine, lymphatic, reproductive, digestive, integumentary] from dirt, and woman from his flesh.

It stands to reason that a designer that installs so much complexity in to a creation would have recommended methods [rules] for operation, and that deviations from those recommendations would cause damage [in some cases, irreparable].

Consider the following passage from PP. This gives us some perspective on how dependent we are on our Creator.

The Levites, in their hymn recorded by Nehemiah, sang, "Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things therein, ... and Thou *preservest* them all." **Nehemiah 9:6**. As regards this world, God's work of creation is completed. For "the works were finished from the foundation of the world." **Hebrews 4:3**. *But His energy is still exerted in upholding the objects of His creation. It is not because the mechanism that has once been set in motion continues to act by its own inherent energy that the pulse beats and breath follows breath; but every breath, every pulsation of the heart, is an evidence of the all-pervading care of Him in whom "we live, and move, and have our being."* **Acts 17:28**. *It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth produces her bounties and continues her motion around the sun. The hand of God guides the planets and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens. He "bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth."* **Isaiah 40:26**. It is through His power that vegetation flourishes, that the leaves appear and the flowers bloom. He "maketh grass to grow upon the mountains" (**Psalm 147:8**), and by Him the valleys are made fruitful. "All the beasts of the forest ... seek their meat from God," and every living creature, from the smallest insect up to man, is daily dependent upon His providential care. In the beautiful words of the psalmist, "These wait all upon Thee.... That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good." **Psalm 104:20, 21, 27, 28**. His word controls the elements; He covers the heavens with clouds and prepares rain for the earth. "He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes." **Psalm 147:16**. "When He uttereth His voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and He causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of His treasures." **Jeremiah 10:13**. {PP 115.1}

Monday's Lesson – In the Image of God.



We have discussed, many times, what it means to be created in the image of God. Is there anything new we can discover??

We were given the gift of creation / reproduction. So were the mammals, birds, fish, insects, etc.

We were given dominion over the animals. Why?? What makes man so very different?? [see below].

Though formed from the dust, Adam was “the son of God.” {PP 44.3}

He was placed, as God’s representative, over the lower orders of being. They cannot understand or acknowledge the sovereignty of God, yet they were made capable of loving and serving man. The psalmist says, “Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: ... the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, ... and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.” Psalm 8:6-8. {PP 45.1}

Man was to bear God’s image, both in outward resemblance and in character. Christ alone is “the express image” (Hebrews 1:3) of the Father; but man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God. **His mind was capable of comprehending divine things. His affections were pure; his appetites and passions were under the control of reason.** He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to His will. {PP 45.2}

As man came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of lofty stature and perfect symmetry. His countenance bore the ruddy tint of health and glowed with the light of life and joy. Adam’s height was much greater than that of men who now inhabit the earth. Eve was somewhat less in stature; yet her form was noble, and full of beauty. The sinless pair wore no artificial garments; they were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear. So long as they lived in obedience to God, this robe of light continued to enshroud them.

Consider this passage:

Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. God made them free moral agents, capable of appreciating the wisdom and benevolence of His character and the justice of His requirements, and with full liberty to yield or to withhold obedience. They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, their loyalty must be tested. **At the very beginning of man’s existence a check was placed upon the desire for self-indulgence, the fatal passion that lay at the foundation of Satan’s fall.** The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden, was to be a test of the obedience, faith, and love of our parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. They were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan; but if they endured the trial, they would finally be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favor with God. {PP 48.4}

God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of the divine government, and there can be no government without law. God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. Such a course would have been contrary to God’s plan in dealing with the inhabitants of other worlds. **It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan’s charge of God’s arbitrary rule.** {PP 49.1}



The lesson references Gen 9:6. *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man.*

Is this God's ideal for humanity, or was He warning humans of consequences of certain behaviors??

James 3:9 points out the hypocrisy of blessing God's name, and cursing man [made in God's image] with the same mouth.

Tuesday's Lesson – Made of One Blood

I have found it disturbing to consider that Adam/Eve's immediate offspring produced offspring of their own [very incestuous], however, when we consider we all have the same DNA as Adam & Eve did, aren't we still brothers and sisters?? Doesn't scripture refer to us being "related" many times??

The lesson makes an excellent point: "If we ever needed proof of how far fallen we are, of how badly sin has damaged us, we have it in the sad fact that humans often treat one another worse than some people treat animals."

Have you ever watched a man get killed in a movie, and not flinch, but feel horrified when a horse falls to the ground, or a dog gets hurt?? I am ashamed to admit, I have.

Wednesday's Lesson – The Character of our Creator

Matt. 5:43-48. ⁴³ *"Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy.'⁴⁴ But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you,⁴⁵ that ye may be the children of your Father who is in Heaven. For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.⁴⁶ For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?⁴⁷ And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?⁴⁸ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect.*

Luke 10:25-37. ²⁵ And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"²⁶ He said unto him, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?"²⁷ And he answering said, "'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.'²⁸ And He said unto him, "Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live."²⁹ But he, wanting to justify himself, said unto Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"³⁰ And Jesus answering said, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment and wounded him and departed, leaving him half dead.³¹ And by chance there came down a certain priest that way. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.³² And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him and passed by on the other side.³³ But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was. And when he saw him he had compassion on him,³⁴ and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.³⁵ And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host and said unto



him, "Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee."³⁶ Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?"³⁷ And he said, "He that showed mercy on him." Then said Jesus unto him, "Go and do thou likewise."

What do these passages tell us about the character of our Creator, and how we are to represent His image??

Thursday's Lesson – Morality and Accountability.

The lesson seems to revert back to a "penal substitution" model here. How is morality & accountability linked?? How are life and breathing linked?? Conventional Christianity would have us believe we are either rewarded for doing/saying the "right" things, or punished for doing/saying the "wrong" things. The lesson states: "The difference between the two groups in Jesus' parable [ref. Matt 25:31-40 – sheep/goats] is how each person treated those who were in need."

Is that the *fundamental* difference?? Might there be some deeper difference?? What if He had said the healthy come stand on My right, and the sick stand on My left?? What is the decision Jesus makes, based upon??

ON WHETHER WE ARE A LAMB OR A GOAT, HEALTHY OR SICK. It's not some arbitrary decision made based on our behaviors. It's a DIAGNOSIS of our condition. The behaviors [right or wrong] are signs and symptoms of health or illness. The wicked [sick] would be miserable in heaven, where love is the Law. God in love, mercy, truth, and justice, gives them up to their condition and wishes.



Origins Lesson 6 1Q 2013

Creation and the Fall

SABBATH

Read memory verse: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Gen 3:15 NIV

Thoughts?

Why did God say he would *put* enmity between fallen humans and Satan?

Would humans have any desire to resist Satan if God did not specifically act to put a desire for good in our hearts?

This text, for those who believe the Bible, is a powerful text against the “natural good” we all have in our hearts. We don’t have natural good. Humans left to themselves, since the fall, cannot advance, evolve to higher levels, develop in positive lines or even be good people. All goodness comes from the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, even in those who don’t believe in God.

What do you think of this perspective from Signs of the Times?

The Lord says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." The enmity does not exist as a natural fact. As soon as Adam sinned, he was in harmony with the first great apostate, and at war with God; and if God had not interfered in man's behalf, Satan and man would have formed a confederacy against heaven, and carried on united opposition against the God of hosts. There is no natural enmity between evil angels and evil men; both are evil through transgression of the law of God, and evil will always league against good. Fallen men and fallen angels enter into a desperate companionship. {ST, July 11, 1895 par. 5}

Do you agree?

What other implications come from the memory text? Do you think Satan understood the meaning, in general terms, that God was going to contest his claim to earth and send a Savior?

Do you think Satan stood by idly for thousands of years awaiting the arrival of Jesus? Or, did Satan actively seek to obstruct God’s plan?

And what as the key to God’s plan? Jesus coming to earth – so what would be the key to Satan’s opposition? Trying to stop Jesus from coming to earth and partaking of our humanity. How might that have been accomplished? By getting 100% of all humans to permanently close their hearts and minds



to God. Would God force a woman against her will to be the mother of Jesus? Would God want a woman whose heart was hardened against him to be the mother of Jesus?

Does this give us any insight into what we see transpiring in the OT? Does it give any insight into God's actions in the OT? Was God punishing, or was God therapeutically acting to keep open the channel for the Messiah?

Read first two paragraphs, "A comic used to play..." does anyone remember this?

But, can the devil *make* anyone choose evil, choose to sin? No! This is powerful to remember – the devil can lie, twist, distort, coerce, manipulate, misrepresent, trick, pressure, tempt, but he cannot force a person to choose. He can play on our worst fears. He can, at times, orchestrate pain and suffering, but he cannot make us do anything.

Read next paragraph, "For some people..." thoughts? What do you think of this idea that the devil is a "defeated foe"?

Has he surrendered?

Has he been destroyed?

Has he been imprisoned?

If he is defeated, why are we still here? Why is there still pain and suffering? Why do we teach he is coming one day to impersonate Christ and deceive the entire world if he is defeated?

What does "defeated" mean?

I looked it up in the dictionary and there are listed three definitions:

1. listed as an obsolete definition is: Destroy
2. a: Nullify (defeat an estate) b: Frustrate (defeat a hope)
3. to win victory over: beat (defeat an opposing team)

Okay, Satan has not been destroyed, yet. His work has not been nullified, but Jesus did win a victory. So, Satan was defeated in his ability to destroy humanity, to misrepresent God throughout the universe, and to maintain his claim to earth. Because of Jesus the human race is already saved, the beings throughout the universe have already rejected Satan, and Satan knows his hold on earth is lost. However, is the war over?

Would you describe it differently, put it in a different tense?

- Satan and his cause are ultimately defeated and will one day be eliminated?
- Christ won the victory over evil forces at the Cross, but the application of that victory, in order to permanently eradicate evil is ongoing?



MONDAY

The lesson points out how the serpent took what God had said and subtly changed it to create a lie. Then asks, “How often do we face the same thing today: someone comes with teachings that, on most points but not all, are in harmony with Scripture? It’s the few points that aren’t that can ruin everything else. Even mixed with truth, error is still error.”

Thoughts?

This is an excellent point; the most effective lies are those that are mostly true. The complete falsehoods are the easiest to recognize and expose, it is the lies that are the closest to the true that are the hardest to spot. Just like any counterfeit currency, the closer to the true, the harder to spot.

So, what would happen if some agency within the federal government started printing counterfeit currency? Wouldn’t this be the most difficult to spot or recognize? In fact, might many people accept it as genuine?

So, what is the source of the most potent counterfeits or lies about God? From the government – and where did the war begin? In heaven, with whom? Lucifer who held high office in God’s government.

2000 years ago from where did Christ experience his greatest opposition? From the Romans who worshipped idols? Or was his greatest opposition from the Jewish religious authorities – from God’s representatives?

What about today? Could there be individuals in church leadership that are actually spreading lies about God?

Is it wrong to ask such questions? Should we believe that anyone who is in leadership in the church is appointed by God, or “God’s anointed” and therefore we should accept their perspectives, ideas, views, beliefs, interpretations of Scripture without studying for ourselves to know the truth?

Read the dark section midway down, “Read Matthew 12:7-9...”

You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: “ ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’ ”

Thoughts?

Is the lesson suggesting we are not to think but to take the Bible only as it reads? What about DT 14, take the tithe and buy fermented wine and rejoice before the Lord. Let’s not add any human thinking to it, let’s just take it as it reads, or should we think about it?



Is Jesus reproving them for the addition of “human thinking” to the Word of God? Interestingly, that is not what the Scripture says, it was for adding human rules, human methods, human principles. In other words, they were not adding their understanding and insights about God’s kingdom of love, but adding their selfish worldly ways and claiming it was God’s way.

What other kind of thinking are we supposed to have? Are we not supposed to read the Scripture and examine it with our “human thinking” and clarify or rightly understand it?

When we read prophecy and interpret the meaning of the symbolism, concluding that a particular beast represents a particular nation or political power, arising at a particular time, whose thinking is coming to these conclusions? And are these conclusions obvious in the text or are we adding our thinking to what is written in the text?

Last paragraph, the lesson makes an excellent point, “The problem with sin is not a lack of rules but a reprobate heart. Even in secular society, we often hear calls for more laws against crime when there are already sufficient laws in existence. We do not need more laws so much as we need new hearts.”

This is extremely well said. Have we seen this very phenomenon happen over the past few weeks? Will more gun control laws actually stop evil in our country?

Everyone of the shootings was done by someone who was breaking multiple laws including the law against murder. Does anyone really think that a person willing to commit multiple murders is going to say, “Well I was going to commit murder, but whoa, there is a law against using a gun not registered to me, don’t want to break that law, shucks, guess I won’t kill all those people.”

The lesson is right, the world is getting worse because God is being pushed aside, selfishness is gaining greater hold on more and more hearts, and men respond by piling up more and more laws, which will ultimately avail nothing.

Why do you think the Bible teaches that before Christ comes laws restricting buying and selling, unless you have the mark of the beast, will occur? Because things continue to get worse and worse, and a godless world will pass more and more laws trying to control the hearts of men. Will it work?

Can we control the hearts of men by passing laws? Can God control the hearts of men by passing laws? Do you see the problem with so much of what is taught in religion? All too often God is presented as passing laws, and then enforcing those laws upon pain of death – this is the beast system. We must stop describing God in this way!

In the bottom green section it asks, “How can we be sure that the standards and rules we apply aren’t going to lead us astray?” Thoughts?

How about by not creating concrete rules to apply in all situations, but instead we understanding the principles and live by those?



Any examples of how living by rules, without understanding the principles, results in harm, whereas principled living is healthy?

There was an old movie called Zulu, which documented the Battle of Rorke's Drift, where 156 British soldiers held off 4000 Zulu. In the early part of the film they depicted when the Zulu army attacked a British column. As the soldiers were running out of ammunition they ran to the quartermaster to get resupply, but the quartermaster refused to dispense ammunition without the proper paperwork filled out and submitted, in spite of being in the middle of a battle. He was a stickler for the rules. Needless to say they were wiped out.

Do we ever follow rules in such a way we miss the bigger picture and instead injure and harm?

I heard one health conscience person say, "I am going to following the health message even if it kills me."

TUESDAY

What do you think about the title to Tuesday's lesson, *Deceived by the Evidence*?

Is there something wrong with evidence? Is there something wrong with looking for evidence? Utilizing evidence in our decision-making?

Could the title be heard in such a way that one could misconstrue and conclude that evidence is not to be used in our religious beliefs or faith based decisions? What do you think of the relationship between evidence and faith?

I was in Salt Lake last week doing a seminar and one of the things that I have discovered about our Mormon friends is that they approach evidence differently that we do. They often will hear the evidence, but then pray for a feeling of conviction to tell them whether to believe the evidence or not. In other words, the feeling of conviction is accepted as supreme evidence despite whatever other evidence has been presented.

Here is a quote many of you have heard, do you agree with this perspective?

"God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His Word, are all established by testimony that **appeals to our reason**; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. **Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration.** Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth, will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith." *Steps to Christ* 105 (1892); *9MR* 202; compare *Education* 169



Is there a problem with evidence, or is there a problem with how one uses evidence? Is there a difference in appealing to our reason with evidence and appealing to our feelings?

So, is the title correct that Eve was deceived by evidence, or was Eve deceived by Satan, who manipulated and misrepresented the evidence?

For instance, she had the evidence of a talking serpent, who was in the forbidden tree. But was the talking serpent evidence that the tree ennobled and elevated, or that another being was manipulating the serpent? So, Eve wasn't deceived by evidence but by a misconstruing of evidence, by having only partial evidence at her disposal, and by ignoring the other evidences God has given of his generosity, love, goodness and trustworthiness.

Read second paragraph, "Eve uses three lines of evidence..." thoughts?

When did the Lord say the tree wasn't good for food? Did the Lord say don't eat of the tree because it was a bad food choice, because it was high in trans fats, because it was poisonous in some way?

One of the founders of our church had an opinion about the quality of the fruit of the tree:

The fruit of the tree of knowledge was not in itself injurious. It was used merely as a test of their obedience to God. Will they be obedient to God's requirements, or not? {9MR 232.2}

So was the problem the nutritional quality of the fruit? When Eve concluded it was good for food, this wasn't a false conclusion any more than you would conclude that the produce in the supermarket is good for food. But, when you conclude that the produce in the supermarket is good for food, does that mean you are free to take what you want and leave the store without paying? Why not? Is the question of leaving the supermarket with the produce one of whether it is good for food, or whether it is yours to take?

In fact, what would have been the point of putting a poisonous tree in the garden? If God would have done this, something that had wart covered, foul smelling fruit, would it have been much of a test for them? Or if it had been laced with cyanide, Eve eats, drops dead and Adam cries, but the sin problem is taken care of right? Wrong, because what would that prove? God poisons his creatures and now we can't trust God, Satan's allegations would be proved true, if that had happened.

What was the issue with the tree of knowledge? Wasn't the purpose to put Adam and Eve in a position that they would have to exercise their own individuality, their own intelligence, their own God-given ability to make choices and choose to remain loyal, thus develop mature character and become so settled into the truth about God and their loyalty to him that they could not be moved?

The tree was put there as a simple tool to help these free beings develop loyalty and maturity, something that could only happen by the free-exercise of their power of choice. From the book Conflict and Courage:



God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; **but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automation. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character.** . . . It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. {CC 13.3}

Read last paragraph, “We are told that Eve...” thoughts?

Why did Adam choose to eat the fruit if he wasn't deceived?

Do we have similar temptations today, being tempted to follow others when we ourselves know a better way? Why do we do it?

- Fear of rejection
- Fear of abandonment
- Fear of loneliness
- Desire to be liked/loved
- Seeking to please others
- Some confused sense of duty or obligation
- Women - believing the lie that as wife you must follow your husband's leadership, even when you are convinced your husband is wrong and going against God's will
- Others?

WEDNESDAY

Read top section, “In Genesis 3...” thoughts?

- Was this an interrogation?
- Was it an investigation?
- Or was it a gentle reaching out to reestablish contact with a loved one?

The lesson then points out that God's first declarative statement recorded in Scripture is a condemnation of the serpent not humanity, well said.

Read third and fourth paragraphs, “Notice, too, that only...” thoughts?

Is this what happened? Did God pronounce judgment upon them, or did something else happen?

What did God just promise in verse 15? That the serpent would be defeated and a Savior is coming. So, what would be the next logical thing God would do...



If God is a punishing God like Satan alleges? If God uses arbitrary imposed law like Satan alleges? Then the next most logical thing would be for him to pronounce judgments and punishments – BUT WHAT IF

God is not a punishing God and Satan lied? What if God is a God of love and life emanates from him, and his law is the protocol upon which life is built? Then after pronouncing to the serpent the coming Savior, then what would God do next? Diagnose them, describe for them the symptoms and intervene with therapeutic interventions designed to heal!

- After Adam and Eve sinned, humanity no longer naturally, automatically, sought to love one another, but instead sought to put self first.
- What effect does the infection of selfishness have upon human nature and how we treat each other?
- So, would one expect the strong to dominate the weak if selfishness rules in the heart? So when God pronounced that Eve would be dominated by Adam, i.e. women subjected to the domination of their husbands, was God inflicting this, or diagnosing and describing one of the natural consequences of what sin does to God's creation? It distorts and perverts the equality God designed. Is this God inflicting something?
- What about pain in childbirth? Inflicted by God, or result of being out of harmony with God's design and nature no longer operating as he built it to? Why did God comment on this particular result then?
- The pain of childbirth is a powerful object lesson allowing women to experience greater insight into the heart and mind of God. Knowing labor will be painful, why do women choose to have children? In the aftermath of labor, the pain of it, why do women rejoice? Is it not because of love? Doesn't love for their children overcome their pain and fear of labor to bring forth new life? Likewise the Bible says, "for the joy set before Him" Christ endured the cross (Heb 12:2). It was for our rebirth that Christ labored as a human and suffered through the cross. Thus the birthing process allows women to appreciate in a small way the pain and suffering God went through to rebirth us in newness of life and also the joy in God's heart to see us renewed.
- What about the pronouncement that Adam would have to labor to produce food from the earth? A punishment inflicted or a consequence with blessing?
- In Genesis 3:17 again God looks good as He works to save and heal mankind. In this verse our Savior is pronouncing the natural consequence which impacted nature when God's rule of love was replaced by Satan's rule of survival of the fittest as a result of Adam's abdication of his rule to the devil.
- Paul says in Romans 8:22 that all nature groans under the weight of sin. God is announcing in Genesis 3:17, that, for mankind's sake, He would not intervene to prevent the law of sin and death from impacting the earth, but the earth was now under the curse of sin. Why did God allow this? As a protection for mankind in a world of sin.
- Once Adam and Eve sinned their natural tendency was toward sin and selfishness. Industry, work, is a hedge of protection from the power of the carnal nature. Maybe you have heard the



old saying, “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop.” A powerful truth is espoused in this statement. Idleness allows the carnal mind time to wander away from the right and engage in unhealthy and destructive practices. Therefore, to protect man, to keep his time occupied, to teach self-discipline, self-mastery and diligence, God announced that it was for man’s sake that He would not stop the earth from changing.

- Further, there is a powerful spiritual lesson in allowing the curse of sin the change the earth, which was also for man’s sake. Imagine you have a garden, one you have faithfully tended and is producing a bountiful harvest. What will happen to your garden if you stop tending it? Will it continue to produce good fruit, or will the weeds come up and eventually destroy it? In a similar way, ever since Adam and Eve sinned, our minds naturally bring up weeds, selfish thoughts, ideas, and conceptions. It is Christ who works through the Holy Spirit to plant the seeds of truth in our minds. He then nurtures and protects the seeds of truth to grow into the fruits of a Christ-like character. It is by utilizing the Sword of the Spirit (which is the Word of God, the truth) that we work with Christ to weed our minds; we uproot the lies and false theories that keep us captive, and instead maintain a healthy and productive mental garden.

So, do we find that God pronounced “judgment” and inflicted punishment, or that God diagnosed accurately, then described the symptoms resulting from the natural consequences of deviation from his methods and utilized those results to provide therapeutic tools for our salvation?

We must stop presenting God in the same light as the beast of revelation. Is it not time we stand up and reject these distortions and embrace the truth about God as Jesus revealed?

THURSDAY

Read second and third paragraphs, “Thus, in Scripture...” thoughts?

What is being suggested is the good news? That we are spared condemnation? If that is the good news, what does it imply? From where does such suggested condemnation come? From God who it is suggested must judge.

So according to this view, from where does the condemnation come? From God, and Christ spares us this condemnation, so what is Christ sparing us from? Not from sin, but from God’s condemnation of sin – do you see the subtle lie built into this theory which has infected Christianity?

Here is from 27 Fundamental Beliefs:

“Christ’s self-sacrifice is *pleasing* to God because this sacrificial offering **took away the barrier between God and sinful man** in that **Christ fully bore God’s wrath on man’s sin**. Through Christ, God’s wrath is not turned into love but is turned away from man and borne by Himself.”¹

“For a loving God to maintain His justice and righteousness, the atoning death of Jesus Christ became ‘a moral and legal necessity.’ God’s ‘justice requires that sin be carried to judgment.



God must therefore execute judgment on sin and thus on the sinner. In this execution the Son of God took our place, the sinner's place, according to God's will." ⁱⁱ

Is this the gospel or is this the great lie told in heaven and to Adam and Eve and has been infecting the church since Apostolic times?

Read last paragraph, "In Revelation 14:6..." thoughts?

What is the problem with this paragraph?

It has the focus in the wrong place, this is not a description of God sitting in judgment, this is a description of God being judged by his creatures. Revelation 14 comes after Revelation 13 in which two beasts deceive the entire world, and get the entire world believing lies about God. Then the good news is to enlighten the world and we are to give glory to God because the time has come for us to judge rightly who God really is and throw off the lies of Satan.

Does anyone have any concerns or questions or reasons why they would be uncomfortable with this passage referring to God being judged by us, rather than us being judged by God?

SUNDAY

The lesson speaks of the serpent being more crafty or cunning and how Satan is the father of lies. The lesson goes on to say in the last sentence, "We must be vigilant (1Pet 5:8) in order to resist his devices."

Paul, actually goes further and say we are in a war and have divine weapons to "demolish" everything that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.

As we consider Satan's attacks, regardless of the method he uses, what is his goal? What is Satan always trying to achieve no matter what method he uses?

- Severing your connection with God
- Destroying the faculties you have that respond and interact with God

So, what are some of Satan's tools, tricks, tactics, methods to separate you from God and keep you from reconciling to God?

- Lies
 - about God
 - about yourself and your condition
 - about God's law
 - about how God deals with sin
- Antithetical beliefs (getting us to believe two things that are opposites)



- God is love but will inflict pain and suffering to punish sin
- God is love but predetermines who is saved or lost
- Symbolism without meaning
 - Power in the blood, cleansed by the blood, washed in blood
 - Covered by robe
- Faith without evidence, reason, or thinking
- Surrendering your thinking to someone else
- “Sinful Living” that damages the brain/body
- Refusal to forgive
- Others

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2-4

ⁱ *Seventh-day Adventist Believe* 27, p. 111.

ⁱⁱ *ibid.*, p. 111.



Origins: Lesson 7 1Q 2013

Through a Glass, Darkly

SABBATH

Read memory text, “The wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written; ‘He catches the wise in their craftiness.’” (1Corinthians 3:19 NIV)

Thoughts?

What *is* the wisdom of this world? In this world what is the “wise” method, action, principle of conduct?

- Survival of the fittest
- Do unto others before others do unto you
- Arm yourself and watch your back (Peter had the same philosophy, remember he carried a sword)
- Kill or be killed
- Kill them all and let God sort out the innocent
- Might is right
- If you don’t get caught it isn’t cheating
- It’s only illegal if you get caught
- Rules are meant to be broken
- Someone’s got to pay
- No good deed goes unpunished
- Justice requires punishment
- Happiness comes from winning – from beating the other person
- Happiness comes from richness – getting more than the other person
- Happiness comes from power – over other people
- Happiness comes from – gratifying self, regardless of other people

A few years back a local pastor shared the following Sports Illustrated story in a sermon:

- Olympic athletes – 1997 poll
 - It was a poll of Olympic athletes and aspiring Olympians. 198 sprinters, swimmers, power-lifters and others answered two questions:

Q) You are offered a banned performance-enhancing substance with 2 guarantees: you will not be caught and you will win your competition. Would you take it?

A) 195 – yes, 3 – no



Q) You are offered a banned performance-enhancing substance with 3 guarantees: you will not be caught, you will win every competition you enter for the next five years and, you will die from the side effects. Would you take it?

A) More than half – yes

source: Sports Illustrated, April 14, 1997

Does this sound wise to you? Is the wisdom of the world foolishness? Why?

Let's re-examine the common ideas above and consider their "wisdom."

- The strong survive
 - Based on what principle? And what does this principle actually lead to if followed?
 - Adolf Hitler practiced what principle? Those with power could dominate and destroy the weak. He not only killed Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, but all the infirmed, mentally ill, mentally retarded, elderly in nursing homes, and recidivist criminals. He wanted to purify the gene pool. He practiced the principle of evolution and wanted to use power to remove from the gene pool what he considered weak genes to create a master race. This is the theory of godless evolution carried out to its logical, moral-less end.
 - Where does this principle lead?
- Do unto others before others do unto you
 - Based on what principle?
- If you don't get caught it isn't cheating
 - Based on what kind of law?
 - If you don't get caught smoking by your mother, do you get healthier?
- Rules are meant to be broken
 - Based on what kind of law?
- Someone's got to pay
 - Based on what kind of law?
 - Do we see this in theology?
- No good deed goes unpunished
 - Based on what underlying principle?
- Justice equals punishment
 - Based on what kind of law?
 - Do we have to punish people who refuse to exercise by giving them obesity and heart attacks?
 - What happens to the criminal who injures another?
 - What is the just course of action in God's government?
- Happiness comes from winning – from beating the other person
 - Based on what principle?
 - What if you love the other person? Do parents ever let their children win? Why?



- When does the person become more important than the game?
- Happiness comes from richness – getting more than the other person
 - Based on what principle?
 - What if you love the other person? Do parents ever go without in order to provide for their children? Are they less happy when they do?
- Happiness comes from power – over other people
 - Based on what principle?
 - Do parents have power over their children?
 - And does such power make the parents happy? Or do the parents experience real happiness when their children mature to the point that the parents can relinquish such overseeing power and set them free? So happiness comes when such power is surrendered!
- From where does happiness come?
 - Healthiness – the healthier we are mentally, physically, relationally and spiritually the happier we are, the more diseased we are in these areas the more unhappy we are.
 - And what contributes to healthiness? Being in harmony with God’s design, his natural law, the law of love.
 - Then what contributes to unhealthiness? Violating God’s design
 - And worldliness is a methodology in violations of God’s law of love, thus it is foolishness.

In the memory text how does God “catch” them? In their craftiness – give them enough rope and they hang themselves. Their own methods, being out of harmony with how God built life to operate, destroys them. And they can’t figure why they aren’t happy.

SUNDAY

The title for the day is “The Earth is the Lord’s” – what do you think about the title?

This is a true statement and has significant implications to how we understand Scripture and God’s conflict with Satan.

Has the earth ever been Satan’s? Did Satan ever have “ownership” over the earth? Did Satan ever claim the earth as his? But was it his? What difference does this make?

Some theologies have ideas that when Christ came to earth to battle Satan for the salvation of mankind and the ultimate eradication of sin, that his battle with Satan included some “legal” battle for the ownership of earth. Did it?

When Satan offered all the kingdoms of the earth to Christ, saying,

I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours. (Lk 4:5-7)



was he speaking the truth? Was the world his? Did he own it? Could he give it to whoever he wanted? Or did Satan claim it was his, but it was actually Christ's?

If it was actually Christ's then was there ever a need for Christ to legally win the earth?

Where did Christ need to prove his case, in some celestial court, or in the minds of intelligent beings?

I agree with the position taken in Desire of Ages on this issue:

When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his **own purpose of deception**. Satan's dominion was **that wrested from Adam**, but Adam was the **vicegerent of the Creator**. His was not an independent rule. **The earth is God's, and He has committed all things to His Son. Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King.** Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "**The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.**" Daniel 4:17. Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits. {DA 129.4}

When the tempter offered to Christ the kingdom and glory of the world, **he was proposing that Christ should yield up the real kingship of the world**, and hold dominion subject to Satan. This was the same dominion upon which the hopes of the Jews were set. They desired the kingdom of this world. If Christ had consented to offer them such a kingdom, they would gladly have received Him. But the curse of sin, with all its woe, rested upon it. Christ declared to the tempter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." {DA 130.1}

If someone kidnapped your child, and later claimed the child was theirs, would their claim make it so?

What if your child was stolen as an infant, raised by them, and grew up believing the kidnapper was their parent, even having affection and heart bond for them. Would the child then be theirs? What would be necessary for the child to be "yours" again? And in what way do you want the child to be yours? As property you own? Or as a being that loves and trusts you?

Does this scenario have any bearing on what Christ came to accomplish?

With these thoughts in mind, let's read the third paragraph, "A favorite..." thoughts?

What do you think of this idea? Does it sound right? Does it sound close to being right, but like something is just not quite right?

- Is it true God is creator?
- Is it true all things come from him?
- Is it true that there is no more legitimate claim to ownership than creatorship? I would question this.



- Do artists, graphic designers, software designers, inventors etc. always own what they create? Is their creatorship of something the most legitimate claim to ownership?
- Did God make us in his image? Yes, did he give us the ability to procreate? Yes, so what would you think if your parent came to you today and said, “I created you I own you. Don’t argue there is no greater claim to ownership than creatorship.” Is there something wrong with this idea?

What kingdom wants to “own things”? Did the Roman empire want to “own” things, lands, properties, wealth, even slaves? Is God’s government like this?

Read next paragraph, “Not only does...” thoughts?

God could certainly take the position presented here, but does he? Does God choose to “own” us?

Imagine one day, in the not too distant future, a human creates artificial intelligence, a cybernetic entity that can think for itself, could the creator of that entity choose to set it free, and while creating it, no longer “own” it?

Does God take the position of “owning” us, or the position of setting us free?

How does the emphasis of ownership represent God? In what light does it cast his character? Does it make him seem more like a power-over kind of being, a Roman emperor type leader?

What if we view God instead as the Scripture describes him, as our Heavenly Father? Parents procreate their children, do loving parents treat their children like property owned, or in some other fashion? What light does a parent-like construct put God in?

And, where does the ownership idea put the burden of work? Does ownership make a subtle suggestion that we are obligated to God, we are his property, servants or slaves and must obey?

Where does the parent view place the burden of work? God is our Heavenly Father, and he is constantly working for our good, health, protection, development, salvation, to love and heal and restore, just like a good parent. And we respond to his tender love and care by freely choosing to obey, not obeying out of obligation to our “owner.”

But what do we do with texts that say, “you are not your own, you were bought with a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.” 1Cor 6:18,19?

Is Paul saying you are a slave, property, don’t think, don’t ask questions, don’t grow, don’t develop, just do what the Master says? Or is he saying, God loved you so much he paid the ultimate price for your salvation, don’t squander what he died to give you?

What about the idea that we are all completely dependent upon God for our existence? It is true, just like we are dependent upon oxygen, food, water, but do these own us?



Read last paragraph, “More so, we are...” thoughts?

What does it mean that death denudes life of all meaning and purpose? Maybe the lesson means any ongoing, future, meaning and purpose because one is dead. But surely not that death denudes the life the person lived of meaning and purpose?

Did Christ die? Is his life without meaning and purpose?

How about others, if they die, even the wicked in the end, will their lives be without meaning and purpose?

Did Satan’s life have a meaning and purpose? Yes, it was purposefully destructive and meant to undermine God and his kingdom of love. And did we learn something from his life? Will his death denude his life of this meaning?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “The curse on the ground...” thoughts?

From where did the curse come? It is, as the lesson states, “a result of sin”?

What happens when we deviate from God’s design from life? This is the curse of sin.

Read last paragraph, “The Flood...” thoughts?

What does this sentence imply? “God graciously promised not to curse the earth again, but the soil we have inherited is a far cry from the rich, productive soil God originally created.”

Does this suggest that the curse came from God? Did the curse come from God or from deviating from God’s design? How would you say it?

Does it make a difference if we say God inflicted the curse, rather than God permitted the results of sin to be manifested, and this is the curse and God pronounced the results of sin, but did not cause those results?

What difference does it make if we make God out to be the source of the curse?

- Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, were very unlike in character. Abel feared God. **Cain cherished rebellious feelings, and murmured against God because of the curse pronounced upon Adam, and because the ground was cursed for his sin.** 1SP 54

Who did Cain blame for the curse? And what did choosing to view God as a curser, an inflictor of curses, do to Cain’s attitude?



But from where did the problems with earth's productivity arise – from God inflicting it, or from earth deviating from God's design and being infected with Satan's principle of selfishness?

- **Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds** when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up. In the parable of the sower the question was asked the master, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?" The master answered, "An enemy hath done this" (Matthew 13:27, 28). **All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares.** {2SM 288.2}

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read question 2 – thoughts?

Is science an entirely human undertaking? Or is science, science, and can be taken up by those who reject God and want to rely only on their own minds, but can also be taken up and practiced by those who surrender themselves to God and cooperate with him for their understanding?

The duties and qualifications of a physician are not small...**Every bit possible of that knowledge that is termed science should be acquired**, while the seeker daily acknowledges that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. **Every item of experience and everything that can strengthen the mind, should be cultivated to the utmost of their power**, while at the same time they should seek God for his wisdom, their consciences illuminated, quick, and pure; for unless they are guided by the wisdom from above, they become an easy prey to the deceptive power of Satan. Counsel to Physicians and Medical Students, p. 17. {Healthful Living 255.4}

God is the foundation of everything. All true science is in harmony with his works, all true education leads to obedience to his government. **Science opens new wonders to our view**; she soars high and explores new depths; but she brings nothing from her research that conflicts with divine revelation. Ignorance may seek to support false views of God by appeals to science; but the book of nature and the written word do not disagree; each sheds light on the other. Rightly understood, they make us acquainted with God and his character by teaching us something of the wise and beneficent laws through which he works. We are thus led to adore his holy name, and to have an intelligent trust in his word.--S. of T., 1884, No. 12. {HL 286.1}

Many teach that matter possesses vital power. They hold that certain properties are imparted to matter, and it is then left to act through its own inherent power; and that the operations of nature are carried on in harmony with fixed laws, that God himself cannot interfere with. **This is false science**, and is sustained by nothing in the word of God. **Nature is not self-acting**; she



is the servant of her Creator. **God does not annul his laws nor work contrary to them; but he is continually using them as his instruments.** Nature testifies of an intelligence, a presence, an active agency, that works in, and through, and above her laws. **There is in nature the continual working of the Father and the Son.** Said Christ, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." {HL 290.1}

God has finished his creative work, **but his energy is still exerted in upholding the objects of his creation.** It is **not** because the mechanism that was once been set in motion continues its work by its own inherent energy that the pulse beats, and breath follows breath; **but every breath, every pulsation of the heart, is an evidence of the all-pervading care of Him in whom we live and have our being.** It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth produces her bounties, and continues her motion around the sun. The hand of God guides the planets, and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens. **It is through his power that vegetation flourishes, that the leaves appear and the flowers bloom.** His word controls the elements, and by him the valleys are made fruitful. He covers the heavens with clouds, and prepares rain for the earth; he "maketh grass to grow upon the mountains." "He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes." "When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures."--S. of T., 1884, No. 12. {HL 290.2}

Thoughts? What are the implications? Do you believe this to be true? Then what would happen if God were to withdraw his presence? What would happen to nature? And when God let's go, or withdraws, what is that called in Scripture? God's wrath! Could it also be called a curse? And the earth is going to feel this coming, Revelation describes it as 7 last plagues. But what would cause God to withdraw? Where is God's dwelling place on earth? Does God force his way into hearts? So what happens when humans close their hearts permanently to God? He leaves them to themselves to reap what they have chosen – which will be what?

And what about the idea that our heart beats and we breathe because of God's sustaining energy? What would this mean regarding the tree of life? Would we have life separate from God, if we could just get a piece of that fruit?

TUESDAY

Read the memory text at the top of the page, "The Lord said unto Satan, 'Whence comest thou?' Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, 'From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.'" (Job 1:7)

What do you understand is going on here and the implication this conversation?

Satan appears before a gathering of God's representatives in heaven. He seems to be alleging he is there as earth representative. What does God do? No, you don't represent earth, Job doesn't recognize you. Then what happens? And what do we learn from the story of Job?



- God is not the destroyer Satan is
- Angels can't read hearts and minds, if they could none would have followed Satan in the first place, and all would have known Satan lied about Job without Job going through what he did.
- God does know the future and the hearts of his creatures, thus he could with confidence call Job to the witness stand of the universe, knowing his testimony would be true
- The issue is over God's trustworthiness and Satan tried to misrepresent God
- And, as the last paragraph points out, Satan has the ability to affect nature and the weather causing disasters, when God removes his restraining hand. What importance does this fact have for us today?

Rev 7 describes the four angels holding back the four winds of strife and the angels are described as having power to harm the land and sea and trees. How does these angel harm? By letting go what they are holding back. Does Job give us any insight into what they are holding back?

I love this quote from one of the founders of our church, she put this pieces together and came to this conclusion, which is so different than traditional views of God, but absolutely in harmony with Scripture:

"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, reprovcs, 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.**

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and **storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work.** He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; **we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of.**" Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

thoughts? Have many conceive of God as a punishing God? In our own Bible commentary in Revelation we describe the plagues as God using his power to inflict terrible suffering and death upon his children. We must come back to the truth about God! We must reclaim the message our church was founded upon, and we must begin telling the truth about God's character, methods, principles so people can be informed of his true character so they won't be deceived by Satan's master deception, of a punishing God who must inflict torture and death.

We live in terrible times and God is waiting for the good news about him to lighten the world so minds can break free of these lies! We are privileged to take this incredible good news to the world.



WEDESDAY

The title of the day's lesson is "The 'Wisdom' of the World", read first paragraph, "As humans..." thoughts?

The lesson is right that mere knowledge, facts, information is not the same as wisdom. What is wisdom?

The dictionary says wisdom is:

- a** : accumulated philosophic or scientific learning : knowledge
- b** : ability to discern inner qualities and relationships : insight
- c** : good sense : judgment
- d** : generally accepted belief <challenges what has become accepted *wisdom* among many historians — Robert Darnton>
- e** : a wise attitude, belief, or course of action
- f** : the teachings of the ancient wise men

Which of these definitions do you like best? How would you define wisdom?

Rightly discerning and applying information to one's life in harmony with God's design, principles and methods?

The lesson points out that our knowledge in science and information has grown significantly over time, but what about our knowledge of God? Has our theology grown? Has our insight into God's kingdom, methods, and the achievements of Christ grown? And if not, why not? Why are we stuck teaching centuries old, out dated, Dark Ages views of God?

I was listening to a presentation on Revelation by Sigve Tonstad on godscharacter.com and saw this quote. It is profound. It from a book looking at the early church history, and examines the first church historian Eusebius. Note, what transpired, this is a quote:

"There are no reserves in the stilted encomium with which Eusebius closes his history, no wistful regret for the blessings of persecution, no prophetic fear of imperial control of the Church. His heart is full of gratitude to God and Constantine. And it is not only his feelings that are stirred. He is ready, with a theory, indeed a theology, of the Christian Emperor. He finds a correspondence between religion and politics... With the Roman Empire monarchy had come on earth as the image of the monarchy in heaven." S.L. Greenslade, *Church and State from Constantine to Theodosius* (London: SCM Press, 1954).

Wow, did you hear that? One of the first *church* historians recounts how the Roman system was viewed as God's method of governing heaven. This is the root of paganism in the church, the change in God's law as predicted by Daniel, and accepted by all Christian churches, including many in our own church.



This is why God waits. He waits for the gospel to go to the world. He waits for the truth about his kingdom of love to be presented. He wants for people to come to know him and reject the beastly views of God that has intoxicated the entire world!

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “Many have looked...” thoughts?

When you consider the vastness of the universe, do you grow in admiration for God, or when you consider the universe and then look around at the pain, suffering, abuse, exploitation, sin on earth, question how God could allow this, and whether God even exists?

What do you say to those who seeing evil, question the existence of God?



Lesson Study #8

Jesus, Provider and Sustainer

Sabbath's Lesson

“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 4:19, NIV.

What are the riches of God's glory?? What did Christ reveal about God's glory?

Sunday's Lesson

Just for consideration:

The stellar disk of the Milky Way Galaxy is approximately 100,000 ly (31 kpc) in diameter, and is, on average, about 1,000 ly (0.3 kpc) thick.^[2] As a guide to the relative physical scale of the Milky Way, if it were reduced to 100 m (110 yd) in diameter, the Solar System, including the hypothesized Oort cloud, would be no more than 1 mm (0.039 in) in width. The nearest star, Proxima Centauri, would be 4.2 mm (0.17 in) distant.^[nb 3] Alternatively visualized, if the Solar System out to Pluto were the size of a US quarter (25 mm (0.98 in)) in diameter, the Milky way would be a disk approximately 2,000 km (1,200 mi) in diameter, having roughly one-third the area of the United States.^[22]

^[2]Christian, Eric; Safi-Harb, Samar. "How large is the Milky Way?". NASA: Ask an Astrophysicist. Retrieved 2007-11-28.

^[22] http://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/5-8/features/F_How_Big_is_Our_Universe.html

These are some staggering numbers, but wait – it's estimated: The observable universe contains between 10^{22} and 10^{24} stars (between 10 sextillion and 1 septillion stars).^{[44][45][46][47]} To be slightly more precise, according to the Sloan Digital Sky Survey, "[by] a conservative estimate.... the currently observable universe is home to of order 6×10^{22} stars"^[1] These stars are organized in more than 80 billion galaxies, which themselves form clusters and superclusters.^[48]

Two approximate calculations give the number of atoms in the observable universe to be close to 10^{80} .

*“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.”
“For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” Psalm 33:6, 9.*

¹God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, ²hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, ³who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the



Majesty on high, ⁴ being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Heb. 1:1-4.

¹⁶ For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. Col. 1:16, 17.

The Levites, in their hymn recorded by Nehemiah, sang, "Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things therein, ... and Thou preservest them all." Nehemiah 9:6. As regards this world, God's work of creation is completed. For "the works were finished from the foundation of the world." Hebrews 4:3. But His energy is still exerted in upholding the objects of His creation. It is not because the mechanism that has once been set in motion continues to act by its own inherent energy that the pulse beats and breath follows breath; but every breath, every pulsation of the heart, is an evidence of the all-pervading care of Him in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:28. It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth produces her bounties and continues her motion around the sun. The hand of God guides the planets and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens. He "bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth." Isaiah 40:26. It is through His power that vegetation flourishes, that the leaves appear and the flowers bloom. He "maketh grass to grow upon the mountains" (Psalm 147:8), and by Him the valleys are made fruitful. "All the beasts of the forest ... seek their meat from God," and every living creature, from the smallest insect up to man, is daily dependent upon His providential care. In the beautiful words of the psalmist, "These wait all upon Thee.... That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good." Psalm 104:20, 21, 27, 28. His word controls the elements; He covers the heavens with clouds and prepares rain for the earth. "He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes." Psalm 147:16. "When He uttereth His voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and He causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of His treasures." Jeremiah 10:13. {PP 115.1}

²⁸ For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as also certain of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' Acts 17:28.

In the bottom section of Sunday's lesson, it asks: "With all this in mind, how do we understand the reality of free will and free choice?" Does the following passage give us any insight? Does the type of Law one believes in make any difference??

God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of the divine government, and there can be no government without law. God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. Such a course would have been contrary to God's plan in dealing with the inhabitants of other worlds. It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. {PP 49.1}

The law of God is as sacred as God Himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom. The harmony of creation depends upon the perfect conformity of all



beings, of everything, animate and inanimate, to the law of the Creator. God has ordained laws for the government, not only of living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything is under fixed laws, which cannot be disregarded. But while everything in nature is governed by natural laws, man alone, of all that inhabits the earth, is amenable to moral law. To man, the crowning work of creation, God has given power to understand His requirements, to comprehend the justice and beneficence of His law, and its sacred claims upon him; and of man unswerving obedience is required. {PP 52.3}

Monday's Lesson

Of course, God provided Adam & Eve with food, and garments of light, but have you ever considered God provided mankind with work for his benefit even before his fall?? Many, today, regard “work” as a four-letter word [mainly because it is], but was this the original intent??

To the dwellers in Eden was committed the care of the garden, “to dress it and to keep it.” Their occupation was not wearisome, but pleasant and invigorating. God appointed labor as a blessing to man, to occupy his mind, to strengthen his body, and to develop his faculties. In mental and physical activity Adam found one of the highest pleasures of his holy existence. And when, as a result of his disobedience, he was driven from his beautiful home, and forced to struggle with a stubborn soil to gain his daily bread, that very labor, although widely different from his pleasant occupation in the garden, was a safeguard against temptation and a source of happiness. Those who regard work as a curse, attended though it be with weariness and pain, are cherishing an error. The rich often look down with contempt upon the working classes, but this is wholly at variance with God’s purpose in creating man. What are the possessions of even the most wealthy in comparison with the heritage given to the lordly Adam? Yet Adam was not to be idle. Our Creator, who understands what is for man’s happiness, appointed Adam his work. The true joy of life is found only by the working men and women. The angels are diligent workers; they are the ministers of God to the children of men. The Creator has prepared no place for the stagnating practice of indolence. {PP 50.1}

Tuesday's Lesson

Is evil natural, as some suggest? Or is there a much bigger picture? Think about how far humanity has degraded to refer to hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, etc as “acts of God”? Not only does God get blamed for not preventing these things, He gets credited with causing them, and thus becomes the source of death and destruction in the minds of many. Satan is continually seeking to misrepresent the character of God, and in place put his own.

Job 42

¹Then Job answered the LORD and said: ²“I know that Thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withheld from Thee. ³‘Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore have I uttered what I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. ⁴‘Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak; I will question thee, and declare thou unto Me.’ ⁵I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. ⁶Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” ⁷And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath. ⁸Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer



up for yourselves a burnt offering. And My servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly in that ye have not spoken of Me the thing which is right, like My servant Job.”⁹ So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did according as the LORD commanded them. The LORD also accepted Job.¹⁰ And the LORD released Job from captivity when he prayed for his friends. Also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.¹¹ Then came there unto him all his brethren and all his sisters, and all those who had been of his acquaintance before, and ate bread with him in his house. And they bemoaned him and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him. Every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.¹² So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand sheasses.¹³ He had also seven sons and three daughters.¹⁴ And he called the name of the first Jemimah, and the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Kerenhappuch.¹⁵ And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job, and their father gave them an inheritance among their brethren.¹⁶ After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his sons and his sons’ sons, even four generations.¹⁷ So Job died, being old and full of days. Some of Job’s questions were unanswered, as are some of ours. Is this a cause for a loss of faith, or do we still have ample evidence of God’s trustworthiness?

Wednesday’s Lesson

The lesson mentions the “wind” as a tool of God’s providence. Apart from the obvious, how does the wind differ so much from rain, sunshine, flowers, animals, etc??

Read 2 Kings 20: 8-11.

⁸ And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, “What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?”⁹ And Isaiah said, “This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that He hath spoken: Shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or go back ten degrees?”¹⁰ And Hezekiah answered, “It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.”¹¹ And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD; and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the dial of Ahaz.

God apparently reversed the Earth’s rotation just to give evidence of favor to ONE man.

In Joshua 10, He apparently stopped the rotation of Earth for about 24 hrs.

Can science explain these phenomena? Does this mean that Scripture is not to be trusted, or is science inadequate in it’s explanations?

Thursday’s Lesson

Jesus is not only the provider for undamaged creation [angels, other unfallen worlds], but he sustains our damaged world. Tim refers to it as having us on life support in order for a remedy to be administered. This is a great analogy. Without his energy, humanity would have self destructed long



ago. Satan miscalculated God's love for fallen humanity. He thought that he could induce mankind to sin, and God would leave the tree of Life available, so sinful man would live forever [see PP Ch. 3]. God, in mercy, removed the tree of life, and provided a remedy for healing mankind, restoring him back to his noble pre-fall state.

Matt. 6: 25-34.

²⁵ "Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"²⁶ Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"²⁷ "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?"²⁸ And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin,²⁹ and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.³⁰ Therefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'Wherewith shall we be clothed?'³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.) For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.³³ But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.³⁴ "Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Friday's Lesson

More P&P. I love this passage.

Yet men of science think that they can comprehend the wisdom of God, that which He has done or can do. The idea largely prevails that He is restricted by His own laws. Men either deny or ignore His existence, or think to explain everything, even the operation of His Spirit upon the human heart; and they no longer reverence His name or fear His power. They do not believe in the supernatural, not understanding God's laws or His infinite power to work His will through them. As commonly used, the term "laws of nature" comprises what men have been able to discover with regard to the laws that govern the physical world; but how limited is their knowledge, and how vast the field in which the Creator can work in harmony with His own laws and yet wholly beyond the comprehension of finite beings! {PP 114.3}



Origins Lesson 9 1Q 2013

Marriage: A Gift From Eden

SUNDAY

Read Genesis 2:18: “And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him.’”

Thoughts?

Why was it not good for man to be alone? Read second paragraph, “God had declared...” thoughts?

This is well said, and the bottom of Tuesday’s lesson it says, “It is the husband’s privilege to give himself to his wife in loving service, as Christ gave Himself for the church.” This is well said.

Man was made in the image of God and Adam needed Eve, someone he could serve in order to enter into Godlike love. And Eve would receive that love and it would return to Adam in appreciative, loving care, service and regard.

This is God’s ideal for marriage what happened? What went wrong? What is the state of marriage today?

According the CDC, last survey 2002 posted on their website

- http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_028.pdf
- 28% of men and women aged 15-44 cohabitated before marriage
- 23% of women and 18% of men married without ever cohabiting.
- 15% of men and women had only cohabited (without ever marrying).
- Approximately two-thirds of first marriages lasted 10 years or more
- In contrast to marriages, only about a quarter of men’s and one-third of women’s first cohabitations were estimated to last 3 years without either disrupting or transitioning to marriage. More than half of first cohabitations were expected to transition to marriage within 3 years.
- The first cohabitations of men and women with no high school diploma or GED were the most likely to remain intact for at least 3 years, whereas the first cohabitations of men and women with a bachelor’s degree or higher were more likely to transition to marriage within 3 years.



- 8% of currently married women's husbands were not employed at the date of interview in 2002, while 15% of currently cohabiting women's male partners were not employed.
- Married persons live longer, have higher rates of health insurance coverage and lower prevalence of cardiovascular disease than unmarried persons. Research also indicates that marriage is positively associated with the health and well-being of children. Children born to unmarried mothers are at greater risk than children born to married mothers for poverty, teen childbearing, poor school achievement, and marital disruption in adulthood.
- From 1987 to 2002, the percentages of women between ages 35 and 39 who had ever cohabited doubled, from 30% to 61%. Yet studies have emerged that suggest that cohabitators do not show the same level of health benefits as married persons but may show greater health benefits than divorced, separated, widowed and never-married persons. Cohabitators also report lower levels of relationship quality and lower household incomes than married couples.
- Studies have found that persons who cohabit prior to marriage are more likely to have their marriages dissolve than those who did not cohabit premaritally.
- Studies comparing child academic outcomes and behaviors in cohabiting and married parent households conclude that children living in families where the mother is cohabiting do not fare as well as those where the mother is married.

Thoughts?

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs, "Think of the blessings..." thoughts?

Why do so many marriages fail? Why do so many people experience pain and anger rather than joy and peace?

It is suggested that if the divine principles are recognized and obeyed then marriage becomes a blessing. Could it be that people experience pain and anger because the divine principles are not being obeyed? What are those principles and what interferes with them being obeyed?

Was marriage designed by God to be an expression and experience of his law of love? Operating upon what principle?

Could marriage, after sin, have taken on a legal, imposed law, construct, in which persons now were legally obligated – both by state and distorted views of God's government?

If people operate under the natural law, law of love, construct, then what is the basis for marriage? How do such marriages function? What causes the bond? How do the partners treat each other?



If people operate under the imposed law construct, then what is the basis for marriage? How do such marriage function? What causes the bond? How do the partners treat each other?

What is love? Love is the principle of beneficence, of giving. Is there a difference in marrying to share your life, to give to love another, and in marrying because one needs to be loved?

Is there a difference in giving in love and living in fear of what the other will think, say, or do? Does love live in fear of rejection? Does love live in fear of abandonment? Does love live in fear of disapproval, criticism, or other mistreatment?

What does the church teach about the role of husband's and wives in marriage? While there is much said about equality, has it been your experience that in practice the church promotes equality between husbands and wives? What examples can you give?

Have you ever heard a pastor tell a husband he should submit to the insights and wisdom of his wife, not because she was his wife, but because she was right? Does the church, inadvertently put husbandly authority over wisdom, healthy decision making and right choices, suggesting the wife should submit to husband's leadership?

If we view God's government as a human government, with a ruler imposing law and enforcing obedience on threat of punishment, will it affect our marriages? How?

Could it result in increased Domestic Violence? If you haven't watched our lecture on DV in the church, I recommend it – Domestic Violence rates in the church are no different than those in the community at large.

But should they be? Should those who profess to be followers of Jesus abuse their spouses less than those who do not profess to follow Jesus? Then what is the problem?

2Tim 3:1-5

- But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—**having a form of godliness but denying its power.**
- Verse 6: They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women

Thoughts?



MONDAY

Read third paragraph, “But God had a reason...” thoughts? What does this idea of one flesh mean to you? What are the implications? Does the fact Eve was taken from Adam’s rib have any implications beyond marriage and into the plan of salvation?

How many intelligent species did God create on planet earth? According to Scripture, has every human being come from Adam, including Eve? The Bible teaches that human life began with Adam, and every other human life is an extension of Adam.

So, when Adam and Eve deviated from God’s design, sinned, they changed themselves. If God wants to heal this creation, to save this creation, this species, what is necessary? If Christ was not born of our humanity then he is not part of this species and the Remedy he achieved is not for us. But he did become part of our humanity, taking up our infirmities, be made like us in every way, to help human beings as the Scripture teaches. Why? Because a human being had to develop a perfect human character, any other species would not have benefited us, but benefited that species.

Thus the Bible teaches Christ is the second Adam, in other words, when we surrender to Christ, the Holy Spirit comes in and we can be transformed to partake of his character, such that we are now grafted into Christ and are part of the healed, renewed, transformed creation that comes from bonding with Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. This is described as writing the law on our hearts and minds.

What does it mean the two shall become one?

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. JN 17:20-23

Does this passage and the passage on the marriage partners becoming one have any relation?

In Mark chapter 12 the Sadducees came to Jesus and asked the question about the woman who married a man with six brothers, her husband dies and a brother marries her, and each time the husband dies until she marries all seven. They ask Jesus who will be her husband in heaven.

What do you think of Jesus’ reply? Here is the Message version of Jesus’ reply:

Jesus said, “You’re way off base, and here’s why: One, you don’t know your Bibles; two, you don’t know how God works. After the dead are raised up, we’re past the marriage business. As it is with angels now, all our ecstasies and intimacies then will be with God. MK 12:24,25



Do you think the passage in John, where Jesus prayed for all his followers to be one has bearing on this? Do you think the message goes far enough? Is it possible that in heaven we will be so united in love, that we will love others more deeply, intimately, selflessly, completely than we even love our spouses now, and everyone there will love us that much? Will there be a unity of all intelligent beings, beyond our ability to comprehend, that is like Jesus prayed for, that we will be one, AS the Father and he are one?

TUESDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “Jesus also emphasized...” thoughts?

Let’s read what Malachi had to say about divorce, Mal 2:13-16:

Another thing you do: You flood the Lord’s altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. ¹⁴ You ask, “Why?” It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

¹⁵ Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

¹⁶ “I hate divorce,” says the Lord God of Israel, “and I hate a man’s covering [his wife - margin] with violence as well as with his garment,” says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith. Mal 2:13-16 NIV

Thoughts?

What position is a healthy position for Christians to take on the subject of divorce?

Does the way we see God’s law enter the picture? If we see God’s law as imposed how do we consider divorce? It is a legal obligation, and unless someone breaks a specific proscribed “exception clause” i.e. adultery, one cannot get out of the legal binding contract. But if one breaks that clause then one may exit the relationship. If one divorces, without the legal exception having been committed, then one is viewed as sinning and themselves committing adultery.

What if one sees God’s law as the law of love? Then how does one see divorce?

Does the Bible teach God hates divorce? Why?

Divorce is like an amputation – do doctors hate amputations? Why do doctors do amputations? When a limb is gangrene and beyond saving.

What do doctors hate worse than amputations? The death of their patients.



What does God hate worse than divorce? The destruction and eternal loss of his children. Are some marriages so abusive that to stay in the marriage would destroy one or both partners?

Here is The Message version of Malachi 2:13-16:

You fill the place of worship with your whining and sniveling because you don't get what you want from God. Do you know why? Simple. Because God was there as a witness when you spoke your marriage vows to your young bride, and now you've broken those vows, broken the faith-bond with your vowed companion, your covenant wife. God, not you, made marriage. His Spirit inhabits even the smallest details of marriage. And what does he want from marriage? Children of God, that's what. So guard the spirit of marriage within you. Don't cheat on your spouse.

¹⁶ "I hate divorce," says the God of Israel. God-of-the-Angel-Armies says, "I hate the violent dismembering of the 'one flesh' of marriage." So watch yourselves. Don't let your guard down. Don't cheat. Mal 2:13-16

Thoughts?

What about the MT 5:31,32:

"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'³² But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

Thoughts? Here is my paraphrase:

MT 5:31 "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must do it legally, giving her a divorce certificate to protect her rights. ³² I'm here to tell you a deeper reality: divorce happens when love breaks down and selfishness wins. No one wants to lose a limb, but we sever a gangrenous limb to save the person, to sever a healthy limb is damaging and wrong. Likewise, anyone who divorces their spouse, except for the gangrenous situation of marital betrayal, inflicts unfaithfulness upon their spouse and whomever the divorced spouse should later marry.¹

Thoughts?

So, how do we now understand Christ's statement about God hating divorce, but God giving divorce because of the "hardness" of their hearts? Doctors hate amputations but do amputations because of the

¹ Adultery is a heart issue, as Jesus said in the previous verses. Divorcing a spouse whose heart is not unfaithful because of selfishness in one's own heart, forces the divorced spouse into a situation in which their heart still longs for their first spouse, so if they remarry their heart longs for the one they have lost, thus the new marriage is built on divided loyalties and longings – an adulterous situation.



necrosis of the tissue. Likewise, God hates divorce, but authorizes divorce when hearts are so necrotic with selfishness the option for healing is gone.

What is adultery? Is it merely physical sex, or is it betrayal of heart? Is it the failure to love your partner more than self?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “One of the greatest...” thoughts?

What do you think of the idea that God “has set some rules.”

What type of law does such a statement sound like the authors are operating under, natural or imposed?

Would you word it differently, how?

I would reword the middle sentence as follows, “That is, it’s not something we can just do with as we please WITHOUT CONSEQUENCE, God has CREATED LIFE TO OPERATE UPON UNCHANGABLE PROTOCOLS AND ONLY HARMONY WITH THOSE PROTOCOLS RESULT IN HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.

The lesson asks us to read Matthew 5:27-30:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Thoughts? What does it mean? Did you notice how Jesus defines adultery as betrayal of heart, not mere behavior? Why do churches have such trouble with understanding this? Because they have accepted the lie that God’s law and government are like a Roman emperor, imposed.

Here is my paraphrase:

MT 5:27 “You know the Scripture says, ‘Do not commit adultery.’²⁸ But I am here to tell you a deeper reality: God is concerned with character and anyone who looks on another lustfully commits adultery and corrupts their heart.²⁹ If you are vulnerable to visual temptation then throw away the media and don’t look at sensual material. You should be so resolutely committed to doing what is right that you would rather lose part of your body than lose eternal life.³⁰ And if you are tempted by what you touch, then touch only that which is good. You



should be so resolutely committed to doing what is right that you would rather lose part of your body than lose eternal life.

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “It is well-known...” thoughts?

What are the implications that unfaithful people are called adulterous? Does it give any insight into what the true nature of adultery is? What is the problem if we limit adultery to physical sex?

Why do so many people fall into the trap of reductionistic thinking and claiming that adultery is limited to physical sex with someone other than the spouse?

Read second paragraph, “At the same time...” thoughts?

What beautiful reality is this pointing toward? How is this possible? Will it be achieved by following rules? Will it be achieved by living by principles, through trust in God?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-4



Origins Lesson 10 1Q 2013

Stewardship and the Environment

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “According to Genesis 1:26...” thoughts?

Do you think Adam could affect the weather? Why or why not? Any evidence to suggest he might have had such ability?

- If he was given dominion over the planet, and if he was made in God’s image, and if they were to govern like God governs, it makes sense he would have such delegated ability
- After Satan usurped Adam’s authority from him Satan demonstrated ability to affect weather, we see this in the book of Job, but perhaps this was just some ability Satan possessed on his own, or perhaps it was authority wrested from Adam.

What are some reasons you can think of that Adam was given dominion on planet earth?

- Reveal God is not selfish and does share power, authority, ability with his creatures, including creative ability and authority to govern
- Showcase God’s character and methods in governing his universe
 - How would Adam reveal this?
 - Would Adam, before sin (even after) eat animals?
 - Would Adam have exploited the animals for gain?
 - Why not? No need, any other reason?
- Demonstrate the limitations in our relationship with God – how?
 - What limited the intimacies and shared knowledge, decision making, planning etc., between Adam and the animals?
 - Was it Adam’s unwillingness?
 - Was it an inherent inability to participate with Adam?
 - Would this teach anything about our relationship with God?
 - Which has the bigger gap, Adam and a lion, or God and a human?

Do you think C.S. Lewis’ depiction of Narnia is accurate? Do you think the animals could talk to Adam, or Adam could communicate with the plants? I read this in a book called Patriarchs and Prophets, what do you think?

The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. They were full of the vigor imparted by the tree of life, and their intellectual power was but little less than that of the



angels. The mysteries of the visible universe--"the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)--afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. The laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men's study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. **They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life.** With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that playeth among the waters to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, "the balancings of the clouds," the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night--all were open to the study of our first parents. **On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God's name was written. The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power.** They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude. {PP 50.3}

So long as they remained loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would continually increase. They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unfailing love of God. {PP 51.1}

Thoughts?

- What do you think it means held converse with leaf and flower and tree?
- What does it mean God's name was written on every aspect of nature?
- The laws of nature – what would they teach?
- What does loyalty to God's law have to do with an ability to expand one's comprehension and understanding?

As I was preparing for this week's lesson I came across an interesting quotation and wanted to read it to you and get your thoughts. It was written over 100 years ago in a magazine called Signs of the Times, Feb 1, 1899:

But since sin entered the world, men have been serving self. The world today takes much satisfaction in talking of the progress of the age. But in this God does not delight. In the antediluvian world there were many wonderful works of art and science. Fresh from the hand of the Creator, **these descendants of Adam possessed capabilities that we do not now see.** But they forgot God; and so it is today. Men have sought out many inventions; but what is the influence exerted by the improvements and the abundant facilities for intercourse that are everywhere seen? **Men have not kept God's commandments,** and therefore the railways, the telegraph wires, the cables that connect the nations and kingdoms of the earth, **have not brought the fallen world any nearer the higher world.** {ST, February 1, 1899 par. 4}

Obedience to God's law brings men into harmony with heavenly intelligences. It is the duty of each human being to offer God whole-hearted service, to strive to find the right path, the narrow way, **that leads through the gate of self-denial into the city of God.** The road that leads to death is broad, and full of indulgence; but at the end thereof is no city whose builder



and maker is God. The road that leads to heaven is narrow, and few there be that find it; for by no device can this path be made smooth or easy. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," Christ declared. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." {ST, February 1, 1899 par. 5}

Thoughts? What do you hear? Have you ever heard similar language before?

Do you hear this through the lens of imposed law, or the law of love? Which makes more sense and why?

I found it fascinating to read this through the lens of God's law of love, the protocol upon which life is built. Notice, this says that if we step outside of God's design for life, don't keep his commandments, we are not ennobled despite our intellectual inventions. Further, it is through obedience to God's law we are brought into harmony with heavenly beings – which means what? That when we harmonize with the protocols that God constructed life to operate upon we unite with the rest of God's universe. And through self-denial is the gate to God's city, which means what?

That it is by love that we enter into God's kingdom, and love is not self-seeking. This means we die to selfishness, but it doesn't mean we abuse and mistreat ourselves, it doesn't mean we flagellate ourselves or do various forms of ritualistic punishment. It means we choose to love others more than self and say no to those actions and choices that are contrary to how God constructed life to operate.

Doesn't it all make sense when we understand God's law as the law of love, the design template upon which life is built? But if we see it as many have taught it, as an imposed set of rules, enforced by a powerful governor, then what view do we get?

I read this from Review and Herald July 25, 1871, consider if the underlying problem between the two groups is attributable to how we see God's law:

Christians should be the most cheerful and happy people that live. They may have the consciousness that God is their father, and their everlasting friend. **But many professed Christians do not correctly represent the Christian religion.** They appear gloomy, as if under a cloud. They often speak of **the great sacrifices they** have made to become Christians. They appeal to those who have not accepted Christ, representing by their own example and conversation that they must give up everything which would make life pleasant and joyful. They throw a pall of darkness over the blessed Christian hope. **The impression is given that God's requirements are a burden** even to the willing soul, and that everything that would give pleasure, or that would delight the taste, must be sacrificed. {RH, July 25, 1871 par. 1}

We do not hesitate to say that this class of professed Christians have not the genuine article. God is love. Whoso dwelleth in God, dwelleth in love. All who have indeed become acquainted, **by experimental knowledge, with the love and tender compassion of our Heavenly Father will impart light and joy wherever they may be.** Their presence and influence will be to their associates as the fragrance of sweet flowers, because they are linked



to God and Heaven, and the purity and exalted loveliness of Heaven are communicated through them to all that are brought within their influence. **This constitutes them the light of the world**, the salt of the earth. They are indeed saviors of life unto life, but not of death unto death. {RH, July 25, 1871 par. 2}

Even the great God is a lover of the beautiful. He has given us unmistakable evidence of this in the work of his hands... {RH, July 25, 1871 par. 4}

God, who made the Eden home of our first parents so surpassingly lovely, has also given the noble trees, the beautiful flowers, and everything lovely in nature, for our happiness. **He has given us these tokens of his love, that we may have correct views of his character. He has implanted in the hearts of his children the love of the beautiful.** But by many this love has been perverted. The benefits and beauties which God has bestowed upon us have been worshiped; while the glorious Giver has been forgotten. **This is stupid ingratitude. We should acknowledge the love of God to us in all his creative works**, and our heart should respond to these evidences of his love by giving him the heart's best and holiest affections. {RH, July 25, 1871 par. 5}

Thoughts?

Read second paragraph, "According to Genesis 2:19... thoughts?"

Names did have great meaning in biblical times, - when were biblical times? Would that be during the times when the Bible was being written? And were the names significant because of the Hebrew culture?

Was Adam alive during the time the Bible was being written, or part of the Hebrew culture?

Adam means – man –

Eve means? Genesis 3:20 Adam calls his wife Eve, the Bible commentary states the following regarding her name:

Eve, *chawwah*. *Chawwah* means "life," and is here translated *Zoe* by the LXX [Septuagint]. It is an old Semitic form, found also in old Phoenician inscriptions, but was no longer used in the Hebrew language at the time the Bible was written. This has been suggested as indicating that Adam spoke an old Semitic language. If Moses had used a contemporary Hebrew equivalent, he would have written the woman's name *chayyah* instead of *chawwah*, but by giving the name in an unusual archaic form he shows that his knowledge goes back into the remote past. In ch. 4:1 *chawwah* was roughly transliterated *Eua* by the LXX, whence comes our English "Eve."¹

So it wasn't Adam and Eve, it was Adam and Chawwah?

¹ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 1*. 1978 (F. D. Nichol, Ed.) (235). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



So where might Moses have gotten knowledge of old Phoenician inscriptions? Could his education in Egypt have had anything to do with it? Or did God give him a direct spelling of this word?

Regardless, Eve/Chawwah means life, or mother of the living. Interesting name, what do you think?

Read last paragraph, “Adam was assigned the task....” Thoughts?

How is the environment treated today? Do we respect and care for the environment? Do we have any responsibility to do so?

What factors lead humanity to damage the environment?

- Ignorance
 - Inventions intended to help having unforeseen affects, chemicals, technology etc.
- Selfishness - greed- capitalism
 - Purposeful exploitation for gaining wealth
 - Corporate farms
 - Genetic engineering of plants
 - Deforestation
 - Strip mining
 - Ivory
- Selfishness – seeking power
 - War
- Selfishness - sport
 - Hunting animals to extinction
- Selfishness - vanity
 - Using animal products, mink etc. for self aggrandizement
- Selfishness – appetite
 - Whale hunting
- Others?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Creation of the animals...” thoughts?

No doubt it is God’s will the animals should exist – question:

- Is it God’s will the animals should be in rebellion to human beings?
- Is it God’s will the animals should exist in the condition and state we find them today?

So, while it is God’s will they should exist, what impact in our decision making does it have when we realize that nature, including the animals, are not currently in the state God created them?



Do we find, for instance, that as good stewards, we might need to kill animals?

- Rabid animals?
- Diseased animals – mad cow disease?
- Cull populations to prevent mass starvation, because no natural predators?
- Kill predators to protect neighborhoods, pets, livestock?
- What about rats, and mice?
 - Bubonic plague happened because of rats
- What constitutes an animal?
 - What about roaches, ants, termites, wasps, hornets, bees – killer bees, mosquitos, ticks, spiders, flies, fleas, lice, bacteria?

So, are there times, in this world of sin, where, as stewards, we need to kill animals?

What about using animals for food? Why or why not?

- Not God's original design
- Not as healthy than a balanced vegetarian diet
- Misrepresents God's intention with the powerful preying on the weak
- Yet, Jesus ate animals and even prepared them for his disciples, what do we make of this?
- If Jesus did it why shouldn't we?
- What is the difference in today's world that the earth 2000 years ago?
 - Pollution and industrial farming have markedly deteriorated the quality of animal products and now animal products are more toxic and harmful than 2000 years ago
 - The population is so large that we are eating animal population to extinction, many fish species have been or are almost gone in the wild.
- Are there times and situations today where it is best to eat meat?
 - What about those places in the world where mass famine, and aid agencies bring in flour, and you can eat bread and chicken, but there are no fruits or vegetables? Is it better to just eat corn cakes or wheat bread three times per day, or eat some chicken with it?

Should animals be used for research? Why or why not?

- Should a dog and monkey have been sent into space before people?
- What benefits have resulted from animal research?
 - 1880s Emil von Behring isolated diphtheria toxin using guinea pigs, leading to the development of a vaccine and the essential elimination of this disease from the human experience and winning the Nobel Prize
 - 1921 Fredrick Banting, doing experiments on dogs discovered insulin and thus the treatment for diabetes, also leading to a Nobel Prize



- 1943 Samuel Waksman discovered streptomycin and coined the term antibiotics. Corwin Hinshaw and William Feldman experimented with guinea pigs using streptomycin to cure tuberculosis. Waksman won the Nobel Prize in medicine for discovery of antibiotics
- 1940's Jonas Salk and his team used rhesus monkeys to develop polio vaccine, which has helped hundreds of millions and basically eliminated the disease where the vaccine is used. 100,000 rhesus monkeys were used to create the vaccine.
- 1940s John Cade tested lithium in guinea pigs as an anticonvulsant, but discovered the animals were calmer and it was used as a mood stabilizer, prior to this animal testing bipolar patients were treated with lobotomy and electroconvulsant therapy
- 1960s Albert Starr developed heart valve replacement technology doing experiments on dogs
- 1968 Carpentier made heart valve replacements for humans using pig valves
 - Over 300,000 people receive heart valve replacement each year from their designs
- 1970s leprosy treatment was developed using armadillos

Should animals be used in research?

Should animals be used for clothing? Why or why not? Does it depend on situation and circumstance? What were Adam and Eve's first clothes after sin? Was God not capable of providing them something out of polyester? Or at least wool?

Should animals be used for sport? Does it again depend on what sport?

- Horse and dog racing?
- Polo?
- Hunting?
- Rodeo?
- Bull fighting?
- Circuses?
- Zoos?

Here is a quotation from one of the founders of our church:

It is because of man's sin that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together" (Romans 8:22). Suffering and death were thus entailed, not only upon the human race, but upon the animals. Surely, then, it becomes man to seek to lighten, instead of increasing, the weight of suffering which his transgression has brought upon God's creatures. **He who will abuse animals because he has them in his power is both a coward and a tyrant.** {2MCP 514.2}

A disposition to cause pain, whether to our fellowmen or to the brute creation, is satanic. Many do not realize that their cruelty will ever be known, because the poor dumb



animals cannot reveal it. But could the eyes of these men be opened, as were those of Balaam, they would see an angel of God standing as a witness to testify against them in the courts above. A record goes up to heaven, and a day is coming when judgment will be pronounced against those who abuse God's creatures.--PP 443 (1890). {2MCP 514.3}

Thoughts?

Do you agree it is satanic to have a disposition to want to cause pain and to inflict suffering? Then, what about various views of God which suggest he must inflict torture and suffering upon the wicked? Wouldn't such depictions also be satanic?

What do you think of the language describing a record kept in heaven in the courts above and judgment pronounced against them etc? Is this describing reality, or using a language necessary for the audience? Who is this written to impress, the tender hearted, or those being cruel to animals? And what kind of language is necessary when dealing with such people? This is why God said in OT times, "Israel is stubborn like a mule, how can I feed them like lambs in a meadow?" and in love, he often threatened.

When you read such judicial language in Scripture, look at who is being spoken to, it is language for the primitive, the hardened in heart, those who don't know God or his methods. As Paul said to Timothy, the law was NOT given for the righteous, but for the wicked.

TUESDAY

Read fourth paragraph, "By pointing us to..." thoughts?

What significance do you find in the Sabbath? Why is it important today? Is the primary importance of the Sabbath to remind us that God - the powerful - created?

I would suggest it is not about creative *power*, but about creative *principle*. Satan hasn't alleged God isn't powerful, so pointing to God's power in creation doesn't answer the questions, nor deter Satan's war against God.

But, when we realize the Sabbath in its context - truth, presented in love, leaving us free – and, the reminder that the Sabbath points us to creation – we realize the Sabbath is an evidence of God's character of love AND calls us to remember the principles upon which God built creation to operate.

In other words, Sabbath calls us to remember *how* God built creation to operate, upon what law. When we consider creation, what is the law it operates upon? The law of love, a natural law, not an imposed law.

This is why Satan hates Sabbath – and any ecclesiastical authority that votes to change the Sabbath can only do so after it first accepts the lie that God's law is imposed. What church committee ever decided to change the law of gravity, or the law of respiration? None, because they recognize these are natural



laws and cannot be changed because they are part of how life is built to operate. If Christian groups would have remembered God's law, as revealed in creation, which the Sabbath reminds us of, they would never have consider they could change the Sabbath – for the Sabbath's existence is evidence of God's nature and character of love.

People can certainly change the day upon which they worship, but they cannot change the law God built life to operate upon, nor can the evidence given by God and embodied in the Sabbath ever be changed.

But when we suggest the Sabbath is an imposed arbitrary test of obedience, then we take this amazing evidence of God's natural law and his character of love and we twist it to misrepresent God and support Satan's attack against God.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "As we have seen..." thoughts?

When we realize that everything God created was perfect when he created it, then what does this mean when we realize we are born defective? Does it give any insight into God's hand in our individual existence? Can we lay at God's hand birth defects?

- Should people who have children born with birth defects suggest it was God's will they have such children?
- Should doctors refuse to correct congenital defects claiming God created the baby that way and who are they to counter the divine will?
- Does God create sinners? Are we born "in sin conceived in iniquity"? (Ps 51)
 - Then is God actively creating each of us?
- No, God created man with an ability to pro-create and human beings are able to use the ability to produce children in their image

Is evolution the only model that incorporates the ideas of sickness and death being part of the landscape of our eternal reality? No, Eastern philosophies teach the eternal existence of good and evil in balance. And this idea has infected Christianity with the teaching of an eternal burning hell – a universe in which good and evil exist eternally, or a God who is the source of suffering and death – thus a universe in which good and evil exist eternally within God.

The eternal dualism theology leads to fear and fear leads to selfishness. It is one of the distortions that undermines our unity with God and impairs our ability to experience genuine healing.

Read last paragraph, "Let none..." Thoughts?

Is intemperance sin? What is sin? Transgression of the law, or lawlessness, or violating the design protocols upon which life is built. So, what is intemperance? Violating the design protocol for physical



health. Is this sin? Why? Because we broke a rule and an external authority is watching, keeping a record, and will judge and punish us unless we accept Jesus payment to avoid our punishment? Or, because intemperance violates the design life was built upon? And what happens when we violate that design? We destroy ourselves leading to what? And what does sin lead to?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “We often tend...” thoughts?

How do you like this suggestion? Do you like the “obligated” language? When you accept Rome’s Imperial law construct, obligation results in what? Rebellion, here is a quotation from one of our founders:

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. **True obedience is the outworking of a principle within.** It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. **The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God.** {COL 97.3}

What do you hear? Is there a difference in doing something out of obligation and doing it out of agreement, loyalty, principle?

What is the difference?

What is someone said, it is our obligation to drink water, is it true? Why? If we insist on thinking of our relationship with God in obligatory terms, then at least do so through the lens of natural law.

Matthew 25 talks about the talents and how if they are invested a person gets more and if they are not then they are taken from the person, what does this mean? Why are talents taken if we don’t use them and why does the one who invests them get more?

This has to do with natural law and how God designed us to function. When we exercise and develop our abilities our neural circuits naturally expand and we actually develop more abilities. But when we fail to develop our abilities the neural circuits are pruned and we lose what we have. How does God look through this understanding?

But what if this is instead viewed through imposed law, then how does the parable of the talents look?

FRIDAY

Read question 1 – what is the greater gap, human to pig, or God to human? How big a condescension would it be for a human to become a pig? How big a condescension for Christ to become human?



Origins Lesson 11 1Q 2013

Sabbath: A Gift From Eden

Before we begin this lesson I wanted to follow up from last week on a quote regarding sugar and meat. This is from *Councils on Health* 152:

I frequently sit down to the tables of the brethren and sisters, and see that they use a great amount of milk and sugar. These clog the system, irritate the digestive organs, and affect the brain. Anything that hinders the active motion of the living machinery affects the brain very directly. And from the light given me, sugar, when largely used, is more injurious than meat. {CH 150.2}

Processed sugar is highly oxidizing, which means it increases the production of molecules that cause oxidative damage to the body and brain. Studies show that people who eat high sugar diets, fast foods, boxed foods, doughnuts, muffins, cookies, cakes etc. have a 40% higher rate of depression than people who don't eat such a diet.

High oxidation increases inflammation which increases risk of cardiovascular disease and accelerates aging. In our DVD set *Modern Medicine, Biblical Technology and The Brain* there is a lecture, The Aging Brain. In that lecture I document the science of aging and how oxidizing factors accelerate the aging process, including the impact sugar has on aging.

SABBATH

The lesson this week is on the Sabbath – what are the questions, issues, concerns, relevance of the Sabbath?

Any questions about which day of the week is the Sabbath?

Have any of you received emails or other correspondence targeting SDAs, using a variety of Bible texts and EGW quotes to allege that the Sabbath of the Bible is not every Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, but that the Bible Sabbath is based on the lunar calendar rather than solar?

If you haven't been subject to this yet, don't get concerned. The arguments are based on a faulty integration of disparate pieces of information, while ignoring evidence that reveal the conclusion is false.

For instance, in the Bible there are annual festivals, like Passover etc. which were called Sabbaths, and were calculated based on the lunar calendar, and Judaism also had new moon Sabbaths which were observed with each new moon.



However, there is also a weekly Sabbath, laid out in Genesis 2, at the end of seven-day creation week, confirmed in Exodus 16 during the wandering in the wilderness when Manna was being supplied for six days followed by the Sabbath for decades, and written down in the 10 Commandments. Yet, those who argue the Sabbath isn't every seventh day on Saturday attempt to use Scriptures that refer to festivals and new moon Sabbaths and apply them to the weekly Sabbath in an effort to suggest the weekly Sabbath is of no importance, or even some suggest a false Sabbath.

Further, they argue that the Bible teaches that the Sun, Moon and stars were given to determine times and seasons, therefore the Sabbath must be determined by the phases of the moon. This again misapplies Scripture and undermines the significance of the weekly Sabbath. One of the powerful evidences of the Sabbath is that its existence is not determined by astronomical factors, but as an evidence of God's character of love. To argue it is determined by phases of the moon undermines the truth of God's character and the evidences he has provided.

They also argue that the current Sabbath is based in the Gregorian calendar, not the Jewish calendar. This argument fails to realize that the Gregorian calendar is concerned with the dates of the year, not the weekly cycle, so when the calendar went into place the "date" changed but the day of the week did not. For instance, Thursday October 4, 1582, was followed by Friday October 15, 1582. The dates changed, but the weekly cycle was not affected.

Evidences for a weekly Sabbath from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday:

- Genesis 2:2
- Exodus 16
- Exodus 20 the 10 Commandments
- The Jewish people who generation after generation, in an unbroken chain of human history worship on the same Sabbath each week since Exodus 16.
- Jesus worshipped on the same Sabbath as the Jews today
- The New Testament has many Sabbath controversies, but none revolved around which day was Sabbath. All were about what activities were appropriate for the Sabbath.
 - The point being is that if the Jewish leadership was upset because Jesus healed on Sabbath, or the disciples picked grain on Sabbath – how much more conflict would have occurred if any attempts to change the day the Sabbath was observed was taking place?
- The languages of the world, many of which have Sabbath for the name of the seventh day of the week.

Arabic: *Sabet*

Armenian: *Shabat*

Bosnian: *Subota*

Bulgarian: *Sabota*

Corsican: *Sàbatu*

Croatian: *Subota*

Czech: *Sobota*

Georgian: *Sabati*

Greek: *Savvato*

Indonesian: *Sabtu*

Italian: *Sabato*

Latin: *Sabbatum*

Maltese: *is-Sibt*

Polish: *Sobota*

Portuguese: *S ábado*

Romanian: *Sambata*

Russian: *Subbota*

Serbian: *Subota*

Slovak: *Sobota*

Slovene: *Sobota*

Somali: *Sabti*

Spanish: *Sabado*

Sudanese: *Saptu*

Ukrainian: *Subota*



- Documents of history which record the historical accuracy that Saturday is the day the Jews observed when Christ was on earth, and the early Christians observed.
- The seven day weekly cycle in history – all cultures regardless of religion operate on a seven day weekly cycle – why? Because of creation week, not astronomical events.
- The admission of the Catholic Church that the Sabbath of the Bible is Saturday. “The church after changing the day of rest from the Jewish Sabbath or seventh-day of the week to the first, made the third commandment refer to Sunday as the day to be kept holy as the Lord’s day.” Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 4, p. 153.

So, if you get hit with this idea that the Bible Sabbath is based on lunar cycles, don’t be distressed, you can certainly take the time to investigate it yourself, but you will find that the arguments are convoluted, confusing, contradictory, and filled with much hyperbole, like “truth is unfolding, we should not let tradition hold us to any view” etc. which are true, but which provide no evidence for the position they are advocating.

So, moving on.

Is the Sabbath important at this time in earth’s history? Why? What difference does it make?

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has held a certain view of the importance of the Sabbath. I will read a view often promoted and would like your response. There are longer versions of this, but this gets the point across:

- The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord's memorial of creation. . . . The mark of the beast is the opposite of this--the observance of the first day of the week.--8T 117 (1904). {LDE 224.3}

Thoughts?

Any concerns or questions about these statements?

Questions:

- Is the issue in our salvation, in our preparation to meet Jesus, in our being ready to translate into heaven without seeing death as simple as which day of the week a person worships upon?
- If a person absolutely insists on worshipping on the Bible Sabbath does that guarantee they won’t get the mark of the beast?
- Those who crucified Christ 2000 years ago wanted Him off the Cross by sunset why? So they could keep the Sabbath – does that mean they had the seal of God?
- Does Satan care if a group of people worships on Sabbath as long as they worship him?
- How should we understand the statements above that we just read?

What is a mark or sign?



A symbol that stands for or signifies something else:

- The sign of the cross stands for what?
- The mark of the fish stands for what?
- The goat's head symbolizes what?
- A pentagram is a mark of what?

So:

- If someone wears a cross are they saved because it is the sign of our crucified Savior?
- If someone has a fish sticker on their car does that mean they are saved because it is a sign of Jesus?
- If someone has a goat ornament hanging on their Xmas tree, does that mean they are condemned because a goat's head symbolizes Satan?
- Or, if someone has a pentagram on their car does that mean they are lost because pentagrams can represent the demonic?
- If someone worships on Sabbath are they saved because it is a sign of God?

So, the passages we read state that the Bible Sabbath and its observance, is a sign or seal of God, whereas Sunday and its observance is a mark symbolizing the beast.

Question, are these days themselves the reality, or symbols, signs, marks of some other deeper reality, just as a fish, cross, pentagram or goat's head?

Could a person wear the flag or uniform of one country, which marks them as being a member of that country; the uniform being an external visible sign of whom they serve, but could the person actually be a traitor and fighting for the other side?

US Army Major Nidal Hasan, shot and killed 13 people at Ft Hood November 2009. Whose uniform was he wearing? Whose side was he on?

Even if we accept that the day upon which one worships can be a mark of loyalty to one side or the other, does that actually inform us of whom is on which side?

Is it possible the days mentioned are signs because they symbolize something that demarcates God's government from Satan's? Could they stand as signals, signets, of the mode of governing each side uses? Could these days, in their origin as days of worship, contain the very elements of the two types of governing – God's vs Satan's?

Keep that idea in mind and let me read a few more quotes from the same person we read earlier about the seal of God and the mark of the beast.

The third angel is to go forth with great power. Let none ignore this work or treat it as of little importance. The truth is to be proclaimed to the world, that they may see the light. {Christ Triumphant 350.3}



This is our work. The light that we have upon the third angel's message is the true light. **The mark of the beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be. All in regard to this matter is not yet understood, and will not be understood until the unrolling of the scroll, but a most solemn work is to be accomplished in our world.** The Lord's command to His servants is "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." {CTr 350.4}

Thoughts? Are we open to expand our understanding of this topic, or do we rigidly cling to a very concrete application, the literal two days of the week and fail to comprehend the deeper reality these two days signify?

Here are some more quotes:

Why are men not interested to know what constitutes the mark of the beast? Exodus 31:12-17. The Sabbath question will be the issue in the great conflict in which all the world will act a part. [How does the entire world act a part? Will Muslims give up Friday and start worshipping on Sunday? What about agnostics and atheists? Or, is it these two days stand as signs of something more, and everyone will choose one or the other of two methods, of which these days stand as symbols?] Revelation 13:4-17. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 3}

"Christ died to save sinners, not in their sins, but from their sins. [Imposed law constructs all teach that we are saved in our sins, from the legal penalty, but not saved from our sins, that we continue live sinfully until Christ returns. The truth is that God actually transforms us here and now and we stop living for self, and live loving God and others more than self] The warning given in Revelation shows us the terrible consequence of transgression. By lips that will not lie, God's law is declared to be holy, just, and good. **Our duty to obey this law is to be the burden of the last message of mercy to the world.**¹ **God's law is not a new thing. It is not holiness created, but holiness made known. It is a code of principles expressing mercy, goodness, and love. It presents to fallen humanity the character of God, and states plainly the whole duty of man.** {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 4}

"'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' This command contains the principles of the first four precepts. And 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Upon these two great principles, the Word of God declares, hang all the law and the prophets. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 5}

"These **principles** are made known by the third angel's message, which declares that **the Creator has always required and always will require obedience to his royal law.** [Why does the Creator require obedience? Why does the Creator require we breathe? Because that is how life is built to operate. Remember the law is not holiness created but holiness made known. The commandments did not impose a law, but made the law known] But this law has

¹ It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415}



been disregarded and transgressed, and is now being ignored by the churches. **Human enactments are placed where God's law should be.** Sunday, a child of the Papacy, has taken the place of God's holy Sabbath. As Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image, and set it up to be worshiped by all, so Sunday is placed before the people to be regarded as sacred. This day bears not a vestige of sanctity, yet it is held up to be honored by all. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 6}

Thoughts?

What is the implication of changing the Bible Sabbath for Sunday? What does this act mean in regard to how God and his government are understood? How can a church vote to change the day of worship? What must first happen concerning God's law? What church committee has ever voted to change the law of gravity, or the law of thermodynamics, or the law of respiration? Why don't they vote to change these?

So what does it mean if an ecclesiastical board votes to change the Sabbath? That they believe God's law is imposed, and therefore believe God is like a Roman emperor a cosmic dictator. And accepting this change in the law is the root to the beast system.

So let's review – what makes the Sabbath holy?

- What significance is it that the Sabbath was “made” or created?
 - It is not “legislated” any more than any other aspect of God's creation. The earth was made, the animals were made, angels were made, mankind was made, and the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.
- What significance is it that the Sabbath was “made”?
 - When was the Sabbath made?
 - What was happening in the universe?
- What did God do? He RESTED – what does that mean?
 - If he RESTED what was God not doing? He was no longer prosecuting His war, his case. He wasn't pressing his agenda. He wasn't intimidating. He wasn't using his power to force his way!
- It is God's Sabbath – the day He rested, the day He revealed by action how He handles opposition, how He treats enemies, how He deals with allegations and rebellion. He gives us freedom!
- What does it reveal that God created the Sabbath in the context of an assault on his right to rule?
- The Sabbath was “made” as further evidence of God's character of love, truth presented in love leaving us free. The first six days of creation week we learn God has power, but the Sabbath reveals God does not coerce or pressure or threaten with His power, but leaves us free. The Sabbath is evidence of God's character of love, established upon the principles of truth, love and freedom.
- What is the significance that the Sabbath points us to remember our Creator – could it be to remember how creation is built to operate, upon what law?



- What do we learn of God when we realize Jesus rested in the tomb during the Sabbath?
 - Do we learn the Sabbath exists because God is not like Satan alleges, that God presents truth, in love and leaves us free. Thus the Sabbath is invested with God's character of love, and it can never be removed or changed, only obscured by lies and misrepresentations.

Therefore the Sabbath stands symbolic, as a sign, of those who value God's law of love, and practice his methods of presenting the truth in love and leaving others free.

Then what is the mark of the beast?

The time has come for the true light to shine amid moral darkness. The third angel's message has been sent forth to the world, **warning men against receiving the mark of the beast or of his image in their foreheads or in their hands. To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the word of God.** {RH, July 13, 1897 par. 5}

What decisions did the beast make and what ideas did it advocate that are in direct opposition to the word of God?

That God's law is imposed, and as an imposed law it can be changed, amended, abrogated, altered, thus, under the imposed law construct Sabbath can be changed to Sunday. And, imposed laws require judicial proceedings, investigation, records, judgments, imposed punishments. Therefore, coercive pressure is used to punish law breakers and ensure obedience.

Sunday, being established upon the basis of imposed law becomes a sign or insignia or mark of those who practice such methods. So:

- Muslims, who would kidnap and kill people who believe differently, who would gain governmental power to enforce their religious law, but never worship on Sunday, are still practicing the methods of the beast and thus will receive the mark of the beast.
- Seventh-day Adventists who worship on Sabbath but teach the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience, that God's law is imposed, and God is an imperial dictator who must impose punishment, will like the Pharisees 2000 years ago, oppose the kingdom of love and receive the mark of the beast – which is what? Coming to the same conclusions about God and his law and advocate the same ideas about God!

The Sabbath, being established in the context of an assault on God's rulership, as a day filled with evidence, leaving beings free, stands as a symbol or sign of God's character of love, pointing to creation reminds us of the natural law God built life to operate upon, and pointing to the Cross reminds us of God's selflessness and his use of power.

Thus the issue in the end, of which the two days stand as signs, is the issue of God's law of love, versus Satan's imposed law construct; God's rule of love versus Satan's rule of fear and selfishness;



God's natural law versus worldly imposed laws. It comes down to the methods one practices and the two days are symbolic of two systems.

Here is another quote from the same founder who wrote the others we have read:

In striking contrast to the wrong and oppression so universally practised were the mission and work of Christ. Earthly kingdoms are established and upheld by physical force, but this was **not** to be the foundation of the Messiah's kingdom. **In the establishment of his government no carnal weapons were to be used, no coercion practised; no attempt would be made to force the consciences of men. These are the principles used by the prince of darkness for the government of his kingdom. His agents are actively at work, seeking in their human independence to enact laws which are in direct contrast to Christ's mercy and loving-kindness.** {RH, August 18, 1896 par. 2}

Prophecy has plainly stated the nature of Christ's kingdom. He planned a government which would use no force; his subjects would know no oppression. [no arrests, no detainments, no imposed punishments, no force] The symbols of earthly governments are wild beasts, but in the kingdom of Christ, men are called upon to behold, not a ferocious beast, but the Lamb of God. **Not as a fierce tyrant did he come, but as the Son of man; not to conquer the nations by his iron power, but "to preach good tidings unto the meek;" "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" "to comfort all that mourn."** He came as the divine Restorer, bringing to oppressed and downtrodden humanity the rich and abundant grace of Heaven, that by the power of his righteousness, man, fallen and degraded though he was, might be a partaker of divinity. **[which is healing and restorative, an expression of the law of love, the law life is built to operate upon]** {RH, August 18, 1896 par. 3}

Those who promote a god who acts like a Roman emperor, who imposes law, who inflicts punishment, are actively promoting the system of the beast.

Scripture is clear God's law is the law of love, an expression of God's character not an imposed law:

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.** Romans 13:10
- The **entire law** is summed up in a single command: "**Love** your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:14
- If you really keep the **royal law** found in Scripture, "**Love** your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. James 2:8
- Jesus replied: "**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: '**Love** your neighbor as yourself.' **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**" Matt 22:37-40
- In the **way of righteousness there is life**; along that path is immortality. Pr 12:28
- He who pursues **righteousness and love finds life**, prosperity and honor. Pr 21:21



- The **law** of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7

History supports the change in the law of God was a change from the natural law of love to an imposed law construct:

Peter Leithart, in his book, *Defending Constantine*, documents that Constantine used imposition of law to support the church:

[Constantine's] rhetoric against both pagans and Jews was forceful, sometimes vicious, and this, along with the *legal restrictions*, created an atmosphere that discouraged but did not destroy paganism. He Christianized public space in Rome, funded the restoration of sacred sites in Palestine and founded Constantinople... When disputes arose in the church, Constantine believed it was his right and duty as Roman emperor to guide the warring factions toward a resolution... Once the bishops had arrived at a decision, Constantine accepted it as a divine word and backed up conciliar decisions with *legal sanctions*, mainly exile for those found guilty of heresy.”¹

Notice that the church was supportive of Constantine's use of state power to promote its position and agenda in society. Where was Romans 14, “let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind.”

But even more telling is the first church historian, Eusebius:

“There are no reserves in the stilted encomium with which Eusebius closes his history, no wistful regret for the blessings of persecution, no prophetic fear of imperial control of the Church. His heart is full of gratitude to God and Constantine. And it is not only his feelings that are stirred. He is ready, with a theory, indeed a theology, of the Christian Emperor. He finds a correspondence between religion and politics... With the Roman Empire monarchy had come on earth as the image of the monarchy in heaven.” S.L. Greenslade, *Church and State from Constantine to Theodosius* (London: SCM Press, 1954).

So what is the mark of the beast?

Regarding God as the beast does and using the methods of the beast – which is teaching God imposes laws, and as an imposer of law must impose penalties, and therefore must be appeased. And using power to coerce and punish those who disagree.

Examples:

- Inquisition
- Burning people at the stake, both Catholic and Protestant
- Salem witch trials
- Islamic Sharia Laws enforced by governments

Here is another quote from one of the founders of our church, consider it in light of what we have presented:



Be sure the Sabbath is a test question and how you treat this question places you either on God's side or Satan's side. The mark of the beast is to be presented **in some shape** to every institution and every individual.--Ms 6 1889, p. 6. (Written Nov. 4, 1889.) {3MR 189.2}

Thoughts about this?

How is the Sabbath a test question? It is to be presented in some shape to every institution... Is it which day merely, or is it what the day symbolizes, what the day signifies in regard to God, his character and method of governing?

Now in light of what we have thus far studied, consider these quotes:

As I was preparing the lesson for this week, reading many sources, I came across this, what do you think?

As the work of God's people moves forward with sanctified, resistless energy, planting the standard of Christ's righteousness in the church, moved by a power from the throne of God, the great controversy will wax stronger and stronger, and will become more and more determined. Mind will be arrayed against mind, plans against plans, principles of heavenly origin against principles of Satan. Truth in its varied phases will be in conflict with error in its ever-varying, increasing forms, and which, if possible, will deceive the very elect. . . . {CTr 361.3}

What is the Great Controversy over? Have we seen this played out in our own experience? Do we see a battle over God's character ongoing right now?

WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY

Read Wednesday third paragraph, "The scoffers..." and Thursday fourth paragraph, "Also, look at the theme..." thoughts?

What do you understand the judgment taking place before Christ comes to be?

Read Daniel 7:20-22, 25

I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. ²¹ As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom... He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws.



Who is the little horn? What does it mean he will war against the saints? What law does he try and change? How has he succeeded? And he succeeds until when?

The above rendering is from the NIV which many, who assume the legal model, prefer. But does the meaning of the passage change when we read from the King James Version?

Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment **was given to the saints** of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Daniel 7:22

Which translation is more accurate? The Hebrew word translated “pronounced” actually means “to give” or “to impart” and thus the KJV would be more accurate in this context. Why do the saints of God need judgment (another word for **discernment**) imparted to them? The Daniel text tells us the horn warred against the saints and was defeating them. What kind of warfare was going on?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Cor 10:3-5

What kind of war? Where is it being fought? This is a war between truth and lies, centering on God’s character, and being fought in our minds! Amazingly, Paul makes the connection to the cleansing of the Temple even closer and shows how the Temple is connected to this war going on in our minds:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s **temple**, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:1-4

Paul is describing the exact same events as Daniel 7 in which evil powers war against the saints and oppose God. In the aftermath of Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, did this man of lawlessness ride into heaven overthrow God, set himself up in God’s temple in heaven, and proclaim himself to be God? No, where did this happen? In the Spirit Temple! In our minds! **Therefore, the cleansing of the temple, as described in the Bible, is the cleansing of our minds from the lies about God**, which wins us back to trust and results in our cleansing from sin.

And what is kept in the Most Holy Place? Consider this description written by Ellen White:

The temple of God was opened in heaven, and I was shown the ark of God covered with the mercy-seat. Two angels stood one at either end of the ark, with their wings spread over the



mercy-seat, and their faces turned toward it. This... represented all the heavenly host looking with reverential awe toward the law of God which had been written by the finger of God. Jesus raised the cover of the ark, and I beheld the tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written. I was amazed as I saw the fourth commandment in the very center of the ten precepts, **with a soft halo of light encircling it.** Said the angel, **‘It is the only one of the ten which defines the living God who created the heavens and the earth and all things that are therein. When the foundations of the earth were laid, then was also laid the foundation of the Sabbath.** ... The man of sin who exalted himself above God, and thought to change **times and laws,** brought about the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. In doing this he made **a breach in the law of God.** Just prior to the great day of God, **a message is sent forth to warn the people to come back to their allegiance to the law of God** which antichrist has broken down. Attention must be called to the breach in the law by precept and example. **I was shown that the third angel proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, represents the people who receive this message and raise the voice of warning to the world, to keep the commandments of God and his law as the apple of the eye,** and that in response to this warning many would embrace the Sabbath of the Lord.” {LS80 236.3}

What do you hear? Do you hear this through imposed law or natural law?

Do you hear that this is a symbolic description of a people who have embraced the law of love, who have surrendered to God, who practice his methods of Truth, Love and Freedom and thus have the law written on their heart – the Most Holy Place of the Spirit Temple – and this is symbolized by the Sabbath, which God made to reveal his methods. Thus the cleansing of the Temple, is the establishing of God’s law in the heart of believers, when they make the right judgment about God and his law of love. And the man of sin fights against this with imposed law constructs, even if the law imposed is the Sabbath of the Bible.

MONDAY

Read Deuteronomy 5:12-15:

“Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. ¹³Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. ¹⁵Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

Why the difference here than Exodus a memorial of Creation?



In the setting of the Great Controversy, over two forms of governing, what would be the purpose of emphasizing the deliverance from Egypt?

What governmental type of system did Egypt employ? And what happened to the decedents of Jacob in Egypt under this type of government?

Does delivery from this form of governing play into the purpose of the Sabbath and reveal anything about the two kingdoms?

Read Exodus 31:13:

Then the Lord said to Moses,¹³ “Say to the Israelites, ‘You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy.

How is a Sabbath a sign that God makes us holy? What is a sign? What does the Sabbath reveal? What type of law is being described when God says he will “make us holy”? Do you notice it doesn’t say “I will declare you holy”?

The “declare holy” idea stems from the beast system, the system in which we have an imposed law by a supreme dictator, who, when appeased, declares holiness which does not actually exist.

But, under God’s natural law of love view, we realize we are actually out of harmony with God and his design protocols for life. When we come back to a knowledge of God, and surrender to him freely, he actually gives us new motives, desires, attitudes, a new heart and right spirit, he “makes” us holy – literally, such that we are in harmony with him. We love God and others more than self.

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses on Jesus and how he observed the Sabbath. It contrasts how the religious leaders criticized the disciples for picking grain on Sabbath, but Jesus found no fault.

Do you see two different law constructs underlying the response of the Pharisees and that of Jesus? Who was operating on imposed law? Who was operating on natural law?

When Jesus healed on Sabbath did he heal only emergencies? Why did he heal conditions that had persisted for decades on Sabbath? What was the point?

To expose that the falsehood of imposed law constructs, rules that must be enforced are revealed to be wrong. That the Sabbath is a day made to live in harmony with God’s kingdom of love – and love works to heal, save, and restore is revealed to be right.

¹ Leithart, Peter, *Defending Constantine*, Intervarsity Press 2010, p. 302-303.



Origins Lesson 12 1Q 2013

Creation and the Gospel

SABBATH

Read memory text, “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” (1Cor 15:22, NIV).

Thoughts?

What does it mean that in Adam all die? What are the possibilities?

- Adam transgressed the law and was sentenced to death and all his children are born under his death sentence
- Adam actually changed his nature such that without divine intervention his condition is terminal and all his children are born with the same terminal condition?

Does it make a difference how we understand the meaning of “in Adam all die”? And does it make a difference regarding how we understand what Christ came to do?

If we choose the first option, that Adam was condemned legally and sentenced to death and all humans are under a legal death sentence imposed by God, then what will we think Christ came to do?

If we choose the second option, that Adam actually changed his nature to be out of harmony with the way life was designed to operate, and we are “born in sin, conceived in iniquity” a terminal condition, then what will we understand Christ came to do?

Origen of Alexandria who lived 185-254 CE, was a leading Christian thinker of his day and wrote extensively in defence of Christianity, in particular in rebuttal of philosophical attacks against Christianity, that criticized Christians in believing in a God who would allow himself to be crucified. The philosophy of Rome was that God is like a Roman emperor and no intelligent person would believe in a God like Jesus. One of the chief antagonists to Christianity was a man named Celsus who wrote a scathing rebuke of Christianity in the second century. He viewed God as Sovereign and that only a fool would believe God would allow himself to be abused. Celsus said:

It is mere impiety, therefore, to suggest that the things that were done to Jesus were done to God. Certain things are simply as a matter of logic impossible to God, namely those things which violate the consistency of his nature: God cannot do less than what it befits God to do, what it is God's nature to do. Even if the prophets had foretold such things about the Son of God, it would have been necessary to say, according to the axiom I have cited, that the prophets were wrong, rather than to believe that God has suffered and died.¹

¹ Celsus on the True Doctrine, 100.



What view of God is he presenting? God as Roman emperor and over the next few centuries the church rejected the Bible's view of God and accepted Rome's, which is Satan's view of God.

Origen countered Celsus and said,

*However, although we have boldly and rashly committed these few remarks to writing in this book, perhaps we have said nothing significant. But if anyone with the time to examine the holy scriptures were to collect texts from all the sources and were to give a coherent account of evil, both how it first came to exist and how it is being destroyed, he would see that the meaning of Moses and the prophets with regard to Satan has not even been dreamt of by Celsus or by any of the people who are dragged down by this wicked daemon and are drawn away in their soul from God and **the right conception of Him** and from His Word.²*

If one believes Celsus, that God rules like a Roman emperor, and yet try to fit the Bible teaching into Celsus' philosophy, then what will they teach Christ came to do? Pay a legal penalty!

If one believes like Origen, that God is like Jesus, a being of love, and refuse to try and conform the Bible to Celsus' philosophy, then what will they believe Christ came to do? Heal and restore his creation! Notice what Origen wrote:

*We certainly do not deny that free will always will remain in rational natures, but we affirm that the power of the cross of Christ and of his death which he undertook at the end of the ages is so great that it suffices **for the healing and restoration** not only of the present and the future but also of past ages. It suffices not only for our human order, but also for the heavenly powers and orders. For according to the Apostle Paul's own pronouncement: Christ has made peace 'through the blood of his cross' not only with 'the things on earth' but also with 'the things in heaven.'³*

The lesson references 1John 3:8 that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil; what do you understand those works to be?

- Satan is the father of lies, did Christ come to destroy lies?
 - How?
 - By revealing the truth – about what?
 - God, himself, exposed Satan as liar, demonstrated nothing wrong with the way God built humankind, that obeying rules without love makes enemies, why death comes and from where
- Satan is a murderer from the beginning, the author of death, did Christ come to destroy death?
 - How?

² *Contra Celsum* 6.44.

³ *ComRom* 5.10.16, books 1-5, 5.10.16; trans. Thomas P. Scheck; *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 103 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 377.



- By destroying the infection of selfishness in humankind and restoring God's law of love, the protocol for life back into humanity
- Satan works to efface the image of God in man and put Satan's image where God's should be;
 - "The life of Christ is to be revealed in humanity. Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; **but Satan has labored to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image.**" Lift Him Up 48.
 - Did Christ come to destroy the work of Satan and restore the image of God in man?
 - How? By developing a perfect character

Did you notice that the lesson states that sin causes separation from the Father? This is well said and quite right!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "As we all know..."

How did they "fall" into sin?

What is sin? Why is it sin? How did Satan get them to fall into sin?

Why does sin bring death?

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
- This is a terminal condition – out of harmony with how life is built to operate

Read second paragraph, "God held a trial..." thoughts?

Did God hold a trial? Which lens is such a view looking through? The lens of imposed law.

These ideas are evidence that those who hold it have accepted Rome's view of God's law. That God's law is imposed and as the imposer of law he must hold trials, he must investigate, he must hold accountable, he must punish...

But it is all distorted because the law is not imposed. God's law is the law of love, emanating from his character and is the protocol upon which life is built.

Thus, this is not a trial, but a manifestation of grace, a reaching out to reconcile, a gentle intervention to bring hope and healing.

God had been lied about – Adam and Eve had believed Satan's version of God's character, that he is selfish, restrictive, mean, unforgiving, severe.



What we see here is NOT God holding a trial to get them to take responsibility, but God gently approaching them to demonstrate that he IS NOT condemning them nor seeking to punish them.

God is the one on trial and God's actions demonstrate he is not the trial judge. "Adam, who told you you are naked? You didn't hear me finding fault and pointing out your problems. That's coming from your own conscience."

Read last paragraph, "Death came in a most..." thoughts?

What lens does this view look through? The lens of imposed law – and who does this view have as being the source of death?

Can someone provide a Bible text that says an animal died?

Notice everything said in this paragraph is supposition, it is surmised, it is imagined, it is NOT from the Bible. God provided the skins, but nowhere in Scripture does it say God killed an animal. Nowhere! That is all read in, from finite human minds who, having accepted Satan's version of God's law, believe God must be the cosmic executioner and therefore God killed the animals, and since the animals represent Jesus, God killed his Son on the cross.

This is false! Which is harder for God to do, create a living animal, or create an animal skin? Given all the explicit and detailed and particular description of animal sacrifice throughout the OT, including Abel's sacrifice, do you really think it was an oversight that the Bible didn't include God killing an animal to provide skins, if in fact God did kill the animal?

If we stick to the Bible, then God provided animal skins, but God did not kill the animals. God provided His Son as our Savior but God did NOT kill his son.

Are you sick of this world? Are you tired of all the sickness, disease, suffering and death? Are you longing for Jesus to come? Why do you think he hasn't?

Jesus said, "When the gospel of the kingdom shall be taken to the entire world as a witness to all nations then the end will come." What kingdom? The kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of love.

I suggest the reason Christ has not returned is because Christianity has accepted a lie about God's law, that it is imposed, rather than the law of love, and having accepted that lie, has taken a false gospel to the world in which God is portrayed as a killer, an executioner, the source of death. This is not the gospel and God is waiting for us to take the truth about him to the world.

Lest you think I make this up, here are a few quotations, all from our church, which we believe has a special mission to take the truth about God to the world in order to lighten it for Christ's return.



“For a loving God to maintain His justice and righteousness, the atoning death of Jesus Christ became ‘a moral and legal necessity.’ God’s ‘justice requires that sin be carried to judgment. **God must therefore execute** judgment on sin and thus on the sinner. **In this execution the Son of God took our place, the sinner’s place, according to God’s will.**” (*Seventh-day Adventist Believe* 27, p. 111).

And this has led to theologians writing things like this:

“Why did **God the Father choose** a cross to be the instrument of death? Why did He not choose to have Christ instantly beheaded or quickly run through with a spear or sword? **Was God unjust in executing judgment on Christ with a cross** when He could have done it by beheading, a noose, a sword, a gas chamber, a bolt of lightning, or a lethal injection?” (Whidden, W., *Ministry Magazine*, February 2007. <http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2007/February/sinners-in-the-hands-of-god.html>.)

In the December, 2007 issue of *Adventist Review World*:

“One of the fundamental problems of the Moral Influence Theory is that it rejects the substitutionary nature of Christ’s death. The idea that **God had to kill the innocent** instead of the guilty in order to save us is considered a violation of justice.” (emphasis mine). (Rodriguez, A., *Adventist World Review*, December 2007; p. 40).

From one of our own Bible study guides the following:

“The Hebrew wording in both Leviticus 9:24 and 10:2 was the same: ‘and fire came out from before the Lord and consumed.’ (9:24, *NKJV*). Consumed what? In the first case, the offering; in the other, the sinners. What a powerful representation of the plan of salvation. **At the Cross, the ‘fire from God,’ the wrath of God, ‘consumed’ the offering, and that was Jesus.** (Goldstein, C., *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, 3 Quarter 2011, Pacific Press, p. 40).

Did God execute His Son on the Cross? Did fire come down from heaven and consume Christ? Or was Christ murdered at the instigation of Satan and unholy men? Is God the source of killing, execution, and death, or does death arise from sin? The idea that God requires sacrifice to assuage, appease, or propitiate His wrath is pagan and Isaiah prophesied we would misunderstand what Christ did just that way:

“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, **yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.**” Isa 53:4

How can Christ return when this lie about God is permeating the world? When our own church promotes such ugly distortions about His character, and when leaders show no interest in changing the message going forward?



TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “All throughout...” thoughts?

This is well said, God’s response has been redemptive and loving.

What about the idea that Adam and Eve didn’t understand the full meaning of what they had done? Did you notice the first paragraph in Sunday’s lesson it said, “They had been warned, and they understood what they had been told.”

Did they understand, really understand, or did they not understand?

Here is a section from one of the founders of our church, notice the progression of what is being described, from Desire of Ages p. 761,762:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.** [Whose argument is this? What kind of law is Satan describing God’s law to be?] When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. **God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner.** {DA 761.4}

If we stop right here many Christians get confused, they don’t see a problem with Satan’s argument. In fact, I heard one pastor actually say that this statement by Satan isn’t false, that Satan was stating a truth here. Why? Because they are stuck under the imposed law construct and this argument is from that viewpoint. If you believe God imposes law and rules like a Roman emperor, then Satan’s version of things will sound right.

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. **Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will.** This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. [Why not? If the problem is legal, why would Christ pay Satan’s legal debt? If the law is imposed this would make God out to be restrictive and selective in who he is willing to save. Christ would die for humans but not angels. But when we understand the truth, that God’s law is the design for life, then we realize a being can so damage themselves that no amount of truth or love will have any impact on them. They are terminal. This is what happened to Lucifer.] But man was **deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry.** The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. **For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** {DA 761.5}



Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. **The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition.** [Why can't the law be changed to meet man in his fallen condition? Because it is the protocol upon which life is built] God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1}

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. [Why does the law require a righteous life, perfect character?] He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a **free gift** to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have **remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** [What does imposed law constructs say results in forgiveness? A legal payment of Christ's blood] More than this, Christ **imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very **righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What is being described? Healing and restoration!

Do you see the difference between an imposed law construct which distorts God into a cosmic executioner and the law of love which has God as our loving Savior seeking to heal and restore?

WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph, "On the cross..." thoughts?

What law is the lens such a paragraph is based upon?

Did the standing of Christ change before the Father?

What was Christ's standing before the Father prior to the Cross, during the Cross and after the Cross?

It depends on the law one uses to look at these issues. If one accepts Rome's imposed law, then Christ had a legal status change from innocent Son, to guilty sinner, and God executed his Son, and the Son died in our place, then rises again as the innocent Son. Honestly, it is a very weird and bizarre twist of the mind to even conceive of such a thing.

If one understands the truth that God's law is the law of love, then one sees that Christ is the means whereby God achieves his goal of restoring humanity back into unity with Himself. Thus, Christ's standing never changes with the Father, Christ is constantly the avenue, vehicle, means whereby God achieves His healing goal. Consider this quote:



As a remedy for the terrible consequences into which selfishness led the human race, God gave His only begotten Son to die for mankind. How could He have given more? In this gift He gave Himself. "I and My Father are one," said Christ. By the gift of His Son, God has made it possible for **man to be redeemed and restored to oneness with Him.** "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **Love is the great principle that actuates unfallen beings.** With amazement the angels behold the indifference that those who have light and knowledge manifest toward a world unsaved. The heavenly host are filled with an intense desire to **work through human agencies to restore in man the image of God.** They are ready and waiting to do this work. The combined power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is **pledged to uplift man from his fallen state.** **Every attribute, every power of divinity has been placed at the command of those who unite with the Saviour in winning men to God.** O, that all would appreciate the truth as it is in Jesus. O, that all would love God in return for the love wherewith He has loved them. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 4}

Sin has extinguished the love that God placed in man's heart. The work of the church is to rekindle this love. The church is to co-operate with God by uprooting selfishness from the human heart, placing in its stead the benevolence that was in man's heart in his original state of perfection. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 5}

What was Christ's standing? He was God's Remedy to sin! He was God's remedy before, during and after the Cross!

The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead,** who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. **It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer.** It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. **Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.** Christ has given **His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.** {DA 671.2}

When we understand Christ is the remedy to sin, did Christ's standing with the Father change?

How can the church rekindle God's love in man if it continues to misrepresent God's law, character, methods and government?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, "In that thick..." and compare this with the last paragraph on Wednesday, "On the cross..."



Thoughts?

Read and discuss question 4, “Critics...” thoughts?

If we believe in a healing model – shouldn’t Christ have understood beforehand what was required of him, what he would need to achieve, and what the outcome would be – i.e. he would rise again? Yes, he did know, and he told his disciples repeatedly he would rise again.

But, if we hold a imposed law, penal legal model, this isn’t fair, because in that model death is supposed to be eternal, and the penalty must be paid. Those with the legal model have a problem when the fact that the penalty of eternal death has not been paid, because Christ rose from the grave. So they make another bizarre and weird twist of the mind in order to pretend their legal model works. They say that Christ thought he was going to die eternally and because he felt and thought it then it was the same as dying eternally. And thus, they find questions like this difficult.

I do believe, in his humanity he didn’t see through the portals of the tomb. He knew he would rise again by faith and trust in his father, but experienced the same human emotions of fear and uncertainty that we struggle with. Thus his human experience was like ours. Yet his human experience of emotional turmoil was NOT like ours in that he was not ignorant of his father, nor his father’s plan, methods, principles, laws. Christ’s mind did NOT operate in the darkness of Satan’s imposed law construct.

This means, that though Christ emotionally felt the anguish, fear, turmoil of separation from his father he UNDERSTOOD who he was, why he was here, what was happening and why and that this was necessary for the healing and restoration of humanity and ultimate elimination from sin.

Just as a person who understands that a dislocated finger needs to be reduced, they have fear, they have anxiety, they experience pain, they are tempted to pull back, they don’t see the future in any miraculous vision, but by faith in their knowledge of the laws of health and the doctor that is going to reduce the dislocation, choose to surrender to the intervention, understanding the ultimate outcome.

Our Savior was intelligent, wise, and loving. He knew what was happening and why, and he chose to go through the horrors of the cross because he KNEW what he would accomplish by it!

MONDAY

Sin and Death – did you read the lesson for the day? Did you find help in understanding the connection between sin and death?

The last paragraph was the most helpful, “If life comes...” thoughts?

This is well said – what a contrast to the idea that God has to execute.



THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “The great news of the...” thoughts?

First question, what is the gospel? Is the great news that Jesus died for our sins, or that God is not who Satan says he is?

Why was Jesus’ death necessary for our salvation? How would you describe it, given all we have discussed today?

Read last paragraph, “Indeed, the person who...” thoughts?

Can you describe what Christ came to achieve in different words?



Origins 1Q 2013 Lesson 13

Creation, Again

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “One thing...” thoughts?

The lesson reports that in the science view “the same cold and mindless forces of chance” that brought the world into existence will destroy it.

Are they suggesting that the world is destroyed instead by an intelligent force?

Are they suggesting God is the destroyer?

Perhaps not because I do like how the lesson expressed it in third paragraph, “The new creation...” Thoughts? Isn’t this well said, “sin brings death and suffering and God’s law is the law of life”?

I have had many conversations with people who will say in one moment the law of God is the law of life, and sin brings death, but at the next moment talk about God punishing and destroying. So...

Who does Inspiration teaches is the destroyer?

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. **He was a murderer from the beginning**, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (JN 8:44)

I like to examine how our church founders saw things. Consider some of these quotations, who is the destroyer – do you agree?

Satan is the destroyer; the Lord is the Restorer. The Lord has not worked as a **physician** in the way that He desires to work, because, He says, **Ye will not come to Me**, that I may give you life. **We look to every source for relief except to the One** who proclaimed over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, “I am the resurrection, and the life.” . . . {CTr 239.2}

Jesus Christ is the Restorer. Satan, the apostate, is the destroyer. Here is the conflict between the Prince of life and the prince of this world, the power of darkness. . . . The world’s Redeemer did not design that His purchased inheritance should live and die in their sins. What, then, is the matter? **Why are so few reached and saved? It is because so many of those who profess to be Christians are working in the same lines as the great apostate. They let Satan devise and plan for them.** He makes them apostates, disloyal to God, **rebels against His precepts and laws...**{CTr 247.2}



What do you think this might look like – working in the same lines as the great apostate?
What might it look like if Satan devises and plans the work?
Could it look like doing mission work, sending missionaries?
Could it look like building hospitals and schools?
What religious organization has the largest church run health care system in the world? The Catholic Church. What religious organization has the second largest church run healthcare system in the world? The SDA church.
What religious organization has the largest church run educational system in the world? The Catholic Church. What religious organization has the second largest church run educational system in the world? The SDA church.
What does it look like to work in the same lines Satan works, to let him devise and plan the work?
Could this be referring to embracing the same ideas about God's law and government that Satan devised? That God imposes law and imposes penalties? That sin must be punished, as Satan had urged?
Could this be referring to Christians accepting penal models of atonement with a wrathful God?
What happens in the mind if we accept lies about God's law?
What happens in the character if we believe God must punish?
Does Satan care if we run schools and hospitals as long as we enslave people into a fear based, self-centered religion of works that fails to transform the life and heal the heart?

I received an email this week from a friend in LLU. He told me that the Adventist Theological Society is going to be doing a presentation on the atonement in Loma Linda this weekend. He forwarded me this from their online journal:

Many world religions teach that when their gods are angered by the misbehavior (sin) of their followers/worshippers, the gods need to be appeased—usually through sacrifices. In this way the wrath/anger of the god or gods is turned away from the worshipper, and the god or gods are no longer displeased. This is called propitiation. **[do you see the basis of paganism, the idea of appeasement, an angry wrathful god who must have something done to him to turn anger and wrath away from the sinner?]**

But in Christianity, the sinner is doomed to face the wrath of God against sin. God gave Christ, however, as a substitute for the sinner. Because Christ carried our sins on Himself at the cross, He faced the wrath of God for all sinners. He became the propitiation for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2; 4:10) and therefore met the demands of divine law and justice.

His death satisfied and appeased a God who hates sin and is radically opposed to it. His holiness and justice demand that atonement be made to change the condemned condition of the sinner, who faces the wrath of God. **Ikechukwu Michael Oluikpe** (Perspectives Digest, A Publication of the Adventist Theological Society, vol 18, issue 1)

<http://www.perspectivedigest.org/article/91/archives/18-1/god-s-loving-wrath>

Thoughts?



Do you hear any difference in the two gods being described? Both are angry, both are wrathful, both require something be done to the god in order for the god not to lash out and destroy the sinner. Yet the so called Christian version has a god who would be willing to vent his wrath on an innocent so that the guilty could get off. It is even more disgusting and revolting than the typical pagan view. Think about it – a human king has laws, if you break them he uncompromisingly will punish – but, there are penalties you can pay and if you pay those taxes, tariffs, fines, you can have your sins pardoned. But there is another king, he also imposed a law, and he is unwilling to allow any taxes or fines to pay him for your sin, but what he is willing to do is find an innocent person and torture them and kill them and allow the guilty to claim, that act of wrath and venting of fury be applied to the account of the guilty.

Which is a more horrendous view of God?

I thought a lot about this passage this week – and I noticed one reason this is so appealing to some and so offensive to others. If you focus on God, His character, how He is being portrayed, whether He is kind and trustworthy or presented on another light, then such portrayals are offensive and rejected.

But if you focus on self, focus on your fear of punishment, focus on how one can get out from under one's problems and escape from execution, then this penal model has appeal. Hey, I can be wicked, I can sin, I can do bad and all my sins are placed on Christ and he gets punished for me – cool. I get off.

When we consider the two antagonistic principles at war – God's character and law of love versus Satan's character and law of fear and selfishness, it becomes obvious that this penal model is built on fear and selfishness. It is exactly pagan. It is Satan's view of God and it infects our church, our minds, our families and the lies must be destroyed by the truth!

Here are a couple of quotes from early Adventist pioneers. The first is by EG White, the second by George Fifiel:

Determined to keep the people in deception, the priests of Baal continue to offer sacrifices to their gods and to call upon them night and day to refresh the earth. **With costly offerings the priests attempt to appease the anger of their gods;**" PK 124

Did you notice this description is that baal required appeasement, and what did the ATS article say Christ died to do? "**His death satisfied and appeased a God** who hates sin and is radically opposed to it." This is baal worship.

At the 1897 General Conference Session of Seventh-day Adventists, Pastor George E. Fifiel, Secretary of the New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, gave a powerful sermon on this subject. Here is an excerpt:

"In Christ Jesus we...[are] the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone... This is as near to the Lord as we can get. This is the at-one-ment; this is why he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, that he might do that for us by breaking down all those things which separate hearts



from hearts, both human and divine. Notwithstanding this, we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted [Isa 53:4]. That was what we thought about it. **We said, God is doing all this; God is killing him, punishing him, to satisfy his wrath, in order to let us off. That is the pagan conception of sacrifice.** The Christian idea of sacrifice is this. Let us note the contrast. ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ That is the Christian idea. Yes, sir. Indifference keeps, hatred keeps, selfishness keeps... But love, and love only, sacrifices, gives freely, gives itself, gives without counting the cost; gives because it is love. That is sacrifice, whether it is the sacrifice of bulls and goats, or of him who is the Lamb of God. It is the sacrifice that is revealed throughout the entire Bible. **But the pagan idea of sacrifice is just the opposite. It is that some god is always offended, always angry, and his wrath must be propitiated in some way.**

“If it is an ordinary case, the blood of bulls and goats will suffice; but if it is an extraordinary case, the blood of some innocent virgin or child must flow; and when the god smells the blood, his wrath is appeased. We talk of pagan immortality, pagan Sunday, pagan idolatry, etc.; **but it seems to me that the lowest thought is that men have brought this pagan idea of sacrifice right into the Bible, and applied it to the sacrifice of the cross. So the Methodist Discipline uses these words: ‘Christ died to reconcile the Father unto us,’ that is, to propitiate God so that we could be forgiven – paganism straight out.** Why, brethren and sisters, it is the application of the pagan conception of sacrifice to the sacrifice upon the cross, so that that wonderful manifestation of divine love, which God intended should cause all men, all beings in the universe, to wonder and adore, has been turned around and made a manifestation of wrath to be propitiated in order to save man. (1897 General Conference Daily Bulletin Sermon Series number 1)

Thoughts? What view of God is presented in the ATS article?

With such a view it is no wonder some teach God is the destroyer.

THURSDAY

In Thursday’s Lesson it talks about how sin broke down relationships, our relationship with God and with each other. After sin, man was afraid of God, Adam blamed Eve, Cain killed his brother, and people have been fighting each other since.

God has a plan to restore us to relationship – and notice before he comes there is a prophecy about restoring relationships – consider this and the connection in light of what we just studied regarding baal worship:

See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; Mal 4:5,6



What does this text have to do with restored relationships? What message would Elijah have that would restore relationships?

What undermines relationships?

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust – Satan lied about God and the lies about God broke our relationship with Him and each other.

The Elijah message, the message to go to the world before Christ comes will be a message that turn the hearts of people to each other again – how? Could it be by presenting the truth about God character and methods of love, which removes fear and restores trust and love?

What did Elijah call the children of Israel to do? To stop worshipping Baal, and who was Baal?

Baal was the son of El (i.e. El-ohim or El-Shaddai). He was the god of weather. Often called, ‘Almighty’ and “Lord of the Earth.” Baal was the god who brought rain, thunder, lightening, who fertilized the earth, controlled the sun and brought the harvest. Baal fought the great serpent leviathan as well as battled against Mot, the god of death. And most amazing of all, it was taught that Baal died in his battle with Mot and was resurrected from the dead to bring life to earth. ¹

So what was the problem with worshipping a god who was the “husband and protector of Israel,” the son of El, who controlled the weather, who brought rain, sunshine, and fertility, who blessed with full harvest, who warred against the great serpent and death, who died and was resurrected to bring life to the earth? What was wrong with this god? What was Elijah opposing? What made Baal worship false?

That they had to provide sacrifices to appease the anger and wrath of Baal – the view in which Christ died to appease his Father is Baal worship and God is calling for a people to reject it, present the truth, demolish the lies that break love and trust and turn the hearts of the parents back to the children.

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Truth believed restores trust and opens the heart to love

- Broken love and trust results in fear and selfishness
- Restored trust results in love flowing in the heart

- Fear and selfishness results in acts of sin
- Restored love and trust results in acts of righteousness

- Acts of sin destroy
- Acts of righteousness heal

Who is the destroyer? Here are few more quotes:



Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows. When he was suffered to afflict Job, how quickly flocks and herds, servants, houses, children, were swept away, one trouble succeeding another as in a moment. **It is God that shields His creatures and hedges them in from the power of the destroyer.** But the Christian world have shown contempt for the law of Jehovah; and the Lord will do just what He has declared that He would—**He will withdraw His blessings from the earth and remove His protecting care from those who are rebelling against His law** and teaching and forcing others to do the same. Satan has control of all whom God does not especially guard. **He will favor and prosper some in order to further his own designs**, and he will bring trouble upon others and lead men to believe that it is God who is afflicting them. {DD 33.3}

Thoughts? What is being described? Why would God withdraw his protective hand?

Upon coming up out of the water, Jesus bowed in prayer on the river bank. A new and important era was opening before Him. He was now, upon a wider stage, entering on the conflict of His life. Though He was the Prince of Peace, His coming must be as the unsheathing of a sword. **The kingdom He had come to establish was the opposite of that which the Jews desired.** He who was the foundation of the ritual and economy of Israel **would be looked upon as its enemy and destroyer...** {DA 111.3}

The Saviour's glance seems to penetrate heaven as He pours out His soul in prayer. Well He knows how **sin has hardened the hearts of men**, and **how difficult it will be for them to discern His mission**, and accept the gift of salvation. [Do we still today have hardened hearts and have difficulty discerning his mission? Do we still see God and Jesus as the destroyer?] He pleads with the Father for **power to overcome their unbelief**, to break the fetters with which Satan has enthralled them, **and in their behalf to conquer the destroyer.** He asks for the witness that God accepts humanity in the person of His Son. {DA 111.6}

Who is the destroyer? What does Satan destroy?

Satan destroys truth, freedom, goodness, health, and life, and brings death –

But doesn't the Bible teach God also destroys? What does God destroy?

- Christ took human flesh that “by his death he might **destroy** him who holds the power of death, that is the devil” Heb 2:14
- “by his death he **destroyed** death and brought life and immortality to light” 2Tim 1:9,10
- By his death he might “**destroy** the devil’s work.” 1John 3:8

Let's compare and contrast:

Satan destroys truth; God destroys lies and brings truth

Satan destroys freedom; God destroys slavery and brings freedom



Satan destroys goodness; God destroys wickedness and brings righteousness
Satan destroys health; God destroys sickness and brings health
Satan destroys life; God destroys death and brings life!

How does one destroy lies – with truth – who is the source of truth?

Jesus!

How does one destroy slavery – with freedom – in whom is our freedom found?

Jesus!

How does one destroy wickedness – with righteousness – who is our righteousness?

Jesus!

How does one destroy sickness – with health – who is our Physician?

Jesus!

How does one destroy death – with life – and who is the resurrection and life?

Jesus!

So, in the end, when God destroys all that Satan brought, how does He do it? Does He do it by using power to inflict pain and suffering? NO! That is Satan's method. He does it by being Himself, full and unveiled. Listen to this:

The people who rejected Christ were soon to see their city and their nation **destroyed**. Their glory would be broken, and scattered as the dust before the wind. **And what was it that destroyed the Jews?** It was the rock which, had they built upon it, would have been their security. **It was the goodness of God despised, the righteousness spurned, the mercy slighted. Men set themselves in opposition to God, and all that would have been their salvation was turned to their destruction.** All that God ordained unto life they found to be unto death. In the Jews' crucifixion of Christ was involved the destruction of Jerusalem. The blood shed upon Calvary was the weight that sank them to ruin for this world and for the world to come. So it will be in the great final day, when judgment shall fall upon the rejecters of God's grace. **Christ, their rock of offense, will then appear to them as an avenging mountain. The glory of His countenance, which to the righteous is life, will be to the wicked a consuming fire. Because of love rejected, grace despised, the sinner will be destroyed.** {DA 600.2}

What do you understand this to mean?

How and why does destruction come to the wicked?

How did the crucifixion of Christ result in their destruction of those who rejected Jesus?

How was it that the salvation despised was that which destroyed them?

What happens in the hearts of people who reject Christ? To those who crucified him? Their hearts harden, they become more selfish.

What kinds of behaviors to such people engage in? Would they be peaceful, kind, gentle people, or would they be violent, rebellious, unruly?

What did the Jews do after the crucifixion and under the Roman rulership? They rebelled and what did that result in?



What was the cause of their destruction? Their own rebellion which resulted from their hardened hearts because they rejected Jesus.

Had they accepted Jesus they would have been renewed and lived in peace, seeking to love others and minister to the Romans. Just as Paul counseled the NT church to do. And that would not have resulted in their destruction as a nation.

Then how do we explain the persecution of Christians?

The persecution of Christians was the persecution of individuals, inspired by Satan to destroy all those who would not follow him.

That persecution was brought about by the growth in Christianity and by the selfishness and jealousy and fear in the hearts of the non-Christians in power, not because the Christians were antagonizing and inciting conflict.

Further, the persecution against the Christians was not targeted at a nation, and national sovereignty wasn't affected by that persecution.

So, how was it the Jewish nation was destroyed? By what? **“the goodness of God despised, the righteousness spurned, the mercy slighted”**

Will it be different in the end or the same? Here is another quote:

God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. [What law?] The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation, [What is that boundary?] and the Lord withdraws His protection, and leaves them to the mercy of the leader they have chosen. Satan will have power over those who have yielded themselves to his control, and he will 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. [What winds are let loose?]** The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old. {Mar 275.3}

In the midst of the time of trouble--trouble such as has not been since there was a nation--**His [God's] chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God's saints. [Is that referring to eternal or temporal destruction?]** {Mar 275.4}

What is the cause of the destruction of the wicked? Unremedied sin! God's love despised, his methods rejected, his salvation and healing spurned, which results in what?

Why doesn't God just use His power to transport people into heaven anyway?

The sinner could not be happy in God's presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. The spirit of unselfish love that reigns there—every heart responding to the heart of Infinite Love—would touch no answering chord in his soul. His thoughts, his interests, his motives, would be alien to those that actuate the sinless dwellers there. He would be a discordant note in the melody of heaven. **Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy.** {Hvn 65.3}



It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them.—SC 17, 18. {Hvn 66.1}

What law is described at work here? Natural law, it is the actual condition of the person that determines their destiny, not a decree on the part of God!

MONDAY

From dust to life – the lesson talks about God creating Adam from dust, breathing into him the breath of life and Adam became a living being, and then at death Adam returning back to dust.

But it also points out in that the Scripture describes a resurrection in which people will live again. Question – will the people who live again, who are resurrected be the same people, with their own identities, individualities, characters?

Did Adam’s character, individuality exist before God breathed into Adam the breath of life?

So when Adam died and his body returned to dust what returned to God? Was it the same “breath” that God breathed into Adam, or modified in some way so that it was uniquely Adam?

The Hebrew word translated “breath” that God breathed into Adam is the Hebrew *neshamah*, the same “breath” of life the animals receive. (Gen. 7:21, 22; Eccl. 3:19) And, when a person dies there is “no breath [*neshamah*, life] left in him” (1 Kings 17:17). But, interestingly, even though this “breath” is no longer in the dead body, the Scripture uses a different word to describe what returns to God at death.

Ecclesiastes tells us that, at death, the *ruach* returns to God who gave it. (12:7) *Ruach* occurs 377 times in the Old Testament and is translated “breath” of the body 33 times as in Eze 37:5. So, on the surface, one could argue that God gave the “breath” of life and at death it returns to God. Yet, *ruach* is also translated as “spirit” or vitality 76 times (Jdg 15:19), “courage” (Jos 2:11), “temper” (Jdg 8:3), the seat of emotions 3 times (1Sam 1:15), moral character 16 times (Eze 11:19), and the “mind” 9 times (Eze 11:5). What this suggests is that the “breath” given to Adam became personalized and what returns to God is more than just life energy, it is the individuality of the sentient being.

Jesus said in Matthew 10:28 don’t fear the one who destroy the body, but cannot destroy the soul. The Greek for soul is ψυχή *psuche*, from where we get “psyche,” which is the root for words like psychiatry and psychology, and it means the individuality or consciousness of the person. And in first Thessalonians chapter four Paul says:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall *asleep*, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that *God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him*. According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, *will*



certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and *the dead in Christ will rise first. After that,* we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (vs 13-17) (emphasis mine)

Did you notice Paul says when God returns he *brings with him* those who have fallen asleep – they are asleep, but they are with Jesus and he brings them with him. What does this mean?

Could it mean the breath that return to God at death was more than life energy, that it was the unique identity of the person?

Perhaps this quote from one of the founders of our church will help:

Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. **The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character.** God in His own time will call forth the dead, giving again the breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend. There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him. {6BC 1093.2}

This is exactly consistent with the Bible which uses the Hebrew *Ruach* as both breath and character.

How do you put all of this together? Consider a computer, with wireless backup to a server – if someone kills the hardware, and you get a new computer, connect it to the server and download your unique data, you have just resurrected your computer.

The Bible teaches that the Lamb's book of life is some storage device where the "names" of the righteous – what is the name symbolic of in the Bible? Character, where the characters of the righteous are stored. So when Christ returns he brings with Him the heavenly "server" "Lamb's book of life" and downloads the "characters" of the righteous into new bodies and they live again!

What is the implication when we put this together with the idea of destruction and God's actions in the OT?

What does the Bible teach is the wages of sin? Sleep awaiting resurrection, or eternal non-existence?

Who has died eternal non-existence? No one! Not even Jesus! He didn't have to because He destroyed death, the infection of sin and cured humanity thus he rose again, with His same character and identity. This same Jesus, the Bible says.



It is only if you accept Satan's version of God's law that it is imposed, that god must be appeased that one has to teach Jesus died the second death, because the penalty must be paid etc. But when we accept the truth, that God's law is the law of love, the design protocol upon which life was built to operate, then we realize Christ didn't come to appease His Father, but to cure and heal mankind. His death was the means of eliminating the infection of sin and cleansing the species, thus He rose again with His perfected character intact!

So, if no one has died the eternal destruction that is the wages of sin, what is the implication for the OT? God has not "destroyed" anyone! God, may have put some people to sleep – but sleep is not destruction!

Because God will not violate freedom, will not coerce, will not inflict punishment for sin, some go to extremes and suggest God never uses might or power for any reason. This is not true. God doesn't use might or power to heal to restore trust, but he does use might and power – in the same way a doctor does, or a loving parent does, in order to heal and protect.

A doctor may amputate to save, a doctor may commit someone against their will or medicate an insane person not punish but to protect and restore to sanity. A parent may discipline, God disciplines those he loves. And a parent may use the power of the state to incarcerate those out of control, not to punish, but to protect – all involved including the criminal.

TUESDAY

Read the first and second paragraph, "Adam was..." thoughts?

Any questions or concerns about what is stated?

What about the idea that "Jesus won back the earth from Satan's dominion"?

Any questions about this?

Is the earth Satan's legally? Who is the ruler of earth? God – how about after the fall?

When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his own purpose of deception. Satan's dominion was that wrested from Adam, **but Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator. His was not an independent rule. The earth is God's, and He has committed all things to His Son.** Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, **Christ still remained the rightful King.** Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "**The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.**" Daniel 4:17. **Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits.** {DA 129.4}

Christ didn't "win back" the earth from Satan – he won back the minds of intelligent beings from Satan's lies and is winning back human beings from distrust of him. But the earth has always been his.



God has permitted Satan to have some authority and freedom on earth to demonstrate his principles and methods. Thus on earth today we live in a dualistic pocket of reality – a pocket of reality in which two antagonistic principles are operating in conflict with each other?

But this is artificial – it is not how God created the universe and only exists because God actively sustains this artificial pocket of reality in mercy to give humans opportunity for healing, to win us back to him!

Read last paragraph, “Those who are saved...” thoughts? What does it mean that we will be given authority as kings and priests?

How does Christ rule? By service – by love, by self-sacrifice, which means will are given authority to love others more than self, to rule by the law of love, to humble ourselves to serve others. This is what we will do in heaven!

WEDNESDAY

More restoration – what more will be restored than we have already talked about?

What about our pets, animals?

And how will they relate to one another?

What animals are you looking forward to petting the most?

FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “And the years...” thoughts?

A non-dual state, a state in which only good exists and no evil.

¹ Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary (3rd ed.)* (108).

Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press. Carthage, a history, Serge Lancel, p194

Miller, Patrick (2000), *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays*, Continuum International Publishing Group, p. 32. [ISBN 184127142X](#)

Moscatti, Sabatino (2001). *The Phoenicians*, Tauris, p. 132. [ISBN 1850435332](#)

Walbank, Frank William (1979). *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Volume 2, Clarendon Press, p. 47

Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary (1976) [ISBN 0-310-23560-X](#).

In 1899, the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article *Baal* by W. Robertson Smith and George F. Moore states:



Major Lessons from Minor Prophets Less 1 2Q 2013

Spiritual Adultery (Hosea)

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY GUIDE

Read first two paragraphs, “The mind...” thoughts?

Do you think the word “sin” is overused to the point we become unresponsive, or wrongly responsive to it? “How did we get in this mess? Sin” – does that really say anything?

What is sin? Answers I have heard over the years include:

- Doing bad things
- Bad stuff
- Disobeying God
- Breaking the Commandments
- Transgression of the Law
- Failing to love
- Not having faith
- Selfishness

Would it be important to have a healthy understanding of what “sin” is?

In the second paragraph when it says, “humans sin – therefore humans die” what do you think of this?

When the disciples asked Jesus, who sinned that this man was born blind? What did Jesus say?
Neither.

Humans sin therefore they die – do newborns commit sin? Do unborn fetuses commit sin? Do they die?

Do we die because we commit sin, or do we die because we *are born sinful*?

We are born in sin conceived in iniquity (Ps 51:5)

Is there a difference from having a sin condition, and actually committing sin?

Who chose for you to be a sinner? Did you make that choice?

We were born this way because we are descended from Adam and Adam changed himself.



So, back to the question – what is sin? “transgression of the law” or being deviant from the way life was designed to operate. Sin is disharmony with God’s character, law, methods, principles, and design protocols of love. And being out of harmony with the way life is built to run results in what? Death!

So humans die because we sin, or another way to say it is, because we have a condition that is terminal and without remedy naturally results in death.

But if we have the idea that sin is an act first and that bad act results in imposed death – then we are on a different plane of understanding.

This same idea underpinned distorted ideas about God 2000 years ago. Health and wealth was thought to come from God and sickness and disease and poverty was thought to be evidence of curse from God. In other words both positives and negatives were believed to be imposed by God, which means they believed in what kind of law? Consider this quotation what do you think?:

It was generally believed by the Jews that sin is punished in this life. **Every affliction was regarded as the penalty of some wrongdoing**, either of the sufferer himself or of his parents. **It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God's law, but this truth had become perverted.** [Why does all sin result in suffering? From where does the suffering arise? How had the idea become perverted? Is the suffering from sin inflicted by God?] **Satan, the author of sin and all its results, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God,--as *punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin.*** [Do we still here this preached today?] Hence one upon whom some great affliction or calamity had fallen had the additional burden of being regarded as a great sinner. {DA 471.1}

Thus the way was prepared for the Jews to reject Jesus. [What prepared the way for the Jew to reject Jesus?] He who "hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" was looked upon by the Jews as "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;" and they hid their faces from Him. [How many Christians teach today that God was the one striking His Son at the Cross? Are Christians preparing to reject Jesus a second time by accepting the same lies the Jews did?] Isaiah 53:4, 3. {DA 471.2}

God had given a lesson designed to prevent this. The history of Job had shown that **suffering is inflicted by Satan, and is overruled by God for purposes of mercy.** But Israel did not understand the lesson. The same error for which God had reproved the friends of Job was repeated by the Jews in their rejection of Christ. {DA 471.3}

Thoughts?

Read paragraphs 3-7, “Yes, humans die...” thoughts?

What is it God does for us that we could not and cannot do for ourselves?

How does he save us from death?

What is the cause of death? Do you see this question takes us back to the two laws?



If we believe in an imposed law and a god in the image of a Roman emperor then we believe the cause of death is a “just” inflicted execution by the ruler of the universe. And Jesus came to appease the wrath of God and pay the legal penalty.

But if we believe the law is the design protocol upon which life is built, then we believe death is the result of being out of harmony with God and His design. Then we realize Jesus came to reveal the truth to break the bonds of deception and win us to trust, destroy death by curing humanity’s sin condition, and restoring the image of God in man!

So the introduction concludes nicely with, “The message is that God wants to save us from our sins, to save us from the devastation that sin, rebellion, and disobedience bring. Over and over in these books we see the Lord pleading with His people to repent, to put away their sins, to return unto Him, to find life, not death, salvation, not damnation, hope, not despair.”

Let that be our focus this quarter

Spiritual Adultery (Hosea) Lesson 1

SABBATH

Let’s start our reading Hosea 1:4-11:

⁴ Then the LORD said to Hosea, “Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. ⁵ In that day I will break Israel’s bow in the Valley of Jezreel.”

⁶ Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, “**Call her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them.** ⁷ Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God.”

⁸ After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. ⁹ Then the LORD said, “**Call him Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.**

¹⁰ “Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘**You are not my people, they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’** ¹¹ The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited, and they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel. Hosea 1:4-11

Let’s now read the memory text:

I will plant her for myself in the land;
I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’ (Lo-Ruhamah)
I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ (Lo-Ammi) ‘You are my people’;
and they will say, ‘You are my God.’” Hosea 2:23



Thoughts?

What was Hosea's life supposed to teach?

Do we see the life of Hosea acting out more than just the Jews? When Gomer has children not from Hosea – do we see the type of God accepting people into his family that were not of Abraham?

Why is the idea that the promises made to Abraham are fulfilled in the Christian church more appealing than the idea that genetic descendants of Abraham are still going to fulfill those promises?

- The problem of sin and its solution is a human race problem, initiated in Adam and solved in Christ. Abraham and his descendants are a small subset of this larger human family tree, but “God so loved the world...”
- Jesus told the genetic descendants of Abraham that their father was Satan – why? Because Jesus taught it was about character not genetics.
- If God chose people for salvation based on genetics it would make God out to be a racist
- Martin Luther King Jr. said: “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”
- Do you think Martin Luther King Jr. was wrong? Do you think Jesus would say to Mr. King, well actually, character isn't what's important, it's whose genes you have.

What kind of God does it make God out to be to teach that genetic descendancy has some advantage, or that God has some different path to salvation other than Jesus for the genetic descendants of Abraham?

Gen 18:18 Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and **all nations** on earth will be blessed through him.

Which means what? That *the* descendant of Abraham, Jesus, will bring salvation for all human beings, “For God so loved THE WORLD...”

ISA 42:6 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness;
I will take hold of your hand.
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles,

ISA 42:7 to open eyes that are blind,
to free captives from prison
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

Thoughts?



ISA 56:3 **Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the LORD say,
"The LORD will surely exclude me from his people."**

And let not any eunuch complain,
"I am only a dry tree."

ISA 56:4 For this is what the LORD says:

"To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,
who choose what pleases me
and hold fast to my covenant--

ISA 56:5 to them I will give within my temple and its walls
a memorial and a name

better than sons and daughters;

I will give them an everlasting name
that will not be cut off.

ISA 56:6 **And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD
to serve him,**

to love the name of the LORD,
and to worship him,

all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
and who hold fast to my covenant--

ISA 56:7 **these I will bring to my holy mountain
and give them joy in my house of prayer.**

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, "There are important..." thoughts?

What is adultery? Is it different in marriage than with God?

Is marital adultery physical whereas adultery with God is with the heart Or is marital adultery also with the heart?

How does the Lord handle our adultery with Him?

- He forgives
- He seeks to restore
- He pleads, begs
- He warns – of what?
- He lets go to reap pain and suffering
- He rescues and pleads and loves and forgives and leave free
- And lets go to reap pain and suffering
- And refuses complete reconciliation until the heart is healed.

MONDAY



Continues the issue of spiritual adultery - What is spiritual adultery? How did the Jews commit spiritual adultery? What did they do?

Read the second paragraph, “The prophet Jeremiah...” Thoughts?

The lesson suggests that idolatry is viewed as spiritual adultery – what do you think? Consider this quotation from one of the founders of our church:

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

Do I need to review any of the quotes from last week’s lesson? Do we have a problem with idolatry today? Do we have a problem with spiritual adultery today, every bit as serious as the Jews did?

Read third paragraph, “The expression...” thoughts?

Is it possible for us to use God’s gifts in a way that works against God’s cause? How?

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Hosea chapter two:

- 1 Say of your brothers, ‘My people,’ and of your sisters, ‘My loved one.’
- 2 Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts.

What do you understand this to mean?

- Is it talking about Gomer or the people of Israel or the Christian Church or all of humanity or all of it?
- Why are they not husband and wife?
- What is implied by unfaithfulness from between her breasts?
What lies below the breast? The heart – is it suggesting that the issue of unity, of genuine marriage, intimacy is a heart bond, and they have not united their hearts with God?

- 3 Otherwise I will strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born; I will make her like a desert, turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst.



Thoughts? What does this mean?

- Will God inflict this or is this an expression of what happens to the soul separated from God?
- When Revelation describes Laodicea as wretched, poor, blind and naked, is it speaking physical nakedness? What about here in Hosea?
- When Jesus told the woman at the well to ask him for living water so she would never thirst again, was he speaking of H₂O? What about in this text?

4 I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery. “

What does this mean?

- Does is say God does not love her children?
- Or is God not able to show his love because such blessings would be misused, would be misunderstood, would be taken as evidence of blessings from the false god and solidify her children in rebellion against God?

5 Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.’

6 Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way.

What does this mean?

- Does God actively inflict harm, or is this a description of the natural consequences built into reality that occurs when we step out of harmony with God’s design?
- What happens to the drug addict? The porn addict? The adulterer? The smoker?
- When we violate God’s law do we reap consequences that hurt like thorn bushes?
- And if we thrash around, frantic to free ourselves to we get confused, lost, overwhelmed, and unable to find our own way?
- Is this an infliction or the natural result of choosing to live out of harmony with God’s design?

7 She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, ‘I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.’

What is being described?

- Reality bears in and despite frantic efforts to find peace in the ways of the world, there is no peace, and joy cannot be caught there.
- So the awareness leads to a conclusion – what?
- To go back to her husband, in this case God – but what is the motive?
- Does she go back because she has come to love God? Or because she realizes she gets better treatment with him? So the motive to return is still selfish.



- This is how we all come to Christ, we come to him broken, hurt, beaten down, frustrated with self and the world, discouraged, lost, hopeless, seeking relief for self. We come initially not primarily because we love him, but because we need him.
- And how does Christ receive us? With love and grace.
- And what happens within us as we experience God's love and grace, so undeserved? We love Him in return!
- Is there a lesson here in how we should treat others?
- Do we see a problem in the Middle East today in choosing another path in how they treat those who betray them? And does that path lead to love and trust?

8 She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold— which they used for Baal.

What is described?

- How many fail to give God glory for their talents, abilities, health, temporal blessings, but instead use those for self-advancement and self-glorification, which results in what?

9 Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens, and my new wine when it is ready. I will take back my wool and my linen, intended to cover her nakedness.

10 So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands.

11 I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed feasts.

12 I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers; I will make them a thicket, and wild animals will devour them.

13 I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot," declares the Lord.

What does this mean?

- How does God punish?
- Is it infliction, or is it that He allows us to reap what happens when we go down selfish paths?
- And when we turn away from God to do our own thing, what does He do?

14 Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her.

15 There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.

16 "In that day," declares the Lord, "you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master.' [baal]"



What is the Hebrew for “my master”? It is baal – you will no longer call me baal?

- What does this imply?
- In Hebrew baal also meant husband and protector, but a domineering controlling, dictatorial husband, very much like we still see in Middle Eastern families. And it became confused with the false god baal, so it stopped being used. God here says they will no longer call me baal.
- Does it imply that people would misconceive God as a baal, as a dictator, imposer of rules and laws, punisher, task master, but a time would come when they would see Him for who he really is?
- What does it look like to consider God to be like baal? To believe he requires appeasement and inflicts punishment for sin.
- Has Christianity struggled with seeing God like baal?
- Has the time come to no longer see God this way?

Notice what follows when we stop seeing God as baal, when we finally return to the truth of who God is as revealed in Jesus:

17 I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked.

18 In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety.

19 I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion.

20 I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord.

21 “In that day I will respond,” declares the Lord— “I will respond to the skies, and they will respond to the earth;

22 and the earth will respond to the grain, the new wine and oil, and they will respond to Jezreel.

23 I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’ I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ ‘You are my people’; and they will say, ‘You are my God.’ ”

Thoughts?

Is this speaking only to genetic descendants of Abraham or to all of us? And what is the message?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Hosea 4:1-3 presents...” thoughts?

Failed to live up to the terms of the covenant – what covenant?



The Old or New Covenant?

When did Israel fail to live up to the terms of the Old Covenant?

What is the Old Covenant? How would you describe it?

Listen to these two quotes both from the book *The Faith I Live By*, do you agree with these conclusions?

Another compact--called in Scripture the **"old" covenant--was formed between God and Israel at Sinai**, and was then ratified by the blood of a sacrifice. . . . {FLB 78.2}

God . . . gave them [Israel] His law, with the promise of great blessings on condition of obedience: "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then . . . ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Exodus 19:5, 6. The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law; and **they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient."** Exodus 24:7. They had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; and **yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God**, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through **a covenant which they had broken**; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the **Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant, and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings.** . . . {FLB 78.3}

The terms of the "old covenant" were, Obey and live: "If a man do, he shall even live in them;" but "cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." Ezekiel 20:11; Leviticus 18:5; Deuteronomy 27:26. **The "new covenant" was established upon "better promises"--the promise of forgiveness of sins, and of the grace of God to renew the heart, and bring it into harmony with the principles of God's law.** {FLB 78.4}

The only means of salvation is provided under the Abrahamic covenant. {FLB78.5}

Thoughts?

- How would you describe the Old Covenant?
- What was the agreement?
- When was this covenant broken?
- Were the sacrifices part of the Old or New Covenant?
- What happens under the New Covenant that didn't happen under the Old? A renewed heart in the believer – healing!

Here is the second quote from Faith I Live By:

As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two covenants. The **covenant of grace** was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should



bruise the serpent's head. To all men **this covenant offered pardon**, and the **assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law.** Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation. {FLB 77.2}

This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it, and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. **The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God's law.** [which law?] The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." The testimony of God concerning His faithful servant was, "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Gen. 17:1; 26:5. . . . {FLB 77.3}

The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the "second," or "new," covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. {FLB 77.4}

The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant. {FLB 77.5}

There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus. The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us today. . . . Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the author and the finisher of our faith. {FLB 77.6}

Thoughts?

What are the two laws?

What do you make of this quote?

Under the new covenant, the conditions by which eternal life may be gained are the same as under the old--perfect obedience. Under the old covenant, there were many offenses of a daring, presumptuous character, for which there was no atonement specified by law. In the new and better covenant, **Christ has fulfilled the law for the transgressors** of law, if they receive Him by faith as a personal Saviour. "As many as received him, to them gave he **power to become** the sons of God." Mercy and forgiveness are the reward of all who come to Christ trusting in His merits to **take away their sins.** In the better covenant **we are cleansed from sin** by the blood of Christ (Letter 276, 1904). {7BC 931.10}

What do you hear in this passage?

- Both laws required perfect obedience? Why? Because life is built to operate upon God's law, it is the design protocol for life.
- What is the difference then?
- In the first, the Remedy, the perfection comes from the sinner, which of course fails
- In the second, the Remedy, the perfection of character, comes from Christ, which He perfectly achieved.



So the problem with Israel? They failed to understand the nature of God's kingdom of love, the law upon which life is built, and saw God like Baal, imposer of law and therefore they responded with works to try and both keep the law and appease God.

And, having gone down the trail of imposed law and legal requirements, how did they treat each other?

- Multitude of manmade regulations, rituals, rules
- False picture of God taught
- Exploitation of others
- Hard heartedness
- Fraud and cheating at the Temple etc. etc.

What about Christianity today? Any similar issues?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The name *Hosea*..." thoughts?

What do you understand the purpose of judgment to be? Would you see it as diagnosis? Correctly diagnosing what is wrong for the purpose of leading people to repentance and healing?

The lesson states the problem was the "people's lack of knowledge, the knowledge of God, that led them into rebellion..."

What interferes with our knowing God?

- Bad theologies taught in church
- Bad science taught in schools
- Bad examples in leadership and society
- Television
- Novels
- Video games
- Alcohol, drugs
- Unhealthy diet?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-4



Major Lessons From Minor Prophets Lesson 2 2Q 2013

Love and Judgment: God's Dilemma (Hosea)

Before we turn to the lesson I wanted to share something I read in a devotional book this week. As you know, our view is that Christ achieved remedy for our sinful condition. We have taught that, as Jesus said, the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieved and makes it known to us, or reproduces His victory, His character in us. I read the following this week in a book called *That I May Know Him* p. 94:

The Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the mind, and faith takes hold of Him. If you accept Christ as your personal Saviour, you will know by experience the value of the great sacrifice made in your behalf upon the cross of Calvary. **The Spirit of Christ working upon the heart conforms it to His image, for Christ is the model upon which the Spirit works.** By the ministry of His Word, by His providences, by His inward working, **God stamps the likeness of Christ upon the soul.** {TMK 94.4}

To possess Christ is your first work, and to reveal Him as One who is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him is your next work. To serve the Lord with full purpose of heart is to honor and glorify His name by dwelling upon holy things, by having a mind filled with the vital truths revealed in His Holy Word.... {TMK 94.5}

Goodness, meekness, gentleness, patience, and love are the attributes of Christ's character. **If you have the spirit of Christ, your character will be molded after His character.** {TMK 94.6}

SABBATH

What do you think about the title to this week's lesson?

Read memory text: "But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always" (Hosea 12:6)

What do you think about the idea of maintaining love and justice?

What do you understand love to be?

What is justice? The following is based on an excerpt from my new book, *The God-Shaped Brain: How Changing Your View of God Transforms Your Life*

On September 20, 2011, just nine days after terrorists attacked the United States in four hijacked passenger jets, President George W. Bush addressed a joint session of Congress. In that speech, President Bush stated, "Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done." (p. 186)



What is President Bush suggesting justice is? Hunting down and killing those who were behind the attacks.

Do you think the president's words reflected God's attitude toward wayward humanity? Does the "justice" of a vengeful nation accurately represent the justice of God? (p. 186)

Is it right to conclude God runs his universe like sinful beings run earthly governments? Or do we misrepresent God and obstruct his healing love when we construe God's justice to be like our own? (p. 187)

Was Jesus suggesting God's government is different from ours when he said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (Jn 18:36)? Is there a reason the Bible uses ferocious beasts to represent earthly governments but a lamb to represent Jesus? Could this suggest something different about how the two systems operate? Could human justice and God's justice be different? (p. 187)

What is the basis of justice? How do we determine what is just and what is unjust?

Justice in any system is based on the law of that organization. Punching someone in the face is just in boxing but unjust in baseball. The rules of the various sports governing bodies determine what a just or unjust action is. Driving at 160 miles per hour on the autobahn in Germany is just (or right), but not so in the United States because the United States has a different set of laws. (p. 188)

What is the basis of justice in the US? The constitution and the laws passed by the government.

What is the basis of justice in God's government? The law of love!

Is God's government like human governments? Is God's law like human laws?

How would you describe the difference to someone you met in the airport?

Notice what how the Bible describes justice:

- Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil and learn to do right. See that justice is done—help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows. (Is 1:16-17 GNT)
 - What is justice here?
- The Lord longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. The Lord is a God of justice. (Is 30:18 NIV)
 - How is this justice?



- This is what the Lord says to the dynasty of David: ‘Give justice each morning to the people you judge! Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors.’ (Jer 21:12 NLT)
 - What is justice here?

What is Biblical justice? **Saving the oppressed NOT punishing the oppressor.** Why? Because when we remember God’s law is the law upon which life is built infliction of punishment is never needed. We don’t have to punish the person who jumps off a bridge, or hangs themselves, breaking God’s law always results in pain, suffering and death, unless the Designer intervenes to heal and restore.

And what stops God from healing and restoring one of us? We do!

Read last paragraph WEDNESDAYs lesson, “Hosea 11 teaches...” thoughts?

What underpins the misunderstanding so many have regarding the difference between loving discipline and angry vengeance? Misunderstanding God’s law and projecting human imposed law constructs upon God and His divine government.

Listen to this quote from a book, *Prophets and Kings* p. 311:

In Isaiah's day the spiritual understanding of mankind was dark through **misapprehension of God.** Long had **Satan sought to lead men to look upon their Creator as the author of sin and suffering and death.** Those whom he had thus deceived, imagined that God was hard and exacting. They regarded Him as watching to denounce and condemn, unwilling to receive the sinner so long as there was a **legal excuse** for not helping him. The **law of love by which heaven is ruled** had been misrepresented by the archdeceiver as a restriction upon men's happiness, a burdensome yoke from which they should be glad to escape. **He declared that its precepts could not be obeyed and that the penalties of transgression were bestowed arbitrarily.**

Thoughts? Do we have such problems today with God’s law being misunderstood and people conceiving of God as the author of death? Even in an online forum of people who share our views this is a problem.

What do you understand death to be? Are first death and second death the same? If we construe them as the same do we have a problem?

Is death, which God told would result from unremedied sin, sleep in the grave until resurrection? Or is death from sin an eternal eradication of the person, both body and individuality?

Is the wages of sin death or sleep until resurrection?

MT 10:28 says that death is destruction of body and “soul” which the Greek for soul is psyche, mind, individuality, identity.



The death in which individuality is destroyed is called the second death. But when Jesus went to the funeral of a little girl what did He say? She's not dead but asleep. And how did they respond? They laughed, why? From a human perspective she was dead, but Jesus said she was asleep. Was Jesus lying? Was He trying to confuse? No, Satan is the author of confusion. Then what was Jesus doing? Was he being the light which lightens all men?

How did Jesus describe Lazarus' condition to the disciples? Lazarus is asleep and I need to go wake him. Both of these two people were asleep and both were raised and their identities were intact. What does this mean?

Has anyone considered the possibility that the second death is actual death, it is non-existence, it is when the individuality, character, identity is permanently erased and is the result of sin and thus is from Satan. But the first death does not destroy the individual, does not erase identity or destroy character, but merely suspends the person in time. Therefore the first death is not the outgrowth of unremedied sin, but only occurs because God has been "interfering" with the natural results of what sin would otherwise do in order to heal and save.

If God did not step in (in multiple ways) when man fell into sin, eternal extinction of the species would have already happened, because that is what sin does. But it hasn't happened because God has been holding in check the full consequences of sin. Thus, the first death, sleep, is a mercy, an artificial state caused by God's grace to allow for the delivery and saving of the race, the minimizing of suffering and pain, and the elimination of sin.

Satan would love for us to lump God's mercy and his evil into the same camp and attribute both to the same cause, but then we miss the reality of what is transpiring.

It is true if there were no sin there would have been no sleep in the grave, but sleep in the grave is not the natural result of sin, but an artificial state, a mercy, held by God's power, for the purpose of salvation.

Back to SABBATH, read first paragraph, "A common way..." thoughts?

What are some metaphors used in Scripture to teach us truths about God, His relationship with us, the plan of salvation etc.?

- Husband/wife (church bride of Christ)
- Parent/child (prodigal son)
- Ransom
- Purchase
- Legal payment
- Legal judgment
- Robe of righteousness
- Cleansed by blood
- Washed in blood
- Record books in heaven
- Sanctuary
- Sheep/goats
- Wheat/tares
- War
- Sword
- Crowns
- Name (give a new name)



What about “healing”? Is the healing model a metaphor or is it the actual reality to which all the others point?

A few years ago when we discussed with local leaders what we teach, we were criticized because it was claimed we present only one metaphor when the Scripture is rich with many metaphors.

Their criticism would have some merit, IF, and only IF, we conclude healing is not real, but healing is only a metaphor, not a reality. So, is healing, recreation, renewal, regeneration, restoration – are these metaphor or are these the reality all the other metaphors are trying to lead us to understand?

It is my belief that healing, restoration, recreation, renewal is a reality of God’s plan. That we will be recreated, healed, restored to perfection. This is NOT a metaphor. Therefore, healing of God’s creation is the reality all other metaphors are trying to enlighten us about.

So, be on guard, because one of the latest strategies of those who cling to metaphor, cling to symbolism, refuse to step from the shadows into the light of reality... In other words, for those who prefer the legal model, one of their latest strategies is to suggest that, “of course there is healing” but it is only part of a larger reality that includes the legal aspects as well. They suggest that God heals, but only after He legally pardons and accepts the blood of Christ as a legal payment. What they are trying to suggest is that the healing view is a small subset of a larger landscape of multiple metaphors, and only those who accept all the metaphors are balanced.

The problem is they have taken the reality that God is trying to teach through metaphor and denied it is real and instead made it symbolic, which destroys the power of truth and actually undermines healing!

So don’t fall into that trap when they say there are multiple metaphors. Say, “Absolutely, there are multiple metaphors. But we are moving past metaphor to understand the eternal reality to which all the metaphors point. And that reality is that God is love. He built His universe to operate upon the protocols of love. And Christ came to restore His creation back into harmony with His design protocols for life. This is healing and restoration – a reality, not a metaphor!”

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Ephraim was the name...” thoughts?

Why did Ephraim turn to other nations? What was the motive? Was it fear and a desire for “self-preservation”?

Where does the fear motive originate in human history?

As soon as Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid because they were afraid...



While God built us with the ability to experience fear, like we have the ability to experience pain, was it His plan that we should experience either?

In fact, fear is a kind of emotional pain. It occurs when something is not as God designed it to be.

When you come face to face with a lion, bear, tiger, etc. would you experience fear? The naturalists would say this is normal, survival-of-the-fittest, but was it God's design we experience fear when we are near such animals?

Why do we experience fear? Because all nature groans under the weight of sin. Because nature is not operating as God designed. Fear happens, like pain, when things are not working as God designed.

What examples can you give from Scripture of actions taken based on fear?

- Aaron making the golden calf under pressure from the people
- Saul trying to kill David
- Saul going to the witch of Endor
- Saul's suicide
- Israel's turning to Egypt for help from the Assyrians
- It is better for one man to die than the entire nation – what is the principle? Fear based survival of self.

Any examples in Scripture of love and trust in God overcoming fear?

- Moses in Pharaoh's court
- Gideon
- Daniel and the 3 worthies
- Jehoshaphat
- Jesus
- Stephen
- Paul

Any examples in human history of actions based on fear?

- The inquisition
- The cooperation with Nazi's during WWII
- A high school chemistry teacher late on her car payments....
- Racism, sexism, bigotry, family violence
- Expelling people from fellowship in your church?

Any examples in history of love overcoming fear?

- Corrie Ten Boone
- Marian and Barbie Fisher
- Martin Luther King Jr.
- Gandhi



What do you see as the difference? Do you see the two antagonist motives or principles involved in each?

Do you see that we are infected with fear, and fear drives us toward selfishness and a willingness to hurt others to protect self? But love casts out fear, causes us to sacrifice self to protect others. It is love that is the basis of life and fear and selfishness are the basis of death.

Satan will work to inflame our fears in order to get us to choose to act selfishly, which will injure us further. Any examples of how this happens in our lives?

- Fear of rejection causes persons to go along with others when they believe it is wrong
 - which result in guilt, shame and loss of effectiveness in revealing the truth about God until the guilt and shame are resolved
- Fear of financial failure causes people to worry about the future
 - lose sleep, have increased stress, inflammatory cascades and more physical and mental health problems, become more pessimistic, negativistic and ultimately lose effectiveness in spreading love.
- Fear of financial failure causing one to put their trust in retirement plans, savings accounts, stocks, bonds, etc.
 - which results in preoccupation with the world, constant monitoring of financial markets, calculating to protect self-interest and reduced trust in God for how things will turn out.
 - David was scolded for taking a census – why? Because when he knew how many soldiers, chariots, archers, spearmen, cavalry he had he would be tempted to but his sense of security and trust in the might of arms and not God. We do the same with our money...
- Fear of financial loss causing one not to take a mission trip...
- Fear of abandonment causes people to stay in abusive relationships, which destroys all parties and undermines fitness for God's cause

How do we overcome fear?

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isa 41:10)

- Do you get the picture of a father walking with his child holding his hand? Are children afraid when holding the hand of the parent?
- What happens when a child is separated from its parent? What emotion do they experience?
- Do we walk through life holding God's hand? Why not, He has His hand outstretched to us!



Doubts and fears grow by indulgence, and the more they are indulged, the harder are they to overcome. It is safe to let go every earthly support and **take the hand of Him** who lifted up and saved the sinking disciple on the stormy sea. {4T 558.1}

Only the sense of God's presence can banish the fear that, for the timid child, would make life a burden. Let him fix in his memory the promise, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Psalm 34:7. Ed 255

Thoughts? What protects us from fear? Does that mean we are not to experience fear, or not to be controlled by fear?

It is **not the will of God that His people should be weighed down with care.** But our Lord does not deceive us. He **does not say to us, "Do not fear; there are no dangers in your path."** He knows there are trials and dangers, and He deals with us plainly. He does not propose to take His people out of a world of sin and evil, but He points them to a never-failing refuge. SC 122

So, in this world of sin will we experience fear? When we do what are we to do? Are we to react like the world, go into self-protection mode and let fear control us?

This is extremely hard, this is a battle with self; we are so wired to do this. It feels so good to take action to make the fear go away. But, what other option do we have?

We have Jesus. We can go to him with our fear. We can say, "Lord, I don't want to make fear based decisions, I want to make love based decisions. Pour your love into my heart. Help me see past my fear, past my insecurity to you and give me love for others." Then choose to act in accordance with what you know God's will is, in harmony with His methods and trust Him with outcomes.

One of the traps that inflame fear is when we forecast the future and try to make decisions which will make the future unfold the way we want.

- Recently, I have been tempted along these lines. I have been invited to take a three-week trip to Singapore and Australia to speak at three different cities. I know God is opening the way, yet fears arise: How will the class do without me for three weeks? Will people stop coming? What about my office, making payroll for my staff, paying my bills?
- We have made the decision to take this trip, planning as best we can with forethought, but trusting God with taking care of our needs.

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "In Bible times..." thoughts?

What does it mean to be yoked to Christ? Is being yoked to Christ the same as losing one's freedom? Or is being yoked to Christ the means of achieving one's freedom? If so how?



Are we saved by our own effort?

While God saved the human species, in the person of Jesus, can God save any individual without the participation of that individual?

So, what does it mean to yoke with Christ? Consider these quotations, do you agree or disagree? What are the implications?

While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the **divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part.** His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}

We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}

There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies-- divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . .** Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

Agree or disagree? So how do you explain the balance in our salvation so that we don't fall into the ditch of salvation by our works? Earlier we read a quote that our first work is to possess Christ – is that salvation by works?

So the balance is as follows:

- The Remedy to sin was fully achieved by Christ and no one else.
- We can do nothing to add to what Christ has done to save mankind, but, each person now must choose to open their heart in trust to receive from the Holy Spirit the benefit of Christ's victory in their life.
- When we do this a supernatural transformation of character, desire, motive, and attitude takes place.



- In this process there is a daily, ongoing, and constant cooperative work of the individual with the Divine in which the person chooses to continue to follow the direction of the Heavenly Physician until they are one day fully healed and set free to be self-controlled beings operating on the law of love, which has been fully restored into the heart. (Heb 8:10).

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read top Bible verses and then first paragraph, "In these verses..." thoughts?

Do you like to see God portrayed as tender and compassionate? Absolutely, this view is correct.

What do you understand "His anger can be terrifying..." to mean?

Why is there fear of God?

When the people heard the thunder and the trumpet blast and saw the lightning and the smoking mountain, they trembled with fear and stood a long way off. They said to Moses, "If you speak to us, we will listen; but we are afraid that if God speaks to us, we will die." Moses replied, "Don't be afraid; God has only come to test you and make you keep on obeying him, so that you will not sin." But the people continued to stand a long way off, and only Moses went near the dark cloud where God was. Exodus 20:18-21

Thoughts? Why were the people afraid but Moses was not? Was God showing one thing to the people and something different to Moses? Were the people hearing thunder and Moses hearing the tympany section of the heavenly orchestra?

Listen to this commentary on those verses:

During that long time spent in communion with God, the face of Moses had reflected the glory of the divine Presence; unknown to himself his face shone with a dazzling light when he descended from the mountain. Such a light illumined the countenance of Stephen when brought before his judges; "and all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Acts 6:15. Aaron as well as the people shrank away from Moses, and **"they were afraid to come nigh him."** Seeing their confusion and terror, but ignorant of the cause, he urged them to come near. **He held out to them the pledge of God's reconciliation, and assured them of His restored favor. They perceived in his voice nothing but love and entreaty, and at last one ventured to approach him.** Too awed to speak, he silently pointed to the countenance of Moses, and then toward heaven. The great leader understood his meaning. **In their conscious guilt, feeling themselves still under the divine displeasure, they could not endure the heavenly light,** which, had they been obedient to God, would have filled them with joy. **There is fear in guilt. The soul that is free from sin will not wish to hide from the light of heaven.** {PP 329.5}



Where does fear of God originate? In our guilt, in our misunderstanding of Him, on our self-condemnation we project our own self-dissatisfaction onto God and believe Him to be of the same selfish character as we are.

In other words, unremedied sin is the source of fear. God is love!

Read next paragraph, “Through Moses...” thoughts?

What were the special privileges afforded to Israel? Did they get a special pass into heaven? Did they get an avenue to salvation not available to any other human being? What is their privilege?

- To be the conduit for the Messiah
- To be his helpers to teach the plan of salvation
- To be the repository of His teaching tools on earth – the Scripture, the Sanctuary, the Feast days, the principles of beneficence incorporated into their government (Jubilees, cities of refuge, system of justice)
- The health laws
- To be a kingdom of priests

Read next paragraph, “All who in this world...” thoughts?

What does it mean to go through the school of sorrows?

Does it mean God inflicts suffering and pain? No!

It means this – Once there is brokenness there is no path that is pain free.

- If you have a broken leg, no option is pain free – do nothing continued pain and worsening disability, go to surgery and PT, pain, but recovery and healing.
- We are in a broken, sick, sinful condition, there is no path forward without pain, do nothing, continued pain and worsening of our condition. Surrender to Christ and the path to overcome our defects can be painful, sorrow will often be part of the process as we must cut ties to unhealthy things and people to which we have become attached. But the outcome is healing, restoration, and one day an eternity without pain or sorrow.

It also means, in this world of sin it is impossible to avoid pain, but misery is optional.

Consider again the 23rd Psalm – when we follow our Shepherd he leads us into the valley of the shadow of death, not the valley of death, for the purpose of dying to self in order to restore our soul and lead us in the path of righteousness for His name sake!



THURSDAY

Read top section, “Some ancient scholars...”

Is it only ancient scholars that viewed God this way? Do we have people who still struggle with this concept today?

Who was the member of the Godhead that acted in OT times? It was Jesus. In both Old and New Testaments we see Jesus as the active agent working and revealing God.

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ²They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 1Cor 10:1-4

Do you see any differences in God of the OT and God as revealed in Jesus in the NT? What differences do you see? How do you explain those differences?

What is transpiring on earth? Is there a conflict involving more than human beings?

Could mankind be saved without Jesus becoming human? Does that have any bearing on what we see in the OT? Was Satan trying to obstruct Jesus from coming to earth, to close the avenue for the Messiah? Was Christ working to keep that avenue open?

Once Christ came and completed his mission, was there any need to continue working in that way?

Do we see all through the OT the grace, love, compassion, mercy, patience of God? Yet, do we see the condition of humanity so degraded that at times God needed to intervene to keep open the avenue for the Messiah?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3



Major Lessons From Minor Prophets Lesson 3 2013

Lesson 2 Clarification

How many were here last week? My responses raised some questions and confusion online and I received multiple inquiries I need to clarify.

Evidently, my responses regarding the flood and Sodom led some to think I teach that God never used his power to put people into the grave. Let me clarify.

I believe God hasn't used his power to punish sin. But God has used his power therapeutically, intervening to save the human race, and at times has put people in the grave:

- First born of Egypt
- Sodom
- The platoons that came to arrest Elijah
- Nadab and Abihu

But none of these were punishments for sin. They were various types of therapeutic interventions.

Doctors don't punish patients for non-compliance, but doctors do amputate gangrene limbs, excise cancerous lesions, and confine and restrain psychotic violent patients. In history, there are times God has acted to limit the spread of wickedness in order to keep open the avenue for the Messiah to come. But this is not punishment for sin. It is grace, mercy and love stooping to do what needs to be done in order to save.

I have done a lot of thinking after last week's lesson and the text that kept coming to mind was John 15:15 "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

- What is the mindset of a slave?
- Why do slaves obey?
- Because the master said it and if you don't obey what happens?
 - Punishment
- How does a slave view the law of the master?
 - Imposed rules enforced by punishment.
- Jesus said, I don't want you to be my slaves, I want you to be my friends! Don't think of me like a slave master.

So what about a friend? What is the difference between the way a slave and a friend think?



A friend understands the master. He understands how the master has built things to operate. It isn't "do it because the master says so or else," but because one understands all the damage and destruction that will happen if one steps out of the master's plan. What kind of law is this? Natural law.

God is longing for us to come to know Him, to know His design, methods, principles and stop relating to Him like slaves! Satan wants us to be nothing more than mindless slaves.

A Holy and Just God

SABBATH

What comes to mind when you hear the lesson title for this week?

Last week we explored Biblical justice, contrasting it with justice of the world. We explored how justice in any system is based on the laws or rules of that system.

We saw that there are two ways to conceive of God's law – the design protocols life is built upon – natural law, and an imposed Roman type law construct.

We explored that if one views God's law as a Roman imposed law then in that model justice requires imposition of punishment by the ruling authority.

But we also noted that if one views God's law as the protocol upon which he built life to operate then justice requires the Designer to heal and fix what is broken. We reviewed texts like:

- "Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy." (Ps 82:3)
- "Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil and learn to do right. See that justice is done---help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows." (Is 1:16-17 – GN)
- "The LORD is waiting to be kind to you. He rises to have compassion on you. The LORD is a God of justice." (Is 30:18 – GW)
- "This is what the LORD says to the dynasty of David: 'Give justice each morning to the people you judge! Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors.'" (Jer 21:12 – NLT)

We discovered that God's justice, according to Scripture is, *delivering the oppressed not punishing the oppressor.*

Thoughts or questions thus far?



But we also enjoyed the company of Andrew and Lily who had multiple questions. They are not alone. I really appreciated their input and questions last week because they represent so many who see the universe and God's government through the lens of imposed law.

They cited the passage in Romans, "vengeance is mine says the Lord" and we explored that Biblical vengeance is destroying sin, cleansing the sinner. God takes vengeance on sin like a doctor takes vengeance on polio. What are doctors working to do with polio? Destroy it! Are they working to destroy those infected with polio? NO!

God hates sin but loves sinners. Satan wants to confuse our thinking so that we think of sinners as sin – not the same.

But, many people struggle with these concepts, many struggle with how to deal with people who mistreat others here, like a murderer or rapist. I received the following email awhile back and wanted to share a little more of how we deal with this in my new book:

Previously I attended your class for two weeks back in 2009. You might remember that I was previously a [Christian] pastor for 15 years. I am currently enrolled [in] law school...

As I was reviewing this week's outline where you stated:

"When one accepts that God imposes law, then one must conclude that the consequences one experiences for disobedience to God's law is imposed by God, or that God's wrath is something that he inflicts to punish for sin."

Since I am [in law school I am] developing my views of criminal punishment and civil sanctions. Should I relate my view of God into the courtroom? More specifically, there are two views of punishment, Utilitarianism and Retributivism.

Utilitarianism seeks to reform the criminal, reason with the criminal, and the focus is on therapy and psychiatric care. This view also incarcerates the criminal to convince the general community to forego criminal conduct in the future. Finally it teaches the convicted what conduct is impermissible.

Retributivism seeks to punish the criminal for freely violating the rules. This view gratifies the passion for revenge. Retributive punishment is the means of securing a moral balance in society where the inmate pays his debt to society. Retributivism seeks punishment as a way to right a wrong and corrects the claim.

It appears that the wrong view of God has much in common with the Retributivism view of criminal punishment. While the utilitarianism view of criminal punish has much in common with the restoration view of salvation.



But should I look to the heart-wise, healing, loving picture of God view when it comes to criminals? Should my decision of how I view God relate to what punishment a murderer, rapist, burglar, and thief receives? In other words, should I be using my influence to end punishment of criminals? So criminals can be set free from prison and be placed in rehabilitation groups, therapy, etc. Or suppose criminals were not sent to jail, just allow them to reap the natural consequence of their sins?

What would you say to him? How do you answer such questions? What is justice to a criminal on earth?

“Many people get confused about God’s law because God, just like a loving parent, has used imposed rules as stopgaps to help his immature people.

When a mother puts a rule in place not to play in the street lest the child get spanked, the real problem in breaking the rule is not the spanking (imposed penalty), but the violation of the natural law of physics when a car collides with the body of the child. The imposed rule, with its imposed penalty, is intended to protect the child, the unknown driver, and even the parent from the result of violation of natural law if the child is hit by a car. The spanking is not intended as retribution, but is a stopgap to help keep the child safe until the child is mature enough to govern itself and not play in the street... *The God-Shaped Brain: How Changing Your View of God Transforms Your Life* p. 189

Does retribution:

- Do good to those who have been offended
- Resurrect the murdered person
- Heal the broken bone
- Restore one’s innocence
- Recover stolen goods
- Or heal, develop, save, or transform the sinner/criminal

So what is the purpose of retribution? Does it serve love or does it serve selfishness?

Does that mean we should ignore criminals? Let them get away with it?

First, do they get away with it? Why or why not?

- Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, **from that nature will reap destruction**...Gal 6:7,8
- We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. **Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again.** By choosing to sin, men



separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

When we sin we actually damage ourselves. Why? Because God's law is a natural law. It is the law upon which life was built to operate. One doesn't have to punish those who violate it because the violation destroy the very faculties that respond to love and truth, the consciences become seared, the character warped, the reason impaired, until those who persist in it become nothing but brute beasts.

So, when a earthly government steps in to arrest and incarcerate a person who has lost self-governance and is acting out to hurt others in society, that act can be done with a desire to seek vengeance, but it can also be done with a desire to protect society, AND the criminal from damaging themselves further. Incarceration can give the criminal time to reflect and consider their course and repent and become a friend rather than an enemy. This is God's justice, healing and delivering those oppressed by sin, AND turning enemies into friends:

Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. All this is done by God, who through Christ *changed us from enemies into his friends* and gave us the task of *making others his friends* also. Our message is that God was making the *whole human race his friends* through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends. Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: *let God change you from enemies into his friends!* (2Co 5:17-20 GNT)

Thoughts?

What does a Just God look like? Like Jesus!

Read Memory Text: "The Lord thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the Lord is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure?" (Joel 2:11)

What does this text mean to you?

Read first paragraph, "In the massive locust plague..." thoughts?

Are they saying God brought the locust plague and draught? What do you think?

It can be confusing, because God did bring plagues in Egypt for what purpose? To expose the gods of Egypt as false.

God did hold the rain for Elijah, for what purpose? To show the impotence of Baal.

So, does that mean every plague in nature or every natural disaster is a direct infliction by God?



Here is one view, do you agree with it, from *Patriarchs and Prophets* p. 428:

Moses faithfully set before the people their great sin. It was God's power alone that had preserved them in "that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water." Deuteronomy 8:15. Every day of their travels they had been **kept by a miracle of divine mercy**. In all the way of God's leading they had found water to refresh the thirsty, bread from heaven to satisfy their hunger, and peace and safety under the shadowy cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. Angels had ministered to them as they climbed the rocky heights or threaded the rugged paths of the wilderness. Notwithstanding the hardships they had endured, there was not a feeble one in all their ranks. Their feet had not swollen in their long journeys, neither had their clothes grown old. **God had subdued before them the fierce beasts of prey and the venomous reptiles** of the forest and the desert. If with all these tokens of His love the people still continued to complain, **the Lord would withdraw His protection** until they should be led to appreciate His merciful care, and return to Him with repentance and humiliation. {PP 428.3}

Because **they had been shielded by divine power** they had not realized the countless dangers by which they were continually surrounded. In their ingratitude and unbelief they had anticipated death, and now the Lord permitted death to come upon them. The poisonous serpents that infested the wilderness were called fiery serpents, on account of the terrible effects produced by their sting, it causing violent inflammation and speedy death. **As the protecting hand of God was removed from Israel, great numbers of the people were attacked by these venomous creatures.** {PP 429.1}

What did God do? Why did God do it? Was God inflicting punishment? Was God setting people free to experience what they persistent chose, rebellion from Him?

Do you think it was different with rebellious Israel and Judah later?

So God actively engages to expose false gods, and God actively engages to protect the avenue for the Messiah, and God withdraws and allows one to reap what they have chosen when rebellion persists....

MONDAY

Read last paragraph, "Throughout Scripture, God is described..." thoughts?

Is the lesson suggesting God sends natural disasters?

What do you think?

Any evidences?



Exodus – Nile turns to blood, darkness, hail that burns, locust, earthquake. What was the purpose of those disasters? To expose false Gods – to punish? Or to save? What was the intended effect? To deliver people's minds from believing a lie. These were given as evidences to break the people out of worshipping false God's, not as punishment.

What about the first chapter of Job – did natural disasters strike Job's family? Who brought them? Satan, who did Job's friends say did it? God!

When the disciples were on the lake and Christ was sleeping in the boat and a great storm came, so severe that fisherman who spent their lives on the lake were terrified, who do you think brought that storm? Was God behind it, or perhaps was Satan trying to destroy Christ and his disciples?

What about at the end of time, the plagues that happen in the future? The lesson suggested the Joel sees in the plagues a prediction of how it will be in the end. Is it God actively inflicting, or God withdrawing His protection?

Rev 7:1-3:

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: ³ "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."

What do you hear this quotation saying?

So we have examples where God acted and we have examples where God stepped back and removed protection. What are the differences?

God's actions were always trying to stop rebellion, expose lies, and His withdrawal was always when no other intervention would work.

So, what about the end of time the troubles to come? Would this be a time when everything else has failed? Here is a quotation from one of the founders of our church that seems to be in harmony with Rev 7:1-3:

"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, reproveth, 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.



"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of."

Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

If God's law is natural, does He have to inflict punishment for disobedience?

Do we do God good service or misrepresent Him and obstruct his purpose and even delay his return if we say, "Katrina was God's punishment on New Orleans for its wickedness?"

SUNDAY

Read 2nd and 3rd paragraphs, "Joel uses four..." thoughts?

What do you understand regarding the hardships of Israel? Why did they go through so much?

What was God's purpose for Israel?

Last week Collegedale Church put on its annual Easter Pageant. What is the purpose of that pageant? It is a theatrical enactment in which people can participate, for what purpose? To teach people.

Does that pageant save anyone? Can a person be saved by dressing up and participating in the pageant?

The nation of Israel were actors – they had a grand stage, great costumes, and a very detailed script. They were to enact, through drama, the plan of salvation. Was salvation found in dressing up in their costumes and performing their rituals?

Could people be saved, before Christ became incarnate, without participating in the Jewish theater? What about Enoch? How about without, as far as is recorded in the Bible, sacrificing animals to God? What about the widow of Sarepta who sheltered Elijah or Naaman?

The widow of Sarepta and Naaman the Syrian had lived up to all the light they had; hence they were accounted more righteous than God's chosen people who had backslidden from Him and had sacrificed principle to convenience and worldly honor. {AA 416.3}

So, God's purpose was for Israel to act out the plan and stay faithful and receive untold blessings, which would reveal God's plan to heal and save. But they chose to follow their own script, do it their way. They accepted Satan's view of God and so what did God do? He used their choices to still teach the truth, but all in symbol and theater – how?



By demonstrating that choosing Satan's way results in pain, suffering, loss, famine, desolation and even death. When they refused God's way He removed His protection and Israel reaped what they chose and they ended up in captivity, just as when we choose to violate God's design we end up captive to sin, addiction, fear, and disease.

So, divine judgments, are they punishment for sin upon Israel, or God's judgment of what was necessary to wake them up to their foolishness, and teach the truth that God's law is a natural law and behavior has consequences. If you choose rebellion God sets you free to reap what you have chosen.

TUESDAY

The lesson talks about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and the latter rain before Christ returns.

What do you think obstructs this from happening? What would be necessary for it to happen?

Will God pour out His Spirit upon individuals to empower them to misrepresent Him? Here are four quotes from one of the founders of our church:

- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the former rain, but the latter rain will be more abundant. **The Spirit awaits our demand and reception.** Christ is again to be revealed in His fulness by the Holy Spirit's power. {COL 121.1}
- The third angel's message is swelling into a loud cry, and you must not feel at liberty to neglect the present duty, and still entertain the idea that at some future time you will be the recipients of great blessing, when without any effort on your part a wonderful revival will take place. . . . **Today you are to have your vessel purified, that it may be ready for the heavenly dew,** ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and **the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement.** It is our **work today to yield our souls to Christ,** that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord--fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. . . . {Ev 701.4}
- **The Holy Spirit is waiting for channels through whom to work.** If all would do the work to which they were appointed, thousands of people might be saved. Satan will not always triumph. The Spirit of God will be poured out upon the church just as soon as the vessels are prepared to receive it. . . . {Christ Triumphant 45.2}
- **The disciples did not ask for a blessing for themselves. They were weighted with the burden of souls.** The gospel was to be carried to the ends of the earth, and they claimed the endowment of power that Christ had promised. **Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out, and thousands were converted in a day.**--Southern Watchman, Aug. 1, 1905. {Christian Service 252.9}



Thoughts? Is there anything we can do to prepare for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Are we ready? Will the Spirit enable us if we are ready to tell the truth about God?

Perhaps we should not ask for the Holy Spirit, but ask to be ready for the Holy Spirit.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "The darkening..." thoughts?

What do you hear? Do you hear a suggestion that the historic interpretation of these signs being fulfilled more than 150 years ago and in some cases more than 250 years ago, are being relinquished and a more metaphorical interpretation is being used?

I think they might be on to something. Prophecies are highly symbolic. What do you think of the idea that the pagan god constructs will be turned to darkness?

The middle of the lesson asks, "While Christ's appearance will terrify the unrepentant, how will the righteous welcome their Lord?"

Thoughts? Why will the appearance of Christ terrify the unrepentant, because He is terrifying, or because of something within the unrepentant that causes the terror?

Why is there fear of God?

- When the people heard the thunder and the trumpet blast and saw the lightning and the smoking mountain, they trembled with fear and stood a long way off. They said to Moses, "If you speak to us, we will listen; but we are afraid that if God speaks to us, we will die." Moses replied, "Don't be afraid; God has only come to test you and make you keep on obeying him, so that you will not sin." But the people continued to stand a long way off, and only Moses went near the dark cloud where God was. Exodus 20:18-21

Thoughts? Why were the people afraid but Moses was not? Was God showing one thing to the people and something different to Moses? Were the people hearing thunder and Moses hearing the tympany section of the heavenly orchestra?

Listen to this commentary on those verses:

- During that long time spent in communion with God, the face of Moses had reflected the glory of the divine Presence; unknown to himself his face shone with a dazzling light when he descended from the mountain. Such a light illumined the countenance of Stephen when brought before his judges; "and all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Acts 6:15. Aaron as well as the people shrank away from Moses, and "**they were afraid to come nigh him.**" Seeing their confusion and terror, but ignorant of the cause, he urged them to come near. **He held out to them the pledge of God's**



reconciliation, and assured them of His restored favor. They perceived in his voice nothing but love and entreaty, and at last one ventured to approach him. Too awed to speak, he silently pointed to the countenance of Moses, and then toward heaven. The great leader understood his meaning. **In their conscious guilt, feeling themselves still under the divine displeasure, they could not endure the heavenly light,** which, had they been obedient to God, would have filled them with joy. **There is fear in guilt. The soul that is free from sin will not wish to hide from the light of heaven.** {PP 329.5}

Where does fear of God originate? In our guilt, in our misunderstanding of Him, on our self-condemnation we project our own self-dissatisfaction onto God and believe Him to be of the same selfish character as we are.

In other words, unremedied sin is the source of fear. God is love!

After Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid why? Where did their fear originate? Where was the source of their fear? Was God being terrifying? Was He threatening? Yet they were still terrified? Why?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Biblical prophets...” thoughts? What would you say to someone who presents God in this light?

What does God destroy? Sin, pain, suffering, selfishness, death, the grave, lies. How?

Truth destroys lies
Health destroys disease pain and suffering
Life destroys death
Love destroys selfishness

So how does God destroy? By being Himself, the source of truth, love and life!

Read third paragraph, “The Lord sustains...” thoughts? Does the Lord desolate the earth or is the earth desolate because the Lord let’s go and allows Satan to have his way?

Why does the earth lay bare for 1000 years? Because the Lord and all those in whom the Spirit of the Lord dwell are gone and Satan has full control of the planet!

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2-5



Brad Cole posted this on an online forum recently:

“A choice is made to come to God or to turn away from God. Those who turn away are united to the ways of Satan's kingdom which is selfish and violent to the core. Since sin entered the universe, God has been restraining the winds of destruction for humans and even for rebellious angels - giving rain to the righteous and the unrighteous. When all "rebels" are finally and fully left to their own ways, unrestrained by God's loving protection, there is violence, death and destruction. Separation from God does lead to death - Sin leads to death. EGW describes this chaos as breaking out, "His power is at an end. The wicked are filled with the same hatred of God that inspires Satan; but they see that their case is hopeless, that they cannot prevail against Jehovah. Their rage is kindled against Satan and those who have been his agents in deception and with the fury of demons they turn upon them." (GC pg. 671-2). She then quotes Ezekiel 28..."they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit." And then she quotes Isaiah 9:5, "Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood..." So, there is God's fire, but there is also another fire at work. The passages I quoted in Revelation suggests to me that we are missing something to our picture of things if we don't also incorporate this aspect. For me, this view of the end does not support Satan's original claim that sin does not lead to death.”



Lesson 4: Lord of All Nations (Amos)

SABBATH

⁸ The lion hath roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD hath spoken! Who can but prophesy?
⁹ Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, “Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof and the oppressed in the midst thereof. ¹⁰ For they know not to do right,” saith the LORD, “who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.”

Key Thought: “Acts of inhumanity are sins against God and will be judged accordingly.”

** Which filter are we going to view this lesson with?? God angry because his imposed law has been broken, therefore, needing to punish his children in order to maintain order and holiness?? OR A parent concerned over the path chosen by His children that will ultimately lead to their destruction??
**

SUNDAY

Crimes against Humanity

In Amos 1, 2 some of the crimes listed are: Human trafficking, perpetual anger, killing pregnant women, dishonoring a treaty, disrespect of the dead, taking bribes, dishonesty, AND, in Amos 2:4,

“Thus saith the LORD: “For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, ***because they have despised the law of the LORD,*** and have not kept His commandments; and their lies caused them to err, after which their fathers have walked.”

Did they despise the imposed law, or the Natural Law, the Law of Life itself??

At the end of the 3rd paragraph, the lesson states, “From God’s perspective, the person who assists and supports a crime, is as guilty as the person who commits it.” Any thoughts?? Is this correct?? Do we have any scripture to support or refute this statement?? Does it matter which filter we use??
Matt. 18: 5-7.

⁵ And whoso shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me. ⁶ But whoso shall cause one of these little ones who believe in Me to fall, it were better for him that a millstone were hung about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. ⁷ “Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must happen that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.



Consider this scenario: Two men in a moving van stop to ask you for directions to a specific address. You give them detailed directions and go on about your day. The following day, you see a news story that the people who live at that address were robbed of everything they own. You assisted the crime. Now what??

The 4th paragraph starts with, “ Because God is all-sovereign, He holds the destiny of all the world in His hands.” Is this correct?? Any scripture to support or refute?? Which Law construct was this statement made from?? Did God hold Lucifer’s destiny in His hands? Is there anyone, whose destiny, God does not hold in His hands?? Mine and Yours. He doesn’t make our choices for us.

I think the author is trying to say that eventually, God’s Will will be done on earth, “as it is in Heaven.” We have the **choice** to accept or reject. We have the **power** to accelerate or decelerate this process.

MONDAY

Justice for the oppressed

Is God a Socialist? Is the lesson’s author one?? What does “Social Justice” mean?? We hear a lot about it these days from political figures, who should remain nameless. Does God’s view about social justice differ from humanity’s??

In many cases means which should be devoted to the missionary work is diverted into other channels, from mistaken ideas of benevolence. We may err in making gifts to the poor which are not a blessing to them, leading them to feel that they need not exert themselves and practice economy, for others will not permit them to suffer. We should not give countenance to indolence, or encourage habits of self-gratification by affording means for indulgence. While the worthy poor are not to be neglected, all should be taught, so far as possible, to help themselves. {CS 166.1}

There are two classes of poor whom we have always within our borders—those who ruin themselves by their own independent course of action and continue in their transgression, and those who for the truth’s sake have been brought into straitened circumstances. {4MR 134}

In the 4th paragraph, the lesson states, “The Bible clearly teaches that social justice should be a **natural product of the gospel**.” I couldn’t agree more. Note: Natural product – Natural Law. Does it matter which Gospel??

TUESDAY

The Peril of Privilege

Are there any parallels between the Israel of Amos’ day, and present day SDA’s?? What privileges do we have in common??



Education, Higher socio-economic status, A unique understanding of scripture, Waiting on a messiah [1st vs 2nd advent], Knowledge of health laws.

Are SDA's honest in all of their financial dealings? Do we care for our worthy poor? Have we robbed God? Have we grown fat and lazy, like Sodom?

Read Luke 12: 43-51.

⁴³ Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. ⁴⁴ In truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. ⁴⁵ But if that servant say in his heart, 'My lord delayeth his coming,' and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink and be drunken, ⁴⁶ the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him asunder and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. ⁴⁷ And that servant, who knew his lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. ⁴⁸ But he that knew not and committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. ⁴⁹ "I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled? ⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am straitened till it be accomplished! ⁵¹ Suppose ye that I have come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay, but rather division.

Is, as the lesson asserts, the principle taught, by our Savior: "when great privileges in life are abused, they will be replaced by great penalties"? Is this what really happens, first of all, and if so, why??

"God speaks to his people in blessings bestowed; and when these are not appreciated, he speaks to them in blessings removed, that they may be led to see their sins, and return to Him with all the heart." PP 470.

WEDNESDAY

Israel's Rendezvous with God

Read Ex. 20: 18,19.

¹⁸ And all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. ¹⁹ And they said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

This was the first experience of Israel "meeting their God". What caused the fear?? Was Israel afraid of "meeting their God" in Amos' day?? Was there, perhaps a memory of that first meeting, passed down from generation to generation??



In the 3rd paragraph, the lesson states, “The people of Israel did not behave like normal people anymore, and God found it impossible to get their attention. Moreover, God’s judgments had resulted in the hardening of the people’s hearts.”

Any thoughts?

Refer to PP 470 above for some insight.

More insight. 19MR 181.1 (Manuscript Releases Volume Nineteen [Nos. 1360-1419])

Why were the eyes of the people blinded, and their hearts hardened? As they listened to Christ’s words and witnessed His miracles, they were convinced of His divinity. The Spirit of God impressed their hearts, leading them to say, This is indeed the Messiah, the One for whom we have looked, the Desire of all nations. **But they hardened their hearts, and refused to accept Him.** To a great degree, the priests and rulers were responsible for the people turning away from the truth to the maxims of men. And today the preachers of the people are following the footsteps of the priests and elders of the Jewish nation. **When conviction is trampled on, the light that has shone into the chambers of the mind grows dim, and the darkness of error takes the place of the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness.**

RH September 14, 1905, par. 7 (The Review and Herald)

Often the professed followers of Christ are found with hearts hardened and eyes blinded, because they do not obey the truth. Selfish motives and purposes take possession of the mind. In their self-confidence they suppose that their way is the way of wisdom. They are not particular to follow exactly the path that God has marked out. They declare that circumstances alter cases, and when Satan tempts them to follow worldly principles, they yield, and, making crooked paths for their feet, they lead others astray. The inexperienced follow where they go, supposing that the judgment of Christians so experienced must be wise.

CT 364.2 (Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students)

Let me tell you what I know of this heavenly Guest. The Holy Spirit was brooding over the youth during the school hours; but some hearts were so cold and dark that they had no desire for the Spirit’s presence, and the light of God was withdrawn. **The heavenly Visitant would have opened the understanding, would have given wisdom and knowledge in all lines of study that could be employed to the glory of God. He came to convince of sin and to soften the hearts hardened by long estrangement from God.** He came to reveal the great love wherewith God has loved these youth....

ST November 5, 1896, par. 10 (The Signs of the Times)

The Holy Spirit comes to convince of sin, and to soften hearts hardened by estrangement from God. It comes to reveal the love wherewith God loves us, and the possibilities that open



before every believing child of God. But are not some afraid of this heavenly guest? At times it comes with an all-pervading influence, but is it received? Do those to whom it comes bow before God with contrite hearts, pleading that they may be prepared to receive the blessings he is presenting to them? I entreat of all to receive this heavenly visitant as an abiding guest; for it will guide you into all truth, and give you joy and peace in the Lord.

What do the above passages tell us about who bears the responsibility of hardened hearts?? What do they tell us about God's relationship to hardened hearts??

Let's be very clear on this: Whether it's blessings given or removed, whether it's discipline given or protection from Satan's decided attacks on us, EVERY THING GOD DOES IS A REVELATION OF HIS LOVE FOR HUMANITY. Even "God's wrath" of LETTING THEM GO at the time of the final judgment is a revelation of God's love.

THURSDAY

The Pride that Leads to a Fall

This focuses on the book of Obadiah, and his prophecies regarding Edom [Esau's descendants]. Certainly, the Edomites treated their blood relatives poorly, and the lesson states, "Edom will drink God's cup of wrath, while the fortunes of God's people will be restored." Edom's "kicking Israel while they were down" is a revelation of character, of rejecting the Law of Life.

My question, regarding pride leading to a fall, is: Are SDA's proud of their day of worship, their education system, their health message, their diets, their knowledge of Scripture, especially prophetic Scripture?? Was there another group on Earth with these privileges that completely missed God's 1st Advent?? Are we in danger of missing the 2nd Advent due to misunderstanding God's character, and His Law, which is based on His character of Love??



Major Lessons From Minor Prophets Lesson 5 2Q 2013

Seek the Lord and Live! (Amos)

SABBATH

Read memory text, “Seek good and not evil, that you may live: and thus may the Lord God of hosts be with you, just as you have said!” (Amos 5:14 NASB)

Thoughts?

What is the relationship between seeking good, not evil, and living?

What are the options?

- Is it speaking of temporal life or eternal life, or both?
- Is it speaking of natural consequences, live healthy and live longer?
- Is it speaking of imposed penalties, do right or else government will execute you?
- Is it speaking of the law of love and its protocols upon which life is built?

What does seeking good and subsequent life have to do with God being with them? Is there a connection that ties goodness, life and God together?

Read last paragraph, “This week, as we continue...” do you agree God is the only true Source of life? Then, what is connection between good, life and being together with God?

What is the reason for death? If death results from being separated from God, from being evil, deviant from God and his design, from failing to be reconciled to Him, then is what Jesus and the Bible writers called “sleep” in the grave, i.e. first death, awaiting resurrection a result of separation from God?

When Jesus surrendered his spirit into the Father’s care – was Jesus spirit separated from God, or safe and secure with God?

Remember this quote from one of the founders of our church?

Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. **The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character.** {6BC 1093.2}

Does this sound like one is separated from God in the “first” death or the “sleep” death?



There would be no death of any kind if there were no sin, however, it seems the first death it is an artificial state permitted by God's grace to allow for salvation. Death, that is the full consequence of unremedied sin, happens after the "judgment" and is the condition in which body, psyche, mind, character, soul, spirit etc. are all eternally destroyed, and from which no one ever rises again.

Thoughts?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "The purpose of the funeral song..." thoughts?

Return to the Lord and they would live – thoughts? For how long would they live if they return to the Lord? Of those who returned to the Lord, and there were a faithful remnant, how many of them lived – are alive today?

Did those who rejected the Lord and those who remained faithful all go into the grave? So, what does it mean return to the Lord and live if they all in fact died?

Could it be talking about death that is the wages of sin, and not temporary sleep in the grave?

Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (Jn 11:25,26)

Thoughts? How do you understand this text? How is it if we believe in Jesus we never die? Did the Apostles believe in Jesus?

What is death? What causes it, first death, second death etc. and most importantly what is God's involvement in death?

To review - If there were no sin there would be no death of any kind!

First point – all death is a result of sin.

But, are the first death and second death the same? First death is sleep, a state in which our identity and individuality is safe with Christ in heaven, awaiting resurrection, and second death is the complete separation from God, the total destruction of body, individuality, mind, character, spirit and soul – nothing left for all eternity and no resurrection.

If the wages of sin is second death, then why is there a first death?

Keeping those two states in mind, what do you make of these texts:



- As for you, **you were dead in your transgressions and sins**, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air... Eph 2:1,2
 - What does this mean?
 - Condemned by a supreme dictator to be executed, under an imposed death sentence
 - Or, your condition was terminal, like a person who was exposed to toxic doses of radiation – dead, but not quite yet?
- You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, **your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness**. Rom 8:9,10
 - What does this sound like, an imposed death sentence, or a terminal condition?
- When you were **dead in your sins** and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. Col 2:13,14
 - What does this mean? How do you hear it?
 - Here is my paraphrase of this text:
When your condition was terminal and selfishness reigned unchecked in your mind and your heart was tied to the destructive cravings and practices of the world, God intervened and brought you the life giving remedy – Jesus Christ. He reclaimed you from your terminal condition, nullifying the pathology report which certified you as dead in sin; he made it clear the written code, with its regulations, was only a diagnostic instrument designed to expose our terminal state and teach us the need for a true cure; he nailed it to the cross.
- **But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives**. 1Tim 5:6
 - What does this mean?
 - Dead and alive at the same time?
 - Does the Bible have difficulty because of the limitation of the human language?
 - So in this case, she remains terminal, in a condition which will die eternally, even though she has not yet died eternally.
- Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life... John 3:36
 - What does this mean?
 - Are they not alive?

Here are some quotes, do they have any insight we can use?

- **God is the fountain of life, and we can have life only as we are in communion with Him. Separated from God, existence may be ours for a little time, but we do not possess life.**



"She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." 1 Timothy 5:6. Only through the surrender of our will to God is it possible for Him to impart life to us... {MB 61.2}

If you cling to self, refusing to yield your will to God, you are choosing death. **To sin, wherever found, God is a consuming fire. If you choose sin, and refuse to separate from it, the presence of God, which consumes sin, must consume you.** {MB 62.1}

- What do you understand this to mean?
 - What is the cause of death?
 - Is sleep in the grave the death of sin?
 - What is God's role in death?
- **Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess; and there could have been no hope for the fallen race had not God, by the sacrifice of His Son, brought immortality within their reach.** While "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Christ "hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Romans 5:12; 2 Timothy 1:10. **And only through Christ can immortality be obtained.** {Darkness before Dawn 14.3}
 - What does this sound like?
 - Does death here sound like an imposed penalty by God who must execute the disobedient, or a terminal condition which Christ came to cure?
 - The Saviour saw that man has vast powers and capabilities for good, which can be used in the upbuilding of God's kingdom. **He came to restore to life those dead in sin.** His voice is to be heard saying, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." "As the Father hath life in himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in himself."

To arouse those spiritually dead, to create new tastes, new motives, requires as great an outlay of power as to raise one from physical death. It is indeed giving life to the dead to convert the sinner from the error of his ways; but our Deliverer is able to do this; for He came to destroy the works of the enemy. And will He not accomplish that which He has pledged himself to perform? {RH, March 12, 1901}

 - What is death?
 - Is death a punishment inflicted by God or a result of sin, being deviant from God's design?
 - What is God doing in regard to death? Seeking to heal and restore!
 - **Man is dead, without God, and without hope in the world.** But over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Christ proclaimed, "I am the resurrection and the life." Not only will all who are in the graves hear His voice and come forth, **He is today the Restorer of those dead in sin. Today Jesus is working His miracles.** The great Physician stands by the side of the faithful worker, saying to the repentant, discouraged soul, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." {ST, June 6, 1900 par. 12}
 - What does it mean we are dead without God?
 - What is the cause of death?
 - **Selfishness brings spiritual death.** {8T 135.3}
 - What is spiritual death?



- Having a character and mind that is out of harmony with God
- Being in a terminal condition, dead in trespass and sin
- What does spiritual death result in if unremedied?
 - Eternal death and destruction of body, mind, spirit etc.
- The polluted stream represents the soul that is separate from God. **Sin not only shuts away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. Through sin, the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted; the faculties of the soul are degraded.** {PK 233.1}
 - What is the cause of death?
- **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. {GC88 36.2}
 - What is God's role in the death of the wicked?
 - Why does God NOT have to execute sinners?
 - Is this really that hard to understand?
 - Why is it then that so many teach God inflicts torture and death as punishment?
 - Because they have accepted Rome's view of God's law that it is imposed and therefore justice requires imposed penalties.
 - Do you notice all of these texts and quotes make sense when we realize the truth that God's law is the protocol upon which life is built, the living expression of love.

The lesson points out in the third paragraph that God calls the people to hate evil and love good, "In other words, a change in the people's attitudes will lead to a change in their actions."

Thoughts? This is well said – a change in the attitudes – how do we experience that?

- A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. **Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from the spiritual death.** Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.-- Review and Herald, Feb. 25, 1902. {ChS 42.2}

Revival – to revive – to bring back to life – to resurrect – to renew... and from where does such new life come?



When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 3:11.4}

We become partakers of the divine nature as we surrender to Christ and the Holy Spirit takes what Christ has achieved and recreates us in His image!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “More than most other...” thoughts?

What are some examples of empty rituals and dead formalism that Israel practiced?

- Sacrifices
- Ceremonial washing (they criticized Christ’s disciples for eating without washing their hands)
- Sabbath observance
- Prayers
- Offerings
- Feast days

Was there anything wrong with the actual action? What was the problem?

They did it without meaning, their hearts and minds were not changed, they acted without thought, without intention, without understanding, without love. Doing it from fear, from mystical and magical thinking, from the idea that it was a requirement.

Do we have any of these problems in Christianity today? Examples?

- Dress
- Church attendance
- Diet
- Prayer
- Offerings
- Communion
- Baptism
- Sinner’s prayer

Is there anything inherently wrong with any of these actions? Where would the problem be? In the heart motive.



Is there a central root lie that, if believed, would contaminate all of our behaviors and spiritual exercises? Yes, the lie about God's character, government, methods and law.

If we believe God imposes law and therefore God imposes punishment, then what is the reason we do what we do? And then we fall into dead formalism and empty ritual.

WEDNESDAY

Read first chapter, "In Amos 8, the prophet..." thoughts?

How do you understand what is happening between God and Israel at this time in history?

First – the famine of the land, not the famine for God's Word – what are the possible reasons?

- Nature falling apart, just random forces
- God withdrawing protection and Satan acting to cause famine
- God acting to cause the famine by holding back rain
 - God inflicting punishment upon them for not doing what He said?
 - God therapeutically intervening to reveal the impotence of their false God's and shake them out of their false beliefs?

Second – what about the famine for God's Word – why? What are the possible reasons?

- God is withholding the truth about Himself
- The truth is revealed, but the hearts of people are hard and reject it
- Consider the parable of the sower and the seed falling on the path and stony ground.

Why do people insist on depicting God as one who inflicts pain and suffering on His children?

Do loving parents ever give their children vaccines? Or discipline? What if such acts were never understood as loving interventions to protect and teach, but instead were always cast as evidences of inflictions of punishment?

Bottom pink asks, "In what ways is it possible to silence the voice of God in our lives?" Thoughts?

- Rejection of truth
- Preference for lies
- Continued, willful, persistent, unrepentant sinfulness – damages the faculties that recognize and respond to truth
- Alcohol, drugs – damage the mind
- Certain entertainments, fill mind with distorted ideas, activate unhealthy brain circuits
- Refusal to help others



FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Our standing before God...” thoughts?

What does this mean? That we are saved by knowledge? Or that we are saved by having a healed character, by having the law of love restored in us so that we love God and others more than self?

Then, what is the point of evangelism?

What breaks the circle of love and trust and incites fear and selfishness? Lies, and lies about God are most destructive.

So, what sets free? Truth, therefore, evangelism is to spread the truth about God, and His kingdom, to provide greater opportunity for people to embrace the truth and experience healing of heart and mind.

It is true that the Holy Spirit works to enlighten everyone, through whatever truth is available to each person. If someone doesn't have Scripture, God uses science and nature, or personal experiences, or people, or circumstances.

But, while each avenue of evidence, Scripture, Science, Experience, can be used by God to bring people to a saving relationship with Him, it is easier for Satan to confound and confuse the evidence if the three threads are separated from each other.

How many times have well meaning people, come to a group who didn't have Scripture, but who had been following the Holy Spirit with the light they had, and then used the Scripture, separated from science and experience to lead them away from God?

When the Jews came to the Gentiles and demanded circumcision, and other formalism, they had the Scripture – but were they using it to lead people closer to God? Are we ever in danger of doing this?

- Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God. {DA 638.2}

Read question 1 – thoughts? What things that were considered shameful and taboo and are now practiced and deemed good?



- Scripture being read and studied by lay persons in their own language?
- Women's ordination?
- People deciding where to give their tithes and offerings to support the gospel rather than allow church hierarchy to decide?
- Homosexuals being treated with compassion rather than stoning?

Read and discuss question 2

TUESDAY

The second paragraph states, "Among those who did not like Amos' preaching was Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, who accused Amos of conspiracy against Israel's king."

Why would the priest oppose the message from God? Shouldn't we expect the priest to support messages from God?

If the person was a priest, doesn't that mean they are anointed of God, or as some might say, "God's anointed"? So shouldn't people defer to the priest?

Are there any lessons for us today? If someone is ordained, pastor or priest does that mean they, necessarily, will be on God's side and support truth from God's messengers?

So how do we handle a situation when a pastor or priest opposes truth as we understand it?

How did David treat king Saul? Did David cooperate with king Saul's agenda? Did David seek to harm king Saul? Did David follow God's will for his life despite the anointed of the Lord opposing him?

Is there a lesson here?

Read last paragraph, "However, speaking the truth..." thoughts?

When this happens in the church today what is it called? Those speaking the uncomfortable truth are often accused of teaching heresy.

As the light and life of men was rejected by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation. Again and again the history of Christ's withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; **but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light**, and those that bore it were **forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth.** In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented. **Often those who follow in the steps of the**



Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience. {DA 232.2}

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “The prophet turns...” thoughts?

Any confusion?

What is the “punishment” for sin? Eternal death – so if God is inflicting the punishment for sin, which is eternal death, then how can he, after inflicting this, turn and save?

So, what is the problem? Describing the punishment from sin as coming from God, and failing to describes God’s actions as interventions to heal and save.

Read Amos 9:11,12:

“In that day I will restore David’s fallen tent. I will repair its broken places,
restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom
and all the nations that bear my name,”
declares the LORD, who will do these things.

Read fourth and fifth paragraphs, “Many Jewish teachers...” thoughts?

Do you agree? The Messiah was coming to save all people, not just Jews! If so, then what was the purpose of the Jewish nation?



Major Lessons from Minor Prophets Lesson 6 2Q 2013

Eager to Forgive (Jonah)

SABBATH

Read key thought: “The book of Jonah reveals, among other things, that God is more willing to forgive others than we often are.”

Thoughts about this?

Does it almost sound like God is willing to forgive – but not always willing, just more willing than us most of the time?

How do you understand forgiveness? What is it?

Is forgiveness and legal pardon the same? Do you get a different definition and understanding of forgiveness depending on which law, imposed or nature, you look through?

Have you been taught God forgives us?

Have you ever heard Jesus paid our sin penalty?

Is that confusing? If you owed someone \$10,000 and couldn't pay, and your brother stepped up and paid your \$10,000 debt, what would you think if the person to whom the money was paid, after receiving the money looked at you and said, “Now that your debt has been paid, I forgive you your debt.” How does that sound to you?

Do you notice many Christian theories put God in such a position – Jesus died to pay our debt, yet the Father forgives us our debt.... Something doesn't quite seem right does it? What is wrong with this picture?

What about Heb 9:22:

- In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (NIV)
- And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission. (ASV)

Which do you like better? According to the lexicon the Greek translated either forgiveness or remission is:

ἄφεσις [*aphesis* /af-es-is/] n f. From 863; TDNT 1:509; TDNTA 88; GK 912; 17 occurrences; AV translates as “remission” nine times, “forgiveness” six times, “deliverance” once, and



“liberty” once. **1** release from bondage or imprisonment. **2** forgiveness or pardon, of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed), remission of the penalty.¹

So since it can be either, what makes the difference?

The law lens one looks through: If one looks through the imposed law then one sees legal payments, debts that need paid and thus forgiveness or pardon, but if one looks through the natural law, then one sees healing, or remission.

If someone has cancer we want the cancer to go into remission – to remit to their precancerous state. In regard to sin in our lives what do we want, mere pardon, or to have sin remit, have our characters healed and cleanse?

God forgives from his heart, without the death of Christ, but it took the death of Christ to have sin remit, to cleanse us to actually heal us.

Here is what one of the founders of our church wrote:

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9. **God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin.** It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had **the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."** Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath **He removed our transgressions from us.**" Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

Thoughts?

Then how do we understand 1John 1:9:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Is it like the first paragraph suggests, Jonah “suspected that these non-Hebrew people might repent of their sins and that God would forgive them.”

What about the idea the people might repent and God would forgive them?

What comes first, our repentance, or God’s forgiveness?

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



If we don't repent does God have a heart of forgiveness or unforgiveness?

So, are those who don't repent forgiven or unforgiven?

It depends upon which law lens and upon whose heart you are looking – the unrepentant are forgiven in the heart of God, but they remain unforgiven, i.e. unhealed, in their heart because they never received the forgiveness freely extended by God.

Consider those who crucified Christ – he forgave them, yet they remained his enemies; they weren't forgiven in their hearts, even though they were forgiven in God's heart.

This is critical to consider. The heart of paganism, and false Christianity, is that God doesn't forgive until some legal payment happens, Christ's blood, and then not until we repent. This is all a lie. God forgave us and thus sent Christ to lead us back to Him, but many refuse to repent. God's heart remains forgiving, but they remain terminal and unhealed.

Thoughts?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "Nineveh was historically..." thoughts?

Would it help or hurt if we changed it to say instead of "Because God is the Lord of all nations and all people are accountable to Him..." to "Because God is the Lord of all nations and He loves all people..."?

What does the accountable to Him seem to focus on? What kind of ideas or feelings does this description engender?

Does it enhance your desire to be with God?

Remember the analogy of breaking both the laws of health and the government by doing IV heroin and getting endocarditis – do you want to go before the judge knowing he will hold you accountable? Do you want to go to the doctor? What makes the difference?

How do we portray God as a judge or doctor?

Which law is actually more powerful and uncompromising the law used by the judge or the law used by the doctor?

Read fifth paragraph, "Jonah ran from God..." thoughts?

Why do people run from God?



- Fear
- Guilt and shame
- Feel unworthy
- Believe lies about God
- Don't recognize a need
- Don't trust Him, He might want them to do something like go to Nineveh
- Don't want to give up some earthly pleasure
- Other?

What do you think of this rhetorical question, “After all, if there is no higher power to answer to, why not do whatever you want?”

What does this question imply?

What is the reason for doing right and avoiding wrong? Not because sin is inherently evil, not because sin damages, but because one must answer to God. And what if there were no God? Then, according to this logic, there is no reason not to do bad stuff because there isn't anyone ultimately to answer to.

So, if God could only get a grip on his anger and wrath, we could live fine for all eternity in sin, because there isn't anything wrong with sin there is something wrong with God – this is SATANs argument and position.

Why don't we do whatever we want? The ceremonial laws were done away with at the Cross so why don't we eat whatever we want? Because the laws of health were not done away with.

The reason we do not do whatever we want is because selfishness violates God's design for life, his law, and automatically damages the sinner, sears the conscience, warps the character and leads to fear, anxiety, inflammatory states and ultimately ruined relationships, health and death. Sin is incompatible with the way God constructed life to operate.

But this question makes it sound like if we could just get God out of the way then we could do whatever we want. And many theologies are based on this very thing –

- Jesus is my substitute, all my sins past present and future are laid on him and he stands before the Father and takes the punishment for me.
- Or, Jesus pleads his blood to the Father in my behalf,
- or Jesus hides me with his robe of righteousness –

In other words, all these theologies are designed to take God out of the picture because we believe falsely that if He was in the picture He would strike out against us. This is Satan's view based on imposed law constructs.

Bottom pink section states, “We believe that God not only sees all that we do but knows ever our thoughts... How differently would you act if, at all times, you were keenly sensitive to the fact that God does know your every thought?”



Thoughts?

Is this a comforting or disturbing thought?

Does it depend on the kind of being you understand God to be?

If one views God as a God of stern justice, who must impose punishment for disobedience, what would likely be the response of realizing God reads all of our thoughts?

What if one viewed God as the Creator, who built his universe to operate upon the law of love, and doesn't ever inflict punishment, but is constantly seeking to heal and restore all deviations from his design for life back into harmony for our good and happiness?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "In Jonah 1..." thoughts?

What do you think of the idea of casting lots? Doesn't this passage give us a clear Biblical example of using lots? The Bible said it, I believe it, that's all there is to it – right or wrong?

In what ways are lots used today?

- Coin toss
- Drawing straws
- Opening Bible randomly and pointing finger in and believing it is a message from God
- Paper with yes and no on either side and drop it
- Dice
- Rock paper scissors
- Magic 8 ball

Casting lots and these other methods are a form of divination – a form of trying to determine answers without use of reason or investigation of evidence. This is the same root method of spiritualism –

- Ouija board
- Tarot cards
- Palm reading
- Astrology

All trying to get knowledge, answers, without using their reasoning powers and/or investigating the evidence, and without using their God-given individuality in self-determination.

These methods seek to turn off the higher faculties and surrender one's responsibility to some other party or method.



Here is what one of our founders said:

Let none be led **from the sound, sensible principles** that God has laid down for the guidance of His people, to depend for direction on any such device as the tossing up of a coin. **Such a course is well pleasing to the enemy of souls; for he works to control the coin**, and through its agency works out his plans. Let none be so easily deceived as to place confidence in any such tests. Let none belittle **their experience** by resorting to cheap devices **for direction in important matters connected with the work of God.** {6BC 1054.7}

The Lord works in no haphazard way. Seek Him most earnestly in prayer. He will impress the mind, and will give tongue and utterance. **The people of God are to be educated not to trust in human inventions and uncertain tests as a means of learning God's will concerning them.** Satan and his agencies are always ready to step into any opening to be found that will lead souls away from the **pure principles** of the Word of God. The people who are led and taught of God will give no place to devisings for which there is not a "Thus saith the Lord" (SpT, Ser. B, No. 17, p. 28). {6BC 1054.8}

I have no faith in casting lots. We have in the Bible a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in regard to all church duties. . . . Read your Bibles with much prayer. **Do not try to humble others, but humble yourselves** before God, and **deal gently with one another. To cast lots for the officers of the church is not in God's order** (Letter 37, 1900). {6BD 1054.9}

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

The lesson points out that in Jonah chapter 2 Jonah celebrates deliverance from the perilous depths.

Many stories in the Bible are recorded there because they not only have historical context, but also are themselves metaphors of God's plan of redemption.

- The children of Israel in bondage in Egypt, metaphor for humans in bondage to sin.
- Moses a deliverer, represents Christ our deliverer etc. etc.
- Manna from heaven represents Jesus, the bread of life
- All the miracle births representing Jesus:
 1. Sarah- Isaac – Mount Moriah willing to be sacrificed
 2. Rebekah – Jacob – who became Israel the father of the nation built upon twelve sons, Jesus the cornerstone of the church built upon twelve apostles
 3. Rachel – Joseph – who sold into slavery (becomes a servant), became ruler to save people from famine, Jesus humbled himself to be a servant but is exalted to be ruler
 4. Monoah's wife – Samson – blessed with strength to deliver Israel from bondage of oppressors and rule over them, Jesus has the strength to deliver us from sin and rule the universe
 5. Hannah- Samuel – who became High Priest, Jesus is our High Priest
 6. Shunammite woman – child died and resurrected, of course Jesus died and rose again



7. Elizabeth – John the Baptist – who greatest of prophets, and Jesus was the greatest of all prophets

What about Jonah any application of his experience to a larger reality?

- Called by God
- Ignore God's call and does own thing
- Experiences storms of life
- Tries to hide from reality
- Reality finds him/you anyway
- Find self sinking into the depths out of control
- God steps in to help, to deliver, but perhaps seen as terrifying and destructive, being consumed or destroyed, but God carries you through the dark days where you languish in reflection
- Leads to repentance
- God returns one to self-governance, autonomy, puts you back on mission for Him

Thoughts?

Has anyone gone through experiences in which difficulties brought them closer to God?

WEDNESDAY

Read Jonah 3:1-5:

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ²“Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”

³Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days. ⁴On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.” ⁵The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

Thoughts?

What do you think of this evangelistic style? Why do you think it worked?

Do you think the preaching was accompanied by the work of the Holy Spirit which brings conviction of sin?

When the Ninevites repented, do we have any record of them engaging in sacrifice?

How is it God was able to turn from his anger, from their destruction when no sacrifice was offered, no blood, no animal, no temple service, no atonement service?



Where did their sin go? Didn't their sin have to be placed on a lamb, and then that sin be transferred to the sanctuary and then at the end of the year have that sin removed by a special service?

What does this story tell us about some of the things we have been taught or assume regarding how sin is dealt with by God?

Were animal sacrifices necessary for salvation, even in OT times? What was necessary in all times?

Repentance, change of heart, turning away from selfishness and opening the heart to God to heal and restore in love and righteousness.

What did the Ninevites do? They repented and turned away from evil.

Why do so many get caught up into ritualistic religions and fail to see the real matter, what is the condition and quality of the heart/character?

How many religious wars are started over transformation of character, in other words people fighting because those people are too kind, patient, generous, loving, meek, self-controlled etc.?

How many religious wars were fought over rituals, rites, and theological ideas? It doesn't matter that they are kind, loving, patient, etc. they still haven't been baptized in the right way, or they don't take the right communion, or worship on the right day...

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Jonah 4 reveals..." thoughts?

What does this tell us? Any other examples of people used by God who had serious problems in their lives?

- Abraham polygamist and liar
- Jacob liar and cheat
- Moses murderer
- Rahab prostitute
- Samson philanderer
- David polygamist and murderer
- Solomon polygamist and worshiper of Moloch
- Peter impetuous and selfish
- Martin Luther prejudice against the Jews.

Is there a lesson for us regarding how we treat people and God's attitude toward people's usefulness for his cause?



Is it possible that some of the best people in God's cause are those who have made the biggest sins and then repented?

- Saul who was a Pharisee of Pharisees, later called himself the chief of sinners?
- Peter after his denial
- Moses after the murder –

Is it possible it is after these mistakes, where our own human strength has failed us, that we are brought to repentance and lose confidence in self and depend more fully in God and thus are much more useful to God?

The third paragraph states, "He could not control his desire for vengeance. He was small-minded and ill-tempered."

Do we today have people who prefer to see the wicked die in the end, the wicked suffer in flames and long for God to stick it to them? Who long for God to take vengeance on them?

Is such an attitude Godly?

FRIDAY

Question 1 states "The book of Jonah teaches that God is in full control of nature."

Does the book of Jonah teach this? Would you say it differently?

Are there any events occurring in nature for which God is not in full control?

When Job's children were killed was it because God was in control of nature?

In Revelation 7, when the four angels let go the four winds and nature falls apart, is God in control of those tragic events?

- Nature is certainly sustained by God – but what happens when God withdraws? Can Satan affect nature?
- Can humans affect nature?
- What about Global warming? Is God in control of this?
- What about survival of the fittest and animals who are predators, if God were in full control of nature would animals kill each other?

Read question 2 – "But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?" Jonah 4:11

Thoughts? What lessons do we take from this insight into God's heart?
Discuss question 3.



Major Lessons From Minor Prophets Lesson 7 2Q 2013

God's Special People (Micah)

SABBATH

Read Micah 6:6-8:

With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

⁸ He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Thoughts?

What does this text mean?

Last week we asked the question, How could God forgive Nineveh when they didn't bring any animal sacrifices, they didn't worship at the Temple, when they didn't have their sins confessed on a lamb and the blood taken into the Sanctuary – so how was God able to forgive them?

What about this text? Does it give any indication regarding the value of animal sacrifice and the Temple service? Did any of that ritualistic activity, ever, at any time in human history, provide Remedy for sin?

What would it mean if sacrificing of animals actually did provide the solution for sin?

- Christ's death wasn't necessary
- We could accomplish our own salvation by killing animals
- If the animal sacrifice actually resulted in salvation, then the purpose of the death of the animal would be for what? Appeasement – thus if one promotes the idea that animal sacrifice was necessary for salvation, one is promoting paganism.
- What was the purpose of the sacrificial system?
 - Theater to act out the plan of salvation
 - Bring conviction to make a person sick at the idea of sin

What is God then saying here through Micah? What does he want from his people?

He wants transformation of the heart, mind, character – any other passages that support this?

- “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” John 3:3



- “The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.” DT 30:6
- “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” PS 51:10
- “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that **I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned** among the nations where you have gone. ²³ I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, **the name you have profaned among them.** Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when **I show myself holy through you before their eyes.** ²⁴ ‘For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; **I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.** ²⁶ **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.** ²⁷ **And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.** Ezekiel 36:22-27

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. **But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What is it God wants to do for us? Through all of these passages what law have you heard in action? The law of love – the design for life which needs to be restored in us! What are we supposed to do?

Read first paragraph, “The prophet Micah...” thoughts?

What makes sin, such as dishonesty, injustice, bribery etc. “fatal”?

- It breaks the law and the lawgiver must execute the death sentence upon you?
- OR, it violates the protocol upon which life is based?

Does it make a difference how one understands why sin is fatal? What difference does it make?

Read next paragraph, “Yet, through...” thoughts?

Was God punishing Israel? Why or why not?

What is the punishment for sin? Is this punishment inflicted or is it the natural consequences?



When we see God act, directly in some way, is it punishment or therapeutic intervention?

Does it make a difference how we see it? What difference does it make?

SUNDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “In Micah 1:1-9...” thoughts?

The lesson takes the position that God is bringing “destructive judgment” and that is what Micah describes in these verses. Let’s read the verses and see what you think:

- ¹ The word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moresheth during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah—the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.
- ² Hear, O peoples, all of you, listen, O earth and all who are in it, that the Sovereign Lord may witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple.
- ³ Look! The Lord is coming from his dwelling place; [where is his dwelling place?] he comes down and treads the high places of the earth.
- ⁴ The mountains melt beneath him and the valleys split apart, like wax before the fire, like water rushing down a slope.
- ⁵ All this is because of Jacob’s transgression, because of the sins of the house of Israel. What is Jacob’s transgression? Is it not Samaria? What is Judah’s high place? Is it not Jerusalem?
- ⁶ “Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of rubble, a place for planting vineyards. I will pour her stones into the valley and lay bare her foundations.
- ⁷ All her idols will be broken to pieces; all her temple gifts will be burned with fire; I will destroy all her images. Since she gathered her gifts from the wages of prostitutes, as the wages of prostitutes they will again be used.”
- ⁸ Because of this I will weep and wail; I will go about barefoot and naked. I will howl like a jackal and moan like an owl.
- ⁹ For her wound is incurable; it has come to Judah. It has reached the very gate of my people, even to Jerusalem itself.

Thoughts? What did you hear? Do you hear God threatening “destructive judgment”?

- Did God destroy any of the people?
- But did any of the people get destroyed?
- What or how did they get destroyed?
- Did the Babylonians destroy them?
- Did unremedied sin destroy them?

What did God say he would destroy?

- Isn’t God threatening to destroy lies, false gods, destructive ideas, distorted worship?



- For what purpose? To punish? Or to help free the minds of the people from eternal destruction?

So, is God punishing, or is God mercifully intervening to deliver and save?

When we recognize God built his universe to operate on love, and that selfishness and fear bring destruction – then we see God acting to counter selfishness and restore love. God is working like a doctor, to oppose infection, the infection of lies, fear, selfishness. Thus, when they are being damaged by false God concepts, rather than ignoring them, God intervenes to shake them out of their delusions and open the opportunity to see the truth.

This is mercy – it is not infliction of punishment for sin.

The punishment for sin is eternal non-existence and what causes this? Unremedied sin!

MONDAY

Read third paragraph, “One of the constant...” thoughts?

Several issues to discuss in this paragraph, what about the idea of divine retribution?

What does this language connote? Does it sound like a God who inflicts punishment? Does it sound arbitrary, in other words, that if God didn't inflict it they wouldn't experience it?

They mention that God warned them over and over in Deuteronomy that the blessings of God were dependent upon their obedience. This is absolutely true, but why?

- Does it mean, if you disobey I will kill, torture, harm,
- Or if you disobey you will take yourselves out of harmony with me and my methods and the result is ruin and death?
- In other words, does retribution mean inflicted externally or natural results?

If you hold an imposed law concept then what does retribution mean?

If you hold a natural law concept then what does retribution mean?

So before I read any other sources, thinking it through, knowing God's law is the law of love – then, what would you conclude retribution to be? The natural results of being out of harmony with God's design for life – NOT inflicted punishment.

Notice how retribution was used by one of the founders of our church:

Upon the slothful servant the sentence was, "Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents." Here, as in the reward of the faithful worker, is indicated not merely the reward at the final judgment **but the gradual process of retribution in this life. As**



in the natural, so in the spiritual world: every power unused will weaken and decay. Activity is the law of life; idleness is death. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." 1 Corinthians 12:7. **Employed to bless others, his gifts increase. Shut up to self-serving they diminish, and are finally withdrawn.** He who refuses to impart that which he has received will at last find that he has nothing to give. He is consenting to a process that surely dwarfs and finally destroys the faculties of the soul. {COL 364.1}

What kind of law is described in this paragraph? How is retribution used? Does retribution of this kind frighten you? Does it make you afraid of God?

Against every transgression of the laws of life, nature will utter her protest. She bears abuse as long as she can; **but finally the retribution comes, and it falls upon the mental as well as the physical powers.** Nor does it end with the transgressor; the effects of his indulgence are seen in his offspring, and thus the evil is passed down from generation to generation. {Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene 44.4}

All who indulge the appetite, waste the physical energies, and weaken the moral power, **will sooner or later feel the retribution that follows the transgression of physical law.** {CD 161.4}

Again, how is retribution used? What law is being described? What kind of God is behind such a system?

Jacob in his distress was not overwhelmed. He had repented, he had endeavored to atone for the wrong to his brother. And when threatened with death through the wrath of Esau, he sought help from God. "Yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication." "And He blessed him there." Hosea 12:4; Genesis 32:29. In the power of His might the forgiven one stood up, no longer the supplanter, but a prince with God. He had gained not merely deliverance from his outraged brother, **but deliverance from himself. The power of evil in his own nature was broken; his character was transformed.** {Ed 147.3}

The same experience is repeated in the history of Jacob's sons--sin working retribution, and repentance bearing fruit of righteousness unto life. {Ed 148.1}

God does not annul His laws. He does not work contrary to them. The work of sin He does not undo. But He transforms. Through His grace the curse works out blessing. {Ed 148.2}

How is retribution described? Do you agree – retribution is not inflicted but it is the natural result of rebellion against God's design for life?

What about the end of sin and sinners, retributive justice, will it be different?

Note this description from one of the founders of our church. Consider how much has changed over the last 150 in how we present things:



God has given to men **a declaration of his character, and of his method of dealing with sin.** “The Lord God, **merciful and gracious**, long-suffering, 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.” [Exodus 34:6, 7.] “All the wicked will he destroy.” “The transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off.” [Psalm 145:20; 37:38.] **The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.** {GC88 541.2}

Okay – what does this mean? How do you hear it? Does it sound scary? Does it sound like God will use power to inflict torment and punishment?

Think about what kind of law God’s government and universe are built upon, then consider the meaning of the passage. Before I read what comes next, what would you anticipate? A description of a system like human courts in which God inflicts punishment, or a system in which sinners are themselves out of harmony with God’s design and thus suffer from their terminal condition?

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. **He desires that the creatures of his hands shall love him because he is worthy of love.** [Can this happen if God is threatening to torture and kill those who don’t love Him? Can God get this with imposed law?] He would have them obey him because they have an intelligent appreciation of his wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love him because they are drawn toward him in admiration of his attributes. {GC88 541.3} [Does understanding the law of love as God’s design for life draw you to love him more? But what happens if we have, instead of just conceptions of God’s qualities, have false ideas and see God as imposer of law and punisher?]

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God... **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, “Love your enemies.”** [what kind of law is described, imposed, or design protocols, principles?] God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom his judgments are visited. He would make them happy if he could do so in accordance with the laws of his government and the justice of his character. He surrounds them with the tokens of his love, he grants them a knowledge of his law, and follows them with the offers of his mercy; but they despise his love, make void his law, and reject his mercy. While constantly receiving his gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that he abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive hour will come at last, **when their destiny is to be decided.** [what is described? How is God acting? Who decides their destiny] Will he then chain these rebels to his side? Will he force them to do his will? {GC88 542.1}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader, and have been controlled by his power, **are not prepared to enter the presence of God. Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters.** [Why are they this way? What causes it? And what is the result of having character fixed like this? Is this describing imposed punishment, or natural



result?] Can they enter Heaven, to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could Heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC88 542.2}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to Heaven, and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,— every soul filled with love; every countenance beaming with joy; enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb; and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,—**could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb?—No, no; [Why not? Is God unwilling? Is God angry? Does God have a rule which requires Him to inflict punishment upon them because they failed to do the right ritual, be baptized in the right way, confess the forgotten sin, claim the blood of Jesus?]** years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for Heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of Heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for Heaven. [Why are they not in heaven? They are unfit, is this imposed, or natural] Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from Heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC88 542.3}

Like the waters of the flood, the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable. {GC88 542.4} **[What is described? What is retributive justice here executed by God? An infliction of arbitrary power to torture? Or the reaping of the natural results of persist violation of God's design for life?**

Do many Christians today believe that divine retribution is imposed? And that we are protected from it by accepting Jesus' payment for our sin? Then are such Christians in danger of believing that because they have accepted Jesus they are free from divine retribution – i.e. the natural results of breaking God's design for life?

- How about how many don't think lifestyle choices matter because Jesus paid their sin debt – we can eat whatever...
- How many think they can watch whatever they want, because they accepted Jesus as their Savior?
- How many think there is no retribution, consequence, for worshipping an angry, wrathful god?

TUESDAY

Read Micah 5:2-4 – thoughts?



Read second paragraph, “Out of a little...” thoughts?

When does Jesus “rule” begin? Did he rule when he came to earth?

Does Jesus rule on earth right now? What prevent Jesus from ruling on earth now? Is it Satan that stops him from ruling or something else?

Could it be Jesus doesn’t rule on earth now because we are ready for his rule?

What do you think of this perspective from Christ Object Lessons:

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. **When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.** {COL 69.1}

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain. {COL 69.2}

Is this consistent with what Peter wrote about God not delaying his return but not wanting any to be lost?

What prevents Christ’s character from being reproduced in his people? Could it be persistent lies about God and his law taught within the church?

Read last paragraph, “As incomprehensible as it is...” thoughts?

It really is incomprehensible that the Creator became human – what does such a thing do for you?

I received an email last week from someone who asked, why did it have to be Jesus, why not a perfect angel come to earth and be sacrificed for our sin – thoughts?

- Who are Satan’s allegations against?
- What would we learn about God if an angel died with the intent to save us?
- Could an angel become human?
- Did it require a human to be victorious in order to save mankind?
- Why Jesus instead of the Father?

THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Micah’s book begins...” thoughts?



What do you think they mean by “There are people who try to explain away or deny the reality of God’s judgments?”

- Are they talking about Universalism? That in the end everyone will be saved?
- Or are they talking about Theistic Evolution – God created it, wound it up, but now lets it run itself. He isn’t involved?
- Or are they talking about the idea that God’s judgments are not punishments but therapeutic interventions?

Do we deny God’s judgments? Or do we understand them in the context of His character and law of love?

Does it make a difference which lens one is looking through?

When they say “God’s justice is the other side of his love and concern.” What do you hear?

Is God two-faced? As Graham Maxwell used to say, will Jesus come back with love on his face for the righteous and an angry scowl on his face for the wicked? Does God have two faces? Or is God love?

Is God any less love to the wicked as to the righteous? What makes the difference? The attitude of God or the condition of the one interacting with God?

Is punishment “God’s word”? Or is “punishment” the result of breaking God’s word?

Think about it – God’s word creates, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.” PS 33:6

God’s Word was made flesh – God’s Word is Life – God’s Word Creates – it is the violation of God’s word, the breaking of God’s law, the transgression of God’s design for life, the deviation from the protocols upon which life is built and that results in punishment!

How diabolical – to attribute to God’s word the punishment that comes from the transgression of God’s word.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The prophet declares...” thoughts? What is justice according to Scripture?

Do you see how answering this question determines what kind of person one becomes?

If God is an imposer of law and thus God’s justice is inflicted punishment upon the oppressor – then we have religions like:

- Christianity in the Dark Ages – crusades, inquisition, burning at the stake



- Islam – intolerance of freedom of conscience, kill people who convert, kill people or treat your ideas and beliefs with what you consider to be profane
- Judaism which crucifies the innocent Lord
- Nations which hunt down and kill offenders

But when one sees God as the Builder, the Designer, the One who constructed the universe to operate upon the law of love – then one sees deviations are destructive and God’s justice is delivering the oppressed and healing the damage caused by sin and oppression. In that case we have religions like:

- Jesus – giving life for others
- Marion and Barbie Fisher – the Amish girls who stood up and asked to be shot first in order to protect their friends
- Kent Whitaker who forgave his son for having his wife and family killed
- Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those in prison, delivering the oppressed

Thus God’s justice is realized at the second coming when the dead are raised, the sick are healed, the abused are delivered, the broken are restored, and the persistently rebellious are mercifully set free to their ultimate end.

Read bottom pink section, “Why is it easier to keep Sabbath strictly than it is to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God?”

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2, 3



Major Lessons From Minor Prophets Lesson 8 2Q 2013

Trusting God's Goodness (Habakkuk)

SABBATH

Read memory text: "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14)

Thoughts?

What does the text mean? The knowledge of the glory of the Lord?

What is the glory of the Lord?

- Fire?
- Power?
- Energy?
- Authority?
- Character?

How would you build a case that God's character is His glory, not the might and power?

- Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. (Exodus 33:18,19)
- Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?... 'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty." (Hag 2:3,9)

The second temple was so small the people wailed and mourned when they remembered Solomon's temple – but the glory of the second would be greater than the glory of the first – how?

Because Jesus would come in person to the second, but wait, what happened on the day Solomon's temple was dedicated? God's presence came down in brilliant glory and filled the place, so bright the priests couldn't enter.

So, God's presence came to both earthly temples, yet the Bible says the glory of the smaller one, the one that didn't have the bright shining glory, would be more glorious than the first. How and why? Why was the second more glorious?

Because God's glory is not might, power, or brilliant light – it is His character of love and where was God's character of love most powerfully revealed? In the life of Christ!



So, if the glory of the Lord is His character, what does it mean that the earth will be filled with the knowledge His glory? That the earth will be filled with the knowledge of His character of love!

Listen to this from a book Christ Object Lessons, written more than 100 years ago. Do you agree?

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth... **The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**”
Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

How is the knowledge of God to be made known in the world?

Do we have any role to play?

What prevents this from happening?

This is message that Come and Reason Ministry is passionate to take to the world. It is our mission, to as clearly as possible, reveal the true character of God!

Over the last several years we have seen a groundswell of support for this message and doors are opening. We invite your continued prayer and support that the truth about God will go forward and the world will be lighted with His glory!

SUNDAY

Read Habakkuk 1:2-4:

How long, O Lord, must I call for help,
but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, “Violence!”
but you do not save?
Why do you make me look at injustice?
Why do you tolerate wrong?
Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and conflict abounds.
Therefore the law is paralyzed,
and justice never prevails.
The wicked hem in the righteous,
so that justice is perverted.

Thoughts?



The prophet is asking, how long they must endure? What about today? Do we ever wonder how long?

What is the answer? How long must we endure the injustice of sin? As long as it takes! As long as there is hope for any to be saved.

Why were the injustices occurring in Habakkuk's day? To whom is Habakkuk referring? It is to the Jewish people, the Jewish leaders he is referring when he speaks of injustice and abuse. He longs for God to bring reform, and he asks how long.

Why doesn't God simply send lightening bolts and fix it?

He can't – why not?

What is the just thing from God's perspective? To heal and set right.

Many times on issues like this, justice, judgment, atonement, satisfaction, etc. we have conflict with others who seem to not appreciate what we are saying, and may even oppose it. As you know in this class we have for some months now explored truth by contrasting the two ways God's law is conceived – natural or imposed. It struck me this contrast of the two laws also helps clarify much of the terminology used in Scripture, and exposes why there is so much confusion. Thus I've created a comparison chart of keywords and how they are defined under each of these two law constructs. It's on the last page so you can print it out on one sheet.

Read third paragraph, "Being a prophet..." thoughts?

Why does God allow injustice to continue?

What does God want from us?

Obedience? What does that mean? Does God want behavioral conformity, or love, loyalty, devotion, understanding commitment and agreement?

Can one get love, devotion, loyalty, understanding commitment and agreement by using force to threaten? What is the only way for God to get what He wants?

To leave people free and allow the two antagonistic principles to be revealed, and then people freely choose to trust God, open the heart and He pours out His Spirit which takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it us!

Read last paragraph, "Babylon's ruthless..." thoughts?

What does it mean that Babylon was a rod of God's anger?



What is God's anger? Does it make it sound like God is using Babylon to inflict punishment upon Israel?

How does the Bible describe God's anger?

Before we read the Scripture, think it through, use the two law concepts and predict, based on your knowledge of God's law what God's anger actually does.

If God's law is imposed, then what would His anger look like? Infliction of hostilities, punishment, torment etc.

If God's law is natural, then what does His anger look like?

Did anyone ever see the old western starring John Wayne and William Holden called *The Horse Soldiers*? It was about a troop of Union soldiers going on a raid deep into the Confederacy. William Holden played the division surgeon. In the movie one of the scouts got shot in the leg. The doctor cleaned the wound and then tied some moss around it. Later in the movie the doctor saw the scout limping and examined the leg and it was all gangrenous. The doctor asked what happened to the moss – the scout said it was itching so he took it off.

The doctor became angry – why? And the doctor then worked to amputate the leg, why? Was the doctor happy about amputating the leg? Did the doctor ever seek to hurt or punish the patient, even when angry? What law was the doctor operating under?

So, before we read Scripture, knowing God's law is the law of love, the design protocol upon which life is built, what would you predict God's anger to be – infliction of punishment, or letting go to reap the results of one's choice?

- **“My anger will flame up like fire and burn everything on earth.** It will reach to the world below and consume the roots of the mountains. I will bring on them endless disasters and use **all my arrows against them.**” (Deuteronomy 32:22,23 – GN)... **“They fail to see why they were defeated;** they cannot understand what happened. Why were a thousand defeated by one, and ten thousand by only two? **The Lord, their God, had abandoned them; their mighty God had given them up.**” (Deuteronomy 32:29,30 – GN)
- **“When that happens, I will become angry with them; I will abandon them,** and they will be destroyed. Many terrible disasters will come upon them, and then they will realize that these **things are happening to them because I, their God, am no longer with them.**” (Deuteronomy 31:17 – GN)
- **“I will fight against you with all my might, my anger, my wrath, and my fury.** I will kill everyone living in this city; people and animals alike **will die of a terrible disease....** Anyone who stays in the city will be **killed in war or by starvation or disease...**It will be **given over** to the king of Babylonia, and **he** will burn it to the ground. I, the LORD, have spoken... (Jeremiah 21:5,6,9-10 – GN)
- **“Very well, then, I will give you freedom: the freedom to die by war, disease, and starvation.”** (Jeremiah 34:17 – GN)



- **“You will feel my anger when I turn it loose on you** like a blazing fire. **And I will hand you over** to brutal men, experts at destruction.” (Ezekiel 21:31 – GN)
- **“I will hand you over to other nations** who will rob you and plunder you.” (Ezekiel 25:7 – GN)
- “The king killed the young men of Judah even in the Temple. He had no mercy on anyone, young or old, man or woman, sick or healthy. **God handed them all over to him.**” (2 Chronicles 36:17 – GN)
- **“I will attack the people of Israel and Judah like a lion.** I myself will tear them to pieces and then leave them. When I drag them off, no one will be able to save them. **I will abandon** my people until they have suffered enough for their sins and come looking for me. Perhaps in their suffering they will try to find me.” (Hosea 5:14,15 – GN)
- **God’s anger is revealed** from heaven against all the sin and evil of the people whose evil ways prevent the truth from being known. **God punishes them**, because what can be known about God is plain to them, for God himself made it plain...They say they are wise, but they are fools; instead of worshiping the immortal God, they worship images made to look like mortals or birds or animals or reptiles. **And so God has given those people over to do the filthy things their hearts desire**, and they do shameful things with each other. **They exchange the truth about God for a lie**; they worship and serve what God has created instead of the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever! Amen. Because they do this, **God has given them over** to shameful passions....**Because those people refuse to keep in mind the true knowledge about God, he has given them over** to corrupted minds, so that they do the things that they should not do.” (Romans 1:18,19,22-26,28 – GN)

What is God’s anger? Letting His persistently rebellious children go to reap what they have chosen. For what purpose? So that they might realize the error of their ways and come back to Him for healing and salvation.

The reason the truth about God’s character of love, the knowledge of His glory is not being more clearly seen is because many in church leadership has accepted the imposed law construct and thus misrepresent God and His government. Examine history you will find it the same.

We need to pray for our leaders, love them, and help them see that the law is not imposed and God is not like a cosmic Roman emperor.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “In Habakkuk 1...” thoughts?

What do you think about the way this is being framed? What is the misunderstanding?

If a patient with infection refuses antibiotics, does the doctor use bacteria to punish the patient? Absolutely not, but if the bacteria is a pathogen and virulent will the patient suffer? Absolutely!



The problem with which so many struggle, is operating under the false paradigm of imposed law, thus they see God inflicting what He allows to happen through Babylon.

So how did God utilize Babylon? Did God force the Babylonians to come and raid and destroy Judah? Did God prod, cajole, encourage, bribe, threaten or in any other way use His power to make Babylon violent and abusive?

Think what they are saying? They are suggesting God is behind the actions of Babylon – this is totally false!

God withdrew His protection because of their persistent rebellion, and the Babylonians do what they do – they attack, because they have already gone down the pagan path and operate under selfishness and not love.

Read third paragraph, “Habakkuk 2:2-4 is one...” wow, that sounds very important, let’s read it:

² Then the Lord replied: “Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it.

³ For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

⁴ “See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright— but the righteous will live by his faith—

Thoughts? What does it mean the righteous will live by faith?

The lesson suggests that it means a legal belief in which we have faith that God credits to our heavenly account the legal record of Jesus and we are declared righteous, even though we are not righteous.

This, is again, based on the false premise that God’s law is imposed. It is commonly held, it has deep roots in tradition and it is distorted.

Let’s give some real examples of the just living by faith.

The three worthies on the plain of Durah – what was their choice – bow or don’t bow. What is the just or right thing for them to do? Can they, by their choice control the outcome, what happens? So what is their decision, in governance of themselves to be based upon? Faith that God will take care of how things turn out, if they make the just or right decision in governance of themselves.

What about Abraham, who trusted God and was recognized as righteous?

What came first, God’s recognition that Abraham was set right with God, or Abraham having a change of heart where he actually trusted God?



Our natural hearts an “enmity” toward God. We do not naturally trust Him. When Abraham trusted God it was evidence or proof of a change in Abraham, thus God recognized that change and declared what He actually saw in Abraham’s character. Thus Abraham was recognized as having been “set right” with God, from distrust to trust.

Yes, there was still clean up work in Abraham’s life to do, but once a person genuinely trusts God with their life, the clean up work is easy for God. The hard part is getting us over ourselves, our distrust and the lies we believe about God so we genuinely trust Him.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “God’s answer to Habakkuk...” thoughts?

Why is the punishment on the enemy in measure for measure? Remember Jesus said, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (MT 7:1,2)

Why? What does this mean?

Think through the two law options –

If you believe God’s law is imposed, then what does the measure for measure principle mean? It means God keeps track of what you have done and inflicts the same thing upon you. Like a Saudi court recently sentencing a man to paralysis for causing the paralysis of another.

But what if you look through the natural law lens? It means when you perpetrate evil upon another you are changing your character. If you murder you are a murderer in heart, if you steal you are a thief, if you lie, you are a liar – thus the very evil you do to another actually sears into your character and you become that evil. Thus you suffer proportionally to the evil you inflict on another. This is what Paul meant when he said they pile up wrath for the day of wrath.

Read fourth paragraph, “God’s ultimate answer...” thoughts?

What enables you to trust God? Does your trust go up when you understand God’s law of love and the way He constructed life to operate?

But, can people have false faith? Can people have faith that David Koresh was Jesus on earth and have peace as the fires consumed them?

So faith alone is not enough, it must be faith in the truth!

How can we tell if our faith is wisely placed? The Integrative-Evidence Based approach – harmonizing, Scripture, Science and Experience.



Science alone – risks evolutionism

Experience alone – risks mysticism

Scripture alone – risks false faith, faith in a false religious system that fails to heal. Look at all the religions of the world, including Christianity with 34,000 different Christian groups all claiming the Bible as their basis of faith.

Sola Scriptura has been misused and misapplied – when Martin Luther used it he used it to defend against tradition that was not supported by God’s Word. But today, theologians use this to exclude God given evidences in nature, science and experience, thus creating an atmosphere in which gross error occurs.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Habakkuk expresses...” thoughts?

Are God’s judgments ever without mercy?

Again, using the two laws – if you view God’s law as imposed what are God’s judgments? Imposed punishments.

But if you view God’s law as natural, then what are His judgments? Therapeutic interventions to minimize suffering and bring healing.

Habakkuk longs for a display of power – what kind of power do you think?

What are the different kinds of power and what are the pros and cons of each?

Power of creation – might, physical power, power over the elements. What can be achieved with this kind of power? What cannot be achieved? What are the risks of using this kind of power?

Paul talked about the power of the gospel – what is that? The power of truth and love – what kind of power is that? What can it achieve? What are the risks of using this kind of power?

Which kind does God use? Has God used both? But which is the one that wins the war?

Zech 4:6 “not by might nor by power but by the Spirit says the Lord.”

THURSDAY

Habakkuk struggles with the question of why the righteous suffer and how to make sense of injustice happening upon the earth?

Thoughts?



FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “There is an answer...” I like very much what this says.

How does God answer? Not by claims, proclamation, declaration, but by evidence!

Far too much bad theology comes because people read Scripture, find texts where God threatens, but then fail to see God’s actions, what actually happens. What does God do?

God allows events to unfold so that we may all see how His natural law of love works and that the violations of such law brings natural consequences not imposed penalties.

Read and discuss questions 2,3



	Natural Law (Law of Love) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols life is built upon • Violations inherently damage • God works to heal • Problem is sin in man • Christ died to Remedy man and destroy sin 	Imposed Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arbitrary rules • Violations- external punishment • God must inflict punishment • Problem wrath in God • Christ died to appease God and pay a legal penalty
Justification	Setting man right in heart with God	Declaring man legally right with God
Judgment by God	Diagnosis, therapeutic interventions, pronouncement of natural result	Legal finding and determination of arbitrarily imposed punishment
Forgiveness	The experience of God freely forgiving AND the sinner repenting, resulting in actual reconciliation	Legal pardon, because of a legal payment
Salvation	The experience of trusting God and accepting Jesus Christ into the heart, which results in healing and restoration to God's original ideal	Legally accepting Jesus' blood payment and having "pardon" entered into heaven's record books
Atonement	Being at-one with God	Appeasement, paying legal penalty
Satisfaction	God being satisfied with Christ perfectly completing his mission to reveal the truth and provide the Remedy which restores humans back into God's perfect ideal	God receiving legal payment of His Son's blood to "satisfy" His demand for retribution
Justice	Delivering the oppressed	Punishing the oppressor
Vengeance	Healing the damage caused by sin, i.e. destroying sin and its results	Punishing sinners for their crimes
Wrath	Letting go to reap the natural results of one's choice	Infliction of external pain, suffering, and punishment
Anger	God's rage at sin and outrage at the damage caused to the object of His love (like a doctor angry at disease but never the sick patient) and the letting go to receive what a non-compliant patient chooses	God's outrage at how He has been treated, His incensed and hostile response to violations of His law and disrespect toward Him and the infliction of punishment for such disobedient behavior
Heavenly Records	The exact transcript of each individual character (like medical records) documenting the true heart condition of each person, and the history of the Remedy offered and either applied or rejected with its results	A legal tally of every sin committed and accurate notation of each crime confessed and notated pardon by each act as the blood of Jesus is applied to the heavenly transcript



Major Lessons From Minor Prophets Lesson 9 2Q 2013 The Day of the Lord (Zephaniah)

Before we get into the lesson, what is the context of Zephaniah's message?

Who is he speaking to?

The people of Judah and the nations surrounding them. What were the conditions in Judah at the time? Idolatrous nation...See 2 Kings 21-25; 2 Chron. 33-36.

How had the nation gotten to this point? After Hezekiah's death, Manasseh became king and led the country so far into idolatry so that "they did more evil than the nations" they had displaced in Canaan. (2 Chron. 33:9)

Who was king? Josiah. What was the king doing? Attempting reform. What was his reformation like? He destroyed the high places, "did away with" the false priests, broke down Asherah poles, tore down the shrines of the male prostitutes which were in the temple, desecrated sites and shrines and he tried to get rid of everything else that was dedicated to false gods. The Bible says during his lifetime, the people "did not fail to follow the Lord, the God of their fathers" (2 Chron. 34:33.)

Was Josiah successful? Not really.

How do we know? As soon as he was gone, the people returned to their false gods.

What does this tell us about the state of their hearts even during the reformations of Josiah? They were heard-hearted...they conformed outwardly, but there was no real heart change.

With all this in mind, let's take a look at Sunday's lesson.

SUNDAY

First paragraph of Sunday's lesson: "The focal point of Zephaniah's message is the "day of the Lord" ([Zeph. 1:7](#)). For biblical prophets, the day of the Lord refers to a specific period of time in which God intervenes in human affairs in order both to save and to judge."

Is this, in fact, what the biblical prophets say the day of the Lord is? Let's look at some other texts that mention the day of the Lord:

Isaiah 2:6 (vs. 6-22 describe the Day of the Lord)

[The Day of the Lord] You, Lord, have abandoned your people, the descendants of Jacob. They are full of superstitions from the East; they practice divination like the Philistines and embrace pagan customs.



What is the day of the Lord like in this passage?

What action is God taking?

God has abandoned His people because they turned to other gods, silver, gold, idols made by men. Ultimately, the day of the Lord is a day when only the Lord will be exalted, and the idols will totally disappear. Those described in this passage who flee from God are those who bowed down to their idols.

Ezekiel 7:19-22

They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will be treated as a thing unclean. Their silver and gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath. It will not satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs, for it has caused them to stumble into sin. They were proud of their beautiful jewelry and used it to make their detestable idols and vile images. Therefore I will turn these into an unclean thing for them. I will hand it all over as plunder to foreigners and as loot to the wicked of the earth, and they will defile it. I will turn my face away from them, and they will desecrate my treasured place; robbers will enter it and desecrate it.

What is the day of the Lord like in this passage?

What action is God taking?

Note verse 22, "I will turn my face away from them," which is how all the doom comes upon them. In the next chapter, God says, "do you see what they are doing—the utterly detestable things the house of Israel is doing here, things that will drive me far from my sanctuary?" And what had they done? They had set up idols in God's temple.

Ezekiel 30:1-4

The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, prophesy and say: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Wail and say, Alas for that day! For the day is near, the day of the Lord is near—a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations. A sword will come against Egypt, and anguish will come upon Cush. When the slain fall in Egypt, her wealth will be carried away and her foundations torn down.'

What is actually happening here? Is this God acting? Or is it an accurate prediction of the coming Babylonian army?



Joel 2:28

[The Day of the Lord] “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

Joel 2:31

The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

What is the day of the Lord like in this passage?

What action is God taking?

This section (Joel 2:28-32) speaks of events to happen before the coming of the great and dreadful (Hebrew word here can mean something to be feared OR revered). Verse 32: “And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved...” This day of the Lord appears to be the second coming.

Joel 3:14

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

Interesting that here it refers to a decision, and moves on to talk again of “the Lord will be a refuge for his people.” What are the multitudes deciding?

Amos 5:18

[The Day of the Lord] Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light.

Amos 5:20

Will not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light— pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?

Who is God talking to here?

Those who have religious feast & assemblies and are sacrificing to Him...but what does He want...verse 24: “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream.” Justice and righteousness are here said to be the same, and this is what God wants...not an outward performing of the religious traditions, but heart change that actively seeks to put things right. So what is actually happening? What day is being predicted? See verse 27 “Therefore I will send you into exile beyond Damascus, says the Lord, whose name is God Almighty.”



Obadiah 1:15

“The day of the Lord is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head.

What is the day of the Lord like in this passage?

What action is God taking?

This is part of a prophecy against Edom, citing how they stood by and watched and rejoiced over the calamity of their “brother.” Their own attitude, their own violence brings destruction back upon themselves.

Malachi 4:5

“See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.

What is the day of the Lord like in this passage?

What action is God taking?

Again, here, the day of the Lord is a prediction of the second coming, when the wicked are consumed, but the righteous rejoice in the same light that consumes the wicked. Before that day, however, “Elijah” will come...and what was Elijah’s message? Worship the true God, leave the false gods behind...and the true God is a God of love...this message will, indeed, “turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers” because those who truly love the true God...will have their hearts transformed into HIS character of love.

Acts 2:20

The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

What is the day of the Lord like in this passage?

What action is God taking?

Here, Paul is quoting from Joel 2:28-32...but instead of “dreadful” he calls the day glorious. Why the difference? Is it because the day IS glorious to those who know God?

1 Thessalonians 5:1-9

[The Day of the Lord] Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.



While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the day of the Lord like in this passage?

What action is God taking?

Referring to the second coming, describes the difference between those who are surprised and find destruction and those who “live in the light.” Very good description of WHY some receive that day with great joy.

There seems to be two different types of references here: 1) the day of the Lord meaning a day when God steps back and lets the natural consequences of their choices occur and 2) the day of the Lord meaning the day Christ returns to earth to take His people home.

Which do we have in Zephaniah? I think we have both...but let's look at the evidence:

Read Zeph. 1:1-3 Which type of reference does this sound like? What evidence in this passage brings us to that conclusion? Is there any room to see this passage both ways?

Read Zeph. 1:4-9 Which type of reference does this sound like? What is God saying he will remove? (see verses 4-6 & 9) What are these verses talking about...what were the people of Judah doing? Why does he point to “those clad in foreign clothes”? (v.8) Why does he mention “all who avoid stepping on the threshold”?

The word translated as “punish” is “paqad”...it means to inspect or look after. In the Young's Literal Translation it says, “laid a charge.” It's translated in the OT as “number” 110 times.

It could be a reference to the superstitious practice the Philistines developed after their god Dagon was broken into pieces with his hands on the threshold. It could also be referring to the pagan practice of having a shrine at the threshold, which had an indentation to receive the blood of the sacrificed animal...again, a pagan practice. (Source: Henry Clay Trumbull's The Threshold Covenant: <http://archive.org/details/thresholdcovanan00trum>)



Would you say that God is angered by idol worship?

Why? Because it changes his children. God made us with the ability to change ourselves based on our choices, habits, and worship. We become like the god (or God) we worship. If we worship the true God, whose very being and character is love, then we become more loving people.

The majority of the people of Judah at the time of Zephaniah appear to be worshipping idols. How were they treating others? (see Zeph 3:1-5)

What about the nations surrounding Judah...what kind of people were they? (Feared by the nations, cruel people, people of force and coercion.)

What kind of gods were they worshipping?

Philistines – primary god was Dagon, second only to El, (one of four sons), and father to Baal.

Moab – Chemosh was the national deity of the Moabites whose name most likely meant "destroyer," "subduer," or "fish god." Human sacrifice was included in the worship of Chemosh.

Ammon – Chemosh seems also to be the national deity of the Ammonites as well. Moabites and Ammonites were descended from the two sons of Lot. Ammonites eventually worshiped Molech, who seems to have derived from Chemosh. "Molech was a fire-god with the face of a calf; his images had arms outstretched to receive the babies who were sacrificed to him. Like their god, the Ammonites were cruel. When Nahash the Ammonite was asked for terms of a treaty (1 Samuel 11:2), he proposed gouging out the right eye of each Israelite man. Amos 1:13 says that the Ammonites would rip open pregnant women in the territories they conquered.

Read more: <http://www.gotquestions.org/Ammonites.html#ixzz2T0dUP0dB>

Assyria – The chief god was Asshur. All other primary gods whom they worshiped were related to the objects of nature. Assyrians were known for their cruelty & ferocity...capital city was Ninevah.

When Judah abandoned and rejected God, and started worshipping the false gods of the nations around them, they became like those nations, and like their gods.

How would you describe our nation? Do you think we're moving faster towards being a peace-loving nation? Does this tell us anything about the gods we worship? Should we evaluate the information we receive via the media, society, or our churches to determine what kind of god is being promoted? How do we evaluate these things? What should be our standard?

MONDAY

Read the first two paragraphs.



In [Zephaniah 2:1-3](#), we see the prophet's call to repentance. Even though the destruction is imminent, there is still time to be sheltered from calamity, but only if the nation will repent. The wicked who refuse to repent will be consumed on the day of judgment like chaff.

With the words "Seek the Lord," Zephaniah is encouraging those who humble themselves before God to hold firm in their faith. The prophet teaches that to seek the Lord is the same as seeking righteousness and humility. This attitude of repentance is essential in order to escape the coming judgment.

What was the imminent destruction Judah was being warned of? Were the wicked "consumed like chaff"? What actually happened? Were those who were faithful to God "sheltered from calamity"? What evidence do we have that they weren't?

Why does Zephaniah address this command to "Seek the Lord" to the "humble of the land," "who do what he commands"? What does it mean to be humble?

The word translated "humble" in the NIV is *anav* (aw-nawv), and means "meek" The Strong's definition is poor, humble, afflicted, meek (a. poor, needy; b. poor and weak; c. poor, weak and afflicted; d. humble, lowly, meek)

Quotes regarding the meek:

He has set us an example in order that we may know how to walk in conformity with His will. Christ is a true Shepherd. His example, if followed, will lead us aright. How precious was His gentle spirit. He was meek and lowly in heart. No jealousy, no envy, no iniquity was found in Him. He passed over the same ground where Adam fell, thus showing us that it is possible for man to overcome. Those who follow Christ will be obedient; they will not trample on one of God's holy precepts (Manuscript Releases Volume Five [Nos. 260-346], Page 258).

All the disciples had serious faults when Jesus called them to His service. Even John, who came into closest association with the meek and lowly One, was not himself naturally meek and yielding. He and his brother were called "the sons of thunder." While they were with Jesus, any slight shown to Him aroused their indignation and combativeness. Evil temper, revenge, the spirit of criticism, were all in the beloved disciple. He was proud, and ambitious to be first in the kingdom of God. But day by day, in contrast with his own violent spirit, he beheld the tenderness and forbearance of Jesus, and heard His lessons of humility and patience. He opened his heart to the divine influence, and became not only a hearer but a doer of the Saviour's words. Self was hid in Christ. He learned to wear the yoke of Christ and to bear His burden.

Jesus reproved His disciples, He warned and cautioned them; but John and his brethren did not leave Him; they chose Jesus, notwithstanding the reproofs. The Saviour did not withdraw from them because of their weakness and errors. They continued to the end to share



His trials and to learn the lessons of His life. By beholding Christ, they became transformed in character... (Our Father Cares, page 191).

The soul that loves God, rises above the fog of doubt; he gains a bright, broad, deep, living experience, and becomes meek and Christlike. His soul is committed to God, hid with Christ in God. He will be able to stand the test of neglect, of abuse and contempt, because his Saviour has suffered all this. He will not become fretful and discouraged when difficulties press him, because Jesus did not fail or become discouraged. Every true Christian will be strong, not in the strength and merit of his good works, but in the righteousness of Christ, which through faith is imputed unto him. It is a great thing to be meek and lowly in heart, to be pure and undefiled, as was the Prince of heaven when He walked among men (God's Amazing Grace, page 109).

Daniel was among the captives when the Babylonians invaded...is there any evidence that he demonstrated meekness?

The lesson says in the third paragraph of Monday's lesson, "The humble are those people who have remained faithful to God and who are led and taught by Him. The psalmist says: "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way" ([Ps. 25: 8-9, NIV](#))." Why does God specifically guide and teach the humble? Because they are the ones *open* to His guidance!

Please read the quote in pink at the bottom of Monday's lesson:

"Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness and relies wholly on the merits of the Saviour. By prayer, by the study of His word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go."—[Ellen G. White, Ministry of Healing, p. 182.](#)

Does this quote give us any insight into what being sheltered by God really means? Does this "sheltering" happen from or IN our circumstances? God's people throughout earth's history have been persecuted, abused, and misused...yet they were "sheltered" in God.

TUESDAY

Let's look at the middle, bold section on Tuesday's lesson: Read [Zephaniah 3:1-5](#). Who is being condemned, and why? Ask yourself, How could God's people, those given so much light and truth, end up so corrupted? How can we protect ourselves from having the same thing happen to us?

What had the people done that led them to this point? They exchanged the truth of God for a lie...Romans 1 tells us what happens when people do that. Would you say that's an accurate



description of the people of Judah at this point in their history? So...how *can* we protect ourselves from having the same thing happen to us?

Second paragraph: The capital city of Judah lies at the heart of Zephaniah's concern. He indicts its leaders concerning the city's moral degradation. The corruption stems directly from the failure of *its leaders to live up to their designated roles and responsibilities* (compare with [Jer. 18:18](#), [Ezek. 22:23-30](#)). The corrupt court run by officials is likened to "roaring lions," and the judges are characterized as "evening wolves." The temple is faring no better because *the priests do not teach God's Word, nor do the prophets speak the truth.* (emphasis mine)

WEDNESDAY

Read the verse at the top of Wednesday's lesson:

"The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." ([Zeph. 3:17, NIV](#)).

How does Zephaniah describe those over whom God is singing?

Zeph. 3:13 "The remnant of Israel will do no wrong; they will speak no lies, nor will deceit be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and no one will make them afraid."

What does this description sound like to you? These are people who know God, who have His love in their hearts, who have been healed by His truth! God rejoices over those who have been healed.

With this thought in mind, what is God's goal? To save as many as will allow Him to heal them. What then, is our role? (See Mark 13:10 and 2 Peter 3:12) How are we doing in that role?

Some suggestions for related passages:

Psalms 119:1-3 "Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways.

Rev. 14:5 (description of the 144,000) "No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless."

THURSDAY

The lesson suggests that we read Nahum to find God's answer to injustice...the first paragraph of Thursday's lesson says:



“The prophecy of Nahum is God’s Word against the kingdoms of this world as represented by Nineveh. As the prophet looked at his world, he saw the hand of God moving against the Assyrian Empire. He announced that its capital city, Nineveh, would soon fall, never to rise again. Nahum spoke with absolute confidence because he knew God’s character and, through the gift of prophecy ([Nah. 1:1](#)), he had been shown by the Lord what would happen. The Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished ([Nah. 1:3](#), [Exod. 34:6-7](#)).”

How does this idea make you feel about God? The KJV in both texts says that God will “by no means acquit the guilty.” Does this sound different to you? Why? God will certainly not declare the guilty innocent for that wouldn’t be true. Instead, he tells them, “nothing can heal your wound; your injury is fatal” (Nah. 3:19).

What caused the downfall of the Assyrians? Their own cruelty. Jesus said, “all who draw the sword will die by the sword” (Matt. 26:50).

FRIDAY

Further Study:

“With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps account with the nations. While His mercy is tendered, with calls to repentance, this account remains open; but when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath begins. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. Mercy no longer pleads in their behalf.”—[Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 364.](#)

“Before the worlds unfallen and the heavenly universe, the world will have to give an account to the Judge of the whole earth, the very One they condemned and crucified. What a reckoning day that will be! It is the great day of God's vengeance. Christ does not then stand at Pilate's bar. Pilate and Herod, and all that mocked, scourged, rejected, and crucified Him will then understand what it means to feel the wrath of the Lamb. Their deeds will appear before them in their true character.”—[Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 132.](#)

So what exactly is the wrath of the Lamb? “Their deeds will appear before them in their true character.” The truth can no longer be avoided, it must be faced...they see themselves and all their actions in light of the truth, and see the awfulness of their own character.

More context previous quote (PH086 28.3-29.3):

When Christ looked down from the crest of Olivet, he saw this state of things existing in every church. The warnings come down to all that are following in the tread of the people of Jerusalem, who had such great light. This people is before us as a warning. By rejecting God’s warnings in this our day men are repeating the sin of Jerusalem. The Lord sees what the human agent does not see and will not see,—the outcome of all the human devising in Battle Creek.



He has done all that a God could do. He has flashed light before the eyes of the people, that their sins might not reach the boundary where repentance cannot be felt. But by a long process of departure from just and righteous principles, men have placed themselves where light and truth, justice and mercy are not discerned. This course has become part of their very nature.

I call upon all who have united in a course of action that is wrong in principle to make a decided reformation, and forever after walk humbly with God. The world is soon to be judged. A righteous God must avenge the death of his Son. Today men are choosing Barabbas, and saying, Crucify Christ. They will do this in the person of his saints. They will go over the same ground as the Jewish priests and rulers did in their treatment of Christ. He, the Son of God, and an innocent man, was murdered because he told men truths that it did not please them to hear. Yet he was the Son of the infinite God.

Those who today despise the law of Jehovah, showing no respect for his commandments, are taking sides with the great apostate. They proclaim to a sin-corrupted world that the law of God is null and void. Those who declare this as truth deceive the people, and have virtually nailed the law of Jehovah to the cross between two thieves. What a thought!

Before the worlds unfallen, and the heavenly universe, the world will have to give an account to the Judge of the whole earth, the very one they condemned and crucified. What a reckoning day that will be! It is the great day of God's vengeance. Christ does not then stand at Pilate's bar. Pilate and Herod, and all that mocked, scourged, rejected, and crucified him will then understand what it means to feel the wrath of the Lamb. Their deeds will appear before them in their true character.

--Special Testimony to Battle Creek Church, 1898

Discussion Questions:

- Some of the people in Zephaniah's time did terrible things against both the Lord and their fellow countrymen, while others were just complacent as such evils unfolded. Which of these two sins do you think is worse in God's eyes? Justify your answer.

Both sins sear the conscience and do damage to the sinner. How *should* we react to the sins/evils around us?

- Go back over the final question at the end of Monday's lesson, where these words were quoted: "Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness and relies wholly on the merits of the Saviour." What does it mean to rely "wholly on the merits of the Saviour"? How do these words reveal to us the great truth of salvation by faith in Christ alone, and why is that truth so central to all that we believe? If we do not rely on His merits, on whose merits can we rely?

How is this traditionally interpreted? His merits are applied to our account? God no longer sees us, but sees Jesus instead? What does it really mean? His merits are applied in our hearts, in our minds, transforming our characters, renewing us in His image!



- Why is it so easy, especially for those who live in wealth and comfort, to forget just how utterly dependent we are upon God for everything that we have? How can we protect ourselves from this fatal delusion?
What about merely being “busy”? Isn’t it possible to forget our dependence on God when we’re too busy? Is *anything* this world has to offer better than what God offers? Are we living our lives as if we believe that statement? Or do our lives tell a different story?
- Dwell more upon this idea of the Lord singing and rejoicing over His people. We tend to think of ourselves singing and rejoicing over God and what He has done for us. What does it mean that He sings and rejoices over us? How could that be, considering the rather pathetic state in which we all find ourselves?

God rejoices over the prodigals who return, who are healed. He eagerly waits for them to realize their pitiful state and return to Him. Do we have the same attitude/love for the lost? Do we have the same burden for their salvation?

Evangelism Page 282

Work for the salvation of souls as though you knew by sight that you were in full view of the whole universe of heaven. Every angel in glory is interested in the work being done for the salvation of souls. We are not awake as we should be. All the angelic host are our helpers. “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.” O cannot we then work with courage and faith. “In that day it will be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack.” Only have faith. Pray and believe, and ye shall see the salvation of God.—Letter 126, 1896. (Evangelism Page 282)

Testimonies for the Church Volume 5, Page 650

If you work for souls with humble, trustful dependence upon God, if the radiance of His Spirit is reflected from you in a Christlike character, if sympathy, kindness, forbearance, and love are abiding principles in your life, you will be a blessing to all around you. You will not criticize others or manifest a harsh, denunciatory spirit toward them; you will not feel that their ideas must be made to meet your standard; but the love of Jesus and the peaceable fruits of righteousness will be revealed in you.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.... And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.”

The enemy will seek to intrude himself even amid your religious exercises. Every avenue will need to be faithfully guarded lest selfishness and pride become interwoven with



your work. If self has really been crucified, with the affections and lusts, the fruit will appear in good works to the glory of God. I entreat you, in the fear of God, not to let your works degenerate. Be consistent, symmetrical Christians. When the heart has given its affections to Christ, old things have passed away, and all things have become new.

Our religion must be intelligent. The wisdom from above must strengthen, establish, and settle us. We must go on and on, forward and upward, from light to still greater light, and God will still reveal His glory to us as He doth not unto the world. (Battle Creek, Michigan, January 6, 1889)



Major Lessons From Minor Prophets Lesson 10 2Q 2013

First Things First (Haggai)

SABBATH

Haggai – prophet of the OT. It is believed by most scholars that Haggai was a child when Israel went into captivity and he saw the first temple. He was approximately 80 years old when he wrote his prophetic message. His entire prophetic work occurred in a span of four months from late August to mid December of 520 BC. His book was written to inspire a distracted and disengaged Israel to resume its reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

The message is essentially: consider what you are doing – you are spending wealth, time, energy on building for yourselves but you are neglecting rebuilding the house of the Lord.

Thoughts about this?

Haggai's message stimulated the people in such a way that they reprioritized and fully reengaged the building project and the Temple was completed very quickly thereafter.

Many of the stories of the OT are not only historical, but chosen by God for incorporation into Scripture because they have object lesson application. In other words, the stories teach a larger truth. Any larger truth in the history of Israel and Haggai that applies to us today?

After Christ's victory 2000 years ago, after his resurrection, the first fruits taken from the grave and into heaven with Him, the gospel freeing minds on earth...after all this, did the people of God experience an attack and were they taken into captivity in any way? How?

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:3,4

What do you hear in this passage? Could we say the "temple" had been run down? Corrupted? Contaminated? What temple is Paul speaking about?

When did this man of sin arise? In the first century or after the first century? After, thus it is not referring to the physical temple in Jerusalem that was destroyed by Rome in AD 70.

What temple is being referred to? The temple of the mind, the temple where the Holy Spirit dwells – and Paul says this man of sin will set himself up there. How?



Could it be the man of sin caused so many lies about God, God's character, methods, law and principles to be accepted that the minds of the people became darkened, distorted and the Spirit temple was defiled and broken down?

Is it possible that today God is waiting for a people to stop building for self, stop promoting self, stop acting primarily to advance self, and instead to humble themselves before God for the renewing of their minds, the cleansing of the Spirit Temple?

Haggai is a lesson book, calling us to return to the worship of the true God, but have we gotten our priorities right? Jesus said,

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' MT 7:22,23

Paul said:

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. 2Tim 3:1-5

Notice, these people are religious, claiming to be followers of Christ, Christians, yet their minds are not renewed, their "temples" have not been rebuilt into Christlikeness! They use religion for their own purposes to advance self!

What is the core that underpins such distorted religion? A distorted view of God as a Roman emperor who must impose laws and punish the disobedient! A God who requires legal payment to propitiate sin.

When this view of God was accepted into the church, the church began to use the power of the state to enforce its way. Instead of sacrificing self for others, the world saw people using the name of Jesus to:

- carry out crusades
- burn people at the stake
- conduct the inquisition
- conduct witch trials
- engage in slavery and burn crosses in the yards of people of different color
- shoot abortion doctors
- harass, persecute and murder homosexuals
- in many other ways use Satan's methods attributing them to God and thus misrepresent the divine character.



The Spirit Temple is broken down and God is calling for a people, at this time in earth's history to cleanse the temple. To present the truth about God, which destroys the lies, to experience the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit and to live lives that love God and others more than self. We practice His methods of presenting the truth in love and leave everyone else free to decide for themselves.

Do we see a lesson in Haggai for us today? What can we do to advance this final message of mercy?

WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph, "God promised that the..." we went over this last week, so this week can someone from the class review the evidence for us, why is the second smaller temple more glorious than Solomon's?

Read bottom pink section, "Read Heb 8:1-5..." thoughts?

Heb 8:1-5:

The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, ² and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man. ³ Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. ⁴ If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. ⁵ They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

Thoughts? What does it mean that Jesus serves in the true tabernacle set up by God?

What is He doing in the true tabernacle?

Is He cleansing the sanctuary? What does this mean?

What is it that defiles the sanctuary in heaven?

Where did sin begin? In heaven, with whom? Lucifer, who occupied what position? Covering cherub, where? In the Most Holy Place in heaven. So, before man ever existed, what contaminated the heavenly sanctuary? Lies about God!

And, this gives insight into why Colossians says, "and through him [Christ] to **reconcile** to himself all things, whether things on earth or **things in heaven**, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." (1:20)

Before any earthly sin, heaven was contaminated with lies about God and Christ came to reveal the truth to cleanse heaven from those lies.



After God made human beings, what was the first thing that contaminated the Spirit Temple, the mind, character and soul of our first parents in Eden? Lies about God! The exact same defiling agent, lies about God, contaminated heaven and the minds/characters/souls of humanity.

What then is needed to cleanse the Spirit Temple? The truth about God, and Jesus said, “you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” Jn 8:32

I found this quotation in my reading and really liked how it amplifies Christ’s words that truth sets free:

“The leaven of *truth* works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By *it [the truth]* the impure are cleansed, washed in the *blood of the Lamb.*” (Christ’s Object Lessons 102).

What do you think of the blood of Jesus being a symbol of the truth about God? Do you remember any symbolism with blood being taken into the sanctuary in order to cleanse it? Where did Jesus, in John 6, say His blood was to be applied?

So what is Christ working in the heavenly sanctuary to cleanse? Could it be His people?

One of the founders of our church thought this was exactly it. Here is from the book *The Great Controversy*:

“The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in *Daniel 8:14*; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in *Daniel 7:13*; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by *Malachi[3:1-3]*, are descriptions of the same event;”(p. 426).

And what does Malachi 3 describe?

“...The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his *temple*...behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a *refiner’s fire* or a *launderer’s soap*. He will sit as a *refiner* and *purifier* of silver; he will *purify the Levites* and *refine them* like gold and silver.”

Who are the Levites? The Priesthood of believers, the faithful people, those who trust God!

“*You* also, like living stones, are being built into a *spiritual house* to be a *holy priesthood*, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1Pet 2:4) What is another name for a “spiritual house”? A sanctuary! “*You* also, like living stones, are being built into a sanctuary...” And just a few verses down Peter repeats this reality for emphasis, “But you are a chosen people, a *royal priesthood*...” (1Pet 2:9).



What is Jesus doing in the heavenly sanctuary? Cleansing His people from the lies about God and from the infection of selfishness and fear that result from believing those lies and leads to destructive behavior. He is writing His law upon the tablets of the heart, which means He is restoring His law of love as the operating motive into those who trust Him. Thus, those who are ready to meet Jesus when He comes are described in Revelation as “they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” (12:11)

This morning I was reading a daily devotional book, *That I May Know Him* and read May 24 and May 25, here is an excerpt:

The **Word of God** has served as a mighty cleaver to separate the children of God from the world. [what is another way to describe the Word of God? Truth, the blood of Christ, which is to be taken into the heart] As they are taken out of the quarry of the world **they are as rough stones**, unfit for a place in the **glorious temple of God**. But **they are brought into the Lord's workshop**, to be hewed and squared and polished, that they may become precious, accepted stones. This work of preparation **for the heavenly temple** [what temple?] is going on continually during probationary time. We are naturally inclined to desire our own way and will, but when the transforming grace of Christ takes hold upon our hearts the inquiry of our souls is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" When the Spirit of God works within us, we are led to will and to do of the Lord's good pleasure, and there is obedience in heart and action.... {TMK 150.2}

We are to occupy some place in the Lord's spiritual temple, and the important question is not as to whether you are a large or a small stone, but whether you have submitted yourself to God that He may **polish you and make you emit light for His glory**. **If we are in the Lord's temple we must emit light**. Are we permitting the heavenly Builder to hew and square and polish us? Have we faith to rest in Him? {TMK 150.4}

The Jewish Temple was built of hewn stones quarried out of the mountains, and every stone was fitted for its place in the Temple, hewed, polished and tested, before it was brought to Jerusalem. And when all were brought to the ground, the building went together without the sound of an ax or hammer. **This building represents God's spiritual temple, which is composed of material gathered out of every nation and tongue and people**, of all grades, high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant. **These are not dead substances**, to be fitted by hammer and chisel. **They are living stones** quarried out from the world by the truth, and the great Master Builder, **the Lord of the temple, is now hewing and polishing them and fitting them for their respective places in the spiritual temple**. When completed, this temple will be perfect in all its parts, the admiration of angels and of men, for its builder and maker is God. Truly, those who are to compose this glorious building are "called to be saints." {TMK 151.5}

What is the temple in heaven constructed out of? What is Christ doing in the heavenly temple?



MONDAY

The lesson points out that the people had lost sight of God and their mission, and Haggai came with a message, to which the people responded. The lesson states, “They ‘feared the Lord’ (vs. 12 NIV) and showed this by worshipping Him and giving Him due attention.”

Thoughts?

What do you think of this idea of fear of God and worshipping God based on fearing Him?

Some criticism of my new book has come in and one of the criticisms is that I downplay fear and suggest God doesn’t want us to be afraid of Him. The critics point out that the Bible says “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Ps 111:10, Pr 1:7, 9:10) Thus they conclude God is the source of fear and wants to instill fear in us.

What do you say?

When Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid because...why? They were afraid – from where did that fear arise? Was God threatening them? Was God their enemy? Did God want them afraid of Him?

The Bible says, perfect love casts out all fear – what does this mean? God is love, so if we come into a relationship with God in which love rules, what happens to fear? It goes away.

But the Bible does say that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom how can we understand this?

Two ways – first, fear can be understood as awe, admiration, respect, and if we have awe and respect for God then we begin to esteem, admire, follow, listen, learn and then emulate the Lord thus we grow in wisdom.

Second, if we are behaving in self-destructive ways, like the Jews at Sinai, and God thunders, then like Israel we may be afraid, and if the fear leads us to stop the destructive “orgy” of sin and begin listening to God then wisdom begins. But, if we listen and come to know God what happens to fear? It goes away, as evidenced by Moses standing there when God thundered saying, “There is no reason to be afraid.”

So, from where does fear come? Does it come from knowing God or from not knowing Him and being alienated and separated from Him?

Who wants us to be afraid of God?

It is a sad commentary when well meaning Christians actually attribute to God motives and methods of the enemy!



So, if God doesn't want us to be afraid, then why does God act in ways, like thundering at Sinai, that He knows we will respond to with fear?

Because, like a loving parent, He won't sit by quietly and watch us destroy ourselves. Before it is too late He will do all in His power to get our attention and attempt to bring us to repentance and salvation, even if as some point our rebellious ways are so loud we cannot hear the "still small voice." Then, in love, He will thunder, hoping it will get through to us. Very much like a parent giving their small child vaccines, knowing the child will not understand, might even be afraid, but never wanting the child to experience such, yet giving the vaccine anyway to protect the child.

TUESDAY

And when the people responded to Haggai's message with fear, Haggai told them, "Do not fear!" Just like a parent who comforts their child who has just received vaccine telling them, its okay, they don't need to be afraid.

But, if we fail to understand this truth about God, and instead promote the idea that fear is what God wants, what is the problem? What does fear lead to?

What happens if we respond to God and obey Him out of fear?

Fear and Love are inversely proportional. Let's use the integrative evidenced based approach and test this:

Scripture: "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love." 1John 4:18

Science: In the brain, the ACC is the part where we experience altruistic, other-centered love – and when the ACC is active it actually calms the brain's fear circuitry. But when the fear circuitry is active it impairs the ACC and higher cortical functions.

Experience: What is your experience? When you have been in a moment of genuine love, when you cared and loved another more than self, what happened to your fear? Then, when you have been terribly fearful, worried, anxious, what happened to your ability to put others first?

What happens in the heart of those who worship out of fear and never transition to love?

Such worship actually destroys love, incites rebellion, results in legalistic attitudes, we become hard hearted religionists who become judgmental and intolerant of others who deviate from the strict code we have established. The liberty of others threatens our fragile false security and our fear leads us to seek to enforce on others what we believe is right.



Does God want us to be afraid of Him or love Him? Then does fear come from God? No, fear comes from alienation from God, from not knowing Him!

The lesson states, in regard to how the people responded to Haggai's message, "The godly response of the leaders and the people testified to the spiritual reformation that had taken place."

Thoughts? What is a godly response? Does it matter to which "god" one believes?

For instance, when calls went out for commitment to the Lord's cause at approximately 1000 years after Christ, how did the people respond? With the Crusades. Did they think theirs was a godly response?

Any examples of people responding to "god" but their behavior and actions reveal that they are worshipping a different "god" than you do?

What is the point of bringing this up?

Remember the text we quoted earlier where Jesus warned that in the last days people will think they are following Him but He never knew them.

Is it possible to be a Christian, to attend church faithfully, to be a regular tithe payer and offering giver, to be a teacher, deacon, elder, bishop, pastor, priest and dedicate your life to serving Christ and still not know Him and actually be working for the enemy?

How can this be? What are the roots of it and how can we ensure we are not among that group?

The Integrative Evidence-Based approach

- Scripture, Science and Experience harmonized, provides testable truths that are reproducible, reliable, and transformational
- Go to Scripture putting God at the center, what does the Scripture teach about God
- Make Jesus Christ the lens through which we require our conclusions of God to harmonize, while holding steadfastly to the other two threads of evidence
- Put into practice the principles of love
- Think for yourself, let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind, Rom 14:5

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The final message..." thoughts

What do you understand the God's judgment to be?



Do you see God through the lens of natural law, the law of love, the design parameters upon which He constructed life to operate or do you see God through the lens of imposed law, like a Roman emperor?

If God is seen through the lens of the law of love – then how do we understand His judgment?

- It is the accurate diagnosis of what the actual condition of each person is
- It is also the therapeutic intervention to heal and restore, and
- The final judgment or diagnosis of the wicked that they are terminal and nothing more can be done. “Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone!” Hosea 4:17
- God in the end judges that, for some, they are beyond healing, they have destroyed the faculties that respond to love and truth and there is nothing more than can be done. Thus, He sets them free to reap what they have chosen, eternal separation from Him, who is the source of life. He grants them the most merciful outcome, not eternal existence in sin, but the freedom to be separate and pass from all suffering.
- Christ in this view was God’s means of revealing the truth and providing remedy to cure the terminally deviant human condition
- Thus those who accept Christ are judged, diagnosed, by God as having been healed and restored to righteousness

But, if we see God through the lens of imposed law how do we see judgment?

- A legal verdict found for or against the sinner
- A penalty, determined by God, is externally inflicted upon the unrepentant to make them pay for their disobedience, either inflicted torment and then execution, or eternal torment inflicted by God
- Christ in this view is punished by His Father in our place
- Christ’s blood is a commodity to be obtained and bartered with the Father to appease His anger and wrath at sin and pay our legal debt to the heavenly government
- Those who accept the blood of Christ are legally declared not guilty and the Father is legally prevented from tormenting and executing them

Which view do you find more reasonable?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “For over a year...” thoughts? How do you understand what is described here?

God actively sent suffering, pain, hardship, disease OR God actively set them free to experience what they persistently chose, life without Him?

Does it make a difference how we understand it? What difference does it make?

Is God’s action punishment? Or, is it loving discipline? Is there a difference? What is the difference?



In *People Magazine*, March 18, 2013 p 94, there is an article about Pat Summit – the famous and incredibly successful coach of the Tennessee Lady Vols basketball team.

For those outside the US, Pat Summit is the all time winningest coach in NCAA basketball history, men or women. She won 8 National Championships and the only coach in NCAA history with over 1000 wins.

As many of you know she has sadly been diagnosed with Alzheimer's dementia. *People Magazine* quotes a section from her recent book, "I know that Alzheimer's has brought me to a point that I was going to arrive at someday anyway. With or without this diagnosis, I was going to experience diminishment. We all do. [And] I know God doesn't take things away to be cruel. He takes things away to lighten us. He takes things away so we can fly."

Thoughts?

Now this is a very tricky idea to consider – will a loving parent take away things for our blessing?

Does God ever take things away?

- Nebuchadnezzar's sanity for 7 years
- But then God restored his sanity and the king was converted

While God may therapeutically intervene to bring conviction and a person to repentance, should we conclude that sickness and disease are from God? Is God the source of disease? Does disease occur in harmony with God's will? Or is disease the outworking of deviations from God's design, will and purpose?

Should we attribute to God's account the numerous birth defects, diseases and sickness with which humanity suffers?

Does that mean then that sickness is because a person is due to an individual sinning? Not necessarily! But because nature is out of harmony with God's design. Certainly, one could abuse themselves with tobacco, alcohol, drugs and cause disease, but the disciples asked Jesus, "who sinned that this man was born blind, him or his parents." And the answer was neither. Also, the case of Job makes it clear that disease can happen to the righteous. But, is disease brought directly by God? Does God act to cause it?

Where would you draw the line?

How do we understand God using everything for good if we trust Him? Not everything is good, but if we trust God He can bring good out of evil.

Read last paragraph, "The Lord used..." thoughts?



Why could God not be honored when His house sat in ruins?

What about the end of the day's lesson, the observation that the people lost a sense of their divine mission as a remnant of God – and the question if there is any lesson for us?

What is the lesson for us? Do we have a divine mission?

How would you state our mission? What is it?

- To spread the gospel? What is this?
- To lighten the world for Christ's return, or prepare the world for the Second Advent – what does that mean, what does it look like?
- To tell the truth about God's character of love, how do we do that? What do we say that will be heard? How many Christians currently believe that the God they worship is not love?
- Others?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 3



Major Lessons from Minor Prophets Lesson 11 2Q 2013

Visions of Hope (Zechariah)

SABBATH

Key Thoughts states, “Though Israel had been punished for its sins, it was time for its people to live again in relationship with God according to His promises.”

What do you think of this idea? Think about it? Any concerns?

The marriage relationship is often used as a metaphor for the relationship God has with His people. Let’s take the key thought and apply it to husband and wife.

“Though Susie had been punished for her transgressing her husband’s rules, it was time for her to live again in relationship with her husband according to His promise not to beat her anymore.”

Really? Does this idea really work for anyone? How can intelligent people really put forth such beliefs?

Ideas such as this attributed to God are evidence of how deeply the lies about God and His methods have penetrated into the psyche of good Christian people.

Now, remember, the disciples had so much distortion about God in their minds that even after 3.5 years with Jesus they still didn’t comprehend his mission or God’s true character and Peter is arguing with Christ the night before the crucifixion and attacking people with his sword.

Good people who are on God’s side may have distortions about God – but they also have hearts that long to grow in their knowledge and experience with God. They have minds that love the truth and recognize the truth is unfolding and they need to keep moving forward, rather than defending old traditions. This is why the disciples, steeped in misunderstanding, were able to be Christ’s true representatives, but the priests and Pharisees were not .

Would a wife ever genuinely love and trust her husband who beats her for not following his rules? Some have argued yes, that in certain cultures this is very appropriate and women get upset if their husbands stop beating them because they think their husband’s don’t care anymore. Thoughts about this?

In relationships dominated by coercive power, abuse, beatings, the victim, whether child, spouse, or kidnapped person, will often come to long for the approval and attention of the one in power – so they will feel safe. If some women find themselves in a culture in which this ugly distortion of healthy relationships happen, they may also find that they have, as a survival mechanism, come to experience the beatings in positive ways – but is it really healthy and positive?



Can we, love, trust and grow into the fullness of our own individuality in a relationship dominated by threat, coercion and imposed punishments?

This idea that the punishment for sin is inflicted by God a lie – so how can we restate the metaphor of marriage that more accurately represents Israel's condition?

Though Susie, because of her repeated infidelity, has suffered the pain and distress of living alienated from her husband, her husband continued to love her and now it was time for Susie to live again in relationship with him, according to his promised devotion to her.”

Thoughts?

Why did Israel end up in captivity? Was God inflicting punishment?

Read first paragraph, “On the wall of an old...” thoughts?

In the 19th century there was a great spiritual awakening in America, with many people returning to a relationship with God, and taking seriously Jesus' promise to come again. Many Christian groups began longing for and looking toward the return of Christ. Some set dates, only to have disappointment follow disappointment. And several new church groups arose from this passion to see Jesus come again. The SDA church was one of those.

May 21, 2013 celebrated the 150th anniversary of the founding of the SDA church – the church with its mission to prepare for the second advent of Jesus. Do Christians today, still have passionate expectation that Jesus will return soon, or have we either lost hope, or just fallen asleep, fallen into complacency and believe Jesus will come one day, but not in our lifetime?

What do you think of these two questions?

- Do you believe Jesus will come soon?
- Do you believe Jesus can come soon?

Do you hear them the same, or do they imply different things?

“Do you believe Jesus will come soon?” implies that God has a set timetable and Jesus return is preprogrammed, like a time bomb, and when the clock hits a certain point it will go off and He will come regardless.

“Do you believe Jesus can come soon?” implies that God is waiting for certain conditions to occur before Christ returns. While God knows the day and hour of Christ's return, because God knows the future, what determines the time is not some preset clock, but the condition of certain things on earth, which we could influence.



Which idea do you think is more accurate?

What can we do to hasten the day?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The return...” thoughts?

How do you answer the questions?

“Would they be safe and secure in their land, or would enemies come again to harass them?”

- Would the people likely have had this concern? Most certainly...
- But, who was their primary enemy? In other words, what was the greatest threat to their security and safety in the land? Other nations or their own apostasy?
- Why did they end up being taken captive? Because they refused to follow God’s methods and He set them free to go their own way.
- Is there a lesson in this for us? Do we ever suffer in this world because of doing our own thing and refusing to follow God’s plan, design, methods for our lives?
- And in the aftermath, do we live in fear of suffering similarly again?
- What is the greatest threat to our personal security and peace in this world?

The next question, “Had God forgiven their past unfaithfulness, or would He continue their punishment?”

- Is this a legitimate question? Or does this question arise from some misunderstanding?
- What is the false premise that this question is based upon?
 - That God’s law is imposed, and God is the imposer of punishments.
- What impact does it have on people to believe this lie?
- What about today, do we ever struggle with such lies?
- How do such ideas affect our relationship with God?

The next paragraph tells how Zechariah saw in vision the angel of the Lord move to intercede for Judah. With whom does the angel of the Lord intercede?

TUESDAY

Read Zech 3:1-8:

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. 2 The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”



3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. 4 The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.” 5 Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by. 6 The angel of the Lord gave this charge to Joshua: 7 “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here. 8 “ ‘Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.

Thoughts?

Let’s identify the players, who is who and what means what?

- Who is Joshua the High Priest?
 - Literally he is the first High Priest after captivity.
- Who does Joshua represent in the symbolism?
 - The people – anyone else?
- What is another name for Joshua?
 - Jesus, and Jesus is our High Priest.
- Who is the accuser?
 - Satan, the adversary.
- Who is the angel of the Lord?
 - Jesus.
- What is the fire from which the burning stick is plucked?
 - Deviation from God’s design, i.e. sin
- What does it mean burning stick?
 - Sinful humankind
- What do the filthy clothes represent?
 - Defective human character, our hearts and minds filled with fear, selfishness, guilt, shame, arrogance, pride.
- What does it mean to take away the filthy clothes and put on clean clothes?
 - Removing fear and selfishness from the character and restoring in our hearts self-sacrificial, Christlike love!
- Who is the Branch?
 - Jesus

So what do you gather from this vision story? What does it mean?

Adam deviated from God’s design and humanity was infected with fear and selfishness, operating on Satan’s principles, being burned up by sin, dying in the fires of selfishness. Jesus came and “became sin though He knew no sin that we might become the righteousness of God.” He took our sinful state upon Himself to cure it. Thus the angel of the Lord and the High Priest represent Jesus doing for us



what we could not do for ourselves. Jesus takes away our sinfulness, literally. He “destroyed sin and brought life and immortality to light.” Jesus Christ actually cleansed the species human, by His singular victory! He now holds the cure, the keys to salvation and eternal life.

Satan is a legalist, an imposed law proponent, who claims it is not fair and Jesus can’t do this. Every sin must be punished urges Satan. Satan brings up long lists of misdeeds, arguing every one must be punished, but Jesus says, “the Lord rebuke you.” Just as He did when He resurrected Moses.

So, Satan, not getting anywhere with Jesus and God with his legal arguments, turns to humanity and begins filling the minds of men with all kinds of legal ideas about God’s government.

Then Satan fills our minds with accusations,

- accusing us of falling short, of committing too many sins, of being too defective for God to love and save, of being unworthy.
- Satan accuses us to discourage us and convince us we are beyond hope.
- He fills our minds with lies about God, presenting God as a being who must inflict punishment for sin – but Jesus says, “the Lord rebuke you Satan.” And Jesus says to each of us, “see I have taken away your sin.”

With whom is Christ pleading?

- Is there any hint in this passage that Jesus is pleading to His Father?
- According to this passage, who would need to hear Jesus pleas?
- Who would be troubled by Satan’s allegations?
- Would Satan’s allegations trouble God?
- In other words, would God get confused and uncertain and start doubting Himself after hearing Satan’s allegations?
- Who would?
- We get distraught, upset, doubt when Satan makes his allegations.
- Then who needs to hear Christ’s pleas? We do.

Here is a quote from a book called *Amazing Grace*. What do you think about the idea put forth?

Satan knows that those who ask God for pardon and grace will obtain it; therefore **he presents their sins before them to discourage them**. Against those who are trying to obey God, he is constantly seeking occasion for complaint. Even their best and most acceptable service he seeks to make appear corrupt. **By countless devices, the most subtle and the most cruel, he endeavors to secure their condemnation.** {AG 316.2}

From who is Satan seeking to secure the our condemnation?

If you have an imposed law construct, then you falsely believe it is God.



If you have a natural law construct, then you realize we are sick, God has the remedy, He will provide it to absolutely everyone who will accept it, and it works to heal 100% of those who take it. Do doctor condemn to death patients they can heal?

If a patient comes to the ER with infection from years of IV drug use – and the doctor has antibiotics, will the doctor, hold “court” ask for witness, hear the accusation of those who want to see the patient die, examine a list of misdeeds, and then make a legal judgment and pronounce the death sentence upon the patient, and then, execute the patient?

Will the doctor examine the patient, hear the history, the facts of what has happened, from the patient and family and medical records, if the patient has been there before? Will the doctor make a judgment, diagnosis? And judging that the patient has a terminal infection, that if not cured will kill the patient, what does the doctor do, if the doctor has antibiotics that will cure them? Give them the remedy.

So, who must Satan get to condemn the sinner so that the sinner won't get the remedy? The sinner must condemn themselves, the sinner must be tricked by Satan into believing they are beyond healing, they are not worth saving, they are too far gone to matter, thus they won't take the remedy.

Here are some Bible texts, notice what the Bible says regarding God's condemnation of sinners:

John 3:16,17:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ **For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**”

“**neither do I condemn you.**” Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery (JN 8:11)

Romans 8:31-39:

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ **Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.** ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So, if God is not condemning us, whom is Satan seeking to get to condemn us? Ourselves!



Then to whom is Christ pleading? Christ is pleading with you and me to trust Him and reject the lies about the Father.

Do we ever struggle because we have mistakenly thought Jesus needs to plead to His Father?

Have we ever struggled with guilt and memories of past failings, thinking we have messed up so bad we are beyond hope? Who is behind such ideas? If those thoughts enter the mind, what is the proper response? “The Lord rebuke you Satan!”

The second paragraph states, “While Joshua is interceding before God for the people, Satan is bringing accusations against them based on their sinfulness.”

Thoughts about this? Any concerns? Where does the text say Joshua is interceding before God for the people?

Do you see how much is read into the text that isn’t there, and all based on an imposed law construct.

Who does Joshua represent? Jesus – and what is Jesus doing? He is taking our sinfulness, our iniquity upon Himself, and removing the iniquity and developing perfect character! He is cleansing the Spirit Temple. Jesus is recreating humanity back to God’s original ideal. And Satan is there the entire time accusing and attempting to derail the process.

Read third paragraph, “The Lord rejects...” thoughts? What are your thoughts about this? Where in this passage is there anything about the full measure of divine punishment? Where do such ideas arise? What impact do such ideas have upon people?

WEDNESDAY

Read Zechariah 4:1-6:

Then the angel who talked with me returned and wakened me, as a man is wakened from his sleep. ² He asked me, “What do you see?”

I answered, “I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights. ³ Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.”

⁴ I asked the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”

⁵ He answered, “Do you not know what these are?”

“No, my lord,” I replied.

⁶ So he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.

Thoughts?

What is the vision about?



From what is the lampstand constructed? Solid gold, what does the lampstand with seven bowls represent?

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet a light unto my path.” PS 119:105

The Word of God – and what is that?

- The Bible?
- The Living Word, Jesus – Logos, “The Word was made flesh...”

What do the seven lights represent?

Verse 10 says these are the seven “eyes” of the Lord – what does this mean?

Some Bible commentators suggest this represents God’s “all knowing presence”. What do you think?

What did Jesus say we are to be for Him? We are a light unto the world. We are to represent Him!

We are to let our High Priest, Jesus, work in our hearts, trimming the wick of our lives, so we shine brightly for Him. Could the seven lights, also called the seven eyes, represent those who are Christ’s followers, those who are connected to the solid gold lampstand and Christ shines out through them?

What is the eye symbolic of? Knowledge, intelligence, awareness. So, I would like to suggest the seven lights represent the people of God, who are “enlightened” and have spiritual insight and intelligence. These are not the believers trapped in darkness and misrepresent God, but those who have been filled with the Holy Spirit and have the light of truth shining through them.

The Hebrew Lexicon says the word translated eye is:

עַיִן, עֵינַיִם [‘ayin /ah·yin/] 1612a, 1613; GK 6412 and 6524; 887 occurrences; AV translates as “eye” 495 times, “sight” 216 times, “seem” 19 times, “colour” 12 times, “fountain” 11 times, “well” 11 times, “face” 10 times, “pleased + 3190” 10 times, “presence” eight times, before” eight times... “conceit” four times, “think” four times, and translated miscellaneous 66 times. **1** eye. **1a** eye. *1a1* of physical eye. *1a2* as showing mental qualities. *1a3* of mental and spiritual faculties (fig.). **2** spring, fountain.¹

So, what does this symbolism mean? That we are to go forward renewed by the Holy Spirit to reveal the light of truth about God, intelligently, dispelling the darkness of lies about God.

The lesson states in the last paragraph, “By the Spirit, God provides the power for us to do His work now as He did then. Therefore, the work is accomplished not by human might of force but by the Lord working through those who are open to be used by Him.”

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



Thoughts? This is certainly true – the work is accomplished by the Holy Spirit, not by our own human effort.

Do you have any concerns about this however?

Does the Scripture actually restrict the limitation of achieving God's purposes by might and power to human might and power? Notice how the lesson attempts to insert the idea this is only stating that human might and power cannot achieve God's purposes, leaving open the idea that God can achieve what He wants by exercising His might and power. Can He?

What is it that God wants? He wants us to completely love and trust Him. Can He achieve that by using might and power?

If might and power achieves God's goals, then why didn't He use might and power on Lucifer in heaven? If might and power exercised by God could bring an end to the conflict then why did Jesus have to die?

Might and power cannot achieve God's goal to destroy the lies about Him, reveal the truth of His character of love and win us back to love and trust. This is the work of the Spirit, which is called the Spirit of truth and love! It is by presenting the truth in love and leaving others free that God wins!

Read Zechariah 6:12,13:

Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord. ¹³ It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.'

Thoughts?

Who is the Branch? Jesus and what does it mean He will branch out from His place? Where is his place?

In heaven – does it say He will leave His place? Is there a difference between branching out and leaving? What is the difference?

A branch stays connected to its source – did Jesus leave heaven, or did He branch out from heaven? When Jesus came to earth and became incarnate, what did He do? He connected His divinity with our humanity! His divinity branched out from heaven – yet He retained His connection to heaven.

Jesus is the connecting link, the conduit, the branch, through which God's love flows back into the species human.

What does it mean He will build His temple? Don't some teach the actual temple already exists in heaven? If so, then why does Jesus need to branch out from heaven to build His temple?



As I was studying this week I came across this article in an old journal, Signs of the Times, written Dec 12, 1895. Consider how some Christians used to think about God, what do you think of this?

In the prayer of Christ for his disciples, he said concerning them: "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one [in spiritual union]; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." {ST, December 12, 1895 par. 1}

The glory of Christ is his character, and his character is an expression of the law of God. He fulfilled the law in its every specification, and gave to the world in **his life a perfect pattern of what it is possible for humanity to attain unto by cooperation with divinity.** In his humanity Christ was dependent upon the Father, even as humanity is now dependent upon God for divine power in attaining unto perfection of character. **God's law is an exponent of his character,** an expression of his holiness; **but, viewed by him who has fallen through sin, it is a voice of condemnation, a ministration of death.** [Why? How do you understand the law, imposed or natural? If the law of respiration is violated, and you are under water, will the law be a ministration of death? Why? Can the law change to meet you underwater? No, if you are to live, you must be brought back into harmony with the law. But if you conceive the law as imposed, then why does death ensue? Because God is described as killing.] It is not in the province of law to pardon the transgressor; for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." "By the law shall no flesh be justified." No ray of hope shines forth from the law to the sinner, and its transgressor can find no answer from the law to his anxious inquiry, "What shall I do to be saved?" "How shall I be just with God?" {ST, December 12, 1895 par. 2}

But through Christ a way of escape has been provided. Our Redeemer came in the flesh to condemn sin in the flesh, to lay hold of the repenting soul with an unyielding grasp, and at the same time to grasp the throne of God, becoming the connecting link between humanity and divinity, between earth and heaven. He is the only refuge for the guilty soul. **In searching to know God, man is directed to Christ, who lived out the law of God, and manifested to the world the attributes of the Father. In the Son of God the inexpressible goodness of God is revealed;** for in him mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **Christ in the flesh, condemning sin in the flesh, was a perfect revelation of God to the world.** Christ declared: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." {ST, December 12, 1895 par. 3}

In answer to the request of Philip, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," Jesus said: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? **he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;** and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." **The Lord Jesus is the embodiment of the glory of the Godhead.** The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. **God has revealed himself to men; he stooped to take upon him our nature, and in his Son we see the glory of the divine attributes.** *Those who see not*



in Christ the divine character are in the shadow of Satan's misrepresentation of divinity.

"The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." {ST, December 12, 1895 par. 4}

In Christ Jesus is a revelation of the glory of the Godhead. All that the human agent can know of God to the saving of the soul, is the measure of the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to which he can attain; for Christ is he who represents the Father. The most wonderful truth to be grasped by men is the truth, "Immanuel, God with us." Christ is the wisdom of God. He is the great "I AM" to the world. As we contemplate the glory of the divine character as revealed in Christ, we are led to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" This wisdom is displayed in the love that reaches out for the recovery of lost and ruined man. {ST, December 12, 1895 par. 5}

The work of God in the creation of man needed no undoing. There was nothing imperfect, nothing incomplete. He spake and it was done. The very dust of the ground from which man was formed was pure, and the breath of life which God breathed into his nostrils was holy. He was placed in Eden, the garden of God, and its atmosphere was undefiled, and from the beams of the sun in the heavens which blessed and cheered the earth, to the fountains and streams that watered the garden, all was holy, **all was clothed with spotless purity and unexcelled loveliness, and was in harmony with the character of the Father and the Son, by whom the worlds were made, and in whom was life, and the life is the light of men.** [All was in harmony with the character of God, meaning? All operated upon the design template of love, the principle of giving, as God designed it] {ST, December 12, 1895 par. 6}

But in the transgression of man both the Father and the Son were dishonored. Man committed sin, and sin is the transgression of the law, which is holy, just, and good. [which means what?] **Through sin the temple of God which he had builded for his own indwelling and glory, was reduced to ruin, was fallen and in decay.** [what temple? Then what temple needed cleansing?] Satan beguiled the holy pair to their own destruction, and **introduced an element of character that was antagonistic to God and to their fellow-creatures.** [what element? Selfishness, antagonistic to love, the principle of survival of the fittest kill or be killed. How was it introduced? Lies believed break the circle of love and trust....] **Before the entrance of sin, the hearts of God's children had been filled with love toward their Creator, and they were in harmony with his will; but upon yielding to the tempter a warring element began to work in the human agent.** Even the earth itself shows the curse of transgression, and signs of enmity appear. Darkness covers the earth like the pall of death, and will continue to shroud the glory of God until death is swallowed up in victory. {ST, December 12, 1895 par. 7}

In the creation of God before the entrance of sin, every part of nature was in perfection; God had nothing to take down as unnecessary to his plan. He needed to set into operation no power by which to dispossess; he needed to inaugurate no opposing force. **But through the calamity of sin, the work of disintegration was begun, and the beautiful**



temple of God's building was defiled and laid in ruins. [the work of disintegration, what is that? What is being said? That sin violates the parameters upon which life is built and natural results in decay, ruin and death, unless God intervenes to heal and restore. What temple is being ruined? What temple did Christ come to build? What temple is being cleansed? How?] **God no longer was a dweller in the heart of man.** To oppose and bring to naught the work of the enemy, the promise was given, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." {ST, December 12, 1895 par. 8}

In the councils of heaven, hope was furnished for the fallen race. Jesus Christ offered his life as a ransom for the lost, as the price by which he might purchase the right to re-create the sinner, and form again the image of God in the soul. [What is ransom? The price necessary to set one free from captivity or bondage. What holds us in bondage? The lies about God we believe and our carnal nature. What then is the price for our freedom? The truth about God which restores to trust and a new nature, both of which Christ achieved.] **Fallen man was to be renewed in the divine likeness.** He was to be uplifted, to be pardoned and redeemed, not by the law, but by Jesus Christ, our Righteousness. Angels fly through the midst of heaven, proclaiming the glad tidings that a ransom has been found, and that the treasures that have been hidden from ages and generations in Christ, are to be displayed before a wondering universe. {ST, December 12, 1895 par. 9}

In Christ is found a resource that has never before been called out. Clothing his divinity with humanity, with the wealth of the treasures of heaven at his command, **he was to come to our world to counteract the ruin that Satan has wrought.** [not to pay a legal penalty, but to counteract the ruin, to rebuild humanity, to restore mankind into God's original ideal] What a scene was that when angels, cherubim, and a seraphim rejoiced as they hastened through the heavenly courts, proclaiming that a ransom had been found, and that God could be just, and yet be the justifier of him who believes in the ransom that had been provided! The law could be magnified and made honorable, **and yet fallen man could be restored to more than his former dignity and glory, and exalted as an overcomer of the Satanic hosts.** Every one who should believe in Jesus, **should be recreated to walk in newness of life, and from the ruins that Satan had wrought through sin, should arise in purity and holiness the fallen temple of the Lord.** Man was to be reconstructed, to be formed after the image of Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of God. "Unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." {ST, December 12, 1895 par. 10}

Thoughts? Isn't this an amazing article? What has happened to our church? We have been hijacked by an imposed law construct, with a distorted god who is like a Roman emperor who must inflict punishment, who must receive legal payment... The truth is we are defective because of sin and Christ came to counteract the damage sin has caused and to rebuild us into His image!

MONDAY

Read Zech 2:10,11:



“Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,” declares the Lord. 11 “Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you.

Thoughts?

What is promised?

- Jesus is coming to live on earth with us
- From what Jesus accomplishes all people of the world, the entire human race, will be blessed, and people from all nations will partake the remedy and be reconciled to God.
- What is the significance of saying “you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you.”?

THURSDAY

First sentence of second paragraph states, “God’s answer through Zechariah is twofold: first it is necessary that God’s people remember the past so that they don’t repeat it.”

This is sound advise – remember the past so we don’t repeat it. Do we? Have we remembered the past, or are we repeating it?

Are we vulnerable to repeating mistakes made by humans in the past? Can you name any?

- Misunderstanding God’s character
- Misconstruing God’s law as imposed
- Believing rituals are important in their own right
- Placing behavior over character (i.e. don’t heal on Sabbath, MT 5, it is more than avoiding the behavior of adultery, but having a new heart)
- Disfellowshipping someone for divorce
- Others?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2



Major Lessons From Minor Prophets Lesson 12 2Q 2013

Heaven's Best Gift (Zechariah)

SUNDAY

The lesson for the day focuses on Zechariah chapter eight, which is about restoration of Zion. Verses 1-3:

Again the word of the LORD Almighty came to me. ² This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her."

³ This is what the LORD says: "I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain."

Thoughts?

What is Zion?

Historically, Zion initially meant the southern mount in Jerusalem on which stood a Jebusite fortress which was conquered by David, and where David built his home, thus called the City of David. The ridge on which this fortress was built had a northern mount, called Mount Moriah. It was here that Solomon's Temple and Palace were built. Thus, after Solomon the entire ridge was often referred to as Zion. Further, since the Temple was built on the "sides of the north" this term refers to the place where God dwells and from where God rules. Thus when Scripture states that Lucifer wanted to sit on the sides of the north, it is saying that Lucifer wanted to occupy God's throne. Take God's place in God's Temple.

This is the literal historic reference to Zion. But, as we have discussed many times in here, the literal stories of ancient Israel often are enacted object lessons for a future reality – does this apply to Zion?

What about Hebrews 12:22,23:

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.

Thoughts? Is the Mount Zion spoken of in Hebrews the physical mountain located in the Middle East today? What is being referred to in Hebrews?

When we read about Zion, about promises to restore Zion, about people coming to Zion – should we be thinking about the earth as it is today and restoring some ruins in earthly Jerusalem, or is Scripture



pointing us toward the new heaven and new earth when all sin, pain, suffering and death are eternally gone?

And what about the idea of God being jealous for Zion, what would this then mean?

Is God jealous for a physical location, dirt, bricks and mortar? Is God of the same mindset as so many in the Middle East who are fighting for real estate?

When God says He is jealous, for what is He jealous?

Read first paragraph, “God’s plan was...” thoughts? When will Jerusalem be a safe place? What will make Jerusalem a safe place?

What makes a city an unsafe place? What are the possibilities?

- Toxins or poisons – Chernobyl
- Biological hazards or disease – typhoid, yellow fever etc.
- Wild animals
- Untrustworthy and dangerous people

When speaking of making the New Jerusalem a safe place which is the biggest obstacle for God to accomplish and why?

Is it difficult for God to cleanse the environment from toxins, destroy disease or tame wild animals? Is there anything that obstructs God from turning untrustworthy and dangerous people into trustworthy friends?

Would it be necessary for God to heal people, to transform them so all the inhabitants are trustworthy friends in order for Jerusalem to be a safe place?

What obstructs that process?

- Lies about God
- Lies about God’s law
- Lies about the gospel and the plan of salvation
- Which perpetuates fear
- Our own selfish natures, which is inflamed by the lies believed
- Satan and his agencies

Does God have a role for us to play in helping to make Jerusalem a safe place?

Which Jerusalem? What is our role?

Read Zech 8:20-23:



²⁰ This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, ²¹ and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the LORD and seek the LORD Almighty. I myself am going.’ ²² And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat him.”

²³ This is what the LORD Almighty says: “In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, ‘Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.’ ”

Thoughts? What does this mean?

Is this talking about earthly Jerusalem, or is Jerusalem here used symbolically to represent those who know God?

What does it mean ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew because God is with him or her?

What were the Jews supposed to do? Did they do it?

Then, has God given up? To whom will people from all nations turn in order to find the truth about God? If someone is genuinely united with God, and witnesses the truth about God, and from their witness leads people to God, would they be one of the “Jews” referred to in this passage?

A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. ²⁹ No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man’s praise is not from men, but from God. Rom 2:28,29

So, what do we conclude from this?

Is Zechariah prophesying of a day, when people, who have been transformed in the inner man, such that Christ’s character, God’s law of love, has been reproduced in them, will lead people from the world back to God?

Then, should we ask, Are we one of those people?

What do we need in order to be one of those people?

- We need to know God, His law of love, His methods, and be able to help people differentiate the truth from the lie
- We need the Holy Spirit to reproduce in us Christlike character so we live out His methods of beneficence in our lives
- We need to demonstrate progressive growth in character, become more like Jesus each day

Read fifth paragraph, “The gospel accounts...” thoughts? Is that what the Bible actually says, that Jesus will draw “all peoples” to Himself, or is this altered in some way?



The Greek doesn't have the word "people" or "men" but simply, "all." Jesus when lifted up will draw "all" unto Himself." What is the difference?

Col 1:20 "all things in heaven and earth are reconciled to Christ at the cross." The unfallen beings in the universe needed the Cross to refute the lies, reveal the truth about God and solidify them in their loyalty. Thus, Christ drew men, but also angels to Himself at the cross and solidified the universe in loyalty to God.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Jesus' triumphal entry..." thoughts?

How does Jesus bring this? How does He achieve it?

What are the options?

- Imposed Law View
 - Deviations from the law are not in themselves destructive, and do not in themselves bring death, but instead bring condemnation from the ruling authority.
 - The ruling authority has set death as the imposed penalty and is now required to inflict it
 - Christ came to take the sinners' place on death row and pays the legal penalty, earning the right of pardon from His Father
 - He offers the legal payment to humans
 - Those who accept it get pardoned
 - Those who don't accept the payment find God will use divine power to torture and kill, thus sending a message throughout the universe, that God has the right to kill if you don't accept the payment of Christ
 - In the future sin never rises again because if it does God just kills the rebellious
 - Thus, fear of God's punishment prevents rebellion, i.e. eternal fear of God
 - Problem – perfect love casts out all fear, but this traditional model perpetuates eternal fear and destroys love and trust in God
- Natural Law View
 - Sin is deviation from God's design for life
 - Humankind is actually in a terminal state, out of harmony from God's design
 - God sent Christ, to take our iniquity, our sinfulness, our terminal state upon Himself and cure it, according to God's purpose
 - All who are won back to trust in God, by the truth Jesus revealed, open their hearts and experience via the Holy Spirit the reproduction of Christ's character within, thus it is "no longer I that live but Christ lives in me."
 - Those who refuse to trust God die of their terminal condition, not as an infliction from God.
 - The saved see and comprehend that God did everything to save those who were lost and realize those lost died from their condition not from an infliction from God



- Love and trust for God, and love for His methods increase and the universe is eternally safe because it is inhabited only by individuals who love God and others more than self, and would rather die than ever harm another.

Which view do you like better? Which view is more consistent with the evidence? Which view is more consistent with the character Jesus revealed?

Read second paragraph, “When Jesus triumphantly...” thoughts?

Why were some rejoicing in the idea of Christ using military might to overthrow the Romans?

What about today? Are any Christians falling into the same trap? Do some Christians teach Jesus, 2000 years ago, despite horrible abuse and mistreatment loved perfectly, but after going to heaven has, over the last 2000 years, had a change of heart and doesn’t come back the gentle loving Jesus, but instead an angry wrathful Attila the Hun type of being – coming to torture and destroy?

Do people ever actually stop and think about what they are saying?

When Jesus comes back what character will He have? It will be perfect love!

But will His perfect love prevent the suffering and loss of the wicked? Why not? What is the cause of their suffering? Is it inflicted by Jesus?

I have been accused of teaching Universalism because I teach that God doesn’t have to inflict death and that God continues to love everyone. The reason some think this is because they are stuck in an imposed law construct and haven’t yet comprehended the truth of God’s design for life. Thus, if we take away God inflicting death, to those stuck in that false model they conclude then everyone must be saved.

But, I do not teach Universalism. Sadly, some will die terribly, just as some patients, who refuse rehab and continue to drink a fifth of vodka a day, die terribly. But the patient/sinner doesn’t die as an infliction at the hands of the doctor/God. The wicked in the end die as a result of their terminal condition, NOT as an infliction from the hand of God.

If we teach that the wicked die because God inflicts it, then we perpetuate eternal fear of God and rebellion never ceases.

TUESDAY

Read Zech 12:10:

And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.



Thoughts?

To what is this passage referring?

- Is it applicable only to the tribe of Judah, David's literal descendants?
- Is it applicable only to Jews, the literal genetic descendants of Jacob?
- Is it applicable to all those who have been renewed like Abraham and experience grace poured upon them?

What does it mean they will mourn?

Read Zech 13:1-2:

“On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

² “On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more,” declares the LORD Almighty. “I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land.

Thoughts? What do you hear in this passage? Is there a promise? What is the promise?

Is it a promise of legal pardon, or of healing and transformation?

How is it we miss this throughout Scripture?

Read Zech 13:6:

If someone asks him, ‘What are these wounds on your body?’ he will answer, ‘The wounds I was given at the house of my friends.’

What do you think this is referring to? Is it suggesting that in the new heaven some will not understand the story of Jesus and need to be instructed?

WEDNESDAY

Read Zech 13:7-9:

⁷ “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,
against the man who is close to me!”
declares the LORD Almighty.

“Strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered,
and I will turn my hand against the little ones.

⁸ In the whole land,” declares the LORD,
“two-thirds will be struck down and perish;
yet one-third will be left in it.

⁹ This third I will bring into the fire;



I will refine them like silver
and test them like gold.
They will call on my name
and I will answer them;
I will say, 'They are my people,'
and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.' ”

Then Read second paragraph, “In Zechariah 13:7-9 the prophet...” thoughts?

What does it mean the “Lord’s judgment goes out against the Good Shepherd?”

Are they suggesting God inflicted something upon Jesus? That God acted like a human judge and imposed punishment upon Jesus?

How do you understand God’s law? Imposed or natural?

If God’s law is imposed, like a Roman Emperor, then God is seen as imposing punishment, as judging Jesus and inflicting punishment upon Him.

How do we see it if we understand God’s law is the design parameters for life, that humankind is out of harmony with those parameters and in a terminal condition? Then what is God’s judgment of Christ? That this is the only pathway whereby Christ can accomplish God’s purpose of rebuilding and restoring humanity to God’s original ideal.

Consider some of these quotes from various Christian organizations and publications and answer, Are they coming from the law of love, natural law, God’s design for life, or a human, Roman-like imposed law construct?

- Here is a statement from a paper called, “A Call to Evangelical Unity,” from *Christianity Today*, June 14, 1999:
“We affirm that the atonement of Christ by which, in his obedience, he offered a perfect sacrifice, **propitiating the Father by paying for our sins** and satisfying divine justice on our behalf according to God's eternal plan, is an essential element of the Gospel.”
- And this is from *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*:
“The word “propitiation” properly signifies the **turning away of wrath by a sacrifice**. Thus it signifies **appeasement**... According to Leon Morris: “The consistent Bible view is that the sin of man has incurred the wrath of God. That wrath is averted only by Christ’s atoning offering. From this standpoint his **saving work is properly called propitiation.**”¹
- In the book, *The Cross of Christ*, we read:
“Paul always speaks of people being reconciled to God (2Cor 5:19; Rom 5:10; Col. 1:20). He never refers to God being reconciled to us. **In spite of that fact**, [my



comment - *he just affirms the Bible nowhere refers to God being reconciled to man, yet now he denies this fact and argues that "in spite of what the Bible says" God did have to be reconciled to man]* however, we should recognize that sin affected both sides. Humanity's rebellion and sense of guilt alienated it from God, while **God was separated from humankind by His necessary hatred of and judgment on sin (His wrath). Christ's sacrificial death (propitiation) removed the barrier to reconciliation from God's side."** ⁱⁱ

What is suggested as separating God and man? Notice, according to this view, it isn't sin, it is God's hatred and judgment – i.e. God's hostile attitude that separates us from Him. And thus they teach that a barrier to our relationship was removed from God's side. Do you realize how totally horrible, false, even Satanic this idea is?

God has nothing wrong in Him that He needed Christ to die to fix. Yet, this false theology, which dominates much of church leadership, is what is promulgated, and it obstructs the completion of the gospel commission.

- Here are two quotations from *Seventh-day Adventist 27 Fundamental Beliefs*:

"Christ's self-sacrifice is *pleasing* to God because this sacrificial offering **took away the barrier between God and sinful man** in that **Christ fully bore God's wrath on man's sin**. Through Christ, God's wrath is not turned into love but is turned away from man and borne by Himself." ⁱⁱⁱ

"For a loving God to maintain His justice and righteousness, the atoning death of Jesus Christ became 'a moral and legal necessity.' God's 'justice requires that sin be carried to judgment. **God must therefore execute judgment on sin and thus on the sinner. In this execution the Son of God took our place, the sinner's place, according to God's will.**" ^{iv}

- From *Ministry Magazine*:

"Why did **God the Father choose** a cross to be the instrument of death? Why did He not choose to have Christ instantly beheaded or quickly run through with a spear or sword? **Was God unjust in executing judgment on Christ with a cross** when He could have done it by beheading, a noose, a sword, a gas chamber, a bolt of lightning, or a lethal injection?" ^v

- Angel Rodriguez, of the Biblical Research Institute writes:

"One of the fundamental problems of the Moral Influence Theory is that it rejects the substitutionary nature of Christ's death. The idea that **God had to kill the innocent** instead of the guilty in order to save us is considered a violation of justice." (emphasis mine). ^{vi}

Did God execute His Son on the Cross? Or was Christ murdered at the instigation of Satan and unholy men? Is God the source of killing, execution, and death, or does death arise from sin? The idea that God requires sacrifice to assuage, appease, or propitiate His wrath is pagan and Isaiah prophesied we



would misunderstand what Christ did just that way:

“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, **yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.**” Isa 53:4

What happens in the heart of beings if they believe God is the source of inflicted death?

We misunderstand because we have accepted a lie about God’s law, that God runs His universe like sinful human beings run earth. How many want to live in a universe run like we run our planet?

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.”

God’s ways are NOT our ways – yet we doggedly persist in misrepresenting God’s kingdom as being like fallen human governments.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “In the last chapter...” thoughts?

Do you think the last chapter is referring to earthly Jerusalem in a literal sense, or is it a symbolic sense?

When Paul refers to those who are God’s children being part of heavenly Jerusalem, could Zechariah apply to those?

Will the wicked of the world, one day, attack the righteous? And does Scripture refer to the righteous as the bride of Christ? And what else is the bride of Christ described as in Scripture?

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband... One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. Rev 12:2,9,10

Could Zechariah be referring to the time when the world turns against God’s people on earth and attempts to kill them?

Read third paragraph, “The closing section...” thoughts?

Why will the entire city be filled with the holiness of the temple?

What is the temple constructed from?



What is the New Jerusalem?

What is the shape of the MH place?

What is the shape of the NJ?

Read last paragraph, “When these glorious...”

FRIDAY

Read question 1 – thoughts? Is there a difference in being gracious, kind, loving, seeking to relieve suffering, helping those down trodden, and seeking to gain control of government and fix the problems of sin through governmental policy and legislation?

Where do we draw the line between living Christian lives, representing Christ, ministering to others, and being diverted into false politics and using the church’s energy and resources on trying to reform government instead of people?

Read question 2 – thoughts?

Why is it that without Christ’s first coming there would be not second, other than the obvious mathematical fact that two always follows one? What is the functional reason that the first coming, in which Christ suffered and died, had to precede the coming in which sin is eliminated?

Read question 3 – thoughts?

What do you understand the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to be? What is its purpose? Is there any reason it hasn’t occurred?

ⁱ Duffield, G. P., & Van Cleave, N. M. (1983), *Foundations of Pentecostal theology* (188), Los Angeles, Calif.: L.I.F.E. Bible College.

ⁱⁱ Knight, George, *The Cross of Christ*, p. 74.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Seventh-day Adventist Believe* 27, p. 111.

^{iv} *ibid.*, p. 111.

^v Whidden, W., *Ministry Magazine*, February 2007.

<http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2007/February/sinners-in-the-hands-of-god.html>.

^{vi} Rodriguez, A., *Adventist World Review*, December 2007; p. 40.



Major Lessons from Minor Prophets Lesson 13 2Q 2013

Lest We Forget (Malachai)

SABBATH

11 My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations,” says the Lord Almighty. Mal. 1:11.

Why did [does] God want “His name” great among the nations? According to the Greeks, their “gods” actually needed the prayers and admiration of mortal humans to derive their immortality. Does God need our praises? Is He so insecure that He needs His name “great among the nations” to feed His ego? Who does this actually sound like? [see Isa. 14: 13].

“The central message of Malachi is that while God revealed His love for His people throughout their history, that love also made His people accountable to Him. The Lord expected the chosen nation and its leaders to obey His commands.” WHY did God expect the “chosen nation & its leaders” to obey His commands?? Which Law lens are we looking through?

SUNDAY – Great is the Lord

Did God really hate Esau?? or was it the other way around? Why was God turning the Edomites territory in to a wasteland? Was it out of perverse pleasure? Was He trying to teach Israel something? Was He trying to reach a wayward child [Edom] with the only means left that might wake them up??

Why were “blemished sacrifices” such a problem? God tells Israel that He would prefer them to shut the temple doors instead of bringing diseased animals for sacrifice [v.10]. What does it mean when God says “**Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king,” says the Lord Almighty**” in verse 14? Did God act to curse these men/women or did something occur naturally? Which Law lens are we looking through??

The lesson states, “The animals were to be without blemish because Jesus had to be without blemish in order to be our perfect sacrifice.” Any thoughts??



MONDAY – Loving & Respecting Others

7 “For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth. 8 But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,” says the Lord Almighty. 9 “So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law.” Mal. 2: 7-9.

Which law is God speaking of here? Shouldn't our “imposed” laws here on Earth be reflections of God's “natural” Law? If so, why should decisions be impartial?? What would showing partiality to the wealthy, the Jews, our friends/families say about God and His Law??

In the 2nd paragraph of Monday's lesson we read:

“God had intended that marriage should be a commitment for life. In Malachi's time, however, many men were breaking the vows that they had made early in life with, as the prophet said, the “wife of your youth.” Seeing their wives grow older, the husbands would divorce them and marry younger and more attractive women. For this reason, God says, He hates divorce (Mal. 2:16). This strong statement reveals how serious God is about marriage commitments, which so often people take very lightly. The strict rules in the Bible about divorce show just how sacred marriage is.”

Is the reason “God hates divorce”, men leaving their wives for younger women? Really?? Perhaps “God hates divorce” because it hurts/damages his loved children. Perhaps He hates divorce because it misrepresents His relationship with his loved children. Perhaps it goes much deeper, even. Any thoughts??

15 Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth. Mal. 2:15.

Might “Godly offspring” be more likely to be produced from a divorce, as opposed to being raised under the umbrella of a poisonous marriage??

TUESDAY – Tithe in the Storehouse.

3 “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, 4 and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years. Mal 3: 1-4.



We have been over this passage many times in our class. For me, it never gets old. The Lord's messenger will purify His Church [The Levites, A Priesthood of Believers, etc] with fire [see Mal 4: 2 & Thursday's lesson]. Note that the purification [healing/transformation] occurs BEFORE the acceptable offerings are given. Character transformation changes behaviors.

8 "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe," says the Lord Almighty. 12 "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty. Mal. 3: 8-12.

Without going in to details, I can speak from personal experience that this passage is trustworthy. Scripture, Science, & Experience in harmony with one another.

Have you ever asked why God wants us to give back 10%?? Does this have relationship to 2 Peter 1: 4? Partaking of the "divine nature"? What is God's nature? Is it not Love, Forgiveness, giving of one's self for the uplifting of others??

WEDNESDAY – A Scroll of Remembrance.

14 "You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty? 15 But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.'" Mal. 3: 14-15.

Apparently, the Jews had similar concepts of imposed law that we struggle with. Do "evildoers" really ever "get away with it"? We have learned that sin, not God, damages the sinner. There is **NEVER** a "getting away with it."

17 "On the day when I act," says the Lord Almighty, "they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. 18 And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not. Mal 3: 17-18.

Why will God "spare" a certain group, and not others? What will be the distinction between "the righteous, and the wicked?"

Imposed Law = Decision [possibly arbitrary] based on accepting a blood payment stamped next to our names in a book in heaven, and a punishment according to the measure of wrath stored up against us.



Natural Law = An accurate diagnosis of our condition, correctly documented in the medical records, and a loving giving over to our choices.

THURSDAY – The Sun of Righteousness.

The 1st paragraph of Thursday's lesson is a very uplifting passage. OK, maybe not. Which Law lens is being used here?? The lesson references John 3: 16 as a support text.

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God. John 3: 16-21.

I think the verses 17-21 provide a better support. v. 20: "everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for FEAR that their deeds will be exposed." Take this in context with "the Sun of Righteousness is rising with healing in His wings [rays]." If we come in to the light [of healing], while under the umbrella of God's limitless grace, we will be healed. If we persist in evil, our characters will become so warped that we will run and hide from the light [beg for rocks and trees to bury us].

Tim uses the comparison of coming out of a cave at 2 AM vs 2 PM. Which is more tolerable? Gradual sunrise or abrupt?

The lesson suggests this healing is some time in the future. I respectfully disagree. I think it has been happening since mankind fell. God, through Christ, has been trying to heal mankind since the beginning, and it's only under the protection of His grace that the healing can take place. Once the "Sun" has fully risen, time is up.

The lesson also mentions the "Elijah message" to be delivered before Christ's 2nd advent. Which message is this, and how can we play a role in delivering it?



Revival and Reformation Lesson 1 3Q 2013

Revival: Our Great Need

What is Revival?

Dictionary:

- 1:** an act or instance of reviving; the state of being revived: as
a : renewed attention to or interest in something
b : a new presentation or publication of something old
c (1) : a period of renewed religious interest (2) : an often highly emotional evangelistic meeting or series of meetings
- 2:** restoration of force, validity, or effect (as to a contract)

Do you like these definitions?

In FRIDAY's lesson there is a quotation from a periodical published in 1902 which states:

A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. **Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from the spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices.** Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.-- Review and Herald, Feb. 25, 1902.

What do you here revival to mean in this article?

Which definition, that in the dictionary, or that from the article, do you identify with? Which definition is the one you believe the church actually needs?

Do you agree that revival and reformation must blend together?

What do you believe is necessary for revival and reformation, obviously the presence of the Holy Spirit, anything else?

Is there anything we can do to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to experience, promote, generate, stimulate, ignite revival and reformation?

I read the following in a book called Conflict and Courage:



Samuel visited the cities and villages throughout the land, seeking to turn the hearts of the people to the God of their fathers; and his efforts were not without good results. After suffering the oppression of their enemies for twenty years, the Israelites "mourned after the Lord." Samuel counseled them, "If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only." Here we see that practical piety, heart religion, was taught in the days of Samuel as taught by Christ when He was upon the earth. **Without the grace of Christ the outward forms of religion were valueless to ancient Israel. They are the same to modern Israel.** {CC 145.2}

There is need today of such a revival of true heart religion as was experienced by ancient Israel. Repentance is the first step that must be taken by all who would return to God. No one can do this work for another. We must individually humble our souls before God and put away our idols. When we have done all that we can do, the Lord will manifest to us His salvation. . . . {CC 145.3}

Thoughts?

What is repentance? Do we have a desire in our heart to truly be transformed, or is it an understanding in our heads, while our hearts desire the things of the world?

Did you notice the author said, "When we have done all we can do, the Lord will manifest to us His salvation..." What is "all we can do?" choose to open the hear to Christ, choose to reach out to Him, choose to apply to our lives what He reveals, choose to surrender ourselves to Him, choose to repent.

And what is another word for salvation? Healing – if we choose Christ, and choose do trust Him, then we experience actual transformation of character, healing of mind, renewal of heart, this is salvation, culminating in complete recreation at the second coming.

What prevents us from experience revival?

In a chapter entitled A Need for Revival, in a book called, *Counsels for the Church*, written more than 100 years ago, I read this:

I am instructed to say to our people: Let us follow Christ. Do not forget that He is to be our pattern in all things. **We may safely discard those ideas that are not found in His teaching.** I appeal to our ministers to be sure that their feet are placed on the platform of eternal truth. **[not some human theory that popped up in the last 500-1000 years]** **Beware how you follow impulse, calling it the Holy Spirit.** Some are in danger in this respect... {Counsels for the Church 326.1}

The enemy is seeking to divert the minds of our brethren and sisters from the work of preparing a people to stand in these last days. **His sophistries are designed to lead minds away from the perils and duties of the hour...** {CCh 326.2}

What obstructs true revival?



- Holding to beliefs that are not found in Jesus' teachings
- Claiming theories and ideas based on human constructs of government, justice, law rather than eternal truth
- Substituting impulse/emotions for the working of the Holy Spirit
- Allowing our minds to be diverted by sophistries away from duty to the Lord

Any examples of each of these?

- Holding to beliefs that are not found in Jesus' teachings
 - Penal/legal theologies is the most obvious
 - Rule keeping more important than people, so chastise the woman who divorces her physically abusive husband because he didn't commit physical adultery
- Not holding to eternal truth
 - Replacing God's law of love with imposed law
 - Making God out to be the source of inflicted death rather than the source of life
- Substituting impulse/emotions for the working of the Holy Spirit
 - Moses striking the stone
- Allowing our minds to be diverted by sophistries away from duty to the Lord
 - Pursing political solutions to achieve God's kingdom, get the right judge, senators, congressman, president elected to get the laws passed we believe are necessary to advance our religious agenda, rather than seeking to lead people to a knowledge of God and His kingdom of love

What are keys to revival?

- Humble heart
- Repentance
- Giving up known activities that incite fear and selfishness
- Studying God, His methods, design for life, which are found in His Word, nature and our experiences.
- Using Christ as a lens, a touchstone to test our theories and rejecting false ideas about God that incite fear
- Understanding God's law as the law of love, the design protocol of life
- Choosing to apply God's principles to our lives
- Trusting God with outcomes
- Growing in the truth – be open for our ideas to change with more evidence
- Giving of ourselves to help others

What suggestions do you have that we as a Ministry can do to contribute to revival and reformation?

Here is what we are doing:



- Praying daily for God's presence, Spirit, wisdom, agencies to empower and enable us to present the truth in love and to open doors of opportunity and bring willing people to join in sharing this message
- Studying God's Word searching for ever increasing insight into His design, plan and methods
- Giving of our time and resources to share these life changing truths with others
- Writing, speaking, designing materials to share
- Producing materials to share
 - DVD sets
 - Books
 - Bible Study Guides
 - Webcasts
 - Blogs
 - Video blogs
 - Fundamental Focus Pamphlets
- Support Heartwise Ministries and Heart of Health Live TV program
- Support the building of a bakery in Uruguay to help young people afford a Christian education
- Reaching out to connect with others to share this message about God
 - Jfest
 - Riverbend Faith and Family Night
 - AACC World Convention
- Seminars
 - I just got back from an all day seminar at Rolling Hills church just outside Los Angeles California. What a wonderful church and group of people, who heard about our ministry and this message about a year ago. A few people began listening online and then a few more and soon many members of the church were finding revival and reformation in this healing message about God. As an expression of their appreciation for our ministry and to help promote what we are doing they gave a donation of \$1000 to Come and Reason Ministries at the end of the Seminar last week.
 - I will be going to Germany in July and speaking in Aachen and Berlin, in August I will be speaking in Singapore and then in Australia at Perth, Avondale College, and Brisbane.
 - We are planning another seminar here in Chattanooga for the fall and will give more details as they unfold.
- By the end of this year our ministry will have produced and distributed, not just to random people, but only to people who have chosen to receive the materials:
 - Over 17,000 DVD sets
 - 20,000 Bible Study Guides
 - Over 11,000 Could It Be This Simple?
 - Over 10,000 Fundamental Focus
 - Plus all the free downloads
- We currently have people who follow us and are part of our online family from:
 - Australia



- South Africa
 - Germany
 - Sweden
 - Iceland
 - Japan
 - Philippines
 - Zimbabwe
 - Singapore
 - Saudi Arabia
 - United Kingdom
 - Canada
 - Most of the states in the US
 - Other countries I don't know about
- And this message is reaching beyond denominational boundaries. Our materials are being used by people of many Christian traditions:
 - SDA
 - Baptist
 - Methodist
 - Roman Catholic
 - Presbyterian
 - Non-denominational community churches

This has all been possible because this message frees people, their hearts burn within, and without solicitation people have sent donations to support in producing these materials to share with others.

When people see God as a being of love, and understand the law of love as the design protocol for life does it bring revival? Here are some emails we have received:

Thank you for coming to SLC. I've been watching your [class] and have listened to your seminars online which are incredibly helpful in understanding more and more about God's love and His amazing handiwork. Your presentation here was so full of practical information. I am blessed and sincerely grateful for your time, effort and your compassion toward others for understanding truth about God and His design for man... Like many others, I have struggled so long with some of the issues you discuss and by His grace, He has shown me that I, (we ALL), are fearfully and wonderfully made. With the knowledge you've shared, I'm better equipped to continue growing forever in Christ.

Kindly note that your approach to the gospel has revolutionized my relationship with God...I have experienced tremendous spiritual growth as I begin to relate with this awesome loving God whose character over the centuries has been deliberately distorted by the father of lies so as to cut us away from experiencing the love of God.



I would love for you to send me Dr. Jennings' **Healing the Mind** DVDs. I have given out about a hundred disks with his mp3's and so many have been so blessed by them.... including me. It took me years to get over mental and physical abuse from my childhood and that only happened because I have always loved to read almost everything and found help from everywhere... but if I had had the information in Dr. Jennings presentations.... oh... it would have been so much quicker and easier.

There was one lady that started attending our church some time ago; when she talked to anyone she mostly looked at her feet and spoke so shyly, hesitant, insecure, stuttering. One day she opened up to me about her childhood. She was... [severely abused as a child]. Immediately I told her she needed to listen to the Healing the Mind seminar. The very next [weekend] she came up to me at church, actually looking at me, and thanked me profusely over and over, and every time I saw her for weeks. I kept telling her to thank God and finally had to ask her not to thank me again. What an amazing change! She was a couple inches taller because the slump in her shoulders was gone, her marriage improved immensely, she would deal with the difficulties of it, she went back to work, etc., etc.

My husband and I have been listening to your [Bible Study] lessons this quarter from our home in Indiana. What you have been presenting about the imposed law construct and the natural law construct (and thus God's true character) has been revolutionary to our faith! We are still trying to work out all of our questions so that the natural law construct makes perfect sense in accordance with scripture...

And this was posted on an individual's facebook page:

Over the last few months, I've had a lot of time to sit and contemplate. Why am I here, slowly wasting away with ALS alone? (Without my wife) What did I do wrong? Was I a bad person? Was I too selfish? I felt there were probably a thousand reasons why, but what were they? She had said more than once that there were many roads taken and reasons for why we were where we were... I wanted to self reflect and really think and get down to the very depths of my soul and figure out what went wrong, what could I have done different.

Somewhere during my soul searching my sister, who was also going through a divorce, was watching a DVD of a presentation by a psychiatrist so I sat down to learn what I could and apply it to my situation. The psychiatrist's name was Dr. Tim Jennings and as I listened to him I was drawn in by his plain and to the point approach. He presented in a very articulate manner and was easy to understand. I listened to his words intently but it was soon over as I had come in on the tail end of it. I asked my sister about more information on him and she informed me



that he was coming to the Cleburne SDA church for a weekend seminar in February and he had a book called “Could it be this Simple.” Well, I attended the seminar, every minute of it. Then I listened to the audio version of “Could it be this Simple” three times, and then I bought a Kindle and read it. As soon as the Kindle version of his newest book “The God Shaped Brain” became available, I read that. Altogether, I gathered the information I needed to find the answers I was looking for deep in my soul. What I found is this, that by having a misguided view of God and not aligning myself with His universal laws of love and liberty, I have made many errors in my selfish nature throughout my life doing things, and saying things that seemed right to me, but weren’t. I take full responsibility for that... Two things are for sure, I am eternally grateful to have a creator that has no limits on what he will forgive in me, and I’m grateful to have such a great family especially my sister and my daughters that continuously support me. And let’s not leave out all the great friends I have.

But, I learned so much more, that my view on the character of God is skewed, and that my view about God’s law is just wrong. As new light was sinking into me my heart was uplifted. I encourage everyone to read these books. They have cleared so many issues up for me. No longer will I argue on this side or that side about God’s law. No longer will I look at another who has a different sin as mine with a critical eye. All of Jesus’ teachings make sense to me now as does the Old Testament. I wish I was good enough with words to explain everything but the books do it so much better than I could. It is worth the time invested to see the light that I now see. It has changed my life and my soul is rejoicing.

That is what the truth about God does. It restores trust and results in actual transformation here and now.

I share this message about God because it has brought me into a relationship with my Creator that makes me a better person. I have less fear and the immature elements of my character are slowly replaced with maturity. I could never go back to the old fear inducing religion that promised legal pardon but had no power to change the heart.

Does anyone want to share how changing their view of God has impacted them?

SABBATH

Read memory text: “ ‘ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.” (Rev 3:20 NKJV)

Thoughts?

What is the door to which Christ is knocking? What are the implication that He knocks? What does it mean He comes in and dines with us?



SUNDAY

The lesson talks about the church of Laodicea.

Let's read Rev 3:14-22:

“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. ¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

¹⁷ You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

¹⁹ Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. ²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

²¹ To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Thoughts? What does this passage mean to you?

Do you hear threat? Do you hear love? Do you find it hopeful or discouraging?

From my paraphrase:

Rev 3:14 “To the messenger for my children – the church at Laodicea write:

This message is from Jesus, the Consistent, the Reliable, Faithful and True witness, who is the origin of God's creation. ¹⁵ I know your choices. I know that you are neither on fire with love nor do you appear cold with selfishness. I wish you were either on fire for my kingdom, or clearly opposed to it! ¹⁶ But, because you are a lukewarm mix of cold hearts practicing selfish methods while appearing to be on fire for my kingdom, you misrepresent me and make me sick to my stomach. I am about to vomit you out. ¹⁷ You claim to be spiritually rich, full of heavenly treasure, thinking you have the truth and are in need of nothing. But you are so self-deceived you don't realize you are devoid of my character of love, decrepit, pathetic, bereft of true godliness, with minds so closed you can't even comprehend truth. You stand naked and exposed. ¹⁸ My prescription for you is to exchange your corrupt motives for the gold of godly love purified through fiery trials, so you can be rich in what heaven values. Exchange your filthy selfish characters for the perfect character of Christ, pure and white, so you can cover the shame of your imperfection. And apply the salve of the Holy Spirit to your minds so you can see and understand the reality of your condition and God's kingdom of love.



Rev 3:19 It is those I love that I diagnose and provide these therapeutic interventions. So take ownership of yourselves, turn away from destruction and apply the Remedy. 20 I am here now! I am standing at the door to your hearts, knocking with truth and love. If anyone hears my voice and opens their heart, I will come in and commune with them and they with me.

Rev 3:21 Everyone who prevails by completing the treatment and lives in harmony with my methods of love until the end, will sit enthroned with me just as I overcame and sit enthroned with my Father. 22 Those whose minds are open to truth will understand what the Spirit reveals to the churches.

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Commenting on Revelation...” thoughts?

The lesson rightly points out that “An insipid religious experience is one that is lifeless.”

What might be the reason for this?

- “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.” Ps 19:7
- “He who pursues **righteousness and love finds life**, prosperity and honor.” Pr 21:21

Can anyone make a connection between these two texts and how an insipid religion is lifeless and what brings life to our religious experience?

- What is the basis of life?
- What law is life built upon?
- What if one substitutes a different law construct?

Do you see the connection between the truth about God’s character of love, His design protocol of love, giving, beneficence, and life? Do you see how if one removes God’s character and design of love and substitutes an imposed law construct one ends up with a lifeless religion?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “There is a gap...” thoughts?

How would you describe that gap? How have you seen the disparity present itself?

- Christian homes have the same rate of domestic violence as non-Christian homes
- History of Catholic and Protestant violence (northern Ireland most recently)
- Chastising, censuring, criticizing people who are going through marital difficulties and divorce



- Spreading rumors about others
- Other examples?

What contributes to the gap between what Laodicea does and says?

- Could it be holding to a misdiagnosis?
 - If one believes they have a certain condition, and they take the remedy for the condition which they believe they have – will they experience a certain confidence?
- But what is the diagnosis is wrong?
- Consider a child, whose parent tells them not to eat the berries on the bushes outside the house. The child is told if they do eat the berries they will be spanked. The child disobeys and eats the berries. Sometime later father sees the child with berry juice on their clothes and face and asks the child if they ate the berries.
 - What will the child think is the problem?
 - What will the child desire from the parent?
 - But what if the berries were poison? What is the real problem?
 - Is the father going to kill the child for their disobedience?
 - What is the father's attitude toward the child?
 - Might the father be upset, even angry? Why?
 - Does the distress of the father ever lead the father to want to kill the child?
 - What does the child need? A remedy!
 - If the father has the ability to remedy the child, will he?
 - Does any of this apply to our situation?
 - Does any of this explain the gap between what Laodicea claims and what it does?

This is the problem with Christianity today – it has accepted a false diagnosis that God is angry, mad, and we are in legal trouble with God and thus it teaches a false remedy, one of legal payment to appease an angry God, when what we need is actual remedy, transformation, healing of heart and mind.

Why don't those who are in this state realize it?

Read second paragraph, "One of Satan's..." thoughts?

And what did these Sabbath keepers do to God in human flesh?

Are we any better as a group than they were? But why aren't we? Don't we have advantages they didn't have?

Read bottom green section, "What ways..." thoughts?



WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “There is hope...” thoughts?

What would you say the divine remedy is?

Truth about God dispels the lies and wins us to trust – restored trust we open the heart and the Holy Spirit comes in. The Holy Spirit reproduces in us the perfect character of Christ, thus it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me. He writes the law of love on the heart again and we live acts of love and righteousness.

But it all starts with the truth about God!

Read second paragraph, “Jesus is going from door to door...” thoughts?

What does it mean to “buy” from Jesus gold tried in the fire?

With what do we “buy”? I thought it was a free gift to all who accept it? Why are we told here to buy?

- We buy by means of “barter” we exchange
 - our unrighteousness for His righteousness
 - our filthiness for His purity
 - our selfishness for His love
 - our terminal condition for His eternal life

The bottom green section talks about how Jesus knocks on the door to the heart and asks, “How resistant am I to opening the door to Him? If you are resistant, ask yourself, ‘Why?’ What is holding you back? What sin, what indulgence, don’t you want to let go of, or what is it that you find hard to let go of?”

Thoughts?

It certainly could be “sin” addiction, power, fear of the consequences of being honest about oneself that prevents the opening of the heart, but could it be something else?

Could it be lies about God that cause us to not trust Him? Could it be the idea that God must punish sin wherever it is found? Could it be distorted God concepts that incite fear keep the door if the heart closed to Him? Could there be people who, as we read in yesterday’s lesson, are behaviorally very religious and keep the rules, yet whose hearts are closed to God? Is it some sin that is holding them back? Fear, pride, and perhaps misunderstanding of God?



THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “The book of Revelation mentions...” thoughts?

What is the significance of the throne of God being mentioned? What does a throne represent? When you think of God’s throne what comes to mind?

In Ezekiel chapter 10, what did Ezekiel see the throne sitting upon? A rotating wheel within a rotating wheel. What does this symbolize?

Does this have anything to do with the Lamb that was slain?

Do you see the connection between God’s character of love, and the law of love, the principle upon which life is built to operate? In other words, God’s government, God’s throne, is built upon the law of love!

Read last paragraph, “Christ uses His greatest...” thoughts?

How do we make these truths real, rather than just wishful thinking?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, “The counsel of...” thoughts?

Do you notice the white clothing is worked into the character, doesn’t cover over evil character? And it results in purity of heart and motive.

What does it mean to wash in the blood of Jesus?

What is the blood of Jesus representative of?

Read and discuss questions 1-4



Revival and Reformation Lesson 2 3Q 2013

Prayer: The Heartbeat of Revival

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: “ ‘If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will you Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!’” (Matthew 7:11 NKJV)

Thoughts? What is the description of God in this text? God is good. Do we ever have other thoughts about God? When it comes to prayer, to going to God, do we go with a certainty that God longs to give us good things?

Does God do good for us only when asked or does God use His resources to give us good things even if not asked? Was Christ given to the human race? Was this a good gift? Did we ask?

What is the purpose of asking?

- It is an acknowledgment on our part of our need, our inability to provide it for ourselves, our understanding that God can provide our need
- It keeps us humble, by waiting to give certain gifts until asked God helps us remember our true situation and condition, mitigate against arrogance, pride, complacency
- Reminds us that the gifts are gifts, which hopefully instills understanding for their use
- Our asking gives God our permission to work in our lives. Why is this necessary? Because He respects us, our individuality, our freedom and won't use force or coercion. He waits to be invited into your life, heart, mind.

Read first paragraph, “God moves powerfully as...” thoughts?

If people don't pray does God move less powerfully?

Does God need people's prayers in order to move powerfully?

- Not in the grander scheme of things, toward bringing an end to the conflict
- But, if we don't pray we limit what God can do for us, in us and through us and thereby we limit our usefulness in His cause

What is prayer?

I read the following from a book, *The Faith I Live By* written more than 100 years ago:

If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. **Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to**



us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet, joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. . . .
Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan. {FLB 225.7}

Thoughts?

Yesterday, a friend gave me a gift a devotional book by Sarah Young entitled *Jesus Calling* – has anyone heard of it? In the preface she describes how she came to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Then she tells how her prayer life grew, until she began to not just talk to God, but to sit quietly and listen for Him to speak back to her and would write down what He spoke to her. This daily devotional book are the communications she wrote down from Jesus during her private devotional time, written in the first person where “I” is Jesus speaking. Here is June 29’s devotion:

As You get out of bed in the morning, be aware of My Presence with you. You many not be thinking clearly yet, but I am. You rearly morning thoughts tend to be anxious ones until you get connected with Me. Invite Me into your thoughts by whispering My Name. Suddenly your day brightens and feels more user-friendly. You cannot dread a day that is vibrant with My Presence.

You gain confidence through knowing that I am with you—that you face nothing alone. Anxiety stems from asking the wrong question: “If such and such happens, can I handle it?” The true question is not whether you can cope with whatever happens, but whether you and I together can handle anything that occurs. It is this you-and-I-together factor that gives you confidence to face the day cheerfully. Psalms 5:3; Psalms 63:1; Philippians 4:13

Thoughts?

Do you like the idea of prayer taking the form of conversation with a friend? Do you like the idea of Jesus speaking His mysteries to us personally?

Well I was familiar with this idea and quotation, so when I read the title of an article “Praying to God is like talking to a friend” it caught my attention.

In the article, it cited recent brain research by Uffe Schjodt, who examined with MRI scans the brains of 20 Christians while they prayed. The researcher said, “It’s like talking to another human. We found no evidence of anything mystical.”

Interestingly though, the areas that lit up that are similar to talking with a friend only happened with improvised prayer. When people recited the Lord’s Prayer the same areas lit up as when reciting a nursery rhyme, which are areas associated with rehearsal, repetition and recall. In other words reciting memorized prayers are not the same as talking with a friend. Memorized prayer is done from rote and the heart is not in it. And such prayer won’t bring about the transformational experience, its basically fake and brain scans can see the difference.

But when individuals prayed spontaneously, they activated the same brain regions which activate when we are aware of another intelligent person



activating circuitry that is linked with the theory of mind - an awareness that other individuals have their own independent motivations and intentions (*Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, [DOI: 10.1093/scan/nsn050](https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsn050)).

These areas process desire and contemplate how the other might react to the expressed desire, as well as the prefrontal cortex which anticipates what the other person might do, and memories areas associated with previous encounters filling in context for this encounter. In other words it is relational interaction.

As a comparator, they also had the people make a wish list for Santa Claus, but in this task the prefrontal cortex didn't activate, so the region of the brain that interacts with another was not involved. Thus the individuals viewed Santa as fictional but God as a real individual and brain scans could see the difference.

Further, the prefrontal cortex doesn't activate when people interact with inanimate objects such as a computer, because the brain doesn't expect reciprocity or have the need to think about what the computer wants or intends.

Thoughts? Back to the quote I just read:

If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. **Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally.** Often there will come to us a sweet, joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. . . . Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan. {FLB 225.7}

Notice, if we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and prayer, **then** our prayers will take the form of conversation with God as with a friend. She had this exactly right. We must come to experience God as a real individual being, before our prayers become transformational. If we pray from rote, when we merely do ritualized religious activities our prayers will not be the prayers as with a friend. Our brains will not experience the positive brain changes and we won't be transformed to be ever more like Christ if we merely do proforma prayer.

In other words, bowing five times per day and going through a regimented prayer ritual to tick off one's religious duty fulfilled, will not result in a relationship with God.

Studies show that religiosity is a predictor of abuse against one's family, spouse and child abuse. Why? Because ritualized religious activity does not engage the prefrontal cortex, does not draw out the mind and heart into intimacy with God for actual transformation.

And does prayer make a difference in our lives?

In the aftermath of 9/11/2001 terrorist attack, University of Michigan scientists evaluated the impact of prayer in coping with trauma and discovered that students who prayed in the aftermath of the trauma had better psychological adjustment 1 year later than those who did not pray.



But they also evaluated Muslim refugees of Kosovo and Bosnia and found that many of them also prayed to cope with the stress, 60% of whom had PTSD. Interestingly, they found that 77% of them had “negative” forms of prayer, such as praying their enemies “would pay for what they have done.” In other words, prayers of vengeance.

They found that positive prayers and practices were related to high levels of optimism, hope and healthy adjustment, but justice-seeking and anger-related religious practices that sought vengeance were related to reduced levels of optimism, hope and healthy adjustment. (*Journal of Personality* Volume 73, Issue 3, p 763-792, June 2005)

Thoughts?

What does prayer do for/to those who pray? It changes them – but the kind of prayer and to whom they pray makes the difference.

What does prayer do for/to God?

Examples of prayer?

- Abraham regarding Sodom – what do we learn from this?
 - Did God have to tell Abraham what He was going to do?
 - Why did God tell Abraham?
 - Did God know Abraham’s heart and how Abraham would respond?
 - Why tell Abraham?
 - Could it be that this entire encounter with God was recorded in Scripture for the purpose of disclosing God’s desire not to destroy the cities, but that, like a cancer that needed to be excised, these cities needed to be eliminated, not to punish the people, but to protect the innocent and keep open the channel for the Messiah?
 - So what did Abraham’s prayer accomplish in this case? Communication from God, which informed Abraham of God’s attitude, willingness to be patient, and also that the condition of the people were beyond healing, and there was nothing God could do for them, but God could intervene to protect the rest of humanity.
- Paul and the thorn in the flesh
 - “To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2Cor 12:7-10
 - What do we learn from this prayer?
 - That God hears but doesn’t always give us what we ask for
 - Why? Because God is interested in our ultimate good, and is also working out a larger plan. Thus, when we trust Him we are willing to have events go as He would direct



them – Joseph would not at age 17 chosen to be sold into slavery, but at age 30, understood and was at peace with how God permitted events to unfold for a larger good.

- Jesus and prayer to His Father throughout His life
 - What do we learn from Jesus' many prayers?
 - We need daily communication with God
 - Prayer is more than just a needs list, it is relationship
 - Prayer keeps the mind clear on the true nature of reality as we keep in tune with God

SUNDAY

The first paragraph reviews the rapid spread of the gospel in the first century after Christ and asks the question, “What was their secret?”

Thoughts?

What message did they take to the world? Could their secret have been that they had seen past the distortion of Satan and seen God's true character, His true kingdom, methods, motives, law of love?

Was the secret that they knew God, as a being of love, had a personal friendship with God and loved Him and His way of doing things?

Did you notice in the New Testament they didn't require people to go through months of indoctrination, give up habits, change jobs, and attest to believe certain historic figures before they could be baptized?

Could their method of preaching God's love and salvation through the remedy achieved by Jesus with immediate baptism for those who were so convicted have made it easier to come back into a relationship with God?

Could our modern method of saying the sinner's prayer, followed by months of indoctrination, required lifestyle transformation and oaths of loyalty to institutions be obstacles to spreading the gospel?

Read last paragraph, “Pastor R. A. Torrey...” thoughts?

In the bottom green section the lesson points out one obstacle to prayer is that we can get too busy to pray. What other obstacles are there to prayer in addition to being too busy?

- Lack of desire
- Lack of belief that God exists
- Lack of trust in God
- Believing one is too sinful for God to love
- Believing one can handle things on their own



- Believe the issue is too insignificant to trouble God with
- Not realizing one's need of prayer
- Not knowing how to pray
- Other obstacles?

If someone told you they don't know how to pray what would you tell them?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Christ was continually..." thoughts?

What process is being described in this paragraph? Do you see God's law of love in action? Do we learn something about the Father from this? What?

Read bottom green section, "Spend a few moments..." thoughts?

When I was in undergraduate school, pre-med, I was taking full load of classes 15-18 hours a semester, working full time as an ICU nurse, giving Bible studies to a student at the University, was a big brother to a young man, and without intent found that my study time had slipped by and a major physics exam had snuck up on me. It was scheduled for first period the next day and I had to work 3-11 p.m. in the ICU that evening. I prayed that God would allow it to be a quiet evening in the ICU so in between my responsibilities I could find some moments to review the material for my exam. I went to work and discovered there was only 1 patient in the ICU, a man who had chest pain and was on observation status. He was simply to be monitored on the heart monitor through the night. When I did my assessment I told him what I was doing and low and behold, he was a physicist that worked in nuclear power. He told me to bring my book over and gave me a tutorial – and I got an A on my exam the next day.

Christie and I have prayed that God would open avenues to allow us to share this healing message about Him with others, and He has blessed by opening the way for two books to be published. This is a real answer to prayer. When we moved to this area we searched the local churches for some pastor or class that shared this perspective, but found none, so we prayed. He has answered our prayers with this class and this Ministry and all of you who love this message and work with us to share it with others. And our friends around the world who have joined us in sharing this message in their community. And it continues to grow!

Would any of you like to take a moment and share an experience when God answered your prayers?

TUESDAY

Read Matthew 18:19,20:



“And I tell you more: whenever two of you on earth agree about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them.”

Then read second paragraph, “The promise...” thoughts?

What does it mean proportionate to the unity of the members? Unity in what way? We are unified in our human condition – we all suffer in sin, we all age, we all die the first death, so what is this unity that empowers our corporate prayers?

Would it mean we have unity of heart, share the same appreciation and love for God, His methods, His kingdom of love, love fore each other and have a unified purpose to share this truth with others? Something else?

What would you like for us to pray for as a united group?

The lesson gives the example of the church 2000 years ago praying for the deliverance of Peter and he was miraculously delivered.

What would you like us to pray for? Let’s do that now.

WEDNESDAY

Read first three paragraphs, “Have you ever...” thoughts?

In prayer we can absolutely do what the lesson describes, freely acknowledge our dependency upon God, but can people pray without acknowledging our dependence upon God? In other words, just because people pray does it mean they have surrendered their lives to God?

I remember a presidential primary in which one of the candidates, whose wife was suffering with cancer, was asked during a debate if he believed in the power of prayer. He said, “No, but I pray for my wife every day.”

I don’t know whether he prayed or not, or simply said this is a political answer, but what is God to do for those who pray out of obligation, out of duty, out of habit, out of form, using prayer wheels, using prayer beads, using computer generated prayers, using memorized prayers, praying without actually believing in God?

Don’t such activities become superstitious? Don’t such activities work to darken the mind? Don’t such prayers actually close the heart to God?

What kind of prayer does God want? Why does God want us to pray?

The lesson asks us to read 2Cor 10:3-5:



For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Thoughts?

What are the weapons we use?

- Truth
- Love
- Freedom
- Prayer
- Praise
- Song
- Meditation
- Study
- Work/discipline
- Service
- Evidence
- Reason
- Experience
- Scripture

What weapons to we not use?

- Lies
- Emotions as a determiner of truth or choice
- “God said it, I believe it, that settles it.”
- Threat, coercion, force
- State authority

In a devotional book, *This Day with God*, after reading Cor 10:3-5, this is the devotion for the day:

In dealing with unreasonable and wicked men, those who believe the truth are to be careful not to bring themselves down to the same level, where they will use the same **Satanic weapons that their enemies use, by giving loose rein to strong personal feelings**, and arousing against themselves and against the work the Lord has given them to do, passion and bitter enmity. Keep Jesus uplifted. We are laborers together with God. We are provided with **spiritual weapons**, mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of the enemy. We must in no case misrepresent our faith by weaving unChristlike attributes into the work. We must exalt the law of God, as binding us up with Jesus Christ and all who love Him and keep His commandments. We are also to **reveal a love** for the souls for whom Christ has died. Our **faith is to be demonstrated as a power of which Christ is the Author**. And the Bible, His word, is to make us wise unto salvation. {TDG 99.2}



Let the righteousness of Christ, with its life-giving influence, into the soul, and then you can sing, He forgiveth all our iniquities. You say, I am full of spiritual disease. The great Physician is calling you to come to Him, that He may heal you. He healeth all our diseases. The worst of these diseases are envy, jealousy, evil-surmising, evil-speaking, a desire to follow plans that counterwork the work of God. The lives of all ought to be holy, but they are full of depravity, and because of this, men are easy subjects for Satan's temptations. **But if Christ abides in your heart, you can say, He redeemeth our life from destruction: He crowneth us with lovingkindness and tender mercy.** [How does he redeem? By healing our characters!!!] Then let songs of praise be upon our lips and in our heart. Meditate upon Christ's sufferings for us. In the place of watching to find something to accuse and condemn in others, thank the Lord that there is forgiveness with Him. **Christ is grieved when we criticize and accuse; for this is the work of Satan.** Let us draw water from the wells of salvation, and praise the Lord. {TDG 99.3}

It is not sermonizing that gives evidence that the soul is born again. An appreciation of Christ's tenderness toward the sheep of His pasture gives evidence of this. {TDG 99.4}

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read first three paragraphs, "There are many..." thoughts? What methods have you found effective?

What do you think of the non-formula in the last paragraph:

- Praise and adoration
- Thanking God for his goodness
- Confession of our faults
- Thanking God for forgiveness
- Supplication, presenting our requests and needs
- Submission to His will
- Thanking Him for hearing and doing according to His will

What if you don't follow the procedure?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 3



Revival and Reformation Lesson 3 3Q 2013

The Word: The Foundation of Revival

What do you think of the title?

When you think of “The Word” what comes to mind? What do you think the authors intended? By the weight of the lesson, they intend the Bible.

So, when we think about using the Bible as our source of authority are there any “rules” “methods” “principles” “guidelines” that enhance our ability to get what God wants us to get out of it?

Can we give a list of guidelines to enhance our effectiveness in relying on the Bible?

First, we want to affirm our belief in the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Having said that, can the Bible, even though inspired by God, be used in a way that misleads?

Did Satan quote Scripture in an attempt to deceive Christ?

What is the lesson from this observation? That just quoting a passage of Scripture is not sufficient to determine truth.

Further, according to the Christian Encyclopedia 2001 there are 34,000 different Christian groups all claiming the Bible supports them. How can that be?

Because the Bible can be on the innocent end, misunderstood, and on the malicious end, twisted, manipulated, and purposely distorted. And using the Bible in isolation can increase the risk of misunderstanding.

What can we do to minimize the likelihood of misunderstanding the Bible?

- Include all of it – Don’t pick and choose the portions we like, but require all of it to harmonize. If we find some portion of Scripture contradicting another portion, then we need to find an understanding that harmonizes them.
 - The critics don’t like this. That we are not to interpret the plain passages, the non-comparable, non-prophecy parts but take it as it reads. But they don’t require the Scripture to harmonize. They cut and divide – that’s old dispensation this is new dispensation. Or they just refuse to incorporate the texts “I don’t know how that fits.”
- Study with a heart longing for truth submitted to the guidance of the Holy Spirit
- Think and reason with your mind enlightened by the Holy Spirit
- Use all the threads of evidence God has provided, the integrative evidence based approach
 - **Scripture** “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2Tim 3:16)



- **Science** “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, *being understood from what has been made*, so that men are without excuse.” (Rom 1:20) (emphasis mine)
- **Experience** “Taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps 34:8)
- Always require the written Word to be interpreted through the lens of the living Word – Jesus. Do pigeon hole Jesus’ actions and teachings into traditions of the Old Testament symbolic system. He was the fulfillment of that system and it needs to be interpreted through Him.
 - Jesus taught that God provided three threads to be harmonized, Scripture, Science/Nature, Experience
 - Jesus taught using Scripture:
 - He quoted it, read in in Synagogue
 - Jesus taught using examples in nature
 - wheat falls to ground dies to bring live, tell the signs of the weather but cannot tell signs of the times, parable of sower, provisions for sparrows and the lilies of the fields
 - Healing – demonstrating the plan of salvation by healing
 - Jesus taught using experience:
 - “Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.’” (Jn 20:27)
- Read a variety of versions, the original languages if possible, but remember the words are not inspired, the authors were inspired and they used human words to convey ideas. So it is the idea that is to be sought, and an idea can sometimes be lost in the words.

The principle of *sola scriptura* espoused by Martin Luther was for the purpose of confronting traditions that had entered the church based on superstition and paganism. Martin Luther was saying basically, I can’t allow tradition to be my determiner, it must be demonstrated also in Scripture.

But this principle has been perverted by modern theologians to exclude other evidences God has provided and this exclusion of other evidences causes the gospel to be obstructed.

Our position requires the harmony of Scripture, Science and Experience – notice the difference in dealing with tradition with the Scripture and integrating science, experience and Scripture together:

Tradition – celibacy for those in the priesthood – Martin Luther found that Scripture did not support this thus he rejected this tradition.

Science – eating a diet that avoids animal products is healthier, and if one does eat animal products if they eat a Mediterranean diet, high in vegetable products and limiting the meat to mostly fish and a few kosher meats they are healthier. Guess what the Scripture says? The same thing, and what does experience say? The same thing.

But, when one uses Scripture only, one can misunderstand passages like:



- “What goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean,’ but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean.’ “ MT 15:11
 - One can conclude this passage is speaking about the physical laws of health, when in reality it is dealing with spiritual principles of character development.
- Or “They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.” 1Tim 4:3
 - One could conclude that all food is good to eat, but notice, the text says foods which God created to be received...

When we use Scripture alone, we can easily, and without malice or purposeful intention to twist, misunderstand. And many Christians have rightly concluded that one is not “ceremonially” unclean by eating non-kosher meat because the ceremonial laws have been done away with. But they have wrongly concluded that the laws of health were done away with at the Cross. Using the integrative evidence based approach brings balance so we don’t fear condemnation from God for what we eat, but we understand His design for health and life and want to live in harmony with it.

When it comes to our theology of God it is the same. Texts by themselves are easily misunderstood. But when we require them to harmonize with the Law of Love and the Law of Liberty – which are testable and reproducible, and which we can experience in our own lives, then certain ideas of God must be rejected. Like God is the source of inflicted pain and suffering, saying, “love me or else I’ll kill you.”

SABBATH

Memory Text: “Plead my cause and redeem me; revive me according to Your word.” (Ps 119:154).

What does this text mean?

What does God’s word say about reviving us? How does it suggest we are revived?

One idea put forth is that we are revived by a legal transaction between Jesus, the Father and us. Jesus pays a penalty, then pleads to the Father the blood He shed in order to spare us the inflicted torture and death the Father would otherwise impose upon us.

Can someone show me that? Can someone demonstrate that in a testable manner? Even if it were true, how does God being restrained by His Son revive us?

Do you see how backward such ideas are?

The Scripture actually presents a different idea:



- “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.” Ps 19:7
- “He who pursues **righteousness and love finds life**, prosperity and honor.” Pr 21:21

What do these texts suggest to us about reviving?

Is there a connection between God’s law and revival?

How would you explain it? The imposed view is penal payment – but what if we use science and experience, then what do we discover?

- The law of love is the principle of giving upon which life is built and we see this throughout nature
 - Many examples given previously (breathing, food cycles etc)
- This law of giving is seen in experience
 - Youth who volunteer experienced greater
 - academic achievement, civic responsibility, and life skills that include leadership and interpersonal self-confidence¹
 - Adults who volunteer (after accounting for variables such as education, baseline health, smoking, etc.)
 - Live longer, have less illness, less disability, less depression, less dementia and live independently longer than those who did not.²

So how does the Lord revive us? By presenting the truth about Himself, His government, methods, principles, that win us to trust. When we trust Him, we open the heart and the Holy Spirit comes into the heart and we enter into a relationship with God in which we experience His love for us. The Holy Spirit takes all Christ achieved and reproduces it in us. Thus it is no longer “I that lives but Christ lives in me.” In that love relationship we desire to live like Him. We begin:

- to give instead of take,
- to trust instead of doubt,
- to pray instead of worry,
- and we experience a change, greater peace, healthier relationships, and better physical health.
- We are revived as we come back into harmony with God and His design for life!

We are not revived by claiming a legal payment while living outside God’s design for life.

The lesson states that when people discover the truth in the Word the Holy Spirit will move upon them. “God will honor their commitment by pouring out His Holy Spirit in abundance, and the whole world will be lightened with the glory of the three angels’ messages. The Holy Spirit will be poured out beyond measure, and the gospel will be carried to the ends of the earth, and Jesus Christ will return (Matt 24:14)”

Wow – don’t you long for this? Don’t you long for the Lord to return?



And I believe the lesson is right, when the gospel of the kingdom is preached to the entire world the end will come.

What is preventing this?

What about the linkage between the gospel and the three angels' messages?

What is the first message?

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people.⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

The eternal gospel from this angel is that the same message that Jesus said needed to go to the entire world as a witness to all nations?

Can someone tell me what that good news message is?

- The truth about God's character of love, His methods of love, His law as the design template for life, His actions to intervene to save and heal, that He is not against us but for us.

What message has gone to the world?

- God is required by law to inflict punishment, kill and torture and is appeased, propitiated from this work by the blood of Jesus

But the first angel is calling people to be amazed with God, give him glory, which means to reveal the truth of His character and methods in our lives, because it is time for Him to be judged! It is time for the world to decide, trust God or not!

What is the message of the second angel? How is it connected to the first message?

⁸ A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”

The first message presents the truth about God's character of love, His methods of love and the second points out that the system of religion that has dominated the world has fallen into confusion about God and teaches ideas that intoxicate the world into a false belief system about God and His methods, causing their hearts to distrust Him i.e. be adulterous.

Do we see this? Have the religious institutions of the world been corrupted with a false view of God?

Here is my paraphrase of the three angel's messages:



Rev 14:6 Then I saw another messenger flying in midair, and he had the eternal good news about God's character of love to proclaim to everyone living on earth, to every nation, tribe, language and people, which represents a movement of people who arise to proclaim the truth about God's character of love throughout the world. 7 He said in a clear resounding voice, "Be in awe of God, and glorify him by living his methods of love, because the hour has come for everyone to make a judgment about God and worship the Creator who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and springs of water."

Rev 14:8 Then I saw a second messenger follow the first proclaiming throughout the world, "Don't trust Babylon the Great, a symbolic description of religions that misrepresent God; it is fallen into the lies about God and intoxicates the world with its pagan views of God, maddening them with its adulterous idea that God coerces and must inflict punishment if not properly appeased."

Rev 14:9 A third messenger followed them and proclaimed in a voice heard throughout the world, "If anyone gives worth and honor to the beastly system of coercion by choosing the methods of the beast and thus marking themselves as loyal in heart by embracing the character of the beast or marking themselves as loyal in deed by practicing his methods, 10 they will reap the full fury of unremedied sin when God let's go his protective hand. They will experience immeasurable torment of mind and burning anguish of heart when they stand in God's fiery presence and are bathed in unquenchable fire of truth and love, all in the very presence of Jesus and the holy angels. 11 And the memory of their suffering and the lesson of their self-destructive choices will never be forgotten throughout all eternity future. There will be no peace of mind, day or night for those who prefer the methods of the beast and model after him, nor for any who choose to mark themselves as followers of the beast." 12 This requires patient endurance on the part of the healed who live God's methods of love and remain true to Jesus.

Thoughts?

SUNDAY

The lesson points out that King David found strength in God's Word. Then in the green section it asks, "How can you learn to draw hope, strength, assurance, and light from the Word of God?"

Thoughts?

What Bible passages have brought you hope, strength, assurance and light?

- "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16,17
- I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. Jn 15:15



- Then neither do I condemn you... Jn 8:11
- So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Is 41:10
- Others?

MONDAY

Read Heb 4:12: “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

Thoughts?

What does it mean the word of God is living and active?

From the SDA Bible Commentary:

That is, “living.” It takes a living and active force to create in man a new heart and to renew a right spirit within him (cf. Ps. 51:10). The “word” of God is living, and imparts life. Thus it was in the work of creation (Ps. 33:6, 9 and thus it is in the re-creation of the image of God in the soul of man. Christ, the incarnate Word, likewise has life in Himself (John 1:4, 12; 5:26). The “word of God” is the energizing force in conversion. The Christian is “born again, ... by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1:23).¹

What does it mean, penetrates the dividing of soul and spirit?

The Greek is *psuchē* and *pneuma*, soul and spirit. Some commentators suggest it means life and breath. Other thoughts?

What do you think of the idea that soul refers to our individuality, our unique individual self, our personhood, our individual wants, longings, desires; whereas spirit refers to the higher faculties of reason and conscience, where our good judgment lies?

And the Word is to separate the two so we are able to discern the right from the wrong, gain mastery over the passions, and choose to do the right, knowing it is right, despite the desires of the soul, even sometimes despite the agony of the soul?

In Gethsemane – Christ’s soul anguished, He was in emotional turmoil, yet He understood His situation, trusted His Father, and chose to do what He knew what right despite what He felt. Is this an example of the Word enlightening the mind and separating the spirit from the soul?

¹ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7*. 1980 (F. D. Nichol, Ed.) (424). Review and Herald Publishing Association.



What about joints and marrow? What might this refer to?

Is it saying the word gets down to the very roots of life in the person, changing from the inside, not just the behavior?

Marrow in Scripture refers to the source of life, the joints refer to living one's life. What might the metaphor refer to?

How do these text influence our understanding?

- his body full of fat and the marrow of his bones moist. Job 21:24 RSV
- My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; And my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; Ps 63:5 ASV
- My strength is gone, gone like water spilt on the ground. All my bones are out of joint; my heart is like melted wax. Ps 22:14 GNB

Now consider this version GNB of Heb 4:12:

The word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where soul and spirit meet, to where joints and marrow come together. It judges the desires and thoughts of the heart. GNB

Does it make a difference in what we think is happening if we view the word separating joints and marrow versus separating soul and spirit where joints and marrow meet?

I like the GNB better. I believe it is saying that God's word, the truth, enlightens our minds and separates us from the carnal nature, the temptations that come from our own desires (James 1), and does this down at the most intimate level where our very life originates and is joined together.

Here is my paraphrase of Heb 2:14:

^{Heb 4:12} For the word of God is the living and active revelation of the truth about God, His methods and principles and the real basis of life in the universe. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, it penetrates the deepest recesses of the mind and separates the thoughts and feelings, habits and motives; it diagnoses the true intentions, attitudes and principles of the heart.

So with all we have reviewed about the Word, its ability to penetrate the inmost being, separate the good from the evil and renew us in righteousness – what is that Word?

Well, if we read the context in Heb 4:2 – what do we find?

For we have heard the Good News, just as they did. They heard the message, but it did them no good, because when they heard it, they did not accept it with faith.

The “Word” is the Gospel, the Good News – which is what?



It is the truth about God, His character of love, His law of love. The law being the protocols upon which life is built, an expression of His character of love, the principles of giving. It is the good news that, while we are sick, terminal “dead in trespass and sin” God is always for us. He is using all His energies to save and heal. It is the good news that God is NOT like the enemy has suggested, an imposer of laws, a judgmental being, bent on punishing who requires appeasement and payment.

Thus, the good news about God, when understood, frees the heart from fear. In trust we open the heart and the Spirit comes in, bringing all Christ achieved and reproducing it in us. We are actually transformed to beings of love. Love for God and others! We are no longer controlled by fear and selfishness, thus the word divides, or separates the spirit from the soul, cleansing and restoring!

This is the same message as that of the three angels, the message which is to go to the world to enlighten the world about God so people will experience genuine transformation and be ready to meet Jesus when He returns.

I was raised an SDA and brought up in a system in which we had many rules, and God was a being to be feared, for justice required He punish disobedience. I was taught the law and that other non-SDA Christians were in trouble with God because they didn't keep the law. Thus, I was instilled with a sense of spiritual superiority because we were right, the remnant, the only ones true to God.

So, when I was young I had a great sense of spiritual confidence, arrogance really, pride and looked down on other Christians as being in the dark. They were to be pitied.

Then, I discovered, while many of the facts I had been taught were correct, they had all been presented coated in distortions about God and particularly His methods. God was presented as arbitrary, the Sabbath as an arbitrary test of obedience. The law was a list of rules imposed to test our loyalty, and God would punish if we didn't obey.

I came to realize the truth of God's law, His character and came to no longer be afraid of God and instead love Him, adore Him, just like to be with Him and hang out with Him.

But, another problem arose for me. Some of you may have picked up on it over the years. Something I have really struggled in my heart with, and this week a light went off for me.

When I came to see God in His true light, as Jesus revealed Him to be, and my love for Him grew, I simultaneously realized much of what I had been taught was wrong and I had a sense of betrayal, anger, resentment tempting me toward my church. How could my church hold to these distortions?

In my frustration, I became embarrassed to be identified as a Seventh-day Adventist. When people would ask me I would say, “tell me what you think one is and I will tell you whether I am one.” Or if they asked what church I belonged to I would try to evade because I saw so much legalism within the church, so much opposition to the God of love, that I didn't want people to think I viewed God in that way.



Then, this week it hit me. Jesus belonged to a religious system that was corrupt, dominated by people who were legalistic, who cherished an imposed law construct and who horribly misrepresented God. Yet, He came and not only revealed the truth about God – but in Jesus we see true Judaism. What the religious leaders lived out is false Judaism. Jesus didn't say "I am leaving Judaism." Rather, He revealed the reality of what that system was suppose to teach all along.

So, I made up a little comparison between Jesus and the Pharisees:

Jesus

Pharisees

Jew
Kept Sabbath
Believed Creator God
Prayed
Honored Sanctuary
Ate right diet
Dressed right
Kept feasts
Believed Scripture

Jew
Kept Sabbath
Believed Creator God
Prayed
Honored Sanctuary
Ate right diet
Dressed right
Kept feasts
Believed Scripture

WHAT WAS THE DIFFERENCE?????????

Lived law of love
True Judaism

Lived imposed law
False Judaism

Paul makes this clear in Romans:

A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. ²⁹ No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God. (2:28,29)

The law of love is written on the heart of the true Jew! (Heb 8:10)

Then I considered my situation today and contrasted a true Adventist from a false Adventist and this is what I came up with (I am not attacking the church. I am exposing a false manifestation of the church. This is what we are talking about reform, reformation this quarter. Eliminating false constructs that infect the church):

True SDA

False SDA

Keep Sabbath
Believes Creator God

Keep Sabbath
Believes Creator God



Prays
Honors Sanctuary
Eats right diet
Observes communion
Believes Scripture
Dress right

Prays
Honors Sanctuary
Eats right diet
Observes communion
Believes Scripture
Dress right

WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE?????

Lives law of love
Teaches God's law is natural

Lives imposed law
Teaches God is imposer of punishment

Then I came across this from one of the founders of our church:

A deep and thorough work of reform is needed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The world is not to be allowed to corrupt **the principles** of God's commandment-keeping people. Believers are to exert an influence that bears witness to the **power of heavenly principles**. Those who unite with the church must give evidence of **a change of principle**. Unless this is done, unless the line of **demarcation between the church and the world is carefully preserved**, assimilation to the world will be the result. {2MCP 559.3}

Our message to the church and to our institutions is: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). **The attributes of Christ's character are to be cherished, and these are to become a power in the lives of God's people.--MS 78, 1905. {2MCP 559.4}**

What does it mean "heavenly principles"? What is the difference between heavenly principles and worldly principles?

Here are a couple of more quotes from the same author. This provides the historic context to determine what a true Adventist is and expose false Adventism:

- **The law of love being the foundation** of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with **its great principles of righteousness**. {GC 493.2}

What is the principle of heaven? The law of love!

- **The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man.** "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: "Thy law is the truth"; "all thy commandments are righteousness" (Ps. 119:142, 172). And the apostle Paul declares: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). **Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author.** {RC 46.5}



Again the principle of heaven is love! Any arguments or disagreements? So what opposes the law of love?

- Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government. GC 493
- At the cross of Calvary, **love and selfishness stood face to face**. Here was their crowning manifestation. Christ had lived only to comfort and bless, and in putting Him to death, Satan manifested the malignity of his hatred against God. He made it evident that the real purpose of his rebellion was to dethrone God, and to destroy Him through whom the love of God was shown. {DA 57.2}

What is the principle of the world? Selfishness – and how does one govern the selfish? With imposed laws, with threats, with punishment! It is the principle of the world.

- In the opening of the great controversy, **Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed**, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan**; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. {DA 761.4}
 - What type of law is Satan's allegations based upon?
 - Arbitrary, imposed law
 - Those who teach the imposed law are forwarded Satan's arguments
 - We are talking about revival and reformation this quarter and the quote I read said we as a church need to reform, to have a change in principle, to embrace the principles of heaven, not the principles of the world.
 - How do human governments operate? On imposed law, imposed punishments. Do we teach God operates like this? It is time to return to the truth about God as Jesus revealed!

Thus – true Adventism, as in all true Christianity, is being like Jesus living the law of love, the principle of heaven. Whereas false Adventism, as in all false Christianity, is living the principles of the world, teaching an imposed law system.

TUESDAY

What do you understand the relationship to be between Jesus, the living Word and the Bible, the written Word?

- Who inspired the Bible writers?
- Which member of the Godhead taught men the truth? (1Cor 10:1-3)
- Does the Holy Spirit speak on His own, or only what He hears? From whom does the Holy Spirit hear?
- Who is the member of the Godhead through which all things were created?
- Who is the member of the Godhead who took upon Himself our humanity in order to heal and recreated it in righteousness?



- When we study the Bible should we require Jesus to conform to our understanding of Old Testament symbolism, or should we interpret the Old Testament through the lens of Jesus and what He taught?
- So, what do we conclude about death if we use Jesus as the lens?
- What do we conclude about God “killing” if we use Jesus as the lens?

The bottom green question asks a great question – “Why can’t we trust our feelings?”

WEDNESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Speaking of the time...” thoughts?

What do you understand faith to be?

- Ultimately, isn’t it trusting God with how things turn out?
- Choosing to live what one knows is right, even under threat, because one trust God with the outcome?

Read third paragraph, “Faith, truth faith...” thoughts?

Believing in Bible promises means what?

- Does it mean finding a Bible promise to quote for every situation in life and expecting, by using these quotes like magic incantations one can make life go the way one wants?
- What does it mean?

Read fourth paragraph, “Our Spiritual...” thoughts?

Don’t people who handle snakes and drink poison claim to accept the Word of God by faith? Is something more than accepting the Word of God by faith required to be genuinely faithful? Are we to think? Are we to reason? Are we to understand?

If we think and reason does that mean we don’t have faith?

If we ask questions, if we say, that doesn’t make sense, does that mean we don’t have faith?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, “Those who...” thoughts?

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2.



Lesson 4: Witness *and* Service: The Fruit of Revival

Sabbath

The lesson states this better than I can, so I copied/pasted it here:

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NKJV).

“The purpose of revival is to fill our hearts with such a love for Jesus that we long to share this love with every person possible. In genuine revival, our own hearts are awakened to God’s goodness, compassion, forgiveness, and power. We are so charmed by His love and transformed by His grace that we cannot be silent.

In contrast, a “revival” that focuses on one’s “spiritual experience alone” misses the mark. If it develops attitudes critical of others who do not measure up to one’s “standard of holiness,” it is certainly not heaven inspired. If the emphasis of revival is to merely change external behavior rather than to change hearts, then something is wrong.

Changed hearts lead to changed behavior. Genuine revival never leads to self-centeredness or, especially, to self-sufficiency or self-exaltation. Instead, it always leads to a selfless concern for others. When our hearts are renewed by God’s grace, we long to bless and serve those who are in need. All genuine revival leads to a renewed emphasis on mission and service. [emphasis added].”

I think this is very eloquently said. Too many times, we seem to put “the cart before the horse” and look at outward behaviors in ourselves & others [where they are much easier to observe and criticize], and we think that by changing our behavior[s], we can change our hearts. Only the Holy Spirit can change the human heart. It is true that our behavior[s] can help or hinder this process, but the heart must be healed first.

Sunday

Christ’s parting Commission and Promise.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” ... Matt. 28:19-20.

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15.

And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

⁴⁶ *Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in*



His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ *And you are witnesses of these things.* Luke 24:45-49.

So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." John 20:21.

Again, the lesson succinctly states: "Once Christ ascended to heaven, His church was to be a visible manifestation of His love and grace to the world. The disciples had a mission. They had a message to share. They had a task to complete. They were to carry on the work that He began."

Has the Christian church fulfilled our Savior's wishes?? Has the SDA church??

Monday

Receiving the Promise

The lesson suggests that the ratio of Christians to the rest of the world's population was 1:580,000 at the time of the Day of Pentecost. How long would it take 1 person to tell 580,000 about the gospel?? Let's get some perspective: Have you ever heard the problem – would you rather have \$5 million right now, or have one penny doubling every day for one month?? The answer is the doubling penny every day for a 31 day month resulting in a total of \$10,737,418.23. This is a simple geometric progression with a constant ratio of 2.

So, if one person told another about his/her conversion experience and what Christ has done for him/her, and it doubled every day for a month, more than 10 million people would have heard about it. And that's just with human effort. The Holy Spirit could make this an exponential progression and then ...

Have we done our job?? What needs to happen first?? Doesn't it matter which gospel is being presented?? Is it no wonder that Christ has not come yet??

Tuesday

The Power of Personal Testimony

The lesson is dead on again with the following: "Religious ritual has little power to change lives. Religious formalism leaves people spiritually barren. Doctrine alone will not transform hearts. The power of New Testament witnessing was rooted in the genuineness of lives changed by the gospel. The disciples were not play-acting. They were not going through the motions. Theirs was not some form of artificial spirituality. An encounter with the living Christ had changed them, and they could not be silent any longer."

AMEN.



This is what our Saviour was referring to when he told the woman at the well she should seek the “living water”, and again in John 7: 38, “...*whoever believes in me [Christ], rivers of living water will flow from within them.*”

Sometimes this transformation occurs quickly [as with Saul of Tarsus / Paul], however most times it is the work of a lifetime.

An upright character is of greater worth than the gold of Ophir. Without it none can rise to an honorable eminence. But character is not inherited. It cannot be bought. Moral excellence and fine mental qualities are not the result of accident. The most precious gifts are of no value unless they are improved. The formation of a noble character is the work of a lifetime and must be the result of diligent and persevering effort. God gives opportunities; success depends upon the use made of them. {PP 223.1}

“Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven’s chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine.” The Desire of Ages, p. 347.

The lesson asks a poignant question. “What kind of personal testimony do you have that tells of what the Lord has done for you??” More specifically, has conformity with God’s Natural Law produced any changes in your life? Any thoughts??

Wednesday

A Witnessing Faith is a Growing Faith.

“Activity is a Law of Life.” Well said. More importantly, it is a natural Law, not an imposed law. God created life to move. From the smallest sub-atomic particles to colossal super-galaxies, everything is in motion. Stagnation is death. **Here we can see Scripture, science, and our experience in perfect harmony.**

This is a Law that I see every day in my practice. When a patient stops moving a body part, joints/connective tissues get stiff and resistant to motion. Sometimes a restoration of motion is painful and even produces bruising. Any parallels with a return to mental, emotional, or Spiritual motion? The lesson states the law of multiplication is a divine principle. More than a multiplication by 2, as in the penny reference above, the Holy Spirit can multiply by numbers we cannot even fathom. Has anyone told you, “you just need more [stronger] faith”? Have you ever told anyone else they need more faith? How does one “get more faith”? What does much of Christianity teach strengthens our faith? What actually strengthens our faith?? Hint: see above.

Note Matt. 10:8. “*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.*”



Do we not have access to the same power the disciples had?? Have we raised any dead lately??

Thursday

Revival, Witnessing, and Divine Intervention.

Does our class have any evidence of divine intervention regarding it's growth?? Have we not experienced some of the same things the early Christian church dealt with? Thankfully, none of us have imprisoned or tortured – yet. We have, though, been lied about, been dismissed from our congregation, been mistreated, all due to wanting to share our message. Has this *mild* persecution resulted in growth or decay of our ministry??

Consider the example given in the lesson of Philip and the Ethiopian. After Philip shared the true gospel of Jesus of Nazareth, he baptized him right away. He didn't baptize him in to a denomination. He didn't wait until the Ethiopian had given up his cigarettes, or became a vegetarian. Anything we can learn from this experience??



Lesson # 5 - Obedience: The Fruit of Revival

July 20, 2013

Read the memory text: 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (NKJV)

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,"

This is a very familiar text for this class.
Typically we read verse 3 along with it.

SABBATH

Obedience is the fruit of revival

- a. Obedience to what?
 - i. a church?
 - ii. the church?
 - iii. a set of doctrines or rules of behavior?
 - iv. The memory text says 'obedience to Christ'
 - i. What does that mean?
- b. The church I belong to has acceptable patterns of behavior:
 - i. why do the members perform certain acceptable behaviors and avoid other unacceptable behaviors?
 - i. if the rules weren't there, would the behavior be any different?
 - ii. What is the source of your behavior restrictions?
 - iii. Do rules or law have anything to do with it?

The title to the lesson says obedience is the fruit of revival.

- a. Metaphor: fruit of revival.
 - i. If you plant a fruit, what do you get?
 - ii. You do not get another fruit; you get a plant. (assuming the seed is in the fruit)
 - iii. If you plant a fruit (obedience), you will not get another fruit (salvation).
 - iv. If you plant the obedience without revival, you might get the **seeds** of rebellion or a **stone fruit**, a stony heart of rebellion.



- b. At the bottom of the second paragraph of Sabbath's lesson there is a statement about the result of Welsh miners coming to Christ.
- c. "This truly is the fruit of conversion"
- d. Revival in one's heart is different than revival of a nation or people.
 - i. One implies the return and rejuvenation of a previous conversion experience, whereas the other implies the conversion of new hearts and lives for God.
 - ii. Whatever the entity, there is behavior changes that accompany all hearts that are on fire for God.

Obedience

- a. Definition of obedience [Miriam-Webster Online]
- b. Definition of OBEDIENT
 - i. submissive to the restraint or command of authority
 - ii. willing to obey
- c. obe·di·ent·ly [adverb]
- d. Examples of OBEDIENT
- e. Origin of OBEDIENT
 - i. Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Latin oboedient-, oboediens, from present participle of oboedire to obey
- f. First Known Use: 13th century
- g. Related to OBEDIENCE
- h. Synonyms: compliance, conformity, submission, subordination
- i. Antonyms: balkiness, contrariness, contumacy, defiance, disobedience, frowardness, insubordination, intractability, noncompliance, obstreperousness, rebelling, rebellion, rebelliousness, recalcitrance, refractoriness, self-will, unruliness, waywardness, willfulness
- j. Related Words: abidance, agreeability, amenability, teachableness, tractability, tractableness, trainability; acquiescence, capitulation, obeisance, obsequiousness, submissiveness, surrender, yielding; deference, docility, dutifulness, humility, meekness, modesty, servility, slavishness, subordinateness, subservience, subserviency; inhibition, repression, restraint, suppression; control, discipline, dutifulness, order
- k. Near Antonyms: noncooperation, recusancy; disrespect, impudence, insolence, rudeness; insurgence, insurgency, insurrection, mutiny, outbreak, revolt; hardheadedness, mulishness, mutinousness, obstinacy, obstinateness, perversity, pigheadedness, stubbornness; misbehavior, mischievousness, naughtiness; dissent, dissidence



What is your emotional reaction to the word Obedience?

- a. Why is obedience a "dirty" word?
- b. Currently it is a very uncommon word.
- c. Word History App or Google Ngram
 - i. peak about 1800 - 1830 as a fairly common word and decline to 1940 and continued to rare at present
- d. recent blogger about religion/Sunday School Teacher: "I don't like it" "my least favorite word"
- e. parents in my office: foreign concept for children to be taught to obey,
 - i. behavior is now controlled, but not obedience
 - ii. Obedience is not expected, especially for the male gender child

Obedience previously was to be included in the bride's wedding vows, but not the groom's vows

Obedience in dictionary and on internet search response

- a. Military (in response to authority)
- b. Religion (in response to creed or leaders)
- c. Animals (dog obedience schools)

Graham Maxwell in his book, "Servants or Friends" described three forms of obedience in relationship to God

- a. **Obedience Type 1:** "I do what I do because God has told me to, and he has the power to reward and destroy."
 - i. may not agree that it is a good idea
 - ii. may not act in that manner if God hadn't said to do so
 - iii. Is that the reason you do not murder or commit adultery, because God said you musn't? Are you saying that you might do it otherwise, but you can't afford to incur his displeasure?"
- b. **Obedience Type 2:** I love God and want to please Him, so I do what he says to do
 - i. again, there is no value to what He says, only that I want to make Him happy because I love Him
 - ii. Do we make Him happy when the only reason we do not kill our mother-in-law is that He said not to do so?
- c. **Obedience Type 3:** I obey because I agree with Him that it is a good counsel and appropriate behavior. "I have found it to be right and sensible to do so, and I have increasing admiration and reverence for the one who so advised and commanded me in the days of my ignorance and immaturity. And being my still somewhat ignorant and



immature, I am willing to trust and obey the one whose counsel has always proved to be so sensible, when he tells me to do something beyond my present understanding.” Servants or Friends? Another Look at God, Pineknoll Publications

- d. **He does not obey** “The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God.” – {COL 97.3}

SUNDAY

- a. Read the first two paragraphs
- i. “It results in a changed life.”
 - ii. “The results of revival are not necessarily positive feelings. They are a changed life. Our feelings are not the fruit of revival. Obedience is. This is evident in the lives of the disciples after Pentecost.”
 - iii. I would have to add the word “only”. Positive feelings are not the only result from revival, but it definitely has been present in my life when I have been influenced by the Holy Spirit. Both. Not either / or.

MONDAY

- a. Read the second paragraph
- i. “The infilling of the Holy Spirit. . . At times the spiritual warfare was fierce, . . .”
 - i. Read the memory text again.
 - ii. Is spiritual warfare visible?
 - iii. Is it external persecution or internal?
 1. See 2 Corinth 10:3 - 6
 2. (This discussion is similar to the one about the difference between Sin & sins.)
 - a. We often spend our energies fighting sins in our life, but instead should be fighting Sin, estrangement from God, and the sins will take care of themselves.



- ii. In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage. But many who profess to be His followers have an anxious, troubled heart, because they are afraid to trust themselves with God. They do not make a complete surrender to Him; for they shrink from the consequences that such a surrender may involve. Unless they do make this surrender, they cannot find peace. {Desire of Ages 330.3}
 - iii. It is the love of self that brings unrest. When we are born from above, the same mind will be in us that was in Jesus, the mind that led Him to humble Himself that we might be saved. Then we shall not be seeking the highest place. We shall desire to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him. We shall understand that the value of our work does not consist in making a show and noise in the world, and in being active and zealous in our own strength. The value of our work is in proportion to the impartation of the Holy Spirit. Trust in God brings holier qualities of mind, so that in patience we may possess our souls. {Desire of Ages 330.4}
- b. Read the last half of paragraph 4: “It’s not out of the realm . . .”
- i. Will this be because they were disobedient? To whom?

TUESDAY

- a. Read the highlighted paragraph at the bottom of the page:
 - a. " Try to put yourself. . ."
 - b. ". . .face and do things we do not understand. . . ."
- b. If we do not understand them, how do we know we are to do them?
- c. The story is referenced regarding Saul’s Damascus Road experience and the subsequent visit by Ananias.
 - a. How did Ananias know to do what he was asked to do?
 - b. Are we to do things we do not understand?
 - i. (Act 17:30) "God overlooked the times when people didn't know any better. But now he commands everyone everywhere to turn to him and change the way they think and act.
 - ii. If we have done this in the past: Is this one of the foolishness that God “winked at” or overlooked?
 - c. If we do not understand them, how do we know what we are to do?
 - d. If we do not understand them, how do we know we are to do them?
 - e. How did Ananias know to do what he was asked to do?
 - f. What is the difference between what Ananias was asked to do, what Abraham was asked to do (with the sacrifice of Isaac) and what a person who is experiencing revival is suppose to do?



- i. it is a matter of how close we know God.
 1. Paul was not given the full commission on the road to Damascus. He had other influences and revelations.
 2. Abraham had at least a 20+ year relationship
 - a. He had also spoken to God in a conversation, face to face.

WEDNESDAY - Paul vs Agrippa - who had it right?

- a. Acts 26:19 (NASBStr) “So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision,”
 - i. Paul was not ready to accept what God had to say to him for three days.
 - ii. After preaching briefly immediately after his conversion, he went to the wilderness, and then went back to tent making in Tarsus.
 - iii. Paul did not immediately complete his entire commission. (time in Jerusalem, the wilderness, at tent making trade before he was called by Barnabas)

THURSDAY

- a. Read the third paragraph: “Jesus was a servant to the Father’s will. . . .”
- b. What is it called when you desire the best for another? LOVE

FRIDAY

- a. Discussion Question #1 is the story of Ananias & Sapphira.
- b. Does this story say anything at all about obedience?
 - i. If so, what?
 - ii. In what way were they disobedient?
 - i. Who were they disobedient to?
 - ii. What were they disobedient about?

The Character of a Rebel by EGW “God knows that if we were left to follow our own inclinations, to go just where our will would lead us, we would fall into Satan’s lines and become possessors of his attributes. Therefore the law of God confines us to the will of One who is high and noble and elevating. He desires that we shall patiently and wisely take up the duties of service. It is for our present and eternal good to work the works of God. If His will is cheerfully and gratefully accepted, the results will be seen in the service rendered and in the character developed.” – {12MR 235.2}

A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. Service is looked upon by such a one in the light of drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered,



ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. – {12MR 236.1}

fruit of the Spirit

- a. 22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

final pronouncement of God

- a. let him be filthy still, etc
- b. (Rev 22:10-12) Then the angel said to me, "Don't seal up the words of the prophecy in this book because the time is near. Let those who don't have God's approval go without it, and let filthy people continue to be filthy. Let those who have God's approval continue to have it, and let holy people continue to be holy. "I'm coming soon! I will bring my reward with me to pay all people based on what they have done.

At the end of time there will be a revival of obedience, enforced by a false christ.

“A mere participation in religious services and ordinances does not make a sinner a Christian. A wicked man does not become righteous merely by associating with those who fear God. A man is made holy, and acceptable with God, only when his unclean heart is made clean by the grace of Christ, through faith, and by obedience to words of truth and righteousness. A work of reformation and restoration must take place in every heart. Those who have had great light and many privileges may perform some good works, notwithstanding their impenitence and their refusal to be saved in God’s appointed way. But these good works do not cleanse the soul from corruption. Only those who accept the light of God’s truth, choosing to obey him, will be cleansed from the defilement of sin.” – {RH December 19, 1907 Par. 11}

“The material world is under God’s control. The laws of nature are obeyed by nature. Everything speaks and acts the will of the Creator. Cloud and sunshine, dew and rain, wind and storm, all are under the supervision of God, and yield implicit obedience to His command. It is in obedience to the law of God that the spire of grain bursts through the ground, “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” Mark 4:28. These the Lord develops in their proper season because they do not resist His working. And can it be that man, made in the image of God, endowed with reason and speech, shall alone be unappreciative of His gifts and disobedient to His will? Shall rational beings alone cause confusion in our world? – {COL 81.3}”

“God stands toward His people in the relation of a father, and He has a father’s claim to our faithful service. Consider the life of Christ. Standing at the head of humanity, serving His Father, He is an example of what every son should and may be. The obedience that Christ rendered God requires from human beings today. He served His Father with love, in willingness and freedom. “I delight to do Thy will, O My God,” He declared; “yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8. Christ counted no sacrifice too great, no toil too hard, in order to accomplish the work which He came to do. At the age of twelve He said, “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” Luke 2:49. He had heard



the call, and had taken up the work. “My meat,” He said, “is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.” John 4:34. – {COL 282.3}”

“The divine Son of God saw that no arm but His own could save fallen man, and He determined to help man. He left the fallen angels to perish in their rebellion, but stretched forth His hand to rescue perishing man. The angels who were rebellious were dealt with according to the light and experience they had abundantly enjoyed in heaven. Satan, the chief of the fallen angels, once had an exalted position in heaven. He was next in honor to Christ. The knowledge which he, as well as the angels who fell with him, had of the character of God, of His goodness, His mercy, wisdom, and excellent glory, made their guilt unpardonable. – {Con 21.1}”

“His lessons of instruction and His holy life, if followed, would stay the tide of physical and moral wretchedness that has so defiled the moral image of God in man that he bears scarcely a resemblance to the noble Adam as he stood in Eden in his holy innocency. Every prohibition of God is for the health and eternal well-being of man. In obedience to all the requirements of God there will be peace and happiness unaccompanied with shame or reproaches of conscience.” – {Con 72.3}

“Their obedience to the laws of God would make them marvels of prosperity before the nations of the world. He who could give them wisdom and skill in all cunning work would continue to be their teacher, and would ennoble and elevate them through obedience to His laws. If obedient, they would be preserved from the diseases that afflicted other nations and would be blessed with vigor of intellect. The glory of God, His majesty and power, were to be revealed in all their prosperity. They were to be a kingdom of priests and princes. God furnished them with every facility for becoming the greatest nation on the earth....” – {CH 204.3}

“The wondering crowd that pressed close about Christ realized no accession of vital power. But when the suffering woman put forth her hand to touch Him, believing that she would be made whole, she felt the healing virtue. So in spiritual things. To talk of religion in a casual way, to pray without soul hunger and living faith, avails nothing. A nominal faith in Christ, which accepts Him merely as the Saviour of the world, can never bring healing to the soul. The faith that is unto salvation is not a mere intellectual assent to the truth. He who waits for entire knowledge before he will exercise faith, cannot receive blessing from God. It is not enough to believe about Christ; we must believe in Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.” {DA 347.1}

“ We hear so many things preached in regard to the conversion of the soul that are not the truth. Men are educated to think that if a man repents he shall be pardoned, supposing that repentance is the way, the door, into heaven; that there is a certain assured value in repentance to buy for him forgiveness. Can man repent of himself? No more than he can pardon himself. Tears, sighs, resolutions—all these are but the proper exercise of the faculties God has given to man, and the turning from sin in the amendment of a life which is God’s. Where is the merit in the man to earn his salvation, or to place



before God something that is valuable and excellent? Can an offering of money, houses, lands, place yourself on the deserving list? Impossible!

There is danger in regarding justification by faith as placing merit on faith. When you take the righteousness of Christ as a free gift you are justified freely through the redemption of Christ. What is faith? “The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). It is an assent of the understanding to God’s words which binds the heart in willing consecration and service to God, Who gave the understanding, Who moved on the heart, Who first drew the mind to view Christ on the cross of Calvary. Faith is rendering to God the intellectual powers, abandonment of the mind and will to God, and making Christ the only door to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

When men learn they cannot earn righteousness by their own merit of works, and they look with firm and entire reliance upon Jesus Christ as their only hope, there will not be so much of self and so little of Jesus. Souls and bodies are defiled and polluted by sin, the heart is estranged from God, yet many are struggling in their own finite strength to win salvation by good works. Jesus, they think, will do some of the saving; they must do the rest. They need to see by faith the righteousness of Christ as their only hope for time and for eternity. {FW 25.3}



Revival and Reformation Lesson 6 3Q 2013

Confessions and Repentance: The Conditions of Revival

SABBATH

Read memory text: “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13, NKJV)

What does this mean?

Does it make a difference how we understand this verse if we look through natural or imposed law?

What does this mean if we read it through the lens of imposed law?

- That those who cover their bad deeds will get caught and punished, but those who acknowledge and confess their sins will receive legal pardon

What does it mean through the lens of natural law?

- Those who cover their disease will not partake of remedy and the disease only worsens ultimately killing them. But those who acknowledge their diseased hearts/minds/characters, confessing before God their true condition and need, will find merciful healing and transformation of character.

How do you hear the verse?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “During the weeks...” thoughts?

What do you think it means to be in “one accord”?

Does it mean they all agreed on the 10 horns? Or they all agreed on who they should eat and associate with? What foods to eat? Whether to circumcise or not? What were they in one accord regarding?

Could it have been they agreed upon:

- Their need for Jesus?
- That Jesus was the true revelation of God?
- That Jesus is God in human form?
- They were united in their longing for His presence?
- Could it also be they agreed on their inability to fix their own situation and they were all in the same boat, even if they didn’t see all things the same way?
- God’s kingdom is the kingdom of Love and God’s law is the law of love?



- Did they agree on God's methods, truth, love and freedom?

What about today? When we talk about unity in Christ, what should be the central focus of that unity?

- The way we baptize?
- How we hold communion?
- What day we worship upon?
- What foods we eat?
- The 2300 day prophecy?
- Our atonement model?
- The mark of the beast?
- OR
- God's character and methods? Truth, love, freedom!
- God being Designer not Dictator and His law being natural not imposed?
- Jesus reveals God?
- Our acknowledgment of our sinful condition and our need for Christ?

Why is there so little unity in Christianity, according to the Christian encyclopedia, 34,000 different Christian groups – why?

How is it that Satan is so successful in causing division and disunity when Jesus brought a message of love and unity?

Could it be by getting people to operate on imposed rules rather than the law of love?

In other words it is more important to keep the rules, be right, than to love others more than self?

What do Christians "fight" over? The doctrines – but what is the central purpose of all doctrine? To reveal the truth about God.

The problem arises when we divorce the doctrines from God's character of love and make them stand alone testing "truths". We get our proof texts to prove the state of the dead, the Sabbath, the little horn of Daniel, the 2300 days and all of it dissected, separated and disconnected from the larger reality of God's character and methods of love and the controversy over His law and rulership.

It is only by putting these things back into this context, anchoring them to God's love that we can find unity.

Consider, does it matter if someone worships on the "right" day, if they crucify Jesus? But what of the Roman who trusted Jesus – never sacrificed at the Temple, never was circumcised, never obeyed the doctrinal rules, but Jesus said, no greater faith did he find in Israel.



The message is about God – Satan diverts us as he gets us to fight over side issues. We must love God and each other and be gracious, allowing God to lead people to whichever organization he wants them in.

One of the problems is that too many Christians believe salvation is found in organizations, institutions, rather than in Christ. Thus we insist when we evangelize that people join our institution. Our ministry wants people united with Christ, and leave it to the Holy Spirit to lead them to whichever field He has for them to work.

Read second paragraph, “Peter makes two...” thoughts?

What do you understand the idea of repentance being a gift to mean?

What do you understand repentance to be?

Is it not a change in heart motive such that we no longer desire the sin, but are repulsed and sickened by it? Are we able to change the motives of the heart? So, genuine repentance is an evidence of the Holy Spirit working on the heart to change the desires and motives. It is part of the renewing, healing, reviving process that God is seeking to accomplish in each of us.

In my preparations for class I came across this quotation in a book entitled *Faith and Works* page 38:

Repentance, as well as forgiveness, is the gift of God through Christ. It is through the influence of the Holy Spirit that we are convicted of sin and feel our need of pardon. **None but the contrite are forgiven**; but it is the grace of God that makes the heart penitent. He is acquainted with all our weaknesses and infirmities, and He will help us. {FW 38.2}

Some who come to God by repentance and confession, and even believe that their sins are forgiven, still fail of claiming, as they should, the promises of God. They do not see that Jesus is an ever-present Saviour; and they are not ready to commit the keeping of their souls to Him, relying upon Him to perfect the work of grace begun in their hearts. **While they think they are committing themselves to God, there is a great deal of self-dependence. There are conscientious souls that trust partly to God and partly to themselves.** They do not look to God, to be kept by His power, **but depend upon watchfulness against temptation and the performance of certain duties for acceptance with Him. There are no victories in this kind of faith. Such persons toil to no purpose; their souls are in continual bondage, and they find no rest until their burdens are laid at the feet of Jesus.** {FW 38.3}

Thoughts?

First, what does “none but the contrite are forgiven” mean? That God is unforgiving – or that only the contrite experience the forgiveness God freely offers?



What about the idea that some are depending on self and the performance of certain duties to be accepted with God? What might that look like?

What would cause one to believe such a thing?

I had a patient in my office this week who said he no longer believes in God, despite believing his entire life until recently. I asked him to tell me what happened that he quit believing in God. He recounted two experiences. The first was listening to Contemporary Christian music and having people at his conservative Christian college tell him he was going to go to hell for listening to this music. The second, he struggled with depression and was told repeatedly by church leaders if he prayed he would be delivered. He prayed for hours and hours, months and months and only got worse, so concluded God doesn't exist.

Were the people who told my patient such things described in the quotation I read? Believing they have to do certain duties to be accepted by God? Failing to trust Him and putting the work on self?

Read last paragraph, "Repentance and confession..." thoughts?

What does it mean the goodness of God leads us to repentance? How do we come to know that God is good?

If the goodness of God leads to repentance, then what would one of Satan's strategies be to obstruct people from coming to God in repentance?

Would it be to get us to conceive of God as something other than good, perhaps "just", where just means the inflictor or proper punishment?

Read bottom green section, "Why is it so difficult..." thoughts?

Is it not fear? Sin severs the circle of love and trust and incites fear and the desire to protect self. Thus, we are afraid of rejection, punishment, retaliation, embarrassment, humiliation, not being loved or liked or accepted etc. etc. so we attempt to hide and cover our defects.

Why would you be afraid to share in this group you have been struggling with gambling, alcohol, narcotics, pornography, or some other issue? What stops you from sharing this here? Is it not fear of how you will be treated? Rather than loved, supported, encouraged, instead shunned, criticized and belittled?

Consider, if you were struggling with a physical illness, might you ask for help? And how does the church treat those struggling with physical illness? With compassion, grace, love and support. Why are we so callous to those suffering with spiritual sickness, i.e. sin? Because the church has been infected with the imposed law lie, and thus do not see sin as a disease, a deviation from God's natural law that we need to be healed from, but instead as willful violations of rules, that require punishment. Which leads to the idea, "You aren't sick, You're bad!"



Remember our memory verse for this week, those who seek to cover their sin don't prosper. Does the distortion of imposed law lead us, through religious teachings, to attempt to hide and cover our sin? What about when we make theories in which we can hide behind Jesus? Is it not another deception, another sophisticated way in which Satan's view of God has infected the church – we hide behind the robe of righteousness, we have Jesus stand between us and the Father, we are covered by the blood, we have our records erased by the blood etc. etc. etc. All mechanisms designed to hide our sins, rather than heal us from our sins.

All of this stems from accepting the lie that God's law is imposed. When we return to the truth that God's law is the design protocol upon which life is built, and we are out of harmony, then, we like David, pray, "Search me and see the wicked way IN ME and create in me a clean heart oh God!"

No sick person goes to the doctor and then asks the doctor to examine their healthy brother in their place, or asks the nurse to erase the medical record so the doctor won't know what is wrong.

But most criminals who appear before the judge hire lawyers whose job is to obstruct the truth, to hide the evidence of their guilt and to erase the record of their crimes.

Who, having committed a crime wants to go before the judge? Who, when sick, wants to go to a compassionate doctor?

We must come back to the truth about God and His law of love and present Him as our Heavenly Physician and stop this ugly Judge presentation, then genuine repentance and revival can occur. As long as we insist on taking the penal view of God to the world we obstruct the unity and reformation God wants for His people.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Repentance is a God-initiated..." thoughts?

Repentance is sorrow for the sin, but also a change in heart motive so that the sin becomes repulsive. And it does include the willful choice to disengage and turn away from deviations from God's design.

Read last paragraph, "When the apostle Paul..." thoughts?

Why was Paul so freely able to talk about his past in this way? Could it be that he had experienced an actual change of motive, no longer motivated by a desire to protect and save self, but genuinely interested in glorifying God and saving others?

Do you think this would result in a change of brain circuitry?

What is the difference between acknowledging one's self as the chief of sinners, and feeling too sinful to be saved?



When we wallow in sinfulness, loathing ourselves as too defective to be loved, too worthless to be saved, too awful for forgiveness, and thus constantly feel insecure and fearful, who have we put at the center of our lives? Have we died to self in such a state, or is this a way of putting self in the center of all?

Two types of narcissists – narcissism is self-centeredness, self-love. The Kernberg narcissist is the proud, self-inflated, egotist who walks in and believes everyone should stop in awe because he or she has arrived. The isle at the store should part to allow him/her to check out etc.

Kohut narcissist, is the opposite, the one who feels too low for anyone to like, so when walking in the mall and passes a couple of teen girls who giggle as they walk by thinks, “they are laughing at me.” Self is put at the center of everything, but not in an inflated way, in a demeaned way. But, self is still at the center. These people often become meek, church workers, always volunteering, always helping, not for love but for fear of others not liking them if they ever say no.

We must put Christ in the center, and surrender self to Him.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Genuine repentance...” thoughts?

What is the purpose of confessing specific sins rather than just general confession?

Is it that God will not forgive, unless He hears the specific sin committed confessed? Or is it something else?

Could it have anything to do with our heart, character, brain? Could the confession of specific sin, have some part to play in our actual recovery? If we refuse to acknowledge our defects, or specific shortcomings, do we obstruct the work of the Holy Spirit by our refusal to be truthful?

So is the confession of specific sin a “legal” requirement, or required by our own condition? The truth must be brought to bear in our minds. Our condition requires it, not God’s heavenly court reporter.

Read third paragraph, “The purpose...” thoughts?

I think this is well said, our confession enables us to receive His forgiveness, His love, His presence.

Are there ideas in this paragraph that apply to other areas, like the judgment?

What is the only variable in the “judgment”? Is it God’s attitude or is it the condition of our hearts?

Read bottom green section, “However much we long...” thoughts?



How do we respond to those who have done us wrong and NEVER ask for forgiveness?

Why did Jesus pray, “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”?

If we refuse to forgive others, what does that say about our hearts? Are we open to the grace of God working in us? Are we loving, kind and merciful or are we selfish and vengeful?

Does forgiving those who have done us wrong mean we approve of what they have done?

Does forgiving those who have done us wrong mean they get away with it?

When we forgive those who have done us wrong who gets changed by our forgiveness?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “There are specific examples...” thoughts?

What do you understand the first sentence to mean? There were people who sought repentance but were not forgiven by God?

Did they seek repentance? One could argue they didn’t, they sought to avoid the pain, suffering and consequences their sin brought, but not a new heart.

Did they experience forgiveness? No, but does this mean they were not forgiven by God?

What does this idea that they were not forgiven by God imply? It implies an imposed law construct.

Is the problem we have in our sinful state God’s unwillingness to forgive, or God’s inability to forgive because some legal requirement hasn’t been met, and something needs to be done so God will forgive, whether it be our repentance, confession, or the blood payment of Christ – OR is the problem our sinful condition itself?

In other words, what obstructs our salvation – God’s attitude of unforgiveness, or our attitude of selfishness and distrust of God?

So, if forgiveness means God’s heart, God’s personal pardon – then doesn’t that happen for everyone?

But, if forgiveness means the entire process of reconciliation then, only those who open their hearts to God in trust experience forgiveness. So if the authors meant the entire process of reconciliation, then they are right, but it would be nice for them to clarify that God forgave, but the sinners didn’t receive it, thus they did not experience forgiveness, i.e. were not in a forgiven state, even though God forgave.

What evidence for this view?



Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will *freely pardon*.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are *my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*” ISA 55:7,8

Those who put Christ on the Cross – did they seek forgiveness? Did Christ forgive them, so they were forgiven by God, but were still in an unforgiven state because they didn’t receive the forgiveness freely offered.

Read last paragraph, “True repentance...” thoughts?

This is well said, and what leads to true repentance? A knowledge of God! Understanding His methods, principles, character and law of love we want to repent and turn away from deviations from God’s design for life. But when we believe in imposed law, then we don’t want to admit we are wrong we want to find an excuse so we can have a legal loophole, or cover our sins.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Confession lances the boil...” thoughts?

Do you notice that the lesson rightly points out that forgiveness is freely extended or offered from Christ? Which means, because Christ is God, all are freely forgiven from God’s side of the equation – because the problem in sin is not legal, it is the actual condition of the person who is out of harmony with the way God built life to operate.

Thus, even though God holds no grudges, God is forgiving to all, only those who repent, who open the heart in trust, experience the forgiveness God extends freely and are reconciled, or restored to God’s original methods of love and at-one-ment with God. Thus only those who accept God’s forgiveness are forgiven in experience.

Read second paragraph, “Is guilt good or bad?...” thoughts?

What is the purpose of guilt?

What is the cause of false guilt?

False guilt in some way is a result of believing a lie. “It was my fault” for something that wasn’t. “I should have known” something that was unknown, etc.

And others will often try to manipulate you with false guilt. Here are some examples:

1. Make you believe they will suffer greatly if you do not respond positively to their request(s).



- If you break up with me I'll kill myself, implying it will be your fault
 - Solution – the truth – only person to keep you safe from you is you, your behavior is not love, and surrender is violation of Law of Liberty
- Oh, if you can't take me to the store that's okay. I've been suffering with this pain so long a few more days won't matter. Implying it is your fault they are in pain.
 - Solution – the truth – you're right I'll be over later.
- 2. Respond to your irrational self by reinforcing your irrational thinking, giving you a sense of blame, for past, present, or future actions.
 - I thought you said you were a loving parent but every time I want to do something fun you say no.
 - Solution – the truth – because I love you the answer is no!
- 3. Feign or fake hardship, illness, discomfort, unhappiness, incompetence, or other negative behavior to arouse your sense of guilt and have you take over their tasks or duties
 - Oh I just can't clean like I used to. My back hurts so much when I vacuum.
 - Solution – the truth – If your back hurts maybe you should vacuum in smaller increments
- 4. Build a case with moral absolutes to convince you of the "right way" to do things, avoiding that negative feeling of guilt for themselves.
 - God teaches that wives are to be submissive to their husbands – don't you want to follow God's Word?
 - Solution – the truth – God teaches equality and wives are to submit to Christlike treatment from their husbands
- 5. Build up scenarios that portrays you at fault for inaction, thus guaranteeing your sense of guilt and your willingness to do anything to alleviate it.
 - Where were you? If you would have been here this mess would have never happened.
 - Solution – the truth – What happened in my absence by someone else is not my responsibility
- 6. Accuse you of misdeeds, words, or actions to arouse your sense of guilt and make you believe you are the one with a problem in an interpersonal relationship difficulty. (This effectively takes the pressure off of them.)
 - You're always in a bad mood. Every time I say something you find fault. There's no talking to you – you take everything the wrong way.
 - Solution – the truth – I'm not always in a bad mood, I don't always find fault, I don't take everything wrong – these allegations are exaggerated expressions of frustration

FRIDAY

Read first sentence, "Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation." Thoughts?

What does this mean? Is it confusing? Why is it not acceptable to God?



If it said, “Bathing is not acceptable to God without soap and water” would that be confusing? Why would bathing not be acceptable without soap and water? Because it really wouldn’t be bathing, we wouldn’t be clean, and God wants us clean.

So, is confession really confession without repentance and reformation?

God doesn’t want simple confession. He wants us healed, restored, cleansed, renewed, saved. Thus He it is not “okay” or “acceptable” to Him if we try and substitute a false remedy that gives us false security but doesn’t transform and heal.

Read question 1, “What crucial...” thoughts? Was Jesus just “willing” to forgive, or did Jesus actually forgive?

Read and discuss questions 2-4.



Revival and Reformation Lesson 7 3Q 2013

Unity: The Bond of Revival

Thoughts about the title?

What does unity mean to you?

Any thoughts on what humanity, human relationships, would have been like had Adam and Eve not sinned?

What would you suggest interferes with unity?

Fear – when Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid because they were afraid – when God came looking for them in the garden, what was the state of Adam and Eve’s “unity”? Did Adam stand by Eve? Or did Adam try to separate himself from her? “It wasn’t me, it was the woman...” Why?

Imagine what Eve felt? “Thank you for your honesty husband” Doubtful – do you think she felt betrayed, hurt, saddened?

What caused the disunity?

Lies believed broke the circle of love and trust – broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness – this breaks unity.

Lies, fear and selfishness.

How do lies, fear and selfishness undermine unity today?

Why is there so much disunity within Christianity? Is it because truth and love predominate? Is it because the church is infected with lies, fear and selfishness?

What is God’s solution to bring unity?

- Truth and Love
- The Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of Truth and Love
- Jesus who embodied Truth and Love
- God who is the source of Truth and Love
- The Bible which teaches Truth and Love

Truth destroys lies, wins to trust, in trust the heart is opened and God pours His love into our hearts (Rom 5:5) and we stop living to protect self but to love God and others.



If God's solution is Truth and Love, taught by the Bible, brought by Christ, administered by the Spirit, then how does Satan counter God's remedy in the church?

By lies – what kind of lies are in the church and obstruct unity?

- Unity is found in correct doctrines rather than a personal relationship with Christ that changes the heart (The Apostles in came into unity, but still disagreed on various doctrines. Peter had to be corrected by Paul later.)
- Because unity is found in correct doctrine we must have doctrinal police to examine doctrines and determine who is of the unified faith...
- Because unity is found in correct doctrines we must attack other institutions that hold different doctrines
- Unity is found in correct behavior – dress, diet, day of worship, rather than in a change of heart motive found in relationship with Christ
- Unity is found in accepting legal solutions to our sin problem, rather than in heart transformation to be like Jesus
- Unity is found by conformity to a vote of church leadership, rather than unity is found in a love relationship with God that changes the heart
- The idea that if someone believes or practices religious rituals that are different it is sin
 - Is it sin to wear jewelry? Then what about the father putting a ring on the prodigal's finger
 - Is it sin to eat meat? Then what about Jesus' feeding the thousands with fish?
 - Is it sin to attend church on any day of the week? Like Wednesday prayer meeting or Sunday school?

Why do some people get angry and upset when others believe or practice differently? For instance, why are some in the church upset if others worship on a different day, or wear jewelry, or eat a different diet, or eat in a restaurant on Sabbath, or believe their deceased loved ones are in heaven or not?

Do we get angry or upset if, as non-smokers, we meet someone who believes smoking is good for their health? Why not? Do we get angry or upset if we meet someone who believes brushing and flossing one's teeth is harmful and therefore they don't do it? Why not?

Why do we get angry and upset if others don't believe the same way about God and religion as we do?

Why do some get divisive and seek to punish those who practice differently? Punishment could be removing from church office, spreading rumors or posting blogs attacking a person's teachings, or stoning, shooting, rioting and executing those who offend by speaking ill of one's spiritual leader or books.

Why do people get divisive and attack those who practice differently? Are such behaviors evidences of love?



In our own church, do our leaders deal with differences in love or fear and selfishness?

Is there a difference between attacking ideas, lies, distortions with truth, and attacking people?

Are we to present the truth in such ways that lies are overturned? Can we do that without attacking people who may believe those lies?

Can you love someone who believes differently than you? Can you fellowship with someone who believes differently than you?

Where do you draw the line in such fellowship, when we consider the Bible counsel to separate from those of the world, and the warning that bad company corrupts good character?

Do we find unity in denominational boundaries and doctrinal teaching, or do we find unity in Christ?

I have much greater unity with those who love God and others, regardless of denomination, than those of my denomination who are like the Pharisees in Christ's day, legalistically keeping the rules and aggressively protecting the "standards." What about you?

SUNDAY

The lesson refers us to Jesus prayer in John 17. Let's read some of John 17 together:

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: ¹ "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. [what does this mean? How is Christ glorified and how did He glorify the Father?] ² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. [What does this mean? Christ has the responsibility to save humanity] ³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. [What is life eternal? And what is Christ providing?]⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. [what work?] ...

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² **I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:** ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. [What does this mean? To be one – is this the same as at-one-ment? Did Jesus come to achieve atonement? What is atonement? How did Jesus achieve it? Is Jesus Himself telling us in this prayer? What is the glory of God? His character – Jesus gives us His character as Jesus possessed and revealed the true character of the Father!]

¹ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. 1984 (Jn 17:1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.



It is by coming back into the unity of God's character of love that we are reconciled to God. The lies are displaced, trust is reestablished, and the Holy Spirit takes all Christ achieved and reproduces it in us! It is amazing, beautiful, powerful and simple. God is Love. Life is built to operate upon love. Sin is selfishness and destroys. Christ came to reveal God, restore Love into the human species, develop a perfect character, and win us back to trust so that we might receive new hearts and minds, operating again on love.

This is the only unity that matters. This is the unity that comes from God and restores us to eternal life!

MONDAY

New Testament Illustrations of Unity read first paragraph, "The New Testament..." thoughts?

What was the society of the world like 2000 years ago? Was it much different in method and principle that ours today? In some ways was it even worse?

- Government sanctioned slavery
- Government sanctioned discrimination
- Government sanctioned immorality
- Government sanctioned violence – gladiators
- Government sanctioned worship – paganism

Did Christ and the Apostles seek to change the government? What was the mission of the church when led by Christ and the Apostles? To change the hearts of people.

What about today? What is supposed to be the mission of the church?

Is the church vulnerable to being derailed from its mission? How? Could it be derailed through trying to change the government?

- Abortion law
- Marriage law
- Promoting various candidates etc.

Has the recent laws regarding gay marriage brought more unity? Has the recent court rulings brought greater demonstrations of love, grace, kindness from the Christian community?

What is happening that Christians are responding with something other than love?

Could it be fear? Could these rulings incite fear in the hearts of Christians that cause them to justify unloving actions in order to protect what they believe is sacred?

Is this different that Muslims who act unloving when someone profanes the Prophet? Why do they do it? They believe they are protecting something sacred. Are such behaviors acts of love or motivated by fear?



What should be the Christian response when others act in ways that are contrary to our beliefs?

What should be the Christian response when the government acts in non-Christian ways, passing laws that promote, what we believe, is immoral?

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” We are in the world, not of the world.

We must remember, the United States is NOT God’s kingdom on earth. It is a human government, and like all human governments, operates on imposed law, run by selfish humans.

We are to promote the kingdom of God, not the kingdom of one earthly government. And how would you describe the kingdom of God?

And how would God’s kingdom respond to the ruling on gay marriage?

With Love and Truth! And what is the truth? In our world, marriage has two aspects. The sacred and the legal. The governments of the earth have the responsibility for legal, statutory aspects of human contract law, property, guardianship, inheritance, etc. including marriage and who can benefit from the legal protections and benefits of marriage contract law.

But human governments cannot and do not determine holiness, sacredness, sanctity, and spiritual unity or blessing associated with marriage. So, when a human government passes laws that homosexuals may marry, they can speak within the bounds of their authority and grant legal privileges for property, health care decision making, tax breaks etc. They cannot make something holy or blessed.

Do we get insecure, threatened, fearful, when activities are promoted that don’t correspond to ours? What is the Christian response? To love everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, and to promote the truth of God’s character, methods and design and leave it up to the Holy Spirit to convict of sin.

The lesson refers to the imagery of the Bible in regard to the unity that we are supposed to experience in the church. Paul uses the imagery of the body, and how we are all members of the body – how does this imagery help in your understanding of how we are to be unified together?

In the body are all the components alike? Do they all share the same appearance? Do they all have the same strengths and weaknesses? Do all the components of the body have the same abilities? Do they all have the same function? How are they unified?

Peter uses the illustration of a holy building – a temple, sanctuary – built together into a house for the Lord. How does this imagery help?

Who is the builder? Who brings the various pieces into alignment? Who is the building built upon? What is the implication for unity? We cannot be unified with each other until we first are unified with Christ!



TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The disciples were...” thoughts?

Do you agree? We need to unite upon the gospel – how would you describe the gospel? What is the good news upon which we need to unite?

Is it not the truth about God’s character and methods of love, how He built the universe to run and His plan through Christ to restore His universe back to His original ideal?

I want to thank all of you, here and around the world, who are uniting with us, who are unifying with us on the truth about God’s character of love. Through your support this gospel message is penetrating. Yet, as the message grows so does the opposition.

As you know I will be going to Singapore and Australia to do a series of presentations. I was notified last week, that one of the venues cancelled as a Chaplain was approached by someone who disagrees with this perspective and misrepresented what we teach. When the person who is organizing my schedule asked what was the problem, the Chaplain refused to discuss it.

Many of you are praying for this ministry regularly – we are thankful for your prayers and I would like to ask for your continued prayer, that God will move upon the hearts of people to prepare them to hear and give me the ability to present the truth about His kingdom in the most effective way possible. Also, please pray that doors of opportunity will continue to open and opposition will be moved out of the way.

The lesson speaks about present truth and that the church has been given a mission to prepare the world for Christ’s return, the message of the three angels of Revelation 14 which is the “everlasting gospel in the context of judgment, of obedience, and the Lord’s return.”

What do you think of the idea of the gospel in the context of judgment? Can it be presented in a way that actually obstructs the gospel?

What is the everlasting gospel? The truth about God’s character of love!

What if we present the gospel as Jesus dying to pay or legal penalty, in the context of God sitting in judgment of sin, and Jesus paying the penalty to turn away the Father’s wrath, so God will judge us saved, but that God will judge condemn and punish those who don’t accept the legal payment of Christ? If we present the first angel in this context are we presenting the eternal gospel or are we obstructing it?

It is my position we are obstructing the gospel with these ideas and obscuring the truth and delaying the second coming. The first angel says we are to worship him who made the heavens, earth, seas – in other words the text is telling us we are being called back to worship the Designer, the Creator, and



reject the dictator views of God which infected the church when Constantine converted. God's law is love and God's character is love! This is the eternal good news – God is NOT like Satan alleges, a cosmic dictator who inflicts punishment on law breakers. Sin destroys, God heals!

WEDNESDAY

Read last two paragraphs, “The Jerusalem Council...” thoughts? What is the lesson suggesting?

Is the lesson suggesting that, when the church meets in official session, and determines a doctrinal issue, that members are to surrender their thinking and agree with the decision of the church leadership?

Thoughts?

- Isn't that the same argument made by the Catholic church to Martin Luther and other Reformers?
- Should the Reformers have accepted the decision of the church councils?
- Should we today go along with the church leadership and General Conference votes, regardless of what the vote says, or only if we are convinced the decision is in harmony with God and His truth?
- What about women's ordination? This argument, the church in General Conference session has voted and the various divisions should abide by that vote. Thoughts?

Those who promote the position of the lesson will quote the following from one of the founders of our church, which was written in 1875:

I have been shown that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered. (3 Testimonies, p. 492, 1875)

Thoughts? Do we say, “well if she said it then we must believe” or do we think for ourselves? Is anyone uncomfortable questioning the decisions of the General Conference? Is anyone uncomfortable questioning after hearing what I just read? Why?

Here are some others quotations from EGW a little later in her life, note the change. For those who believe she was inspired, was she less inspired with these?

If it were possible, **the enemy would clog the wheels of progress, and prevent the truths of the gospel** from being circulated everywhere. With this object **he** leads men to feel that it is their privilege to control the consciences of their fellow-men according to their own perverted ideas. **They dismiss the Holy Spirit from their counsels**, and then, **under the power and name of the General Conference, they invent regulations** through which they compel men to be ruled **by their own ideas and not by the Holy Spirit.** {1888 1527.2}



The plans to obtain control of human minds and ability are as strange fire, which is an offense to God. And who are those who dare engage in this work? Men who have revealed that they do not have self-control, that they are not divested of selfishness. Unless these men shall themselves turn unto the Lord, they will die in their sins. There is scarcely a vestige of genuine truth remaining in them. The effort to manage others, which is made by those who cannot manage themselves, is one of the greatest fallacies that could exist. Let those who love to rule, begin the work where it should have begun years ago; let them rule themselves, and show that they are in subordination to God's rule, that they have been converted at heart. **Then they will at least not make their fellow-men groan under the galling yoke of their restrictive policy. Then there will be fewer prayers sent up to heaven in anguish of heart because of their selfish oppression.** {1888 1528.1} [how many Christians have been discouraged, left the church, because of restrictive rules put upon them by someone in church leadership? How many have failed to experience the grace, peace, love and joy of God, because someone in leadership has made religion an onerous and restrictive set of rules and burdens? Should we blindly surrender our judgment to the General Conference?]

"It has been some years since I have considered the General Conference as the voice of God." --17MR 216 (1898). LDE 50.3

One day at noon I was writing of the work that **might have been done at the last [1901] General Conference if the men in positions of trust had followed the will and way of God. Those who have had great light have not walked in the light.** The meeting was closed, and the break was not made. **Men did not humble themselves before the Lord as they should have done, and the Holy Spirit was not imparted.** {LDE 57.1}

Thoughts? Should we blindly adhere to the rulings of the General Conference or any other human body, or should we humbly, prayerfully, study for ourselves and decide for ourselves?

Here is a quotation from one of the pioneers of our church found in *The Desire of Ages*:

As the light and life of men was rejected by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation. Again and again the history of Christ's withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; **but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light,** and those that bore it were **forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth.** In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented. **Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love,** in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. **And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience.** {DA 232.2}



Do we expect the final work to be done from the General Conference? Or is the final work to be done by you and me?

Don't be discouraged, embrace the truth about God's character of love and dedicate yourself to sharing it, and when you do, expect all manner of evil to be said against you falsely, because the devil wants to shut down every source of light.

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "Every Christian..." thoughts?

What, according to this, is to be the ambition of the believer? Do you agree?

And is there a connection to revealing Christ in our characters and experiencing unity? Is it not the key?

As I have travelled around the world, I have found the most wonderful unity and bonds of friendship with those who love God and cherish His character of love.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 1 – does this question sound like they are most concerned with presenting God's kingdom of love, or protecting an institution, and even restricting its growth and movement forward in the truth?

Read question 3 – discuss – how do we, move forward in the truth and challenge our church to grow in the most gracious way possible?



Lesson 8: Discernment: The Safeguard of Revival

SABBATH

“Consider how I love Your precepts; revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness. The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever” (Psalm 119:159-160, NKJV).

What is “discernment”?

1. the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure : skill in discerning
2. an act of perceiving or discerning something.

Discern:

1. to **detect** with the eyes <*discerned* a figure approaching through the fog>
 - a. to detect with senses other than vision <*discerned* a strange odor>
2. to **recognize** or identify as separate and **distinct** : **discriminate** <*discern* right from wrong>
3. to come to know or recognize mentally <unable to *discern* his motives>

Origin: Middle English, from Middle French *discerner*, from Latin *discernere* to separate, distinguish between, from *dis-* apart + *cernere* to sift.

Any thoughts regarding the story told of the man claiming he was cured of lung cancer while smoking a cigar? How do the two law concepts relate?

SUNDAY

God’s Will and His Word

“All true spirituality is focused on knowing God and doing His will (*John 17:3, Heb. 10:7*).” AMEN. Well said.

Isn’t the root of all [spiritual] discernment the knowledge of God and His ways/methods/principles??

What is God’s will? Is it not for EVERYONE to be healed, and none be lost? Is it not for those on the path to healing to share the source of our healing with those who are “dying”? Is it not to have a people who speak about God “that which is right”? Did not Christ do “God’s Will” in completely revealing God Himself [Heb. 10:7]?

The lesson states “the Word of God is the foundation and heart of all true revival.” How, then, can we have upwards of 34,000 sects of Christianity all using the same Word of God? Might there be something else involved? Think the three threads of scripture, science, and our experience [relationship].



MONDAY

God's Love and His Law

Is there any difference between God's love and His Law??

God is the life-giver. From the beginning, all His laws were ordained to life. But sin broke in upon the order that God had established, and discord followed. So long as sin exists, suffering and death are inevitable. It is only because the Redeemer has borne the curse of sin in our behalf, that man can hope to escape, in his own person, its dire results. {AG 73.3}

“Revival is all about knowing Jesus. It is a reawakening of the spiritual faculties of the soul. It is a personal and vital experience with the Savior. Knowing Jesus-really knowing Him as a friend-is the essence of all revival. From the depth of his personal experience with Jesus, the apostle Paul shared that he is praying for the Ephesians to “know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (*Eph. 3:19, NKJV*.)” Again, very well said from the lesson.

³ Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a ^dliar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But ^ewhoever keeps His word, truly the love of God ¹is perfected ^fin him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶ ^gHe who says he abides in Him ^hought himself also to walk just as He walked. 1 John 2: 3-6.

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 1 John 4:7-8.

²⁰ If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also. 1 John 4: 20-21.

TUESDAY

Formalism, Fanaticism, and Faith

Do we see any examples of formalism in Christianity today?? in Adventism?

- Baptism by immersion vs sprinkling. Baptism by an ordained minister.
- Rote / perfunctory prayer.
- Only certain types of music allowed in church / on Sabbath.
- Day of worship. Might we worship on the “correct” day and miss the relationship with its Creator? Might we worship on the “incorrect” day and love with all our hearts/minds/spirits?
- What foods are acceptable, etc.
- Being resistant to new “light” – greater revelations of God.



What about fanaticism??

- Following false messiahs.
- “Faith” healings, Snake handling, speaking in tongues, etc.
- Bombing abortion clinics / shooting physicians who perform abortions
- Belief that if a church doesn’t have 10,000 members or more, a coffee shop, and its own football team, it has nothing to offer.
- Belief that if a church has more than 30 members, it has nothing to offer.
- Failure to test new “light” against Scripture, known science, and our experience.
- Belief that only men have anything to contribute to a worship service or discussion about religion.

What is “Faith”? see Heb. 11: 1

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Substance = under standing. How many of us can conclusively prove that Earth was created in 6 days?? How many have “faith” [based on understanding] that the Earth was created in 6 days?

WEDNESDAY

Ministry and Miracles.

I saw a billboard that asked “Do You Need a Miracle?” Come to our church on this date and we guarantee you one. I didn’t need a miracle, so I didn’t go. I wondered, though, if people were disappointed.

We have discussed many times in class that miracles are NOT for the strong in faith, they are for the weak.

The lesson states: “False revivals emphasize spectacular signs and wonders; genuine revivals recognize that the greatest miracle is a changed life.” Yet again, well said. The greatest miracle is our character transformation, and it’s what we will spend eternity sharing with angels and un-fallen intelligent beings. What does the following passage represent?

12 I tell you for certain that if you have faith in me, you will do the same things that I am doing. You will do even greater things, now that I am going back to the Father. 13 Ask me, and I will do whatever you ask. This way the Son will bring honor to the Father. John 14: 12-13. CEV.

Ever notice that the Son was glorifying the Father and vice versa? What does this tell us about their



relationship?

What about this one?

⁹ The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. II Thess. 2: 9-12.

Why do the wicked die in the end?? BECAUSE THEY DID NOT RECEIVE THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH. How much more clear can Scripture be??

THURSDAY

Fruits and Gifts

Have you ever known someone with strong discernment?? Were they born with it, or were they reborn with it? see I Cor. 12: 10.

How can we be more discerning?

*13 For every one that useth milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.
14 But strong meat belongeth to those who are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Heb. 5: 13-14.*

What is the purpose of ALL of the spiritual gifts?? The building up and strengthening of the body of Christ [the Church].

Can we have discernment without the specific gift of the spirit? Can we use discernment for self instead of building up the church?

Why do we need to look for fruits of the Spirit as well as gifts??



Reformation: The Outgrowth of Revival, Lesson 9, 3Q 2013

What exactly is reformation?

According to dictionary.com:

re·form

noun

1. the improvement or amendment of what is wrong, corrupt, unsatisfactory, etc.
2. an instance of this.
3. the amendment of conduct, belief, etc.

verb (used with object)

4. to change to a better state, form, etc.; improve by alteration, substitution, abolition, etc.
5. to cause (a person) to abandon wrong or evil ways of life or conduct.
6. to put an end to (abuses, disorders, etc.).
7. to abandon evil conduct or error: The drunkard promised to reform.

Are there different types of reformations? (social, political, medical, spiritual) How does social, political, or medical reform happen? Who is responsible for these types of reformations? What is the normal method for these types of reform? (change the laws to change behavior)

How does spiritual reformation happen? Who is responsible for spiritual reformation?

being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)

for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. (Philippians 2:13)

Is spiritual reformation the same thing as sanctification? Who is responsible for sanctification?

“Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ (Acts 26:15-18)



Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:16)

SABBATH

Memory Text: “For both *He who sanctifies* and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11, NKJV).

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.” (1 Corinthians 1:30-31, NKJV)

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:30-31, NIV)

But God has brought you into union with Christ Jesus, and God has made Christ to be our wisdom. By him we are put right with God; we become God's holy people and are set free. So then, as the scripture says, “Whoever wants to boast must boast of what the Lord has done.” (1 Corinthians 1:30-31, GNB)

The sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity. Gospel religion is Christ in the life—a living, active principle. It is the grace of Christ revealed in character and wrought out in good works. The principles of the gospel cannot be disconnected from any department of practical life. Every line of Christian experience and labor is to be a representation of the life of Christ.

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

If Christ is our sanctification, is there anything we can do to cooperate? (Get with Christ!) And how do we do that?



“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.” (John 17:17-19)

Does this give us any insight into how we cooperate? How does the truth sanctify? How do we become acquainted with the truth? (Scripture, science, experience) Do you think it’s enough if all we do is let someone else study it and present their findings? Why not? How important is it, then, to study for ourselves? If it is so important, are we doing it? If not, why not? What are some of the things you have experienced that get in the way of studying? For myself: Lack of time, busy doing other things,

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17. The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, “Sanctify them through Your truth; Your word is truth.” John 17:17. If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us. {COL 100.1}

So, why are the Scriptures “the great agency in the transformation of character”?

Is it possible to be familiar with the word, and *not* sanctified? How do we know? What evidence do we have for this?

John 5:38-40 But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

So, how did they manage to study the word diligently and still miss the sanctifying truth? Some possible answers: 1) studied to affirm what they already thought, 2) misunderstood God’s character, 3) trusted their own understanding rather than asking God to lead them, 4) they did not study to know God.

Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the



truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan. {Christ's Object Lessons 408.3}

The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man's heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; **but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form.** "Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice." Ezekiel 33:31. The apostle Paul points out that this will be the special characteristic of those who live just before Christ's second coming. He says, "In the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves; ... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Timothy 3:1-5. {COL 411.1}

So how can we make sure that we avoid the problem the Pharisees and those described in 1 Tim. had? What does it sound like that they missed in their study? What, then, should be the focus or purpose of our study? (Relationship with God...getting to know Him better)

Read the first paragraph in Sabbath's lesson:

Revival is an ongoing process. Daily our Lord invites us into the joy of His presence. Just as Israel was nourished by the manna that fell from heaven, Jesus spreads out a spiritual banquet for us every day. Daily our souls are nourished, our spirits refreshed, and our hearts revived as we kneel quietly before His throne, meditating upon His Word. True spiritual renewal leads to a change in our thought patterns, habits, and lifestyle; it's what we call a "reformation."

Why is revival an ongoing process? How important is it to study daily? How can we make sure that we study correctly? (In other words, how do we make sure we don't end up like the Pharisees, having knowledge of God's word, but not knowing Him?) Some suggestions:



- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide our study, specifically for the purpose of getting to know Jesus
- Have an open mind
- Study through the lens of Jesus' life and natural law
- Make sure all three threads are in harmony (Scripture, science, experience)

Does our method for studying the Bible matter? What are some positive methods for studying? (Inductive Bible study; reading whole books to get the “big picture”; word studies; thematic studies; studying in small groups; application studies-SOAP: Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer)

We cannot obtain wisdom without earnest attention and prayerful study. Some portions of Scripture are indeed too plain to be misunderstood; but there are others whose meaning does not lie on the surface, to be seen at a glance. Scripture must be compared with scripture. There must be careful research and prayerful reflection. And such study will be richly repaid. As the miner discovers veins of precious metal concealed beneath the surface of the earth, so will he who perseveringly searches the word of God as for hid treasure, find truths of the greatest value, which are concealed from the view of the careless seeker. The words of inspiration, pondered in the heart, will be as streams flowing from the fountain of life.

Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages, we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given. When Nathanael came to Jesus, the Saviour exclaimed, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” [John 1:47.] Nathanael said, “Whence knowest thou me?” Jesus answered, “Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.” And Jesus will see us also in the secret places of prayer, if we will seek him for light, that we may know what is truth. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance.

The Holy Spirit exalts and glorifies the Saviour. It is his office to present Christ, the purity of his righteousness, and the great salvation that we have through him. Jesus says, “He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.” [John 16:14.] The Spirit of truth is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. How must God esteem the human race, since he gave his Son to die for them, and appoints his Spirit to be man's teacher and continual guide. {CE 58-59}

What are some negative methods? (taking things out of context; studying to prove our own points, biases, or ideas; leaving Jesus out of the study; never studying for application)

What should we do with what we learn as we study?

But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop (Luke 8:15). (in other versions of the parable, retain=accept, understand)



He replied, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice (Luke 8:21).

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock (Matt. 7:24-25).

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20).

Here is a beautiful description of the sanctifying work of God’s Word on our hearts:

The truths of the word of God meet man’s great practical necessity—the conversion of the soul through faith. These grand principles are not to be thought too pure and holy to be brought into the daily life. They are truths which reach to heaven and compass eternity, yet their vital influence is to be woven into human experience. They are to permeate all the great things and all the little things of life.

Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving.

The world regards as a mystery the man who is imbued with this principle. The selfish, money-loving man lives only to secure for himself the riches, honors, and pleasures of this world. He loses the eternal world from his reckoning. But with the follower of Christ these things will not be all-absorbing. For Christ’s sake he will labor and deny self, that he may aid in the great work of saving souls who are without Christ and without hope in the world. Such a man the world cannot understand; for he is keeping in view eternal realities. The love of Christ with its redeeming power has come into the heart. This love masters every other motive, and raises its possessor above the corrupting influence of the world.

The word of God is to have a sanctifying effect on our association with every member of the human family. The leaven of truth will not produce the spirit of rivalry, the love of ambition, the desire to be first. True, heaven-born love is not selfish and changeable. It is not dependent on human praise. The heart of him who receives the grace of God overflows with love for God and for those for whom Christ died. Self is not struggling for recognition. He does not love others because they love and please him, because they appreciate his merits, but



because they are Christ's purchased possession. If his motives, words, or actions are misunderstood or misrepresented, he takes no offense, but pursues the even tenor of his way. He is kind and thoughtful, humble in his opinion of himself, yet full of hope, always trusting in the mercy and love of God.

The apostle exhorts us, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:15, 16. The grace of Christ is to control the temper and the voice. Its working will be seen in politeness and tender regard shown by brother for brother, in kind, encouraging words. An angel presence is in the home. The life breathes a sweet perfume, which ascends to God as holy incense. Love is manifested in kindness, gentleness, forbearance, and long-suffering.

The countenance is changed. Christ abiding in the heart shines out in the faces of those who love Him and keep His commandments. Truth is written there. The sweet peace of heaven is revealed. There is expressed a habitual gentleness, a more than human love.

The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Through its life-giving power it brings all there is of mind and soul and strength into harmony with the divine life. Man with his human nature becomes a partaker of divinity. Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. As these changes are effected, angels break forth in rapturous song, and God and Christ rejoice over souls fashioned after the divine similitude. {COL 100-102.3}

Don't you want that kind of change? Do you think it's worth the effort of spending time with God in prayerful study of His word? Why do you think it can be so hard for us to do something we *want* to do, that we know is so important, and for which the benefits are a relationship with Jesus and eternal life? (Because we have an enemy who will do all he can to keep us from moving into that relationship with Jesus.)

If reformation is an outgrowth of revival, and revival is the result of a growing relationship with Jesus, then is it likely that the prophets would call for reformation?

SUNDAY

So, let's take a look at Sunday's lesson, titled, "The Prophet's Appeal for Reformation." It starts with this sentence: "God often sent His prophets to lead Israel into revival." Why did God need to do this? Because they had drifted away from Him...the relationship was suffering as a result of their choices.



Let's look at the second paragraph in Sunday's lesson:

Revival and reformation occurred in the Old Testament when there was a renewed heart commitment to obey God's will. When Israel "turned to its own way" and "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25), God withdrew His blessing, and the nation faced disaster and defeat.

Is a "renewed heart commitment to obey God's will" all that is needed for revival and reformation? What happened shortly after the Israelites left Egypt and promised to obey all that God had said?

So let's look at the example the lesson points to...the story in 2 Chronicles 20:1-20. Three neighboring countries band together to make war on Jehoshaphat. When he hears of this, the first thing he does is proclaim a fast. What is the purpose of fasting? Is it reform-oriented, or relationship-oriented?

The second thing Jehoshaphat does is pray. What is the purpose of prayer? Is it reform-oriented, or relationship-oriented?

At the end of his prayer, Jehoshaphat says, "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you." (vs 12) and all of Judah is there with him before the Lord.

Does all of this sound like a call to reform or a call to relationship? It's all about the relationship!

MONDAY

Let's look at Monday's lesson, titled, "Paul's Appeal for Reformation in Corinth"

First two sentences: In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul expresses great concern regarding their spiritual condition. Many members had drifted from God's ideal.

What is God's ideal that they had drifted away from? Were their actions the problem, or were they the symptom of the problem?

The lesson suggests we look at some verses in 1 Corinthians to see Paul's counsel for the church:



1 Cor. 6: 19-20 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Does this sound like an appeal for reformation, or a reminder of relationship? How does the reminder that we are designed to be temples for God's presence affect what we do?

1 Cor. 9:24-27 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

What is the prize Paul is talking about here? Eternal life? And what is eternal life? (John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.) So what is it that the runners are fixing their eyes on? Does this sound like an appeal for reformation, or an appeal for relationship?

1 Cor. 13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.



Does this sound like an appeal for reformation, or an appeal for relationship?

1 Cor. 15: 1-2 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

What was the gospel he preached to them that he is reminding them of here?

1 Cor. 2:1-2 When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

What is the testimony about God? What do we learn when we focus on Jesus Christ? Does this sound like Paul was preaching a gospel of reformation, or a gospel of relationship?

Let's look at the last few sentences on Monday's lesson:

The Holy Spirit brought the Corinthians spiritual renewal. This revival brought a corresponding reformation. Reformation led to changed habits, changed lives, and changed relationships. The Corinthians still faced spiritual challenges. They had their share of trials, but they made significant advances in their Christian faith. Revival and reformation are not some panacea to solve all of our spiritual problems. They are part of an ongoing faith journey.

Why are revival and reformation “part of an ongoing faith journey?”

TUESDAY

“Revelation's Appeal for Reformation in Ephesus

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. (Rev. 2:1-5)



What kind of people are being described here? Are these worldly ungodly people? They're a church, with lots of good actions...but what are they missing?

Why would God say He would "remove your lampstand from its place" if they do not repent? Why would you remove a lamp? Only if the light wasn't working, right? What did they use in their lamps to power the light? Oil...which represents what? The Holy Spirit. And what does the Holy Spirit do? He dwells in our hearts, recreating Jesus' character in us. Without the relationship, the light goes out.

Jesus pointed out the power of false teaching to destroy the appreciation and desire for truth. "No man," He said, "having drunk old wine straightway desires new: for he says, The old is better." All the truth that has been given to the world through patriarchs and prophets shone out in new beauty in the words of Christ. But the scribes and Pharisees had no desire for the precious new wine. Until emptied of the old traditions, customs, and practices, they had no place in mind or heart for the teachings of Christ. They clung to the dead forms, and turned away from the living truth and the power of God.

It was this that proved the ruin of the Jews, and it will prove the ruin of many souls in our own day. Thousands are making the same mistake as did the Pharisees whom Christ reproved at Matthew's feast. Rather than give up some cherished idea, or discard some idol of opinion, many refuse the truth which comes down from the Father of light. They trust in self, and depend upon their own wisdom, and do not realize their spiritual poverty. They insist on being saved in some way by which they may perform some important work. When they see that there is no way of weaving self into the work, they reject the salvation provided.

A legal religion can never lead souls to Christ; for it is a loveless, Christless religion. Fasting or prayer that is actuated by a self-justifying spirit is an abomination in the sight of God. The solemn assembly for worship, the round of religious ceremonies, the external humiliation, the imposing sacrifice, proclaim that the doer of these things regards himself as righteous, and as entitled to heaven; but it is all a deception. Our own works can never purchase salvation.

As it was in the days of Christ, so it is now; the Pharisees do not know their spiritual destitution. To them comes the message, "Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear." Revelation 3:17, 18. Faith and love are the gold tried in the fire. But with many the gold has become dim, and the rich treasure has been lost. The righteousness of Christ is to them as a robe unworn, a fountain untouched. To them it is said, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and



repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” Revelation 2:4, 5.

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.” Psalm 51:17. Man must be emptied of self before he can be, in the fullest sense, a believer in Jesus. When self is renounced, then the Lord can make man a new creature. New bottles can contain the new wine. The love of Christ will animate the believer with new life. In him who looks unto the Author and Finisher of our faith the character of Christ will be manifest. {DA 279-280}

Let’s look at the bottom of Tuesday’s lesson:

Ephesus, here, is equated with the New Testament church from approximately A.D. 31 to A.D. 100. These early Christians were zealous for their faith. They labored unceasingly for the advancement of the gospel. The disciples diligently preserved the doctrinal purity of the church. They had no tolerance for heresy and were fierce defenders of truth.

As time went on, however, the members began to lose their “first love.” They substituted duty for devotion. Doing Jesus’ work became more important than their relationship with Him. Gradually and almost imperceptibly, their experience with Jesus began slipping away. They were laboring hard to defend the faith, but something vital was missing in their own spiritual experience. Love for Jesus and for one another was desperately lacking.

How do you think they “lost their first love?” If a married couple ceases talking, does that affect the relationship? If they stop spending time together, continuing to learn and appreciate each other, does that affect the relationship? What if just one does this? Does the relationship still suffer?

Let’s look at the questions at the bottom of Tuesday’s lesson:

What was it like when you first came to know Jesus? How can you still maintain that “first love”? Why is it so important that you do? What things threaten to turn you away from that love?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson suggests that we naturally think about Martin Luther when we think about reformation... What kind of person was Martin Luther? What was the first message that turned his life around?

When it appeared to Luther that all was lost, God raised up a friend and helper for him. The pious Staupitz opened the word of God to Luther’s mind and bade him look away from



himself, cease the contemplation of infinite punishment for the violation of God's law, and look to Jesus, his sin-pardoning Saviour. "Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, throw yourself into the Redeemer's arms. Trust in Him, in the righteousness of His life, in the atonement of His death.... Listen to the Son of God. He became man to give you the assurance of divine favor." "Love Him who first loved you."—Ibid., b. 2, ch. 4. Thus spoke this messenger of mercy. His words made a deep impression upon Luther's mind. After many a struggle with long-cherished errors, he was enabled to grasp the truth, and peace came to his troubled soul. {GC 123.3}

Interesting, isn't it, that the first thing to give him hope was someone telling him to look away from himself & look to Jesus? After this, he devoted himself even more to studying the Bible, and after much urging also to preach. Then he visited Rome, and it was there, after seeing the material wealth but spiritual poverty of the church leaders that he heard the phrase, "the just shall live by faith" while climbing Pilate's staircase. He eventually stood to oppose the sale of indulgences, which the church had set up in order to raise money to build St. Peter's Church in Rome.

Luther, though still a papist of the strictest sort, was filled with horror at the blasphemous assumptions of the indulgence mongers. Many of his own congregation had purchased certificates of pardon, and they soon began to come to their pastor, confessing their various sins, and expecting absolution, not because they were penitent and wished to reform, but on the ground of the indulgence. Luther refused them absolution, and warned them that unless they should repent and reform their lives, they must perish in their sins. In great perplexity they repaired to Tetzl with the complaint that their confessor had refused his certificates; and some boldly demanded that their money be returned to them. The friar was filled with rage. He uttered the most terrible curses, caused fires to be lighted in the public squares, and declared that he "had received an order from the pope to burn all heretics who presumed to oppose his most holy indulgences."—D'Aubigne, b. 3, ch. 4.

Luther now entered boldly upon his work as a champion of the truth. His voice was heard from the pulpit in earnest, solemn warning. He set before the people the offensive character of sin, and taught them that it is impossible for man, by his own works, to lessen its guilt or evade its punishment. Nothing but repentance toward God and faith in Christ can save the sinner. The grace of Christ cannot be purchased; it is a free gift. He counseled the people not to buy indulgences, but to look in faith to a crucified Redeemer. He related his own painful experience in vainly seeking by humiliation and penance to secure salvation, and assured his hearers that it was by looking away from himself and believing in Christ that he found peace and joy. {GC 129}



How did Luther know the teaching of the indulgence sellers was wrong? Because he had studied and learned of Christ for himself. What were his opponents like? What was it that turned them away from hearing Luther's message?

Many dignitaries, of both church and state, were convicted of the truthfulness of his theses; but they soon saw that the acceptance of these truths would involve great changes. To enlighten and reform the people would be virtually to undermine the authority of Rome, to stop thousands of streams now flowing into her treasury, and thus greatly to curtail the extravagance and luxury of the papal leaders. Furthermore, to teach the people to think and act as responsible beings, looking to Christ alone for salvation, would overthrow the pontiff's throne and eventually destroy their own authority. For this reason they refused the knowledge tendered them of God and arrayed themselves against Christ and the truth by their opposition to the man whom He had sent to enlighten them. {GC 131}

What motivated his opponents? Self! And what motivated Luther? Love for God, love for truth, and love for the people. What were some of the results of Luther's stand for truth?

Luther's teachings attracted the attention of thoughtful minds throughout all Germany. From his sermons and writings issued beams of light which awakened and illuminated thousands. A living faith was taking the place of the dead formalism in which the church had so long been held. The people were daily losing confidence in the superstitions of Romanism. The barriers of prejudice were giving way. The word of God, by which Luther tested every doctrine and every claim, was like a two-edged sword, cutting its way to the hearts of the people. Everywhere there was awakening a desire for spiritual progress. Everywhere was such a hungering and thirsting after righteousness as had not been known for ages. The eyes of the people, so long directed to human rites and earthly mediators, were now turning in penitence and faith to Christ and Him crucified. {GC 133}

Despite all the opposition and persecution Luther faced, he still stood. What was it that kept him so strong?

"O almighty and everlasting God," he pleaded, "how terrible is this world! Behold, it openeth its mouth to swallow me up, and I have so little trust in Thee.... If it is only in the strength of this world that I must put my trust, all is over.... My last hour is come, my condemnation has been pronounced.... O God, do Thou help me against all the wisdom of the world. Do this, ... Thou alone; ... for this is not my work, but Thine. I have nothing to do here, nothing to contend for with these great ones of the world.... But the cause is Thine, ... and it is a righteous and eternal cause. O Lord, help me! Faithful and unchangeable God, in no man do I place my



trust.... All that is of man is uncertain; all that cometh of man fails.... Thou hast chosen me for this work.... Stand at my side, for the sake of Thy well-beloved Jesus Christ, who is my defense, my shield, and my strong tower.”—Ibid., b. 7, ch. 8.

An all-wise Providence had permitted Luther to realize his peril, that he might not trust to his own strength and rush presumptuously into danger. Yet it was not the fear of personal suffering, a dread of torture or death, which seemed immediately impending, that overwhelmed him with its terror. He had come to the crisis, and he felt his insufficiency to meet it. Through his weakness the cause of truth might suffer loss. Not for his own safety, but for the triumph of the gospel did he wrestle with God. Like Israel’s, in that night struggle beside the lonely stream, was the anguish and conflict of his soul. Like Israel, he prevailed with God. In his utter helplessness his faith fastened upon Christ, the mighty Deliverer. He was strengthened with the assurance that he would not appear alone before the council. Peace returned to his soul, and he rejoiced that he was permitted to uplift the word of God before the rulers of the nations.

With his mind stayed upon God, Luther prepared for the struggle before him. He thought upon the plan of his answer, examined passages in his own writings, and drew from the Holy Scriptures suitable proofs to sustain his positions. Then, laying his left hand on the Sacred Volume, which was open before him, he lifted his right hand to heaven and vowed “to remain faithful to the gospel, and freely to confess his faith, even should he seal his testimony with his blood.”—Ibid., b. 7, ch. 8. {GC 156-157}

He kept his mind stayed on God...he continued to study for himself...he was open to having others show him his errors if they showed him from Scripture how he was wrong.

Luther ended up excommunicated by the pope, and in danger for his life. I read this interesting quote regarding the presenting of truth:

Opposition is the lot of all whom God employs to present truths specially applicable to their time. There was a present truth in the days of Luther,—a truth at that time of special importance; there is a present truth for the church today. He who does all things according to the counsel of His will has been pleased to place men under various circumstances and to enjoin upon them duties peculiar to the times in which they live and the conditions under which they are placed. If they would prize the light given them, broader views of truth would be opened before them. But truth is no more desired by the majority today than it was by the papists who opposed Luther. There is the same disposition to accept the theories and traditions of men instead of the word of God as in former ages. Those who present the truth for this time should not expect to be received with greater favor than were earlier reformers. The great controversy between truth and error, between Christ and Satan, is to increase in intensity to the close of this world’s history.



Said Jesus to His disciples: “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.” John 15:19, 20. And on the other hand our Lord declared plainly: “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” Luke 6:26. The spirit of the world is no more in harmony with the spirit of Christ today than in earlier times, and those who preach the word of God in its purity will be received with no greater favor now than then. The forms of opposition to the truth may change, the enmity may be less open because it is more subtle; but the same antagonism still exists and will be manifested to the end of time. {GC 143-144}

Do you think you could stand in the face of opposition? Would you be prepared? Do you have the relationship with Christ, that, with eyes fixed on Him, would give you what you need to face trouble and persecution?

THURSDAY

First paragraph on Thursday’s lesson:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a reform movement.

Is being a “reform movement” a good thing? Should our church be a reform movement, or a revival movement? Which do you think would be more powerful?

Continuing that paragraph: It was raised up by God to restore biblical truths lost sight of many centuries ago. Although the Holy Spirit worked powerfully through the Reformers, there were vital truths that they did not fully understand. God still had more truth to reveal to His people.

Does God still have more truth to reveal to His people? How long will there be more truth to reveal? Will there ever be a time when we “know it all”? Read the next two paragraphs:

God is not interested in our understanding truth merely to fill our minds with more religious knowledge. Biblical truths are windows into His very heart. They reveal something about His character. The more clearly that we understand the truths of His Word, the more completely we will understand the depth of His love. False doctrine distorts His character. Truth unmask the



devil's lies and reveals who he really is (take, for instance, eternal torment in hell as a prime example of what lurks in Satan's heart).

From the inception of the great controversy in heaven, Satan has attempted to malign the character of God. He has lied about God's intentions toward His creatures. But, in the life that He lived, in the truths that He taught, and in the death that He died, Jesus revealed what His heavenly Father was really like.

Read God's end-time message of revival and reformation (Rev. 14:6-7, 12).

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” Rev 14:6-7

This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus. Rev. 14:12

What do these verses teach us about the character of God? What is the eternal gospel? How do we give God glory? What are His commands? What does it mean to remain faithful to Jesus? How does this impact the revival of His people?

What happens when a revival begins? I read a very interesting quote:

When churches are revived, it is because some individual seeks earnestly for the blessing of God. He hungers and thirsts after God, and asks in faith, and receives accordingly. He goes to work in earnest, feeling his great dependence upon the Lord, and souls are aroused to seek for a like blessing, and a season of refreshing falls on the hearts of men. The extensive work will not be neglected. The larger plans will be laid at the right time; but personal, individual effort and interest for your friends and neighbors, will accomplish much more than can be estimated. It is for the want of this kind of labor that souls for whom Christ died are perishing. {Christian Service 121}

So according to this quote, how many people does it take to start a revival? Just one! So the bottom-line question would be...who will be that one?



FRIDAY

Further Study: “A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.”-Ellen G. White, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Feb. 25, 1902.

“Whatever may be their profession, it is only those who are world servers at heart that act from policy rather than principle in religious things. We should choose the right because it is right, and leave consequences with God. To men of principle, faith, and daring, the world is indebted for its great reforms. By such men the work of reform for this time must be carried forward.”-Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 460.

Discussion Questions:

- In the call for revival and reformation, what must come first, revival or reformation, and why?
- Why are revival and reformation things of the heart more than anything else? Why must they start individually, with each of us making a conscious choice to renew our walk with the Lord, to draw closer to Him, ~~and to seek more earnestly than ever to do His will?~~ What is the danger of waiting for the person next to you in the pew to do this, or waiting for the pastor to initiate this? Why must you, yourself, now, make the choice to surrender even more fully to the Lord so that He will work in you?
- Nothing could kill the call to revival and reformation more than a harsh and judgmental spirit toward those who don't seem to live up to the standards that we think they should. How can we learn to avoid that dangerous pitfall while at the same time standing for the truths that have been entrusted to us?



Lesson 10 Reformation: The Willingness to Grow and Change

Is there ever a time when we are not changing?

- The better question is: Is there ever a time we are not growing?
- Can we grow in the wrong direction?
- The question is not whether we are growing or not, the question is into what likeness are we growing/changing.
- We are changing and growing, whether we like it or not.

Read the Memory Verse:

- James 4:6-7 (NKJV)
 - a. But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."
- Why does God resist the proud?
 - a. Is it because he is "a jealous God" and he will "have no other gods before" Him?
 - b. Is it against God's law?
 - c. Is it because it is not in our best interest to be proud?
 - d. One of my main tasks as a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon is to monitor my patients bone growth.

It is upsetting to me, if I see one of their bones growing crooked.

Many times it is nothing they directly did to cause it, but other times it is.

Why am I concerned?

I want the best for "my kids."

- We will self-destruct if we continue into our own selfish and proud direction.
- We will grow into beings that are terminal by our condition.
- We are God's children and He wants the best for His kids.
- How does He give grace to the humble?
 - a. Is this an arbitrary imposition on God's part?
 - b. Scenario #1: We fulfill certain requirements and conditions; therefore, we are given (rewarded) with gifts which we otherwise would not be eligible to receive. It is at this point that we are given a quantity of grace. (How do we measure that? A cup full?, etc) If we get enough of this good stuff along with other good stuff called faith, and it is then that we are declared righteous and thereby saved.
- "To be pardoned in the way that Christ pardons, is not only to be forgiven, but to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. The Lord says, "A new heart will I give unto thee." The image of Christ is to be stamped upon the very mind, heart, and soul. The apostle says, "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). Without the transforming process which can come alone through divine power, the original propensities to sin are left in the heart in all their strength, to



forge new chains, to impose a slavery that can never be broken by human power." – {3SM 190.2}

When you read this memory text, what do you understand the phrase "submit to God" means.

- Is this a command to 'arbitrarily' give up your desires and submit to someone else's (God) desires or plans for you?
- Could this not be that your desires are so in harmony with God that you are doing "God's will."
- See Friday's quote: second paragraph, DA 668 "All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us." – {DA 668.3}
- Reading the same memory text from a different translation and reading one prior text that gives a reason for our actions.
 - a. James 4:5-7 (God's Word) "Do you think this passage means nothing? It says, "The Spirit that lives in us wants us to be his own." But God shows us even more kindness. Scripture says, "God opposes arrogant people, but he is kind to humble people." So place yourselves under God's authority. Resist the devil, and he will run away from you.
 - b. The reason that God shows us this kindness and wishes us to be changed from arrogant people into humble people is that He wants us to be His own.
 - c. The way we were designed and created to be his humans.
 - d. This was the design template, the original plan, and Christ's work was to come to this earth that we might be re-created into His likeness and once again be like Him.
 - e. That is an amazing reality.

SABBATH

READ THE FIRST PARAGRAPH: "Before Pentecost. . ."

Was this any different after Pentecost?

Acts 1:6-8 (NASBStr) "So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

What was the result of the Pentecost experience?

So, if that was the result, what was the purpose of the Pentecost experience and transformation?



So was the purpose of the Pentecost outpouring of the Holy Spirit for the believers or for the unbelievers?

- God's gifts **to** us are not **for** us.
- It is not about us, it is about **OTHERS/HIM**.
- We are so polluted and changed by this infection of selfishness, that we (most of the time) think about how God's gifts are given to us for our purposes or wishes.
- The gifts of the Spirit are not about us.

Read second paragraph: But the emphasis should not be on our own growth, development or changes.

As we work for others we grow. The focus should not be on our own growth and change. It should always be on our service for others. But as we work for others. As we work for God with others, we will grow and change into His likeness.

SUNDAY

The disciples growth and changes:

- Luke 9:54 (NKJV) "And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?"
- Matthew 20:21 (NKJV) "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

Read the bottom pink section for Sunday's lesson:

- How do we know that our feelings of discouragement are not reality in God's Kingdom?
- Samuel 12:22 (KJV)"For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people."
- Hebrews 13:5-8 (GW)God has said, "I will never abandon you or leave you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What can mortals do to me?". . . . Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

How can you measure spiritual growth?

- Tests and trials are a way for God to reveal to us our
- spiritual condition and needs.
- Are there any other ways?
- What are your thoughts?
- "In the kingdom of God, position is not gained through favoritism. It is not earned, nor is it received through an arbitrary bestowal. It is the result of character. The crown and the throne are the tokens of a condition attained—tokens of self-conquest through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." – {AA 543.1}



MONDAY

Read the first paragraph: "Change comes. . ."

The lesson asks us to read Phillipians 2:12-14

Do you have a favorite translation?

This usually is not one of my favorites, but the Amplified Version has a great rendering for this passage.

Philippians 2:12-14 (AMP) "Therefore, my dear ones, as you have always obeyed [my suggestions], so now, not only [with the enthusiasm you would show] in my presence but much more because I am absent, work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own salvation with reverence and awe and trembling (self- distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ). [Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight. Do all things without grumbling and faultfinding and complaining [against God] and questioning and doubting [among yourselves],"

The fifth paragraph: "God will not rip some selfish thought out of our minds." Read on to the end of the paragraph.

How is it that we are changed?

Also read 2 Corinthians 3:18 (TEV) "All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces; and that same glory, coming from the Lord, who is the Spirit, transforms us into his likeness in an ever greater degree of glory."

We change into what we look at and admire.

- If we are looking at the wrong things, we will become the wrong people.
- If we look at the true Christ, we will become Christlike.

TUESDAY

Read the second paragraph: "Both Peter and Thomas had one striking feature. . ."

This discusses human judgment.

- Can we use any other judgement?
- After Pentecost, were they less human?
- Was Adam more or less human after the fall?
- What are we talking about when we discuss human judgment?



- What does the Holy Spirit (God, Jesus, God the Father) do to us when we are filled with their presence?
- How do we know that we are using good judgment?
- In a meeting with some powerful people this week, I was told that I was blind to reality.
 - a. How do we have discernment?
 - b. How do we know if what we are sensing or hearing is reality?
 - c. When it says in the Bible, "Thy word is truth."

What does it mean?

How are we to know in our daily lives what is truth?

WEDNESDAY

Read the first introduction to Wednesday's lesson:

Why did the Prodigal Son decide to return?

He was hungry/starving.

- There was food at home.
- The slaves at home had food.
- He realized his need.
- He realized there was something better somewhere else.
- When did he realize what his father was really like?
 - a. Prior to his departure?
 - b. In the pig pen?
 - c. After his return?
 - d. It wasn't until he came back home that he realized how gracious his father truly was.
 - e. It was only after the son looked at the father in "new eyes" that he was able to see what his father was really like.
 - f. We are not sure just how far his understanding truly went. It is not part of the story. All we know is that he came home.
 - g. We hope the son got to the point the he understood his father's love and character. All we know is that he came home for the food and that he participated in a party.
 - h. We maybe do not seldom come to many of our foundational realizations at the time things are happening. It is only after the events have occurred, that we often realize their true meaning. That is what it means at this time to be human. We may develop differently in heaven, but for now, it is only after the fact that most of us have true insight. This is true whether we are contemplating prophecies, doctrines or our personal relationships.
 - i. Jesus's instructions to Peter before his fall. (See Luke 22:31)
 - j. Jesus's statements on why he gave prophecies. (See John 13:19, 20 and John 16:4)
 - k. This may be a later time.



1. 2 Peter 3:18 (GW)"But grow in the good will and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory belongs to him now and for that eternal day! Amen."

Read the highlighted sentence in the last paragraph.

- "Revival occurs when God's love breaks our hearts. Reformation occurs when we chose to respond to a love that will not let us go."

THURSDAY

Read the first paragraph:

- Is this true? (I think so.)
- Do you have another explanation?
- But...

Christ also healed the man, because that is what God is like. Christ did not have an ulterior motive. That is the kind of being God is! He wished he could have healed everyone of them, but that would probably have created such a crisis, that his life on earth would have been cut short. He didn't heal everyone, not because he couldn't or didn't want to, but because the Jewish leaders were so deformed of mind that he dare not. (See Desire of Ages, chapter)

Read the first question of the day: "Why do you think Jesus asked . . ."

- Christ asked him if he truly wanted to get well. The man heard an accusation of 'why are you still here after 38 years.'
- It is not true that all who suffer want to be healed.
 - a. I have met many who do not want to be healed.
 - b. That is their identity and source of personhood.
 - c. They receive some identity from their disease and they play a role.
 - d. This also goes to the point of Christ's later admonition to (v.14) "stop sinning."

Stop acting in a way that continues the sin/disease problem.

This was not an arbitrary command.

The man was not punished for his sins with this disease.

The laws of God that were broken, were not arbitrarily meted out punishment. There are many reasons why bad things happen to people good or bad. Christ was not telling him, "Stop the in or I or my Father will punish you with a worse evil." God wishes the best for His children and guides them with infinite love and compassion.

Read the pink paragraph at the bottom of the page:

- It is to experience who God is.
- It is not about us, it is about Him.



- On the cross Christ forgave those who nailed him there, but without their understanding of **Who. He. Was.** They are not going to accept what He gives.

FRIDAY

Read the last question, the last sentence: "What principles can we find in the Bible that will enable us to have the victories that we are promised?"

For me it is not a principle, **it is a person.** When you realize who God is and what He is really like, then you will trust **H.I.M.** for the victories that are promised. You are trusting Him for the strength, and the victories because you have come to know Him and Jesus Christ who He has sent. (This is true faith.)

The Bible is not about principles or rules or laws or guidelines. Although one can find plenty of all of these in the Bible. The Bible is truly about God. Who is God and what is He like. That is the fundamental message of all inspired scripture.



Revival and Reformation Lesson 11 3Q 2013

Reformation: Thinking New Thoughts

Before we start the lesson I wanted to give a report on our trip to Singapore and Australia:

We had a wonderful time in both places – so many people shared with us how their lives have been changed because of this message about God.

Special thanks to Kok Tho Yip, his wife Roxanna and Carolyn Lim who coordinated the events in Singapore.

Special thanks to Simon Harrison who coordinated events in Australia and also did the artwork of the brain for the book and my presentations.

And Simon's wife, Wendy, sent a few gifts back for members of the class. Those who have arrived on time today are getting a special blessing from Wendy in Australia.

Your prayers were answered in our trip to Australia. I just wished each of you could have been there to see the smiles, joy, happiness, enthusiasm of those who are part of this movement to tell the world about God's character of love!

Please Pray for our upcoming Events:

September 6: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The National Boomers Conference in Allen, Texas (just outside of Dallas). Sponsored by the Texas Baptist Convention.

September 11-14: Dr. Jennings and nine others (Laurie and Peter Cooper, Tim and Brittany Ryder, Christie Jennings, Tamara Slocum, Stephanie Land, Dean and Zoe Scott) will be at the World Convention of the American Association of Christian Counselors. Dr. Jennings will do a 3 hour seminar on The God Shaped Brain, a 1 hour lecture on The Aging Brain, and we will have a booth and be giving away our materials. There will be over 7000 Christian counselors and pastors in attendance.

October 1: Come and Reason Ministries is partnering with J103's Pastor's Breakfast here in Chattanooga. They expect 400-500 pastors from our area to attend. You will hear ads for Come and Reason on J103 and also we will be there with a booth and give away our materials to these pastors.

October 15: Come and Reason Ministries is partnering with Men's Ministries Network and J103 for Mobilize Chattanooga...One man at a time, an evening with Ben Carson.

Also, our new Bible Study guide The Cosmic Conflict over God's Character is done – the digital version is already available on our website for download. The hard copy versions are being printed.



God is blessing this ministry and we are seeing such tremendous successes in opening minds, freeing people from living in the bondage of oppressive god concepts. Keep praying and keep sharing!

SABBATH

Read memory text: “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:1,2 NKJV)

Thoughts? What does “raised with Christ” refer to? What is the connection between being raised with Christ and where our minds focus? Can our minds focus and be set on heavenly things if we have not been raised with Christ?

What is the concern if, after we have been raised with Christ, we allow our minds to move away from heavenly things?

Read first paragraph, “Isaac Watts is credited...” thoughts?

Isn't it true? Our mind, our character, is really what makes the measure of a man.

Read second paragraph, “Isaac Watts was right...” thoughts?

What do you think it means to bring our thoughts into harmony with Christ's?

If we don't keep our thoughts in harmony with Christ's, but we still claim to be Christian what might our thoughts trend upon?

Will we be concerned with self?

- Certainly there would be the classic self preoccupations of worrying about what others think of us, worrying about the future, worrying about things we have no control over, with plotting, planning, calculating constantly how to get our own way.
- But, what about these thoughts, do you think these are thoughts that are in harmony with Christ's, or a subtle form of self-focus?
 - “I hope there isn't some sin I have committed that will keep me out of heaven.”
 - “Will God be mad if I eat this or watch that?”
 - “I can't help this person on Sabbath because I would break the commandment and sin.”
 - “I can't be friends with homosexuals because they are sinners and I am going to keep myself pure and follow Bible standards.”

If are thoughts are brought into harmony with Christ's do we live in fear of sinning? Do we live in fear of doing something wrong? Do we live in fear of God punishing us if we disobey?

Or if our thoughts are in harmony with Christ's might our thoughts be less self-focused and more like this:



- “Awesome are you ways oh God, amazing are your designs. I am so overwhelmed with your goodness, and humbled by your love.”
- “How can I share your beauty and love with others?”
- “What can I do to help relieve someone else’s burdens?”
- “Thank you God for the blessings you have provided!”
- “God thank you for the opportunity to help this person on your Sabbath day.”

thoughts?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Our thoughts will ultimately dictate our...” thoughts?

There is much truth in this paragraph, our thoughts do influence us and our behavior influences our thoughts.

But to me, it is even more than this – we are not only influenced by our thoughts, but by our feelings, attachments, beliefs, imagination, and relationships. And in my experience it is the feelings which are the most troublesome and confuse the thoughts. The Bible supports this in James 1.

All of our experiences are processed (or not) through our thoughts. If we are going to make changes we generally need to think about it. Thus what we think, how we think, the methods we utilize in thinking become critical.

Do you ever analyze your thoughts? What tools do you use to determine if your thoughts are healthy? How can you tell if what you believe is reliable? My first book, *Could It Be This Simple?*, which we have here for anyone to take with them at no cost, was written to help people put their minds in balance, learn to think well. But, in addition to understanding our minds there are other tools to use when are minds are in balance.

I highly recommend the Integrative-Evidenced Based Approach:

- Examine what you believe in light of Scripture
- Test what you believe against the laws of nature
- Use your experience to test cause and effect
- Ask is my belief supported by all three threads or is something inconsistent?
- Pray to God for wisdom, insight, understanding – then study all three threads
- Discuss and study with others

Read third paragraph, “As we behold...” thoughts?

Do you believe this to be true? It is. So what happens if we believe distorted ideas about God?



Paul tells us in Romans chapter one that our minds become darkened, depraved and futile when we accept lies about God.

Why? What actually happens?

When we accept God concepts that incite fear we damage ourselves, activate fear circuits, incite false guilt, ultimately disrupt brain networks, interfere with ability to resolve emotional stress. This results in greater inflammation in the body, which reacts upon the brain causing destructive brain changes. Further, it results in loss of ability to discriminate and think healthfully. We become more self-referenced and begin creating theologies with protecting self at the center, like:

- Covered by the robe of righteousness means we are being hidden from God by Jesus
- Covered by the blood means that Jesus covers our defects so God can't see them
- We have the blood of Jesus applied to our record in heaven so the heavenly Judge can't use it against us
- We create the lie that Jesus died to propitiate and appease His Father's wrath.

Notice the focus of all these theories – it is self-protection and what they all assert is that we need protection from God.

But the truth is much different – the truth is that God is always on our side, and has been working through Christ to heal and restore. The metaphors, rightly understood, mean something quite different.

This is from a book called Christ's Object Lessons. Object Lessons are parables or metaphors which teach a greater reality. We want the greater reality. I agree completely with this perspective on being covered by the robe – notice how it is described here:

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul... {COL 311.3}

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. **Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us... When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.** {COL 311.4}

What does this author suggest the covering with Christ's righteousness means? Covering something up so God can't see or an actual, real, literal, internal change in the heart and mind of the believer? So, why if we are covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness is it that the Father doesn't see our sinfulness? Because we have been healed, transformed, and sin has been removed from our hearts!

Which do you like better?



When we worship a distorted god we get more fearful and more self focused with distorted theologies. But when we worship a God of love brain science documents that we reduce inflammatory cascades, experience growth in circuits that correspond to love, empathy, and self-governance, and improve memory. We are literally transformed to be live lives that love others!

The last paragraph states, “Reformation is all about looking to Jesus.” Looking to Jesus for what? For what should we look to Jesus?

- Love
- Truth
- Healing
- Wisdom
- Comfort
- Assistance
- Deliverance
- What else?

Can we look to Jesus in ways that are not helpful, even harmful? How?

- Did they look to Jesus to use power to throw off Rome and dominate their enemies?
- March 5, 2006 Louis Farrakhan: “The Bible says that in His Second Coming, He will have a sword dripping with blood in His hand. He is not coming back to teach. He is coming back to kill the enemies of His teaching and set up a new government.”
- Do people look to Jesus for health and wealth? Can this be a means of misrepresenting God and injuring others? How?
- What about when pastors tell people with depression to look to Jesus and pray more and they won’t need medication?

What happens if we look to Jesus for our purposes, our wishes, and the fulfillment of human carnal desires? Examples?

- Would prayers of vengeance be Godly? But we see David praying this way in Scripture? So isn’t it Godly if it is in Scripture?
- What about praying for the fleshpots of Egypt, or a king?
- Do we ever pray for things that go against God’s will?
- What is the danger?
- If our hearts are determined to have it, and we are going to rebel completely against God without it, He might let us have our request – Why? Because He doesn’t want to lose contact with us and He would rather us get hurt by our own stubbornness while still connected to Him, so He can pick us up and heal us, then for us to permanently close the heart to Him.

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Here is one simple...” thoughts?



Does it matter what we bring into our minds?

- Babies under 1 watch approximately 1 hour or more of TV per day
- 7 studies have now confirmed that babies who watch TV, any TV include things like Baby Einstein, have delayed language development
- There are no studies that show TV watching of educational material to under 2 y/o has any benefit
- Children get greater than 6 hours per day of electronic media - TV, music, video games, computers, texts, tweets, cell phones etc.
- 50% of teens have a TV in their bedroom
- Average American teen watched/s:
 - Over 200,000 acts of violence
 - 15,000 sexual acts per year
 - 2000 beer/wine commercials per year
- Children don't differentiate between reality and TV and can't distinguish the qualitative difference in information, i.e. they believe what is happening on TV is real and reliable
- Teen programming has more sexual content than adult programming, but less than 10% of the content shows responsible behavior

Theatrical entertainment activates mood circuits and deactivate higher cortical circuits, thus studies show that the more theatrical entertainment the greater problems with concentration and impulse control.

In other words, theatrical entertainment actually changes the brain structure undermining self-control and increasing aggression – regardless of the rating of the programming.

G-rated or R-rated both increased violence and impaired concentration in multiple studies. But educational television did not.

It is not the box, but the content on the box – documentaries, lectures like our seminar DVDs do not cause these negative brain effects why?

Because educational programming requires the activation of the higher cortex to think, process, reason, contemplate, reflect, consider etc. Firing these circuits helps them grow. Whereas, theatrical entertainment fires the mood circuits while not activating the higher cortex faculties of reason etc.

Does it matter what we watch? Absolutely!

TUESDAY

Read middle section – 2Cor 10:3-5 – what does it mean? What does it mean the weapons are spiritual?

- The weapons are in harmony with God's kingdom of love
- What kind of weapons would those be? In other words, what would those weapons do, what impact or effect when wielded would these divine weapons have?
- The weapons would be healing and restorative not weapons that injure or harm!



- Consider an antibiotic is a weapon against disease, but what does it do? It heals the person while destroying the infection. Likewise, Spiritual weapons **ALWAYS** heal the sinner, while destroying the sin!
- What are those weapons?
- Truth, Love, Freedom are the big three!
- Truth destroys lies, but heals the mind of the person who partakes the truth
- Love destroys fear and selfishness, but heals the heart of those who partake of and practice love and heals relationships
- Freedom destroys control, coercion, manipulation and unhealthy attachments healing the lives of those caught in relational bondage and heals individuals and relationships

What are carnal weapons?

- Lies – which break the circle of love and trust inciting fear
- Fear – which undermines love and increases selfishness and self protective thoughts and actions
- Selfishness – which results in actions that incite more fear, greater distrust, damage to self and relationships
- Any activity that inflicts injury, harm, pain, suffering on another
- All of these injure the character, mind, brain, body of the person who practices them

While I was at Avondale the chaplain there, Wayne French gave me a paper on Spiritual Abuse. In it were the following definitions of spiritual abuse:

1. Spiritual abuse is the violation of our trust placed in God by someone who betrays that trust by using God's name to gain entrance into our secret soul, destroying our experience of the goodness of God.
2. Spiritual abuse is the exploitation of our sacrificial love for God as a means of advancing organizational and institutional goals, leaving our spirits under-nourished and our lives over-burdened.
3. Spiritual abuse is the addictive power of legalistic theology that creates guilt in order to dispense grace, leaving us spiritual cripples bound to one another by the invisible cords of co-dependency.
4. Spiritual abuse is the silent cancer of secret gossip and malicious rumour [sic] that causes a feeding frenzy among the sharks submerged in the troubled waters of church conflicts. We are unaware of the damage until we stand up and attempt to walk out, and find we have no legs.

Thoughts?

Are these examples of carnal weapons? How could such destructive weapons enter the church and be utilized under the guise of righteousness to destroy?

Could it have anything to do with how one conceives of God's law and thus God's character? Could it be related to having fear based God concepts that result in need to protect self?



Why is it so important to bring every thought into captivity to Christ?

The thoughts we think determine which neural circuits fire, and it is the circuits we fire that grow stronger while those we leave dormant are actually pruned.

Discuss BDNF, proBDNF and neural plasticity.

Read third paragraph, “Billy Graham is quoted...” thoughts?

Where do we draw the line on who is responsible for what we view?

Should we spend our energy ensuring every woman is covered from head to toe any time she leaves her home so no male is ever tempted to think a lustful thought? Or, should we develop a character that doesn't go down those trails, and if our eyes do fall upon something inappropriate we voluntarily turn away?

What is the balance between our responsibility for what we view and think and what others put out there?

Do parents and society have a responsibility to protect children from advertisers?

What is the state's way to protect others? By coercion and laws.

What is God's way? By converting the heart. What would society be like if populated only by people who loved genuinely for others and always wanted to protect, uplift and promote the welfare of others? Would there be any need to protect children from advertisers in such a society? This is God's plan!

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “For the New Testament...” thoughts?

What is the relationship between body and mind?

Consider a computer hardware and software, but in which both can affect the other. In the brain the “software” changes the “hardware”, new neurons grow depending on what the software chooses. But also, if the hardware is damaged the software doesn't work as well.

Studies show that lifestyle significantly affects brain function:

- Those who eat fast food and junk food have 40% higher rate of depression than those who do not
- Recent research documented that children who drink soda 1-4 per day had impairments in concentration and impulse control and had more behavior problems, regardless of soda type. Diet, regular, caffeinated or not.



- Sleep deprivation impairs PFC function undermining concentration and increasing irritability, thus making self-governance more difficult
- Obesity increases inflammation, which damages brain cells. Obese persons at age 70 had 8% less brain matter and the brain appeared 16 years older than normal weight persons at age 70

Read last paragraph, “The Holy Spirit...” thoughts?

The paragraph states we should surrender our lifestyle practices that are not in harmony with God’s will to Him. How do we tell what practices are in harmony with His will?

- Scripture? Which means what? That we should eat kosher meats? As the Bible teaches? Or should we go against the Bible and be vegetarians? (Do you see how one can take a truth and turn it? Does the Bible teach to eat kosher meats? Yes, Does it teach vegetarianism after sin? No, But which is the healthiest diet? A balanced vegetarian diet. Are we really going against the Bible to be vegetarian? Of course not! Why? Because the vegetarian diet is based on the principles of Scripture moving back toward God’s original design, but without a specific dietary plan laid out. Whereas, kosher diet is specifically spelled out in Scripture. So those who like rules, spelled out, with to do lists often read Scripture and fail to grow to its truly highest ideals.)
- So how do we have lifestyle practices in harmony with God’s will? What are they?
 - Vegetarianism?
 - What about sugary foods?
 - What about exercise?
 - What about excessive study?
 - Here is one comment I found in a book called Child Guidance, what do you think:
 - Intemperance in study is a species of intoxication; and those who indulge in it, like the drunkard, wander from safe paths and stumble and fall in the darkness. The Lord would have every student bear in mind that the eye must be kept single to the glory of God. He is not to exhaust and waste his physical and mental powers in seeking to acquire all possible knowledge of the sciences, but is to preserve the freshness and vigor of all his powers to engage in the work which the Lord has appointed him in helping souls to find the path of righteousness. {CG 396.4}
 - Overwork?
- Science?
- Do circumstances or situations ever make a difference?
 - Should we advocate everyone in all parts of the world be vegetarian? Or should that only be for people who have access to a balanced and wholesome vegetarian diet?
 - Should people in third world countries eat fish and chicken?
- How can we tell what is the best?
- What about principles? I.e. the principle of doing what is most healthy with what one has and the knowledge one possesses?

Is this one of the areas that every person should be fully persuaded in their own minds? Why?



Well what if a person does exercise, but is doing it under protest, hates it, and the entire time activates stress circuits? Will that benefit them in the same way as doing an exercise they enjoyed would? No it won't

The paragraph makes a great point that Satan wants to control our minds through our bodies, whereas Jesus wants to control our bodies through our minds.

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "The goal of revival..." thoughts?

What is central to having the light of God shining through us? Would it not be to actually come back to the truth about God's character of love?

And what does it mean to live a distinctly different lifestyle?

Does it mean – dress in obviously peculiar ways so that one draws attention to oneself and advertises they are a member of a particular organization, i.e. military uniform, wearing a yamaka, or headdress?

Or perhaps, it means avoiding certain foods, worshipping on a particular day, but didn't people 2000 years ago live very different, stand apart based on their religion and yet kill Jesus?

So is the primary issue in living a distinctly different lifestyle one of external behavior? NO!

The primary, central, element to living a different lifestyle is living a lifestyle that is not self-centered. We live a lifestyle of love, kindness, humility, seeking to be of service, to bless others.

But this idea of living a different lifestyle has been corrupted to allow selfishness to reign in Pharisaism, as we pride in our restrictive diet, "I am going to follow the health message even if it kills me." We pride in our refusal to wear jewelry and makeup, thus making a greater spectacle of ourselves, then if we would use some modest cosmetics.

God is calling for a people who are not self-focused but genuinely living lives that love Him, want to reveal Him as Jesus did in loving others!

Read last paragraph, "The Old Testament..." thoughts? They quote a text from Isaiah 55, what is the context of that text? God's Justice is not like ours! God's justice is freely pardoning, delivering and healing. It is restorative, whereas ours is vengeful. Thus God's ways are not like our own.

We are to live radical, loving, free pardoning, forgiving others, lives that contradict the world's definitions which have crept into the church.



FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Many profess...” thoughts?

Does it matter of what kind of God we spend our time thinking about?

Read and discuss questions 2-4



Revival and Reformation Lesson 12 3Q 2013

Reformation: Healing Broken Relationships

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “In this week’s lesson...” thoughts?

The paragraph stated, “They include breaking down the barriers in our relationship with God...” thoughts about this?

What are the barriers in our relationship with God?

- Lies we believe about Him
- Our own selfish natures
- Fear we have of Him
- Guilt and shame in our hearts
- Fear of not being loved, not being good enough
- Hardened heart which loves self and the world
- Pride
- Anger at God for some perceived injustice
- Others?

How are these barriers broken down?

- Lies we believe about Him
 - Broken down by truth
- Our own selfish natures
 - Broken down by surrendering to a God we trust and infused with His love
- Fear we have of Him
 - Trust and love in a relationship with God
- Guilt and shame in our hearts
 - Experiencing forgiveness, repentance and new heart/motives
- Fear of not being loved, not being good enough
 - By being loved by God and other Christians, by experiencing change in heart and moving the focus from self to others
- Hardened heart which loves self and the world
 - Often a painful experience that awakens one to the reality that their way doesn’t work
- Pride
 - Often a humbling experience, met with grace and love
- Anger at God for some perceived injustice
 - Seeing the truth about God as revealed in Christ and understanding the perceived injustice in a more accurate light



What about this as a barrier?

- “Paul always speaks of people being reconciled to God (2Cor 5:19; Rom 5:10; Col. 1:20). He never refers to God being reconciled to us. **In spite of that fact**, however, we should recognize that sin affected both sides. Humanity’s rebellion and sense of guilt alienated it from God, while **God was separated from humankind by His necessary hatred of and judgment on sin (His wrath). Christ’s sacrificial death (propitiation) removed the barrier to reconciliation from God’s side.” (Knight, George, *The Cross of Christ*, p. 74.)**

Thoughts? Does God have a barrier to reconciliation in His heart, on His side, that needs Christ to do something to remove it?

- “Christ’s self-sacrifice is *pleasing* to God because this sacrificial offering **took away the barrier between God and sinful man** in that **Christ fully bore God’s wrath on man’s sin**. Through Christ, God’s wrath is not turned into love but is turned away from man and borne by Himself.” (*Seventh-day Adventist Believe 27*, p. 111.)

What is the barrier between God and man according to this passage?

Is that correct? Is the obstacle to our salvation in God’s heart? Who would want us to believe this?

John the Baptist said that Jesus came to take away the sin of the world.

What happens when we believe the barrier to our relationship with God is God’s attitude? Does it instill trust?

Would such teachings advance or hinder God’s work on earth?

Recently, I have received correspondence from listeners who have thought I have been attacking the church. First, I want to thank each of you for sharing your concerns and giving me an opportunity to respond.

Sometimes, when a doctor diagnoses a patient, and then informs a patient of the diagnosis, the patient feels uncomfortable, embarrassed, and fears being ridiculed or put down. But the doctor doesn’t expose the “defects” in the patient to the patient in order to hurt, criticize, mock, or in anyway attack the patient.

The doctor has a heart of love for the patient and wants to heal the patient, but one cannot heal until one admits what the problem is, so we must start with accurate diagnosis.

When I point these things out I am not attacking the church. I am attacking distortions that have infected the church and undermine our mission, for the purpose of healing in the church. Jump to FRIDAY read question #3:

“If we look at our church, that is, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as a whole, what is the greatest thing holding us back from the kind of revival and reformation that will be needed in



order to reach the world? Is it our teachings and doctrines? Of course not. These are the very things that God has given us to proclaim to the world...”

Do you agree? Do we have a problem with our doctrine about God? About what His character and justice looks like? Has our church, along with the rest of Christianity, been infected with an imposed law construct and therefore a dictator view of God, in which God is angry and wrathful and Jesus must do something to remove a barrier to our salvation from God’s side?

Here is the historic SDA view, written in 1902:

To break down the barrier that Satan had erected between God and man, Christ made a full and complete sacrifice, revealing unexampled self-denial. He revealed to the world the amazing spectacle of God living in human flesh, and sacrificing Himself to save fallen men. What wonderful love! ST Sep 24, 1902

So, in our modern view, in what is being printed today, we have God generating within His heart a barrier to our reconciliation, but the Bible and our founders taught that the barrier Christ came to remove was erected by Satan.

Do we have a problem, an infection? Is it an attack on the church to point it out, or is it love for the church? When a doctor rightly diagnosis a patient with anthrax, is he attacking the patient? If the patient was in denial and the doctor was passionately arguing for the patient to take the remedy, would he be attacking the patient?

I am NOT attacking this or any other church or group. I am attacking an infection of thought, a false construct, a distortion about God that has entered modern Christian thought which undermines our ability as a church to complete the work God has given us to lighten the world with the truth about His character of love!

Thoughts? Do we need more evidence? Are you convinced there is a problem?
Any suggestions on how to solve this problem?

SUNDAY

Read first and third paragraphs, “Paul and Barnabas...” thoughts?

The last paragraph says, “Paul’s ministry was enriched by the young preacher, whom he had obviously forgiven. The barrier between them was broken, and they were able to work together in the cause of the gospel.”

Thoughts?

What does the lesson suggest was the barrier that was removed? The lesson is suggesting that Paul was unforgiving toward John Mark and that it was his unforgiveness that was the barrier.



Do you see how this is a mirror to the theology that claims our problem is God's wrath and unforgiveness, and God must forgive us in order to be reconciled to Him?

I suggest this is in error. I suggest that Paul didn't have an unforgiving attitude toward John Mark, but Paul didn't trust John Mark's ability to handle the responsibilities placed on him and therefore didn't want to rely on him, i.e. work with him.

In other words, the barrier was not in Paul's unwillingness to forgive, but in John Mark's maturity and ability to handle the responsibility. And what changed was the same thing that changed for Peter – think about Peter. He denied the Lord, Jesus was not unforgiving, but there was a barrier to Peter's usefulness, Peter's maturity. After his denial, Peter went out wept bitterly and found grace, resolve, and a new motive of loyalty. Then Jesus could rely upon Peter.

Likewise, John Mark, needed some time to reflect on his fearfulness, his walking away from mission, and determine in his own mind that he was committed, and willing to sacrifice self for the cause of Christ. Evidently, he came to this point and then Paul was able to rely and value John Mark.

Where is the problem in our relationship with God – His ability and willingness to forgive, or our ability to trust and obey Him?

Do you see how this thread of thinking, this theology to make the problem with the offended person's willingness to forgive, subtle protects self. It isn't me, the sinfulness in my heart that is a barrier, it is God's anger, wrath that needs to be resolved. John Mark didn't need reformation – Paul did.

Thoughts?

When a breach in relationship occurs – it is true the offended party must have a forgiving heart, but forgiving the offender alone does not reconcile a relationship, why? What else is needed? The offender must actually experience a change in heart such that they have matured, learned, grown, and are not as likely to continue to make the same mistake over and again.

Read bottom green section, "How can we..." thoughts?

Questions about forgiveness and reconciliation?

MONDAY

Discusses the runaway slave Onesimus and his owner Philemon. Any questions or thoughts about this?

What did Paul instruct Onesimus to do? Go back to his slave owner. Is that all Paul did? What else did Paul do? He wrote a letter to Philemon reintroducing Onesimus as a brother in Christ.

What impact would this have upon Philemon, if Philemon operates under the law of love?



How would Onesimus treat Philemon from this point forward?
Do you notice that Paul did not address the issue of social justice or the morality of slavery? Why not?
Is there any lesson there for us and the mission of the church?
If all people loved others more than self, would there be slavery?

Have you ever found it bizarre that the first words of our Constitution,

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—

were written by men who owned slaves?

What lesson do we learn from this? That good men can be blind to some areas of their own minds. Thus we see Nicodemus and Saul of Tarsus who were good men, but had blind spots in their understanding and application that required maturing.

Today, there are many good people who are teaching penal views of God, but the key for each of us, is a willingness to grow in our understanding of God, to reexamine or beliefs in light of new evidence and to advance where the truth leads.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read 1Cor 3:5-11:

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸ The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.

¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

What is the principle of unity and relationship Paul is describing here?

That none of God’s workers are to be worshipped. All of Christ’s true workers don’t seek self-glory, but seek to turn hearts to Christ. Thus, we don’t build factions of this group or that group based on the personality of individuals, we unite in the truth about God as revealed in Christ.

All of our building of character must be built upon what Christ has accomplished for us and thus we grow in Christlikeness of character, but also grow in Christlikeness of understanding of God’s character and design for His universe.



Do we have factions in Christianity? Why?

I want to see us all come back under one head, Jesus Christ! What prevents unity?

I suggest it is focusing on doctrines that are separated from the truth about God's character of love.

When we have an imposed law construct then we can have an infinite number of permutations of how arbitrary law is written and applied. Thus theologies get subtle differences that become focal points for divergence and disagreement.

The Catholic Priest and Protestant theologian arguing over whether Christ is offering His "sacrifice" (Catholic position) or "merits" (Protestant position) to the Father to assuage His wrath and obtain our forgiveness, is a classic example.

A trivial point, made into a huge deal, while both are blind to the fact they are bowing before a false god concept of a being who requires appeasement and payment in order to forgive. Why? Because both operate upon the imposed law and think something has to be offered to the offended god. They just disagree on what.

When we come back to seeing God as Designer, Builder and His law as love, the design parameters for life, then we see we are deviant from His original design and God is working to heal and restore us.

Consider a medical analogy – we have an injury and need Physical Therapy. One person is doing exercises with free weights, another is doing exercises with nautilus equipment, and another is actually using heavy objects around the home, and another is doing pushups, pullups, situps, and heavy rubber bands. They each have different "rules" and "exercises" which they argue are the orthodox or correct way to grow stronger and the other ways of exercising are sinful.

But the person, who lives on principles and natural law, realizes that the specific weight used isn't important as long as the application actually strengthens, heals and restores function and doesn't add injury.

Religious application - Does it matter if we have piano or not in our church music? Some churches this is a big deal, no instruments. Others criticize those who won't allow instruments in the church. But does it matter one way or the other? What does matter? Are we growing to be like Jesus in character, loving God and others more than self and developing minds that love truth! If some people come to grow into Christlikeness without a piano and others with a piano, what does it matter?

We are divided because we believe in an imposed law construct from a dictator, and once we believe we understand His rules, then it is imperative we keep those rules and anyone who isn't keeping it is a "law breaker" and therefore must be either confronted, avoided, chastised or punished. And if we can't get everybody to keep the same rules, then we need to have our own club, i.e. denomination of those who agree with our rules.



We need to present the truth about God's character of love! His methods and principles of love and then we see it doesn't matter which weights are used, as long as one is in harmony with God's design for life and growing ever more like Jesus in character!

Thoughts?

Does this mean then that anything goes? No standards as long as one is sincere?

Consider the medical analogy with the weights, will anything work? Or will some applications actually injure or damage?

Spiritually, will anything work to heal the mind, restore the character, return one to genuine unity with God? No, some activities will actually darken the mind and harden the heart.

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

There are several things very well stated in this lesson. Read third paragraph, "It is true..." thoughts?

Isn't this well said?

Back to second paragraph, "Christ took the initiative..." thoughts?

What do you think of this idea that "we were reconciled to God while we were sinners"?

The Scripture says, "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!" Romans 5:9,10

Who is the "we" that is reconciled to God through Christ's death?

Which view do you hold, imposed or natural law?

The imposed proponents say that all humanity had their sins, past, present and future, placed upon Christ at the Cross and Christ suffered the legal penalty thus paying the legal price at the cross, removing wrath from God's side and thus humans are legally reconciled even though they are still God's enemies in heart.

Our view would say that the human species was reconciled to God, or put back into its original intended condition in its created perfection and relationship with God in the person of Jesus Christ. And Jesus obtained the Remedy that all humans may freely partake in order to be reconciled to God individually. But, only those who partake the remedy are actually reconciled to God.



This is why Paul talks about Christ being the second Adam and how all humans sinned in Adam and the human race was saved in Christ.

We can see the difference between the work of God to restore the human species back to His original ideal and our individual restoration when we contrast Romans 5:1 with Romans 5:9, note the difference:

Therefore, since we have been **justified through faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... (Romans 5:1)

“Since we have now been **justified by his blood**, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!” (Romans 5:9)

Do you notice in one passage we are justified or set right through faith, but in the other passage we are set right through his blood, which is a metaphorical way of saying His self-sacrificial death?

What is going on? When Paul describes being “justified by his blood” he is focusing on the work God needed to accomplish to heal, fix, remedy, restore the species human back to God’s original intent. Christ did this alone, without any help from any other human. In Jesus humanity became what God intended Adam to be. Thus, “we” the species of planet earth, genetic descendants of Adam, have a Champion, who has made our species perfect and right in every way and restored the human species back to right relationship with God.

But in the “justified by faith” passage Paul is talking about each individual human choosing to trust God, open their heart, and experience the application of Christ’s achievements via the work of the Holy Spirit within.

Again, no legal transaction going on in a courtroom in heaven, but the Designer, Builder, Creator, is actually recreating humanity back to His original intent, through the achievements of Jesus Christ!

Read last paragraph, “Forgiveness is releasing...” thoughts?

Did Christ release us from “His” condemnation? What is implied in this passage?

When we have an imposed law construct, then one must hold that God, in order to be just, must rightly condemn the breakers of His imposed law. So, Christ naturally condemns us, but then, taking the punishment upon Himself He releases us from the condemnation He previously held.

But, what did Christ say to the woman caught in adultery? “neither do I condemn you.”

What did Jesus say to Nicodemus in John 3:17?

For God did **not send his Son into the world to condemn** the world, but to save the world through him.



Jesus was NEVER condemning toward us! Therefore, He didn't have to release us from His condemnation.

When a doctor sees a patient who is ravaged with cancer – does the doctor “condemn” the patient? But if nothing is done to put the cancer into remission is the patient in a “condemned” state? By what? By their condition!

We must reject the imposed law, and come back to the truth about God's law and understand that our condition, our hearts, minds, characters, separate from God are defective and terminal. It is our own unhealed condition that condemns us, not God. God longs to heal us!

But if we believe God is the source of condemnation, then what does that do to our desire to go to Him? Do you see Satan's strategy? Do you see how Christianity has been infected with lies which paralyze our ability to complete our mission?

Will Christ be reconciled to all humans? Does He want to be? Yes, then why isn't He? What is the lesson for us?

THURSDAY

The lesson talks about the three steps in resolving conflict with someone in the church.

First step, talk to them one on one. If this doesn't work, take one or two others with you who are to act as mediators to help bring reconciliation. Then if necessary go before the church, which could mean the entire church or the church leadership team.

What are your thoughts about this?

What has been your experience with this process?

I have found it depends totally on the heart willingness of the people involved.

If people actually want to find healing and pursue the truth, then this process will work well. But what if people are not motivated for healing and truth?

This process can be completely corrupted to promote one's own agenda especially when church politics get involved and the disagreement is with people in position of authority within the institution.

FRIDAY

Discuss question 1



Lesson 13 Revival and Reformation

The Promised Revival: God's Mission Completed.

SABBATH

First: What is God's Mission? Has it already been completed, or is it yet to happen??

“Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand” (James 5:7, 8, NKJV).

“The challenge of preaching the gospel in the context of the three angels' messages to the entire world may seem impossible. Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church is growing rapidly *[is it??]*, it is not keeping up with the population. There are multiple areas of the world where the name “Seventh-day Adventist” (much less our message) is not known. *[is this a bad thing?]*

The reality of this harsh fact leads to serious questions. Is it possible for the gospel to be preached to the entire world in this generation? Will there be some unusual breakthrough that will dramatically speed up the proclamation of the three angels' messages? *[Does it matter which gospel is presented?]*

There is always one thing to keep in mind when we discuss this topic: the mission is God's, and He will accomplish it. At the same time, however, we must remember that we have been called to a crucial role in that final work, as well.” *[emphasis – mine.]*

Wasn't God's mission to restore mankind to his/her original nobility after Creation? To restore a correct understanding of God in man's mind/heart? To have mankind in harmony with His Law? Unselfish, kind, living out His perfect Law in heart, mind, and behavior. Didn't He accomplish this a little over 2,000 years ago? If so, what's left?

SUNDAY

What is the “power” spoken of when “the Holy Spirit has come upon you”? The Holy Spirit is also known as the Spirit of Love, and Truth. How does this fit?? What are the fruits of the Spirit? [see Galatians 5, 22,23.] What is the “power” of these fruits? How powerful is self-control? Which is more powerful? Thermonuclear destruction or Creator of Life? Love or hate, selfishness or selflessness? Death or Life? Disease or healing?

“No matter how challenging the task, the promises of God are sure. Jesus' statement that ““this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come”” (Matt. 24:14, NKJV) is a promise. The proclamation of the gospel to the entire world may seem impossible, but God's power will overcome every obstacle. Every person on planet Earth will have a reasonable opportunity to hear and understand God's message of love and truth before the



return of our Lord (*See Rev. 18:1*.)”

It still matters which gospel is being preached.

MONDAY

Doesn't it make sense that God would provide some sort of illustration for humanity, since he has known, from the Beginning, how long this process would take, and how many would accept His grace, as revealed in Jesus of Nazareth, and how many would reject it? We see this illustration in the early / latter rain metaphor. The real question is, are we now receiving the latter rain, or are we hindering it?

The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. It sends down its roots into the earth. It drinks in the sunshine, the dew, and the rain. It receives the life-giving properties from the air. So the Christian is to grow by co-operating with the divine agencies. Feeling our helplessness, we are to improve all the opportunities granted us to gain a fuller experience. As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take deep root in Christ. As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, we are to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit. The work is to be done “not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6. If we keep our minds stayed upon Christ, He will come unto us “as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” Hosea 6:3. As the Sun of Righteousness, He will arise upon us “with healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2. We shall “grow as the lily.” We shall “revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.” Hosea 14:5, 7. By constantly relying upon Christ as our personal Saviour, we shall grow up into Him in all things who is our head.

The wheat develops “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” The object of the husbandman in the sowing of the seed and the culture of the growing plant is the production of grain. He desires bread for the hungry, and seed for future harvests. So the divine Husbandman looks for a harvest as the reward of His labor and sacrifice. Christ is seeking to reproduce Himself in the hearts of men; and He does this through those who believe in Him. The object of the Christian life is fruit bearing—the reproduction of Christ's character in the believer, that it may be reproduced in others. COL 66.1.

TUESDAY

What were the prerequisites for the Early rain? See Acts Ch. 1, 2.

- Unity of purpose
- Unity of knowledge of God's character as revealed by Jesus
- Continual prayer
- Sharing resources with each other
- Teachable spirits
- NO unity of doctrine or denomination



Might it make sense that the prerequisites haven't changed?? Isn't God still waiting on a people to fully reveal the "power" [see Sunday's lesson] of a transformed heart and mind?? A people unwilling to keep this power to themselves, and build a fortification of doctrines to protect their "truth"? A teachable people?

The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God. God cannot pour out His Spirit when selfishness and self-indulgence are so manifest; when a spirit prevails that, if put into words, would express that answer of Cain,—“Am I my brother's keeper?”—The Review and Herald, July 21, 1896.

The lesson states that “all spiritual revival and genuine reformation lead to a passionate desire to witness.” I would take it a step further, and say we cannot help but witness.

WEDNESDAY

3rd paragraph. “The symbolism of fire is a symbol of the glory, presence, and power of God manifest in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. To be baptized with fire is to be immersed in the glory of God's presence through the Holy Spirit in order to witness in His power. Moses met God at the burning bush and then left the glory of His presence in order to witness to Pharaoh. Elijah witnessed to Israel in the glory of God's fiery presence on Mount Carmel. When tongues of fire fell on Pentecost, the disciples witnessed in languages that they had never before known. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is immersion in the presence and power of God in order that we can effectively witness of His glory. Once again, in the last days of earth's history, God's people will be immersed in His presence, filled with His power, and sent out to witness of His glory to the world.”

This is a powerful paragraph, especially if one takes it to its rational conclusion, and applies it to the destruction of the unrighteous. Won't every human be “baptized” with the fire of God's presence eventually?

THURSDAY

The lesson suggests that the book of Revelations can be summed up thusly: Jesus wins, satan loses. I suggest it is summed up: God Is Love. Just like the summation of the entirety of Scripture, and Creation. 1st paragraph:

“Here is good news: the same Jesus who defeated Satan on the cross will come again and triumph over the powers of hell and put a full end to evil (*Rev. 19:19-21; Ezek. 28:18-19*). Evil



will not have the last word. Poverty and pestilence will not have the last word. Sickness and suffering will not have the last word. Chaos and crime will not have the last word. Disease and death will not have the last word. Instead, God will.”

What will God’s last words be? “Up yours, wicked”? “Is it hot in here, or is it just me”? “Burn, burn, burn”? NO. It will be something like, “I love you, satan. There will, forever, be a hole in my heart where you used to be. I will miss you very much.”

FRIDAY

1st question in the green section below.

“...Ellen G. White wrote: “The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God.” In class, discuss what you think that means. What does it not mean? After all, our message is very logical, very reasonable, and it comes with some very powerful arguments in its favor. How are we to understand, then, what she is telling us?”

Thoughts?



4th Quarter 2013 – The Sanctuary

Lesson 1: The Heavenly Sanctuary

SABBATH

This week: each day was about a different aspect of the heavenly sanctuary

- a. Where does God live
- b. God's Residence
- c. Throne Room
- d. Worship in Heaven
- e. Courtroom
- f. Place of Salvation
- g. Statements about heaven with commentary.

What is the sanctuary doctrine?

From: <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/#24>.

Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary: There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Heb. 8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Lev. 16; Rev. 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12.)

My version:

There is a heavenly place where God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are united in performing functions for this time in behalf of this earth and the entire universe. At the conclusion of this work, Christ will come for his faithful children and the Great Controversy between God and His Adversary Satan will be concluded.



Mechanical Puzzles: I love to work mechanical things, including mechanical puzzles. Usually there is a central trick or key to solving the puzzle. When you first look at the puzzle, it may seem incomprehensible. Once you have figured out the puzzle, it is great! All you can see, is the solution. There are several ways of relating to others who haven't figured it out yet...

- a. Superiority (Pharisee)
- b. Proselytize (that is all they can talk about)

What gives a person the most enjoyment

- a. Figuring it out themselves
- b. If you tell them, they may "know" but really haven't experienced it.
- c. (Psa 34:8 GW) "Taste and see that the LORD is good. Blessed is the person who takes refuge in him." Or (Psa 34:8 GNB) "Find out for yourself how good the LORD is. Happy are those who find safety with him."

4. Why was the sanctuary doctrine such a big deal to the early Seventh-day Adventist believers and the former Millerite followers who formed this church?

- a. They were devastated by Great Disappointment
- b. They knew God had led them in the past, but this was a blocked path they couldn't see around.
- c. The presence of the Heavenly Sanctuary was a true life changing "Ahaa" moment.
- d. They learned something about God that was not possible for them to learn in any other way.

God had revealed everything to them, but it wasn't in their paradigm. When Christ revealed it we said, "AHA, So that is what God is really like."

- a. It wasn't just explanation of a mental puzzle
- b. We don't realize how far we have come from those first Ahaa moments.

If it was so good for the early Seventh-day Adventist believers, why is the Sanctuary motif not good news to the current Seventh-day Adventist church member?

- a. (<http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/> doesn't even mention it.)
- b. They don't understand it.
- c. We do not understand what Christ is really doing.
- d. We do not understand who God is and what He is really like.
- e. If God is who He says He is, then truly whatever He is doing in the Sanctuary is Good News.

Read the second paragraph of the Introduction to the Lesson"

- a. "The sanctuary formed the template to help us understand Jesus as our Sacrifice and High Priest."
- b. Realizing it was not understood correctly by the Children of Israel, shouldn't it be the other way around? Shouldn't Christ be the explanation of what should have gotten from the sanctuary and it's services.
- c. We should look at Christ as the true picture and then understand the sanctuary from what Christ has shown us.



The last sentence of the first paragraph is then true: “This earthly sanctuary, however, only modeled the heavenly one, which is the true center of God’s presence and of His activity in the universe.”

The second page: “The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. . . It revealed the position and work of His people.”

The last paragraph of the second page of the introduction: “The sanctuary discloses the heart of God. Studying the sanctuary will bring us close to the presence of the Supreme and to the personality of our Savior and draw us into a deeper personal relationship with Him.

But not if all we see is the furniture and ritual.

Second paragraph, page two, Introduction: “the sanctuary message is the Adventists’ unique doctrine.

Survey of coworkers:

- a. Word association
- b. What does this word mean?
- c. Use it in a sentence as if you were giving a hint at a spelling bee.
- d. Most common response: Church
 - i. The place in the church where you hold services.
- e. Second response
 - i. Safety
 - ii. A place where you are safe
 - a) A bird sanctuary
 - b) The dictator sought sanctuary in the church.
- f. I think it is telling that someone who has lived all their life within 15 miles of 6000 doctrine Seventh-day Adventists cannot come up with a single reference to the “unique doctrine” of the church is the sanctuary a safe place? For us?
- g. There is going to be a model of the Children of Israel’s mobile desert sanctuary set up on Standifer Gap within the next several weeks.
 - i. How much of the energy will be getting the furniture right?
 - ii. How much of my time is getting the character of God right?
 - iii. The fact that Jesus and the Father and the Holy Spirit are all working in Heaven, for my benefit.
 - iv. Unfortunately, the tabernacle is often no better than a mechanical puzzle, parts of which we still haven’t figured out.



MEMORY TEXT

“Then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.” 1 Kings 8:49

SABBATH

Does God need a dwelling place?

If He doesn't need one, why does He have one?

If He does need one, why does He need it?

Last sentence of Sabbath Afternoon's lesson: “What He is doing in the sanctuary is, indeed, for us.”

- a. Is it for anyone else?
- b. How about the unfallen angels?
- c. How about the unfallen worlds that have not sinned?
- d. Is what Christ is doing now or what He did on the cross for them as well?
- e. Do you have any scripture to support your conclusions?
 - i. (1Co 4:9) For it seems to me that God has given the very last place to us apostles, like people condemned to die in public as a spectacle for the whole world of angels and of human beings.
 - ii. (Col 1:19, 20) For it was by God's own decision that the Son has in himself the full nature of God. Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God made peace through his Son's blood on the cross and so brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven.
 - iii. Eph 3:9-10 “. . . God, who is the Creator of all things, kept his secret hidden through all the past ages, (10) in order that at the present time, by means of the church, the angelic rulers and powers in the heavenly world might learn of his wisdom in all its different forms.
 - iv. 1Pe 1:12 God revealed to these prophets that their work was not for their own benefit, but for yours, as they spoke about those things which you have now heard from the messengers who announced the Good News by the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. These are things which even the angels would like to understand.

SUNDAY

Opens with several Bible quotes

- a. Jeremiah 23:23, 24 “Do I not fill heaven and earth?”
- b. Psalms 139 “nobody can flee from God”
 - i. Example: Jonah
 - a) Have you ever wished you could flee from God? Why?



- c. Acts 17: 27, 28 Paul argues that God is close to everyone, at least in a spiritual sense”
 - i. Why was this last phrase added?
 - ii. Is God close to us physically?
 - iii. Are there some who are closer to God than others? If so in what way?
 - a) What does this say about God?

Fourth Paragraph: “God is generally present everywhere; yet, He chooses to reveal Himself in a special way in heaven and, as we will see, in the heavenly sanctuary.

Bottom shaded text: There are many things that are difficult for us to imagine or understand, such as the dwelling place of God. Yet, the Bible says that this dwelling place is real. How can we learn to trust in all that the Bible teaches us, no matter how hard it is sometimes to understand? Why is it important for us to learn to trust even when we don’t understand?

- a. Why do we trust ‘even when we don’t understand?’
- b. Because we have a relationship that has experience.
- c. It is a relationship of trust.
- d. We know who we believe in.

MONDAY

Imagery of the Bible as God as King.

Heavenly throne

Several statements regarding God, God’s throne and His Kingship.

Last sentence, first paragraph: In most of the Biblical depictions of God’s throne “God is acting for or speaking in behalf of the righteous.”

- a. He is not speaking on His own behalf, except in the sense that it is done for others.
- b. That shows the character He has.**

God as sovereign

- a. Not only in the future but already in the here and now.
- b. what does it mean that God is sovereign?
- c. A local religious radio station makes a big emphasis of God as Sovereign as one of the radio station’s central points.

God is independent and superior to the rest of the universe.

5th Paragraph is Ellen G. White quote:

“As in obedience to His natural laws the earth should produce its treasures, so in obedience to His moral law the hearts of the people were to reflect the attributes of His character.” *The Adventist Home, p. 144.*



The 'moral law' is the natural law of the mind and heart.

Shaded area at bottom of page: "How can we better manifest goodness, righteousness, and justice in a world filled with evil, unrighteousness, and injustice? Why must we do these things?"

- a. Would it make sense to ask the question: Why must you use clean gas in your car and lawn equipment?
- b. Why shouldn't you put sand or sugar in your gas tank?

TUESDAY

Revelation 4 & 5

- a. The throne room in heaven is depicted with Christ as a slain lamb opening a scroll with seven seals. The throne and its surrounding beings are depicted symbolically (are we sure what it looks like?).

WEDNESDAY

Read the texts for the day: Psalms 11:4-7, Habakkuk 2:20

Would you have seen these two texts as pointing to a courtroom scene?

I would like to contrast the Courtroom motif with a Doctor's Office (something which I am much more familiar)

Do you have scriptural illustrations of how the Sanctuary was used as a courtroom or a doctor's office in the Old or New Testament?

- a. Christ healing of the ten lepers
- b. dispute management during the exodus

Was this an internal function or external function?

Was this a tabernacle function or a priestly one?

- a. We as New Testament Christians are described as a kingdom of priests.
- b. We are to have good judgment.
 - i. 1 Corinthians 6



What is the difference between a courtroom and a doctor’s office?

Characteristic	Courtroom	Doctor’s Office
Is there fear associated with both?		
What are people afraid of?		
Are there investigations involved in both?		
What is the purpose of the questions that are voiced in both?	Truth?	Truth
Is it important for the truth to be know in both? Why?		
What kind of law is typically used in each one?		
What is justice when applied to each room?	Process	The Right Thing. Right Function. Right Outcome.
Is pain sometimes felt in either room?		
What is the hoped for outcome in. . .?		
Define justice in each room?		

Third paragraph: “Divine judgment involves both the wicked and the righteous. While the wicked receive a punishment similar to that received by Sodom and Gomorrah, the upright “will behold His face” (Psalms 11:6, 7 NASB)”

- a. Won’t both the righteous and the wicked see His face? Some will like it others will not.
 - i. See Revelation 1:7 “Look, he is coming on the clouds! Everyone will see him, including those who pierced him. All peoples on earth will mourn over him. So shall it be!”
 - ii. Isa 25:9 “On that day his people will say, "This is our God; we have waited for him, and now he will save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him. Let us rejoice and be glad because he will save us."”
 - iii. Who is going to be in the fire?



- a) Isa 33:14-15 (GNB) “The sinful people of Zion are trembling with fright. They say, “God's judgment is like a fire that burns forever. Can any of us survive a fire like that?” (15) You can survive if you say and do what is right. Don't use your power to cheat the poor and don't accept bribes. Don't join with those who plan to commit murder or to do other evil things.”

Shaded area at bottom of page: “However much we cry out for justice, we often don't see justice in the present. Why, then, must we trust in God's justice? Without that promise, what hope do we have?

- a. The song: “My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus blood and righteousness”
i. When I was trying to remember the words of this song I sang, “Jesus love and righteousness”
b. John 14:9 Jesus answered, "For a long time I have been with you all; yet you do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Why, then, do you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

THURSDAY

Why is it a place of salvation?

Question at top of page:

- a. Read Hebrews 8:1, 2
b. What is Christ doing at the throne of God?
c. We have a High Priest at the right hand of God. What does that mean?
d. Before someone goes too far the road of what Christ is doing and His actions in relationship to the Father, we need to read again Romans 8:31-39 (GNB).

In the preceding verses Paul has just outlined how Christ is for us, the Holy Spirit is for us and God the Father is for us. We read:

“In view of all this, what can we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? (32) Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son---will he not also freely give us all things? (33) Who will accuse God's chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! (34) Who, then, will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right side of God, pleading with him for us! (35) Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death? (36) As the scripture says, "For your sake we are in danger of death at all times; we are treated like sheep that are going to be slaughtered." (37) No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! (38) For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, (39) neither the world above nor the world below---there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.”



We then are told to read Revelation 1:12-20, 8:2-6, 11:19, and 15:5-8.

“A careful study of these scenes reveals that they are interconnected, showing an internal progression in the salvation accomplished by God: from Christ on earth to His heavenly ministry in the first and second apartments to His high priestly ministry’s end and finally to the new earth tabernacle.”



The Sanctuary Lesson 2 4Q 2013

“Heaven” on Earth

SUNDAY

This quarter we are studying The Sanctuary. Much confusion arises because the word can rightly refer to several things. What can the word “sanctuary” legitimately refer to?

- A retreat for rest and rejuvenation
- A safe haven
- A place of worship
- A place where God dwells
- Our bodies and minds
- The corporate church
- A tent built by Moses
- A building built by Solomon and Herod
- Jesus and His human body
- Something in heaven
- Others?

And has sanctuary ever been attributed to be something it was not legitimately intended to refer to? For instance, the earth in the early 19th century?

Can confusion arise if we read something about the sanctuary which refers to one meaning and we are thinking of the other?

Sunday’s lesson points out parallels between the Garden of Eden and the sanctuary suggesting that perhaps Eden was the first sanctuary on earth. Thoughts?

The lesson gives many examples of the similarities between Eden and the Sanctuary:

- A place where they communed with God and where God walked
- Adam and Eve were to tend and keep it as the Levites were the sanctuary
- Garden like imagery appears in the sanctuary
- Cherubim guarded the way to Eden after the fall and are on the lid to the ark
- Six days of Creation where God spoke followed by the Sabbath and the Sanctuary was given to Moses in six phases where God spoke followed by the instructions for the Sabbath

Thoughts?

Do you see any other lessons from Eden, the first sanctuary?

What was Eden constructed out of?



- Living organisms – any lessons in that regarding God’s Heavenly sanctuary?
- 1 Cor 4:9 says that we are a theater a spectacle to angels and men. Was that true in Eden? Were angelic beings watching what transpired in Eden?
- In whose image were Adam and Eve created? What role did they play in the theater of newly created earth? Who did Adam and Eve represent?
- And where did they dwell?
- They dwelt among the living organisms of earth, tending and keeping it, providing for the welfare, good, and growth of all the living creatures in the Garden. What do we learn about God and His heavenly sanctuary from this?
- God’s heavenly sanctuary is built out of living organisms and God dwells amongst His living beings constantly ministering to us for our good, our health, our eternal growth in love and grace.
- Adam named the animals – any lesson there in our relationship with God?
 - In the Bible name refers to character. In the microcosm of Eden, where Adam and Eve represent the Godhead, and the animals represent living beings beneath the Godhead, what is the significance of Adam naming the animals?
 - God knows our true characters, and calls us by our real names?
 - To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it. Rev 2:17
 - Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. Rev 3:12
 - Any significance? We will discuss the new Jerusalem later in the lesson, but be thinking how it connects to sanctuary themes.

In the sanctuary built by Moses the law was in the ark – where was the law in Eden?

- Written into every living thing, the entire ecosystem is an expression of God’s law of love as all nature is built to operate upon it.
- But the pinnacle, the showcase of God’s law, was the most holy place of Adam and Eve’s heart/mind, where God placed His law of love.
- The law of love is a living law, the template of life, and could only be understood written upon the tablets of the hearts of living beings.

And right in the middle of the Eden Sanctuary we find two trees the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, where Satan approached them with lies, and the Tree of Life. What does this tell us about the heavenly sanctuary?

- What symbolized by the Tree of Life?
- Adam and Eve could eat of it and sustain life – suggesting what?
- Who is the bread of life? In sanctuary they ate the sacrificed lamb. Jesus said unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no part with Him.



- Could the Tree of Life represent Jesus who is our sustainer and from whom we receive life? The sun represents the Father who lives in unapproachable light (1Tim 6:16) and Jesus receives from the Father and becomes the conduit through which God's life flows out to all?
- As long as they were filled with love and truth they had unhindered access to the Tree of Life. Symbolically, representing their unhindered relationship with God. I like how this is described in the book Desire of Ages:
 - But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life. {DA 21.2}
- And what of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, what does it represent?
- Where did lies begin in heaven? Right in the most holy place with Lucifer. Right in the middle of the heavenly sanctuary. Again, what kind of sanctuary? It is built out of what? Living organisms.
- I like this description in the RH January 5, 1886:
 - Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors, and it was only by repentance toward God and faith in the promised Messiah that they could hope ever to regain the lost image of God.
 - Lies believed break the circle of love and trust...
 - Only by changing their belief about God, i.e. repentance, change of thought, attitude etc., and being restored to trust in God, could they hope to be healed and restored to righteousness
- So, Adam and Eve had to choose between two "trees" which represented Jesus and Lucifer – the two methods in competition for the hearts of intelligent beings. God's methods of love as revealed in Jesus or Satan's methods of lies, selfishness, and fear as represented in the Tree of Knowledge.
 - And what did lies do to the sanctuary? It defiled it. The heart of man became corrupt, the sanctuary defiled and what was needed? The sanctuary needed to be cleansed? And this is what Christ came to do!

Does the sanctuary built by Moses contain imagery depicting Satan's lies which needed to be destroyed by the work of Christ?

The veil – consider the imagery of the sanctuary and what it symbolically is trying to teach.



- The priests in their white robes represent the converted. Those who have had rebellious hearts converted to trust God and now live to represent Him, thus wearing the righteousness of Christ in character depicted by the white robes.
- Only the priests could enter the Holy Place, where we find the Lampstand, filled with Oil and giving light – symbolic of the living and written Word of God, which is a light unto our path, enlightening our minds via the work of the Holy Spirit.
- The showbread which was eaten only by the priests on Sabbath, representing the bread of life, partaking the character of Christ and internalizing the truth about God into our minds, as we practice His methods of truth, love and freedom, all symbolized by the Sabbath, the day upon which they ate the bread.
- And the golden altar, upon which incense was burned, representing the prayers of the converted ascending to God from hearts purified by the righteousness of Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit.
- As the priests were in the Holy Place, longing to see God more fully, something prevented it, what? The veil, and what was sewn on the veil? Angels. Symbolically, what is being taught?
 - That angelic beings obstruct our clear view of God, which means what? Satan and his angels lie about God obstructing our clear understanding of God.
 - “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” 2Cor 4:3,4
- At the Cross, when Christ completed His mission of revealing fully the truth about God’s character of love, the lies were destroyed and the veil was torn open. The lies that obstruct our knowledge of God were destroyed.
 - Those who believe the lies about God and have the truth about God obstructed are perishing. Their minds are veiled to the gospel, the good news about God that Christ revealed. But to those who have seen the light, the truth about God, are being renewed and cleansed to be like Him.
- Additionally, Satan tempts us through our fallen natures and Christ destroyed the infection to our nature at the Cross and in His person renewed the human species back to God’s original design. Thus the two barriers to being united with God – lies we believe about Him, and our fallen natures which prefer selfishness to selfless love, were both destroyed at the Cross, thus the veil was torn open. Satan and his minions were defeated.

The Sanctuary in Eden, and the original in heaven, are made out of living organisms and there was no blood, no slaughtered animals, no death in those sanctuaries. But the one built by Moses was made out of non-living matter, dead material and it was filled with blood and had a constant stream of slaughtered animals. Why? What is being depicted?

Our terminal condition is being depicted!

The sanctuary God built was contaminated by sin, the design protocols for life were broken and thus the system, as it is, is dead. We are “dead in trespass and sin.” But, the blood, representative of Christ’s life, was spread throughout the system, symbolizing that Christ would come, take upon



Himself our terminal condition, develop a perfect human character, eliminate the infection of fear and selfishness, and cleanse the sanctuary, restoring it to God's original ideal and bringing humanity back from the dead.

Do you see how all of this can be understood without ever having to resort to payment, appeasement, punishment etc.? When we see God's law as the expression of His character, the design protocols of life, then we can discern the beauty of the symbols and realize He is working to heal and restore us back into perfection!

Thoughts?

MONDAY

The title of the lesson is quite right, "Copy of a Pattern." Read first paragraph, "The Scriptures clearly teach..." thoughts?

What does this mean when we consider any lessons we might draw regarding the earthly sanctuary?

When a tailor or seamstress get a "pattern" for a dress, do we, from viewing the pattern, get a clear understanding of what the dress will look like?

Moses was show the pattern, the blueprint, the outline, not the actual sanctuary. What is the implication?

Could it be that the real sanctuary is too complex for Moses to understand? It had to be put in a simplistic pattern?

And, what do we get when we build the sanctuary at Sinai? Do we get the reality? Do we actually get a miniature of what is in heaven?

- Do you think there is a slaughterhouse in heaven in which animals are being slain?
- Do you think Jesus is in heaven offering incense and smoke to His Father?
- Are they eating showbread or roasted lamb?
- Is there a lamp burning oil giving light so Jesus can see in the sanctuary in heaven?
- Is Jesus pleading His blood to the Father every time we seek His grace in our lives?

What is going on? What is this pattern to reveal? Read third paragraph, "The book of Hebrews explains..." thoughts?

Notice the lesson rightly points out that "As a shadow is always a mere representation of something real, and an imperfect and faint representation at that, the earthly sanctuary is a mere representation of the heavenly."



We make grave mistakes to extrapolate the shadow and blow it up in our imagination and plug Christ into a larger version in heaven.

The last paragraph the lesson states, “Because the correspondence runs from type (original) to antitype (copy), we can see in Hebrews that the heavenly model that Moses had seen is referred to as ‘type’ or ‘pattern’ (Heb 8:5) and the earthly sanctuary as ‘antitype’ or ‘copy’ (Heb 9:24).” Thoughts?

Any concerns with this? Was Moses shown the original? No, Moses was shown a pattern of the original. This is a big difference as we already discussed. We can use type and antitype language if we want, but we shouldn’t conclude that the type in this case was the original, it was the pattern of the original Moses saw.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “One of the themes in the Gospel...” thoughts?

Jesus declared Himself to be the temple, what should we conclude from Jesus words?

Was Jesus suggesting that the pattern shown Moses, from which the OT system was built, was in some way a pattern of God’s design for humanity? And Jesus, the second Adam, assumed upon Himself the sanctuary God created in Eden, but which had been defiled by Adam, and Jesus cleansed and rebuilt it back to God’s original intent?

Any passages that might inform us on this idea?

Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord. ¹³ It is **he who will build the temple of the Lord**, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. Zech 6:12,13

Why does He need to branch out and build the Temple if it already exists in heaven? Unless, it is speaking of the true Temple, where God’s law is to be written upon the heart, which was defiled by Adam and which Christ was to cleanse?

Other texts?

- 1cor3:9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, **God's building**.
- 1CO 3:16 Don't you know that **you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?**
- EPH 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the **whole building** is joined together and rises **to become a holy temple** in the Lord. ²² And in him **you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit**.



- 1PE 2:4 As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- 5 **you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood**, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- Heb 3:6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And **we are his house**, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

Can we make the case that God's sanctuary is built out of intelligent beings?

What then do you understand Heb 8:1,2 to mean?

- "The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves **in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.**"

Thoughts? It is saying the true sanctuary was not built by humans, right? Who built Adam and Eve? Who built the angels? Who built Eden? Is the true sanctuary intelligent living beings built by God? Consider this passage:

- 2CO 5:1 Now we know that if the **earthly tent** we live in is destroyed, we have **a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.** ² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our **heavenly dwelling,** ³ because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴ For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be **clothed with our heavenly dwelling,** so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

What does this mean? Is it saying that the sanctuary built by God, and not by humans, is the sanctuary of the human being? Where does God want to write His law?

- This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. **I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. (Heb 8:10:11)

Do we have any Biblical evidence that the Sanctuary God created, without the help of human hands, was His intelligent creatures. Adam defiled his sanctuary, we are born in defiled sanctuaries, Christ came and took up our infirmities, our iniquity, and as He told the Jews, will rebuild the Temple in 3 days after they destroyed it.

Did you notice how because of Jesus, God cleanses us by writing the law in our hearts and minds?

Consider this passage:

You were anointed as a guardian cherub,



- for so I ordained you.
You were on the holy mount of God;
you walked among the fiery stones.
15 You were blameless in your ways
from the day you were created
till wickedness was found in you.
16 Through your widespread trade
you were filled with violence,
and you sinned.
So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God,
and I expelled you, O guardian cherub,
from among the fiery stones.
17 Your heart became proud
on account of your beauty,
and you corrupted your wisdom
because of your splendor.
So I threw you to the earth;
I made a spectacle of you before kings.
18 **By your many sins and dishonest trade
you have desecrated your sanctuaries.**
So I made a fire come out from you,
and it consumed you,
and I reduced you to ashes on the ground
in the sight of all who were watching.
19 All the nations who knew you
are appalled at you;
you have come to a horrible end
and will be no more.” Ezek 28:14-19

Thoughts?

Read last paragraph, “All who did service...” thoughts?

What law is referred to in this passage? The law of love, the design template for life, or Imperial Roman rules imposed and policed by the ruling authority?

How do you see the law of love in the sanctuary?

The entire system is a mini-theater, a drama, designed to act out a simple teaching – we are separated from God, alienated, dying. But through Christ we are brought back into unity with our heavenly Father and healed from all defects.



WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “Paul speaks in...” thoughts?

Is the church (people who are saved not the building) “real” or metaphor? If one believes the sanctuary is composed of the “church” is one believing in a real sanctuary or a metaphor? In other words, which is the real sanctuary, the one were God wants to dwell, a building made of inanimate material or the hearts and minds of living beings?

Where did Satan want to enthrone himself in a building made out of dead matter or in the hearts and minds of living beings as the one most loved and adored?

- You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. (Is 14:13)

Where did Satan want to be enthroned?

Any concerns if we move away from metaphor to reality and instead of talking of symbols we talk of the way things actually are? Or is it more comforting to discuss blood, altars, incense, and coverings?

Read first sentence bottom pink section, “Of course, we are saved by Christ’s righteousness, which covers us completely.”

Beautiful metaphor – what is the reality this metaphor attempts to communicate?

Here is one description which attempts to move away from metaphor to reality, see if this is the common view we hear in church:

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 3:11.4}

Thoughts? Is there a difference between covering over disease and actually curing it?

God, through Christ cures, heals, restores, recreates you and me back to His original design. This is God’s plan of salvation. It is real. It is described in many symbolic ways, including cleansing of the sanctuary, but the real cleansing is when the hearts and minds of His intelligent beings have been cleansed from fear, insecurity, shame, guilt, selfishness, lies, evil and renewed in purity, holiness, righteousness, love and unity with Him.



God longs for a people to think, to reason with Him, to move past the dark symbols and into the light of the reality of his universe.

THURSDAY

The lesson asks us to read Revelation 7:15-16:

“they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.

Thoughts?

Is this literal or metaphorical? What does it mean? Does God put a tent over us? Are we trapped for eternity in a building in heaven? Are we thinking literal building, or interpreting the symbols to the reality of the temple being constructed out of living stones?

If we are the temple does it make any difference?

Read last paragraph, “John does not...” thoughts?

What else does the Bible say about the New Jerusalem?

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. Rev 21:2

Who is the bride of Christ? The church!

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. Rev 21:9,10

What is the bride of Christ? Is it inanimate material or is the Bride of Christ the church, composed of intelligent living beings?

The city has twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes and twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles. What does this mean? Is it literal, or symbolic? And if symbolic, symbolic of what?

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. Rev 21:3



The dwelling of God is with who? And what is the dwelling of God also known as? The Temple or Sanctuary.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "A fear of making..." thoughts?

If we consider the temple to be real, physical, built out of real flesh and blood living intelligent beings have we spiritualized it away?

Consider this quotation from one of the founders of our church:

The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use.

Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}



Come And Reason Ministries presents a **FREE**, three-session Seminar/Webinar **Saturday, November 9, 2013** from 2-6 p.m. Eastern Time, hosted by **Hamilton Community** and **Rock Point Churches**.

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The three presentations are:

The God-Shaped Brain: How Changing Your View of God Transforms Your Life

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!

Objectives:

- Identify the relationship between belief and physical and mental health
- Examine the scientific evidence documenting how a change in belief can alter brain function resulting in a change in health
- Formulate a methodology for separating healthy from unhealthy beliefs

Designer or Dictator an Exploration of God's Law and Justice

How we view God changes us, physically and spiritually. How we conceive of God's law and justice fires either love circuits or fear circuits and impacts our ability to love and trust. In this presentation Dr. Jennings explores the Biblical record of God's law and how tradition slowly changed humanity's conception of God and His law.

Objectives:

- Differentiate between natural and imposed law
- Differentiate the justice of natural versus imposed law
- Explore the divergence of love versus fear based beliefs upon religious and social activities

Buddha, Jesus and the Brain

Buddha and Jesus are the two individuals who have perhaps impacted more people with their ideas and examples than any others in history. This presentation will contrast the philosophical differences underpinning their teachings while examining what recent brain science reveals about Eastern vs Biblical meditation.

Objectives:

- Contrast the differences in philosophical underpinnings between the teachings of Buddha and Jesus
- Examine the impact meditation has upon brain function and structure



- Identify the physical health outcomes of meditation



The Sanctuary Lesson 3 4Q 2013

Sacrifices

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “Central to the...” thoughts?

Do you agree that sacrifice is central to the entire gospel? If so, how is sacrifice central?

What is the gospel? I looked up on several websites and here are some definitions of the gospel I found online:

The gospel is the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that provides full and free deliverance from the power and penalty of sin according to the grace of God alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone. (<http://www.gospeloutreach.net/gospel.html>)

The gospel is the singularly most important communication of God to man. In Jesus who is God the Son, we have the revelation of God’s love and sacrifice that saves us from God's righteous judgment upon sinners. (<http://carm.org/what-gospel>)

The Gospel is called the ‘good news’ because it addresses the most serious problem that you and I have as human beings, and that problem is simply this: God is holy and He is just, and I’m not. And at the end of my life, I’m going to stand before a just and holy God, and I’ll be judged. And I’ll be judged either on the basis of my own righteousness – or lack of it – or the righteousness of another. (<http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/what-gospel/>)

In a day of depressing headlines and uncertainty all around us, good news is very welcome. What better news could there be than as the old hymn says: “The vilest offender who truly believes, that moment from Jesus a pardon receives?” When Christians refer to the “Gospel” they are referring to the “good news” that Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sin so that we might become the children of God through faith alone in Christ alone. (<https://bible.org/article/what-gospel>)

Thoughts? What do you hear in these definitions of the gospel?

Who is placed at the center of all these definitions? Do you notice how these subtly place self at the center?

- Do you notice how God is depicted in all of these supposed gospels?
- Do you notice the tension in these gospels between God and man?
- As these gospels are described did you experience God and sinners being on the same side?



The Bible refers to the gospel as:

- The gospel (good news) *of God* Rom, 1:1 (and many other places)
- The gospel (good news) *of God's Son*, Rom 1:9
- The gospel (good news) *of Jesus Christ the Son of God*, Mark 1:1
- The gospel (good news) *of God's grace*, Acts 20:24

Is the gospel about us? Or is it about God?

If the good news is about God shouldn't it present God in a way that is actually good? Do you notice how many of these so called gospels present Jesus as good, but the Father as not so good?

Here are some other texts:

- The gospel (good news) *of the kingdom* Mt 24:14
 - What kingdom?
 - Where is the focus of this gospel?
 - Is the gospel about God's heavenly kingdom or our salvation?
 - Jesus told Nicodemus, "no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." (Jn 3:3) If the gospel is the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, and one must be born again to see it, then is being born again the same as the gospel?
- Revelation 14 tells us an angel comes from heaven with an "eternal" gospel. (14:6)
 - What does eternal mean? not just eternity future, but eternity past
 - Was there a gospel *of God* before sin? Was there good news about God before sin?
 - What did the war in heaven start over?
 - If you were lied to and told that your spouse was cheating, what would be good news to you? The truth that your spouse is loyal!
 - Is the good news primarily about us or about God?
- Most significantly the Bible also describes the gospel as the "*gospel of the glory of Christ*", which the Bible then defines as "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God." 2Cor 4:4-6
 - What is the gospel? What is the good news? The truth about God as revealed in Christ!
 - Is the gospel primarily about our deliverance from sin or primarily good news about God Himself?

The gospel is the good news that God is NOT the kind of being Satan has alleged, that God's kingdom is NOT like human kingdoms. Did you notice that the gospel definitions I read said things about Jesus paying our penalty so we could be saved, or forgiven or pardoned? But the Bible says:

Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, **for he will freely pardon.** "For **my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,**" declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are **my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.** (IS 55:7-9)



Did you notice that God freely pardons? And this free pardon is NOT the way of humans, our ways are lowly, God's ways are higher, holier, loftier than ours. Yet, we insist on lowering God down to our human methods, motives, and actions and teaching a false gospel that God is the source of pain and suffering and God must inflict it on His children. Rather than freely pardon, we say that God pardons after Jesus pays a penalty in our behalf.

Thus, all the gospel definitions we read earlier, are definitions based on false premise and misunderstanding of God's law. These false gospels are what arise when people fail to see God as Creator and Builder and instead believe God runs His universe like humans run earthly governments with imposed laws that have no inherent consequence and thus require the ruling authority to police breeches in the law, have judgments and inflict punishments. Then the gospel becomes perverted to mean Jesus paying our legal penalty.

But the gospel is the good news about God Himself, that God is not like a Roman dictator. God law isn't imposed. God builds, God creates, God designs and His law is an expression of His character and He constructed the universe to run in harmony with His own nature of love. Deviations from this design protocol are not compatible with life. Therefore, we are dead, terminal, in trespass and sin, and God so loved the world that He sent His only Son that whoever trusts Him will be saved. He did not send His Son to condemn the world but to save it through him!

So, then, now that we know the gospel is about God, His character of love, His methods of love, His kingdom of love, then how do we understand the connection of sacrifice with the gospel?

Would it be that God sacrifices to fix what Adam broke?

The first paragraph says the basic meaning of sacrifice "describes the act of approaching, the act of bringing something into the presence of God."

What does this suggest? How can it be rightly understood and how can it be easily misunderstood? Does the law concept one hold impact how one understands it?

If one believes God's law is like human law, imposed and then enforced, then what does one believe sacrifice to approach God means? Payment, appeasement of the offended deity.

But if one believes God's law is the design parameters for life and we are out of harmony, then what does one understand sacrifice to mean? First, Christ's sacrifice to remedy our situation, to actually cure humanity. Second, denial of self, the sacrifice of the destructive things our hearts have become attached to, the dying to self, the crucifixion of selfishness, for the purpose of being restored into harmony with God so that we may experience regeneration and eternal life.

Notice, sacrifice is NEVER to appease, influence, alter, impact or change God. It is the process necessary to heal and transform sinners.



Thus the next paragraph has it right, “Similarly, the English word *offering* comes from the Latin *offerre*, the presentation of a gift. The word *sacrifice* is a combination of the Latin *Sacer* (holy) and *facere* (make) and refers to the act of making something sacred.”

Thoughts?

Doesn't this mean the act of healing, restoring, cleansing, recreating, purifying, the sinner? In other words, the sacrifice is NOT for God's need, to pay penalty, to appease anger, to turn away or absorb wrath, but to heal, transform and regenerate humanity back into God's original design!

As the Scripture says, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2Cor 5:21)

So why does God WANT sacrifice? Because He wants to see us healed, saved, restored, cleansed! And we can only be healed through the sacrifice Christ has made.

Was sacrifice needed in heaven before sin? Was sacrifice needed in Eden before sin? What does this tell us? That sacrifice is the means of healing, restoring, cleansing the sinner.

Now listen carefully so you don't misunderstand – the sacrifice of Jesus for the eradication of sin, salvation of humanity, securing of the universe, is not **The** good news, it is **the expression, outworking, effective action** of the Good News of who God is! In other words, the good news is about God and His character which is fully expressed in the actions of Christ sacrificing Himself for our salvation. But the good news about God was true before He sacrificed Himself, it was just obscured by Satan's lies. Thus the good news is always about God!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Adam and Eve lived...” thoughts?

Did God “grant” them face to face communication or did God “design” and “desire” face to face communication with them?

Does it make a difference to say God “granted” them faced to face communication? What does it suggest? Does it subtly suggest that perhaps they had to petition, that it was an inconvenience to God, that God really didn't desire it Himself?

Read second paragraph, “Adam and Eve...” thoughts?

Does such language give anyone pause? Does it confuse anyone? What does it mean? How do we understand it? How do you handle such descriptions?

Thoughts?



From whose perspective is this being described? “Adam and Eve stood as criminals before God...”
From God’s perspective, Adam and Eve’s or both?

Is it likely, Adam and Eve felt condemned, but where did such condemnation arise? Did they hear God in the garden condemning them? “Adam who told you you are naked?” Implies what? “Adam I didn’t say that. Your own conscience is condemning you. You are changed! Your condition is out of harmony with how I built life to operate.”

Is their condemnation coming from God or from their own condition?

So, after Adam and Eve changed themselves, God goes on to tell them all the consequences of what their actions have caused, but also, the promise of a redeemer to heal and save. Was God punishing or was God informing when He told of the curse on the ground etc.?

Well here is another quote from the same author that the Study Guide quotes. Does this make it more clear?

Satan had peculiar interest to watch the development of events immediately after the fall of Adam to learn how his work had affected the kingdom of God, and what the Lord would do with Adam because of his disobedience. **The Son of God, undertaking to become the Redeemer of the race, placed Adam in a new relation to his Creator. He was still fallen;** but a door of hope was opened to him. **The wrath of God still hung over Adam, but the execution of the sentence of death was delayed, and the indignation of God was restrained,** because Christ had entered upon the work of becoming man's Redeemer. **Christ was to take the wrath of God which in justice should fall upon man.** He became a refuge for man, and although **man was indeed a criminal, deserving the wrath of God,** yet he could by faith in Christ run into the refuge provided and be safe. **In the midst of death there was life if man chose to accept it.** The holy and infinite God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, could no longer talk with man. **No communication could now exist directly between man and his Maker.** {RH, February 24, 1874 par. 29}

Does this make it more clear? What law construct to you read such ideas through?

Did you notice the last two sentences, no direct communication with man was possible – who spoke to Adam in Eden telling him of his expulsion from Eden? Who spoke to Moses on the mountain? So, do we take all of this literal, or realize there is some generalities going on that need to be more precisely understood?

Let’s break it down:

The Son of God, undertaking to become the Redeemer of the race, placed Adam in a new relation to his Creator. He was still fallen; but a door of hope was opened to him.

- What is the relation Adam has without Jesus?
- Before sin it was open and free, after sin, separation, disconnect, dying in terminal condition separated from the source of life



- What is the new relation that Adam has because of Jesus?
- Jesus becomes the connecting link to restore Adam back into unity with God, to heal Adam and reconnect Him to the source of life.

The wrath of God still hung over Adam, but the execution of the sentence of death was delayed, and the indignation of God was restrained, because Christ had entered upon the work of becoming man's Redeemer. **Christ was to take the wrath of God which in justice should fall upon man.**

- What does this mean?
- What is wrath – the Biblical definition of wrath?
- “When that happens, **I will become angry with them; I will abandon them,** and they will be destroyed. Many terrible disasters will come upon them, and then they will realize that these **things are happening to them because I, their God, am no longer with them.**” (Deuteronomy 31:17 – GN)
- “**I will fight against you with all my might, my anger, my wrath, and my fury.** I will kill everyone living in this city; people and animals alike **will die of a terrible disease....** Anyone who stays in the city will be **killed in war or by starvation or disease...**It will be **given over** to the king of Babylonia, and **he** will burn it to the ground. I, the LORD, have spoken...I will set your palace on fire, and the fire will burn down everything around it. I, the LORD, have spoken.” (Jeremiah 21:5,6,9-10,14 – GN)
- “The LORD **has abandoned** his people like a lion that leaves its cave. The horrors of war and the LORD’s **fierce anger** have turned the country into a desert.” (Jeremiah 25:38 – GN)
- “Very well, then, **I will give you freedom: the freedom to die by war, disease, and starvation.**” (Jeremiah 34:17 – GN)
- “**You will feel my anger when I turn it loose on you** like a blazing fire. And **I will hand you over** to brutal men, experts at destruction.” (Ezekiel 21:31 – GN)
- “**I will attack the people of Israel and Judah like a lion.** I myself will tear them to pieces and then leave them. When I drag them off, no one will be able to save them. **I will abandon** my people until they have suffered enough for their sins and come looking for me. Perhaps in their suffering they will try to find me.” (Hosea 5:14,15 – GN)
- **God’s anger is revealed** from heaven against all the sin and evil of the people whose evil ways prevent the truth from being known. **God punishes them,** because what can be known about God is plain to them, for God himself made it plain... They say they are wise, but they are fools; instead of worshiping the immortal God, they worship images made to look like mortals or birds or animals or reptiles. **And so God has given those people over to do the filthy things their hearts desire,** and they do shameful things with each other. **They exchange the truth about God for a lie;** they worship and serve what God has created instead of the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever! Amen. Because they do this, **God has given them over** to shameful passions....**Because those people refuse to keep in mind the true knowledge about**



God, he has given them over to corrupted minds, so that they do the things that they should not do.” (Romans 1:18,19,22-26,28 – GN)

What is God’s wrath according to Scripture? Letting go to reap what sin does.

So how do we understand the quotation that the wrath of God hung over Adam and eventually fell upon Christ?

- That Adam’s own choice changed Adam and put Him outside the design protocol God constructed life to operate upon. God respects the free choices of His creatures and without some actual change in mankind man would reap what He had chosen, complete and total separation from God. But Christ, chose to take Adam’s condition, i.e. place, and cured the condition, thus restoring humanity back to God’s ideal. At the Cross God surrendered Christ, let Him go, to the free choice Christ made, to go through that awful experience of destroying the infection of fear and selfishness, aka sin.

He became a refuge for man, and although **man was indeed a criminal, deserving the wrath of God**, yet he could by faith in Christ run into the refuge provided and be safe. **In the midst of death there was life if man chose to accept it.** {RH, February

- Why could God’s forgiveness alone, personal pardon in Eden not save Adam? Because pardon doesn’t fix what is broken. Christ came to fix mankind, to actual heal, transform and renew humanity.
- Thus, Christ took our terminal condition and at the Cross the Father let Christ go to reap what Christ had chosen – which was what? To save us!
- When reading difficult, dark speech language like the two earlier quotes, do we bring other references from the same author to bear to give further insight to potential meaning, like this one:

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

- When we bring it all together, what emerges? That Adam and Eve deviated from God’s design and stood outside the “law”, which is the design parameters for life. This is a terminal condition. They stood condemned, by their condition, and because God is a God of truth, He truthfully acknowledges, or judges their condition to be terminal. But His judgment doesn’t cause it to be such.



- God did not want humanity to die from their terminal condition, thus Christ committed Himself to become human for the purpose of reconciling humanity back to God. What did this require? To fix the deviation in God's design. To restore humanity back into harmony with God. God was not changed by sin, mankind was, thus Christ died to heal the human race, not to assuage the anger and wrath of God.

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "God established..." thoughts?

Is the paragraph talking about the sacrifices done by the patriarchs or since Sinai? It appears Sinai since it talks about all the types of sacrifices one could bring.

Do you agree with their conclusion that God set this up so believers could enter into close relationship with Him?

Does this mean that without these sacrifices believers could not enter into close relationship with Him?

Then, could believers enter into close relationship with God without animal sacrifices?

Then, what was the purpose of the sacrifices of animals? Was it designed to BE the way into relationship with God or to TEACH the way into close relationship with God?

Too often through human history God gives teaching tools to teach a greater reality, and people mistakenly think the teaching tool is the reality.

Imagine using mirror as an analogy of looking into God's law to see the defects in one's character – but then people mistake the teaching tool for the reality and believe mirrors are necessary to see the defects of sin. So people build churches and houses and sanctuaries and worship centers with lots of mirrors. We create mirrors in the shape of crosses, ensure people carry them with them everywhere. We institute a mirror service where we all pull out a mirror and looks into them. We have a mirror moment before major tests and sporting events. Mirrors become holy relics passed down from generation to generation. We aren't allowed to place other objects on top of the mirror. Only sacred water can be used to clean the mirrors.

Do you see a problem with this?

Thus, the sacrifices, which were only to teach the way back into close relationship with God, became misunderstood as the *means* to a close relationship with God. And people have taken the teaching tool and extrapolated false ideas about God and the heavenly sanctuary.

Christ is the means, the way, the truth and the life. It is through Christ that we enter into close relationship with God.



TUESDAY

Abraham and Isaac at Mt Moriah – thoughts or questions about this?

Why did God instruct Abraham to do this?

An explanation is offered in the lesson, read second paragraph, “It was to impress...” thoughts?

Did Abraham’s behavior demonstrate accurately the behavior of God toward Jesus?

Did God doubt and need to have His faith tested?

Did God use His power to kill Jesus?

No! When one accepts the imposed law construct, then one misunderstands this entire account and believes it is a mini crucifixion and extrapolates falsely that God killed Jesus. But they fail to actually apply what happened. First, Abraham did NOT kill Isaac. So even, if one does, incorrectly, try to extrapolate the lesson to God and Jesus, then one must conclude that God did NOT kill Jesus, but that is not what they do.

This exercise was NOT to teach what God did to Jesus but to teach Abraham something about God’s heart and willingness to sacrifice to save us and strengthen Abraham’s faith in God.

When Jesus said that Abraham longed to see his day and saw it, he was referring to Mt Moriah. What did Abraham see there?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “In a passage...” thoughts?

How do you understand this?

If a person was dying of renal failure and needed a kidney transplant could one say, the laws of health demand it. Thus the donor is meeting “legal” requirements, where “legal” refers to the laws of health? But would using such language help us understand or hinder our understanding?

This is the problem with legal language, if one has clear comprehension of God’s law, as the protocols upon which life is built, then legal language can be used, but far too often the language is misunderstood and instead darkens the mind and misrepresents God because people falsely conclude God’s law is imposed like human law.

If we have imposed law constructs then the blood (life) becomes legal payment, rather than healing solution. People teach ideas that the blood of Jesus, instead of cleansing from sin, is taught to contaminate with sin. Have you ever heard the blood of Jesus being taught to contaminate?



The ransom concept is also misunderstood in the imposed model to be a legal price paid to free us from our legal condemnation etc.

But, what is the function of a ransom? To free one held in captivity or bondage.

And what holds us in bondage? Lies we believe and our own terminal condition.

Thus what is the ransom that frees us from this bondage?

- The truth about God that destroys lies AND
- A perfect human nature achieved singly by Christ
- The sanctuary service depicted this in many places. The blood is symbolic of the truth about God and the perfect nature that is applied throughout thus cleansing all it comes in contact with. Not contaminating it.
- The animal, representative of Christ, when the sins were confessed, symbolizes Christ taking our terminal condition. The animal was slain, and the fat of the inner organs were cut away and burned. This symbolizes the work Jesus did at the Cross of destroying the infection of sin, which tempts us to act selfishly. Some might say the carnal nature. And the rent veil also symbolizes the destruction of lies and the fallen nature, which opens the way back to God.

To whom is the ransom “paid”?

In other words, who needs the truth and the new nature to set them free? We do. Christ did this for us! The Father didn’t need the truth presented to Him and the Father doesn’t need a new nature developed for Him.

This idea of ransom being paid to God or the law is a lie, based on a false law construct which came out of Imperial Rome and has infected the church and actually obstructs God’s plan to heal and restore us. Our minds need cleansing!

THURSDAY

First paragraph, “Though after Christ’s...” thoughts? Why was there no more need for animal sacrifices?

What was the need before Christ’s death? If the need was to teach something, then why is that need gone? Because the system was corrupted to teach lies about God and obstruct the truth and God didn’t want us falling back into that corruption.

Sadly, many have done just that by the way the OT sacrificial system is taught, as a system of legal payments, again misrepresenting God.

What teaching tools has God given us to help us learn in the aftermath of Christ’s death?



Communion – what do we learn from these symbols? Can it be misunderstood and actually cause misunderstanding about God? How?

Are we cleansed by the wafer or the wine? What is its purpose?

Other lessons?

Baptism, are we cleansed by water baptism? Or is it a teaching tool a symbol to teach the real cleansing of our hearts and minds being immersed by the Holy Spirit?

Others?

What does it mean to be a living sacrifice? We present ourselves to God to be cleansed, healed, restored, to be made holy and renewed in Godliness.

What does this look like?

We say no to selfishness and yes to love for God and others. We are willing to sacrifice self to promote the kingdom of God.

What can we do to cooperate with this?

What defiles the soul?

- Lies about God
- Deviations from God's design, such as selfishness

FRIDAY

Read question 1 and discuss

Read and discuss question 2



The Sanctuary Lesson 4 4Q 2013

Lessons from the Sanctuary

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “The sanctuary...” thoughts?

Which direction should we go to direct the current of our study, use the OT sanctuary to understand the gospel, or use the gospel of Jesus to understand the sanctuary?

Which is better, to study a shadow to understand the object casting the shadow, or to study the object to understand its shadow?

One of the major problems with most OT theology and sanctuary teaching is that they study the shadow to try to understand Christ and His mission and ministry, rather than studying Christ to understand the OT sanctuary.

This is from a book called Christ’s Object Lessons, published in 1900, yet this idea is still not utilized to understand the sanctuary:

The significance of the Jewish economy **is not yet fully comprehended**. Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols. **The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries. Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding. Far more than we do**, it is our privilege to understand these wonderful themes. We are to comprehend the deep things of God. (133)

Thoughts?

Several points if you think this is right:

- At the time *Christ’s Object Lessons* was written (1900) the significance of the sanctuary service was not fully comprehended. Meaning – much of what was written before that was limited, partial, incomplete and perhaps misunderstood. Yet, we cling to descriptions from more than a century ago as if it is the clearest and final understanding of the sanctuary symbolism.
- The gospel is the key. We must first have a right understanding of the gospel to understand the symbols. If we misunderstand the gospel as paying legal penalty, we will necessarily misunderstand the sanctuary. The gospel, as we discussed last week is the Good News about God’s character as revealed in Christ. Only those who rightly understand the gospel will uncover the meaning of the sanctuary symbols. 2Cor 4:4-6
- We have much more to learn, truth is progressive. We need to stop resting complacent on ideas hundreds of years old and instead move forward in our understanding.

Thoughts?



In the lesson is a little diagram of the sanctuary. I thought this week we could explore some of the symbols and meaning of this system and how it was designed to teach the true gospel.

First, some general principles we will use to decode the symbols:

- The OT Sanctuary was a teaching tool. **Everything** in it was a symbol of something else. Not one element was to be taken literal. It was not to be taken concretely, but translated into its ultimate reality. Just as letters are symbols that make up words which represent realities, i.e TREE is not a tree, but is a symbolic representation of a tree. So too, all the symbols of the sanctuary represent other realities. It is these realities we seek.
- Some of the symbols may have more than one meaning, just like words can have more than one meaning, (lamp represents living and written Word)
- Some realities are represented by more than one symbol, just like objects can have more than one name. (Lamb and High Priest represent Jesus etc. daily priests and the vessels that carried the blood represent the converted working with God to share the gospel)

So let's examine the meaning of the various elements

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL:

- The children of Israel represented what? The entire human race. The twelve tribes represent peoples from all nations, tribes and kindreds.
- The came out of Egypt, and Egypt represented what? The sinful world
- Pharaoh represented who? Satan
- Moses represented who? Jesus
 - The ark Moses was found in represented what? Jesus. Moses was to be drowned in the Nile, as all baby boys were (Ex 1:22). But the ark preserved Moses, representing Jesus the ark for the human race that saves the race from drowning in sin.
 - Moses also, was taken into the house of Pharaoh and raised there. Jesus came to earth and was raised in the domain of the prince of this world.
 - Moses went to the wilderness to overcome his self-dependence and came back to deliver the people from bondage. Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan and overcome temptations to act in self-interest and returned to deliver the people from sin. As Jesus said:
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim **release to the captives**, And recovering of sight to the blind, **To set at liberty them that are bruised**, **proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.** (Luke 4:17-19)
- They marched through the Red Sea – the waters of the Red Sea represent the grave. The cloud that hovered over them represented the Holy Spirit. Moses represents Christ holding the grave open. Their going through represented baptism, death to the old life, leaving the world of sin (Egypt) and rising from the water in new life. Thus the children of Israel were baptized when they when through the Red Sea.(1Cor10:2) Moses held up his hands represents Christ interceding in our behalf. The two assistants holding up Moses hands represents Christ's



human agents on earth spreading the gospel, living lives of love and truth, cooperating with God to restrain and keep open the way of salvation.

- Pharaoh's army destroyed in the sea represents Satan's agents who die as a result of unrestrained and unremedied sin, when God withdraws His protective hand and allows the natural results to take its course.
- The people marched in order through the Red sea and on their journey in the wilderness: Judah the first tribe, Dan the last.
 - Judah is the tribe from which kings came, and from which Jesus descended, and thus leads Israel. Dan means God is judge and represents the final end when God's judgment is realized and sin is eradicated.
 - This also represents Jesus who is the King of kings and Lord of lords at the head of humanity and the righteous judge, as all judgment was placed in His hands, at the end of humanity. He is thus the beginning and the end, the alpha and omega, the first and the last. All graphically depicted in the symbolic way this drama is carried out.
- Then in construction of the sanctuary, God chose Bezaleel from the tribe of Judah and Oholiab from the tribe of Dan to be the two lead craftsmen to make the sanctuary and its items. Bazaleel from Judah and Oholiab from Dan, represent Christ, the first and the last, the King and the Judge, the Beginning and the End, the one who branched out from his place in heaven to build His sanctuary.
 - Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will **branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD.**¹³ It is he who will **build the temple** of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' Zech 6:12,13
- The tribes camped around the sanctuary on three tribes on each of the four sides with the Levites closest as a connecting link between the people and the other tribes.
 - This represents the world, the Levites represent those who have accepted salvation and are on God's team working to bring the gospel of God's kingdom to the rest of the world. The other twelve tribes represent the nations, tribes, and kindreds of the world, who will ultimately be saved from all parts of the world.
 - The 12 Tribes and The Outer Court represent the world
Revelation 7:4 144,000 represent the saved from the 12 Tribes and Revelation 21:12 New Jerusalem 12 gates names of the 12 tribes

MOSES

Represents Christ prior to His incarnation (Moses goes into God's presents to speak with Him and from Moses comes all the instructions for the sanctuary. Represents Christ working with the Father in heaven to formulate and carry out the plan of salvation prior to Christ's incarnation.)

THE LAMB

Represents Christ in His human incarnation on this earth

- JN 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"



THE HIGH PRIEST

- represents Christ after his resurrection and ascension (Heb 4:14 “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.”)
- Christ didn’t become High Priest until after His incarnation, death and resurrection:
 - For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:17,18

In order to understand the meaning of the symbols, we have to determine the general lesson being taught. Are we viewing this through the penal, imposed law model or the natural healing model? What is the key? The gospel, which is what? Misunderstand the gospel and misunderstand the symbols.

What, in general, is the lesson that the sanctuary is to teach? Reconciliation with God. God’s plan to save humanity from sin.

What is the problem that needs resolving? Is the problem of sin a problem or defect in God or God’s law? Or is the problem/defect in humanity?

So, when we interpret these symbols are we interpreting them in ways that suggest something is being done to God and/or His law, or that something is being done to heal and restore man?

THE COURT

- Contains the Brazen altar and the laver both made out of bronze.
- THE BRAZEN ALTAR
what does it symbolize?
 - The altar was constructed out of Shittam wood, which was symbolic of corruptible humanity, overlaid with bronze, symbolic of our defective condition being judged or diagnosed as such.
 - Thus the bronze altar represents the starting point in salvation process. Step one of the 12 steps – “we admit that we are powerless over alcohol and our lives have become unmanageable.” The first step in any healing process is admitting we have something wrong. It is the place of “judgment” or diagnosis, where we acknowledge something is wrong and we are powerless to cure ourselves and thus are in need of an external remedy or Savior. This is the first step, where we all must start, fall down and acknowledge our condition, our sinfulness, and our need of a Savior. The Bronze altar, step one in the salvation/healing process.
 - When an animal was slain the inner fat, the fat around the organs, was removed and burned on the brazen altar, representing the work of Christ in taking our sinful condition upon Himself and destroying the infection of fear and selfishness at the Cross when He was tempted to save self, but didn’t give in to those temptations. He cleansed the inner man.



- The blood represents the perfect character of Christ and the truth about God. The blood was poured out at the base of the altar and applied to the horns. This represents a complete cleansing of the heart and renewal in the truth about God as the foundation of salvation or healing, and then the character transformation as the blood is applied to the horns. Our thoughts being brought into harmony with His etc.
 - "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink." John 6:53-55
 - "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
 - The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb. {COL 102.3}
 - In the study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life." Fundamentals of Christian Education 378.1
- THE HORNS
represent the power of sin in our lives, the defects of character that are in need of removal and transformation by the work of God through Christ in our lives.
 - "To the arrogant I say, 'Boast no more,' and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horns. Do not lift your horns against heaven; do not speak with outstretched neck.' "Ps 75:4,5
 - The sin offering for the non-priest Jew would have the blood placed on the horns of the brazen altar, in addition to being poured out at the base. Representing what? The conversion of the life and the removal of character defects and renewal in Christlike character
- THE FIRE
God the HS, on altar before blood applied the working of HS to bring conviction and draw to conversion, and after blood applied to bring transformation, consuming of the old man and regenerating the new.
 - Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers;
 - Luke 24:32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"
 - Acts 2:3,4 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
- THE LAVER:
The washing of the HS and Truth
 - Only the Priests and High Priest washed in the laver
 - The laver was made out of solid bronze with no wood and filled with water. The water is symbolic of God the Holy Spirit, which fills the laver. The laver represents



the Word of God. The laver was constructed out of the mirrors the women brought out of Egypt (Ex 38:8). This aptly represents the purpose of God's Word to expose our defects and diagnose our condition. (James 1:22-25)

Titus 3:4-7 "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. **He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit**, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."

Individual sacrifice

Eph 5:25-27 "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, **cleansing her by the washing with water through the word**, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." Corporate sacrifice

We find this theme of washing with the word of God to cleanse our characters carried over by Jesus in the foot washing service.

- Our feet symbolize our journey through life
 - Naked feet symbolize revealing truthfully our life journey to our brothers and sisters in Christ
 - Washing by another symbolizes others, directed by the Holy Spirit, using God's Word, methods and principles to help us clean up our journey, removing the impure practices from our lives and to experience cleansing of character
 - Washing other's feet reveals our willingness to help others who reveal their life journey and share how they have gotten themselves dirty with sin, clean up their lives and characters by the application of Gods' Word, methods and principles
- THE VESSELS THAT CARRIED THE BLOOD FROM SACRIFICE TO APPLICATION POINT:
Represent the believers who take the truth about God and the character of Christ, in action, deed, the way they live and the gospel preached to others.
 - Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:"
 - 2Tim 2:21 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work.
- THE DAILY PRIEST
 - The priesthood of believers
 - JN 20:21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."
 - 1PE 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.



- WHITE ROBES:

- The character of Christ reproduced within the believer
- Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, "**Take off his filthy clothes.**" Then he said to Joshua, "**See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.**" Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." **So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him,** while the angel of the LORD stood by. (Zech 3:3-5)
- Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?" And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev 7:13,14)
- Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us [ready] to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul...

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. **Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us.** "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." ... By His perfect obedience He has made **it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 3:11.4}

THE COVERINGS OF THE SANCTUARY

- ANGELS EMBROIDERED ON THE FIRST COVERING/LAYER
the onlooking universe who are watching things both in heaven and on earth as well as ministering to us on earth (this first layer of the Tabernacle had 10 curtain panels, two sets of 5, woven from white linen thread, 1/3 dyed crimson and 1/3 dyed royal blue. The two sets were joined together with 50 gold clasps).
 - MT 18:10 "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.
 - HEB 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?
- GOATS HAIR CURTAIN
 - Symbolic of human sinfulness, fallen human nature
 - Goats were often symbols of deception (Rebekah used a goat to deceive Isaac. David's wife Michal used goat's hair pillows to deceive Saul's messengers. In the judgment metaphor the wicked are describes as goats.)



- Made of eleven curtain panels sewed together into two groupings, one of six and one of five, joined together with 50 bronze clasps (hooks and rings or similar).
- The one of six (six is the number of fallen man) had the front panel folded lengthwise (doubled in the bible) that hung over the opening to be seen from the court – symbolic of our sinful nature in constant and daily need of Christ’s healing presence. It is to remind us that on this earth we are still in our fallen “tent” and in daily need of the renewing of God’s grace.
- The one of five panels (five is the number of grace) is symbolic of Christ who took our fallen condition upon Himself in order to cure and overcome. In eleven instances goats were used as sin offerings, thus symbolizing Christ taking our sinful condition upon Himself to cure it.
- The combination of the five curtain panels (grace) and the six curtain panels (man) make eleven which is symbolic of the chaos of sin overcome by the grace of God through Christ
- RAMS SKIN DYED RED
 - Rams were the animals offered to consecrate the priesthood
 - Jesus is of course our High Priest who brings the healing solution.
 - The Rams skins were died red, symbolic of the perfect life of Christ, which He surrendered to remedy our sin condition. This red rams skin covered the goats hair curtain, symbolic of Christ’s righteousness which will become our character and overwrite our sinfulness, when He writes His law on our hearts and minds
- BADGER OR DUGON (SEA MANATEE) SKIN

(the meaning of the Hebrew word is obscure as badgers were uncommon in the Sinai desert, but manatees were plentiful in the Red Sea)

 - A tough, durable, impenetrable leather covering which withstood all that nature could throw against it, heat of the sun, rain, storms. Thus representative of Christ our righteousness and our shield of faith which withstands the attacks of the enemy. No matter what the prince of this world throws at Christ He withstood it, and no matter what Satan throws at us, when we are surrendered to Christ His victory will sustain us.

THE BOARDS IN THE SANCTUARY

- Consider the symbolism and lesson: to make boards for the sanctuary, trees had to be cut down, severed from their roots in the earth and stripped of all their branches, i.e. earthly fruits. The board represent the saved who become part of God’s sanctuary, the building blocks of it. They must be cut away from their roots in the sinfulness of this world, and stop producing fruits of sin.
- The boards, representing the believers who compose the sanctuary, are wood, earthly, but covered in gold symbolizing being purified by Christ. We must be purified by Christ, have our roots in this world severed, and cut away our self-righteousness then be renewed in Christ’s perfect character, in order to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
- There were 10 boards on the north and south sides of the sanctuary, symbolic of completion. On the east end were six boards, with two corner boards that partially overlapped the first and last. Six symbolic of man, two symbolic of unity with Christ, equals eight, symbolic of New Beginning. Thus, man (6) when united in Christ (2) has a new beginning (8).



- The boards were to stand upright, which is symbolic of those renewed in Christ to stand upright for God's kingdom.
- Each soldier when registered had to give a half shekel of silver to the temple (regardless of whether the soldier was rich or poor). Silver is symbolic of at-one-ment. Being united back with God.
- It took 3,000 shekels to make one talent (about 120 pounds, silver having the same density/weight as lead), which was the weight of one socket (foundation). Each board stood upon two sockets, equivalent to the atonement money of 12,000 soldiers. Symbolically, that atonement, bringing us together again and uniting us to God cost God greatly. And we are only able to stand upright as we are anchored in what Christ has done for us.
- The boards were then held together with five poles (probably about 3 to 4 inches in diameter) made of the same acacia tree wood as the boards and covered in gold, symbolic of Christ's dual nature, human/divine. The five poles symbolized grace.
- Four poles went through solid gold rings, one per pole per board, attached to the outside of the boards. The middle pole did not. It went through holes bored into the middle of the boards pinning them all together from one end to the other, a fitting representation of "Christ in you the hope of glory."

THE HOLY PLACE

Represents the Church:

- The Door represents Christ our door, our gate, the way back into unity with the Father
- Through the door, the light of the lamp shone out into the courtyard. This represents Christ the light which comes from Christ and shines out from the church into the world. Through Christ, shines the light of truth which lightens all men, shining out into the world.
- Five pillars overlaid with gold and with gold crowns on the top, represent grace (the number five) of God through Christ. The pillars of wood, covered in gold crowned with gold, represent Christ, the means of bringing God's grace and healing solution.
- The curtain contained the same colors as the curtain to the Most Holy Place, significant in that what obstructed the view of God was similar in general appearance to Christ who is the door into God's presence. The counterfeit closely approximates the genuine. Lucifer in heaven a covering Cherub claimed equality with Christ.
- But notice that the door to the church (Holy Place), was open through Christ, but the way to ultimate unity with God was obstructed until Christ's death. Christ was NOT the obstruction to God, but was the new and living way through the obstruction. The obstruction was Satan's lies and our carnal nature. Christ destroyed both at the Cross.

THE LAMPSTAND

the Word of God – the written and living Word

- PS 119:105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."
- The central stand represents Christ made from gold
- There were 7 lamps but six branches this represents the church, the six branches humans (six the number of a man) united with Christ the central stand makes seven lamps, the number of perfection.



- The bowl on the lampstand – the heart of the believer where the Word and Spirit burn within recreating Godlike character and the heavenly light as a witness for God – the bowl connect to the lamp is like branch connected to the vine
- The almonds carved on the lampstand represent the fruit of the Spirit which are manifest in the church
- The High Priest and only the High Priest trimmed the wicks each morning and evening, symbolizing Christ working in our hearts to trim away defects of character so we can shine more brightly for Him
 - MT 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.
 - MT 25:7 "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

THE OIL

the Spirit of God

- 1SA 16:13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.
- Christ was anointed with the HS at the beginning of His ministry

THE TABLE

represents Christ

- Made of wood, covered in gold, represents Jesus our incarnate God, who took humanity (wood) upon Himself and perfected it (gold) and from who we receive all spiritual nurturance (bread)
- The table had a border or crown on it, measured a handsbreadth high. The only measure in the sanctuary that wasn't in cubits. It surrounded the 12 loaves, which represents God's protective hand about His remedy for His people.

THE 12 LOAVES OF SHOW BREAD

(the bread of the presence) represent Christ – the bread of life, the truth of God as revealed in Christ in sufficient quantities for the entire worldwide church

- John 6:35 "Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."
- The loaves were made out of fine flour, with no lumps, and no leaven, representing the purity of Christ without sin
- The Hebrew for cakes *challah* according to Strong's is usually a cake that is punctured or perforated, symbolic of Christ's body which was pierced for us.
- Incense was placed on top of the two stacks of loaves and every Sabbath the priests would join with the High Priest who would burn the incense on the golden altar and then eat the loaves.



Which symbolizes what? Believers coming together on Sabbath, joining with their High Priest Jesus, offering prayers and praise to God (incense) and partaking of the Word (bread)

THE WINE

The truth about Christ which continues to provide the church and individual believers with spiritual nurturance

- Matt 26:-29 “Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

THE GOLDEN ALTAR

Represents the converted heart which is a member of the body of Christ and growing in grace, because prayers are offered from the converted, not unconverted:

- PS 141:2 May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.
- Rev 5:8 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

- INCENSE

Christlike character – burned by High Priest

- 2CO 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. 15 For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.
- But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. {DA 668.2}

- FIRE

the HS working within the heart to enlighten, transform, heal, ennoble

- MT 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

- HORNS

The remnants and vestigial defects of character and remaining elements of selfishness and scars from sin which are being cleansed and healed and purified by the continual partaking and application of Jesus

- The horns of the golden altar are smaller than the Brazen, symbolizing the growth in righteousness and transformation of character.
- When priests offered sin offerings the blood was placed on the horns of the golden altar, not brazen altar, symbolizing the continual need for Christ's transforming power in the hearts/minds of believers

- GOLDEN CROWN

Represents the crown of victory in Christ



- No crown on the brazen altar as it represents the unconverted heart

THE VEIL WITH EMBROIDERED ANGELS

Divided the Holy from Most Holy, obstructing the view of the Most Holy. This symbolizes the lies of Satan which separate us from God, and our carnal nature which Christ assumed and destroyed.

- 2 Cor 2:3,4 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
- Heb 2:14, John 17:3, Heb 10:20

MOST HOLY PLACE

Heaven and the believer in full unity and oneness with God

- THE ARK

The heart of the believer who has God's law written in the heart - Christlike character reproduced within, the living bread of heaven dwelling with and who through God's grace is a branch plucked from the fire through the victory and healing of Jesus Christ - it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.

- (HEB 8:10 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.")

And the order of items placed in the ark - manna, then Law, then rod, we partake of Christ (manna) experience conversion and in trust open the heart, he writes His law upon the heart and mind, and we are transformed from being dead in sin to alive in Christ and bring forth fruits of righteousness (Aaron's rod that budded)

- SHIKINAH

God the Father who lives in unapproachable light

- THE MANNA

- Christ the bread of life - the pure heavenly truth without any remaining distortions in our minds
- John 6:48-51 "I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

- THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

- Christ the true source of the Law of Love
- MT 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

- AARON'S ROD



- Christ, who took upon Himself our dead, defective humanity and by combining it with His divinity overcame the infection of selfishness which brings death and out of this dead humanity that He accepted from Adam He brings forth new life
- THE LID (MERCY SEAT)
Christ – hilistereon the place and means of reconciliation –the one who through all things in the universe hold together:
 - The lid was made out of solid gold, fit representation of Christ’s perfect character. It also was not given any dimensions. This means it is boundless. Christ our Savior and His grace, mercy, love, healing power is boundless.
 - Romans 3:25 “God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished”
 - Eph 1:9, 10 “And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.”

READ THE MEANING

Let’s examine the differences between the sin offerings for Priests and Non-priest Jews.

NON-PRIEST

- Confess on head of animal – sin happens in mind
- Sinner cuts the throat – once lies about God believed separate from source of life – death ensues
- Blood – represents the life, love, character of God
- Carried by priest in vessels – both represent believers sharing the truth
- The blood poured around brazen altar and applied to horns – the truth and character of Christ applied entirely to the uncovered heart
- The Brazen altar with blood applied – the newly converted heart/babe in Christ
- The washing of the organs – the cleansing of the mind from lies by the truth of God’s Word enlightened by the Holy Spirit
- Separating the fat the destruction of the carnal nature
- The burning of the organs the renewal of mind, recreation within, the elimination of old habits, conditioned responses etc.
- The Lamb’s meat eaten by the daily priests – the internalization of Christ’s character, truths, principles methods etc. and growth in spiritual strength as we minister the truth to others

PRIEST

- Confess on head of animal – sin happens in mind
- Sinner cuts the throat – once lies about God believed separate from source of life – death ensues
- Blood – represents the life, love, character of God



- Carried by priest in vessels – both represent believers
- Sprinkled before veil – removes the lies told by the believer, heals the church
- Placed on horns of golden altar – removes and heals residual defects of character
- Pour remainder at base of brazen – witness to the world of the grace of God
- Remove fat and burn, symbolic of destruction of carnal nature achieved by Christ
- Wash and burn organs – witness to the victory achieved by Christ over sin

SUNDAY

Read last paragraph, “Another purpose...” Thoughts?

Was this to teach about how God can stand to be near us, or how we can be healed to be near Him?

The sanctuary came down and was amongst them. Jesus came down from heaven and dwelt amongst us. He did this to provide the way and means of restoration to God. It wasn't to enable God to dwell with us, it was to enable us to dwell with God.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Exodus 40:9,10 shows us that...” thoughts?

Do you agree? I guess it depends on what we are separating from?

Holiness can mean separate and unique from the sinful world, but on the other side of that coin, it also means, unity and likeness to God. Jesus prayed that we would be one with Him and the Father, and all things are going to be brought together under one head, Jesus.

So, holiness separates from the world, but unites with God.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “On top of the ark...” thoughts?

The Greek is *hilisteron*, which means lid or cover, to the ark. Luther translated it as *Gnadenstuhl*, German for Mercy Seat, and it was translated by Tyndale into English as mercy seat.

But it really means, Jesus is the place and means of reconciliation with God.

Here is my paraphrase of Romans 3:21-25:

But now God has revealed, a healthy state of being – a character that is right and perfect in every way, that did not come from the written code, but is exactly what the Scriptures and the 10 Commandments were pointing your minds toward.²² This perfect state of being comes from Christ and is created within us by God when we trust him. Our trust in him is established by



the evidence given through Jesus Christ of his supreme trustworthiness. There is no difference amongst any ethnic group, ²³ for all humanity is infected with the same disease of distrust, fear and selfishness, and are deformed in character and fall far short of God's glorious ideal for mankind. ²⁴ Yet all, who are willing, are healed freely by God's gracious remedy that has been provided by Jesus Christ. ²⁵ God presented Jesus as the way and means of restoration. Now, through trust established by the evidence of God's character revealed when Christ died, we may partake of the remedy procured by Christ. God did this to demonstrate he is right and good, because in his forbearance he suspended, for a time, the ultimate consequence of being out of harmony with how he designed life to exist and has been falsely accused of being unfair. ²⁶ So, he did it to demonstrate how right and good he is at the present time, so he would be seen as being right when he heals those who trust in Jesus.

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "At the dedication..." thoughts?

What about a place for thanksgiving, rejoicing, dedication, prayer, communion with God, reconciliation, triumph, victory, renewal...?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 1



Lesson 5 Atonement: Purification Offering.

SABBATH

“The sacrificial system is, probably, the best known part of the sanctuary service because it’s the part that points directly to Christ’s sacrifice. The blood of the animal that died for the sinner becomes a symbol for the blood of Christ, who died for us.”

Is that really what the blood of the animal symbolizes?

SUNDAY

“As anyone who knows the Lord can testify, sin separates us from God. The good news is that the Lord has put in place a system to heal the breach caused by sin and to bring us back to Him. At the center of this system is, of course, the sacrifice.”

Is the death of so many animals really good news? See Ps. 51: 7, Isa. 1: 11-18, Hosea 14:2.

The lesson asks, “Is God justified in forgiving the sinner? After all, is not the sinner unrighteous and, therefore, worthy to be condemned? [see Deut. 25:1].”

This is the sort of mentality that develops when we view the OT sanctuary system through the imposed law lens, instead of through the example of Jesus of Nazareth. The lesson chooses to further explain via an example of a dishonest man getting a dishonest woman to lie about one of her sons murdering the other one, and states that she gives King David a pass, because she and her family will take all of the blame of acquitting the one son of murder.

But wait, it gets better: “Similarly, God takes over the guilt of sinners in order to declare them righteous. For us to be forgiven, *God Himself must bear our punishment*. This is the legal reason why Christ had to die if we were to be saved.”

I don’t know where to begin with this statement. First, God HEALS the sinner in order to declare them righteous, otherwise God would be a liar. Second, God is forgiveness, so we default as forgiven. Forgiven does NOT equal saved. God did not have to bear our punishment in order for us to be forgiven. He did have to die in order for our salvation, however, and it has NOTHING to do with the legal profession. He died in order to reveal His character, Satan’s character, and our characters, and to provide a means for healing us, and restoring us back to “atonement” with Himself.

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He “will abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord.



For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7-9. God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10. And again he says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12. TMB 114. [emphasis provided].

MONDAY

This one was so good, I had to include it in its entirety. My commentary is in italics.

“The goal of the offering was to remove sin and guilt from the sinner [*the goal of the offering was to show the individual that sin separates from God – cutting the circulation of blood/life*], to transfer responsibility to the sanctuary [*to show that deviations from God’s natural Law lead to death*], and to let the sinner leave forgiven and cleansed [*sinner are already forgiven, but NOT healed*]. (In extremely rare cases one could bring a certain amount of fine flour as a purification offering, and although this purification offering was bloodless, it was understood that “without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness [*remission*]” [*Heb. 9:22, NASB*]).

The ritual itself included the laying on of hands, the death of the animal, blood manipulation, the burning of fat, and the eating of the animal’s flesh. The sinner who brought the offering was granted forgiveness [*because God IS forgiveness*], but only after the blood ritual [*could the sinner begin to experience God’s freely given forgiveness /“atonement”*]

A crucial part of this process involved the laying on of hands (Lev. 1:4, 4:4, 16:21). This was done so that the offering “may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf” (Lev. 1:4, NASB). The offering applied only for the one who put his hands on the animal’s head. According to Leviticus 16:21, the laying on of hands would be accompanied by a confession of sin; this would acknowledge the transfer of sin from the sinner to the innocent animal [*it would acknowledge that sin kills, not God*].

The slaughter was, of course, basic to any animal offering. After the animal was killed, the spilled blood was used to make atonement on the altar (Lev. 17:11). Because the sins had been transferred to the animal by the laying on of hands, we should understand the death of the animal as a substitutionary death [*only if we believe in a Satanic version of God. The lesson is: sin pays its own wage, not that God would substitute His only Son in order to appease His righteous indignation*]. The animal died in the place of the sinner [*the animal died because the sinner cut its throat – the lesson being that sin kills*]. This may explain why the act of killing the animal had to be performed by the sinner, by the guilty one, and not by the priest.

Next time you are tempted to sin, envision Jesus dying on the cross and see yourself putting your hands on His head and confessing your sins over Him. How might this concept, played out in your mind, help you to understand just what it cost in order to be forgiven [*seriously?*]? How could this idea help you to resist succumbing to that temptation?



TUESDAY

“The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars.” (Jer. 17:1).

This is from Tim’s notes from last week:

“The blood represents the perfect character of Christ and the truth about God. The blood was poured out at the base of the altar and applied to the horns. This represents a complete cleansing of the heart and renewal in the truth about God as the foundation of salvation or healing, and then the character transformation as the blood is applied to the horns. Our thoughts being brought into harmony with His etc.

- "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink." John 6:53-55
- “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
- The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb. {COL 102.3}
- In the study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life.” Fundamentals of Christian Education 378.1
- **THE HORNS represent the power of sin in our lives, the defects of character that are in need of removal and transformation by the work of God through Christ in our lives.**
 - **“To the arrogant I say, ‘Boast no more,’ and to the wicked, ‘Do not lift up your horns. Do not lift your horns against heaven; do not speak with outstretched neck.’ ”Ps 75:4,5**
 - **The sin offering for the non-priest Jew would have the blood placed on the horns of the brazen altar, in addition to being poured out at the base. Representing what? The conversion of the life and the removal of character defects and renewal in Christlike character.”**

We see that two altars were used with horns on the corners of each. On the altar of burnt offering the horns were long and sharp, on the altar of incense the horns were shorter and blunted. We learned that the outer altar represents the unconverted heart/mind, and the inner altar represents the converted one, hence the shortening/dulling horns [representing the sinful nature diminishing in size/scope]. With this in mind, how do we understand the above text from Jeremiah, and, more to the point, how do we understand the lesson’s assertion that blood transfers sin to the sanctuary? If that were the case, wouldn’t the inner altar’s horns be longer/sharper? Which lens are we looking through?

Again from the lesson: “Finally, the burning of the fat on the altar indicated that everything about the



purification offering belonged to God (Lev. 3:16).”

Thanks to the death of Jesus, symbolized by those sacrifices, our sin has been taken away from us, placed on Him, and transferred to the heavenly sanctuary. This is central to the *[distorted]* plan of salvation.

How does the sanctuary service help us to understand our utter dependence on God for forgiveness of our sins? What comfort does this truth bring you? At the same time, what important responsibilities follow? (See 1 Peter 1:22.)”

We learned last week that the fat burning symbolizes the complete eradication of sin in our lives through the healing power of the Holy Spirit. Think about the biblical language of “sweet savor / smell” of sacrifices. Have you ever smelled hair or fat burning? Is the smell appealing or revolting? How, then can it be referred to as fragrant? Also, has our sin been placed on Jesus?? or did he take on our sinful “nature” and provide a remedy to heal it?

Does the lesson’s interpretation of the sanctuary service comfort you?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson invites us to read Lev. 6:25-6, and Lev. 10: 16-18, and asks us “what crucial truth is revealed here?” Well, it depends on which lens we view the service doesn’t it? Did the priests actually “bear away” the sin[s] of the sinner/congregation, or was God trying to teach both the sinners and the priests something else? See John 6: 54, 56.

Yet again, from the lesson:

“How does the eating of the sacrifice contribute to the process of atonement *[how indeed]*? Eating was required only of those offerings in which blood did not enter the holy place; that is, the offerings of the leader and the commoner. The Bible explicitly said that by eating the sacrifice the priests would “bear away the guilt,” which would “make atonement” for the sinner. To carry the sinner’s guilt implies that the sinner now goes free *[only from a penal substitution viewpoint]*.” *From a healing substitution viewpoint, Jesus took on our terminal condition, and healed it. He now offers us the free remedy.*

“The priest’s work of bearing another’s sin is exactly what Christ did for us. He died in our place. We conclude, then, that the priestly work at the earthly sanctuary typifies Christ’s work for us, because He has taken upon Himself the guilt *[result, i.e. death]* of our sins *[sinful nature]*.”

THURSDAY

“In the Bible, [Micah 7:18–20](#), with its emphasis on forgiveness, is immediately followed by [Nahum 1:2-3](#), with its emphasis on judgment. This unfolds the two dimensions of God’s dealings with us: forgiving the repentant and punishing the wicked. Both sides belong to God. He is Savior and Judge. These two aspects of God’s character are complementary, not contrary. A compassionate God can also



be a just God. Knowing this, we can rest assured in His love, in His forgiveness, and in His ultimate justice.”

FRIDAY

“Some have argued that the whole concept of substitution is unfair. Why should the innocent die in the place of the guilty? However, because this is a truth that is not only clearly taught in the Bible but is central to the core theme of the Bible, how do we answer that charge? Might the “unfairness” of it all help us to understand the grace that was displayed in order to bring us forgiveness? That is, in what ways might this “unfairness” help to show just how great and merciful and loving our God really is?”

What shows how great and merciful and loving our God really is, that He would demand His innocent Son to die to appease his wrath, and maintain justice, OR that God Himself came and died to win us back to trust, and restore the broken circle of love and trust? How sad. Pray for our church.



The Sanctuary Lesson 6 4Q 2013

The Day of Atonement

SABBATH

We are studying The Day of Atonement – what does atonement mean?

Dictionary definition has several:

- the reconciliation of God and humankind through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ
- reparation for an offense or injury : satisfaction
- *obsolete* : reconciliation

From *The God-Shaped Brain*:

Atonement is one of those words whose meaning has changed. I remember when I used to believe God's law was an imposed law, it affected how I understood God's Word. Like many, I thought that atonement meant "satisfaction or reparation for a wrong or injury; to make amends." I drew all kinds of wrong conclusions: like Jesus had to die to appease the Father's wrath toward my sin. As long as I believed that distortion, love didn't flow in my heart. It was the truth that set me free and opened my heart to love.

I discovered when the King James Bible was translated into English in 1611, atonement had a different meaning than we typically ascribe today. In the 16th and 17th centuries the word "one" was not only a noun but also a verb. If two people were at odds and I wanted to bring them back into friendship I might say, "I am going to *one* them." I am going to bring them back into unity, into oneness. This concept quickly became known as "at-one" or "atone." We pronounce it atone rather than at-one because that is the old English pronunciation. When you are all by yourself, you are not "all one" but "alone." The process of uniting warring factions is, therefore, called atonement. (p. 177)

Here is the reference for this section of the book:

"atone: short for the phrase 'set or make at one'... make one, put at one, unite... From the frequent phrases 'set at one' or 'at onement,' the combined *atonement* began to take the place of *onement* early in the 16th c., and *atone* to supplant *one* vb. about 1550. *Atone* was not admitted into the Bible until 1611, though *atonement* had been in since Tindale. (Simpson, J., Weiner, S., *The Oxford English Dictionary Second Edition*, Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 754-755.)

When we think of the Day of Atonement, are we thinking of the Day of Reconciliation, the Day of Unity, the Day of Oneness, the Day when all are One with God? Or do we think something else?



Thoughts?

Before we even explore the meaning of this ritual day, we have to decide which trail we are going down. Do we go down the legal, imposed law trail, or do we see things through the natural law, God's design protocols for life?

The imposed law trail results in appeasement, payment and legal conclusions.

The natural law trail results in actual reconciliation, restoration and unity with God.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Throughout the year, all kinds of sins and ritual impurities were transferred to the sanctuary. With the Day of Atonement comes a time for their removal."

Can anyone show me a Bible text where the sanctuary was contaminated, defiled, or in other ways corrupted by the application of the blood of the sacrificial animal?

It is true, that during OT times the sanctuary was, in violation to God's instructions, defiled by prostitutes, by pagan symbols, by offering pigs, but where is there a Biblical record of the blood of the sacrificial animal defiling the sanctuary?

The idea that the blood of the sacrificial animal contaminates the sanctuary is a result of starting down the wrong trail. In other words, if we have a legal model: the law is broken; we must keep a record of sin in order to have just punishments meted out etc. then we find ourselves with this idea that the blood transfers the sin to the sanctuary, to keep a record for proper punishment and thereby contaminates it.

But, again, can anyone show a Biblical record of this? Interesting isn't it, that every time the blood of the sacrificial animal touched anything it made it holy.

This is totally consistent with the healing model. The blood, metaphor for the life of Christ and the truth Christ brought, cleanses from lies and selfishness. When we understand God's law as the design protocols for life, sin is deviation from that design, which is incompatible with life, then we realize the application of the blood does not contaminate, but heals.

During the daily sin offerings the sinner confessed sin on head of animal and then cut the throat, the daily priests, not high priest, took the blood in vessels to the various points. This symbolizes the work of sharing the gospel to heal believers, conversion and sanctification. Our ministry in God's cause, sin is being removed from the sinner by the blood of the lamb. It represents the writing over the old character with the new character of Jesus.

Day of Atonement – is the time, in the annual cycle when unity is achieved.



The sacrificial goat does not have sin confessed on it, but yet it is offered as a sin offering. What does this mean?

No sin confessed but offered as a sin offering, why? Because it is not about the conversion, confession, repentance or surrender of the heart of the sinner, which is symbolized in the sin offering sacrifice, what happened daily.

The Day of Atonement is about the work of the High Priest in cleansing, restoring and reuniting people with God. The goat is not slain by a person confessing sin, but by the High Priest, which represents Christ. This is representative of Christ's self-sacrifice – Christ's work in the cleansing the soul from sin.

Consider the various activities in the sanctuary and our role in salvation:

- We can confess our sins (daily sacrifice)
- We can accept Jesus and all He has done
 - the blood applied to brazen altar represents conversion
 - the blood applied to the golden altar represents sanctification
 - the eating of the sacrificial lamb by the priests, the continual internalization of Christ into the heart
- We can witness the truth and share the gospel, the work of the daily priests and the vessels which carried the blood.
- We can study the word of God, wash in the laver.
- We can fellowship together with other believers studying God's word, eating the bread each Sabbath in the holy place.
- We can experience the work of the Holy Spirit within, the fire in the altars.
- We, united with Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, can be a light to the world, the lampstand.
- But only Jesus can actually cleanse and restore us and make us holy and reunite us, make us at-one with God.
 - Thus only the High Priest burned incense on the altar, representing the character of Christ going up before God from the hearts of believers in praise and prayer.
 - Only the High Priest trimmed the wicks of the lamp, represented the work of Christ in the heart of the believer cutting away the sinful traits and making us more like Him a light to the world.
 - And only the High Priest was in the Temple officiating and working on the Day of Atonement, representing Christ's work of cleansing the heart from sin and restoring the character of His people into perfection. He is preparing His bride for the wedding.
- Day of atonement is also about corporate cleansing, preparing the bride for Christ's return
- Settling into the truth that cannot be moved
- Preparing the people of God to see God face to face



During the time the High Priest is doing this work the people, all the people, were fasting and praying, representing their devotion to cleanse their minds and cooperate with God for the full cleansing from sin.

Leviticus 16 documents the procedure for the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. It first starts with the bull slain by Aaron for the sin of Aaron and his family. This was a sin offering, and when Aaron went into the MH place, with the blood of this sin offering, he took the censor and two handfuls of incense and burned it to have the smoke of the incense hide Aaron from seeing the mercy seat. What would this mean?

The mercy seat represents what? Christ in His perfection. The smoke from the incense represents what? Christ-like character going up from the heart of the believer, in this case Aaron, in prayers and praise and adoration. So, what is represented? Without a renewal of Christ-like character in us we cannot see God or be reconciled to Christ. Or another way of saying it is: it is only through a Christ-like character we are able to see Christ and be reunited back to God.

After the bull for Aaron and his family, then Aaron has two goats, that are as alike as can be. He casts lots over them one for the Lord's goat. What does this represent. Satan attempts to impersonate Christ. Satan's lies, Satan's false system is as close to the truth as Satan can make it appear, yet it is still a false system. November 9 we will expose this false system and how it damages our minds, the Spirit Temple, in our God and Your Brain Seminar.

Then Aaron sacrifices the Lord's goat and takes the blood and goes back in as the High Priest but without the censor and without the incense, - which represents what? Jesus' work of applying His character and the truth to bring the universe back into unity. The blood is sprinkled on the lid and in front of it 7 times. Why? What does it represent?

One of the errors that has been made in understanding this is the incomplete understand of the ark. Some of the historic views focus on the law beneath the mercy seat and exclude the other elements within the ark. Further, they claim the law that is in the ark is the *broken law*, and thus the blood is to pay the penalty for the broken law. But, beneath the lid is also the manna, and the rod that budded. Those who take the broken law position fail on multiple points.

First, they ignore the other two elements that are in the ark, resulting in creating a distorted idea of what the ark represented and create a false legal picture.

Second, they fail to realize which law is in the ark. If you remember there were two sets of commandments given to Moses. The first one, what happened? It was broken! The second one was not broken. Which went into the ark? If God wanted to represent the broken law, which was covered by Christ and some legal payment of blood being made, why didn't he have the pieces of the broken law put in the ark? No, God had them put the *unbroken* law into the ark, which represents the restoration of God's law written into the heart of the believer, perfectly!



Those who take the position that it is to represent the broken law, err, why? Because they go to the text with presuppositions, already believing that the broken law required legal payment so they interpret the symbols to fit their preconceived ideas.

But if we let the symbols and Scripture speak for themselves, and we understand God's character of love and law upon which He constructed the universe, then we see something entirely different.

We realize the law under the lid is not the broken law, but the law unbroken, restored in the heart of the believer. This idea is reinforced when we include all three elements together in the order they were placed in the ark:

- Manna – the bread of life taken into the heart of the believer restores trust in God
- Law – once trust is restored the law is written on the heart, it is the law kept, the law of love, the renewed character here represented not the broken law. This is the new covenant.
- Rod that budded – once the law is written on the heart we are no longer dead in trespass and sin, but renewed, reborn to live lives of righteousness and bring forth fruits of righteousness

The lid covers because it is only as we are united with Christ, have His character overwriting our selfish character that we can be renewed into righteousness. Further, it was Jesus who provided the remedy which heals us, the truth which destroys lies and restores trust, and a perfect character which we receive when we trust Him.

Then what is happening on the Day of Atonement? It is the final settling into the truth that one cannot be moved, on a global scale, preparing the world for Christ's return.

The sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat represents the sealing, the settling into the truth so that they cannot be moved, which occurs before the second coming, and only happens to those who have partaken of Jesus (manna), had the law written on the heart (tablets), and been renewed to bring forth fruits of righteousness (Aarons rod).

Notice the Most Holy Place is being purified from the sins of the people, because it stands in the middle of the camp which is unclean. (Lev 16:15,16)

What does this symbolize? The cleansing of the Bride of Christ, the church. The Sanctuary in this feast represents the corporate temple of God. Know ye not that you are a temple of God?

The church is in the world and the world is corrupt. Thus before Christ returns the church needs to be purified, settled into the truth such that it cannot be moved.

This is done by the settling of all the believers who comprise the church, those long time members, represented by the golden altar and the blood of the goat applied there, and the new converts, represented by the brazen altar and the blood of the goat applied there.



MONDAY

First sentence “The primary function of the high priest was to mediate between God and humankind.”
Thoughts?

Here is one Bible commentator who has a slightly broader perspective, do you agree or disagree, and what are the implications:

“While we rejoice that there are worlds which have never fallen, these worlds render praise, and honor, and glory to Jesus Christ for the plan of redemption to save the fallen sons of Adam, as well as to confirm themselves in their position and character of purity. The arm that raised the human family from the ruin which Satan had brought upon the race through his temptations, is the arm which has preserved the inhabitants of other worlds from sin. Every world throughout immensity engages the care and support of the Father and the Son; and this care is constantly exercised for fallen humanity. Christ is **mediating** in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by his **mediatorial** work. Are not these themes of sufficient magnitude and importance to engage our thoughts, and call forth our gratitude and adoration to God?” {RH, January 11, 1881 par. 4}

thoughts? The Bible says in Colossians 1:18-20 that all things in heaven and earth are reconciled to Christ at the cross. Heavenly things being reconciled.... Interesting.

How do you understand mediation?

Read third paragraph, “The blood of Christ...” thoughts?

The blood... releases the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law – why?

What releases the tuberculosis patient from the condemnation of the laws of hygiene and health? Being cured. The blood of Christ is a metaphor, it is not literal red corpuscles that cleanse. When Jesus said unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood he wasn't speaking cannibalism. The blood represents the life of Jesus taken into the heart/mind of the believer, such that “it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.” We receive a new heart and right spirit, the law is written upon the heart. Thus, the blood, applied to the heart, cleanses the conscience and mind of the believer, curing, healing, restoring to righteousness and thus, once renewed, the law finds nothing in the believer to condemn.

The blood, i.e. life of Jesus, doesn't cancel or erase history, thus the sin is not cancelled. David after repentance still had the scars and problems of his sin to deal with, even though his heart was cleansed.

It stands on record in the sanctuary, until the day of Atonement, meaning what?

- What do we understand the sanctuary to be symbolic of?
- According to Scripture the sanctuary is built out of intelligent beings
- What is the war over? 2Cor 10:3-5 it is over God, and what are the weapons Satan uses?



- Lies, about who? And where do lies infect or contaminate?
- And who has been damaged by sin?
- So what needs cleansing from sin?
- And who does Satan blame for all the pain and suffering? God,
- So after we are forgiven, and experience new motives in the heart, what remains to be removed?
- The responsibility of all sin remains until the end when all the blame will finally be placed upon Satan and God will stand fully vindicated.
- This is represented by the blood applied to the mercy seat, golden altar and brazen altar and then hands on the Scapegoat – that the minds of the believers have all the lies about God removed and all finally see the reality that the pain and suffering from sin originated in Satan and he is held responsible in the MINDS of all the saved and God stands cleared and vindicated, thus WE ARE RESTORED to unity AT-ONE with God!
- So the record of the history of sin stands, because God doesn't erase history, yet the sinner is cleansed and renewed from sin. Thus, throughout all eternity future the record, recorded history, will remain in our minds and will bring us joy as we eternally recall all God, through Jesus, has done to save and heal us.

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, “The ritual with the live goat...” thoughts?

The lesson suggests that atonement was made with the live goat in a punitive sense, meaning that the sins were placed upon the scapegoat for ultimate punishment.

Thoughts?

They quote Lev 16:10 in support of this idea

But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat.

Does the text say the atonement via the scapegoat is through punishment, or punitive means?

How does sending the scapegoat into the desert make atonement?

It depends on what you believe the problem of sin to be. What do you believe the problem sinned caused, the solution, and what the various elements represent in reality.

If the problem of sin is deviation from God's design, at the root are lies and selfishness. If that problem infected humans and resulted in humans operating deviant from God's design and therefore are in a terminal condition, and the solution being the truth to displace lies, restore trust and the receipt of a new nature procured by Christ, then we can understand the meaning of the elements.



- The blood represents the truth, which being placed upon the head of the scapegoat means we see reality as it is.
- The placing the hands on the head of the scapegoat and confessing the sins represents the removal of all the lies about God, the misunderstanding, the fear, hate, resentment, blame etc. that we have held against God and placing it where it belongs, on the originator of all these problems.
- We see the truth about God, about Jesus, about the origin of sin, about how sin infected us, about the damage sin does to the mind, about Satan and his true character and the responsibility for it all rests upon Satan who originated the lies and thus it all goes back on his head.
- The minds of all the saved are cleansed from all the lies and Satan is held responsible in the minds of all loyal intelligences.
- Going out into the wilderness represents that Satan is gone from existence, he and his lies never again to infect the people of God, thus the universe, freed from lies and selfishness are at-one with God again.

This is described in Isa 14:12-17:

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn!
You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!
¹³ You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.
¹⁴ I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."
¹⁵ But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.
¹⁶ **Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: "Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble,**
¹⁷ **the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?"**

Other problems with the punitive position, the punitive adherents also claim that all sins, past present and future were placed on Christ and punished in Christ, but they now have the sins, already punished in Christ, being placed upon the scapegoat and being punished again in the scapegoat. Any concerns about this?

This is the problem with imposed law penal theories, they are inherently inconsistent and make God out to be arbitrary.

So, if not punitive, then what? What does the blood represent? Here is one commentator:

- The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb. {COL 102.3}



- In the study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life.” Fundamentals of Christian Education 378.1

Do you notice how this Bible commentary has the blood cleansing, healing, restoring, not contaminating?

But the truth brought home to the minds of those who have solidified themselves in lies causes suffering. Thus the suffering of the scapegoat, Satan, is not punitive, not an infliction, but the natural result of what happens when a person who hides in lies is confronted with the truth.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph at the top, “Thus in the ministration...” thoughts?

Do you hear two types of issues are being describe, something going on daily and something going on annually.

What is represented by the daily activities? The conversion and healing of the individual from sin.

What about the annual events, according to this passage? Something occurring on a larger scale, and the Day of Atonement cleansing the universe from sin, not just the individual sinner.

FEASTS: Represent the history of the plan of salvation being played out from Adam’s sin until the second coming.

Passover – as soon as man fell into sin God passed over their sins Romans 3:25 he left the sins committed before hand unpunished. Christ was the lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.

Unleavened bread – immediately began dispensing truth unmixed with error to nurture and save, but it was mixed with bitter herbs, representing the bitterness of sin in this world.

Thus the feast of unleavened bread symbolized the internalization of the truth about God as revealed in Christ.

Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)– The truth spreads and takes root in many hearts and a harvest is experienced.

Trumpets – a special message for the end time – something special is about to happen prepare.

Atonement –

- reunification with God, oneness with God,
- full healing, settling into the truth that one cannot be moved,



- sealing of God, the cleansing of the church to meet Christ,
- making a right judgment about God so that the lies about Him have been removed from the minds of the believers.

Tabernacles – second coming where we tabernacle with God for eternity in our earth renewed, our new Eden home symbolized by the green branches.

When did the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement start? 1844, based on what? Daniel 8:14 and what does it mean to cleanse the sanctuary in light of what we understand the sanctuary to be?

Just prior to the Daniel 8:14 text the Bible says that out of one of the horns that made up the divisions of the Greek Empire would rise a “little horn” which would reach the host of heaven and bring the place of the sanctuary low. How did this little horn power defile the heavenly sanctuary AFTER the fall of the Greek Empire? Did this power enter heaven where God sits? Of course not, then how did it defile the sanctuary in heaven after the fall of the Greek Empire?

“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the CHURCH of the firstborn, whose NAMES are WRITTEN IN HEAVEN.” Hebrews 12:22,23.

Notice the church has its membership registered in heaven. Satan defiles the heavenly sanctuary by defiling the membership of the church here on earth, by infecting their minds with lies about God.

Paul says, “Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.” (2Thes 2:3,4)

He is talking about that same little horn power that sets itself up in the church defiling the membership with lies about God and thus defiling the heavenly temple where God’s church is registered.

And what was presented that defiled the sanctuary?

Constantine converted and the church was infected with an imposed law construct and God was represented as a dictator who must punish sin. The atonement was perverted to be the payment of legal penalties and thus the minds of men, the membership of God’s church, was contaminated with lies about God and needs cleansing. Listen to what the first church historian taught:

Eusebius – First Church Historian (263-339 CE) said “There are no reserves in the stilted encomium [praise] with which Eusebius closes his history, no wistful regret for the blessings of persecution, no prophetic fear of imperial control of the Church. His heart is full of gratitude to God and Constantine. And it is not only his feelings that are stirred. He is ready, with a theory, indeed a theology, of the Christian Emperor. He finds a correspondence between religion and politics... **With the Roman Empire monarchy had come on earth as the image of the**



monarchy in heaven.” S.L. Greenslade, *Church and State from Constantine to Theodosius* (London: SCM Press, 1954).

But, the cleansing of the sanctuary, which began in 1844, was to remove this distortion about God from the minds of men. Thus EGW taught:

While God has desired to teach men that from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself, the archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God as one who delights in their destruction. Thus the sacrifices and the ordinances designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God.” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 685)

Why does the penal legal distortion about God defile the heavenly sanctuary? Because the sanctuary is made out of God’s intelligent beings.

When God cleanses His temple notice what he cleanses:

MAL 3:1 "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the **Lord you are seeking will come to his temple**; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

MAL 3:2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. 3 **He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.**

Listen to this quote from one of the founders of the SDA church. It gives us insight into how people in the 19th century saw this:

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, **are descriptions of the same event**; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25. {Mar 248.3}

God cleanses His Temple by cleansing the very building blocks of this living breathing, loving, cohesive, unity of intelligent being where God dwells by His Spirit and character of Love! He brings all things in heaven and earth back into unity and oneness with Him and then once again one pulse of harmony runs through the entire universe!

Thoughts?



THURSDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “Functioning like...” thoughts?

What is the process being described? Cleansing! When does forgiveness happen? When he is cleansed. Thoughts?

What does it mean the iniquity is taken away?

Read last paragraph, “God’s work of...” thoughts?

Do you see how legal this sounds? Are sinners acquitted? When in universal history will it ever be true that Adam did not sin, that we did not sin? To acquit means to declare not guilty. This is the lie the penal group puts God in the role of telling – but it is false.

We are not acquitted we are healed, cured, cleansed, thus we are examined and found to be “without blemish” as the Scripture says! (Rev 14:5 ASV)

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Now the events...” thoughts?

Is this clear to you? Is it to be taken literally? How much is symbolic? What do the symbols represent? How do we translate the symbols to a more reality based understanding?



The Sanctuary Lesson 7 4Q 2013

Christ Our Sacrifice

Last week someone inquired about a quotation in the GC in which EGW said:

Day by day the repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle and, placing his hand upon the victim's head, **confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice.** The animal was then slain... **The blood, representing the forfeited life of the sinner,** whose guilt the victim bore, was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. **By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary.** {GC 418.1}

I got several emails this week from people questioning how we could come to our conclusions in light of this statement.

Truth is unfolding. One of the problems with many religious people and organizations, is that when they come to an idea, with truth in it, they lock down, and stop growing. 2000 years ago the Jews had much truth, they knew that the time for the Messiah was to come was at hand, they knew He would be born in Bethlehem, they knew many things, but they also had many misunderstandings about God and the meaning of their system that prevented them from accepting Jesus.

Likewise, many religious people have beliefs that are filled with truths, but can also have some misunderstanding. But, when they come to a belief they become afraid to change that belief. Fortunately, EGW didn't have this problem. The writer of the quote we just read grew in her perspectives, insights and understandings with time, meaning what she wrote at one point in time isn't necessarily the final word on any subject. For instance:

- The Lord loves those little children who try to do right, and he has promised that they shall be in his kingdom. **But wicked children God does not love.** He will not take them to the beautiful City, for he only admits the good, obedient, and patient children there. {Appeal to Youth 61.3} 1864
- Jesus would have the fathers and mothers teach their children this beauty of character. He would have them teach their children that God loves them, that their natures may be changed, and brought into harmony with God. **Do not teach your children that God does not love them when they do wrong; teach them that he loves them so that it grieves his Spirit to see them in transgression, because he knows they are doing injury to their souls. Do not terrify your children by telling them of the wrath of God, but rather seek to impress them with his unspeakable love and goodness, and thus let the glory of the Lord be revealed before them.** {BEcho, February 1, 1892 par. 9}



What should a spiritual, God filled church member have done with the quote in 1864? Should they have said, “well if EGW says it, who am I to question?” Or should the person have said, “I don’t believe that is correct?”

When Peter the Apostle refused to interact with the uncircumcised, why didn’t some of the local church members reject this idea, think for themselves, and tell him he was wrong? Could it be they were conditioned to believe if one has the gift of prophecy then their ideas are more right? That we are not to question those with the gift or prophecy but to just believe? Was Peter right? What is the lesson?

And what did Ellen White say about how we should understand and use her writings?

- **I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice.** By that Word we are to be judged. A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White, p. 64 (1851). (Reprinted in Early Writings, p. 78.) {3SM 29.1}
- **The Spirit was not given--nor can it ever be bestowed--to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the Word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.** . . . (Isaiah 8:20).--The Great Controversy, Introduction, p. vii. {3SM 30.5} (1888).
- The testimonies of Sister White should not be carried to the front. God's Word is the unerring standard. **The Testimonies are not to take the place of the Word... Let all prove their positions from the Scriptures and substantiate every point they claim as truth from the revealed Word of God.**--Letter 12, 1890. {Ev 256.2}
- **Our position and faith is in the Bible. And never do we want any soul to bring in the Testimonies ahead of the Bible.** --Manuscript 7, 1894. {Ev 256.3}
- **The Lord desires you to study your Bibles. He has not given any additional light to take the place of His Word. This light is to bring confused minds to His Word,** which, if eaten and digested, is as the lifeblood of the soul. -- Letter 130, 1901. {3SM 29.2}
- **We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and Heaven alone are infallible.** Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed. {Christian Experience and Teaching 203.2}

The point of what we said last week is that if we don’t find in the Scripture a certain point, then we must take the Scripture and interpret all other writings through the Scripture.

One other point on this idea that the blood of the animal contaminated the sanctuary. Consider this, if we believe the blood of the animal in the type (the model) contaminated, then are we to conclude, when Jesus moved the application to reality in John 6, when He said we must drink His blood, that



then, when we partake of Jesus, (symbolized by the blood) when we take Him in, we are being contaminated, sin is being transferred into the Spirit Temple?

We cannot have it both ways as some would like. Either the blood of the sacrificial animal contaminates or it cleanses. The Bible is 100% consistent in that the blood of the sacrificial always cleansed and made holy.

SABBATH

Memory verse: “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you are healed.” 1Pet 2:24 NASB

Thoughts?

Interesting verse, because this is frequently used by those who hold to penal substitution, yet those who take that view don’t even apply what the text says. But, perhaps they are at a disadvantage because of the way one word was translated.

Do you notice how the translation says he bore our “sins” in His body but then says that we might die to “sin”?

In English, is there a different connotation, meaning, between “sins” and “sin”?

Would the text suggest something different if it read this way:

“He Himself bore our *sin* in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you are healed.”

What do you hear differently between bore our “sin” versus bore our “sins”?

The Greek is the exact same in both places, which means the translators must decide when to use the word “sins” and when to use the word “sin”? If they have an imposed law bias, then they falsely believe that each individual act of sin must be punished, thus they translate “sins” instead of “sin” in the first phrase.

When we hold the design law model, the healing model, we recognize Christ took our condition upon Himself and cured it, thus he took our iniquity, our fallen state, our sinfulness, or our “sin”.

Which is more consistent with the very text itself. Notice how this text says nothing about penal payments, or legal requirements, but it does say that we are being healed by what Christ has done and that Christ died so we might live righteously, not so we could be declared righteous.

In other words, the context itself supports our view and refutes the penal view.



Read first two paragraphs, “Catholic priest...” thoughts?

What makes Christ’s sacrificial death more significant than Kolbe’s?

Multiple points:

- Christ overcame alone – without the comfort of the Holy Spirit or His Father
- Christ’s sacrificial death, by the exercise of His human brain destroyed the carnal nature, the desire to save self, by perfect sacrificial love.
- Christ died without the experience of hope. The martyrs died, with the presence of the Holy Spirit bringing comfort and encouragement, they didn’t experience themselves as abandoned and cast off. They had hope for security in the resurrection. As such, they did not have the full weight of the carnal nature pulling on them and distressing them as Christ did.
- Christ could have delivered Himself from death and destroyed those killing Him, but He didn’t. What does this reveal?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Isaiah...” thoughts?

The lesson suggests the passage provides “clear evidence that Jesus’ death is atonement in the form of penal substitution...”

The lesson claims five points to prove this:

- He suffered for others
- His suffering brought benefit to others
- It was God’s will for Christ to do this, and our iniquity was place upon Christ
- Jesus is righteous
- He was an atoning sacrifice

These five points are absolutely true – and yet, nowhere can you find penal substitution in it. Penal substitution is a manmade theory, based on believing Imperial Rome’s idea of law. It is this distortion, above all others, that has infected Christianity, distorted the truth about God, and prevented the Christian church from completing the mission Jesus gave us to prepare the world for His return.

When we see God’s law as the law of love, the design protocols for life, then we see that healing substitution is the correct view. Let’s reexamine the five points, then the text itself.

Consider the analogy of someone in renal failure needing a kidney transplant:

The one who saves the dying by donating the kidney:

- Suffers for another
- His suffering brings benefit to the other



- It is the will of the loving Father to provide the healthy kidney to save the dying person and, the sickness and pain due the one dying, will be taken upon the person donating the kidney, i.e. the healthy person loses the kidney, and the sick person loses a dead kidney but gets a healthy one
- Jesus is righteous i.e. The one donating the kidney is perfectly healthy
- Jesus is an atoning or reuniting sacrifice. His sacrifice brings healing, reconciliation, oneness. Thus the one donating the kidney, by healing the dying patient reunites them with the living, brings them back into harmony with how life is built to operate.

Thoughts?

Let's look at Isaiah itself chapter 53 starting verse 2:

He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ **Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.**

[notice that he took our infirmities, our sickness, our sinfulness, yet we would misunderstand and think God was striking him, punishing him]

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

[But, it wasn't God doing this to Him, it was our transgressions, our evil that crushed Him. Our sinful condition caused Him grief, both within and from without. And the purpose He suffered was not to pay legal payment, but so that through his ordeal we could be healed, which meant He was procuring the Remedy to our condition]

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

[Yes the sinfulness, the iniquity, with which we all are infected was laid upon Christ. He took our sinfulness and overcame, cured, eradicated it]

⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

[It was the Lord's will to provide the Remedy which would cure mankind. Christ's mission, to be the second Adam, to take up mankind broken off in Adam and carry it to completion, to cure the condition was absolutely, God's will. God was in the Son reconciling the world to



himself. It was only through this path that sin could be eradicated and man saved, and it was God's will to accomplish this.]

¹¹ After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. [Justify means to set right. What was wrong that needed setting right? The actual sinful condition of mankind. Thus, mankind the species, was set right in heart, mind, character, motive, by Christ! And because of His accomplishments many additional individuals will also be set right.]

¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Thoughts?

Now I want to share with you a portion of a sermon delivered by George Fifield, SDA pastor, at the 1897 General Conference session:

"YOU will find the basis of our study this evening in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and the third verse: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

In connection with this I will read several other verses of the same chapter, and also a translation, which will enable us to obtain the thought more clearly:

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

The other translation reads: "Surely he bore our griefs, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But **he was pierced through by our sins; he was crushed by our misdeeds**. The chastisement of our peace lay upon him, and in his wounds there became healing for us. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Another translation: "**The Lord let all our misdeeds come upon him...**"

Translation: "**It pleased the Lord to let him be crushed**; he hath made him sick; when his soul hath given a trespass offering, he shall see seed and live long." The thought is clearly enough expressed in the Authorized Version, but since we are liable sometimes to receive the wrong thought, the translation helps us to see it more clearly.

The third verse states and vividly **contrasts the true and the false idea of Christ's mission, and of his work, and of the atonement. One is what was, and the other is what we thought was; one is truth, the other is falsehood; one is Christianity, the other is paganism.** We



would do well to study every thought in that text. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; he was pierced through by our misdeeds, and God permitted it because in his stripes there was healing for us. But we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Whose griefs? Whose sorrows? - Ours.

The grief and the sorrow that crushed the heart of Christ, and took him from among the living, so that he died of a broken heart, was no strange, new grief or sorrow. It was not something unlike what we have to bear; it was not God arbitrarily putting upon him our sins, and thus punishing our sins in him to deliver us.

He took no position arbitrarily that we do not have to suffer. It was our griefs and our sorrows that pierced him through. **He took our sinful natures**, and our sinful flesh, **at the point of weakness to which we had brought it**, submitting himself to all the conditions of the race, and placing himself where we are to fight the conflict that we have to fight, the fight of faith. And he did this by the same power to which we have access. By the Spirit of God he cast out devils; through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot; and the Spirit of God rested upon him, and made him of quick understanding in the things of God. It was our sins that he took; our temptations.

He took our sorrows, our griefs, all the conflicts of our lives upon him, and was tempted in all points as we are. **He took the injustices of our lives upon him too. It is a fact that you and I have to suffer for many things for which we are not at fault.** All my suffering is not the result of my sin. Some of it is; but just as long as sin exists, injustice exists. As long as men sin, men will be sinned against. Just so you and I will have to suffer for the sins of others; and so God, to show that he knew and realized all that, let him that was perfectly innocent, take the injustice and sin of us all. O brethren and sisters, **he did not bear some other grief or some other sorrow, but he bore our griefs and our sorrows.** He was pierced through by them, **and the Lord permitted it, because there was healing in it for us; not that he might appease God, or reconcile him unto us.**

Every passage of Scripture that refers to the reconciliation or atonement, or to the propitiation, always represents God as the one who makes this atonement, reconciliation, or propitiation, in Christ; **we are always the ones atoned for, the ones to be reconciled. For us it was done, in order that, as Peter says, he might bring us to God.**

The only way to do this is by destroying sin in us. He took our sins upon him in order that he might bring us to God. **It was that he might break down the high middle wall of partition between human hearts and God**, between Jew and Gentile, between God and man; **that he might make us one with him, and one with one another, thus making the at-one-ment, or the atonement.**

In Christ Jesus we who were sometimes afar off were made nigh by the blood of Christ, so that we are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ



himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

This is as near to the Lord as we can get. This is the at-one-ment; this is why he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, **that he might do that for us by breaking down all those things which separate hearts from hearts, both human and divine. Notwithstanding this, we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. That was what we thought about it. We said, God is doing all this; God is killing him, punishing him, to satisfy his wrath, in order to let us off. That is the pagan conception of sacrifice.** The Christian idea of sacrifice is this. Let us note the contrast. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That is the Christian idea. Yes, sir. Indifference keeps, hatred keeps, selfishness keeps, or gives, if at all, but grudgingly, counting the cost, and figuring on some larger return at some future time. But love, and love only, sacrifices, gives freely, gives itself, gives without counting the cost; gives because it is love. That is sacrifice, whether it is the sacrifice of bulls and goats, or of him who is the Lamb of God. It is the sacrifice that is revealed throughout the entire Bible. **But the pagan idea of sacrifice is just the opposite. It is that some god is always offended, always angry, and his wrath must be propitiated in some way.**

Thoughts?

The battle between the truth about God's character of love and Satan's mischaracterization is the battle that has raged since the war broke out in heaven. This is not a new battle. It is THE battle and we are in the middle of it. Every Christian church is in the middle of this battle. Which version of God will you choose? On which side will you expend your resources, abilities, heart and soul? Who will you reveal in your life?

The last paragraph notes that in the New Testament they recognized Christ's fulfillment of this prophecy in Isaiah 53. Let's note how the New Testament writers used it:

Isa 53:4:

Surely our griefs He himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.(NAS)

Matt 8:16-17:

And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and **healed all who were ill 17 in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases."** (NAS)

Bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows does not mean that Christ "paid the penalty" for our sins, but instead means that he took away from us our griefs and



sorrows (ie took away our sicknesses). I'd like to think that the sickness he took away was not just physical, but also spiritual.

Isa 53:5

But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, and **by His scourging we are healed.** (NAS)

1 Pet 2:24-25

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, **that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.**

For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. (NAS)

By His scourging we are healed does not represent a "legal" transaction in heaven where God's attitude toward us is "healed", but instead represents a change in our heart, where we die to sin and live to righteousness, returning to God instead of straying from Him.

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Jesus died for..." thoughts?

Do you hear "sins" or "sin"? It can be translated either?

The lesson says in the second paragraph, "In simple terms, in order for humanity to be saved, Jesus had to die. There was no other way." **This is absolutely correct. We want to affirm this truth.**

But the great divergence has to do with WHY?

Penal view has the obstacle to our salvation being God's anger, God's wrath, God's law, God's justice, God's need, in other words something on God's side needed to be fixed so we could be saved. They couch it in words like "justice" or "holiness" etc. But in the end, it is a lie. It is pagan.

Our view has the barrier being sin, sinfulness of our hearts, lies about God we believe, our own carnal nature. The defect which separates us is in us and Christ came to fix sinful humanity to bring us back into unity with God. We believe there was no other way to accomplish this other than the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Christ's blood..." thoughts?



First, when you hear “blood” do you think literal or symbolic? Is it literal red corpuscles or does the blood symbolize something else?

The lesson claims it does not represent Christ’s life, but Christ’s death. Why do they make this claim?

When they say the death – they are focusing on the “death penalty.” In their penal view, they need the death payment to be made, so they claim the blood is about the death to ensure the legal payment is made.

But, what did Christ say, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” (Mt 14:24) What is being poured out? His life is being poured out, yes in death, but where is Christ focusing? On the sacrificed life, given for many.

Is Christ focusing on His death, “this is my death which is poured out” or “this is my life which is poured out”?

When He said in John 6, unless you drink my blood or eat my flesh, was He saying “unless you drink my death?” Or was He saying unless you internalize my life?

The death of Christ, in Bible symbolism is represented in Baptism, where we die to the old self, are buried with Christ and rise in newness of life.

Those who take the penal view focus on the death, because they believe that the law requires a death payment. But, not so, here is how our church viewed it over 100 years ago: (notice several points, who originates the legal model and the claim that sin must be punished? What does the law actually require?)

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. **God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner.** {DA 761.4}

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. **For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** {DA 761.5}



Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and **not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."** 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1}

[Why could the law not be changed? Because the law are the protocols upon which life is built. To change the law would be to destroy life. The law of respiration cannot be changed to meet the person who has tied a plastic bag over their head. What needs to change in the condition of the person. Thus, Christ was sacrificed for man's redemption, to reconcile man back to God, to restore man back to harmony with God. Actual transformation. Notice the very next words of what the law required. Satan alleged all sin must be punished. Penal substitution theology supports Satan's claim, stating all sin must be punished. Notice how our church thought over 100 years ago on what the law required...]

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. **Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What is happening? Christ is the means whereby the law is sustained and the sinner is restored to harmony with it. This is justice. This is doing right. This is healing. All this inflicted punishment for sin is pagan and based on Satan's false presentation of God's law as imposed.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks why it was crucial that Jesus be sinless?

Can you provide remedy for the disease if you are dying from the disease?

Read fourth paragraph, "Jesus, the.." thoughts? Is this clear to you? How would you explain it?

Read last paragraph, "Through Christ's death..." thoughts?

Are we presented to the Father, and then as the Father comes to see us, Jesus magically jumps in the way, and the Father sees His Son and says, "Why Son you are perfect. I won't look at the disgusting sinner hiding behind you but will pretend he is as perfect as you."

Or, is it something else? How about this, the way our church viewed it over 100 years ago:



This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. **Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us...** By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness,** which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

Is this Jesus standing in our place legally? Or is this Jesus healing, curing, restoring in US His perfection? This is the truth. The legal, penal substitution model has infected our church and obstructs our mission to lighten the world for Christ's return.

We cannot do our mission as a people until we throw off these distortions and come back to the truth about God's law, character and what Christ has accomplished for us and what He will do in us if we let Him!

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, "Some of those..." thoughts?

What do you think of the idea, that those who deliberately reject God do not "have any efficacious sacrifice for their sins."

What does it sound like the problem with sin is, and the problem with rejecting God and His plan?

Does it sound like the problem is that they don't have the proper sacrificial payment to offer to God, in order to get God to forgive them? This is pagan, based on accepting the lie about God's law. It places the problem with sin upon God and God's attitude needing appeasement or the law needing payment.

Think of it this way, imagine someone dying of anthrax infection, and a doctor spends his life fortune, sacrificing all he has to develop Cipro (a remedy) and offers it freely to the dying patient, but the patient refuses it. What happens? Do we say, well without Cipro there isn't a sacrifice which will be efficacious? Or, would we realize there is no remedy? Yes the doctor sacrificed to develop the remedy, it was through the sacrifice that the remedy was achieved, but it is the remedy that cures.

Jesus, through His sacrificial death, provided Remedy for sin! If we reject it, we die in our trespass in sin, unhealed.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "What Martin Luther..." do you notice how it is all about healing and transformation, not about legal payment? Read and discuss questions 1-3.



The Sanctuary Lesson 8 4Q 2013

Christ, Our Priest

Before we start I need to follow up on a question that came in from an online viewer last week.

An online viewer to my weekly Bible Study Class asked this week how do I understand this quotation from an article in Signs of the Times Dec 23, 1886:

The altar and the promise stand side by side, and one casts clear beams of light upon the other, showing that the justice of an offended God could be appeased only by the death of his beloved Son.

I deferred answering because I wanted to know the context, what altar was referred to etc. I am glad I did. The context of the article is that of Cain and Abel. The altar is the altar built by Cain and Abel, at the instruction of Adam.

The author contrasts the attitudes of the heart of Cain and Abel.

The article starts out with this:

These two brothers, Cain and Abel, represent the whole human family. They were both tested on the point of obedience, and all will be tested as they were. Abel bore the proving of God. **He revealed the gold of a righteous character, the principles of true godliness.** But Cain's religion had not a good foundation; **it rested on human merit. He brought to God something in which he had a personal interest,**--the fruits of the ground, which had been cultivated by his toil; and **he presented his offering as a favor done to God,** through which he expected to secure the divine approval.

Note the context is over character, one of love and trust versus pride and selfishness. The article describes how Abel understood the principles of God's government, how God is always the giver, not the receiver, but Cain sought to put God in the role of receiving the offerings to earn favor.

Abel worked with God to act out a lesson, Cain sought to appease God with payments.

So, with this context what does the quote mean?

Through which "law" lens to you understand justice? Imposed law or designer law, the protocols upon which life is built?

What is God's justice? Doing what is right, doing what is right as defined by the law of love, which is what? What does love require? To heal, to restore, to redeem, to save.



Thus the promise given to Adam, that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head, but the serpent would bruise his heel stands beside the altar, which visually acted out the selfless sacrifice of Christ to achieve what was promised. The promise and the theater (altar) enlightened each other.

Then what about the justice being appeased? Again which law lens do you look through?

If the imposed law then one believes this is legal payment to an offended God. But the article itself disallows this interpretation, as it makes clear throughout that the gifts are not given to God, which Cain tried to do, but are from God to man for man's need. Here is another example from the article:

Man, in the pride of his heart, would like to believe that he can confer some favor upon God; that our heavenly Father may be the receiver, and not always the giver. But God will not be bribed.

God is not bribed. The barrier set up between God and man is that of sin in man, thus what is required is provided by God to fix the problem of sin in man.

It is offensive to God (as it is to any being with a heart of love) to see pain, suffering, death, which occur when God's design for life is broken. Thus God hates sin because it breaks the protocols upon which life is constructed, inflicts pain, suffering, death and is an offense to the pure loving heart of God.

Therefore, if we look through the lens of designer law, the law upon which life is built, we see that the sacrifice of Christ was the only means to please God's purpose in saving mankind.

Do you think I am being dishonest with the quote? Well, here is the dictionary definition of the word appease:

“to make (someone) pleased OR less angry by giving or saying something desired”

What would please God, after Adam deviated from God's design and plunged humanity into a death spiral? Would it not please God to see mankind delivered and saved? Is this not what God desired? Thus, the only way God's justice of love could be pleased was through the death of Jesus, who provides remedy for the terminal condition Adam inflicted upon the world, fulfilling God's desire to save the human race!

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “After his resurrection...” Thoughts?

Why, after the resurrection, why after the Old symbolic system was done away with, why after Christ fulfills what the Old system pointed toward do we still insist on using symbolism to describe things? Why not just state it plainly?



What does it mean to be “covered by faith by His blood”? Does it mean we are washed in plasma?

One of the rituals of ancient Rome is that they would sacrifice bulls. Gladiators would do this and walk beneath the bull as it was sacrificed and have the blood of the bull wash over them and they were literally covered in the blood of the bull.

Is it talking about actually being covered by blood? What does it mean?

It depends on the lens you interpret the symbols through.

Penal/Imposed Law

Blood is legal payment
Pays for our bad deeds/sins
Covers our defects of character
Removes record of sin from books
Symbolic of death

Healing/Design Law

Blood symbolizes Remedy
Heals the heart/condition
Transforms our character
Removes sinfulness from hearts
Symbolic of life (Love/Truth)

The founders of our church saw it the way I do, sadly most of Christianity, including many of our current church leaders, see it through Roman Imperial law constructs. Here are some quotes written over 100 years ago to show you how our church started out:

- The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; **it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health.** It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the **righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters** (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}
- In the beginning, man was created in the likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature. **Sin defaced and almost obliterated the divine image; but Christ came to restore that which had been lost.** GC 645
- When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}
- **The law of God should be loved and honored by His true people now more than ever before.** There is the most imperative necessity of urging the injunction of Christ upon the minds and hearts of all believers, men and women, youth and children: "Search the Scriptures." Study your Bible as you have never studied it before. Unless you arise to a higher, holier state in your religious life, you will not be ready for the appearing of our Lord... **Much time should be spent in prayer, that our garments of character may be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.** {5T 717.1}



- **The leaven of truth** works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. **By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb.** {COL 102.3}
- **In the study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God,** which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life.” Fundamentals of Christian Education 378.1

Thoughts?

Do you think we need to move past symbols to reality?

Read second paragraph, “This week...” thoughts?

What does it mean Jesus is “standing in the presence of God ministering the merits of His sacrifice in our behalf”?

What are the merits of His sacrifice? It depends on the lens through which you view it. Let’s contrast the two lenses:

Penal/Imposed Law

Merits = Credits/Points/Payment
Presented to God to earn favor
Offered to earn pardon
Applied to record books

Healing/Design Law

Merits = traits of character
Presented to us to earn trust
Offered as remedy to cure hearts
Reproduced in people

Why do we end up with such confused thinking? Because the filters/lenses/biases people have when they read. The Bible is written in many symbols, riddles, dreams, metaphors, parables, and “dark speech” and thus is open to wide interpretation. When people read they bring with them their preconceived ideas and understand the symbols and metaphors through those lenses. (This is why we use the integrative evidenced based approach, harmonizing Scripture, Science and Experience)

Here is a quotation from a founder of our church. Consider how this is most frequently understood, and how do you understand it or explain it?

The world's Redeemer possessed the power to draw men to Himself, to quiet their fears, to dispel their gloom, to inspire them with hope and courage, to enable them to believe in the **willingness of God to receive them through the merits of the divine Substitute.** As subjects of the love of God **we ever should be grateful that we have a mediator, an advocate, an intercessor in the heavenly courts, who pleads in our behalf before the Father.** {LHU 320.2}

Thoughts? Does this quote from the same person give additional insight to what might have been meant?



While Jesus, our Intercessor, pleads for us in heaven, the Holy Spirit works in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure. All heaven is interested in the salvation of the soul. Then what reason have we to doubt that the Lord will not and does not help us? . . . {2MR 37.1}

Thoughts? Jesus pleads, but all heaven is interested in our salvation, what does this mean? It means that those in heaven do not need persuasion. So if Christ's pleading is not to persuade the beings in heaven, including His Father, then it must be need to persuade others, who? He is pleading in heaven, through the HS to us!

- We are the ones who doubt God's goodness.
- We are the ones burdened by guilt and shame and lies to think we are too far gone, too sinful, too wicked, too unholy for God to still love.
- We are the ones who doubt that Christ's love, Christ's righteousness could still be for us.
- We are the ones who are confused, groping in the darkness of this world seeking for the light and Christ from heaven that pleads, through the Holy Spirit, to you and to me, "I love you. Don't give up! Listen to my voice. Follow me. I will never leave you nor for sake you. Trust me, let me into your heart, choose me and I will heal you!"

Satan has lied and Christianity has been infected with his lies about God's law being imposed, and therefore the solution and pleas of Christ are directed toward God and God's law rather than toward you and me! This penal idea undermines trust and obstructs Christ's ability to actually heal us.

MONDAY

The lesson starts with Romans 8:31-34, lets read it:

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Read first paragraph, "The background..." thoughts?

What is the lesson trying to say? What lens do they read the Scripture through?

The Roman Imperial law lens – but notice the Scripture does not have a legal courtroom described, if any kind of court is described it is a royal court, the place where God rules, but not a legal courtroom.

Read the next paragraph, "However, we do not..." thoughts?

Why, according to the lesson, do we need not fear?



Did you notice anything in the Bible text that was overlooked by the lesson? “also” Jesus is “also” interceding for us? Also means what? In addition to who, in addition to the Father, read verse 28:

Rom 8:28: “And we know that in all **things God works for the good of those who love him...**”

Who is working for our good? And what about verse 26?

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the **Spirit himself intercedes for us** with groans that words cannot express.

So who is interceding for us? God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit – ALL THREE are interceding FOR us. One member is NOT interceding with another member of the Godhead, instead all three are working together to intercede for us – with what or whom?

Could it be like this?

- The Father intercedes by providing all the resources in heaven for our defense and restoration, thus He intercedes with the principalities and power of darkness. He sends the angels to hold the four winds, and to create protective hedge against evil forces, and to watch over His people. (Jesus said the angels of the children always have access to the Father). He also sent the most precious resource of all, His very own Son!
- The Holy Spirit intercedes in our hearts and minds, to enlighten with truth, convict of wrong, to draw with love, to woo to a better way, to make us dissatisfied with sin and create a longing for our heavenly home, and to apply what Christ achieved in us.
- Jesus intercedes with the course of sinfulness itself by becoming sin, though He knew no sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God. In other words, humanity, in Adam, was on a terminal course, but Jesus, by becoming human changed the outcome, interceded in the trajectory that the species was racing toward and offers, a new destination, instead of eternal death in Adam, we can have eternal life in Christ.

Do you see, in the healing model, how all three are working together, all three are interceding with the power of sin, evil, darkness for our recovery and salvation. But in the imposed law model, Jesus is often presented as interceding with His Father to plead His blood payment to an offended god.

Read the last paragraph to get a sense of this distortion: “Our Advocate...”

Read second to last paragraph, “This truth becomes...” again this is a distortion from accepting the false law construct, believing the lie that sin must be punished. Where did this lie originate? Here is what our church used to teach:

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



justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. **God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner.** {DA 761.4}

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. **For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** {DA 761.5}

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and **not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."** 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1}

[Why could the law not be changed? Because the law are the protocols upon which life is built. To change the law would be to destroy life. The law of respiration cannot be changed to meet the person who has tied a plastic bag over their head. What needs to change is the condition of the person. Thus, Christ was sacrificed for man's redemption, to reconcile man back to God, to restore man back to harmony with God. Actual transformation. Notice the very next words of what the law required. Satan alleged all sin must be punished. Penal substitution theology supports Satan's claim, stating all sin must be punished. Notice how our church thought over 100 years ago on what the law required...]

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. **Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What is happening? Christ is the means whereby the law is sustained and the sinner is restored to harmony with it. This is justice. This is doing right. This is healing. All this inflicted punishment for sin is pagan and based on Satan's false presentation of God's law as imposed.



Also, the word “*parakletos*” is the same word used by Jesus to tell disciples that the “comforter” would come to them. It means someone who walks alongside to provide help, to guide, to assist, to lead into truth, to lead out of darkness. Thus, it is NOT a legal term, but a healing term, a “helper” to help use in our time of need.

Jesus is our “helper” along with the Father and the Holy Spirit. As Hebrews says, “surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.”

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Christ is called...” thoughts?

When we think mediator what do we think?

A go between? Yes, Christ is the go between. When did Christ become the one who goes between God and His creatures? Was it only after sin, or even before sin?

God lives in “unapproachable light” (1Tim 6:16), it is not about photons, but about knowledge, truth, wisdom and all the prerogatives of divinity. God is infinite in all things. Finite beings cannot enter into infinity, it is unapproachable to us. Thus, if we cannot approach infinity and God longs for closeness with His finite, yet intelligent, creation, what is required? A member of the Godhead to leave infinity and interact on the level of the creation. This member has always been Jesus.

Prior to actually partaking of humanity and becoming human, Jesus used to “manifest” (not actually be) Himself in the form of an angel (see Exodus 3) and other places.

So, Jesus has always been mediating, interceding, going between the Godhead and His creation. But, because of Imperial Roman law constructs we have interpreted 180 degrees backward what His mediation is about.

Rather than seeing Jesus mediating a new covenant, a new relationship, a healing remedy in which Jesus cures us and returns us to unity with the Father, we have described Jesus as pleading a legal payment to His Father, or Jesus hiding the truth of our condition from the Father etc. etc.

The third paragraph is correct, Jesus came to restore the connection between God and man that was broken by sin. This required fixing man, not changing God.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out correctly that Jesus was tempted in everyway, just like us, but without sin. It points to the experiences in the desert when Satan tempted him. And yes, Jesus did experience external temptation from the enemy as we do. But, this wasn’t the most powerful, nor the most significant, in my view.



Notice how Satan approached in the desert. He approached through the three primary avenues of our carnal nature – the lust of the flesh – appetite, the lust of the eyes – greed (all the cities), and the pride of life, throw yourself down and show us how special you are.

But later, Christ experienced even more powerful temptations. The most powerful temptations came in Gethsemane and crucifixion weekend, when he experienced temptation, from His own human emotions, when He felt emotions of fear, loneliness, rejection, hurt, humiliation, shame, when He was rejected by His friends, cursed by His followers, spit upon by His people, whipped by strangers, stripped naked and hung out before the world, mocked, belittled, teased, and then tempted by others to save Himself repeatedly. To be without sleep, dehydrated, weak, and feeling all alone, without even the comforting sense of His Father.

Then the devil hit him with coercion, pressure, threat, intimidation, rejection of friends, physical abuse and death.

It was an awful time, yet what did He do? He loved, constantly, totally, insistently, completely, perfectly. His human brain, though tempted, He never surrendered, never gave up, never quit, never stopped loving, but surrendered self in love for you and for me!

Yes, He knows the power of what our fallen nature does to us. He knows exactly the horror of fear, and the pull to act to protect self, and therefore we can have confidence that we are not alone. God really does understand!

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “As we have seen...” thoughts?

Yes, sin is bad, it is terrible – but is sin terrible because Jesus died? If Jesus had not died for us, would sin be less terrible? But if Jesus had not died for us would God be as good?

Why could animal sacrifices not suffice to deal with sin?

The legal model would say that it is because sin is so terrible, so offensive, it requires a payment that is more valuable than an animal, a perfect sinless payment, the death of Jesus.

But, again, it is because they have accepted the false law construct. The answer is quite simple, animals don't possess a human nature. Therefore, the death of an animal could not cure the human condition, cleanse the human conscience, or renew the human nature.

Thus Hebrews says:

This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper...¹¹ When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle



that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. ¹² He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ **How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences** from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Heb 9:9-14)

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our **hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience** and having our bodies washed with pure water. (Heb 10:22)

Notice, that the sacrifice of Christ was not to cleanse a building in heaven, to gain legal status change, but to actually cleanse us by restoring us into God's design, by healing and transforming us back to rightness, also known as righteousness.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 4, "The book of Hebrews..." thoughts?

I was emailed a link in which a Catholic priest and a protestant theologian discussed the Eucharist and transubstantiation:

<http://amazingdiscoveries.org/12.10.24-debate-about-the-mass-and-transubstantiation>

They went back and forth over things like whether a priest could stand in for Christ, over sacrificing Christ again and again, over it being a violation of the law to eat blood etc.

But the real issue was uncovered when The Catholic priest said:

"There are two elements to any sacrifice the immolation and the offering. The immolation is a bloody death. The lamb is slain, what is precious about that is the life in the blood of the lamb is precious and that pays back God. That's how the Old Testament rituals used to work. The immolation happened once but the offering is something Christ does for all eternity. He is right now in the presence of the Father, in the holy of holies, in the eternal presence, offering himself to the Father for the forgiveness of our sins.... Christ isn't killed again and again and again, he is offered [in the Eucharist] in the same eternal presence as Christ offers himself."

The priest said it was in this offering of his sacrifice over and over again that the sins were paid for. So each time we sin, we must take mass in order to have the sacrifice of Christ pay for that sin.

How do you think the protestant theologian responded? The protestant theologian responded, with the argument that Christ is not in heaven offering his sacrifice over and over, but offering his merits to the Father over and over.



So to the protestant theologian, each time we sin we don't need to go to a priest and take mass to have Christ's sacrifice presented to the Father to pay for our sins. Our sins were paid for, past, present and future, all at the Cross. No, when we sin we go to Christ, who presents his merits to the Father, reminding the Father that he has already paid for our sins so the Father can forgive us and not punish us.

Thoughts? Don't you see Satan laughing? Here we have Catholics and Protestants arguing, for centuries, whether Jesus is offering his sacrifice to God over and over again to pay for our sins, or whether he is offering his merits over and over to remind the Father that our sins are paid for.

What is the problem?

Daniel 7, the little horn power would seek to change God's law – how? By getting us to replace the truth that God's law is the law of love, the design protocol upon which life was built, with the idea that God's law is like a Roman emperor, put upon us to test our obedience.

Catholic and Protestant alike have accepted this change in God's law and both teach that Christ needed to die to pay for our sin, and both teach that Christ works to present something to the Father so the Father won't punish us.

But, the truth is God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. That God so loved the world he sent his son. That the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ bodily, so that even though he knew no sin, he became sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God.

When we accept the lie that God's law is imposed, then we create false doctrines that breaking the law requires the lawgiver to punish and Christ died to offer himself to the Father to pay the penalty for our sin.

When we accept the truth that God's law is the principle of love upon which life was built, we realize that breaking the law is incompatible with life and Christ died to destroy the infecting principle of selfishness and actually restore humankind back into harmony with God's design for life.

We have a message that is to lighten the world, to free minds from this insidious distortion of God and his character of love and people need this message, including many well meaning, sincere, good-hearted church leaders.



The Sanctuary Lesson 9 4Q 2013

The Pre-Advent Judgment

For those who haven't heard, both the NAD and the IED have voted to approve ordination of women to the gospel ministry. From Spectrum:

The Inter-European Division's recommendation stems from several points:

- The Bible does not specifically define what ordination for pastoral ministry is.
- There are no direct statements in the Bible either commanding or prohibiting women's ordination.
- As the church felt free to develop its organizational structure to further its mission based on biblical principles, division BRC members consider ordination not as a doctrinal or biblical issue, but something that must be handled at an administrative level.
- There are no clear biblical principles that would require or guide the application of the principle of headship in the family or the church.
- The Old Testament priesthood has its fulfillment in the unique priesthood of Christ, which is the basis for the priesthood of all believers.
- BRC members were unclear over why ordination requires a differentiation between genders that doesn't exist in other levels of ministry or service, such as teachers, deacons, prophets and leaders.

How long have their conclusions been true? Were their conclusions true before they concluded it? What took so long?

This is a great example of unfolding truth – how an organization can doggedly hold to a certain idea, based on bias, presupposition, assumption, tradition, preconceived ideas, and yet that idea not have any basis in Scripture or be true.

Do you think women's ordination is the only idea in Christianity like this?

What about the Pre-Advent Judgment? Might it have ideas that need to be advanced?

What is your understanding of the pre advent judgment?

- What is it to accomplish?
- For whose benefit?
- What is being examined?
- Who is being judged?

A little history of this doctrine. William Miller was a Baptist preacher who studied Daniel and Revelation prophecies and in the 1830's became convicted to preach on the fulfillment of these time prophecies, particularly Daniel 8:14, culminating on October 22, 1844. Unto 2300 days then the



sanctuary will be cleansed, was calculated to finish 1844, and the event was thought to be the second coming.

Well, Christ didn't return and there was a great disappointment, with the vast majority of the Millerites returning to their denominational churches. A handful of those Millerites continued to study and came to believe that the date was rightly calculated, but the error was in understanding the sanctuary. The Millerites understood the sanctuary to be the earth, but in fact it is not, and they discovered there is a "heavenly sanctuary" and this prophecy refers to this sanctuary, not the earth.

This led to the development of the pre-advent judgment doctrine in which the church teaches that in 1844 Christ entered the MH place of the heavenly sanctuary to initiate the final phase of the work before the advent.

But this doctrine has been debated in the church since its inception and has been under a progressive transformation since its inception. Initially, after the earth as the sanctuary was rejected, it was taught that 1844 was the close of probation and no one else could be saved after that date. Then it was updated to teach that Christ's mission changed at that date from Holy to Most Holy Place, and investigation of records began to determine who would be taken in the first resurrection. Later the idea that angels needed to be certain the saved were "safe to save" was proposed, and the idea that God's government was being vindicated in this process was included.

- 1887 Dudley Canright questioned the doctrine and chose to leave the church and became a strong critic of the church.
- 1905 Albion Ballenger was disfellowshipped for questioning the doctrine.
- 1930 William Fletcher resigned because of questions about this doctrine.
- 1931 Louis Conradi had his ministerial credential removed and chose to leave the church because of questions about the sanctuary doctrine.
- 1945 Harold Snide from what is now SAU withdrew from the church because of questions about this doctrine.
- 1956 Robert Greive, an Australian leader, had questions about the investigative judgment had his ministerial credentials withdrawn and then left the church.
- 1979 Desmond Ford went public with questions about the Sanctuary which resulted in Glacier View meetings in 1980, and the church revoked his ministerial credentials one month later, and it was reported that that resulted in 182 pastors in Australia and New Zealand resigning between 1980 and 1988, which was about 40% of the pastorate in that region.
- Since 1980 most people in the SDA church have been afraid to ask legitimate questions for fear the church administration will take action against them.

So, can we explore the question of the investigative judgment, honestly, with sincere hearts, searching for the unfolding truth, or must we shy away, parrot back the standard lines and refuse to "investigate" the investigative judgment doctrine?



I will share my view on this, as long as we can agree that my view is not the final word, it is understandably developing. I may not have every portion correct, and don't claim to, but only to honestly investigate the question seeking for answers that harmonize with the totality of Scripture.

Can we do this? Or must we conclude there is nothing more to understand or learn and close our minds to any advancing light?

Because this is a unique SDA teaching, we will necessarily review some of the documentation from the early years of the SDA church.

My approach is upon the landscape of the Great Controversy over God's character which began before humankind was created. This landscape informs us of this issue and what is actually transpiring.

As you review this doctrine do any questions come to your mind? As I was studying this topic several questions came to my mind:

- Why does the Heavenly Sanctuary need cleansing, and from what?
- By what means is it cleansed, and who cleanses it?
- Is this cleansing related to judgment?
- If so, who is being judged?
- Why does it take so long?
- Who needs the investigation?
- Who is being investigated?
- What relevance does any of this have for me here on earth?
- Does the Bible teach any sanctuary in existence, other than the one in heaven, in 1844 and since?

Why do we need to build on history? Why can't we just accept what the founders of the church have laid down and stick with that? Well, one of the founders, Ellen G. White, said in 1900, long after the foundational understanding was laid:

“The significance of the Jewish economy is **not yet fully comprehended**. Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols. The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries. Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding. **Far more than we do**, it is our privilege to understand these wonderful themes.” COL 133.

As a physician one of the first principles we are taught is to diagnose because if the diagnosis is wrong, most of the time, the treatment will be wrong. So we need to start with some diagnostic questions:

1. What sanctuary needed cleansing?
2. What is the problem with the sanctuary that it needs cleansing? And then after answering these two questions we can answer
3. How is the sanctuary cleansed?



What sanctuary needs cleansing? The founders of the SDA church established that the “heavenly sanctuary” needs cleansing, but, is that the *only* sanctuary the Bible teaches that needs cleansing? Paul tells us of another sanctuary that needs cleansing,

“Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.” (1 Corinthians 3:16,17).

Do you and I need cleansing from sin? Is this part of the sanctuary message? If so how? Again from one of the SDA founders:

“In the building of the sanctuary as a dwelling place for God, Moses was directed to make all things according to the pattern of things in the heavens. God called him into the mount, and revealed to him the heavenly things, and in their similitude the tabernacle, with all that pertained to it, was fashioned.

“So to **Israel**, whom He desired to **make His dwelling place**, He revealed His glorious ideal of *character*. The pattern was shown them in the mount when the law was given from Sinai and when God passed by before Moses and proclaimed, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Exodus 34:6. . .

“Through Christ was to be fulfilled the **purpose** of which the **tabernacle was a symbol--** that glorious building, its walls of glistening gold reflecting in rainbow hues the curtains inwrought with cherubim, the fragrance of ever-burning incense pervading all, the priests robed in spotless white, and in the deep mystery of the inner place, above the mercy seat, between the figures of the bowed, worshiping angels, the glory of the Holiest. **In all, God desired His people to read His purpose for the human soul.** It was the same purpose long afterward set forth by the apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. (Education 34-36).

“In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that **every created being**, from the bright and holy seraph to **man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator.** Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and **through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.** God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. **In**



cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Mal. 3:1-3. (DA 161).

So what sanctuary needs cleansing?

Well certainly the sanctuary of the human soul needs cleansing.

Was this sanctuary still on the earth in 1844?

One of the assumptions made by the Millerites was that the sanctuary was the earth, the cleansing was the second coming. When the Lord didn't come some people reevaluated and drew a conclusion: The Bible doesn't teach the earth is the sanctuary. The OT sanctuary wasn't on the earth at that time, so **they concluded the only sanctuary left** to be cleansed was the one in heaven. Is that the only sanctuary, according to Scripture? No, the sanctuary of the human soul needs to be cleansed as well.

Then what about the "heavenly sanctuary"? Does it need cleansing? First, what is the heavenly sanctuary? Does inspiration give us any insight as to what constitutes the sanctuary in heaven? From what is it built?

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's **HOUSE** [sanctuary/temple], built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building [sanctuary/temple] is joined together and rises to become a **HOLY TEMPLE** in the Lord. And in him **YOU** too [you all] are being built together to become a **dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit**. Ephesians 2:19-22.

"As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- **YOU** also, like **LIVING STONES** [building blocks of the Temple], are being built into a **SPIRITUAL HOUSE** [Temple] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." 1 Pet 2:4,5.

From the Bible, if we use it, then we must conclude the sanctuary in heaven is built by God, without human hands, and the building material IS intelligent beings. Did some of the founders of the SDA church think this?

There are many quotes, like the two I gave above that any reasonable person would understand teaches God's true tabernacle is built out of intelligent beings. But here is another, and there are more, that leave no doubt:



The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use. {3MR 231.3}

Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}

So does the sanctuary of the human soul need cleansing? And, what about the sanctuary in heaven? If it is constructed out of beings then would it need cleansing

Satan defiles the heavenly sanctuary by defiling the membership of the church here on earth, who are the actual building blocks of that heavenly house.

So, the sanctuary in heaven *and* the sanctuary of the human soul, both need cleansing! Then from what do they need cleansing?

Let's start with the heavenly sanctuary, what defiles the heavenly sanctuary?

"From the opening of the great controversy it has been Satan's purpose to misrepresent God's character and to excite rebellion against His law, and this work appears to be crowned with success." (PP 338).

Satan, the angel formerly known as Lucifer, occupied the position of covering cherub. Where did the covering cherub stand? Where was his place in heaven? In the Most Holy Place in the sanctuary in heaven. Before man ever sinned, before man even existed, Lucifer sinned in the sanctuary in heaven misrepresenting God's character. The first defilement of the sanctuary in heaven was not your sin and my sin it was Lucifer's sin, his lies about God, his misrepresentations about the character of God, which started right in the heavenly throne room, and which defiled the sanctuaries of heavenly beings. 1/3 of the angels were defiled, the unity, the peace, the sanctuary in heaven was disrupted:



- You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones.
- ¹⁵ You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.
- ¹⁶ Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones.
- ¹⁷ Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth;
I made a spectacle of you before kings.
- ¹⁸ By your many sins and **dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries.** Ezek 28:14-18

From one of the SDA founders:

“**Satan had accused God** of requiring self-denial of the angels, when he knew nothing of what it meant himself, and when he would not himself make any self-sacrifice for others. This was the **accusation** that Satan made against God in heaven; and after the evil one was expelled from heaven, he continually charged the Lord with exacting service which he would not render himself. **Christ came to the world to meet these false accusations, and to reveal the Father.**” (RH, February 18, 1890).

“God was represented as **severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The **very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan,** the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God.” (Signs of the Times January 20, 1890).

So, from what does the sanctuary need cleansing? The heavenly sanctuary, first, needs to be cleansed from Satan’s lies about God, that God is selfish, unwilling to serve, that He is severe, exacting, revengeful and arbitrary. And secondly, as our founders have established, the heavenly sanctuary needs to be cleansed from the sins of the people.

But what about the sanctuary of the human soul, from what does it need cleansing?

“Eve **believed** the words of Satan, and the **belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband.** They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors...” (RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8).

What was the first thing that defiled the sanctuary of the human soul? Lies about God! It was not what we call sin, the passions, lusts, earthliness. The first thing to contaminate the Spirit Temple was lies about God. The exact same thing that contaminated the Heavenly Sanctuary! It was only after the Spirit Temple was contaminated with lies about God that it was further defiled with passions, the selfish lusts, earthly desires and evil habits, but only **after** the mind was already contaminated with lies about God.



So from what does the sanctuary need cleansing?

- The heavenly sanctuary needs cleansing from the lies that Satan told about God and the recorded sins of the people.
- And the Spirit Temple, the sanctuary of the human soul, needs cleansing from the lies that Satan told about God and defilement of sin, the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits.
- Both sanctuaries need cleansing from the exact same things!
- If this is confusing, how we as individuals can be temples, but collectively also be a sanctuary – consider building a super computer, which can be done from multiple individual computers connected in parallel. If some of the individual computers are infected with a virus, then the entire supercomputer can be infected, and certainly won't work properly. In order to "cleanse" the super computer, one must cleanse each individual computer that makes up the whole.
- Likewise, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary IS the cleansing of the individual members who make up the whole.

Now how is the prophecy of Daniel 8 related to the cleansing of these two sanctuaries?

In this chapter there is a little horn power described as defiling the sanctuary, but the little horn power is not the ultimate enemy of God. He is just one of the many faces God's true enemy uses. Let's look at the power behind the little horn?

The Little Horn Power	The Power Behind the Little Horn
Grew great but not by own power	Received power from Dragon Rev. 13:2
Threw starry host down & trampled them	Dragon's tail swept 1/3 of stars from heaven Rev. 12:3
Set itself up to be like the Prince	Dragon fought against Prince Michael Rev. 12:7
Took away the daily sacrifice	Dragon created false system Mark 4:15, 2Cor 11:14, 2Thes 2:9
Brought the sanctuary low	Dragon establishes synagogue of Satan Rev 2:9, 3:9
Throws truth to ground & deceives	Dragon is father of lies John 8:44
Persecutes the saints	Dragon persecutes the saints Rev. 12:13-17

Where does the little horn get his power? From the dragon - Satan! But now the question is: what is the dragon's power?

“Since the children have flesh and blood, he [Christ] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy **him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil**” Hebrews 2:14.



Did you know that the devil holds the power of death? What is the power of death? And how can the devil hold it? Christ gives us the insight we need:

John 17:3 “Now this **is eternal life**: that they may **know you**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

What is eternal life? Knowing God! If eternal life is knowing God, then what would eternal death be? Not knowing God! Then what would Satan’s power be? The lies that he tells about God, that we believe, that keep us from knowing God!

- What was the first thing that contaminated the heavenly sanctuary? Lies about God!
- What was the first thing that contaminated the sanctuary of the human soul? Lies about God!
- And what was the first lie told in heaven by Satan, according to one of the founders of the church, who helped form the investigative judgment doctrine?
- **In the opening of the great controversy**, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan**; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

So what defiles the soul temple?

- The lies about God that Adam and Eve believed that broke their trust and confidence and relationship with God;
- The continued lies that we believe that prevent us from trusting God and being reconciled to Him.
- If those persistent lies about God are not removed by the truth about God that Jesus Christ has brought, then Satan’s principles of selfishness continue to grow – the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits.
- These destructive elements strengthen within and instead of Christlike character developing we develop the character of the rebel, the Satanic character;
- and the soul, the individual created with dignity, nobility of character, in God’s image to represent Him to an onlooking universe, the being designed to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, instead of revealing Godlike character, becomes a synagogue of Satan and the habitation of devils and reveals the Satanic character, ultimately ending in desolation and destruction.
- The abomination that causes desolation is the abomination of lies about God, told by Satan in heaven and religious systems on earth, that results in the desolation of the image of God in man, the destruction of character and ultimately the desolation of the sanctuary – the sanctuary of the human soul.
- This abomination is manifest from the Dragon – who first lied in heaven, that God is unforgiving, every sin must be punished urged Satan (DA 762), and God’s law is imposed, but



this abomination is manifest through the church that has accepted a change in God's law, that it is like Imperial Rome's, imposed rather than the truth that God's law is the design protocol upon which life is built. This distortion leads to multiple false doctrines that contaminate the mind, incite fear of God and defile the Spirit Temple.

- God needs to cleanse our minds from the false constructs that cause fear, legalism, penal atonement models, punishing God concepts and bring us back into trust relationship with Him, so He can then cleanse us from fear and selfishness and prepare us to walk into heaven!
- We are called back to worship the Designer, the Creator and reject the dictator view of God that is promulgated in penal atonement theories.

In fact the little horn power is said to make war and be winning until something happens, what?

Daniel 7:21,22 gives insight:

As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

The above rendering is from the NIV which many, who assume the legal model, prefer. But does the meaning of the passage change when we read from the King James Version?

Until the Ancient of days came, and **judgment was given to the saints** of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Daniel 7:22

Which translation is more accurate? The Hebrew word translated "pronounced" actually means "to give" or "to impart" and thus the KJV would be more accurate in this context.

Why do the saints of God need judgment or discernment imparted to them? The Daniel text tells us the little horn warred against the saints and was defeating them. What kind of warfare was going on?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought** to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Cor 10:3-5

What kind of war? Where is it being fought? This is a war between truth and lies, fought in our minds and centering on God's character! Amazingly, Paul makes the connection to the cleansing of the Temple even closer and shows how the Temple is connected to this war going on in our minds:

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's **temple**, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:2-4



Paul is describing the exact same events as Daniel 7 in which evil powers war against the saints and oppose God. In the aftermath of Christ's death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, did this man of lawlessness ride into heaven overthrow God, set himself up in God's temple in heaven and proclaim himself to be God? No, where did this happen? In the Spirit Temple! In our minds!

Therefore, the cleansing of the temple as described in the Bible is the cleansing of our minds from the lies about God, which wins us to trust and results in our cleansing from sin.

We have identified the two sanctuaries, the sanctuary in heaven and the sanctuary of the human soul.

- Both were defiled by lies about God.
- Both defiled by the sins of the people, either the actual sin in the Spirit Temple or the recorded sin in the Heavenly Temple.
- But what is the connection between sin in us and our record in heaven? In other words, why is it so vital to cleanse those records, and how are they cleansed?
 - “Remember, **your character is being daguerretyped [photographed]** by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. **What do the books of heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ?** Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb? "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" [Revelation 22:12]. . . . {Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery and Divorce 62.1}
 - Our **personal identity is preserved in the resurrection**, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. **The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character.** God in His own time will call forth the dead, giving again the breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again **bearing the same individuality** of features, so that friend will recognize friend. There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him. {6BC 1093.2}

The heavenly sanctuary is composed of living beings. Currently, the individualities of those who have died are stored safe with Christ in heaven. What is recorded there is your character, your heart, your individuality. Thus, the heavenly sanctuary is contaminated by us, literally. If we are defiled our characters are defiled and they are recorded there. Thus, the cleansing of the sanctuary entails, just what the Bible teaches, Christ purifying and cleansing His bride, the cleansing of our characters, the removal of defects from us. The records in heaven merely record the reality of our hearts and minds.

We have identified that both sanctuaries have contaminated by lies about God and the sins of the people, now we must explore what it is that cleanses.



What cleanses the sanctuary? What cleanses the sanctuary in heaven and the sanctuary of the human soul?

And of course we all know this answer, we have been taught this since childhood- “The blood of Jesus” cleanses. But what does that mean? How does the blood of Jesus cleanse?

Jesus said,

“I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.” (John 6:53-55).

We know that Jesus was not promoting cannibalism, so His words must mean something else, what does it mean to drink His blood and eat His flesh?

“In the **study of the Bible** the converted soul eats the **flesh** and drinks the **blood** of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life.” (Fundamentals of Christian Education 378).

Could the flesh and blood of Christ have something to do with truth? Could truth have something to do with cleansing the sanctuary?

“The leaven of **truth** works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By **it [the truth]** the impure are cleansed, washed in the **blood of the Lamb.**” (Christ’s Object Lessons 102).

The blood is symbolic of the truth that Jesus brought, the truth about God which wins to trust, but the blood is symbolic of more: Leviticus 17:11,14 tell us that the life is in the blood.

Thus the blood is also symbolic of the perfect life of Jesus, which those who trust Him receive. Thus the two phases of Christ’s mission, the two phases in our salvation: Christ came to reveal truth to win to trust, but Christ also came to develop a perfect character which He offers as a free gift to all who trust Him.

Therefore, the blood is symbolic of the truth revealed by Christ which cleanses the Spirit Temple of the lies about God and wins to trust and the blood is also symbolic of His perfect life, His perfect character which is reproduced in the Spirit Temple by the working of the Holy Spirit. Thus to partake of His blood is to partake of the truth about God and the character of Christ, which cleanses the Spirit Temple from sin.

In the book The Great Controversy Ellen White states,

“The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in **Daniel 8:14**; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of



Days, as presented in **Daniel 7:13**; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by **Malachi[3:1-3]**, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25.” (p. 426).

Notice we have four texts that describe the same event. Let’s look at the first three.

Daniel 8:14 “Unto 2300 days and then shall the sanctuary be **cleansed**.” If you look in the SDA Bible commentary you will discover that the Hebrew word translated **cleansed** is more accurately translated **justified**. Unto 2300 days and then shall the sanctuary be **justified**.

But what does justified mean? To set right, to put in order, to put what is out of line back in line. For those of you who have a word processor on your computer there is a command at the top which allows you to **justify** your margins. If you justify the margins what happens? Everything that is out of line is put in line, everything that is out of order is put in order, everything that is out of harmony is put in harmony, everything that is wrong is set right.

Now the question is: what needs justifying? What is wrong that needs to be set right? What is out of line that needs to be put in line? What is out of order that needs reordering? What is out of harmony that needs to be brought back into harmony? **The mind, heart and character of mankind!** Let’s see if the evidence supports this.

Remember in the quote above four texts are all referring to the same event. We have just examined Daniel 8:14, but look at the Malachi 3:1-3 which is describing the same event,

“...The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his **temple**...behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a **refiner's fire or a launderer's soap**. He will sit as a **refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them** like gold and silver.”

What does a refiner’s fire and launderer’s soap do? They cleanse! Remember Daniel 8:14 unto 2300 days and then the sanctuary will be cleansed or justified or set right. And what does Malachi say He cleanses when He comes to His temple? The Levites!

Well who are the Levites?

“**You** also, like living stones, are being built into a **spiritual house to be a holy priesthood**, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1Pet 2:4)

What is another name for a “spiritual house”? A sanctuary!

“You also, like living stones, are being built into a sanctuary...” And just a few verses down Peter repeats this reality for emphasis, “But you are a chosen people, a **royal priesthood...**” (1Pet 2:9).



2300 days then shall the sanctuary be justified or set right, 2300 days and He shall come to His temple and He shall purify or cleanse the Levites – the priesthood of believers, the sanctuary of the human soul. How does the cleansing of the Spirit Temple, the sanctuary of the human soul affect the sanctuary in heaven? How are the two sanctuaries related in this cleansing? Well there was another text referring to the same event, the Daniel 7 text. “The Ancient of Days took his seat...The court was seated, and the books were opened.” (Daniel 7:9,10).

What books and for what purpose? Two options:

Roman Imposed Law	Designer Law of love
Books have list of sins	Books have record of God’s action in lives of sinners
Heaven investigates sinners	Sinners investigate God
God determines innocence/guilt	Sinners determine whether to trust God

What is more likely?

- God is love 1Jn 4:8
- Love keeps no record of wrongs 1Cor 13:5
- But the Bible says there are heavenly records – what does it mean?

When I was in med school, doing ER rotation...

The records are there to exonerate and defend God, NOT condemn and judge us!

What did the war in heaven, initiated by Lucifer, start over? Lucifer alleged God could not be trusted. How did Satan spread his rebellion to earth? He deceived our first parents in regard to God’s trustworthiness.

We are fighting a thought war and are to demolish everything that sets itself up against “the knowledge of God!” (2Cor 10:5). Jesus said that life eternal is “knowing God” (John 17:3)

In Romans 3:4 Paul tells us that God is the One on trial, the One accused and the One who will be proved innocent:

God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when **thou art judged**. KJV

May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “That You may be justified in Your words, And **prevail when You are judged**.” NASB



Certainly not! God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, “You must be shown to be right when you speak; **you must win your case when you are being tried.**” GNT

No! God will continue to be true even when every person is false. As the Scriptures say: “So you will be shown to be right when you speak, **and you will win your case.**” NCV

In heaven, when God opens the books, who is being examined, God or us? Whose books are these? Have we kept these books or has God kept these books? These books are God’s books. Why would God need to open His books and why would God need to open His books about us?

In this time, this special period of history, this Day of Atonement time, when Satan is standing and accusing, God is saying, “I want to take away your defective and damaged character and restore in you my character!” Right now, today, God wants to heal you and me! In this post 1844 period it is a time for cleansing from sin, for the restoration of the image of God within, to have new garments of Christlike character.

“This is the **covenant** I will make with the house of Israel **after that time**, declares the Lord.”

After what time? Could it be the longest time prophecy in the Bible, the longest time prophecy in the Bible that has to do with the cleansing of the sanctuary?

“I will put my **laws** in their **minds** and write them on their **hearts.**”

The law is a transcript of God’s character. I will put my character in their hearts and minds. I will clothe them with rich clothing. It all means the same thing, the recreation of Christlike character within. The Spirit Temple being cleansed!

“I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘**Know the Lord,**’ because they will **all know me**, from the least of them to the greatest.” (Hebrews 8:10,11).

“This is life eternal that they might **know you** the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3).

The lies of Satan have been blown away. They are no longer operating in the mind. We are back in unity with God. We are back in unity with Christ. We are back in oneness – at-one-ment! The day of at-one-ment, the day of recreation of Christlike character within!

Imagine you have a child who has metastatic cancer, cancer all over their body. The doctors have told you the case is terminal; there is nothing that can be done. But you have heard of a doctor out west that no matter what disease the person has that goes to him, they always leave with a clean bill of health. So you pack up your child. You gather all the medical records, the bone scans, biopsy reports, CT Scans, MRI’s, everything that documents the extent of the disease and you go to this doctor. Finally,



you get your day with the doctor. You hand him the medical records documenting in great detail the extent of the cancer which is ravaging your child's body. Then the doctor takes the records and begins to remove all the pages documenting any record of disease and inserts clean blank sheets of paper. And when he has replaced the entire record with blank paper he hands it back and says, "There, no more record of disease. You go on home." Are you satisfied? If you have a doctrine that teaches Christ is in heaven cleansing record books without doing something in you, you are in trouble!

But what if you go to this doctor and he looks at the records documenting the cancer in your child, and then he goes and examines and begins to intervene *in your child*, what do you want to happen? You want the cancer to go into *remission*! "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). When cancer goes into remission the cancerous cells remit to their original, normal, healthy non-cancerous state. The cancer is gone. Without the shedding of blood we could not be remitted to our original sin-free state, to our original Christlikeness of character! Without the shedding of blood, without the truth being internalized, without the victorious life and self-sacrificing death of Christ we cannot be restored, we cannot be healed!

And so, the doctor treats your child and the medical records shows the disease, shows the damage caused by the disease, but also shows the treatment applied and the record now shows your child is cancer free! God has records in heaven showing our sickness of heart and mind and the damage sin has caused in us. And hopefully, His records are also showing that we are partaking of His remedy, His treatment, and the records are showing that the sickness of sin is being removed, the rich garments are being put on, the cancer of sin is going into remission, the character of Christ is being reproduced within, the law of God is being written on the heart!

"The **cases** of all are pending in the **heavenly sanctuary**. Day by day angels of God are watching the **development of character**... All defects must be remedied. The **character** must be assimilated to the **character of Christ**... At an infinite cost a fountain has been prepared for **our cleansing**. In the **blood** of the Son of God **we may wash our garments of character**, and make them white." (ST, April 17, 1901).

"Fear God and give him **glory**, because the hour of **his** judgment has come." (Rev. 14:7). What is God's glory? His character, and how do we give Him glory? By allowing Him to heal us so we reveal His character at the time of **His** judgment! "Through trial and persecution the **glory--the character--**of God is revealed in His chosen ones." (AA 576).

Daniel is told in vision that an evil power would arise that would lie, distort, misrepresent God and defile the Spirit Temple by getting humans to accept, worship and teach a false picture of God. That it would be 2300 years before enough truth would be recovered for Christ to empower His people on earth with judgment to break free from the lies and be cleansed in their minds and characters, which is confirmed by Mal 3, the cleansing of the Levites.

In summary, what cleanses the two sanctuaries? The two sanctuaries need to be cleansed from Satan's lies about God. What cleanses us from the lies about God? The "blood of Christ" "the life of Christ"



the significance of truth about God revealed by Jesus. Every one of the specific lies that Satan made about God was answered in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ!

But after the sanctuaries are cleansed from the lies about God they also need to be cleansed from the sins of the people, the Spirit Temple from the damage that sin has caused and the Heavenly Temple from the record of sin. What cleanses us from this? God actually, literally, genuinely heals the damage, recreates us in character, rewrites His laws on the heart and mind, restores His image within! When the lies of God have been removed so that we again trust God and open the heart to Him, then the Holy Spirit is poured out and takes what Christ has achieved and reproduces it in us. The Holy Spirit actually dwells in us, dwells in the Spirit Temple healing, transforming, recreating us into Godlikeness! And thus we are cleansed and the records in heaven document this healing and transformation!

And what about the other lies of Satan, that God is unjust if He should forgive and heal and restore sinners? That it's not fair for God to save human sinners but not save him and his evil angels? That God is not allowed to forgive and pardon us? That sin requires God to exact punishment? How do these false allegations get resolved? How are the sanctuaries cleansed from these lies?

God opens His books and allows Himself to be investigated! God allows his conduct in handling the sin problem to be investigated! And He is glorified in His methods and principles as they are demonstrated to bring life, to bring health, to bring healing, to bring restoration, to bring unity – at-one-ment. And He is glorified in the lives of the saints who bear witness that even though we were branches burning in the fire, branches damaged and marred by the fire, that He can put out the fire of sin in us and actually cleanse and restore and recreated us to be just like Jesus!

Opening Questions:

- Why does the Heavenly Sanctuary need cleansing, and from what?
 - Because Satan told lies about God which caused deviation from God's design and fear and selfishness has damaged his children
- By what means is it cleansed, and who cleanses it?
 - By the victory of Jesus Christ, who revealed the truth and procured a perfect character, which we receive by trust
- Is this cleansing related to judgment?
 - Yes, it is only by coming to the right judgment about our situation, our condition, God, His character, methods, Christ and what He has done and choose to surrender to God and cooperate with Him that we can be healed/cleansed
- If so, who is being judged?
 - God has been lied about and thus God has provided the truth, that we must evaluate and judge in order to choose to trust Him
- Why does it take so long?
 - Because Satan has a counterfeit to God's law, an imposed system, that has infected the church and darkens the minds and misrepresents the truth about God, and results in a false system in which people claim legal pardon, but don't experience restored trust with God nor regeneration of character within.



- Who needs the investigation?
 - We do, we need to investigate the truth and be set free by it
- Who is being investigated?
 - God
- And what relevance does any of this have for me here on earth?
 - It is the process of conversion and transformation which is perfectly recorded in heaven, thus cleansing the record of my life from the defects of sin
- Does the Bible teach any sanctuary in existence, other than the one in heaven, in 1844 and since?
 - Yes, the Spirit Temple

SABBATH

The lesson states in the first paragraph, “The visions of Daniel 7 and 8 reveal that at some point in history this heavenly work of Christ in our behalf had entered a new phase, the judgment.... (From last paragraph) He judges in their behalf before the onlooking universe and grants them entrance into Christ’s eternal kingdom, the culmination of all their hopes as followers of the Lord.”

Thoughts?

Which law model is this through? Is our eternal destiny determined by God’s judgment of us, or our judgment of Him?

Does God’s judgments of us determine our destiny, or confirm our diagnosis, the actual condition of our hearts? Does God’s judgment determine the condition of our hearts? Then what does? Our judgments of Him!

When God judged “Ephraim is tied to his idols leave him alone.” Did God’s judgment cause Ephraim to be tied to his idols and beyond healing?

Likewise, in the judgment in heaven, to the degree God makes judgments, it is only the accurate diagnosis of what condition we are actually in. What determines our condition, and thus our eternal destiny, is NOT God’s judgment of us, but our judgment to trust or not to trust Him with our lives!

SUNDAY

The lesson focuses on Daniel 7 and claims it is a judicial judgment scene, but the text does not actually say so, that has to be read in. What the text actually describes is the coronation of Christ. Thus the court that is set is not a judicial court but a royal court:

“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him.



Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened....“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like **a son of man**, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. **He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him.** His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Daniel 7:9,10,13,14

Notice, nothing about judgment, judicial findings are expressed in the text, nothing about sinners standing before the judgment seat of God is expressed in the text.

This is the Royal Court of the universe which is holding the Coronation of Christ! Some are uncomfortable with this conclusion and rest their entire position on the Hebrew word "*diyn*" which is translated "court" claiming this Hebrew word refers to a judicial proceeding. I refer them to ***The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*** published in 1980 by Moody Press which supports "*diyn*" as I have rendered it above.

Read bottom pink section, "Imagine being..." does such a picture cause you to have more or less fear? As soon as Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid because they were afraid. Fear is part of the infection of sin. But perfect love casts out fear.

Who wants to promote ideas about God that incite fear? Satan, because such ideas undermine trust.

Consider the analogy, used last week in our seminar, of a IV heroin user, who having used dirty needles is now sick. Does he want to go to the magistrate and be examined, judged and sentenced? No! Does he want to go to the doctor and be examined, judged (diagnosed) and sentenced (treatment prescribed)? Yes.

The imposed law concept is the infection from the little horn power, which began in heaven with Satan's lies that sin must be punished, and has led to this false idea of a dictator god who sits in judgment and hands out punishments.

But the truth is that God is the Designer, the Creator, and sin deviates from His design and He accurately diagnosis what is wrong and will heal and restore all who trust Him.

MONDAY

The last paragraph states, "We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments not founded upon our merits, but on His own."

Thoughts?



To whom is Christ pleading? Would He not be presenting His pleas to those who are being negatively impacted by Satan's accusations? In other words, to those who actually listen to and consider what Satan has to say?

Are there any beings in heaven who listen to what Satan has to say?

From the same author who wrote the quote above consider this:

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the **unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe**. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, **he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted**. Whatever attitude he might assume, **he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin**. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

What could Satan NOT do after the cross? Accuse us before the heavenly universe!

Then to whom is Satan presenting his accusations? To US!

“You are sinful. You have gone too far. You are too corrupt. God doesn't love sinners. Don't waste your time going to Jesus. Just give up. Your salvation is lost. You've committed the unpardonable sin.”

But Jesus makes an effectual plea – to whom? Who needs to hear Christ's pleading? This sinner burdened with guilt and shame, being assailed by Satan's accusations!

Thus, the Holy Spirit comes to us:

I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. JN 16:12,13

Notice Jesus has much to say to us, but He sends the Spirit, who speaks not for Himself, but only what He hears, from who? Jesus pleads, via the Spirit to you and me!

TUESDAY

The little horn wars against the saints and is winning, until judgment is imparted to the saints. As was discussed above, the war is over the knowledge of God and the little horn power introduced a false law, imposed law, with a false legal, penal system, which infects the minds of people and obstructs God's healing plan.



The little horn was winning until judgment, or discernment, was imparted to the saints such that they could reject the lies and come back to the truth about God as revealed in Jesus. Primarily, about His law as the law of love, the design protocols upon which life is built and thus Jesus mission to heal and save rather than pay legal penalties.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson speaks about God's love and justice. How would you describe God's justice?

If you were at the seminar last week how would you describe God's justice?

The little horn power, which promotes the imposed law concept, teaches that God's justice is the infliction of punishment. This is false.

God's justice, according to Scripture, is the delivering of the oppressed and healing the broken.

Thus, read the last paragraph, "The great controversy..." note dualism, the condition of good and evil existing together is eliminated.

Eastern religions teach eternal dualism that good and evil exist together for all eternity. Christianity, has been infected with this idea in the guise of two ideas:

1. Penal theologies in which God is the source of life, but also the source of death as He inflicts pain and suffering and death originates in God as the just punishment for sin
2. Eternal burning hell

As we discovered in the seminar last week, these are both lies and God is the source of life, but Satan is the murderer from the beginning, sin kills, not God and death does not originate or come from God!

The universe will be restored to oneness with God and dualism will be eliminated.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph "Why would anyone..." those with penal views have difficult time understanding this, and create all kinds of false ideas to deal with it.

Like, God judges Jesus in our place, or our records get erased before God gets a look at them etc.

But, when we come back to the truth about God's law of love, we realize that God judging us is God diagnosing us, which is then followed by His healing and restoring us. So we pray like David, "search me and see the wicked way in me, create in me a clean heart oh God..."

The last paragraph states, in regard to the righteous, "their sins are forever blotted out..."



From where are the sins blotted out? From the hearts, minds and characters of the saved, NOT from the recorded history of the universe.

Read bottom pink, thoughts?

By teaching the truth about God's design for life, the law of love, and God's judgment is the diagnosis of our condition in order to heal.

FRIDAY

Read main paragraph, "Satan has an..." this is the same as what we discussed in Monday's lesson, Christ pleading to us because we are being duped by Satan's allegations.

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2

Has the SDA church presented the true gospel about God's character of love, or has it, like all other churches, been infected with imposed law and false penal legal models which misrepresent God and prevent the gospel from going to the world?



The Sanctuary Lesson 10 4Q 2013

The Eschatological Day of Atonement

Review the Opening Questions from last week's lesson:

- Does the Bible teach any sanctuary in existence, other than the one in heaven, in 1844 and since?
 - Yes, the Spirit Temple, the sanctuary composed of living beings
- Why does the Heavenly Sanctuary need cleansing, and from what?
 - Because Satan told lies about God which caused deviation from God's design and fear and selfishness has damaged God's children
- By what means is it cleansed, and who cleanses it?
 - By the victory of Jesus Christ, who revealed the truth and procured a perfect character, which we receive by trust
- Is this cleansing related to judgment?
 - Yes, it is only by coming to the right judgment about our situation, our condition, God, His character, methods, Christ and what He has done and then choosing to surrender to God and cooperate with Him that we can be healed/cleansed
 - And our records in heaven are an accurate reflection of our character, so the only way to cleanse our records is through the avenue of our hearts/minds
- If so, who is being judged?
 - God has been lied about and thus God has provided the truth, that we must evaluate and judge in order to choose to trust Him
- Why does it take so long?
 - Because Satan has a counterfeit to God's law, an imposed system, that has infected the church and darkens the minds and misrepresents the truth about God, and results in a false system in which people claim legal pardon, but don't experience restored trust with God nor regeneration of character within.
- Who needs the investigation?
 - We do, we need to investigate the truth and be set free by it
- And what relevance does any of this have for me here on earth?
 - It is the process of conversion and transformation which is perfectly

From Last week's Lesson # 9 MONDAY

The last paragraph states, "We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments not founded upon our merits, but on His own."

Thoughts?



To whom is Christ pleading? Would He not be presenting His pleas to those who are being negatively impacted by Satan's accusations? In other words, to those who actually listen to and consider what Satan has to say?

Are there any beings in heaven who listen to what Satan has to say?

- Does God give credence to Satan's allegations?
- When Jesus went to raise Moses from the dead and Satan protested, was there a trial, a court scene? Did Jesus make pleas to the Father in Moses behalf, or did Jesus merely rebuke the liar?
- In Zech 3, when the High Priest is standing there and Satan begins accusing, do we see a court scene with Jesus pleading to His Father or presenting any arguments about His blood etc? No, Jesus merely rebukes the devil, in other words He say, "be quiet, no one here cares what you have to say."

So, are there any beings in heaven who listen to Satan's arguments?

From the same author who wrote the quote above consider this:

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the **unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe**. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, **he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted**. Whatever attitude he might assume, **he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin**. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

What could Satan NOT do after the cross? Accuse us before the heavenly universe!

Then to whom is Satan presenting his accusations? To US!

"You are sinful. You have gone too far. You are too corrupt. God doesn't love sinners. Don't waste your time going to Jesus. Just give up. Your salvation is lost. You've committed the unpardonable sin. God in order to be just must punish sin, and you know you have sinned so God must punish you."

But Jesus makes an effectual plea – to whom? Who needs to hear Christ's pleading? This sinner burdened with guilt and shame, being assailed by Satan's accusations!

Thus, the Holy Spirit comes to us, as Jesus said:

I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. **He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears**, and he will tell you what is yet to come. JN 16:12,13



Notice Jesus has much to say to us, but He sends the Spirit, who speaks not for Himself, but only what He hears, from who? To whom is the Spirit listening? Could it be to the One who sent the Spirit? Jesus pleads, yes He does. He pleads to those He loved so much that He died to save. Via the Spirit, Jesus pleads to you and me!

“I love you! Don’t listen to the lies of Satan. You are worth the universe to me. I gave my life to save you. You haven’t gone to far. Let me heal you. Trust me and I will cleanse your mind, renew your heart and take away your fear. I will heal your wounds, and give you a new heart and right Spirit. It isn’t about mistakes you have made in the past, but about the condition of your heart, mind and character today. And if you let me I will heal you!”

What are the implications? That this entire courtroom drama, that has been presented to us, with Satan in heaven accusing us, and Jesus defending us and God sitting in judgment over us, is a distortion of reality. It is a result of accepting the Roman Imperial law concept, and all its subsequent legal constructs.

The war is in our minds over our beliefs and knowledge about God! God is waiting for a people who actually know Him! Who will trust Him. Who will open their hearts to Him and then He can heal and renew them!

SUNDAY

First paragraph the lesson points out that the little horn power of Daniel takes away the “daily” what do you understand this to be?

The daily is reference to the work of Jesus to heal us. When Paul says, “I die daily” it was in reference to this daily work of surrendering to Jesus and allowing Jesus into the heart to cleanse and restore.

The penal model comes to a different view because it is built on the foundation of the little horn distortions of God’s law – what are those distortions?

That God’s law is imposed not the design protocols upon which life is built.

Thus, the change in the law is the change from the Creator, Designer law, to law that mirrors manmade rules.

Thus, having accepted the lie that God’s law is imposed, they focus on the problem being wrong rituals, or wrong legal applications of Christ’s blood, rather than damage to the mind because we accept false ideas about God.

For instance, many Protestant groups suggest taking away the daily is when a Catholic priest offers the Eucharist, and thus replaces Christ. But then they turn around and present the same distorted legal system, with Jesus pleading to the same distorted god.



I was emailed a link in which a Catholic priest and a protestant theologian discussed the Eucharist and transubstantiation:

<http://amazingdiscoveries.org/12.10.24-debate-about-the-mass-and-transubstantiation>

They went back and forth over things like whether a priest could stand in for Christ, over sacrificing Christ again and again, over it being a violation of the law to eat blood etc.

But the real issue was uncovered when The Catholic priest said:

“There are two elements to any sacrifice the immolation and the offering. The immolation is a bloody death. The lamb is slain, what is precious about that is the life in the blood of the lamb is precious and that pays back God. That’s how the Old Testament rituals used to work. The immolation happened once but the offering is something Christ does for all eternity. He is right now in the presence of the Father, in the holy of holies, in the eternal presence, offering himself to the Father for the forgiveness of our sins.... Christ isn’t killed again and again and again, he is offered [in the Eucharist] in the same eternal presence as Christ offers himself.”

The priest said it was in this offering of his sacrifice over and over again that the sins were paid for. So each time we sin, we must take mass in order to have the sacrifice of Christ pay for that sin.

How do you think the protestant theologian responded? The protestant theologian responded, with the argument that Christ is not in heaven offering his sacrifice over and over, but offering his merits to the Father over and over.

In the Protestant view, all sins were placed on Christ at the Cross and paid for there, but when we pray for forgiveness, the Jesus goes to the Father and reminds the Father of what He already did, in paying for the sins and claims his “merits” i.e. I earned the right to get forgiveness from you for them.

So to the protestant theologian, each time we sin we don’t need to go to a priest and take mass to have Christ’s sacrifice presented to the Father to pay for our sins. Our sins were paid for, past, present and future, all at the Cross. No, when we sin we go to Christ, who presents his merits to the Father, reminding the Father that he has already paid for our sins so the Father can forgive us and not punish us.

Thoughts? Don’t you see Satan laughing? Here we have Catholics and Protestants arguing, for centuries, whether Jesus is offering his sacrifice to God over and over again to pay for our sins, or whether he is offering his merits over and over to remind the Father that our sins are paid for.

What is the problem?

Daniel 7, the little horn power would seek to change God’s law – how? By getting us to replace the truth that God’s law is the law of love, the design protocol upon which life was built, with the idea that God’s law is like a Roman emperor, put upon us to test our obedience.



Catholic and Protestant alike have accepted this change in God's law and both teach that Christ needed to die to pay for our sin, and both teach that Christ works to present something to the Father so the Father won't punish us. Which mean, both views distort God's character and misrepresent Him, thus obstructing His healing plan. The gospel has not gone to the world, instead a false gospel, based on a false view of God's law has gone to the world.

The truth is God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. That God so loved the world he sent his son. That the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ bodily, so that even though he knew no sin, he became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God.

And this focus on imposed law, with arguments over differences in proper ritual, application or practice, and not focusing on the truth about God's character, has led to splitting and fracturing of Christianity into various groups and turning on one another, like in the third paragraph, "The little horn..." thoughts?

Is the greater emphasis on papal Rome or on Christian Rome?

- Does one have to be papal, or Catholic, to worship the Imperial god of Rome?
- Does one have to belong to a particular organization in order to value and cherish the lies of the little horn?

In rejecting the truth, men reject its Author. **In trampling upon the law of God**, they deny the authority of the Law-giver. **It is as easy to make an idol of false doctrines and theories as to fashion an idol of wood or stone. By misrepresenting the attributes of God, Satan leads men to conceive of Him in a false character. With many, a philosophical idol is enthroned in the place of Jehovah; while the living God**, as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, and in the works of creation, is worshiped by but few. Thousands deify nature while they deny the God of nature. **Though in a different form, idolatry exists in the Christian world today** as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. The god of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists--the god of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, **even of some theological institutions--is little better than Baal**, the sun-god of Phoenicia. {GC 583.1}

Many SDAs want to make the problem with God's law in Christianity about which day one worships upon. They fail to recognize that the Jews who crucified Christ wanted Him down by sunset in order to keep the Sabbath. One can have the right day and still be God's enemy.

Thus, many SDAs because they have accepted an imposed law construct, and teach God runs His universe like humans run human governments, needing legal payment and inflicting torture and death, are still trapped in the false system with distortions about God, regardless of what day they worship upon.

It is not about organizational affiliation it is about God. Who is God and what God are you worshipping? The Designer or Dictator?



But sadly, we seem to fall into denominationalism and cast criticisms at those who practice differently than us, music, worship style, baptism, day one attends church, clothing style etc. all the while worshipping the same dictator god.

MONDAY

How long? How long until the sanctuary is cleansed? Thoughts?

Why does it take so long? What is the hold up?

If it was a process of God going through records – how long would that take?
If it was the process of angels going through records how long would that take?

What is the delay? What happens when the Lord finishes cleansing the sanctuary? The second coming – so what would delay that?

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2Pet 3:9

So, according to Peter, what is the cause of the delay? People not being ready for Jesus to return and thus, in mercy, He waits.

Jesus predicted such a delay in the parable of the 10 virgins, and remember this quotation:

“The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in **Daniel 8:14**; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in **Daniel 7:13**; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by **Malachi[3:1-3]**, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of **Matthew 25**.” (p. 426).

- So Daniel 8:14 predicts the time, sometime after 1844.
- Daniel 7 tells us it is a time when Jesus is coronated and the saints of God receive wisdom, discernment or judgment, and during this time the church is composed of wise and foolish members, and there is a delay in Christ completing the cleansing, such that the virgins fall asleep waiting for Him.
- Malachi 3 tells us it is a time when the Levites are cleansed, thus the sanctuary being cleansed is the sanctuary composed of living beings
- And Matthew 25 tells us there is a delay, because some of the “virgins” didn’t have oil and the Bridegroom wanted to give them time to get some, but instead they fell asleep

From my paraphrase:



Matthew 25:1 “At that time in earth’s history, God’s people on earth will be like ten undefiled bridesmaids who took their lamps and went out into the dark world to meet the bridegroom. 2 While all ten were sincere students of the word, only five were wise, the other five foolish. 3 The five foolish went out into the dark world with their lamps of God’s word, but they didn’t fill themselves with the oil of the Holy Spirit. 4 The wise, however, not only carried their lamps of God’s word, but also filled the jars of their hearts with the Holy Spirit. 5 The bridegroom took much longer than they expected in coming, and all ten bridesmaids became drowsy and fell asleep.

6 “In the middle of the night a loud cry was heard: ‘The bridegroom is here! Come and meet him!’

7 “All ten bridesmaids awoke and prepared their lamps to shine brightly. 8 But the foolish ones realized they could not, not without the oil of the Holy Spirit. So they looked to the five wise and said, ‘Give us some of your oil; our light is going out.’

9 “But the five wise said, ‘We can’t! The oil of the Spirit, that enables us to shine brightly, is only provided in sufficient quantities for each lamp. You must go to the source yourselves and get your own supply.’

10 “While the foolish ones were out searching for oil, the bridegroom arrived. The bridesmaids who were prepared went in to the reception with him and the door was closed tightly.

11 “Later the foolish ones came banging on the door shouting, ‘Master, let us in!’

12 “But he replied, ‘The truth is, you’re not my friends. I don’t know you.’

13 “So stay alert, be vigilant, because you don’t know when the Lord will return.”

Thoughts?

So, what is putting the church to sleep? Jesus is delaying His return to give time for the church to get ready, but the church is sleeping, meaning it isn’t able to get ready while asleep, and by the time the cry goes out that the Lord is coming, it is too late to get ready.

So, what is putting the church to sleep? What does alcohol do to a person? It intoxicates, numbs the reason and puts to sleep.

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. ⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made **all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.**” Rev 14:6-8

What is the maddening wine of her adulteries?

Rev 17 gives a little more insight:

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. ² With her the kings of the



earth committed adultery and **the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.**”

Rev 18 says the same, that before the second coming, the message of Revelation 14 will be given again by another messenger, or group of people:

After this I saw **another angel** coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. ² With a mighty voice he shouted:

“Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. ³ **For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries.** The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.”

⁴ Then I heard another voice from heaven say: “**Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins**, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; ⁵ for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.

Thoughts? What does all of this mean?

Note, God’s people are in fallen Babylon – that is where the church is, and those in Babylon are drunk on the wine from the harlot. And what is the wine? It is the false doctrines, the lies, the distortions, and the primary lie is the prophesied change to God’s law foretold by Daniel. This system would seek to change God’s law, and that attempt warred against the saints, corrupted the minds of men and has put the church into a deep spiritual slumber.

Why? Because it leads to a false legal security which numbs the need for true regeneration, i.e. for true infilling of the Holy Spirit.

- If the law is like ours, imposed and breaking the law requires the ruling authority to impose proper punishment
- The solution is to get the proper payment made to the ruling authority and then have that payment applied to one’s account
- Then, when we claim the blood of Jesus and believe it is applied to our records in heaven, we go to spiritual sleep believing “I accepted Jesus as my Savior, all my sins, past present and future have been paid for and the Father has accepted Jesus in my place, thus forgiveness is stamped by my name in heaven and when the Father looks at me I am covered by the robe of righteousness and the Father can’t see my true corrupt character beneath.”

This wine of false legal system has infected the church and lulled millions into a spiritual apathy in which they have false security of legal salvation, but no actual regeneration of heart, renewal of character. In other words, they have their lamps, Bibles, but they don’t have oil the Holy Spirit within regenerating and renewing the heart. Why, because the heart isn’t the problem in the legal model, it is the legal record that is the problem. We need to wake the sleeping saints up, in time for them to open their hearts for actual transformation. Then what the Bible actually teaches will be true:



- Create in me a new heart...
- Renewal of the heart by the Holy Spirit
- Remove heart of stone put in heart of flesh
- Write the law on the heart and mind
- Have the mind of Christ
- Be renewed
- Be reborn
- Be recreated
- Be regenerated
- The old is gone the new has come

The entire Scripture teaches a real, actual, regeneration of the believer when filled with the Holy Spirit. But the little horn power has infected Christianity with a false law, and false god construct that lulls them into a false security, thus putting them into a spiritual sleep.

Here are these verses from my expanded paraphrase:

Rev 14:6 Then I saw another messenger flying in midair, and he had the eternal good news about God's character of love to proclaim to everyone living on earth, to every nation, tribe, language and people, which represents a movement of people who arise to proclaim the truth about God's character of love throughout the world. 7 He said in a clear resounding voice, "Be in awe of God, and glorify him by living his methods of love, because the hour has come for everyone to make a judgment about God and worship the Designer, Creator and Builder who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and springs of water, which all operate upon his law of love."

8 Then I saw a second messenger follow the first proclaiming throughout the world, "Don't trust Babylon the Great, a symbolic description of religions that misrepresent God; it is fallen into the lies about God and intoxicates the world with its pagan views of God, maddening them with its adulterous idea that God coerces and must inflict punishment if not properly appeased."

Revelation 17:1 One of the seven angels who had one of the seven bowls came to me and said, "Come with me and I will show you the damning end of the great prostitute who sits upon the many waters, symbolic of false religion that misrepresents God. 2 The leaders of the world took their governments into bed with her, sharing in her plans, plots and methods, and the people of earth had their minds so filled with her lies about God and his methods they were like drunks, stuporous and unable to be reasoned with or embrace the truth."

Revelation 18:1 After this I saw another messenger coming down from heaven, symbolizing the Godly origin of his message. He had the great authority and power of truth, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. 2 With a voice reverberating throughout the earth he shouted: "Babylon the Great, is a fallen system of tradition, fable and falsehood distorting the truth



about God. Every demonic distortion about God, every evil attitude toward God, and all filthy and destructive heart motives find their home with her. 3 For she intoxicates the world with her pagan views of God, maddening them with her adulterous idea that God coerces and must inflict punishment if not properly appeased. Earth's leaders corrupt themselves with her by practicing her methods, and people not anchored in God's kingdom of love, but who wander from philosophy to philosophy, stuff their minds with her smorgasbord of lies.

4 Then I heard another voice calling from heaven saying: "Come out of her, my people. Leave that confusing mess of evil thinking so that you will not share in her spiritual sickness and rebellion, and so that you will not receive the suffering she has chosen;

So, could the church be asleep because it has been infected with lies about God from that little horn power? And those lies are primarily about God's law, that it is imposed, and God is a punishing being?

TUESDAY

The lesson talks about the little horn power attacking God's people, what does this mean?

Is the primary attack upon God's people physical, or is it mental?

What did Jesus say, "Don't be afraid of the one who can destroy the body, but the one who can destroy body and soul" MT 10:28

2Cor 10:3-5 we war against everything that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.

Thus, the war is over ideas, concepts, beliefs, that end up influencing us, changing us and destroying us.

Consider the power a belief can have over you. If your employer does various health screenings, and one day they do some blood work, and a person in a lab coat calls you into the office and says, "We are sad to tell you that when we ran your blood it came back HIV positive." Now they are lying, but if you believe the lie, what happens inside of you?

Will you lose peace, have anxiety, fear, will this lie affect your relationships?

What has actually changed? Only what you believe, but that change in belief has biological changes in your brain and body, it changes your perceptions about yourself, it alters how you relate to others etc.

Satan gains his power over us by what he gets us to believe.

Think about all the superstitions people believe and how it affects their minds, bodies, relationships...

This is what Paul was addressing in Romans 14, when people were afraid to eat meat offered to idols. Paul said, if your faith is great, meaning if you understand reality and realize that an idol is nothing but inanimate material and cannot affect the nutritional quality of the food, then eat anything. But, if your



faith is weak, and you believe the idol alters the food such that if you eat it now the idol has cursed your or has some power over you, then don't eat.

The issue isn't the idol, but the belief one has, and if Satan can get you to believe you are cursed, or too sinful to be saved, or harassed by demons, or contaminated spiritually, or committed the unpardonable sin etc. etc. he then gains power in your mind!

This is one of the problems people have with the sanctuary symbolism, they think that sin can contaminate objects. Sin is transferred to the priest and then to the temple in heaven and the objects must be cleansed. This is like the food be contaminated by being offered to idols. **Objects cannot be contaminated sin. Sin doesn't happen in stone, wood, metal. Sin happens in living souls, in minds, hearts, characters.**

But to the degree Satan can get us to believe the objects are contaminated, and Christ is cleansing objects, including record books, then he exerts power over us, keeping us in the "dark" and putting us to sleep.

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph, "The horn's war..." thoughts? Can anyone tell me the historical interpretation of this?

This is considered to be speaking of the time prophecy in Revelation 13, in which the beast persecutes for 1260 days, time, times, half a time, or 42 months, which all prophetically are interpreted to mean 1260 years.

The time frame for this is historically said to be from 538 CE, when Justinian's general, Belisarius defeated the last of the Arian nations, the Ostrogoths, drove them out of Rome and turned over the city to the Bishop of Rome.

1260 years later, would be 1798, and that year, the French general Berthier, enters Rome, declares it a Republic, takes the pope captive, exiles him to France where the pope dies a prisoner.

Because of this prophecy, and the history of the Dark Ages, and the physical persecution such as burning at the stake, crusades, inquisition, many have concluded that the war against the saints is/was a physical war.

Thoughts?

When Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." MT 5:27,28



He was saying that the physical actions are a result of heart defects. Is this true only for adultery?

Remember the law of worship, or modeling, by beholding we become changed? We become like the God we worship. Therefore, the reason the church persecuted others and violated human rights, was because it had been infected with lies about God. It had accepted a change in God's law as imposed and imposed laws require imposed punishments. It falsely viewed God's government as a government like Imperial Rome, made up of imposed rules requiring the ruling authority to police the laws and punish law breakers. Therefore, as "God's church on earth", it naturally practiced those methods.

But the real war, was not a physical war, it was a war of ideas, of beliefs, of concepts about God. And while political powers have come along to restrain the physical persecution of religious institutions, the churches, all of them, remain infected with the lies about God and His law.

Do you notice how this paragraph has God in the role of punishing?

Where did this lie originate?

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan**; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

Do you hear this very lie being taught in our lesson? No wonder the Lord hasn't come, we, our very own church, perpetuating the lie that Satan proclaimed in the opening of the war in heaven.

God wants a people to tell the truth about Him. He wants a people to come back into a true love relationship with Him, a people who actually know Him, and realize He is exactly like Jesus revealed!

And how did Jesus treat sinners? Neither do I condemn you! I did not come to judge or condemn but to save!

Even though all judgment is given to me it is the truth that will judge you, by your very words you will be judged.

In other words, Jesus revealed the reality of our condition judges us, either reconciled to God and renewed in heart such that we live in God's presence, or solidified in selfishness such that God's presence is torture to us and when He appears we beg for the mountains to fall on us.

THURSDAY



Goes through the process of calculating the 2300 year prophecy, starting and ending points and how they came to those dates.

Bottom line, from the time when the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem – which was 457 BC, until the end of the 2300 years, which ended 1844.

What is the significance of the prophecy?

- Does one have to understand the time prophecy in order to be saved?
- Does one have to agree on the time prophecy and what it means in order to be saved?
- Can someone have the wrong understanding of the prophecy and be saved?
- Can someone have the right understanding of the prophecy and be lost?

What is the importance of the prophecy?

Its primary purpose, in my estimation, is to give hope to people on earth that the Lord is returning, and confidence in God, His foreknowledge and His outworking of His overriding plan.

One of the potential problems with Bible prophecy is over valuing or mis-valuing it. What I mean is valuing the prophecy for something it was not intended for – like one must have the right interpretation in order to be right with God, or must have the right interpretation in order to be useful in God's cause.

Not so – the Bible says:

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² **If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.** ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ **Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease;** where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ **For we know in part and we prophesy in part,** ¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹² Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. 1Cor 13

What is necessary for salvation – in fact, what IS salvation? It is restoring love into the heart, mind, character of the person. Salvation does not exist without love restored in the heart!



Thus, if one has love restored in the heart, which is a work of the Holy Spirit, who applies what Christ achieved, they are saved, but without that restoration then everything else, including right understanding of prophecy doesn't matter!

Here is my paraphrase of chapter 13:

1Cor 13:1 If I am gifted to speak the language of men and angels, but do not have God's love in my heart, I am only making meaningless noise, because I remain terminal and dying. 2 If I am gifted with prophetic insight and understand all mysteries and knowledge, and if I am trusted to move mountains, but do not have God's love in my heart, I am a fraud because I am still dying in sin and am nothing at all. 3 If I give away all my possessions to the poor, and die as a martyr tied to a burning stake, but don't have God's love in my heart, I am still unhealed and have gained nothing.

4 Love is the principle upon which life and health is built to operate, and when active in intelligent beings, love is patient and kind. Love gives in order to bless others and does not envy, boast, or promote self. 5 Love is not intrusive, rude, selfish, irritable or hot tempered. And love doesn't hold grudges or keep a record of wrongs. 6 Love takes no pleasure in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love always protects, heals, restores, builds up, trusts, hopes and perseveres.

8 Love originates in God and therefore will never stop and never fail. But one day, prophecies will cease, talking will be paused, and human knowledge will fade. 9 We are finite, knowing just a part of all truth and prophecy is just a piece of a greater whole. 10 But when God restores the universe to His perfect design of love, all imperfection will disappear. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child bragging about myself, I thought like a child focusing on the do's and don'ts, and I reasoned like a child. But when I grew up I embraced God's kingdom of love and put the childish ways behind me. 12 Our minds are so darkened by selfishness that we see God's kingdom poorly, like a reflection in a cloudy mirror, but when he returns we shall see perfectly – face to face! Right now I know only part of God's reality; then I will have all questions answered and fully know the truth, just as God fully knows me.

13 So these three endure, trust, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 2 – do you have a clear understanding? Review my notes from lesson 9 and discuss



The Sanctuary Lesson 11 4Q 2013

Our Prophetic Message

This past Thursday was Thanksgiving here in the US.

Thanksgiving in the US has its tradition in the Pilgrims of Plymouth in present-day Massachusetts, who celebrated in 1621 the first American Thanksgiving.

This tradition continued throughout the colonies in various communities, called in the fall to celebrate a good harvest. These celebrations were to thank the Almighty for His blessings and called by the various local clergy up until 1682 when both church and state leaders called for the celebration of thanksgiving.

During the Revolutionary War both General George Washington and the Continental Congress had various thanksgiving celebrations to give thanks to God for events favorable to the cause of the revolution.

As President, George Washington proclaimed the first nation-wide thanksgiving celebration in America for November 26, 1789, “as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favours of Almighty God.” (Hodgson, Godfrey (2006). *A Great and Godly Adventure; The Pilgrims and the Myth of the First Thanksgiving*. New York: Public Affairs. p. 167)

Thanksgiving, currently celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November by federal legislation in 1941, has been an annual tradition in the United States by presidential proclamation since 1863 and by state legislation since the Founding Fathers of the United States.

Since we have members of our online class all over the world, I thought I would mention other countries also have annual Thanksgiving Celebration:

Canada

history similar to the US but celebrates it in October.

Liberia

West African country was colonized by free blacks (most of whom had been formerly enslaved) in 1820, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the first Thursday of November.

The Netherlands

Many of the Pilgrims who migrated to the Plymouth Plantation had resided in the city of Leiden from 1609–1620, many of whom had recorded their births, marriages and deaths at the Pieterskerk. To commemorate this, a non-denominational Thanksgiving Day service is held each year on the morning



of the American Thanksgiving Day in the Pieterskerk, a Gothic church in Leiden, to commemorate the hospitality the Pilgrims received in Leiden on their way to the New World.

Norfolk Island

In Australia, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the last Wednesday of November, similar to the pre-World War II American observance on the last Thursday of the month. This means the Norfolk Island observance is the day before or six days after the United States' observance. The holiday was brought to the island by visiting American whaling ships.

Grenada

Thanksgiving Day which is celebrated on October 25. Even though it bears the same name, and is celebrated at roughly the same time as the American and Canadian versions of Thanksgiving, this holiday is unrelated to either of those celebrations. Instead the holiday marks the anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of the island in 1983, in response to the deposition and execution of Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop.

Germany

The Harvest Thanksgiving Festival (*Erntedankfest*) is an early October, German festival. The festival has a significant religious component to it, but also, like its North American counterpart, includes large harvest dinners (consisting mostly of autumn crops) and parades.

Japan

Labor Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday in Japan. It takes place annually on November 23. The law establishing the holiday, which was adopted during the American occupation after World War II, cites it as an occasion for commemorating labor and production and giving one another thanks.

Today, would anyone like to thank God for things you are thankful for?

- I am thankful to God for Jesus Christ, for bringing us the truth about God procuring the Remedy to sin we could not procure for ourselves
- I am thankful for the way God runs His universe, truth, love and freedom
- I am thankful for the privilege of sharing the truths He has revealed to me with others
- I am thankful for Christie who shows me God's love every day
- I am thankful for being raised in the church, even though many things I was taught were presented through a legal lens, it provided me a foundation of data from which I could pull when I got old enough to think for myself
- I am thankful God created us with the ability to think
- I am thankful for you, our Ministry friends and supporters who have provided your time, energy, funds, presence, prayers to help spread this message, and because of your support we have touched tens of thousands of lives.

Anyone want to share a thanks?

Back to the Lesson



What is our prophetic message? Revelation 14:6-12 the three angels messages?

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. ⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

How do you explain the message of the first angel?

- Angel = messenger
- Flying through air = message heard around the world
- Eternal gospel = the eternal truth about God, His character, methods, principles that have been obscured by Satan’s lies
- Fear God = be in awe, admiration and respect
- Give Him glory = reveal His character of love and His methods of living in your actions, words and deeds
- The hour of His judgment = the time in human history when God can finally be judged correctly, when we have a message clear enough that people can make a correct judgment on who God is and reject the lies of Satan
- Thus, with the correct understand of God we are called back to worship the Designer and reject the dictator view of God which has infected Christianity.

Thoughts?

The Second Angel:

⁸ A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”

What does this mean? How do you understand it?

- Angel = messenger, which is to follow the first
- The second message cannot be effectively given, until the first is given. So what happens if we have never given the first, but an imperial, distorted view of the first message? How has the first message been distorted?
 - Having accepted the false law construct, the judgment is not seen about us coming to the right judgment about God, but about God sitting in judgment of us to determine guilt and innocence and proper punishments
 - Worship the Creator is distilled down and interpreted to mean the single act of going to church on Saturday. And this is distorted to promote Satan’s view of God, when it is taught that the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience. In other words, when it is taught there is no logical reason for the Sabbath, the only reason is because God commands us to do it takes the Sabbath, designed by God to reveal His character of love, and twists it to promote Satan’s lie that God is arbitrary.
 - From the lesson



- WEDNESDAY last paragraph, “The Sabbath is the central issue in the conflict over God’s commandments. As with no other commandment, the designated day of worship is suited for a test of loyalty because it cannot be deduced by logical reasoning. **We keep it only because God has commanded us to do so.**”
- Dictionary definition of arbitrary:
 - based on or determined by individual preference or convenience rather than by necessity or the intrinsic nature of something
 - existing or coming about seemingly at random or by chance or as a capricious and unreasonable act of will
 - marked by or resulting from the unrestrained and often tyrannical exercise of power
 - not restrained or limited in the exercise of power : ruling by absolute authority
- Do you hear the lesson is suggesting that the Sabbath is arbitrary, there is no reason, it is not intrinsic, but only an external command by absolute authority

What was the historic SDA view?

Let it be made plain that the way of God's commandments is the way of life. God has established the laws of nature, but His laws are not arbitrary exactions. Every "Thou shalt not," whether in physical or in moral law, implies a promise. If we obey it, blessing will attend our steps. **God never forces us to do right**, but He seeks to save us from the evil and lead us to the good. {MH 114.2}

Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. **Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God.** He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, that men might lose the true views of God's character, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth. He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. **The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. **The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God.** Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes.** That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Therefore he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their



minds as clothed **with the attributes of the prince of evil himself--as arbitrary**, severe, and unforgiving--that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. . . . {HP 8.2}

The law of Jehovah, dating back to creation, was comprised in the two great principles, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." These two great principles embrace the first four commandments, showing the duty of man to God, and the last six, showing the duty of man to his fellow-man. **The principles were more explicitly stated to man after the fall, and worded to meet the case of fallen intelligences. This was necessary in consequence of the minds of men being blinded by transgression.** {RH, May 6, 1875 par. 13}

The apostle gives us the true definition of sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law." **The largest class of Christ's professed ambassadors are blind guides. They lead the people away from the path of safety by representing the requirements and prohibitions of the ancient law of Jehovah as arbitrary and severe.** {Con 75.2}

Christ came to our world to become our sacrifice. He came to discover to our eyes the gems of truth, to place them in a new setting,--the frame-work of truth... When Christ came, **it was to engage in the conflict with the enemy of God and man, on this earth, in the sight of the universe of heaven.** But why was it necessary to wage the warfare in the sight of other worlds?--It was because Satan had been an exalted angel, and when he fell, he induced many angels to join him in his revolt against God's government. **He worked in the minds of the angels as he works in the minds of men today. He made a pretension of loyalty to God,** and yet he argued that angels should not be under law. **He inculcated his ideas, his rebellion and enmity, and hatred of God's law** originated in the minds of the angels in heaven through his influence. **He caused the fall of man through the same temptations** with which he had caused the fall of angels; [He inculcated his ideas about God's law into the minds of angels and he caused the fall of man through the same temptations, what is his idea about God's law? "In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan...DA761**] and in the world where he proposed to work out his principles of rebellion, the battle had to be fought, **that all might behold the real nature and results of disobedience to God's great moral standard. He represented God in a false light, clothing him with his own attributes. Christ came to represent the Father in his true character. He showed that he was not an arbitrary judge, ready to bring judgments upon men, and delighting in condemning and punishing them for their evil deeds.** The Lord proclaimed his character to Moses in the mount. "And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, 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." {ST, November 18, 1889 par. 6}



Why has the second message of the three angels been ineffective in calling people out of a confused system of beliefs? Because the first angel's message has not been presented in its right light.

- We have not presented God's character correctly
- We have not presented the good news about God
- We have not presented the truth about God's law
- We have continued to promote an arbitrary law by an arbitrary god
- Thus, we have merely taken people trapped in a imposed legal religious system and transferred them to a different system of imposed arbitrary rules, but still they are trapped under the oppression of worshipping a dictator god.
- Babylon the Great = confused Christianity, speaking with thousands of different voices, ideas, doctrines, arguing. Currently there are 34,000 different Christian groups, yes, Christianity is a confused mess, just like Babel after the languages were confused. Further, Babylon represents the confusion that happens when we have imposed law. Think about earthly governments and how things get so confused with arbitrary law, with rules made up and externally enforced. Thus, Babylon represents a manmade religious system, the Imperial Roman law structure projected upon God and heaven, and manifests in the form of penal substitution theology, and other dictator views of God.

Before we go on to the third angel's message, I received an email from an online listener regarding the investigative judgment and the idea of God being judged rather than God sitting in judgment of us.

I am starting to realize that while it's true *most* of Revelation needs to be taken as symbolic of something else, I think mostly everyone can agree that from a biblical and logical standpoint, it is not *all* symbolic (2nd coming included for instance) and thus requires careful analysis to see what is what. I am also realizing that the pre-advent judgment is not *exclusively* about us judging God to be trustworthy or not. Relationships always go two ways. For those seeking to put away sin, there should be no fear in realizing we too will be judged by unfallen beings and God as trustworthy or not, based on our actions. This reality provides assurance that one day sin will forever be a thing of the past. Reinterpreting the Bible to say it is all about us judging God ignores the other side of the relationship coin.

Thoughts?

My response:

Yes, relationships do go two ways, but the way one understands the two sides of "judgment" goes back to how one sees God's law. Imposed law, i.e. human law projected back onto God, which came through the little horn power, and has infected Christianity, including Adventism, sees judgment as you have described. God and heavenly beings "judging" us based on our "actions." I believe this is completely false.

When we see God's law as the design protocol for life, then we realize our actions (As Jesus taught in MT 5 regarding adultery and murder) are merely symptoms, or the outworking of sin



in the heart. Another way to say it is, when the character is deviant from God's design the automatic outcome is to sin behaviorally. Thus, the actions are "symptoms" to reveal the condition of the heart. The non-divine beings can observe the actions to understand how things go in the heart. But, God Himself doesn't look on the outward appearance, He looks on the heart. And He "judges" the secret intents of the heart, in the same way a doctor, who examines and MRI and looks inside the person "judges" what He sees. God accurately diagnosis what the actual condition of each heart is. And our actual heart condition is determined by whether we trust God and open the heart to the working of the Spirit, which is determined by our judgment of Him.

So, the idea that God judges us based on our actions, is an artifact of the Roman infection of Christianity, and is needed for the babes in Christ, who, according to Paul focus on the actions and are not acquainted with righteousness:

¹¹ We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because **you are slow to learn.** ¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, **being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.** ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, **not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death,** (Heb 5:11-6:1)

Notice, the children, the spiritual infants, are focused on "acts that lead to death" in other words on being judged by their acts, or actions. This is not righteousness, not even acquainted with righteousness. This is childishness. This is like an adult brushing their teeth because mommy has a rule and if I don't I will get judged bad by mommy. This is penal theology, God has rules and He must judge us if we don't do right.

Christianity is filled with children, who as children needed the rules to help them, but who have never grown up to understand what righteousness really is. What is happening is that people find themselves at different levels of development, intellectually, morally, relationally and God wants to reach them all, so God has used language for the children, the babies, but sadly, many of the children never grow up and continue to believe God's baby talk is what He wants for all eternity. This is where penal models of atonement and judgment and punishment arise. Have you read Kohlberg's moral development stages, which do a good job of describing normal human development, and give some insight into the mindset different people view the Bible through:

KOHLBERG'S STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

A. PREMORAL OR PRECONVENTIONAL STAGES:

Behavior motivated by anticipation of pleasure or pain.



STAGE 1: PUNISHMENT AND OBEDIENCE:

Avoidance of physical punishment and deference to power. The immediate physical consequences of an action determine its goodness or badness.

The atrocities carried out by soldiers during the holocaust who were simply "carrying out orders" under threat of punishment, illustrate that adults as well as children may function at stage one level.

- Israel as it left Egypt – slave mentality

STAGE 2: INSTRUMENTAL EXCHANGE:

Marketplace exchange of favors or blows. "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." Justice is: "Do unto others as they do unto you." Eye for an eye mentality. Wrong doing must be punished.

Vengeance is considered a moral duty.

- Israel at Sinai, God tries to advance them one step into maturity,
- But sadly much of the Middle East still operates on this childlike level

B. CONVENTIONAL MORALITY:

Acceptance of the rules and standards of one's group.

STAGE 3: INTERPERSONAL CONFORMITY:

Right is conformity to the behavioral expectations of one's society or peers. Individuals act to gain approval of others.

Good behavior is that which pleases or helps others within the group. "Everybody is doing it." One earns approval by being conventionally "respectable" and "nice."

Sin is a breach of the expectations of the social order.

Retribution, however, at this stage is collective. Individual vengeance is not allowed. Forgiveness is preferable to revenge. Punishment is mainly for deterrence. Failure to punish is "unfair." "If he can get away with it, why can't I?"

- Israel after the time of the judges. Their request for kings, "everybody is doing it" So they turned away from God and tried to conform to the world around them – this led to the 70 years to teach them not to be like the nations around them, which helped them go to the next level

STAGE 4: LAW AND ORDER:

Respect for rules, laws and properly constituted authority. Defense of the given social and institutional order for it's own sake.



"Justice" normally refers to criminal or forensic justice. Justice demands that the wrongdoer be punished, that he "pay his debt to society," and that law abiders be rewarded. "A good day's pay for a good day's work."

Injustice is failing to reward work or punish demerit.

Authority figures are seldom questioned. "He must be right. He's the Pope (or the President, or the Judge, or God)."

- Israel at the time of Christ, a legalistic system of rules that must be kept for the rules sake.

STAGE 4 ½:

Between the conventional stages and the post-conventional Levels 5 and 6, there is a transitional stage. College-age students that have come to see conventional morality as relative and arbitrary, but have not yet discovered universal ethical principles, may drop into a hedonistic ethic of "do your own thing." This was well noted in the hippie culture of the 1960's. Disrespect for conventional morality was especially infuriating to the Stage 4 mentality, and indeed was calculated to be so.

C. POSTCONVENTIONAL OR PRINCIPLED MORALITY:

Ethical principles

STAGE 5: PRIOR RIGHTS AND SOCIAL CONTRACT:

Moral action in a specific situation is not defined by reference to a checklist of rules, but from logical application of universal, abstract, moral principles. Individuals have natural or inalienable rights and liberties that are prior to society and must be protected by society. Retributive justice is repudiated.

The statement, "Justice demands punishment," which is a self-evident truism to the Stage 4 mind, is just as self-evidently nonsense at Stage 5. Retributive punishment is neither rational nor just, because it does not promote the rights and welfare of the individual. Only legal sanctions that fulfill that purpose are imposed-- protection of future victims, deterrence, and rehabilitation.

The freedom of the individual should be limited by society only when it infringes upon someone else's freedom.

- What Jesus tried to teach them, no need to punish the woman caught in adultery
- All humans are valuable, even the lepers, tax collectors and prostitutes

STAGE 6: UNIVERSAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES:

An individual who reaches this stage acts out of universal principles based upon the equality and worth of all human beings.



Persons are never means to an end, but are ends in themselves. Having rights means more than individual liberties.

This is the "Golden Rule" model. A list of rules inscribed in stone is no longer necessary.

At this level, God is understood to say what is right because it is right; His sayings are not right, just because it is God who said them.

Persons at this level have accepted God's invitation to "come and let us reason together".

- Jesus lived this level
- The New Testament church lived this level and the Apostles taught this, thus the law is the law of love, and that the written law was useful only to diagnose and not given for the righteous but for the wicked. The law is written on the heart, new covenant
- This is the level our class seeks to achieve

THE FOLLOWING ARE OBSERVATIONS THAT WERE MADE BY KOHLBERG

1. STAGE DEVELOPMENT IS INVARIANT.

One must progress through the stages in order, and one cannot get to a higher stage without passing through the stage immediately preceding it.

2. IN STAGE DEVELOPMENT, SUBJECTS CANNOT COMPREHEND MORAL REASONING AT A STAGE MORE THAN ONE STAGE BEYOND THEIR OWN.

3. IN STAGE DEVELOPMENT, MOVEMENT THROUGH THE STAGES IS EFFECTED WHEN COGNITIVE DISEQUILIBRIUM IS CREATED, THAT IS, WHEN A PERSON'S COGNITIVE OUTLOOK IS NOT ADEQUATE TO COPE WITH A GIVEN MORAL DILEMMA.

4. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE FOR A HUMAN BEING TO BE PHYSICALLY MATURE BUT NOT MORALLY MATURE.

5. KOHLBERG BELIEVED THAT ONLY ABOUT 25% OF PERSONS EVER GROW TO LEVEL SIX, THE MAJORITY REMAINING AT LEVEL FOUR.

The Bible enjoins principles of modesty, humility, and wise stewardship of the money. Application of these principles might preclude the purchase of expensive jewelry, furs, flashy cars, or other items primarily for show. A person functioning at level six would have no problem applying these principles. Persons functioning at a level four on the other hand, might make rules about "jewelry" (in a church for instance) or red dresses, or cosmetics. But they might not even notice a flashy car or the lady who wears a new dress every single week. Those things aren't on the list. If Kohlberg's observation is true, then level 6 thinkers would be in the minority. They might even be misunderstood and persecuted by a level 4 majority (Christ being the primary example).

STAGE THEORY AND THE ATONEMENT

Level 1: Man sinned and offended God. God responded with angry vengeance taking the life of Jesus.



Level 2: God somehow struck a bargain with the Devil, a market place exchange of Christ's life, paid as a ransom to the Devil, in trade for the devil's releasing his hostages. In the popular version, Satan found out too late that God had conned him, when Christ rose from the dead.

Level 3-4: The Law must be kept. Man broke the Law. Someone had to pay the penalty. "The wages of sin is death." Jesus paid that penalty. The integrity of the Law was maintained.

There is an aspect of truth on the law must be kept when the law is understood as the law life is built upon.

Level 5-6: He demonstrated that separation from God is death. ("Why have you forsaken me?") Since we separate ourselves from Him, not He from us, He is not our executioner. He allowed Satan to play out his hand, exposing his selfish character for all both man and angels to see, and thus erasing all sympathy for the accusations of the fallen foe. God's character was vindicated.

Level 7: Atonement becomes at-one-ment. God did what it took to win our love and trust, destroy the infection of sin and restore us to unity with Him again. Neither God, nor His law, defined as the eternal principles upon which He bases His government, change, but our understanding of His law changes, and God speaks to us at each level of our understanding. It is a mistake to cling to expressions appropriate to an earlier age of understanding, regardless of how valid and useful they were in their own context, when more appropriate expressions exist.

Where are you on this moral hierarchy? Where do you experience the majority of church leadership to be? Have we taken the first and second angel's messages to the world?

The message of the third angel can only be effectively given when the first two angel's messages are given in their right light:

⁹ A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." ¹² This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.

Thoughts?

Angel = messenger

Loud voice = heard all over the world

Worships = values the doctrines, adheres to the principles, practices the methods of the beast, regardless of denomination



Beast and image = a merger of religious and political powers, particularly the merger of religious rhetoric with human law constructs, creating a dictator god and political religious organization that will use coercive tactics

Mark = that which distinguishes one as a follower of the beast system

Forehead = true believer in the penal legal god who must punish

Hand = practitioner of those coercive methods even though one doesn't believe

God's anger and wrath = God letting go His restraining hand and allowing unremedied sin to take its full toll

Burning sulfur = God's life giving glory, the Greek *thion*, neutered form of *thios*, which means divine, or God, and which is the basis of "theology" the study of God. Thus, the burning sulfur is God's fiery presence, the fire of truth and love which consumes sin, seen in Ezek 28, the fiery stones Lucifer walked amongst before his fall, or Daniel 7 when the ancient of days took his seat. And the text explicitly states this fire takes place in "the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb."

Smoke = Is what is left behind after something is burned up. Thus it symbolizes the history of the lives and choices of the lost, the memory of what they chose and did which is remembered by the saved forever and ever. We never forget the lessons taught us through this battle between Christ and Satan, and why the wicked are lost in the end – by their own choices.

Forever = eternity, the end of the wicked is eternal, and we will remember for all eternity, never forgetting

No rest = the mind is never at peace or rest in deviation from God's design, and they never enter the eternal rest, or reunion with God

Keep the commandments = live the law of love

Faithful to Jesus = represent God rightly and tell the truth about God's character

My paraphrase of the Three Angel's Messages:

Rev 14:6 Then I saw another messenger flying in midair, and he had the eternal good news about God's character of love to proclaim to everyone living on earth, to every nation, tribe, language and people, which represents a movement of people who arise to proclaim the truth about God's character of love throughout the world. 7 He said in a clear resounding voice, "Be in awe of God, and glorify him by living his methods of love, because the hour has come for everyone to make a judgment about God and worship the Designer, Creator and Builder who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and springs of water, which all operate upon his law of love."

Rev 14:8 Then I saw a second messenger follow the first proclaiming throughout the world, "Don't trust Babylon the Great, a symbolic description of religions that misrepresent God; it is fallen into the lies about God and intoxicates the world with its pagan views of God, maddening them with its adulterous idea that God coerces and must inflict punishment if not properly appeased."

Rev 14:9 A third messenger followed them and proclaimed in a voice heard throughout the world, "If anyone gives worth and honor to the beastly system of coercion by choosing the methods of the beast and thus marking themselves as loyal in heart by embracing the character



of the beast or marking themselves as loyal in deed by practicing his methods, 10 they will reap the full fury of unremedied sin when God let's go his protective hand. They will experience immeasurable torment of mind and burning anguish of heart when they stand in God's fiery presence and are bathed in unquenchable fire of truth and love, all in the very presence of Jesus and the holy angels. 11 And the memory of their suffering and the lesson of their self-destructive choices will never be forgotten throughout all eternity future. There will be no peace of mind, day or night for those who prefer the methods of the beast and model after him, nor for any who choose to mark themselves as followers of the beast." 12 This requires patient endurance on the part of the healed who live God's methods of love and remain true to Jesus.

Thoughts?

Is there any wonder why the church has not fulfilled its prophetic mission? We cannot fulfill the mission until we come back to the truth about God, reject the dictator view of God, which is promoted in:

- the imposed law model
- penal substitution theology
- God must punish sin
- Sabbath is a test of obedience without reason just because God said so
- Judgment is God sitting in judgment determine who will be saved and ordering punishments
- God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death
- All sin must be punished and God will inflict it

All these presentations continue to confuse the world and misrepresent God and obstruct the message of the three angels from doing its work in preparing the world for Christ's return.

SUNDAY

The lesson talks about the terrible persecution that is to occur during the 1260 year period

The time frame for this is historically said to be from 538 CE, when Justinian's general, Belisarius defeated the last of the Arian nations, the Ostrogoths, drove them out of Rome and turned over the city to the Bishop of Rome.

1260 years later, would be 1798, and that year, the French general Berthier, enters Rome, declares it a Republic, takes the pope captive, exiles him to France where the pope dies a prisoner.

Because of this prophecy, and the history of the Dark Ages, and the physical persecution such as burning at the stake, crusades, inquisition, many have concluded that the war against the saints is/was a physical war.

Thoughts?



Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
MT 5:27,28

What was He saying about the physical acts of sin? They are a result of heart defects. Is this true only for adultery? What did Jesus say about murder?

Then would the actions of the church in the Dark Ages, when it persecuted physically, **be the actual war** against the saints, **or the symptoms**, the outworking, **the result of the real war** going on in the hearts and minds of men?

Remember the law of worship, or modeling, by beholding we become changed? We become like the God we worship. Therefore, **the reason the church persecuted others and violated human rights, was because it had been infected with lies about God. It had accepted a change in God’s law as imposed and imposed laws require imposed punishments.** It falsely viewed God’s government as a government like Imperial Rome, made up of imposed rules requiring the ruling authority to police the laws and punish law breakers. Therefore, as “God’s church on earth”, it naturally practiced those methods.

But the real war, was not a physical war, it was a war of ideas, of beliefs, of concepts about God. And while political powers have come along to restrain the physical persecution of religious institutions, the churches, all of them, remain infected with the lies about God and His law. (2Cor 10:3-5)

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Fear could be...” thoughts?

I agree that fear can be understood in two ways. I also agree that if someone is in the middle of an orgy at the foot of Sinai worshipping a golden calf and God’s thundering incites fear, that fear may result in one stepping back and rethinking one’s position.

But, in the context of the three angels, is it appropriate to suggest that God is calling for people to experience “terror”?

Absolutely NOT! This is a result of the distortion to God’s character which has infected Christianity.

Remember, the people specifically called upon in the first angel’s message to fear God are the same ones called upon to give Him glory, meaning to reveal Him in their character, so others can see the truth about God and make a right judgment about Him. This means they are called upon to reveal God’s love in their lives. And perfect love casts out all fear! Perfect love does not cast out awe, admiration and respect for God, it enhances it. But perfect love does cast out terror of God! So, if they



were going around showing terror or dread about God, their witness would lead people to make the WRONG judgment about God, and perhaps reject God and conclude God doesn't exist.

Thus, Revelation's call to fear God is NOT the call to be in terror but a call to reveal our awe, admiration and love for our God of love!

But the lesson rightly points out, there is something to fear – what? The lesson suggests it is God, but what is your answer? Unremedied sin!

But Satan is such a good liar he has far too many more afraid of God who is trying to heal them, than sin which is destroying them! Think about it, which do we need to fear more – Ebola, or a doctor with a remedy for Ebola? What do we need to fear more, sin, or God who has the remedy for sin?

Read bottom pink section “We know...” thoughts?

What does this imply to you?

Does this imply God is your friend, someone safe to go to with sin in your life? Or does it imply that God will hurt you?

This idea corrupts how we present the gospel and bring people to Christ.

In NT times when they preached and the Holy Spirit convicted people they were baptized then, meaning they were brought immediately into relationship with Christ and the church as new babes in Christ.

We don't do this today – why? Because when someone is convicted by the Holy Spirit to accept Jesus, we believe God is too just, or too Holy to tolerate sinners coming into the church without first getting themselves cleaned up from sin. Or perhaps, it is the idea the church needs to be protected from sinners, so we must put them through indoctrination classes, but even worse – they must quit smoking before baptism, they must quit working on Sabbath before baptism, they must stop using alcohol before baptism etc. etc.

In other words, they must clean up sin in their lives BEFORE we allow them baptism. But, where does the power to overcome sin in the life originate? In Christ, thus this legal model causes us to put burdens on people, make them feel pressure to perform, makes them feel they are not good enough to come to Christ, make them feel underserving of His love, make them feel God is intolerant of them in their sick state, distorts their idea of God and His single desire to deliver, heal and save them.

When did the lepers come to Christ, before or after they were healed of leprosy? What is leprosy symbolic of in Scripture? Sin! Naaman in OT times was a leper, and was instructed to do what? Go and baptize himself in the Jordan 7 times – as a leper. Symbolically, go as a sinner to Christ, be immersed by the Holy Spirit (baptized) and in that immersion you will be cleansed from sin.



When we realize sin is a condition, with which we are born, and God has a healing remedy we go to Him, in our sin-sick condition and are immersed in His love, truth, power, presence and it is this experience which purges the lies, purifies the heart, removes the selfishness, writes in the love and cleanses and heals us.

But, when we have a penal legal system, we have rules which must be met first. We have behaviors we must change first. We have lists of beliefs we must adhere to first, or God cannot accept us while we smoke, drink, work on Sabbath etc.

Is it any wonder the three angels messages have not done their work to call people out of Babylon?

Lest anyone get confused and think I am suggesting that there is not place or need for a change in behavior let me state it clearly. We must experience a change in behavior, but only after we come to Christ and experience His healing power in our hearts and minds. Anything else is a false remedy.

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, “God reacts to the rage of the nations ...” thoughts?

Before we talk about God’s power, let’s talk about Satan’s wrath or methods of attack.

When you study Scripture, have you observed that Satan attacks in a certain pattern? Can you describe the pattern?

The best place to see his tactics is in the life of Christ.

How did Satan first attack Christ?

- By subtle deception and appeal to carnal weakness
 - Hunger was used to incite doubt and tempt him to use his power for self interest (lust of the flesh)
 - Ego, or pride, was used to tempt him to prove Himself (pride of life)
 - Greed or gain was used to tempt him to save self (lust of the eyes)
- Then when this didn’t work, Satan worked through family, brothers tempted him to use his power to prove self
- Then when this didn’t work, his disciples tempted him to use his power to destroy his enemies
- Then the religious leadership was used in attempts to trick him with theological tricks and legal entanglements
- Then, when none of the subtle temptations worked, Satan moved on to coercion, pressure, threat, with physical attack, mockery, humiliation, betrayal, rejection, and ultimately execution

Likewise, Satan’s methods are the same against us. We are tempted first through our own carnal weakness:



- Lust of the flesh (addictions, sensual pleasures, gluttony etc)
- Lust of the eyes (money, stocks, cars, etc.)
- Pride of life (need to be first, head elder, pastor of largest church, first in sales, first in class, gold medals etc.)
- When this doesn't work he hits us with all kinds of subtle lies (evolutionism, theistic evolution, legal theologies, humanism, eastern philosophies, etc.)
- He attacks us through family and friends who ridicule, reject, betray for our beliefs and following his methods. (You're a legalist for not eating meat. You're rigid for....)
- He attacks us from religious leaders (you teach contrary to church beliefs...)
- Then, one day, when none of this works, Revelation predicts there will come again actual physical persecution to incite fear, inflame or desire to save self, and tempt us to deny God, and practice Satan's survival of the fittest principle and betray what we believe in order to save self.

What is God's power to defeat Satan and his attacks?

- Truth, love and freedom
- Truth destroys lies
- Love destroys selfishness
- Freedom destroys coercion
- Prayer and Bible study keeps one humble and connected to God
- Fellowship with believers keeps one encouraged and connected to community, which destroys fear of isolation and abandonment
- Trusting God with outcomes destroys fear about the future

Read next paragraph, "Revelation 11:17,18 gives..." thoughts?

What is the lesson suggesting? How do you hear it? Does this cause one to feel safe with God or become terrified of Him?

Does it sound like a threat, do it my way or else I will pour plagues out upon you? Can love exist under threat? Is God love? Then can God be threatening to inflict pain and suffering on those who won't love Him?

What then do we make of this?

Let's read Revelation 11:16-18

And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.



¹⁸ The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great— and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

Thoughts?

So, we have what it says, the critical question is what does it mean? What are God’s methods for destroying the earth?

Revelation 7:1-3 gives a clue:

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, **holding back the four winds** of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice **to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea:** ³ “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”

Notice these four angels are doing something, what are they **ACTIVELY** doing? Holding back the four winds and it says later they have power to do something, what? To harm the land and sea. What do you think their power is? To let go that which they are restraining or hold back, which is Satan and his forces.

Thus, the harm does not come out from God, the plagues are not inflictions from God, but are God’s restraining hand letting go and Satan gaining more and more freedom to use his power on earth.

Why, does God let go? Why is His presence withdrawn from the earth? What is the dwelling place of God’s Spirit on earth? The heart of men. And what happens as billions of people harden their hearts and close their hearts to God? Where does the Spirit go, slowly withdrawn, and thus the four winds are slowly loosed.

This is exactly what historic Adventism taught, before penal substitution infected our theology. Here is from EGW:

"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.



"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of."

Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

I want to tell you another thing. **The vials of God's wrath and the sprinkling of them, are already coming. What is the matter that we do not discern it? [What is the matter? I believe the problem is we have accepted Satan's view of God's law, the wine of Babylon, that God's law is imposed, that sin must be punished, and thus we view Satan's behavior as God's behavior] It is because the light of truth does not affect the heart. The Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the world.**

You hear of calamities by land and by sea, and they are constantly increasing. What is the matter? The Spirit of God is taken away from those who have the lives of men in their hands, and Satan is coming in to control them, because they give themselves to his control. Those who profess to be the children of God do not place themselves under the guardianship of the heavenly angels, and **as Satan is a destroyer,** he works through those men and they make mistakes, and they will get drunk, and because of intemperance, many times bring these terrible calamities upon us.

And see the storms and tempests! Satan is working in the atmosphere; he is poisoning the atmosphere, and here we are dependent upon God for our lives—our present and eternal life. And being in the position that we are, **we need to be wide-awake,** wholly devoted, wholly converted, wholly consecrated to God. But we seem to sit as though we were paralyzed. **God of heaven, wake us up!** *Sermons and Talks Volume 2, p. 69.3; Manuscript 1, 1890; SM book 2, p. 52*

As I said last week, the 10 virgins, the church is asleep, and what puts the church to sleep? The wine of Babylon, which is the false doctrine of penal substitution, God's law being imposed and God in order to be just must inflict punishment. Thus, we falsely teach God inflicts the plagues. We need to wake up!

Here is my paraphrase of Revelation 11:16-18:

Rev 11:16 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on thrones before God, humbled themselves in awe and admiration, 17 and said: "We are thankful to you, Lord God Almighty, who lives today and who has always existed, because you have unveiled your great power and begun to reign in truth and love. 18 The nations of the selfish world lived in anger, and you have let them reap what they have chosen. The time for accurately diagnosing those who sleep in the grave has come, and for rewarding your spokespersons the prophets and your saints and all those who revere your character of love, both small and great, and for the destruction of those who destroy the earth."



WEDNESDAY

In the second paragraph it states, “The final test will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men.” What do you understand this to be?

One view has taken this idea and boiled it down to one test, which day one worships upon. Is this what it boils down to? Is it only about the day of week one attends services?

Or, is it actually about THE commandments of God versus THE commandments of men?

What is the difference between the commandments of God and men?

What are God’s commands?

- Love the Lord your God with all your heart and neighbor as yourself
- According to Jesus “All law” how much? “All” law hangs on these.
- So every commandment of God, regardless of which one, is an expression of love.
- Thus God’s law is the law of love, which functions as the principle of giving
- This is a natural law, the design protocol for life and deviations are incompatible with life
- Justice requires healing and deliverance of the oppressed

What are the commandments or law of men?

- Survival of the fittest, which is fear based, threaten and coerce with
- Imposed rules
- Legal requirements
- Justice requires infliction of punishment

Sabbath, originated in Eden, at the end of six days of God delivering and providing incredible evidence of His nature, character, methods and principles, which were summed up in His closing arguments about His government, the Sabbath. I rest my case. Universe, you’ve heard the arguments against me. You’ve seen the evidence, the mini-theater I have just created, showing my creative power, that all life originates with me. Yet, I don’t hoard power and have given dominion to Adam and procreative ability to humanity. Consider all I have revealed to you, take 24 hours aside, think for yourselves, no pressure, no coercion, I rest my case!

The Sabbath, created in the midst of a war over God’s right to rule, is invested, created, built, by God, upon God’s very methods – truth, presented in love, leaving intelligent beings free to think for themselves, no threat, no coercion, no pressure. Thus the Sabbath was CREATED holy, and stands as evidence of God’s government, methods and character.

The fact the Sabbath exists proves Satan a liar. If Satan were right and God was selfish and used power to threaten and coerce, then there would be no Sabbath, God would have merely executed Satan and told the other beings to get in line or He would kill them too.



Thus, the Sabbath stands as a sign, a signpost, a billboard, a declaration point, an evidence of God's law of love embodied in time, by our creator to remind us of God's methods of love and liberty. Its holiness is created within the day itself and because its existence is evidence of God's methods it cannot be supplanted by any other day.

No other day was created on the 7th day. On day 1-6 we learn that God has power, it is only on day seven we learn the character of the one who wields the power.

Sunday, or any other day of the week, provide evidence of God's power, but not God's character of love. Thus, these two days of worship are SYMBOLIC or representative of two methods of governing.

God's law- the method of love, truth and freedom or man's law, arbitrary rules chosen and enforced upon threat of punishment. So, when we take the Sabbath and claim there is no logical reason, just God commands us, we pervert the very purpose and meaning of the Sabbath and make the Sabbath support Satan's argument. So people can worship on the "right" day, but still crucify the Lord of the Sabbath. This is what is happening within Adventism today.

Real Sabbath observance occurs in the heart and character, by people who practice God's methods.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The second and third..." thoughts?

From our study today, why will people who reject God partake the seven last plagues?

FRIDAY

Discuss questions 1 and 3



The Sanctuary Lesson 12 4Q 2013

The Cosmic Conflict Over God's Character

I want to start out by giving kudos to the editors for including this topic. I am happy they are acknowledging that the character of God is THE Central issue in the Cosmic Conflict.

Some guidelines I like to use for determining the truth about God's character:

- Jesus is God in human flesh. Therefore, Jesus is the clearest picture of God and God's character. Jesus said "If you've seen me you've seen the Father." So, if we have some idea about God that is not true in the life of Jesus then we need to rethink that view.
- God is love – every other aspect of His character is an expression of love. Thus, it is a distortion to say, "God is not only loving, He is also just."
 - This is a classic distortion from the imperial legal proponents. When we say "loving" instead of "love" we have diminished God. God is more than loving, He is love! This means every action, including God's "justice" is an outworking of love.
 - So, when we understand the reality of God's character, statements like, "God is not only loving, He is also just" are realized to be nonsense. It would be like saying "God is not only Creator He is the one who made us." Of course God is just because love always does what is right and that is what is just.
- God's law is an expression of His character of love, which is the principle of giving. Any doctrine which has God acting contrary to His character of love would be false.
- Love requires genuine freedom. Therefore, God never uses coercion. Any doctrine which has God in the role of coercing would be a lie.
- God is the source of all truth. Any doctrine which has God using deceit would be a lie.
- God is the source of life. Any doctrine which has God as the source of death, i.e. inflicting death, would be a lie. (We are speaking of death as defined by God in the Bible, not as we humans define death. Thus, we are speaking of the death that is the wages of sin, not the death which the righteous also experience.)
- We must use the integrative evidence based approach, which requires our understanding of God to include the entire inspired record, so we don't use select passages while refusing to deal with others. But more, our understanding requires the inspired text to harmonize with God's laws of nature/science and our experience.
- God is infinite and we are finite, so we must always remain open to advance, and change our views with new insights. We never want to "arrive" at a position that we refuse to reevaluate, if new evidence is presented.

With these guidelines in mind let's examine our lesson

SABBATH



The first sentence of the second paragraph states, “Central to this controversy is the sanctuary...” thoughts about this?

How is this true?

If we use the Bible and understand that the true sanctuary, the heavenly sanctuary, the sanctuary not built by human hands, but built in Eden by God, is the sanctuary of the human soul, the living being, both individually, but also corporately, then we understand why the sanctuary is central – because.....

What is the central issue in the war?

2Cor 10:3-5... which means the war is fought where? In our minds. Note, it is not fought in a building made out of brick and mortar in heaven. It is fought in the Spirit Temple.

Further, Satan is the father of lies. Where do lies have their power? In the minds of intelligent beings. He isn't writing graffiti on the walls of a heavenly building.

Further, where does Satan want to sit enthroned, in an empty building made out of brick, or in the hearts of intelligent beings to be most loved and cherished? In other words, from where did Satan want to dethrone God – a physical chair, or the hearts of His intelligent beings?

God's weapons are Truth, Love and Freedom – where do they have power? In the mind of intelligent beings. So, yes the sanctuary is central, because the sanctuary is you and me and God is working to heal us, while Satan is trying to destroy us.

SUNDAY

Revolt in heaven – let's consider this.

If you were an angel in heaven, no carnal nature, never seen sin, you know God personally, you have spent eons with Jesus, what could Lucifer do to get you to rebel?

- Tempt you with gold, drugs, alcohol, sex, grand theft, embezzlement etc.?
- Did Satan allege he was more powerful than God and challenge him to arm-wrestling contest?
- What strategy could Satan use?

He attacked God's character – how? Through alleging God was arbitrary, a God who made up rules and used His power to dictate His way. In other words, Satan alleged God's was a dictator, and therefore created rules that had no intrinsic value, but required external enforcement, such as judging and punishing. Thus, Satan put God in the role of being a judge and executioner, just like much of Christianity does today.

I thought we could review some historical documents, how our church viewed this message over 100 years ago. The first chapter of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, entitled, *Why Was Sin Permitted* and then



Desire of Ages, It is Finished. Let's examine portions, and take note throughout how what is being described is Satan's attempt to make God appear to be a dictator, but God's true character is love.

"God is love." 1 John 4:16. His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be. "The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," whose "ways are everlasting," changeth not. With Him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Isaiah 57:15; Habakkuk 3:6; James 1:17. {PP 33.1}

- What is the first and last and always central truth about God?
- What is God's law?
- How long has it been so?
- How long will it be so?
- Does God ever change from love?
-

Then, as we progress through this conflict between Christ and Satan, centering on God's character, you can be certain that any representation of God that is other than love is a lie. If you do this analysis you will be amazed at how deeply the lie has penetrated all of Christianity, including our own church.

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings... The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God's unchanging love. {PP 33.3}

What do all of God's actions reveal? Love.

So, if we read some story in Scripture and don't see love, what does that mean? We are misunderstanding something.

If we hear that God is not only loving but just, we know the infection is working to erode our conception of God's character of love. All God's actions are demonstrations of love!

The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate--a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." John 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father--one in nature, in character, in purpose--the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . . When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Proverbs 8:22-30.... {PP 34.1}



Who was with the Father from the beginning?

One of the attacks on God's character is an attack on the Trinity. It has resurfaced again, and making the rounds again that there is no Trinity. That Christ is not fully God. This argument is an attack on God's character of love, why? Because love cannot exist in isolation, love by definition needs an object an other to pour itself upon. A singularity is not love, a plurality is love. God is love, thus the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, together, make up the Godhead, all loving each other.

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love--service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {PP 34.3}

- In the first few paragraphs we have emphasized what?
- God's character is what? Love.
- God's law is what? Love.
- Why does the happiness of all creatures depend upon perfect accord with the law of love? Because life is constructed to operate upon this law.

What other design law, an expression of love, is described in this paragraph? The law of liberty, love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom. So, regarding the character of God, what does it mean? What does it mean if we hear arguments about God using power to force His way? It is a lie and something is misunderstood.

So long as all created beings acknowledged the allegiance of love, there was perfect harmony throughout the universe of God. It was the joy of the heavenly host to fulfill the purpose of their Creator. They delighted in reflecting His glory and showing forth His praise. And while love to God was supreme, love for one another was confiding and unselfish. There was no note of discord to mar the celestial harmonies. But a change came over this happy state. **There was one who perverted the freedom that God had granted to His creatures.** Sin originated with him who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven. Lucifer, "son of the morning," was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled. He stood in the presence of the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glory enshrouding the eternal God rested upon him. "Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering. . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." Ezekiel 28:12-15. {PP 35.1}

- What was supposed to be the allegiance of the created beings? The allegiance of love.



- What is the essence of love? Other-centered regard.
- What is the essence of sin? Selfishness, exploitation of others.
- How could deviation from love occur? Because of genuine freedom.
- What does this say about God? God is NOT a dictator.

If God was like Satan says, Satan could never exist. It is only because God is love and gives real freedom that Satan had the liberty to misuse and abuse.

Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. The Scripture says, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Ezekiel 28:17. "Thou hast said in thine heart, . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High." Isaiah 14:13, 14. Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. **Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son**, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.... {PP 35.2}

- Does this motive, this intent, have any bearing on the “sanctuary”?
- Does it have any bearing on defiling the sanctuary, or cleansing the sanctuary?
- Does it have any bearing on how we teach the sanctuary?

Lucifer did not want a building. He wanted the loyalty and devotion of intelligent creatures turned to him. Thus, he worked to corrupt their hearts, the sanctuary of the soul of intelligent beings. We err when we focus on inanimate materials in heaven.

To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels. To this object he was about to bend the energies of that master mind, which, next to Christ's, was first among the hosts of God. **But He who would have the will of all His creatures free**, left none unguarded to the bewildering sophistry by which rebellion would seek to justify itself. Before the great contest should open, all were to have a clear presentation of His will, whose wisdom and goodness were the spring of all their joy. {PP 36.1}

- What was Satan's wedge to cause discontent in heaven? He alleged no difference between himself and Christ and that God was arbitrary in choosing Christ over Lucifer.
- How could this argument be made? Because Christ was the member of the Godhead, who while fully God, pre-existent, fully divine, left infinity and moved out toward His creation to interact on the level of His creation.



Thus Christ “manifested” Himself in the *form* of an angel, even though He was not an angel. (Exodus 3 the burning bush and many other places) And Satan complains that Christ gets privileges to go into counsels that Lucifer doesn’t get to go in to.

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng--"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. **Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes**, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. **Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants.** But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love.... {PP 36.2}

- Why was it necessary to state this before the angels?
- Was God’s declaration that only Christ could fully enter into His purposes an edict?
- Was it the declaration that made it so, or did God declare what was already true?
- Why could others not enter fully into the purposes of God?
- Was it because God was restrictive, exclusive, selfish? No, God is infinite, and only an infinite being can enter infinity.

Created beings, including angels, are finite. This was no arbitrary decree on God’s part, but merely the way reality is. In other words, natural law. But Lucifer, alleged God made up arbitrary rules and enforced them by use of selfish power. Just as Satan has caused human’s to conceive of God’s law today.

He [Lucifer] was beloved and revered by the heavenly host, angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was exalted above him, as one in power and authority with the Father. He shared the Father's counsels, while Lucifer did not thus enter into the purposes of God. **"Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He honored above Lucifer?"**

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. **He worked with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God.** {PP 36.3}

Hypocrisy. Note how he pretends to be righteous but actually sews discord. And where do we find such activity in human history? Where do we find those who profess to be promoting God’s cause? In religious institutions. It was religious leaders who pretended to be righteous while crucifying Christ,



burned people at the stake, carried out crusades, conducted the inquisition. Yes, there are also righteous leaders, but Satan's most powerful agents are those cloaked in the pretense of righteousness.

The false claim of equality with Christ was made possible only because God is love, humble, meek, kind, gentle, completely trustworthy, and Jesus the self-existent eternal Creator, chose to move out of infinity and interact intimately with His creation.

He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of the worlds, angels, being more exalted, needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide... The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor... But now even the liberty which they had hitherto enjoyed was at an end; for an absolute Ruler had been appointed them, and to His authority all must pay homage. Such were the subtle deceptions that through the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts. {PP 37.1}

In other words, Satan alleges God appointed Jesus arbitrarily; God's law is an imposed list of rules. But the truth is, Christ possessed His position, not by appointment, but by inherent ability of His being. He is God.

There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer's envy and misrepresentation and his claims to equality with Christ had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God; but this had been the same from the beginning. Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer's deceptions.... {PP 38.1}

How many humans are likewise confused and deceived about Christ and God? A battle of ideas about God raged in heaven between loyal angels and deceived angels.

Still the loyal angels urged him [Lucifer] and his sympathizers to submit to God; and they set before them the inevitable result should they refuse: He who had created them could overthrow their power and signally punish their rebellious daring. No angel could successfully oppose the law of God, which was as sacred as Himself. They warned all to close their ears against Lucifer's deceptive reasoning, and urged him and his followers to seek the presence of God without delay and confess the error of questioning His wisdom and authority. {PP 40.2}

Many were disposed to heed this counsel, to repent of their disaffection, and seek to be again received into favor with the Father and His Son. But Lucifer had another deception ready. The mighty revolter now declared that the angels who had united with him had gone too far to return; that he was acquainted with the divine law, and knew that God would not forgive.

How many today declare the same thing, that God will not forgive, unless he receives the blood payment of His Son. This lie is one of Satan's lies from the beginning of the conflict in heaven, which infected the minds of angels, and infects the minds of humans on earth today.



He declared that all who should submit to the authority of Heaven would be stripped of their honor, degraded from their position. For himself, he was determined never again to acknowledge the authority of Christ. The only course remaining for him and his followers, he said, was to assert their liberty, and gain by force the rights which had not been willingly accorded them. {PP 40.3}

So far as Satan himself was concerned, it was true that he had now gone too far to return. But not so with those who had been blinded by his deceptions. To them the counsel and entreaties of the loyal angels opened a door of hope; and had they heeded the warning, they might have broken away from the snare of Satan. {PP 41.1}

Here is it suggested that angels in rebellion against God could have returned to God without a blood payment, without any legal payment being made. It was Lucifer who said that God would not forgive. Today, much of Christianity teaches this lie. God will not forgive unless He receives a blood payment.

- Why was it true that Lucifer had gone too far?
- Does it mean God was so upset with Lucifer that God wouldn't forgive him?
- Or, that Lucifer, by persistent rebellion, had destroyed the faculties that respond to truth and love and there was no way to reach him?

Lucifer was beyond healing!

- And if God didn't need a blood payment for angels, does He need a blood payment for humans?
- Then why was Christ's death necessary, and it absolutely was? Let's keep reading.

But pride, love for their leader, and the desire for unrestricted freedom were permitted to bear sway, and the pleadings of divine love and mercy were finally rejected... {PP 41.1}

The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore God permitted him to demonstrate the nature of his claims, to show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. **His own work must condemn him.** Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked.... {PP 42.2}

- What does it mean "his own work must condemn him"?
- What kind of process is this?
- Is it a court room, with testimony, witnesses, prosecution and defense arguments etc. or is it the evidence and results of the choices and actions themselves being carried to their inevitable conclusion and becoming self evident as they inherently lead to certain results?



This is the outworking of the natural results of deviating from God's design. The entire imposed law construct is a lie, foisted on us by Satan, to confuse us about the divine government and just as angels in heaven were confused, so too people on earth have been confused.

Chapter 79 of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *It Is Finished*, is another historic document to give us insights into how our church founders thought of these issues. Let's go through some of it together and see if it helps us gain insight:

Christ did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and with His parting breath He exclaimed, "It is finished." John 19:30. The battle had been won. His right hand and His holy arm had gotten Him the victory. As a Conqueror He planted His banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? All heaven triumphed in the Saviour's victory. Satan was defeated, and knew that his kingdom was lost. {DA 758.1}

Satan was defeated by Christ's death. Just as Scripture says, "By his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death that is the devil." Heb 2:14

- Why? How? What does it mean?
- What is revealed in this?
- What method is God using to destroy Satan and Satan's kingdom?
- What does it say about God?
- What does it say about Satan?
- How did Jesus conquer? Did Jesus conquer with the exercise of His personal divine power, or by the exercise of His human brain?
- What does this mean?
- What did Jesus achieve?

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory. {DA 758.2}

- How do angels, with unfallen natures, share in Christ's victory?
- What does this mean regarding what Christ was to accomplish?

"All things in heaven and earth are reconciled to Christ at the cross." Col 1:20

Why? Because Satan's war was not a war of physical might and power, but of ideas, focused on distorting God's character in the minds of intelligent beings. Thus, the angels who remained loyal needed clarification, needed truth, needed the questions answered, needed to understand, needed to have the issues settled in their minds. What does this tell us about God, His methods, and the current war on earth? But because of Adam's choice humans needed more from Christ than the angels did.



Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion. {DA 758.3}

- If angels in heaven were deceived, and even the loyal angels were confused, does that inform us of the power of Satanic deception?
- Where is the battleground?
- What is the key to winning the victory? The death of Christ.
- Did the angels need a legal payment? No!
- Did they need the death of Christ? Yes!
- Do we need what the angels needed? Yes, and more of course.
- What more do we need? A new nature, healing of our characters.

Let's see if this is part of the achievement of Christ.

It was a being of wonderful power and glory that had set himself against God. Of Lucifer the Lord says, "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." Ezekiel 28:12. Lucifer had been the covering cherub. He had stood in the light of God's presence. He had been the highest of all created beings, and had been foremost in revealing God's purposes to the universe. After he had sinned, his power to deceive was the more deceptive, and the unveiling of his character was the more difficult, because of the exalted position he had held with the Father. {DA 758.4}

Thoughts? What is the point? Because of his exalted station, because of his years of good service, because of prior truth telling, because of trust he had earned over the years, because he was esteemed and looked up to, because he pretended to be righteous, when he lied it was much more impactful. Is this instructive for us today? What lessons?

- Be careful who you trust
- Always think for yourself
- Don't believe on claims, examine the claims in light of the abundant evidences God has given, which are found in Scripture, Science/nature and Experience
- Remember God's testable laws, law of love, law of liberty etc.

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government.** The Lord's **principles are not** of this order. **His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** {DA 759.1}

What are the powers of God that prevail? Truth and love. What will never be used? Coercive power, the use of force. Then what would it mean if people teach that God will use force to kill His enemies,



even torture them? That the people who teach this still have their minds infected with distortions about God. They need their sanctuary cleansed.

We don't need to hate such people or be derogatory about such people, many of us thought and taught similar things at some point in our journey, why? Because we are all infected with sin, selfishness, lies, misunderstandings. So, when we hear such distortions we need to recognize them as symptoms of the infection and use the divine weapons provided by Christ – truth, love and freedom, which have prevailing power!

It was God's purpose to place things on **an eternal basis of security**, and in the councils of heaven it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government. He had claimed that these were superior to God's principles. **Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, that they might be seen by the heavenly universe.** {DA 759.2}

- How are things placed on an eternal basis of security?
- Why can things not be eternally secure if the war is won by force?
- So, what would be the problem if God uses His power to torture and kill in the end, or burn people for all eternity?

- What method is being used to win the war?
- Is it a court room, reading a record of sins, of charges, of offenses? No, it is Satan himself revealing his methods and what they result in. It is the outworking of the natural result of deviating from God's design.
- What would God have lost if God did not allow Satan time to develop and reveal his principles?
- What are Satan's principles?
 - Lies
 - Coercion
 - Flattery
 - Force
 - Intimidation
 - Death, disease, perversion

Satan led men into sin, and the plan of redemption was put in operation. For four thousand years, Christ was working for man's uplifting, and Satan for his ruin and degradation. And the heavenly universe beheld it all. {DA 759.3}

- What was Christ doing in Old Testament times? Working for man's uplifting.
- What does it mean when some suggest God was punishing sin in the OT?

God, therapeutically intervened throughout the OT in many places, but all His actions were part of the plan to heal and restore. When a doctor cauterizes a cancer he is not torturing, or punishing, but



excising dead and destructive tissue. Likewise, in OT times, God sometimes cauterized festering pockets of moral decay, for the purpose of keeping open the avenue for the Messiah. Yet, even those individuals who were put in the grave by God, are not terminated. Each will still arise to complete their lives by the exercise of their own freewill choices.

When Jesus came into the world, Satan's power was turned against Him. From the time when He appeared as a babe in Bethlehem, the usurper worked to bring about His destruction. In every possible way he sought to prevent Jesus from developing a perfect childhood, a faultless manhood, a holy ministry, and an unblemished sacrifice. But he was defeated. He could not lead Jesus into sin. He could not discourage Him, or drive Him from a work He had come on earth to do. From the desert to Calvary, the storm of Satan's wrath beat upon Him, but the more mercilessly it fell, the more firmly did the Son of God cling to the hand of His Father, and press on in the bloodstained path. All the efforts of Satan to oppress and overcome Him only brought out in a purer light His spotless character... {DA 759.4}

- What did Satan do? Why did he do it?
- Why did Satan want to prevent Christ from developing a perfect childhood?
- When Satan led Herod to try and have baby Jesus killed, why did God intervene to prevent it?
- If sin is a legal problem, and God requires a legal payment, and that payment is the blood of His sinless Son, then why stop it? Jesus was human, on earth, sinless and about to be executed by evil men at the prompting of Satan. So, we would have had a "blood payment."
- Why stop it? Because a blood payment was NEVER needed, NEVER. The idea of a legal blood payment is a lie of Satan. What was needed was for Christ to reveal the truth about God, expose Satan and develop a perfect human character!

Heaven beheld the Victim betrayed into the hands of the murderous mob, and with mockery and violence hurried from one tribunal to another. It heard the sneers of His persecutors because of His lowly birth. It heard the denial with cursing and swearing by one of His best-loved disciples. It saw **the frenzied work of Satan, and his power over the hearts of men.** Oh, fearful scene! the Saviour seized at midnight in Gethsemane, dragged to and fro from palace to judgment hall, arraigned twice before the priests, twice before the Sanhedrin, twice before Pilate, and once before Herod, mocked, scourged, condemned, and led out to be crucified, bearing the heavy burden of the cross, amid the wailing of the daughters of Jerusalem and the jeering of the rabble. {DA 760.1}

Heaven viewed with grief and amazement Christ hanging upon the cross, blood flowing from His wounded temples, and sweat tinged with blood standing upon His brow. From His hands and feet the blood fell, drop by drop, upon the rock drilled for the foot of the cross. The wounds made by the nails gaped as the weight of His body dragged upon His hands. His labored breath grew quick and deep, as His soul panted under the burden of the sins of the world. **All heaven was filled with wonder when the prayer of Christ was offered in the midst of His terrible suffering,—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."** Luke 23:34. **Yet there stood men, formed in the image of God, joining to crush out the life of His only-begotten Son.** What a sight for the heavenly universe! {DA 760.2}



- What is happening in the war?
- What is the purpose of Christ?
- Is Christ working to convince His Father to love us?
- Is Christ working to win His Father's favor as is often taught?
- Is Christ seeking legal means to get His Father's government to pardon us? No, Christ is working to undo the lies of Satan, to expose Satan as a fraud, to vindicate the truth about God's character and to Remedy the fallen condition of humanity.

The principalities and powers of darkness were assembled around the cross, casting the hellish shadow of unbelief into the hearts of men. When the Lord created these beings to stand before His throne, they were beautiful and glorious. Their loveliness and holiness were in accordance with their exalted station. They were enriched with the wisdom of God, and girded with the panoply of heaven. They were Jehovah's ministers. But who could recognize in the fallen angels the glorious seraphim that once ministered in the heavenly courts? {DA 760.3}

Satanic agencies confederated with evil men in leading the people to believe Christ the chief of sinners, and to make Him the object of detestation. Those who mocked Christ as He hung upon the cross were imbued with the spirit of the first great rebel. He filled them with vile and loathsome speeches. He inspired their taunts. But by all this he gained nothing. {DA 760.4}

Could one sin have been found in Christ, had He in one particular yielded to Satan to escape the terrible torture, the enemy of God and man would have triumphed. Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: **for the accuser of our brethren is cast down**, which accused them before our God day and night." Revelation 12:10. {DA 761.1}

Satan was cast down from heaven at the Cross – why? Note the reason and what restricted his access to heaven.

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

Think of the significance – no heavenly beings listen to anything Satan says any more. God doesn't listen, Christ doesn't listen, angels unfallen don't listen. He is restricted. He is cast down. He is cast out of their hearts, affections and sympathies. This is a war of ideas and loyalties and there is no being



in the heavenly universe who will any longer listen to anything Satan has to say. He is not able to stand in heaven and accuse us before the heavenly beings. There is no courtroom scene going on in heaven in which Satan is a prosecuting attorney trying to get us convicted and Jesus is our defense attorney pleading His blood and claiming its legal power to grant us pardon. This is all false, based on Satan's distortion and lies about God and God's law.

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan**; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

Here is Satan's view of God's law. And many church leaders, when I have shown them this have said, "well Satan was right about this." Unbelievably, those who have opposed our ministry have done so by sustaining and supporting Satan to be right, and most of the members of our church don't even notice.

This is the argument of imposed law. But the Creator could do justice how? By revealing the truth, winning us to trust and healing us, fixing what is broken in our hearts and character. This is right, this is just and then it is perfectly proper and in harmony with God's government for us to enter heaven, for we will have been restored into harmony with it. This is what Christ came to achieve for us!

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. **But man was deceived**; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. **The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** {DA 761.5}

Where is our hope? In a knowledge of God's character of love. Not in a legal blood payment. Why? Because it was never a legal problem, it has always been a problem with our actual condition. Sin is deviation from love and trust and a condition out of harmony with how life is built. This requires healing, recreation, restoration, and **of course occurs because God forgives. But His forgiveness precedes Christ's mission to earth, it is not in response to it.**

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. **The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition...**



Why? For the same reason the law of respiration cannot be changed to meet a person who ties weights to their legs and jumps in the ocean. It is the design for life, to change the law WOULD DESTROY ALL LIFE

...God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1}

Sacrificed Christ for man's redemption, healing, saving, note the very next words of what the law requires and what Christ accomplished.

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character**, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."... Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Note what is actually happening, Christ reveals the truth about God, exposes Satan as a fraud, wins us to trust, and cured the condition by developing a perfect character which He imbues to all who trust Him, thus transforming us to be like Him. We are reborn, healed, renewed, recreated in righteousness!

His life stands for earth. He is our head. He is our Adam. He is our champion. He stands for us, not in some legal sense, but in actuality. He is human and He is perfect and sinless. Thus He took His humanity to what Adam was created to be.

The warfare against God's law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. **All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion.** {DA 763.3}

- What kind of law is God's law? Natural, design template for life, intrinsic.
- What kind of law is man's? Imposed, rules without inherent consequence.
- Thus, we must all decide, whose law will we follow?
- How do we see and understand God's law?

There will be but two classes, those who worship the Designer and adhere to the law of love, the design template for life and thus practice presenting truth in love and leaving others free. Or those who adhere to imposed law, and worship the dictator god who inflicts pain, suffering and death for



disobedience, and thus they will use their power to coerce others, as they practice and implement human law to force their religious way.

The character we develop is based on what God we worship, which is impacted by how we see His law. Is God the Designer or Dictator? Thus, SDAs who present the Sabbath as an imposed law, to test obedience, misrepresent the law of God and move people way from salvation.

Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off. **Sin and sinners will perish**, root and branch, (Malachi 4:1),--Satan the root, and his followers the branches. The word will be fulfilled to the prince of evil, "Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; . . . **I will destroy thee, O covering cherub**, from the midst of the stones of fire. . . . Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." Then "the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be;" "they shall be as though they had not been." Ezekiel 28:6-19; Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 16. {DA 763.4}

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. He is "alienated from the life of God." Christ says, "All they that hate Me love death." Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. **God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them.** {DA 764.1}

This is not an arbitrary act, God does not use His power to inflict this. Their destruction is the NATURAL result of what happens when one deviates from the law upon which life is built! Yet, those who have accepted Satan's lie that every sin must be punished, that God's law is imposed, teach that God uses His power to inflict pain suffering and death.

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. **[What did they not understand?]** Had Satan and his host then been left to **reap the full result of their sin**, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was **the inevitable result of sin**. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe. {DA 764.2}

Note how this is described, reaping the full result of sin, the inevitable result of sin. Sin destroys, sin deviates from God's design, sin is the cause of death. Angels would not have understood this originally and what would that have caused? A doubt of God. And what about today? Because of Satan's lies so infecting Christianity about God and His law, many Christians teach that it is not sin that causes death, but God inflicts it to punish for sin. Thus many Christians teach ideas that cause people to doubt God. This is what needs to be cleansed. This is the prophecy of Daniel 8, to cleanse the sanctuary of all these lies and distortions about God.



But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, **the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law.** {DA 764.3}

Thoughts?

MONDAY

The lesson, in paragraph four quotes a section out of Christ's Object Lessons page 167 – "Satan 'is accusing the children of God, and making their case appear as desperate as possible. He presents before the Lord their evil doings and their defects.'"

Is there a trial going on in heaven, or is something else happening? Let's read the context carefully:

The people of God are here represented as a criminal on trial. Joshua, as high priest, is seeking for a blessing for his people, who are in great affliction. **While he is pleading before God, Satan is standing at his right hand as his adversary. He is accusing the children of God, and making their case appear as desperate as possible.** He presents before the Lord their evil doings and their defects. He shows their faults and failures, hoping they will appear of such a character in the eyes of Christ that He will render them no help in their great need. Joshua, as the representative of God's people, stands under condemnation, clothed with filthy garments. **Aware of the sins of his people, he is weighed down with discouragement. Satan is pressing upon his soul a sense of guiltiness that makes him feel almost hopeless.** Yet there he stands as a suppliant, with Satan arrayed against him... {COL 166.4}

Every manifestation of God's power for His people arouses the enmity of Satan. Every time God works in their behalf, Satan with his angels works with renewed vigor to compass their ruin. He is jealous of all who make Christ their strength. His object is to instigate evil, and when he has succeeded, throw all the blame upon the tempted ones. **He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which have dishonored their Redeemer. All this he urges as an argument proving his right to work his will in their destruction. He endeavors to affright their souls with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement can never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield fully to his temptations, and turn from their allegiance to God.** {COL 168.1}

Thoughts?

Do you notice, that in heaven no one pays any mind to Satan's allegations? The only place Satan's allegations have traction, make an impact, is in the minds of human beings. Thus, before the Father,



Christ is pleading to you and me and the Holy Spirit takes Christ's pleas and communicates them to your heart and mind!

Read last paragraph, "In both cases..." what is this paragraph communicating? What law is it predicated upon? Which version of God is it connoting? Is it representing God's character correctly?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "From the very beginning..." Do you hear Satan's allegations from the opening of the controversy in heaven? We read this earlier. The lesson claims that the act of an innocent dying to pay the legal death payment of the guilty is an act of justice.

The truth is, that what they propose is the most unjust act possible in the universe and thus the present God as the most unjust being in the universe. It is just as EGW said Satan hid his rebellion under the pretense of righteousness. These theologians claim this is just, when it is vile, evil and unjust.

It is unjust to execute the innocent in place of the guilty, even if the innocent is willing to take the place of the guilty.

However, it is absolutely just, for love to interpose itself and sacrifice itself to save someone dying of a terminal condition. It is a just act of love to give a kidney to a child dying of kidney failure, to step into harms way to save one, to give up your seat on the life raft for another. When death is a result of deviation from the design protocol for life, it is an act of love and justice for a being to step in and take the place of the terminal party for the purpose of saving the one they love, for the purpose of providing Remedy.

Thus, Christ is our substitute. He took our terminal condition upon Himself and He overcame. He revealed the truth to win us to trust and He developed a perfect human character that He freely provides to all who trust Him. But God did NOT execute Jesus the innocent in our place to satisfy a divine legal penalty.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "As Scripture..." thoughts? To whom is Satan presenting his allegations? Who needs the answer? Who is the one listening?

Read second paragraph, "God's character..." thoughts?

This is correct, the purpose of the records are like medical records, there to exonerate the Creator when allegations of misconduct are made against Him. They are not their to judge or impugn the patient or sinner.

THURSDAY



Read Ezekiel 36:22-27:

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.

²⁴ “ ‘For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Thoughts? Why does giving us a new heart and spirit bring honor to God? For the same reason a patient being cured of cancer brings honor to the doctor who developed the cure.

We are sick, we don't get any glory from our being cured, God the Creator gets the honor and glory for creation and recreation.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 1



Discipleship Lesson 1 1Q 2014

Disciples and Scripture

Before we begin the new quarter, I wanted to follow up on a point from last week's lesson regarding baptism and church membership. We were discussing why don't we baptize into Christ, why do we require people to make all these changes in their lives before they are baptized, rather than bringing them, in baptism to Christ, for the power to overcome in their relationship with Him

We speculated it may be to "protect" the church from those deemed to be unsavory, not yet orthodox enough.

After class, James Erlich mentioned to me that we could solve the problem by baptizing immediately when people are convicted and want to give their lives to Christ, like they did in Bible times, but membership in the church is something achieved by the vote of the church. Thus, not hold the vote for membership until whatever standards, the various church's determine are necessary to constitute spiritual maturity enough to be a member of the church, which would entail voting, ability to hold office etc.

I thought this was "brilliant" why don't we do it this way?

Is it because we recognize on some level that when someone is baptized into Christ they enter the mystical body of Christ and become part of the church invisible, and we want to believe that our denominational church is the repository of all such members?

Could it be our denominationalism has been misunderstood? Could it be that denominations are manifestations of fracturing amongst the body of Christ, as confusion creeps in, and that what should motivate one to join a denomination, is not necessarily the same thing that motivates one to give their heart to Christ? Specifically, can one join a denomination because they identify with the mission of that organization and want to use the gifts Christ has given them to further that mission? So could there be two people, both who have given their lives to Christ and are renewed in heart, but have fields of service, led by the Holy Spirit, in two different denominations?

Should we lead people to Christ and let the Holy Spirit determine which field of labor that person is best suited to pursue, including which denomination?

Would our arguments today over denomination be similar to what Paul wrote to the Corinthians?

My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. ¹² What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Peter"; still another, "I follow Christ."

¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?
1Cor 1:11-13



Are we today doing this? Are we baptized into Luther, Calvin, Knox, White, or are we baptized into Christ?

Which brings us to the **Introduction** to our lesson, Christ's example of making disciples, of the Great Commission, the process whereby we become followers of Jesus.

What is our mission to the world? How would you state our mission? What is the Great Commission?

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." MT 28:19,20

What does this mean? What are we to do? Make followers of all the peoples of the world, "baptizing" meaning what? Simply dunking or sprinkling with water, depending on denomination? Or when Jesus said baptizing He meant something more?

Immersing their minds, hearts, characters, into the character of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – which is what? It is immersing people into the truth of God's character and methods of love, teaching them how God's kingdom of love operates, a surrender of self, dying to selfishness, and living to love, which is then symbolized by the act of water baptism.

Thus one of the founders of our church wrote:

"It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth... **The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**" Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

This is what Christ dealt with 2000 years ago, Isaiah prophesied that darkness covers the people gross darkness the people. John, in John 1, stated that Jesus was the light to lighten all men, but even though the light was shining into the darkness the darkness did not understand it.

What about today? Is there still darkness in the world, in the church, about God's character and methods of love?

Do we promote the kingdom of love by denominationalism, by harping on doctrinal differences, by running down other organizations, by bragging up our own?

Should we be promoting our denomination, or our Savior Jesus Christ?



And then, we can show how our organization is working to further the mission of Christ, the revealing of God's true character and methods to prepare the world for His return, and invite people to join the mission?

One of the devil's tricks is to get groups pitted against each other and arguing over various doctrinal points, all while ignoring the truth about God's character, methods and principles.

Thus 2000 years ago the Sadducees and Pharisees argued constantly over the state of the dead and resurrection, but what understanding of God did they hold? Even if one group was right regarding resurrection did it do them any good? No, they still rejected and crucified Jesus.

This is like many Christians today, so concerned with right doctrine, which day is the Sabbath, what is about the state of the dead, what foods are right to eat, what is right to wear, who is the beast of revelation, what is the mark of the beast, what is the right ending for this prophecy or that prophecy – but what does it matter if they don't know the truth about God and His kingdom of love? Don't take it from me, take it from Paul:

I may be able to speak the languages of human beings and even of angels, but **if I have no love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging bell.** I may have the gift of inspired preaching; I may have all knowledge and understand all secrets; I may have all the faith needed to move mountains—but **if I have no love, I am nothing.** ³I may give away everything I have, and even give up my body to be burnt— **but if I have no love, this does me no good.**

⁴ Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; ⁵love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; ⁶love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. ⁷Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.

⁸ **Love is eternal.** There are inspired messages, but they are temporary; there are gifts of speaking in strange tongues, but they will cease; there is knowledge, but it will pass. ⁹**For our gifts of knowledge and of inspired messages are only partial;** ¹⁰**but when what is perfect comes, then what is partial will disappear.**

¹¹ When I was a child, my speech, feelings, and thinking were all those of a child; now that I have grown up, I have no more use for childish ways. ¹²What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be complete—as complete as God's knowledge of me.

¹³ Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love. (1Cor 13)

Thoughts? What is he saying? That without an experience of God's love, of partaking of the kingdom of love, without being immersed (baptized) into the character of God, God's love, then all right doctrine, prophecy, languages and works are worthless, for we remain outside God's design for life and in a terminal condition.



But someone, who has been renewed in love, may not understand some point of doctrine correctly, but they are healed in the inner man and have entered eternal life. This is what really matters, bringing people back to God's true character and methods of love!

We have so focused on right doctrine we have lost site of righteousness – of actually being right with God. Worse, we have supplanted true righteousness, being renewed in heart to love like God loves, with a false righteousness of legal declaration, without actual transformation.

Am I saying doctrine doesn't matter, or it doesn't matter what we believe if we have love? Of course not! Doctrine does matter in its right place, and what is the right place for right doctrine? Always connected to the truth about God.

If we separate doctrine from God's character and stand them up like toy soldiers, with their proof texts and present them as stand alone ideas, we have created a distorted reality in which the doctrines work to obstruct the greater reality of God's kingdom.

Every doctrine, rightly understood, is valuable in that it leads us to a deeper and more meaningful appreciation of God's kingdom and character of love. This is why we value and share the *Fundamental Focus* pamphlet, because it demonstrates that every doctrine does indeed reveal the truth of God's character of love.

So, what does it mean to make disciples of all nations? To bring all people back to love for God, His methods, principles and love for each other, so that we actually live in harmony with His methods, with Him and each other.

The introduction also asks what method Jesus used to draw people to Him. Thoughts?

- Miracles
 - Miracles were done as an outworking of love to those whose hearts were open to receive truth and love from God
 - But miracles were NOT done as a proof or evidence to win converts or followers or to pass some test of orthodoxy
 - “Some Pharisees came to Jesus and started to argue with him. They wanted to trap him, so they asked him to perform a miracle to show that God approved of him. But Jesus gave a deep groan and said, “Why do the people of this day ask for a miracle? No, I tell you! No such proof will be given to these people!” (MK 8:11,12)
- Compassion and love
- Serving others
- Healing, ministering
- Teaching truths in ways people could understand
- Reasonable and practical truths
- Revealing God to be a God of love
- Disabusing people of contradictory teachings and hypocritical practices



- Overthrowing the idea that one should follow church leaders blindly, but teaching people to think for themselves
- Breaking social convention, talking to women, touching lepers, socializing with tax collectors, talking with prostitutes, seeking to heal rather than seeking to condemn
- His attitude was NOT one of finding faults in order to condemn, but like a physician He loved people and any fault He saw He sought to heal. His frustration grew, just like a physician, when He saw defects He could heal, but people hardened their hearts and wouldn't allow Him to heal.
- Other methods?

SABBATH

Read memory text, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” (John 5:39)

Thoughts?

What is the message of this passage? What is Jesus saying? Does this go back to our discussion on doctrines? If we separate our teaching, prophetic interpretations, doctrines from Jesus we miss the entire point and instead of leading people to Christ for healing, we lead them to a system of rules, burdens, oppressions and discouragements.

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “The narrative of Christ’s...” thoughts?
Did Christ overcome the devil by “quoting” Scripture? Think carefully...

Or did Christ overcome by choosing to live in harmony with the Scripture and practice God’s methods and principles as taught in Scripture, and used the Scripture to convey His purposes and intents of His heart and attitude? In other words, Jesus comprehended and practiced what the Scripture taught, He didn’t merely memorize and quote Scripture when in crisis.

I have had many patients who have come to see me distressed, overwhelmed, frustrated and confused. They have had a crisis in their life, they had been taught to memorize Scripture and then quote it when in crisis, but in this circumstance it didn’t work. Is memorizing and quoting enough? Or is there something more needed for victory?

It is when the meaning, the reality of which the Scripture is pointing is internalized into the heart and mind, resulting in an abiding trust in God, that one gains power for victorious living. Merely quoting a Scripture doesn’t provide that power or that trust.

Many use Scripture almost like magical incantations, with the idea that if they cite the Scripture something supernatural will happen. I have known of people who wouldn’t travel without a Bible in



the car, because they believed the Bible provided supernatural protection. This is superstition. The Bible doesn't provide protection, God provides protection. The Bible is God's inspired Word to lead us to Him. It is in our union with Him that we experience power, growth, healing, wisdom, confidence, love, and the ability to overcome.

Just as with doctrines, if we separate the Scripture from the God of Scripture we experience no benefit. So, is the Scripture valuable, important, absolutely, but only as it leads us to and connects us with Christ.

The lesson recognizes this same point, in the bottom green section it states, "Though it's important to know the Bible, that alone isn't enough. Some of the biggest-named Bible scholars have not even been believing Christians."

MONDAY

Read first paragraph? Thoughts?

What was the difference between Jesus' use of Scripture and that of the Pharisees, or even Satan himself in the wilderness temptation?

Didn't the tempters use Scripture? What is the difference?

- Jesus used Scripture to reveal truth
- Satan used Scripture to obscure truth
- What does this mean about using Scripture? That Scripture can be misused, therefore, quoting Scripture alone is not enough.

Who was the audience to whom Jesus quoted Scripture? Did Jesus quote Scripture to Pilate? How did He deal with Pilate? Why didn't He quote Scripture to Pilate?

The lesson seems to be using Jesus' example of when He did use Scripture to suggest that Scripture is the only means to be used. Is this so? Should we have other means in addition to Scripture, especially for speaking to those who do not yet value or believe in Scripture?

In fact, if one insists on using Scripture and quoting Scripture to those who don't believe in it, will you likely have success? So do we need threads other than Scripture? What are those other threads? From the Scripture (Science/nature Rom 1:20, and experience

Why is appeal to Scripture alone, i.e. sola scriptura NOT sufficient for our arguments?

It doesn't help reach those who currently don't believe it. But also...

- What did those who promoted slavery use? They used Scripture.
- Those who promote polygamy use Scripture
- those who continue to promote inequality of women use Scripture



- those who promote God as the source of inflicted pain and suffering use Scripture
- those who attack homosexuals use Scripture
- those who suggest God must be appeased use Scripture

Am I saying Scripture is unreliable, or uninspired, or faulty in any way? Absolutely not! I have every confidence in God's Word as inspired by God for our salvation – yet that Word can be misused and misapplied, so relying solely on Scripture opens us up to deception.

Did Christ use Scripture – absolutely, but what made His use of it different from those who misused it?

- He understood it – but what allowed Him to understand it properly?
- He knew His Father, His Father's character and methods and then when reading Scripture could understand the right meaning.
- But those who opposed Jesus used Scripture, but read it through a different filter, a different concept of God, a god who they conceived as being intolerant, prejudicial, legalistic, requiring penalties be paid etc. Thus though seeing they did not see and hearing they did not hear.
- We have the same problem today.
- Jesus also used the Integrative-Evidence Based Approach – He did not use Scripture alone or sola scriptura, this idea is a tool of the devil to divide and separate the threads of evidence God has given. We should harmonize the threads, not divide them.
- Those threads are: Scripture, Science, Experience; How did Jesus use all three?
- He clearly quoted Scripture – but also He used nature to illustrate how natural law works constantly stating God's kingdom is like, or works like this. He also had His disciples experience Him, and the evidence of His person. On one occasion saying specifically to Thomas, put your hands in my side, touch me, experience me, have faith, believe based on what you experience.
- Here are a couple of quotes from one of the founders of our church, documenting what method we, as an organization, were to use in determining our beliefs, but we have diverted onto the path of Scripture alone:
 - In the study of the sciences also, we are to obtain a knowledge of the Creator. **All true science is but an interpretation of the handwriting of God in the material world.** Science brings from her research only fresh evidences of the wisdom and power of God. **Rightly understood, both the book of nature and the written word make us acquainted with God** by teaching us something of the wise and beneficent laws through which he works. {CE 66.2}
 - **Rightly understood, both the revelations of science and the experiences of life are in harmony with the testimony of Scripture to the constant working of God in nature.** {Ed 130.3}

This week I received an email from one of our online listeners, Mark Ueek, who sent this quote from Derek Barton, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry:

“God is Truth. There is no incompatibility between science and religion. Both are seeking the same truth. Science shows that God exists.”



Thoughts?

- What is the danger of Scripture alone? Confusion and disintegration into factions, 34,000 different groups claim the Bible supports them.
- What is the danger of science alone – godlessness
- What is the danger of evidence alone – mysticism

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “During Christ’s earthly...” thoughts? Are the people of Christ’s day the only ones who relate to the Scripture in legalistic ways?

The lesson rightly points out in the second paragraph, “Christ-centered religion is rooted in a heart transformation that leads to ethical behavior.”

Thoughts?

Any examples of unethical behavior because people are following the rules they believe come from Scripture?

- Violence against homosexuals
- Shooting abortion doctors and bombing abortion clinics
- What about passing laws forcing people to worship in certain ways, go to church on certain days, be baptized in certain ways, because one believes the Bible describes a particular day or method of baptism as the correct one?
- What about using the power of the state to enforce one’s religious beliefs upon others? What if that belief is to ban abortion?
- What about the church firing a woman from her church employed position because she divorced her husband after years of physical abuse, but without “Biblical” grounds?
- What about disfellowshipping a woman who sits at a hearing in Collegedale for her daughter who is seeking partner benefits for her lesbian partner, even though the mother, never speaks in favor just sits next to her daughter?
 - What did the Pharisees in Christ’s day say about Christ’s association with prostitutes?
 - Who is more Christlike, the mother sitting with her daughter, or the church leaders taking a stand against sin by disfellowshipping the mother from membership in the church?

Where do humans focus? On the outward appearance, on behavior – where does God focus – on the heart. Any examples of people, considered righteous by God, doing behavior that go against the stated rules?

- Rahab – a prostitute who lies but is in the hall of faith
- David – AFTER his sin of adultery and murder, when did sexual relations with Bathsheba no longer constitute sin?



How do you explain these?

It took faith for Rahab to align herself with God. God doesn't applaud her lying, He applauds her choosing to side with Him and act in accordance with her belief in Him to do her best in the situation. She didn't know much, but she acted on what she knew to protect God's people.

The theologians who believe our problem is our "sins" i.e. bad deeds, which need to be punished, have problems with David. He is supposed to have repented, which in the legal model means "to turn away from the sinful behavior." And to them the sin is sexual relationships with Bathsheba, thus they think David, after repenting should turn away from her, not embrace her and place her first amongst his wives.

Yet, God sees it differently, and blesses them with Solomon. What is the difference?

David did repent, and he turned away from SELFISHNESS in his heart. He was no longer motivated to "save self" but to save others and in this case to as far as possible repair the damage he inflicted upon Bathsheba. His actions, by killing her husband, made her a widow, took her livelihood, home, property, name, station, reputation. She would have ended up on the street, homeless. Thus the legal model would have added more damage to her. But, David, having experienced a new heart and right spirit, married her, to as far as possible restore to her what he had taken.

Ethical, Christlike behavior, cannot be distilled down to a list of rules, behaviors, or actions. The situation will frequently determine which is the ethical and appropriate action to take. The appropriate action always heals, restores, saves, in harmony with truth, love and freedom.

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, "Beginning at Moses..." thoughts?

On the road to Emmaus why didn't Christ just appear before them in glory, perform some miracles and declare Himself?

Why must their faith be established upon the evidences of fulfilled Bible prophecy?

Because miracles can be faked, Satan can impersonate Christ, false Messiahs can come and still come today. It is only through the evidence, reasoned out with God and, understood and practiced that we can have confidence in our beliefs.

Do you know the truth about God, His design so much that nothing can shake you from it?
Do miracles determine truth? When a serpent spoke in Eden did that make what the serpent said true?



When Jesus was miraculously transported to the top of the Temple and an angel spoke to Him, did the accompanying miracles make what the angel say true?

If you were suddenly confronted with an angel “of light” and teleported instantly to the top of the capital in Washington DC and given some instruction, along with Scripture quotation, what would you do?

What if you had an angel visit you and give you some gold plates with a new theology on it, what would be the basis upon which you would determine whether this new theology is true or false?

Read bottom green section, thoughts?

Truth brings conviction, this is the burning in the heart, however, there is a false burning, a counterfeit, which is promoted by some.

In that view the burning in the bosom doesn't come from evidence of Scripture being comprehended and the conviction of the soul. No, in that view the mind actually turns away from evidence and truth and instead goes into private prayer and prays long and hard for a feeling, not for evidence, for a feeling a conviction, a burning in the bosom to determine whether something is true or not. But James tells us this method is the way of temptation, the way in which Satan deceives.

When we pray we are to pray for God's Spirit of Truth and Love to enlighten our faculties so that every person “can be fully persuaded in their own mind.” (Rom 14:5). We are not to stop thinking. When you have all evidence on your side, when all truth supports you, then you want people to investigate and examine the evidence. But when you are the father of lies and have no truth, then you want practices that move people with emotions while simultaneously getting them to believe it is pious and holy to ignore the evidence or use ones feelings as the barometer to determine what is true and false.

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “The earliest Christian...” thoughts?

Should we have confidence in Scripture? Absolutely – for what? For all truth necessary for salvation and to understand God's methods and live in harmony with them. It is not the best book for calculus, or piano instruction, or anatomy and physiology, or microbiology etc. To use the Bible for what it was not intended leads to error and opens the Bible up to ridicule, like using the Bible as an astronomy text.

How do we determine what Scripture is reliable for and what it is not?

- Martin Luther didn't include James, Hebrews, Revelation and Jude in his “cannon” but relegated them to the end and said he couldn't find Jesus in them.
- Thomas Jefferson used a razor to remove most of the miracles from the Bible



- Roman Catholics and the original King James Version include the Apocrypha, but most Protestants do not
- Mormons include the Book of Mormon as Scripture
- Muslims include the Koran as Scripture
- Recently some have tried to include the book of Thomas

What determine whether something is “Scripture”?

What standard? What can we utilize?

If we don’t have any knowledge of God at all, and we don’t use reason, don’t think, don’t use evidence, if we surrender our thinking, experience, common sense to others, then we can accept and believe anything, including non-sense and superstitious systems of belief.

FRIDAY

Read Question 1 – “What are some...” thoughts?

I am asked how to I reach people who don’t believe in God, or the Bible? By demonstrating God’s laws in their lives – law of liberty etc. In lectures I present how God’s design permeates all nature and how Scripture teaches this design.

Epigenetics now document that Scripture is more scientifically accurate than Darwin, who postulated random mutations caused finch beaks to be different.

The promise for long life from honoring parents is not an arbitrary use of power to cause the outcome, but the cascade of what happens when we have relationship conflict, activation of inflammatory pathways and destruction of our physical health resulting in early death.

Discuss question 4 – thoughts? Consider what Peter said about Paul’s writings.

Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶ He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.
2Pet 3:15,16

Do we need to be careful quoting texts here and there? Could we actually be quoting Satan if we do this?



Discipleship Lesson 2 1Q 2014

Discipling Through Metaphor

SABBATH

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Is Christianity supposed to be reasonable and logical? Absolutely! Is it consistently presented that way?

This week I was reading an online discussion and some people were discussing penal versus healing models. One person told a metaphor he heard once:

Jesus is knocking on the door to a person's heart and saying, "Let me in."
The person asks, "Why?"
Jesus responds, "So I can save you."
"From what?" the man asks.
Jesus replies, "From what I will do to you if you don't let me in."

This is a great metaphor for penal theologies. Is this reasonable and logical?

What about the idea of an innocent being punished in place of the guilty and calling it justice, is it reasonable and logical?

What about God saying, "I love you, all I want is you to love me, but if you don't I will kill you, after proper torture of course."

What about, "We have faith we don't need evidence." Is that reasonable and logical?

Any examples of ideas that permeate Christianity that don't make sense to you?

Read second paragraph, "Meanwhile, complex..." thoughts?

Do you find these ideas complex? What do you think the source of their complexity is: that the idea and concept itself is complex, or what is currently taught within Christianity about these topics is so convoluted, infected with false ideas, and inherently contradictory that it becomes confusing and appears complex?

Listen to this description of Satan's methods from a book called Patriarchs and Prophets. See if you agree with it.

He [Lucifer] had artfully presented his side of the question, **employing sophistry and fraud to secure his objects**. His power to deceive was very great. By disguising himself in a cloak of falsehood, he had gained an advantage. **All his acts were so clothed with mystery** that it was



difficult to disclose to the angels the true nature of his work...**It was his policy to perplex with subtle arguments concerning the purposes of God. Everything that was simple he shrouded in mystery, and by artful perversion cast doubt upon the plainest statements of Jehovah. And his high position, so closely connected with the divine government, gave greater force to his representations.** {PP 41.3}

What do you hear in this passage? Do you agree that such tactics as sophistry, fraud, subtlety, perversion, mysteriousness are used by Satan? And that such tactics are used to make the simple and plain mysterious and complex?

Would Satan abandon such tactics after being cast out of heaven, or would he continue to use them?

How would such tactics be manifest today? Would Satan have agents in places of high position, appearing to be closely connected to God's government on earth? Who would such people be? Theologians, Pastors, Church leaders, and would their power to deceive be all the greater because of their leadership position?

Let's be balanced: Does Gabriel hold a high position in God's government? Does he deceive or work against God? Absolutely not, so I am not suggesting every theologian, pastor or church leader is an agent of Satan, only that Satan would use such strategies as getting his agents into leadership positions.

Examples from history: Caiaphas, Annas, and many leaders in the Dark Ages etc. Do you think such tactics stopped in the Dark Ages, did it stop with every denomination except ours?

Do you think all the various people in positions of church authority throughout history who worked to misrepresent God were aware they were working for the enemy, or did many, most perhaps, think they were doing God's work?

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' (MT 7:22,23)

So, back to the question of these ideas being complex, are they inherently complex ideas or have they been made to seem complex by, perhaps well meaning, but misguided theologians?

Let's examine these ideas:

How is justification traditionally taught?

From Wikipedia:

Justification, in Christian theology, is God's act of removing the guilt and penalty of sin while at the same time **declaring a sinner righteous through Christ's atoning sacrifice.**



In Protestantism, **righteousness from God is viewed as being credited to the sinner's account** through faith alone without works.

The means of justification is an area of significant difference between Catholics/Eastern Orthodox and Protestants. Broadly speaking, **Catholic and Orthodox Christians distinguish between initial justification, which in their view occurs at baptism**, and permanent justification, accomplished after a lifetime of striving to do God's will. **Most Protestants believe that justification is a singular act in which God declares an unrighteous individual to be righteous, an act made possible because Christ was legally "made sin" while on the cross** (2 Cor 5:21). Justification is granted to all who exercise faith, and that is viewed as a gift from God (unmerited favour) by Lutherans and Calvinists, who use Eph 2:8, as well as Acts 16:14 and Phil 1:29 to support that belief. Catholics and Eastern Orthodox use James 2:14-26, Galatians 5:19-21 and Matthew 19:17 to support **their belief that justification is kept through avoiding grave sins**. Justification is seen by Protestants as being the theological fault line that divided Catholic from Protestant during the Protestant Reformation.

Christ's death and resurrection (triumph over Satan and death) provide justification for believers before God. His righteousness becomes theirs, and **his death becomes an offering to God in their place, to pay for all of their sins**. According to Protestants this justification is by faith alone - not through good deeds - and is a gift from God through Christ. According to **Catholics and Eastern Orthodox justification is a free gift but is gotten through baptism initially and through the sacrament of reconciliation if justification is lost through grave sin**.

So, is this simple or complex? Why? It is actually very simple, if you start from a bedrock of reality – the way the universe actually works, and do not start off from a false assumption regarding God's law.

God's law – is it design law, protocols upon which the Creator constructed life to operate, or imposed law, rules like humans use, with no inherent consequence for breaking?

Daniel prophesied that a little horn power would arise and seek to change God's law – which happened when Constantine converted and Imperial Rome's idea of law infected Christianity. God's law was no longer seen as design protocols, the principles of love functioning in the circle of giving, but rules we must adhere to, which requires the law giver to punish for breaking.

Thus both Protestant and Catholic theologies have a God, which must receive some form of payment from His Son in order to legally pardon, assuage wrath, have sin penalty paid, expiate His vengeance, or justify us legally before God.

The point of argument between the two is not over God's character or law, both Protestants and Catholics agree God requires payment, God inflicts suffering and death, God tortures, God must be paid by the blood of His Son, that sin must be punished by God, that God cannot forgive sin unless He receives something from humanity. The point of argument is what? Protestants say only the blood of



Jesus, which the believer accepts on faith justifies, Catholics say the blood of Jesus plus the sacraments when we fall and fail justifies.

Do you see they are both actually teaching the exact same thing, the exact same view of God, and don't even realize it.

If you start out upon the truth of God's law of love, and realize deviations are incompatible with life, you understand justification is simply setting one right with God, in heart, in trust, in relationship, and righteousness is the experience of actually being right with God, in heart, in character, in method, motive, relationship, and sanctification is the maturing, growing, healing that comes from being set right and abiding daily in one's right relationship and heart attitude with God.

But if you start out with the false law construct, that God operates like a Roman dictator, and imposes law, without inherent consequence, and then He must inflict punishments, justification becomes a legal process whereby one is declared to be righteous, based on some legal event, even though the person is actually not righteous. It has the unjust act of an innocent being tortured and killed in place of the guilty and then calling that just. It becomes convoluted, contradictory and confusing, because it is based on a lie.

But the Bible says:

“Abraham believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous.” (Rom 4:3 GNT)

the word “accepted” in some translations is “credited” others “reckoned.” This is from *Strong's Lexicon*:

3049 λογίζομαι [*logizomai* /log·id·zom·ahee/] v. Middle voice from 3056; TDNT 4:284; TDNTA 536; GK 3357; 41 occurrences; AV translates as “think” nine times, “impute” eight times, “reckon” six times, “count” five times, “account” four times, “suppose” twice, “reason” once, “number” once, and translated miscellaneous five times. **1** to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over. *1a* to take into account, to make an account of. *1a1* metaph. to pass to one's account, to impute. *1a2* a thing is reckoned as or to be something, i.e. as availing for or equivalent to something, as having the like force and weight. *1b* to number among, reckon with. *1c* to reckon or account. **2** to reckon inward, count up or weigh the reasons, to deliberate. **3** by reckoning up all the reasons, to gather or infer. *3a* to consider, take into account, weigh, meditate on. *3b* to suppose, deem, judge. *3c* to determine, purpose, decide. *Additional Information: This word deals with reality. If I “logizomai” or reckon that my bank book has \$25 in it, it has \$25 in it. Otherwise I am deceiving myself. This word refers to facts not suppositions.*¹

When people account something, or reckon something, they are counting up what actually is, what already exists.

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



So, in the case of Abraham, what came first was a change in Abraham's heart, which was naturally "enmity" to God, in a distrusting state, but was changed to a heart that trusted God. Heart change CAME FIRST and then God accounted, reckoned, recognized, stated, agreed, declared the reality of what had already happened in Abraham's heart, that Abraham had been "set right" with God in heart, from distrust to trust, thus Abraham was recognized to be right with God, or righteous.

This is not complex, it is straightforward and simple, the reality of God's law of love, the methods of truth at work to displace lies and win to trust. Yet, theologians have come along and built a confusing pile of distorted ideas founded on Satan's lie about God's law.

Thus, they make God out to be a liar when they have God declaring people righteous when they are not righteous. Penal substitution theology makes God out to create a duplicity, a falsehood. They claim God doesn't see our wickedness, but the righteousness of Christ, which is legally accounted to our records, even though we are actually not righteous in heart and character.

Here is a metaphor: You are sick with the black plague. Because of this you are quarantined and "judged" to be in a terminal condition, unless the disease can be cured. A doctor is coming to examine your case. When he arrives he picks up your chart, but before he does so your older brother, who is perfectly healthy, has replaced your record with his physical examine findings, taking his name off and putting your name on the findings of his exam. Now, when the doctor comes and examines the record he declares you healthy, even though you are still terminal and dying. Note:

- The doctor is being deceived
- The doctor is declaring something to be true which is not true
- The doctor is participating in a fraud and deception along with the older brother
- You the patient are still terminal and dying
- If this wasn't bad enough, in the penal theologies of Christianity, the doctor is unwilling to sign off on the fraud unless He personally receives some payment to do so

This is the grossest and most disgusting portrayal of God. It makes God out to be a fraud, a liar, and in pursuit of some recompense to benefit Himself.

But if one worships Him who made the heaven, earth and seas, the Designer and not the dictator, one realizes justification, is setting people right in heart, character, method and motive with God. Here is from one of the founders of our church:

Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God. He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, **that men might lose the true views of God's character**, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth. **He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was pictured as one who could take



pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. **Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth.** Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature.** {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

The only way to “justify” the only way to make humans right with God, was to take beings whose minds were filled with lies about God, whose characters were dominated by selfishness and 1) present the truth about God in order to destroy the lies and win to trust which is to justify or set right, and 2) provide a new heart and right spirit, write the law of love on the heart and mind, to develop a perfect character that is freely given, reproduced in the heart of all those who trust God. Thus the human species was set right (justified) in the person of Christ who constantly and always had a right relationship with His Father and purged the infection of selfishness and developed a perfect human character. And we as individuals are set right (justified) by Christ when we accept the truth and trust God, and then actually made righteous and transformed by the Holy Spirit taking what Christ achieved and reproducing it in us.

Thus, when God looks at us He does not see our wickedness and sin, not because of some trickery, but because “it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.” We are renewed, reborn, recreated, cleansed within so that we actually love God, His methods, principles and law of love and long to be like Him, grieving over every shortcoming, old habit, selfish motive that remains in this defective body of sin.

So listen to what Paul says in Romans:

²¹ But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. (Rom 3:21-26 NIV)

I purposely quoted the NIV, which uses the most legal sounding language. But interestingly the word for righteous, righteousness, justice, justify, justification in the Greek are all the same basic word, and it simply means to be right, or put right, or set right, or do the right thing.

From my paraphrase:

^{3:21} But now God has revealed, a healthy state of being – a character that is right and perfect in every way, that did not come from the written code, but is exactly what the Scriptures and the



10 Commandments were pointing your minds toward.²² This perfect state of being comes from Christ and is created within us by God when we trust him. Our trust in him is established by the evidence given through Jesus Christ of his supreme trustworthiness. There is no difference amongst any ethnic group,²³ for all humanity is infected with the same disease of distrust, fear and selfishness, and are deformed in character and fall far short of God's glorious ideal for mankind.²⁴ Yet all, who are willing, are healed freely by God's gracious remedy that has been provided by Jesus Christ.²⁵ God presented Jesus as the way and means of restoration. Now, through trust established by the evidence of God's character revealed when Christ died, we may partake of the remedy procured by Christ. God did this to demonstrate he is right and good, because in his forbearance he suspended, for a time, the ultimate consequence of being out of harmony with how he designed life to exist and has been falsely accused of being unfair.²⁶ So, he did it to demonstrate how right and good he is at the present time, so he would be seen as being right when he heals those who trust in Jesus.

Thoughts?

Now, listen to this written in 1902, more than 100 years ago in a periodical called Signs of the Times:

God is omnipotent, omniscient, immutable. He always pursues a straightforward course. **His law is truth--immutable, eternal truth.** His precepts are consistent with His attributes. But Satan makes them appear in a false light. **By perverting them, he seeks to give human beings an unfavorable impression of the Law-giver.** [Attack God's law, and alters how we see the Law-giver. How is the law attacked? Changed from Design law to Imposed law] Throughout his rebellion he has **sought to represent God as an unjust, tyrannical being.** [What does a tyrant do? Makes up rules and imposes them as they see fit.] {ST, July 23, 1902 par. 12}

In the beginning it was Satan's purpose to separate man from God. [How? Lies believed break the circle of love and trust...] And this purpose he has carried out in every age. Constantly he is at work among the children of men. He sways all classes. The same **method of deception**, the same logic, that he used to deceive the holy pair in Eden, he has used in all succeeding ages. **His plan of work has ever been one of deception.** [What method? Lies believed...] **At times he assumes a cloak of piety, purity, and holiness. Often he transforms himself into an angel of light.** [Where will Satan have agents placed?] He has blinded the eyes of men so that they can not see beneath the surface and discern his real purpose. [How? Could it be by complex and confusing theologies?] As a result of Adam's disobedience, every human being is a transgressor of the law, sold under sin. [Why? Born in sin, conceived in iniquity Ps 51, what kind of law?] Unless he repents and is converted, he is under bondage to the law, serving Satan, falling into the deceptions of the enemy, and bearing witness against the precepts of Jehovah. **But by perfect obedience to the requirements of the law, man is justified.** [Who obeyed perfectly? Jesus, as a human, thus humanity, man, was set right with God in the person of Jesus Christ. Why? Because Jesus restored God's design of love back into the humanity He assumed] Only through faith in Christ is such obedience possible. Men may comprehend the spirituality of the law, they may realize its power as a detector of sin, but they are helpless to withstand Satan's power and deceptions, **unless they**



accept the atonement provided for them in the remedial sacrifice of Christ, who is our Atonement--our At-one-ment--with God. [What was the atonement provided for? Not a legal payment, but as a remedy, it was a remedial sacrifice, it remedied, remediated, what was wrong in man that sin caused, and thus when we trust God, we experience renewal of heart so that we are at-one with Him again, through what Christ accomplished in our behalf] {ST, July 23, 1902 par. 13}

Those who believe on Christ and obey His commandments are not under bondage to God's law; for to those who believe and obey, His law is not a law of bondage, but of liberty. [What does bondage to the law mean? How does God's law, if broken, hold one in bondage? Is it a legal condemnation by the ruling authority, or an actual state of being, for which we cannot of ourselves escape or change? A person who violates God's laws of health, and becomes sick, say smokes 2 packs per day and gets COPD, do they experience bondage? Do tight cords hold them where they do not have the liberty that once was theirs? Can they climb stairs, go skiing at altitude, run, walk fast, cut wood, or do any real labor? Are they actually tied down to an oxygen bottle, their liberty restricted? Consider someone who does MDMA, an illegal drug, which if prepared wrong can destroy the dopamine producing cells in the brain and cause a Parkinson's like problem, permanently. Will they be in bondage? Will their liberty be restricted? Which restricts ones liberty more completely and without compromise, a jail cell, a legal condemnation, or inability to move because one had destroyed either their lungs or their brain cells? Penal models of atonement undermine the law of God by representing it as human law, and suggesting what holds us in bondage is legal condemnation and the law enforcement angels from heaven.] Every one who believes on Christ, every one who relies on the keeping power of a risen **Saviour that has suffered the penalty pronounced upon the transgressor**, every one who resists temptation and in the midst of evil copies the pattern given in the Christ-life, will **through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ become a partaker of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. **Every one who by faith obeys God's commandments, will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression.** {ST, July 23, 1902 par. 14} [What is the penalty of unremedied sin? Being let go by God, complete separation from Him. Jesus experienced this on the Cross, "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?" God let Jesus go to experience what Jesus chose, to be our Remedy, to do what was necessary to heal our condition, to love perfectly and purge the infection of fear and selfishness from humanity. Thus He rose again, having cleansed and purified the humanity He assumed. Christ, in His human brain, developed a perfect human character and became the human that God intended Adam originally to become. But of course, Christ was more than Adam, for He is also fully God. And notice, our faith in our reconciling (atoning) sacrifice results in what? Our actual partaking of the divine nature, we are not declared righteous merely, we are regenerated as righteous, and one day we will be fully glorified to be sinless.

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "Isaiah's poetic story..." thoughts?



Are punishment and discipline the same? Do you hear them the same. Do we derive the same connotation from them?

Dictionary definition:

PUNISHMENT

- 1: the act of punishing
- 2: **a:** suffering, pain, or loss that serves as retribution
 b: a penalty inflicted on an offender through judicial procedure
- 3: severe, rough, or disastrous treatment

DISCIPLINE

- 1: punishment
- 2: *obsolete* : instruction
- 3: a field of study
- 4: training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character
- 5 **a:** control gained by enforcing obedience or order
 b: orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior
 c: self-control
- 6: a rule or system of rules governing conduct or activity

So, one can hear discipline as punishment, but do you think they actually mean the same when referring to God?

My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke,
because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. Prov 3:11,12

Read last paragraph, "Jeremiah's parable..." thoughts? So what does the Lord do to those who refuse Him? He eventually releases them to reap what separation from the Lord and His design for life brings.

Examples:

- Snakes in the desert – were they sent of God, or when they rebelled, God withdrew His protection that was keeping the snakes away, and snakes came in, as snakes do?
- Babylonian captivity –

These were disciplines, but what about other actions in the OT?

- The 10 plagues of Egypt?
- Sodom and Gomorrah?
- 185,000 Assyrians?
- The platoons that came to arrest Elijah?

Were these discipline or punishment?



- 10 Plagues – discipline to expose the falsehood of their idols and lead to God
- the other three – neither discipline nor punishment, but therapeutic intervention to keep open the channel for Messiah. Cauterizing a necrotic or cancerous lesion. When one cauterizes a lesion they are not punishing, or disciplining, but working to heal. Without Christ’s arrival, the entire race is lost. Satan is working to shut down the avenue for the Messiah, God worked to keep it open. All those individuals put in the grave will arise again in one of two resurrections. What happened at that time was not the end of their existence.

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read MT 7:24-27:

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Thoughts? What do you understand the metaphor to mean?

Christ illustrated character building by a house built on a rock, against which storm and tempest were powerless, and the house built on the sand, which was swept away. We are living in perilous times. Amidst the changing scenes, **with heresy and false doctrines coming in that will test the faith of all**, the house built on the solid rock cannot be shaken. But when storm and tempest come, the house built on the sand will fall, and great will be the fall of it.

Let us take heed, then, how we build. Let no one build unwisely. The word of God is our only foundation. Every semblance of error will come upon us. **Some of these errors will be very specious and attractive, but if received, they would remove the pillars of the foundation that Christ has established and set up a structure of man's building.** There are those who **seeing, see not, and hearing, hear not**, and under Satan's guidance they prepare false foundations for human minds. {MM 87.2}

Consider the following metaphor, and examine which method will most likely result in building habits or traits of character that will be solid, and less likely to collapse, versus those which can be undone under deception or stress:

Child A is taught by their parent that they are to brush their teeth, because the parent has a rule, and if they don't, the parent will punish. The child never grows to understand any other reason for brushing teeth, other than parental rules, and imposed punishments by parents if the rules are not obeyed.

Child B is taught by their parent, when they are very young, to brush their teeth, because the parent has a rule, and if they don't, the parent will punish. But as the child grows older they



discover that the reason the parent had the rule was because of love to protect the child from violations of the design law, of entropy, that if energy isn't put into the system the system will decay. If they don't brush they will eventually get cavities and lose their teeth. They realize their parents punishments were never the actual punishments for not brushing, but were disciplines designed to protect and prevent the loss of their teeth. They now understand the real purpose for brushing.

Which child, when an adult, will have their teeth brushing built on solid rock, and which will be built on sand? Why?

How does this metaphor apply to Christianity, our understanding of God's law and our obedience to God? What builds our character on solid rock and what constitutes sand?

What false doctrines have come in to test our faith, to erode solid rock? Nothing is more destructive to character than distortions of God's character, and particularly God's law as imposed, which has infected Christianity in the guise of penal theologies. This is part of the wine of Babylon that must be replaced with the truth about God the Designer and His law as the law of love.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "At the same time..." thoughts? The paragraph is referring to the wheat and tares growing up together until the harvest.

Did you find it peculiar that they use judgment that God does as "condemnation" but judgment we do as "discernment"? Do you see again the infection into our theology of the imperial Roman law construct?

The idea that God judges, i.e. finds guilt or innocence and then condemns the guilty, rather than the truth, that God's law is design law, and God judges, or diagnoses perfectly. His judgments are merely the accurate diagnosis of one's condition, example,

- "Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone! (Hos 4:17)
- Or "Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy." (Rev 22:11)

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Christ's ministry..." thoughts? Well said, yes revolutionary, and the weapons were truth, love and freedom. Breaking down the lies and setting minds free.

But, what did Satan do? He counterattacked, the man of sin, set himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be god. How? By infecting Christianity with Satan's view of God's law, thus



altering in the minds of Christians how they conceive of God's character and government. Thus, in the spirit temple is a false god construct set up proclaiming God is like a dictator who inflicts pain and suffering and death for disobedience.

Read last paragraph, "No question..." thoughts? What does this sound like? Does it sound like lack of mercy, the judge doesn't care whether you are ignorant, meant well, etc. He has rules you broke them and he must punish?

Why will ignorance not be an excuse? Deviations from God's design for life are deviations from God's design for life, thus a person who smokes cigarettes ignorantly, believing they help a person live longer and have better health, will still suffer the results of damaged lungs and heart disease.

A person, who prefers selfishness, lies, etc. will still find love and truth hateful, will still experience torment of their own condition when they can no longer hide from who they really are, having never been reborn and transformed to be like Jesus.

Many well meaning Christians will find themselves crying out in pain, we kept the rules, we ate the right foods, we worshipped on the right day, we did miracles in your name, but they never experienced a changed heart. Why? Because they relied on a legal religion and had false security, never believing transformation of the inner man was necessary, just legal pardon.

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, "However they are expressed..." thoughts? The Bible is filled with imagery, metaphor, parable – but we must remember there is an eternal reality to which all this metaphor and imagery points. Are we to remain in symbols, or should we struggle to move past metaphor and symbol to, as far as possible, reality?

Is healing, transformation, regeneration of character, renewal, restoration in Godlikeness metaphor or the reality to which God, through Christ is working?

Then we need to stop calling the healing plan of salvation a metaphor, and lumping it in with all the other actual metaphors like ransom etc. It is not a metaphor, it is the reality to which all the metaphors point.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions.



Discipleship Lesson 3 1Q 2014

Discipleship and Prayer

Announcement: We have transitioned our webcasting to a new online platform and hosting service. Over the last few weeks a few glitches have occurred. Our class is in the Eastern Time Zone but our hosting service is in Mountain Time Zone. Last week this resulted in our online chat room being opened at the wrong time, basically two hours late. We have resolved this now and apologize for the inconvenience to those who were unable to log on last week, which was everyone.

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: “ ‘I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.’ ” (John 17:20,21 NKJV)

Thoughts?

What does this mean? How are we to be one?

What prevents unity, what causes division?

- Lies
- Selfishness
- Pride
- Fear
- Doubt
- Distrust

What is necessary to establish unity? What enables us to be one?

- Truth
- Love
- Freedom

How does truth help establish unity?

What does it mean that Jesus prayed to His Father? Why was Jesus praying if He was fully God? Many use texts like this to draw conclusions that Jesus wasn't fully God. What is the problem with that conclusion?

Jesus lived as a human, and had to overcome as a human, by the exercise of His human brain, while denying use of His personal divine abilities. So, when we read such texts they inform us of Jesus' humanity, but not His divinity.



There are many texts in which the Bible speaks of Jesus' humanity, such as the Father granting, gifting, elevating, etc. the humanity of Jesus, and some erroneously conclude these texts speak of Christ's divinity and thus conclude that Christ is not fully and equally God.

I can understand how this could be confusing, but we must remember what damage we do to the plan of salvation and God's character if we suggest Christ is less than the Father.

There was a quote I intended to read last week from one of the founders of our church, but didn't get to and it speaks of this "oneness" as well. So I thought I would read it today:

God is omnipotent, omniscient, immutable. He always pursues a straightforward course. **His law is truth--immutable, eternal truth. His precepts are consistent with His attributes.** [Meaning He built His universe to run in harmony with His character of love] But Satan makes them appear in a false light. **By perverting them, he seeks to give human beings an unfavorable impression of the Law-giver.** [Attack God's law to alter how we see the Law-giver. How is the law attacked? Changed from Design law to Imposed law and this causes division, breaks down unity as each group has its own interpretation of the legal requirements of God] Throughout his rebellion he has **sought to represent God as an unjust, tyrannical being.** [What does a tyrant do? Makes up rules and imposes them as they see fit.] {ST, July 23, 1902 par. 12}

In the beginning it was Satan's purpose to separate man from God. [How? Lies believed break the circle of love and trust...] And this purpose he has carried out in every age. Constantly he is at work among the children of men. He sways all classes. The same **method of deception**, the same logic, that he used to deceive the holy pair in Eden, he has used in all succeeding ages. **His plan of work has ever been one of deception.** [What method? Lies believed...] **At times he assumes a cloak of piety, purity, and holiness. Often he transforms himself into an angel of light.** [Where will Satan have agents placed?] He has blinded the eyes of men so that they can not see beneath the surface and discern his real purpose. [How? Could it be by complex and confusing theologies?] As a result of Adam's disobedience, every human being is a transgressor of the law, sold under sin. [Why? Born in sin, conceived in iniquity Ps 51, what kind of law?] Unless he repents and is converted, he is under bondage to the law, serving Satan, falling into the deceptions of the enemy, and bearing witness against the precepts of Jehovah. **But by perfect obedience to the requirements of the law, man is justified.** [Who obeyed perfectly? Jesus, as a human, thus humanity, man, was set right with God in the person of Jesus Christ. Why? Because Jesus restored God's design of love back into the humanity He assumed] Only through faith in Christ is such obedience possible. Men may comprehend the spirituality of the law, they may realize its power as a detector of sin, but they are helpless to withstand Satan's power and deceptions, **unless they accept the atonement provided for them in the remedial sacrifice of Christ, who is our Atonement--our At-one-ment--with God.** [What was the atonement provided for? Not a legal payment, but as a remedy, it was a remedial sacrifice, it remedied, remediated, what was wrong in man that sin caused, and thus when we trust God, we experience renewal of heart so that we



are at-one with Him again, through what Christ accomplished in our behalf] {ST, July 23, 1902 par. 13}

Those who believe on Christ and obey His commandments are not under bondage to God's law; for to those who believe and obey, His law is not a law of bondage, but of liberty. [What does bondage to the law mean? How does God's law, if broken, hold one in bondage? Is it a legal condemnation by the ruling authority, or an actual state of being, for which we cannot of ourselves escape or change? A person who violates God's laws of health, and becomes sick, say smokes 2 packs per day and gets COPD, do they experience bondage? Do tight cords hold them where they do not have the liberty that once was theirs? Can they climb stairs, go skiing at altitude, run, walk fast, cut wood, or do any real labor? Are they actually tied down to an oxygen bottle, their liberty restricted? Consider someone who does MDMA, an illegal drug, which if prepared wrong can destroy the dopamine producing cells in the brain and cause a Parkinson's like problem, permanently. Will they be in bondage? Will their liberty be restricted? Which restricts ones liberty more completely and without compromise, a jail cell, a legal condemnation, or inability to move because one had destroyed either their lungs or their brain cells? Penal models of atonement undermine the law of God by representing it as human law, and suggesting what holds us in bondage is legal condemnation and the law enforcement angels from heaven.] Every one who believes on Christ, every one who relies on the keeping power of a risen **Saviour that has suffered the penalty pronounced upon the transgressor**, every one who resists temptation and in the midst of evil copies the pattern given in the Christ-life, will **through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ become a partaker of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. **Every one who by faith obeys God's commandments, will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression.** {ST, July 23, 1902 par. 14} [What is the penalty of unremedied sin? Being let go by God, complete separation from Him. Jesus experienced this on the Cross, "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?" God let Jesus go to experience what Jesus chose, to be our Remedy, to do what was necessary to heal our condition, to love perfectly and purge the infection of fear and selfishness from humanity. Thus He rose again, having cleansed and purified the humanity He assumed. Christ, in His human brain, developed a perfect human character and became the human that God intended Adam originally to become. But of course, Christ was more than Adam, for He is also fully God. And notice, our faith in our reconciling (atoning) sacrifice results in what? Our actual partaking of the divine nature, we are not declared righteous merely, we are regenerated as righteous, and one day we will be fully glorified to be sinless.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Frequently, prayer assumes..." thoughts?

The lesson suggests one way to have our prayers become less self-centered is to engage in intercessory prayer.



What do you understand intercessory prayer to be?

- Who needs the intercessory prayers? And why?
- Does God need someone to pray to Him to encourage Him, persuade Him, convince Him, or somehow induce Him to do some good He would not want of His own accord want to do?
- Then, if God wants to do good anyway, what is the purpose of intercessory prayer?
- Will God violate the freewill of others? Why not? So if a person says to God, leave me alone, get out of my life, I am going to go it alone, will God force Himself into their lives?
- But, if another person says to God, “God, I know my child is choosing to turn away from You, but they don’t really understand. I know you give them freedom to make this choice, but for me will you continue to seek opportunities to reach them.” Does this give God, within the bounds of respecting freedom, an avenue to stay engaged? Any evidence?

Daniel 10:12-14, 20,21:

¹² Then he [an angel] continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the **prince of the Persian** kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then **Michael, one of the chief princes**, came to help me, because I was detained there with the **king of Persia**. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.”

²⁰ So he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to **fight against the prince of Persia**, and when I go, **the prince of Greece** will come; ²¹ but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. **(No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.**

Thoughts?

What is going on here? Daniel has been praying for the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy (see Daniel 9) and the release of the Jews from captivity. 21 days later Gabriel comes and tells him he has been delayed because the prince of Persia has been opposing him, and soon the prince of Greece will join the prince of Persia in opposing him, and the only one to help him is Michael.

What going on? Let’s identify the players involved in the Daniel text above:

Now is the time for judgment on this world; **now the prince of this world will be driven out.**

³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself.” John 12:31,32

- Who is the prince of this world that is being driven out by Christ? Satan
- Then who would be a prince of Persia and Greece? Would they be superior or inferior to the prince of the world? And they oppose Gabriel and Michael and are able to fight these heavenly beings, so what kind of beings must they be?
- These are fallen angels, who have authority in Satan’s order over these regions of the world



Some type of battle between angelic beings is being waged behind the scenes, and our prayers are involved in this battle. Angels appear to respond to our prayers. But what kind of war is this?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Cor 10:3-5

- What kind of war is this?
- What weapons are used?
- Satan is the Father of lies, and his weapons are lies, selfishness, deception, fear, coercion etc.
- So where is the battle ground of the war?
- Are angel beings involved in the war going on in our minds?

Why were no other angels able to help Gabriel other than Michael?

What kind of war is this? What weapons are used?

This is a war of ideas, the weapons of God are truth, love, freedom which oppose lies, deceit, selfishness, and coercion.

Lucifer, prior to his fall, was the covering cherub, a light bearer. So, how powerful and effective are Satan's lies likely to be? What kind of weapon is necessary to destroy such lies? Truth!

Gabriel took Lucifer's place, the implication is that Gabriel is now the highest created being in the army of truth. He would be the created being with the greatest breadth, depth, and ability to wield the sword of truth, which combats the weapons of Satan, IN THE MINDS of humans. The only One in heaven more capable than Gabriel would be who? Jesus, or in His preincarnate form Michael, the Divine Son of God, fully God, the source of all truth and light. Thus, the only one to help Gabriel is Michael. (Remember Michael is not a created being, but fully divine)

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6

Thoughts?

So, Daniel is praying for the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy, the release of the Jews to return to the promised land. This requires the human ruler to pronounce it. Satan's agencies, the prince of Persia, is working through his means, consider the various people who tricked Nebuchadnezzar to set up the idol in order to trap the three worthies, or those who tricked Darius with to trap Daniel and the lion's den. Thus, Satan's agencies are working to bias Darius and give his false reasons to deny the release. Gabriel and Michael are on the scene to provide truth, love, and promote freedom, to offset the lies and allow Darius the freedom to choose rightly.



So, what does intercession do? It provides freedom, protection from evil, counterbalance to Satanic ideas, desires, which enables a person the ability to choose for themselves. Without the intercessions of Christ in our hearts and minds, we would not be able to conceive a good thought, choose a healthy choice or in any other way break free from Satan's power.

Here is a perspective from one of the founders of our church:

Christ desires His followers to reveal in their **lives this same character. In His intercessory prayer for His disciples He declared: "The glory [character] which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me"** (John 17:22, 23). {Amazing Grace 322.4}

Today it is still His purpose to sanctify and cleanse His church ". . . that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing . . ." (Ephesians 5:26, 27). **No greater gift than the character that He revealed, can Christ ask His Father to bestow upon those who believe on Him.** What largeness there is in His request! What fullness of grace every follower of Christ has the privilege of receiving!. . . O that we might more fully appreciate the honor Christ confers upon us! By wearing His yoke and learning of Him, we become like Him in aspiration, in meekness and lowliness, in fragrance of character. {AG 322.5}

What is Christ's prayer of intercession? For what is Christ praying in our behalf? For our healing and transformation to be like Him!

Any examples in Scripture of people engaged in intercessory prayer?

- Moses, people of Israel – note concerned for the people and God's reputation
- Abraham, Sodom – note concerned for the people and God's reputation
- Daniel – concerned for the people and God's reputation
- Jesus – concerned for us and our knowledge of God and unity with God
- Others?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Think through what prayer really is..." thoughts?

What does this paragraph say to you? How do you hear it? What is implied?

What does it mean, "sinful beings worthy of death?"

Which way is it?



- A child has disobeyed their parent, who happens to be the judge and executioner of their jurisdiction, and the child is currently being held on death row, awaiting their sentence of death, but they have a radio where they can talk to their father.
- A child has disobeyed their parent and went caving where their parent told them not to go, and while in the cave it began to rain very hard, and water has risen in a stream in the cave trapping the child, as the water continues to rise it is only a short while and the child will be drowned, but the child has a radio they can talk with their parent.

Why is the child in the first scenario worthy of death?

Why is the child in the second scenario worthy of death?

If the child believed that the father was required by law and justice to execute them, would that increase their desire to talk with him? And if they did, perhaps out of fear and desperation talk to their father, what would they likely say?

If the child believed their situation was what condemned them, and though it resulted from disobedience, and they knew their father was crying longing to rescue them, would they want to talk to him? And if they did what would they likely say?

When we talk about prayer, what it really is, does our view of God affect it?

If we hold to a god who is the source of death, a god who is required to punish, a god who needs some other being to stand between us in order to absorb His wrath etc., and we do still pray to this god, will our prayers be affected by this conception of god?

How do prayers get impacted when we are afraid of God and believe His agenda is legal justice and punishment of sin?

- Are we afraid?
- Do we pray to the Father or to Jesus more often? Who did Jesus pray to? Did He tell us to pray like He did? Do penal theologies undermine our willingness to pray to God, and thus we pray more often to Jesus, or some even pray to Mary and the saints because they want more beings between them and God?
- Do we pray for ourselves more, for forgiveness, for pardon, for avoidance of punishment?
- Do we make deals with God, “I promise I will never do this again, please God just...” “God if you don’t do this then I will never speak to you again.” “God if you let me do this then I will do that for you...”
- Do we claim Bible promises as a way to hold God to it? “God you promised that if...”
- Do we pray the blood of Jesus to the Father, seeking to influence the Father with the blood of His Son? “Father, I don’t come before you on my own, I come by the mighty blood of Jesus, who has paid my sin and given me the right to come boldly before you...”
- Consider how the 450 prophets of Baal prayed? They prayed and prayed, but for what, with what mindset? Did they come with hearts that trusted, or with offerings to influence?



- Consider how the publicans and Pharisees prayed and prayed, but with what mindset and for what?

Do our prayers change when we come to realize that God is just like Jesus, that He is for us, on our side, giving everything He has for our salvation and redemption, a God who never needed convincing to do what is best for us, a being who set out to save us before we even knew we needed to be saved. If we view God like this do our prayers change? How?

- Instead of being afraid we move toward thankfulness
- Instead of focusing on self we meditate on Him
- We move away from insecurity and uncertainty to love and admiration
- We bring our concerns to our Father confident that He is for us, wants to know the issues of our hearts, longs for our good, will always listen, always understand, always forgive, always intervene with what is for our eternal best good, including if necessary, loving discipline, but He would much prefer such discipline would never be needed.
- We come to know He longs for us to be with Him infinitely more than we long for Him to be with us
- As we begin to appreciate His true self we begin to grieve at how little we have loved Him, how little we have spent time with Him, how little of ourselves we have actually returned to Him, how little of our hearts are truly dedicated to Him, and we tell Him of our sorrow, “Father I am so sorry.” And we, in our mind’s eye, see Him smile in love and reach out and like the prodigal’s father, pull us in for a big hug.

Does our conception of God make a difference in what prayer is?

Read fourth paragraph, “Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.”

Thoughts? Isn’t this beautifully stated?

Remember what Jesus said to His disciples in John 15:15:

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Can you talk to someone as a friend, if you live in fear that that person is out to kill you?

What is the essence of friendship? Love, trust and understanding! Friends are for each other. Friends know each other, understand each other, care for each other, want what is best for each other, love each other and trust each other.



In our case, we are imperfect, so human friends may fall short, may make mistakes, but such mistakes are not purposeful betrayals. A friend who lets a friend down is grieved, even before the friend knows about it. When we let God down, if we are His friend, we grieve because we have let Him down. We are sad in our hearts and we go to our heavenly Friend, tearful at times, and talk to Him, “Lord I am so sorry. I blew it. I am so weak. I want to never let you down, but sometimes the good I want to do, I don’t do it and the things I don’t want to do I find myself doing. I am so sorry...”

And Jesus responds by saying, “I know your heart is willing but your flesh is weak. I know you are for me. You just need more time with me, practicing choosing the right. Don’t worry, our friendship hasn’t changed. The only thing that will change our friendship is if you close your heart to me and stop coming to me when you make mistakes.”

But, if we are not friends, if we are instead servants, then we fear what the master will do to us when we make mistakes. Instead of being sad, we are afraid of the punishment, so we seek to get our mistakes covered by the blood of His Son, or our punishment placed on Jesus and be sure the Father punishes Jesus for our mistake, or get the record books erased from any record of our mistake, or get Jesus to hide us from the Father so the Father won’t know about our mistakes.

Which type of conversation do you think God wants to have with us, that of servants or friends?

If you have never read the book by Graham Maxwell, *Servants or Friends* I highly recommend it to you. Graham does a masterful job of helping people see God in His true light, a God of consummate love and grace, who longs for His relationship with His children to be restored, and for us to grow up beyond just sons and daughters of God, to be also His understanding friends.

Think how our prayers change from focusing on ourselves to God’s greater purpose when we know and understand Him.

- Remember how David prayed to be able to build a house for God
- Remember how Daniel prayed for Israel, for the fulfillment of God’s purpose
- Remember how Moses and Abraham prayed for God’s reputation
- Remember how Jesus prayed that God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Do you have a vision of what God is trying to accomplish? Do your prayers go beyond our safety, our earthly needs (which are good and proper to talk with God about), but do we go beyond this and also talk to Him about His desires and longings? Do we pray for greater opportunities to fulfill His purposes? Do we ask God for enabling to represent Him, for resources, skills, abilities to take a message forward to enlighten the world?

Do we ever talk with God and let Him know we are sorry for the pain and suffering He endures every day as He looks upon this sin sick world? Do we empathize with Him and tell Him, that we would love to shield Him from the agony He must endure, that if we could we would? Do you think such prayers are appropriate and proper?



TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Prayer miraculously...” thoughts?

If prayer is spiritual adhesive, if it bonds us to God, then is it critical that we are praying to the “right” God?

It is enough to end our prayers with, “in Jesus’ name”?

Can a person pray to “Jesus” or to the “Father” and actually be praying to a false god? If so, how?

Could a person pray to a deity, with a different salutation (something other than Jesus or Heavenly Father) and be praying to the true God?

What makes the difference? The kind of God one believes in and the motives of the heart.

In C.S. Lewis’ last book of the Narnia series Lewis describes a Calormene soldier named Emeth and his encounter with Aslan the lion. Emeth was a worshipper of Tash, and as a result was terrified when he came face to face with Aslan. This is that encounter from the book:

I fell at his feet and thought surely this is the hour of death, for the Lion will know that I have served Tash all my days and not him.

But Aslan’s response?

Son thou art welcome. But I said, alas Lord I am no son of thine but the servant of Tash. He answered, Child all the service thou hast done to Tash I account as service done to me.

I questioned the Glorious One: Lord, is it then true that thou and Tash are one? The Lion growled and said, It is false. Not because he and I are one, but because we are opposites, I take to me the services which thou hast done to him. For I and he are of such different kinds that no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him. Therefore if any man swear by Tash and keep his oath for the oath’s sake, it is by me that he has truly sworn, though he know it not, and it is I who reward him. And if any man do a cruelty in my name, then, though he says the name Aslan, it is Tash whom he serves and by Tash his deed is accepted”.

Emeth questions once more:

Lord, I have been seeking Tash all my days.

Beloved, said the Glorious One, unless thy desire had been for me thou shouldst not have sought so long and so truly. For all find what they truly seek.



Thoughts? Do you agree with this assessment? If a person prayed to Buddha their entire life, but lived in harmony with God's methods, having the right conception of God's principles, methods, but not knowing about Jesus, would God take all of that as service to Him, would such a person be saved?

If a person prayed to Jesus their entire life, but viewed God as punitive, severe, and thus they practiced such methods toward others, though they claimed the blood of Jesus, they would coerce and pressure others to bend toward their way, could they actually be praying to Satan?

This is from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, **but they have cherished His principles.** Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even **among the heathen** are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. **Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish.** Though ignorant of the written law of God, **they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.** {DA 638.2}

Thoughts? Does it matter to whom we pray? Is it the salutation that matters the most, or the character of the one to whom we pray?

Here is from Paul in the NT:

For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, **do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves,** even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since **they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts,** their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) Rom 2:13-15

What is the New Covenant?

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. **I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they will be my people. Heb 8:10

So, if a person has the law written on their heart, how did it get there? Who did the writing? The Holy Spirit. So, is Paul saying a person can have the law of God written on their heart without ever having the Scripture presented to them, without ever going through water baptism, without ever partaking communion, without ever attending church, without ever paying tithe, without ever claiming the blood of Jesus for their sins? Is Paul really saying this?

What would this say about God and His law?



That God is love and His law is an expression of His character of love, the protocols of life.

- It doesn't matter what one calls oxygen as long as one breathes it
- It doesn't matter what one calls water as long as one drinks it
- It doesn't matter what one calls bread as long as one eats it
- A rose by any other name is just as sweet
- The true God, by any other name is just as beautiful and true
- But, also, it doesn't matter what one calls cyanide it is just as deadly

So, the point, when we understand God's law as the protocols of life, then what label we put on Him doesn't matter, what matters is whether we actually know Him, partake of Him, internalize His methods and principles into the heart. This is Design law, not imposed law.

But, if we have penal views, if we have imposed laws then it can't be like this. In that view we must go through the proper rituals, be baptized by the proper authorized representatives, have the proper incantations spoken above us as we are baptized, ensure we ask forgiveness and claim the blood of Jesus as our legal penalty for each and every individual act of sin. If we don't do this, then we can't be legally saved – or so the false gospel teaches.

The true God is our Creator, our Designer, and He knows we are defective, deviant from the design and in a terminal condition and He has worked through Christ to provide Remedy to heal us.

He isn't concerned if we call the Remedy:

- Jesus
- Joshua
- Yohua
- Immanuel
- El-Shaddai
- Elohim
- El
- Rose of Sharon
- Lilly of the Valley
- Bright and Morning Star
- King, Lord, Master, Sovereign, Ruler, Creator, Designer, Teacher, Heavenly Physician, Father, Daddy, Papa or any other name

He is concerned with whether we actually partake the Remedy, whether we partake the truth about God as revealed by Jesus and trust Him and open the heart to the Holy Spirit for healing and transformation!

What do we do with the passages that no one comes to the Father except through Christ and there is no other name under heaven whereby men can be saved?

Who is the member of the Godhead through whom all things were made? Jesus



And, Scripture says that God's divine nature are seen in what He has made, (Rom 1:20) so if someone comes to know God through seeing God's methods in nature, who is the one who put that lesson into nature? Who wrote it there? Jesus, so they still come through Jesus.

And when they are won to trust through the evidence Jesus provided, whether in Scripture or nature, from where does the healing remedy come that the Spirit applies? In other words, how does the divine nature get back into humanity? Who did that? Jesus! Jesus is still the healing Remedy, the pattern, the connecting link, the conduit through which God's character is reproduced into the heart of all the saved, whether they have heard the name "Jesus" or not.

A person doesn't have to know what penicillin is, nor have heard the name "penicillin" to benefit from taking it.

WEDNESDAY

Third paragraph states, "Jesus could effectively intercede on His disciples' behalf because He was actively engaged in their lives, thoroughly understood them, and passionately desired their good. Effective intercession today demands nothing less."

Thoughts?

When you hear intercession what comes to mind? What does it entail?

Who needs the intercession to influence them to cooperate with the plan of salvation?

Does God need to be interceded with in order to influence Him to be positively involved in our salvation?

Do we need to be interceded with in order to influence us to be positively involved in our own salvation and the salvation of others?

So, when we hear of intercessory prayer is it ever to influence God to be positive in His desire, willingness or attitude to help?

Then what is it for?

THURSDAY

The second paragraph, speaking of the Apostles states, "Frequently their payers assumed the form of intercession. They prayed for government leaders, fellow believers, and, generally speaking, everyone!"



Thoughts about this?

So, could this be a form of intercession – praying that God would give true wisdom in decision making to government officials who don't acknowledge Him and don't seek His wisdom in their decision-making?

With your prayers, might God send an angel to provide insight, perspectives, wisdom, discernment to an individual who might not otherwise receive that special help because they themselves are simply not seeking for it?

In researching I came across this description and found it quite interesting:

I was shown that the advocates of truth should not seek discussions. And whenever it is necessary for the advancement of the cause of truth and the glory of God that an opponent be met, how carefully and with what humility should they go into the conflict. With heart-searching, confession of sin, and earnest prayer, and often fasting for a time, they should entreat that God would especially help them and give His saving, precious truth a glorious victory, that error might appear in its true deformity and its advocates be completely discomfited. Those who battle for the truth, against its opposers, should realize that they are not meeting merely men, but that they are contending with Satan and his angels, who are determined that error and darkness shall retain the field and the truth be covered up with error. **As error is most in accordance with the natural heart, it is taken for granted to be clear.** Men who are at ease love error and darkness, and are unwilling to be reformed by the truth. They do not love to come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved. {1T 624.2}

If those who stand in vindication of the truth, trust to the weight of argument, with but a feeble reliance upon God, and thus meet their opponents, nothing will be gained on the side of truth, but there will be a decided loss. Unless there is an evident victory in favor of truth, the matter is left worse than before the conflict. Those who might formerly have had convictions in regard to the truth set their minds at rest and decide in favor of error, because in their darkened state they cannot perceive that the truth had the advantage. These last two discussions did but little to advance the cause of God, and it would have been better had they not occurred. Brother F did not engage in them with a spirit of self-abasement and a firm reliance upon God. He was puffed up by the enemy and had a spirit of self-sufficiency and confidence not becoming a humble servant of Christ. He had on his own armor, not the armor of God. {1T 624.3}

Brother F, God had provided you with a laborer of deep experience, the ablest in the field. He was one who had been acquainted in his own experience with the wiles of Satan, and who had passed through most intense mental anguish. He had been permitted in the all-wise providence of God to feel the heat of the refining furnace and had there learned that every refuge but God would fail and every prop upon which he could lean for support would prove but a broken reed. You should have realized that Brother Andrews had as deep an interest in the discussion as yourself, and you should have listened in the spirit of humility to his counsel and profited by his instructions. But Satan had an object to gain here, to defeat the purpose of God, and he



stepped in to take possession of your mind and thereby thwart the work of God. **You rushed into battle in your own strength, and angels left you to carry it on.** But God in mercy to His cause would not suffer the enemies of His truth to obtain a decided victory, and in answer to the earnest, agonizing prayers of His servant, angels came to the rescue. Instead of an utter failure there was a partial victory, that the enemies of truth might not exult over the believers. But nothing was gained by that effort, when there might have been a glorious triumph of truth over error. There were two of the ablest advocates of truth by your side; three men, with the strength of truth, to stand against one man who was seeking to cover up truth with error. In God you could have been a host, had you entered the conflict right. **Your self-sufficiency caused it to be almost an entire failure.** {1T 625.1}

Never should you enter a discussion where so much is at stake, relying upon your aptness to handle strong arguments. If it cannot be well avoided, enter the conflict, but **enter upon it with firm trust in God and in the spirit of humility, in the spirit of Jesus,** who has bidden you learn of Him, who is meek and lowly in heart. And then in order to glorify God and exemplify the character of Christ, you should never take unlawful advantage of your opponent. Lay aside sarcasm and playing upon words. **Remember that you are in a combat with Satan and his angels, as well as with the man.** He who overcame Satan in heaven and vanquished the fallen foe and expelled him from heaven, and who died to redeem fallen man from his power, when at the grave of Moses, disputing about his body, durst not bring against Satan a railing accusation, but said: "The Lord rebuke thee." {1T 626.1}

FRIDAY

Read and discuss first three questions



Lesson 4: January 18 – 24

Discipling Children

As I was looking for specific texts and quotations to illustrate the points I wanted to make this week, I came across this statement.

“The student of the Bible should be taught to approach it in the spirit of a learner. We are to search its pages, not for proof to sustain our opinions, but in order to know what God says.”
Education pg 189.1

What is the difference between disciple, discipline, discipling, and disciplining? My spell checker did not recognize the word.

I am the wrong person to speak to this subject

- Absent father for many years
- My presence in Chattanooga is in large part due to the decisions that were made in regard to this topic.
- To a large degree, the shaping of our children’s lives is due to the steady influence of their mother.

What is the age of the class members?

- Do any have children currently under the age of 16?
- This is not a time to gang up on the few people in the room who do have small children
 - Rally around them and encourage them in many ways that we have failed
- If there are few people in here that have young children, why study this class topic?
 - How can we use the information we are learning in our Bible study this week?
 - Our grand children
 - “others”, but word of warning
 - most parents are hostile to outside influence in the raising of their children
- The children of our church
 - By our presence here, we are not in children’s divisions helping out, and unless you are a part, you are not part of the solution.
 - encourage emphasis of church programs
 - mentoring programs in the roles of the church, occupation, life.
 - Growing up, all my contacts with orthopaedic surgeons were with people who did not have a Christian outlook
 - I did not think it was possible to be a Christian orthopaedic surgeon until shown by Dr Forlidas
- We associate with others of like age and interests



- Limits the impact that this class has on other segments of the world
- We have to be intentional to spread our outreach to others with the message God's character and love of all.
- We learn something of our Heavenly Father and His interest in us as His children.
- Members of this class, if they are to have influence, will have to be actively searching for friends and contacts outside of this class.
 - That is true whether we are talking about discipling children or any other age group

Discipling children: what will happen if we get this wrong? Will God have to punish you for your mistakes

SATURDAY

Memory Text: Mat 21:16 GW

They said to him, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" Jesus replied, "Yes, I do. Have you never read, 'From the mouths of little children and infants, you have created praise?'"

How do we evangelize children?

- Is it appropriate to do so?
- Who is responsible for a child's eternal destiny?
- Is there a group of people that are more important for ministry than others?
 - What is that group?
 - Is there an emphasis that needs to be applied to a particular audience?
 - Should we "target" audiences or specific groups of people?
 - Mat 28:18-20 GW When Jesus came near, he spoke to them. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) So wherever you go, make disciples of all nations: Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (20) Teach them to do everything I have commanded you. "And remember that I am always with you until the end of time."
- Is there a "market" here? If so what is it?
- Did Jesus target audiences?
 - Did he use the same tactic with the Woman-at-the-Well as with Nicodemus?

SUNDAY

A couple statements about wrath:

Read first paragraph of Sunday's lesson. Ends with "Truly, the day of wrath must come."

The third paragraph of Wednesday's lesson, in talking about the tragedy of criminal acts against



children, including those that happen within the confines of the church says: *“Criminal acts against children - especially during church-sponsored activities- can destroy a child’s confidence about the church and, usually, about the God of the church **What wrath must justly await those who perpetrate such actions and those who protect the perpetrators.**”*

Why? Must wrath come?

- Is this an imposed penalty by a righteous God?
- As I heard this week on the radio: “Every sin comes with a requirement that must be punished.”
- The day of wrath will come, not because it is decreed, but the universe was made that way.
- You grow what you plant.
- How well your plants grow, depends on how well you take care of what you plant.
- The second law of thermodynamics applies to more than a campfire.
- Sometimes even a well tended gardener experiences blight.
-

Read second paragraph *“Under spiritual leadership, Israelites greatly valued their offspring.”*

- What do we/our societies sacrifice to our gods?
 - That which we most highly value: whatever it is
 - What we think is important
 - If truly we believe something to be important, everything that is of lesser value than that supreme entity will be sacrificed to that “god”
- By sacrificing their children, people do not signify how much they value their children, but rather what kind of God they worship.
 - Many Christians sacrifice their children’s future, identities, self confidence, independence, ability for self control to a god that is either controlling and demanding or is unconcerned and inattentive to detail or directions.
 - We are just as wrong if we serve a
 - demanding, coercive god that does not respect personal freedom’s
 - a god that doesn’t care what we do and or how we treat ourselves or our neighbors as long as we provide him with the correct payment.
 - a god that makes up laws to his best interest and enforces them to please himself

For many years, I thought the highest ideal was being a “Christian physician” and I sacrificed everything else to that false god, including my children.

Read the highlighted box at the bottom of the screen

It is not just those “corrupted, evil and degraded people” who hurt their children.

Jeremiah 17:9 GW "The human mind is the most deceitful of all things. It is incurable. No one can understand how deceitful it is.



We are all damaged goods. It is only by God's graciousness, that we may be healed and live for Him.

MONDAY

Read the first paragraph

Would God have known what it was like to be a child, if Christ had not gone through childhood.
Did God 'learn' something by Christ being a human?

Isa 53:11 God's Word "He will see and be satisfied because of his suffering. My righteous servant will acquit many people because of what he has learned through suffering. He will carry their sins as a burden.

Did Christ go back to the Trinity and say: "You just don't know what it is like down there. Give them some slack."

Does the human Jesus have more 'pull' with the Trinity than the pre-incarnate God-the-Son have before incarnation?

What was the purpose of Christ going through childhood?

He would not have been human if He had not.

He would not have "developed a perfect character" which we needed for our salvation, for correction of our own.

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What scriptural helps do we have? Also compare with Romans 5:18, 19

Read Luke 2:40-52 - story of "lost in temple three days" at time of Passover.

Luke 2:52 KJV And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

What does that word 'stature' mean?

Some Greek lexicons: "of the same age, mature, maturity, :synonyms: age, life, life's span, stature.



Echoed in God's Word Translation:

Verse 52: God's Word Translation Luke 2:52 *Jesus grew in wisdom and maturity. He gained favor from God and people.*

- Like people say: "He grew up"
- He grew up in Nazareth
- "Can anything good come out of Nazareth"
- We chose a 'good' town to raise our children
- So did Lot
- Our town: Asheville NC
 - The Good Things
 - Large number of SDA churches
 - Four SDA elementary schools
 - Two SDA high schools
 - A relatively large Christian medical community
 - There were some aspects of the town that were demon possessed.
 - If you are where God has placed you, He can help you raise God-centered children.
 - The parents need to be God-centered themselves.
 - The parents should create a heavenly atmosphere for their children, wherever they live
 - Christ did not have special advantage in where He was raised

TUESDAY

The Bible readings are four stories of Christ healing children:

- Raising little girl from the dead
- Healing the Syrophenician woman's daughter
- The story of the man with the seizing son.
- The nobleman from Capernaum's son

The main points:

- Each child was brought to the attention of Christ by a desperate parent
- He healed them all
- Why does that not happen now? Our questions of anguish at the loss of a child.
- Mourning physical death and observing spiritual decay may be equally painful.
- We must cling to our loving God.

The tragedy of death of a child

The tragedy of a wayward child

God has known the agony of both!

WEDNESDAY

Interesting statements:



First sentence of paragraph #2:

“Modern disciplinarians need to learn another lesson: Children need never leave their childlike dependency behind.”

Galatians 5:22 - 23 GW “But the spiritual nature produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, and selfcontrol. There are no laws against things like that.”

To a Physician Bearing Large Responsibility
“Elmshaven,” Sanitarium, Cal.,
August 6, 1902.

My Dear Brother,

“You regard too lightly the sacred truth for this time. You are not, in all things, walking in the light that God has sent you. Beware lest you confederate with unbelievers, accepting them as your counselors, and following their worldly policy; for this is dishonoring to God. The less you expect from the world, the less attention you pay to its flattery, the safer you will be and the surer of securing salvation. The less dependency you place in men who are wise in their own conceit, the better will be your standing before God. There is no safety in trusting in men who do not honor the Lord, who disregard his holy law. The less we expect of such men, whether of temporal help or inspiring example, the less bitter will be our disappointment. {SpTB06 35.2}

And he who depends on his own strength leans on a broken reed. Put your trust in the Lord. Wait patiently for him, and he will cause his name to be magnified. {SpTB06 36.1}

The Lord encouraged you, not because your ways had been perfect in his sight, but because he would not permit those who were opposing a good work to carry out their own ideas and plans, to the injury of his cause. {SpTB06 36.2}

You are taking honor to yourself. You are in danger of placing yourself where God should be. Unless you change, the Lord cannot sustain you in your exalted position of sacred responsibility. The Lord is proving you. Because it is more convenient, you have mixed with the truth that God commanded you to keep pure and holy, the very principles he forbade you to cherish. The principles of truth and righteousness have been turned aside. Unless you depend continually upon God, truth is no safer in your hands than in the hands of those whom you supposed to be your enemies. Some of these are as righteous as you are in practice. Had you made straight paths for your feet, God would have delighted to co-operate with you. At the last General Conference you stood on vantage ground. God called upon you to take a higher stand. But you misinterpreted his purposes. {SpTB06 36.4}



Those who are connected with Christ, the chief worker, will represent his character in all their work. God is calling men, “Come to me as my helpers in the performance of my work.” Righteousness and truth are the habitation of this throne. No man can execute his will who has not surrendered himself to God, that God’s will may be done in him. “Come to me as my right-hand helper,” will be the message to the faithful of the land,—the men who are trustworthy, who will exalt the God of heaven, not merely in their words, but in their deeds; men who can be relied on to do their duty under all trials, and whatever the circumstances may be. {SpTB06 37.3}

Righteous, high-principled, God-fearing men will stand before him as capable of receiving his orders and of executing them with exactitude. The work of such men will bear the similitude of heaven. They will choose as their counselors and helpers only the good and faithful. Our God is a jealous God, and those who fear him, who live as if in his presence, as they surely are, will choose as counselors those who are pure and righteous, who understand the will of God, and who refuse to uphold unrighteousness or selfishness in themselves or in any one else, who will not oppress their fellow-men because they have it in their power to build up or to tear down, but who treat the humble as God treats them, showing them favor. When the heart is purified, refined by the Spirit of God, there will be fewer judgments pronounced upon others, and far more meekness and lowliness will be revealed. {SpTB06 38.1}

To all who obey him the Lord will say, “Dwell with me as my servants.” “He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.... Whoso privily slandereth is neighbor, him will I cut off, him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.” {SpTB06 38.2}

Those whom God shall favor, exalting them to a high place before angels and before men, should ascribe to him all the glory, giving him the praise for their influence and their opportunities. Those whom God has made rulers in his stead, dishonor him when they put self into their work, which then bears the imperfections of the human agent. God demands that both in private and in public life men shall honor him, in the home, in the church, and in their daily business, setting an example which may be safely followed. Those whose hearts are fully with the Lord will not draw one thread of selfishness into the web. Not one jot or tittle of glory will they take to self. {SpTB06 38.3}

The benefits that God bestows are daily renewed, and should be gratefully remembered and acknowledged. Should the Lord deal with men according to their sins, according to their underhand dealing, their departure from righteousness, how changed all would be. His blessings would be withdrawn; his indignation and wrath would be manifested. But he bears long. He allows misfortune and loss to come upon the wrong-doer. If this does not bring him to repentance, he comes close to him in affliction. If none of these things succeed in drawing him to the Saviour, he cuts down the fruitless tree. {SpTB06 39.1}



God is plenteous in mercy. “He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger forever.” Just as soon as men heed his warnings, and set their own hearts in order, he will make the rough places plain before them. It is God that is dealing with his people. Trials as well as blessings come from him. His hand is to be acknowledged in all. {SpTB06 39.2}

Read the highlighted section at the bottom of the page.

- What does it mean that “their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven?”
- Why should that make anyone who hurts a child tremble?
- What is the point of the statement and that section of Christ’s discourse? (Matthew 18: 1-10)
 - Is that the point of the statement? If we should not look down on these little ones, God places high value on them to the point of having heavenly representation before the universe. Compare to a heavenly congress, senate or Parliament with the representation. They have value.

THURSDAY

Read Mark 10:13 – 16

Mar 10:13-16 GW Some people brought little children to Jesus to have him hold them. But the disciples told the people not to do that. (14) When Jesus saw this, he became irritated. He told them, "Don't stop the children from coming to me. Children like these are part of the kingdom of God. (15) I can guarantee this truth: Whoever doesn't receive the kingdom of God as a little child receives it will never enter it." (16) Jesus put his arms around the children and blessed them by placing his hands on them.

Read the first paragraph: “what Jesus wanted them to know”

- What did Jesus want them (His disciples) to know?
- See John 17:26 Why did He do all these things and what was His ministry for? “John17:26 GW I have made your name known to them, and I will make it known so that the love you have for me will be in them and I will be in them.
 - That is not an age dependent goal.
- Christ blessed the children that were brought to Him by their mothers.
 - Is this a true statement?**We can only reach children who are brought to Christ.**
- The Saviour regards with infinite tenderness the souls whom He has purchased with His own blood. They are the claim of His love. He looks upon them with unutterable longing. His heart is drawn out, not only to the best-behaved children, but to those who have by inheritance objectionable traits of character. Many parents do not understand how much they are responsible for these traits in their children. They have not the tenderness and wisdom to deal with the erring ones whom they have made what they are. But Jesus looks upon these children with pity. He traces from cause to effect. {DA 517.5}



The Christian worker may be Christ's agent in drawing these children to the Saviour. By wisdom and tact he may bind them to his heart, he may give them courage and hope, and through the grace of Christ may see them transformed in character, so that of them it may be said, "Of such is the kingdom of God." { 17.6}

We have often mentioned in this class how our behaviors, our choices, our actions and our thoughts change our DNA. This causes our offspring to be different in many ways, not all of them good.

Christ has the remedy.

As we cooperate with the Creator, he will pardon, heal and restore us and our children to Him.

FRIDAY

The Jews were looking for a Messiah to be revealed in outward show. They expected Him, by one flash of overmastering will, to change the current of men's thoughts, and force from them an acknowledgment of His supremacy. Thus, they believed, He was to secure His own exaltation, and gratify their ambitious hopes. Thus when Christ was treated with contempt, there came to Him a strong temptation to manifest His divine character. By a word, by a look, He could compel His persecutors to confess that He was Lord above kings and rulers, priests and temple. But it was His difficult task to keep to the position He had chosen as one with humanity. {DA 700.4}

John was to go forth as Jehovah's messenger, to bring to men the light of God. He must give a new direction to their thoughts. He must impress them with the holiness of God's requirements, and their need of His perfect righteousness. Such a messenger must be holy. He must be a temple for the indwelling Spirit of God. In order to fulfill his mission, he must have a sound physical constitution, and mental and spiritual strength. Therefore it would be necessary for him to control the appetites and passions. He must be able so to control all his powers that he could stand among men as unmoved by surrounding circumstances as the rocks and mountains of the wilderness. {DA 100.4}

In childhood and youth the character is most impressible. The power of self-control should then be acquired. By the fireside and at the family board influences are exerted whose results are as enduring as eternity. More than any natural endowment, the habits established in early years decide whether a man will be victorious or vanquished in the battle of life. Youth is the sowing time. It determines the character of the harvest, for this life and for the life to come. {DA 101.1}

As a prophet, John was "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." In preparing the way for Christ's first advent, he was a representative of those who are to prepare a people for our Lord's second coming. The world is given to self-indulgence. Errors and fables abound. Satan's snares for destroying souls are multiplied. All who would perfect holiness in the fear of God must learn the lessons of temperance and self-control. The appetites and passions must be held in subjection to the higher powers of the mind. This self-discipline is essential to that mental strength and spiritual insight which



will enable us to understand and to practice the sacred truths of God's word. For this reason temperance finds its place in the work of preparation for Christ's second coming. {DA 101.2}

The student of the Bible should be taught to approach it in the spirit of a learner. We are to search its pages, not for proof to sustain our opinions, but in order to know what God says. {Ed 189.1}



Lesson 5 Discipling the Sick

SABBATH

Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. ³¹ So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel. Matthew 15: 30-31.

If Christ's mission on Earth was to render a payment to His father, or the Law, or why didn't he go about paying everyone's governmental fines?

How did Jesus heal the sick, blind, deaf, mute, lame, paralyzed, leprous, etc?

How does a modern physician restore health?

Many persons bring disease upon themselves by their self-indulgence. They have not lived in accordance with natural law or the principles of strict purity. Others have disregarded the laws of health in their habits of eating and drinking, dressing, or working. Often some form of vice is the cause of feebleness of mind or body. Should these persons gain the blessing of health, many of them would continue to pursue the same course of heedless transgression of God's natural and spiritual laws, reasoning that if God heals them in answer to prayer, they are at liberty to continue their unhealthful practices and to indulge perverted appetite without restraint. If God were to work a miracle in restoring these persons to health, He would be encouraging sin. {MH 227.3}

It is labor lost to teach people to look to God as a healer of their infirmities, unless they are taught also to lay aside unhealthful practices. In order to receive His blessing in answer to prayer, they must cease to do evil and learn to do well. Their surroundings must be sanitary, their habits of life correct. They must live in harmony with the law of God, both natural and spiritual. {MH 227.4}

SUNDAY

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. Isa. 53:4.

...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying; He himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses." Matt. 8:17.

Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

³ Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. John 9:1-3.



From the Lesson:

“In antiquity, sickness was considered the result of sinful actions. (And even today, who hasn’t at times—even if only for a moment—wondered if illness, either their own or that of a loved one, wasn’t brought on as a punishment for sin?) In the book of Job, his friends suggested that his misfortunes, which included personal illness, resulted from hidden faults; the implication was that somehow his sinfulness caused his predicament. Similarly, Christ’s disciples understood blindness as punishment for someone’s sinfulness. **This suggests that sickness required not diagnosis or medication but atonement.** Matthew references Isaiah’s Messianic prophecy, stating that Christ fulfilled this prediction and that healing can be found in Him.” Emphasis added.

Do we not hear the same argument from most of Christianity today?? Most of Adventism??

MONDAY

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

2 And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. **2** And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. **3** And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. **4** And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. **5** And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” **6** Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, **7** “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” **8** And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? **9** Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? **10** But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— **11** “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” **12** And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!” Mark 2: 1-12.

What is Jesus telling us?? Is there some relationship between forgiveness of sin, physical healing, and the “gospel”?? Why didn’t Jesus tell the paralytic, “Your fine will be paid soon. Sorry about the paralysis.”??

TUESDAY

We, in this class, have unique insights as to the mind/body connection and how it relates to health [for more information see the most recent DVD series – The God Shaped Brain, Designer vs Dictator, and



Buddha vs Jesus]. Science is only now scratching the surface of the relationship of the brain and other systems.

What does it mean to “heal” the mind?

The following is from Dr. Tim Jennings’ blog dated: 27 July, 2012.

10 Simple Steps to a Healthy Brain

1. Regular Sleep

Approximately one in three Americans is chronically sleep deprived, sleeping less than seven hours per night. Sleep is one of four physical requirements for life, along with air, water, and food. Yet far too many people fail to provide their brain and body with adequate sleep.

Chronic sleep deprivation is devastating to brain health. Without regular adequate sleep brain function is impaired, particularly the part of the brain in which we attend, focus, organize, plan, self-restrain, calm self and modulate mood.

Chronic sleep deprivation results in higher activation of the brain stress circuits, with subsequent increase in inflammation and oxidative stress – cellular damage to body and brain. This increases the risk for illness of brain and body such as, diabetes, obesity, depression and dementia.

A healthy brain requires regular sleep.

2. Regular Exercise (Both Physical & Mental)

According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than one third of US adults (35.7%) are obese.

Obesity is a high inflammatory state that reduces quality and length of life and results in accelerated aging and loss of brain tissue. A combination of a high sugar, high saturated fat diet and lack of regular exercise are primary contributing factors to obesity.

Regular exercise not only results in better physical health, and generally better weight profile, but also causes a cascade of beneficial events for the brain. Regular exercise causes the muscles to produce powerful anti-inflammatory cytokines that reduce inflammation. Exercise increases blood vessel growth in the brain improving oxygenation. Additionally, regular exercise causes the brain to produce proteins that stimulate the brain to make new neurons and increase the growth neuron-to-neuron connections. People who exercise regularly are at lower risk for dementia. Finally, exercising the brain itself by engaging in mentally stimulating activities, puzzles, Bible study, learning a new language etc. activates growth factors that promote brain health. If you don’t use it, you will lose it – so exercise regularly!



3. Hydration

Water is the single largest component of your body comprising well more than half of your body weight. Every cell of the body requires water. Water is essential for the functioning of our cells and the removal of waste products of metabolism.

Dehydration shrinks the cells of the body and their function becomes impaired. This results in increased oxidative stress and inability to clear toxins, which results in greater damage to our cells, including our brain. Concentration, memory and general alertness can be negatively affected by dehydration.

An average adult should drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day, and more if exercising vigorously, or working in hot humid environments in which sweating profusely.

4. Healthy Diet

You have probably heard the old adage we are what we eat. Well there is much truth in this saying. What we eat provides the nutrients and building blocks from which the tissues of our bodies are made.

Diets high in sugar and saturated fats increase inflammation and oxidative stress accelerating the aging process and decline in brain function. Conversely, diets high in fruits, nuts, grains, vegetables, cold-water fish, olive oil, provide antioxidants, which reduce inflammation and slow the aging process.

In general, the more highly processed the food the less healthy and more damaging to body and brain. The less processed the food the healthier for body and brain.

5. Avoid Toxins

It doesn't take much brain power to figure out that tobacco, heavy alcohol use, and illegal drugs are damaging to body and brain and accelerate the aging process. But one toxin often missed is high caffeine use. While one or two caffeinated beverages may not confer great risk, higher amounts do increase inflammation, interfere with sleep, reduce blood flow to the brain and increase oxidative stress on the brain.

Other potential toxins, for which we have concern, but not solid evidence, include the myriad of man-made chemicals infused into our society. Read the labels on many household items and you will discover a long list of man-made chemicals, to which we are daily exposed. Only time and research will tell the full impact on physical and mental health these substances are having.

6. Forgive

Grudge holding, bitterness, resentment are toxic emotions that activate the brain's stress pathways causing activation of inflammatory factors. Failure to resolve such feelings results in increased oxidative stress and damage to physical, mental and relational health. Forgiving those who have offended us does not mean what they did was okay, but relieves us of carrying the toxic emotions of anger and resentment everywhere we go and over time ruining our own health.



7. Develop Healthy Relationships

Relationship conflict activates the brain's stress circuits, which turns on the immune system causing increase levels of inflammatory factors. Chronic relationship conflict also interferes with regular sleep. The combined effect of increased inflammation and sleep deprivation accelerate aging and undermine brain health. People with chronic relationship problems have higher rates of mental and physical health problems.

Conversely, healthy relationships are protective and reduce the incidence of both physical and mental health problems. Adolescents who grow up in homes in which they have one adult who is a close confidant perform better in school, get more awards, have less depression and lower rates of drug problems.

8. Be a Giver

Multiple studies have demonstrated that persons who are involved in any form of regular volunteerism have better physical health, lower blood pressure, are on less medicines, maintain independence longer in life and have lower rates of dementia.

Loving other people is healthy for the brain.

9. Minimize Theatrical Entertainment

Brain research has demonstrated that theatrical entertainment (but not education programming) alters the brain structure, resulting in decreased development of the prefrontal cortex (higher brain where we plan, organize, self-restrain, attend, have good judgment), and over development of the limbic system (lower brain where we experience fear and irritability). This occurs in a dose dependent fashion, meaning the more TV watched the more damaged done. This imbalance increases the risk for attention problems as well as anxiety and mood problems.

Minimizing theatrical entertainment is protective for the brain.

10. Build relationship with God of Love

Individuals with a healthy spirituality, focusing on a God of love, have reduced anxiety, stress and overall more meaningful and satisfied life. Research shows healthy spirituality reduces rates of suicide, increases life satisfaction scores, and general results in healthier relationships and lifestyle.

Conversely, God constructs that incite fear are associated with increased anxiety, dread, worry, relationship conflict and a general sense of life dissatisfaction, all of which increase inflammation and are unhealthy for the brain.



WEDNESDAY

The lesson suggests that “eternal life in a new world” is what Jesus has to “offer” us. Is that accurate?? Is that all?? See John 17:3.

As far as we know, the Centurion’s servant, the Widow’s son, and Lazarus all went back to “sleep” or died. What was Christ telling us in the raising them from the dead the first time?

Have you ever thanked God for the sleep we know as death?? If you’ve ever lost a loved one, did it make you yearn for something better; an existence without damage, disease, and death?? Consider, for a moment, if God had allowed humanity access to the Tree of Life and there was no death. What would this world look like?? The avenue for the Messiah narrowed down to ONE man just a few generations after Creation even with death in the picture. The entire world would have been overrun with evil if mankind had been allowed access to the Tree of Life. It is Grace and Mercy that allow humans to “sleep” in death.

“In order to possess an endless existence, man must continue to partake of the tree of life. Deprived of this, his vitality would gradually diminish until life should become extinct. It was Satan’s plan that Adam and Eve should by disobedience incur God’s displeasure; and then, if they failed to obtain forgiveness, he hoped that they would eat of the tree of life, and thus perpetuate an existence of sin and misery. But after man’s fall, holy angels were immediately commissioned to guard the tree of life. Around these angels flashed beams of light having the appearance of a glittering sword. None of the family of Adam were permitted to pass the barrier to partake of the life-giving fruit; hence there is not an immortal sinner.” PP 60.

THURSDAY

First-century disciples witnessed firsthand Christ’s promise of seeing “greater things than these” fulfilled (*John 1:50, compare John 5:20, 14:12*). Miraculous healings and resurrections attended the ministries of early Christianity’s most prominent disciples: Peter and Paul. These events figured significantly in the early church’s growth. God’s eternal presence, signified by miraculous healing, influenced thousands of religious leaders to accept Christ. Their flocks often followed.

What did Christ mean by “greater things than these” in John 14:12? Were the miracles of the Apostles any more fantastic than Christ’s?? Did the people raised from the dead by the Apostles die again sooner than did those raised by Christ??

Christ never had to **transform** his character. He developed it – perfectly, but he never had to transform it. The Apostles, and all true Christians, since, have experienced character **transformation** which, in my opinion, is the greatest miracle ever performed, and the greatest evidence of the Truth of Christ’s mission of healing.



Discipleship Lesson 6 1Q 2014

Discipling the Ordinary

Two weeks ago I was in St. Helena CA, speaking at The Haven, formerly known as Elmshaven. What a great experience. Record breaking turnout and the response to this picture of God was overwhelmingly positive.

Last week I spoke at East Cleveland SDA church and again the response was incredibly positive to this view of God.

Monday and Tuesday next week I will be speaking for the leadership teams of 15 Baptist churches in Texas. Please pray that God will bless this presentation.

For those who haven't yet heard, the long awaited book, *Servant God: The Cosmic Conflict Over God's Trustworthiness*, is now available on Amazon. It is an excellent resource, 19 authors, published by Loma Linda University Press. I wrote chapter two.

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "Christ's death was..." thoughts?

For the believer in Christ this is certainly true, at the foot of the cross there is no difference, all are sinners. But, what about those who don't believe in Christ? Is Christ's death the great equalizer for those who don't believe in God?

Does the Bible present any other tool that is useful in bringing people to realize they are no better than anyone else? The written law – it is the 10 Commandments that diagnose, that expose the defects, that reveal our shortcomings. And, whether one believes in Jesus or not, if one examines the principles in the law of love every person falls short.

The law exposes our sickness, whereas the death of Christ reveals and provides the Remedy! Those, who have not yet realized their condition find no need of the remedy provided by Christ.

And when we present the law as a list of rules, imposed by a God who is waiting to punish if we disobey, then how does evangelism usually work? But if we present the law as the design protocol upon which life is constructed, and deviations damage the deviant, while God works to heal, then how does evangelism work?

What about how the lesson suggests we seek to win those who are great in the world?

Read second paragraph, "Not so with Jesus..." thoughts?



What about today? What kind of a god appeals to those who prefer the methods of the world?

- Would it be a power over god?
- Would they look for a god who would come to use his power to hurt people?
- March 5, 2006 Louis Farrakhan

We are living at a time that was described by Jesus in these words: “If those days were not shortened for his elect sake, no flesh would be saved.” We know that we have now entered that period when we witnessed a tsunami killing over 200,000 people in Asia; an earthquake in Pakistan; storms raging throughout America, fire on one side, water on the other, snow, cold, ice in between...

At the townhall meeting in New Orleans, I pointed out the high Black-on-Black crime rates, rebellion against the will and law of God, and the love of partying and acting foolishness that prevails in the city. I asked them if they did not think that Allah (God) would handle the city as He did two ancient cities that lived in rebellion. I told them Allah (God) brought a punishment to America, but He also brought a punishment to Black people, and that punishment is going to spread. There will be many more disasters that we are not prepared for in this country.

This country glories in its cities and skyscrapers, but Allah (God) is going to bring them down. We are going to know that He is God. ..

The Bible says that in His Second Coming, He will have a sword dripping with blood in His hand. He is not coming back to teach. He is coming back to kill the enemies of His teaching and set up a new government.

If people prefer the methods of the world to God’s true methods, how do the present justice? Do those who like the methods of the world, like it when we suggest God forgives freely, God pardons without payment?

The ideas of the world have corrupted the church by presenting God’s law like human law, and God like a dictator who inflicts pain and suffering upon the disobedient. This is not restricted to Christianity. Believers of other religions have been corrupted by this same misunderstanding of God’s law. Thus when people believe that God uses force to get His way, they use similar methods. Look at the history of Christianity since Constantine – crusades, inquisitions, burning people at the stake etc.

Is physical violence the only way the methods of the world? What methods of the world are more common? What about coercive pressure, not buying and selling? What about pressuring others what to think? What about intimidation and fear tactics? What about decisions based upon fear?

What about using fear as a mode to get people to accept Jesus? Did Jesus ever use fear?

How do we understand the Old Testament when God thundered at Sinai? Was God using fear? What did Moses say, at that very moment? “there is no need to be afraid.” If God was using fear tactics, then why did Moses tell them they did not need to be afraid?



Could it be God was not using fear tactics, but was intervening to save them from themselves. Rightly understood God was acting in mercy in love, not anger and vengeance.

In chapter three of *Servant God* the question of suffering is explored and what is God's role in it, does He use His power to inflict suffering?

The book points out how Jesus taught that natural disaster were not from God, when answering the question about the tower of Siloam. And this from the book:

Two events in the Bible that are attributed to God – the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah – came with much warning and an active rescue effort on God's part to save his children from these disasters. In fact, rather than interpreting these events as God's retributive punishment, the narrative reveals a God who is actively trying to rescue his people from being engulfed by their dark spiritual surroundings. The Bible records instances when God disciplined people to prevent greater harm. What we can be sure of, however, is that God in human form never inflicted physical suffering on anyone. Also significant is that Jesus rebuked his disciples when they wanted to call down fire to destroy rebellious people (Luke 9:54,55). (page 59)

Thoughts?

What about lying? Do those who value the methods of the world lie from their position in the church? What about if a pastor is fired from his job because he wants to present a loving picture of God, but the senior pastor presents a punitive God, and after firing the associate pastor with the loving God picture, the church leadership tells the congregation that the fired pastor "took a call" to another position.

Is this God's methods for dealing with situations? Why do people use such methods?

How can we expect to win people to God's kingdom of love if there is not different in method or function by those proclaiming Christ? In other words, why leave the world with its domination over, coercion, deceit, manipulation, and come into a religion that uses the same methods, albeit while claiming the penalty for such abuses was laid upon Christ and He was punished in our place.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Joseph and Mary..." thoughts?

Were Joseph and Mary ordinary or extraordinary?

Man looks on the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the heart.



Regarding position, wealth, rank, skill-set, perhaps they were ordinary people, but what about regarding character?

How would an ordinary man, in that culture, have reacted to his fiancé being pregnant but not by him?

How would an ordinary woman, in that culture, have reacted to being asked to be pregnant out of wedlock?

And what do you think the character of Mary was that she was chosen to be the human mother of Christ?

Ordinary or extraordinary?

Read last paragraph, “The parents of Jesus...” Thoughts?

Are there any lessons in this paragraph for us?

Where do we draw the line between providing for our children, and providing work for our children?

Do we set character development as the number one goal for ourselves and our children, or do we have other things we put before it, like education, awards, making money, retirement?

Do we experience ourselves and others as successful if they are not wealthy or highly educated?

Do we experience ourselves and others as successful if they are mature and Christlike in character?

Why do education, wealth, position, power too often become the measure of success?

I have patients who fear they are failures because they have lost a job, bankrupted, lost their home, or lost a relationship, break up or divorce.

Are any of these measures of success or failure? Why or why not?

What does God consider to be a successful life? Examples?

- Enoch, Elijah and Moses are obvious
- Daniel and John
- David, Solomon, Manasseh?
- Rahab, Mary Magdalene, and the thief on the cross?
 - How could a murderer, polygamist, idol worshipper who sacrificed his own son, prostitute and thief be successful?
 - Does this mean it doesn't matter what we do as long as we accept Jesus in the end?
 - Think of the Design law, like laws of health. All of these bad deeds are symptoms of hearts that are sick with sin. The disease is raging and destroying their character, some of these individuals were hanging between life and death, eternal life and death, by a



thread, and praise God, as sick as they were when they partook the Remedy, it cured them.

- But wouldn't it have been better to take the Remedy earlier, to avoid so much sickness, pain, suffering and damage to self and others?
- Wouldn't it have been better to have years of influence in promoting the Remedy?
- And wasn't it dangerous to allow the disease of sin to rage? What is the danger? Destroying permanently the faculties that are sensitive to the Spirit of truth and love.
- Caiaphas & Annas? Did they have successful lives? Why or why not? They were High Priests, could anything in that culture be more successful?

What about in our culture today? What does success look like?

- Becoming President of the US?
- Winning the Super Bowl?
- Winning gold at the Olympics?
- Sharing the true picture of God and practicing His methods of love?
- Which do you value more?

What determines if one is successful? Is it not partaking of Jesus Christ, and the sooner one does so, and is reconciled to God and begins practicing God's methods, then the greater good they can achieve with their lives.

The thief on the cross, ultimately succeeded in that he accepted Christ, but he accomplished nothing for the kingdom here on earth. Rahab saved the spies and became a progenitor of Christ...

The sooner we come the Christ, partake the Remedy, and the more consistently we practice His methods, the more impact we have for His kingdom.

MONDAY

Read third paragraph, "So often..." thoughts

The take away from this is that if we depend on self and not Christ we ultimately fail. Those who depend on Christ however, ultimately succeed.

But there are some big premises in this statement, that "ordinary people" lack self-sufficiency. Really? Aren't many "ordinary" people self-sufficient?

And who is an "ordinary" person? Why is it sometimes difficult to reach those with wealth and power?

Could it be those struggling with financial or health problems have come up against their own limitations and thus look beyond self for help? And could it be those with more means could falsely think they can handle more of life's problems on their own?



What about people in power or with wealth having been conditioned to be skeptical from all the people coming to them with their hands out wanting something, and those with little means, while self-sufficient aren't as jaded because they haven't been approached by as many scams and con men, not to mention the multiplicity of genuine and legitimate charities requesting aid?

So could the "ordinary" be more open and less guarded? Could they also be more vulnerable to flattery, the flattery of being valued and needed?

Read bottom green, "We all tend..." Did Jesus ever become an icon of His time, and people flocked to Him to see a show?

How did Jesus handle this? How should we?

TUESDAY

The lesson is about Peter and his experiences with Christ, when you think of Peter what lessons do you learn from his life?

Does the history of Peter encourage or discourage you?

Peter was perhaps the most impulsive of the disciples. He would blurt things out, jumped right out of the boat when he saw Jesus, asked Jesus to let him walk on the water, then took his eyes off Jesus and panicked. Sounds like Peter may have had ADHD, couldn't stay focused on one thing for more than a minute.

But, what was necessary for Peter to become effective for Jesus?

What did Peter tell Jesus when Jesus said all would run away and leave him?

Peter declared he wouldn't, was Peter lying to Jesus? Could Jesus trust Peter?

How can it be that Peter was not lying, yet he was also not being truthful?

Did Peter love Jesus? Did he want to stay and be loyal to Jesus? But what happened that prevented this?

Did Peter still love himself more than Jesus? Was survival of the fittest still the ruling agency in Peter's character? Thus, while he loved Jesus, he still hadn't died to self and totally surrendered to Christ. This is why he along with the others, were arguing about who would be greater in heaven just before the Last Supper.

But what changed after Peter's denial of Christ? Did Jesus change? Did God change? Did Peter's legal status change?



Peter had a change of heart, he loathed the selfishness and fear in his heart and realized he could not fix it, thus he finally surrendered all to Jesus.

This is what caused Peter to go from ordinary to extraordinary!

WEDNESDAY

Read MT 6:25-30:

⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Thoughts?

Do we worry? About what do we worry?

What of Christ’s question, who can add a single day to his life by worrying?

In fact, worrying shortens the life, by activating inflammatory cascades, which damage the body and increases disease.

Does worry solve any problem? Does worry increase faith, trust, peace?

Do you notice most of the things we worry about are things that are not our responsibility?

- What others think of us – we are not responsible for what others think, we are responsible for what we think and how we act
- Whether we are liked – we are not responsible for whether others like us, we are responsible for whether we are like Christ
- How our children turn out – we are not responsible for how they turn out, we are responsible for our conduct in parenting
- Whether we get into a certain school, or hired for a certain job, we are not responsible for whether we get in or hired, we are responsible for preparing ourselves, applying and presenting ourselves in the most favorable way



- Whether a sickness gets cured in us or a loved one, we are not responsible for how a sickness turns out, but for living in harmony with God's methods and principles for health and doing all in our power to bring healing.

We worry because we take outcomes upon ourselves and try to force events to go the way we want, rather than focusing on fulfilling our responsibilities in governance of ourselves, in any given situation, and trusting God with how things turn out.

What about our worth? Where does our worth originate?

Does sin change a person's worth?

If a person murders is their worth affected?

If they commit adultery?

If a person is abused by their parents is their worth affected?

If a person is rejected and divorced is their worth affected?

If a church disfellowships someone is their worth affected?

If a person rejects God is their worth affected?

In other words, are the lost, those who reject Jesus, worth less than those who accept Him?

What determines our worth? From where does it originate?

Our actions for good or evil cannot change our worth, but our actions can change our health. Our physical, mental, relational and spiritual health are all affected by our choices and actions, but not our worth.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Perhaps the most..." thoughts?

This confused me a little, when it suggested no class distinctions, didn't they still have slaves in Bible times, amongst the Christians? Did women have equality in the early church?

Why did these disparities exist in the early church? Was it because slavery and bigotry were part of Christianity, or were these issues part of the culture upon which Christianity grew? Was Christianity supposed to incorporate slavery and bigotry or rise above it?

How has Christianity done?

Did the early church have women pastors? Why not?

- Because it violates God's will?
- Because people were biased by culture and were not yet enlightened, including Bible writers?



- Because elevating women would have offended the unconverted and thus closed the minds of people to the gospel before they even had a chance to hear it?
- Or could it have been that in that culture women in religious circles were held in high esteem as cult priestesses and prostitutes and Christianity wanted to distinguish itself from these perverse religions, thus they relegated women to non-leadership roles for the purpose of making the chastity of Christian values understood to those outside the church?
- And the Christian women were gracious enough to be like Jesus who did not think equality with God was something to be grasped but humbled himself into the form of a servant.

Do we have struggles with class distinctions in Christianity today?

- Are women treated as equals in Christianity?
- Should they be?

What about black conferences rather than integrated conferences?

How do we find the unity in Christ with the beauty of the plurality of divergence?

How do we present our unique culture in ways that win rather than offend others?

How can culture become an obstacle to the gospel message?

Do we have doctrinal class distinction – i.e. those who hold to certain tenants are considered more orthodox and thus superior to those who don't?

Do we have educational class distinction, those with greater degrees, doctors etc, or certain degrees, theology degrees, are esteemed higher and given more credence?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “In this closing...” thoughts?

What were the qualifications Christ looked for in His disciples?

Discuss questions 1, 2



Discipleship Lesson 7 1Q 2014

Jesus and the Social Outcasts

Monday and Tuesday of this week I had the privilege of speaking with the leadership of 15 Southern Baptist Churches, over 200 people, in Texas. What a great group of people.

I presented God's design of love and how our view of God changes our brain and then met in small groups with their various leadership teams and had incredibly positive response across the board.

Thank you for all your prayers and support and let's keep sharing this beautiful picture of God in every opportunity we get.

SABBATH

Read the first two paragraphs, "A young woman..." thoughts?

How do you view this young woman? How is it God can know her sin, your sin, my sin and still love us?

Is there something about how God views our sin and us that if we shared that viewpoint it would enable us to love those who sin against us?

Why did this young woman murder the social worker? What led her to do it? Was it fear, desperation, terror of losing the only being whom she had ever felt love from?

And from where did the fear, that this woman struggled against, come? When did this woman choose to have problems with fear, insecurity, doubt, & selfishness?

So, her behaviors, her actions what did they reveal? A sickness of heart. A heart lacking in love, a heart filled with fear and insecurity, which inevitably acts to protect self.

Her sin, her behavior, then was a symptom of a heart condition, with which she was born, but for which she had yet to take the Remedy that Christ provided.

This is the condition of all humans since Adam's sin, we are born filled with fear, insecurity and selfishness. Thus, we must be reborn, we must have new motives take root in the heart.

But, from where can a person find the solution when they are all alone? Thus the pastor who visited her not only taught her about Jesus, but his concern for her, his compassion, his refusal to reject her, his love for her as a person revealed God's love to her and it was this love that opened the door for her to receive the truth about God as revealed in Jesus.



When we understand God's law as the design upon which life was constructed, the protocols of love, then we realize deviations result in dysfunction, bad behaviors. But the behaviors are merely symptoms of a heart and mind out of balance from God's design.

When you have a child who is sick, and that child may have vomiting, diarrhea, productive cough, they may cry, whine, and be irritable, what is your attitude toward that child? Do you hate the child or do you long to heal the child?

This is how God sees everyone of us. He knows that sin is a sickness of heart, mind and character that steals peace, incites fear, destroys love and instills guilt. He knows that these symptoms lead to behaviors designed to comfort, to bring peace, to bring security, but based on a survival principle, not on God's design and thus we only get worse. But, He also knows He can heal us, if we let Him.

God's forgiveness is not judicial, it is restorative. True Bible forgiveness is the process of recreating in the believer the mind and heart of Christ so that we are restored to God's design and live in harmony and unity with Him.

Thoughts?

We have such problem with people who commit overt sin because we see through human eyes, sinful human law lens and think of sin primarily as bad behavior, breaking the rules and that punishment is deserved. This distortion interferes with our ability to love like Christ loves.

But how did Jesus tell us to treat those who do us wrong, who sin against us?

- Love them and heap burning coals their head
- Turn the other cheek
- Pray for those who spitefully use you
- Forgive

Why? Because they are sick and are dying in their sin and the only remedy to their sinful condition is the truth and love of God. Thus, when we love and treat with Godly concern those who sin, we minister the remedy of God's truth and love and reveal God's design for their lives. This is what the pastor did for the woman in the story.

SUNDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "Societies establish..." thoughts?

There is a societal hierarchy, which values worldly things. Does God have a hierarchy or is it only human societies that establish hierarchies?

What makes one great in the kingdom of heaven?



Love! The willingness to live in harmony with God's character and design, living to give to help others makes one great in God's kingdom.

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. MT 5:17-20

Jesus just finished His sermon on the mount, and what was the message of that sermon?

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. MT 5:3-11

Note what Jesus says makes you blessed – can anyone tell me?

Where did Jesus place the emphasis?

Did he say, “Blessed are you when you pay your tithe?” or “Blessed are you when you eat according to the law?” or “Blessed are you when you don't lie, steal, murder, or commit adultery?”

Why not?



Do you notice Jesus did NOT focus on behavior. Jesus focused on heart attitude. We are not blessed for doing the right thing; we are blessed for having the right heart!

And such a heart we cannot create, we can only receive it in relationship with Jesus Christ!

We are also blessed when we endure the abuse of the world with a heart like Christ, when we love our enemies, when we turn the other cheek, when we pray for those who spitefully use us. Again, we are blessed when our hearts are divergent from the world, when our hearts are in harmony with the King of love from the kingdom of love.

In this context Jesus speaks of the law and those who live in harmony with God's law, His law of love, His design for life, will be great in the kingdom of heaven!

Are their degrees of sin, some that are more offensive to God?

I read this recently in a book entitled Steps To Christ:

God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation, as well as in that of man; but however trifling this or that wrong act may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God. Man's judgment is partial, imperfect; but God estimates all things as they really are. The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven; while pride, selfishness, and covetousness too often go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God; for they are contrary to the benevolence of His character, to that unselfish love which is the very atmosphere of the unfallen universe. He who falls into some of the grosser sins may feel a sense of his shame and poverty and his need of the grace of Christ; but pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give. {SC 30.1}

What is God's scale upon which He measures the severity of sin? The more severely it numbs the conscience and makes one unresponsive to His endeavors to save and heal. It isn't about the specific act, it is about the condition of heart and mind, the closing out of God.

David's sin of adultery and murder was not as severe or offensive in God's eyes as the church leader who judges someone for believing differently and works to have them disfellowshipped. Why? Because David knew he was wrong and repented and sought God's healing presence, but the prideful church leader believes they are right and thus don't recognize the sickness of pride and selfness in their heart and don't partake of God's true remedy.

This makes God sick, listen to the message Jesus has for the Christian church today:

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. ¹⁵ I know your deeds, **that you are neither cold nor hot**. I wish you were either one or the other!

¹⁶ **So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my**



mouth. ¹⁷ You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to **buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.** Rev 3:16-18

Let’s decode this – How does one get lukewarm? By a mixture of hot and cold – and these people are religiously hot, they promote themselves as being God’s representatives and doing God’s work, yet their hearts are cold and selfish, thus they are lukewarm. And the Greek word for spit is *emeo* from which we get emesis, it means to vomit. In other words, God is saying this pretentious piety, the presenting oneself on fire for God but having a cold heart makes God sick.

So, he counsels, stop looking at self, stop feeling righteous because you have always gone to church on the “right day” or eaten the right foods, or been baptized in the right way, or you didn’t have sex before marriage, or you never smoked, used drugs or drank alcohol, or whatever. Stop thinking you are good because you have done this or that and come back to reality and recognize you are infected with the same disease of fear and selfishness and no amount of external behavior will change what’s in the heart. So, buy from Jesus the gold refined in fire, which is to say, His perfect character refined by His trial of his ordeal, then our filthy selfishness will be overwritten, as He writes the law of love upon our hearts and minds.

How do we buy it? It is the barter method, we exchange what we have for what He has. Our sinful life for His sinless life, our terminal condition for His immortal condition, our wickedness for His righteousness, our selfishness for His love! We then become partakers of the divine nature and live new lives, having our minds enlightened by the Holy Spirit, our eyes anointed with oil.

Thoughts?

The lesson states the same, read paragraph four, “Although hardened by sinful...” Thoughts?

How do we reach those who are struggling with fear and insecurity and seeking to find themselves by abusing themselves with various forms of going against their upbringing?

Grace- can someone tell me about grace? What is it, what does it look like?

MONDAY

- The woman caught in adultery, what did Jesus say?
- What did Jesus do with the knowledge of the sins of the people who brought the woman caught in adultery?
- Adam after sin, how did God approach him? What did God say and do?
- How did Jesus treat Judas?
- How did Jesus treat those who crucified Him?

Here is a story from Philip Yancey’s book *What’s So Amazing About Grace?* On page 49...



Thoughts?

Do we love or do we judge? Where is the balance between loving and intervening? Is there a difference between diagnosing and judging? Can you explain the difference?

When we love someone and they are sick how do you approach them? When they are sick but refusing help how do you approach them? But if you see them as doing bad stuff, not as sick, but as rebellious, how do we often approach?

Can we confront and deal with the sickness of sin in our families in ways that are consistent with love? What might that look like?

TUESDAY

The lesson points us to the story of the demoniac who was living in a cemetery, in rags, with broken chains still upon him, cutting and abusing himself.

Read second paragraph, “A crucial point...” thoughts?

Well said, professional help is often needed but many people reject professional help, believing that if they just had enough faith they would be okay.

What barriers have you seen that prevent people from getting professional help?

Does mental illness determine one’s relationship with God? Absolutely not, any more than physical illness. One of the lies of the devil is that if you are sick it is because of some sin that separates you from God. The story of Job is a great example that disproves this, or the blind man who according to Jesus his blindness was not from his or his parents sin. Likewise mental illness can be a sickness that is physical.

But, it is also true that physical illness could be brought about by sin. A person could get HIV from sinful living, or lung cancer from smoking etc. Likewise some mental health problems could be from sinful living, a person committing adultery will have increased anxiety, insecurity, fear, conflict etc. But it would be wrong to conclude that all illness, physical or mental is a result of some sin by that person.

In the last paragraph it states, “but from God’s perspective every human being is of infinite worth.”

Absolutely true, this is a fact – but have you or anyone you’ve known ever struggled with feelings of worthlessness?

What would you say to someone who was feeling worthless?



From where does one's worth originate?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks us to review Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well.

What are the lessons you take from this experience?

- Jesus breaks down human barriers
- Jesus loves all people regardless of race or gender
- Jesus disarms by asking her to help him
- Jesus offers her what she really longs for, love (metaphor living water), she had five husbands and her current live-in partner is not her husband. She is lonely, empty, discouraged, and afraid, Jesus offers her love, genuine Godly love. And such love that when she receives it will overflow from her and go out to many. This is the nature of God's love, it gives it cannot be taken and hoarded, it must be given away and when it is it grows and grows.
- Jesus didn't condemn her but offered her hope, he showed her grace
- He diagnosed and provided Remedy
- Jesus told her salvation is of the Jews – yet He told the Pharisees that when they convert a person to Judaism they make him twice the son of hell. How are both true? Because Jesus is representative of true Judaism, the Pharisees practiced false Judaism, a counterfeit. Is there a lesson for us today? Salvation is of Christ, i.e. Christianity, but could some people be converted to a form of Christianity that makes them more bonded to hell than before they converted? Thoughts about this? What might this look like?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "It's hard to imagine..." thoughts?

No doubt there would be no prejudice in a world without sin, but what about the rest of it?

Are class distinctions evil and a part of sin, are cultural differences evil and a part of sin? Or are these Godly and the evil is the selfishness that causes these differences to be used as means of oppressing others?

Did God make:

- Male and female? In His design their was equality, divergence, two separate classes, but equal, sin causes inequality between these two classes God created.
- What about Cherubim and Seraphim are these classes of angels, different divisions?
- What about in Revelation and Ezekiel do we see divisions? Two covering Cherubs, four living creatures, twenty-four elders, thousands and thousands, and then ten thousands times ten thousands?
- Are their beings of different unfallen worlds? Would they have different culture? Is this evil?



- Sin is selfishness, and selfishness has taken the divergence God created, which provides beauty and novelty and uniqueness, and used those differences to create points of exploitation and abuse.

So must we transcend culture or transcend selfishness which makes us uncomfortable with other cultures?

Do we admire other cultures or look down on them as not being as good as us?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “The one class...” thoughts?

Read questions and discuss



Discipleship Lesson 9 1Q 2014

Discipling the Powerful

This class and our online class has been actively supporting us in preparing and sharing all the materials, DVDs, Study Guides, etc. I wanted to share some of the feedback we have been getting. I have received more than a thousand emails and letters from around the world thus far, this is just a sampling of some of the feedback we are getting:

We'd like to order another case of the DVD's, if we might. We've given out the previous case here in California. Now we're heading to Arizona and have relatives and friends there we'd like to share with. Thought you might enjoy some of the feedback we've been getting here with regard to the DVDs.

One woman was intrigued when I told her we found the DVD life changing. She watched the whole seminar in one afternoon, and watched it again the next day so she could absorb the points presented. She said she now understands why we found it life changing and was very excited about the message.

Another couple, on their own initiative, watched the DVD with a group of eight in their home.

We're pretty excited that the videos are being so well received and are praying that those who haven't yet viewed them will sometime in the future.

Thanks again for all the wonderful thoughts put forth by your ministry.

I run the English Speaking group of the SDA church here in Freiburg Germany. We have been following your Bible lessons with great interest for a few months now, and they have been the cause for much deep discussion.

We would be extremely happy to receive any of the books, dvds and seminars that you have available.

They will be used not only for our own study purposes, but also for distribution to the other English speakers and churches here...

Thank you for your Ministry. It has meant a lot to me personally. It has changed my thinking about God and has challenged my belief systems in many respects. There are many statements from you that I am battling with (at a theological and conceptual level at minimum). I am very disappointed that many in our Church are not willing to consider the perspective that you have studied in great detail. It really does offer tangible answers to many of the "difficult questions" most of us struggle with (e.g. why does a loving God let innocent children die?).

Yes, we have our own set of lenses whereby we view God and the world around us. Our son passed away 4 years ago (he was 3.5 years), so we have had our own battle with this question. Ironically, this experience drew us closer to God and has led us to become born-again Christians. Our study of the book of Job led us to understand there is a great battle raging in a realm that we can't see, but are intrinsically part of. We understood the Great Controversy even before we studied the book by the same title. Our studies have led us to the Seventh Day Adventist Church. We were baptised 3 years ago. I therefore find it difficult that in our own Church, the Character of God is so misrepresented (i.e. non Biblical or seen through lenses that of the wrathful God).

The view that God has led you, brings a refreshing perspective about Him that appeals to my belief that God is



love, that He REALY cares for us and REALY wants to saves all of us. I also enjoy the balanced view that He created certain constructs/Laws of nature that we are "bound" to. The law of love, if broken breaks the circle of love and trust, and therefore damages our relationship with Him (and others around us). I truly believe that God's will is to change our hearts (to restore in us love and trust), to save us from sin, while we are still at the mercy of the consequences of sin.

I recognize that email is not the best forum for these discussions, nor is English my first language. The bottom-line is that I want to encourage you to continue to spread His story. The Gospel of Jesus. The one that brings people closer to the real God, through the Holy Spirit's ministrations and through the lens of a living and loving Jesus that came to exemplify God's character on earth.

I have worked through "Healing the mind" and I am eager to learn more. I have distributed a number of copies of your first book to Church members (with mixed results I am afraid ;)).

Would you be able to ship the new DVDs to South Africa?

People have been getting restful minds because Of These DVD Seminars. - California

I received one of your copies of the three seminars and I am having a hard time in trying to keep them. Several my friends would like a copy of them. Could you send me 20 copies so I can pass them out to our leaders in our church. -Massachusetts

Wow, all the DVDs are free?! I don't know how you can afford it, but I would love to have all three sets. - Maryland

I am a Juvenile prison Chaplain. I work for the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. At the request of one of our volunteers I read your book The God Shaped Brain. I was challenged theologically, and confronted with a lot of great meditation material. All I know for sure is that the things that you speak about would do a lot to help the 165 bruised, broken, abused, neglected and genetically challenged male youth who reside within our razor wired prison fences. For that reason I am asking that you would send me your series, "God And Your Brain."

I have watched GOD AND YOUR BRAIN DVD you graciously sent me multiple times, and i realize that our church, needs to know this new enlightenment about our brain how it works. May I request again to have more copies, at least 10 of them if there are more left available. We will use this as one the tools for church planting in our city. Thank you very much. Canada

I just received the dvds today. Thank you so much. Dr. Jennings' seminars have been such a blessing to me. I am beginning to see God the Father as He really is... A God of Love...love beyond anything our finite minds can fathom. I am so thankful for the light about God's love that Dr. Jennings is sharing in his seminars and books. I am reading "The God Shaped Brain". What a wonderful book!!! I got it on Amazon. I will read it all the way through from cover to cover. It vindicates God's true character as our loving heavenly Father. Truly a God of Love. I am learning so much from Dr Jennings. This message is for the last days. It should be preached in every church. So many people would turn to God if they only knew how He really is. I am grateful for this ministry and will be praying for it and that the message will be spread everywhere. God bless all of you.... - California



I have sat at the feet of some pretty impressive and Godly people; Maxwell, Anderson, Stone, Ellquist, Gothard, are some of the names. These are human heroes I've met and whom I long to meet again. And as refreshed and encouraged as I've been by all these and more, Tim Jennings has thrown open a window the size of the whole wall on the sunny side of the room. Its like I had cataract surgery of the mind! I'm really almost speechless. - California

All three cases arrived within the last few days, and I have begun to share the DVD sets. Having the connection between scripture, science, and experience outlined so clearly makes seeking Truth a freeing rather than a scary or depressing experience. For the last couple of decades, God has been leading me to find truth through scripture and my experience. Looking back now, I see that He was using science as well, but I really hadn't recognized its part of the process. Seeing the Venn Diagram model of Truth incorporating all three avenues of God's revelation cleared so many things up for me! I am no longer at the mercy of those whose views take into account only one or two of God's avenues of revealing Himself and His truth. How freeing that is! – Oregon

These are just some of the emails we are getting. The message about God and His character and methods of love is changing lives and I want thank you each of you for your contribution and support in helping us share this message and encourage you to continue pressing forward, promoting this message as lives are being healed and minds are being set free.

I also want to make a personal request – I will be in an out throughout the year as different groups have scheduled me to come speak and present this material in their community. My request – don't let this class disintegrate if I am not here. Some people have suggested that this class is a Dr. Jennings' personality cult – rather than a group of people committed to this message about God. I know you don't follow me, you love the truth about God we cherish in this class.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Over the long...” thoughts?

What gives rulers the right to rule? Has anyone heard of “The Divine Right of Kings?” It was a theory from the middle ages that monarchs received their right to rule from God and as such could only be judged by God. Therefore, they were not subject to any court, law, church, or aristocracy.

This idea was supported particularly by Protestants as a way of diminishing the power of the Pope over the state.

King James I of England was a strong supporter of this idea and of course is the Monarch who commissioned the King James Bible.

Thoughts about this theory? Are kings above the law? Do monarchs have divine rights and can only be judged by God?

Interestingly, this idea has its roots, not in the Bible, but comes from Roman law. Doesn't it fit with Roman, imposed law, that a human ruler could have such absolute, arbitrary power? Who presents



God as ruling like this, absolute power, above all accountability, answerable to no one, creating rules without inherent consequence that required God to be the inflictor of punishment and pain to breakers of His rules.

This is an historic view from our church, from RH, February 18, 1890 par. 2:

Satan had accused God of requiring self-denial of the angels, when he knew nothing of what it meant himself, and when he would not himself make any self-sacrifice for others. This was the accusation that Satan made against God in heaven; and after the evil one was expelled from heaven, he continually charged the Lord with exacting service which he would not render himself. Christ came to the world to meet these false accusations, and to reveal the Father.

And this is from RH, September 7, 1897 par. 4:

As one in holy office, he [Lucifer] manifested an overbearing desire for justice, but it was a counterfeit of justice, which was entirely contrary to God's love and compassion and mercy.

What was the kind of justice, that was counterfeit, that Lucifer alleged God must perform? From the same author, the historic SDA view, found in DA 761:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan**; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

Satan presents God as a God who inflicts punishment for disobedience. This is false justice. This is the justice that stems from imposed law, this is the justice that created beings invent, because created beings can only impose rules, and then impose punishments for the rules they have created.

But the Creator operates on a different plane of existence. He constructs, He builds, He designs, He creates the very fabric of the cosmos, the protocols upon which all life, all nature operates. His laws are not imposed rules, but the design parameters for life itself.

Thus God's justice is the justice of restoration, healing, recreation, renewal, and allowing those deviant, who refuse healing, to reap what they have sewn.

But Satan alleges God is like human rulers, who impose rules and answers to no one.

But when we think about the divine right of kings, this idea that rulers are not subject to law, that only works when we accept the false view of law, imposed rules. Why? Because a ruler is still subject to the laws of health, the laws of nature, the law of liberty, and in fact, it was the violation by rulers of



the law of liberty, the abuse of liberty, that led to the rebellion of their subjects and the revolutions that eventually destroyed the divine right of kings doctrine.

If kings and rulers would have understood God's law, as the design protocol, and not operated upon the Roman concept of imposed law, perhaps they would have won the love and support of their subjects.

The lesson asks what is the best form of government, any thoughts? Does it matter the situation? What form of government is best in a sinless world versus a sinful world?

Do we govern children different than mature adults? Do immature adults need different governing than mature adults?

What is the difference? Which group gets more freedom? When liberties are being restricted by governments, what is the driving force? Is it love or fear? And is the government making rules for the most mature in society or the most impaired?

When speed limits are posted, are those limits for the best cars, with the best suspension, traction, and handling, with the most experienced drivers, or for the worse cars, with the worse handling and least experienced drivers?

In other words, the laws are on the dumb side of the population curve, for the most immature, the most ignorant, the least capable.

So what is the best form of government? In my opinion? Self-government in harmony with God's design! In Galatians we are told that when the Holy Spirit has His way in our lives we get certain traits of character the last is, "self-control" or self-government, the Greek, *enkratia* en – within, crat, like democrat, autocrat, means to exercise authority or control. Thus, the best form of government is a government in which all inhabitants are self-governing, operating upon God's original design, the law of love! Thus, the new covenant, the new plan, the new agreement, the new government God will have with His people?

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time, declares the Lord.
I will put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.
No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,'
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest. (Heb 8:10,11)

Thoughts?



Read Romans 13:1-7:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ² Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. ⁴ For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

⁶ This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷ Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Are all governments and leaders set up by God? Did God set up Adolf Hitler, Stalin, Hussein, Pol Pot?

Are such leaders the leaders God Himself chose? Or, does God allow humans to reap what they choose? When they choose to deviate from His plan, to value human and Satanic values, they love and prefer leaders who share such debased values and methods?

Why would God allow such leaders to ever get power and hurt so many innocents?

Because intelligent beings can be fooled by lies, flattery, innuendo, and the only way to expose a liar once the liar is loved and trusted is to what? Let the liar expose himself. Let the methods of the liar be carried to its conclusion.

Parents, how many times have you had to let your children experience something because they would not learn because you told them? Whether it be not to eat too many pieces of pie lest they get sick, to something more serious?

Once intelligent beings have believed a lie, only overwhelming evidence will displace the lie.

Thoughts about obeying human governments? The lesson asked in the first paragraph, "Should we always obey the governments?" What do you think in light of this Romans 13 passage?

Does this Bible passage give much leeway? Was the government of Rome a respecter of human rights? What is going on? Do the instructions of God change from time and place?

Read second paragraph, "Oppression and brutality..." thoughts?



Were Jesus' actions in the temple civil disobedience? I would not characterize it as such, but as theological correction. They were misrepresenting God in the service instituted by God to reveal His character. Jesus intervened to set the lesson right.

Why didn't Jesus go to the various pagan worship centers and overthrow their false worship tables, and idols etc?

What is the big point then? Jesus never taught, nor did His disciples practice, politics or attempts to reform earthly governments. Jesus taught explicitly that His kingdom was not of this world. Is the church on mission or off mission when it gets involved in promoting political agendas?

Should the church seek to control the state or seek to convert the hearts of men?

Is there a difference between the church mobilizing its membership and using its resources for political agenda, and a Christian relying on his relationship with God to give him wisdom in how he votes and acts as a citizen? For instance, if individuals in political office were converted to God's methods and operated like Daniel, would those individuals bring God's principles into the way they govern? Is that the same as the church seeking to control the state?

What method uses coercive tactics? What would lead Christians to want to use the state to legislate laws to force non-believers to practice lifestyle in harmony with Christian beliefs?

Where is the balance between granting liberty and promoting God's values and principles?

When societies make laws, where to draw the line? What laws intrude into personal conscience, and what laws are appropriate for social order?

- What about laws that require parents to get medical treatment for their children who are under 18, including antibiotics even if they believe such decisions violate God's will?
- What about laws that make it illegal to smoke hallucinogens, such as peyote, when it is part of certain religious rights to some American Indians?
- What about drafting individuals into the armed forces?
- What about laws regarding marriage and adoption?
- What about prohibition?
- What about legalizing marijuana, not just by prescription for medicinal uses, but for recreational use?
- What about blue laws, requiring stores to close for business on Sunday?
- What about restricting the sales of alcohol on Sunday?
- What about restricting the sales of alcohol and tobacco in your community?

Are there any lessons from history regarding states that try to enforce religious code upon people with a different belief system?

- Crusades
- Inquisition



- Witch burnings

What principles did Christ and His Apostles use? What do you think is the proper role for the church in today's world?

Can we win people to God's kingdom by force? What about by coercion, sanctions, believe in God or you cannot trade with America?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Unfortunately, some of..." thoughts

Is there a lesson in this for us? Throughout history has the state or the church been more active in opposing the gospel? Certainly, there have been some states that have opposed the gospel – Rome – initially through legal and military opposition, and later through infection of its ideas into the church, Communism, but throughout the landscape of human history, who has done more to obstruct the truth of God, civil powers or religious powers?

Isn't it interesting that the very institution set up by God, can become infected with beliefs and ideas that result in that institution misrepresenting God and opposing His methods, principles and agents?

What would cause people who claim to be on God's side to end up opposing Him?

Would it be, not actually knowing God and His methods? Wouldn't it be accepting false ideas about who God is, what He is like, what His law is, what His justice looks like and then practicing those false ideas?

What about today? How did Christ deal with religious leaders, who held to wrong God concepts, in His day? Did He or the Apostles spend time seeking out theological debates with the religious leaders? Did they seek out the religious leaders to get their approval of their message?

What did they do? They went to the people with the message of truth and how did religious leaders respond? They became threatened and used what tactics?

- They misrepresented Jesus – saying He had a demon
- They threatened people with disfellowship
- They accused Jesus of denying traditional beliefs
- They tried to twist Scripture to undermine Jesus' message
- They twisted Jesus words to make it appear He said things He didn't actually say
- They sought to confuse his followers
- They refused to embrace the truths and principles He taught

When they did confront Christ, seeking Him out to force a discussion, how did Jesus deal with them?



- He discerned their purpose, on the occasion when a person legitimately sought to find out the true intention of the law Jesus validated him
- But, when they were trying to trick Him He let them entrap themselves. When they asked by what authority He was teaching He said He would tell them if they would first answer His question, and He asked them by what authority was John's baptism....
- Other times He spoke in parables and had them incriminate themselves

The leaders in Christ's day had problems with authority – they believed authority rested in position, tradition, status, wealth, or the written word. They refused to recognize Jesus as authoritative,

- because He held no church office,
- because He was not taught in their theology department,
- because He didn't have a theology degree
- because He was not wealthy or come from a connected family
- because He didn't promote their traditions and man made rules
- because He wasn't exclusive and egotistical, he loved the non-Jews

What makes Jesus authoritative?

When an expert witness is called in to testify on a subject, what makes them an “authority” or authoritative? It is their knowledge of the subject matter. To the degree they can communicate reality/truth accurately they are authoritative.

Thus, truth, fact, reality is authoritative and God is truth, Jesus is the truth, the Word made flesh. But they refused to recognize it.

Today, many people suffer the same problem, they falsely believe authority comes from position. So if someone is pastor, conference president, chair department of theology, bishop, cardinal, pope – then by right of position what they say is authoritative.

This was one of the arguments put forth when we met with local church leaders. How could I question the senior pastor, he is the “Lord's anointed.”

Position doesn't make what one says true and only truth is authoritative. This is why I tell my patients, when I give them a copy of my first book, “Never believe anything because it is written in a book. Believe it only after you have thought it through, examined the evidence for yourself and found it to be true.”

The last paragraph states, “Finally, the miracles...” thoughts? What about miracles? What role should they play in our pursuit of truth? Are miracles reliable indicators of truth? Why or why not?

TUESDAY



The lesson notes that while most of the time Jesus' encounters with those in power ended "acrimoniously" that there are exceptions. They cite Nicodemus.

Thoughts about Nicodemus? What positive things can we say about him?

- He was willing to inquire
- He was willing to consider new ideas
- He was willing to be taught
- He was willing to follow new truth
- He was willing to admit he was wrong
- He was willing to accept Jesus, after investigation
- He didn't convert on emotions
- He didn't convert for political expediency
- He didn't convert to please others
- He didn't convert to avoid punishment

Then the lesson asks us to examine the centurion, He didn't need Christ to come personally; he only need Christ to command it and he believed it would be so. Thoughts about his faith? Where do you think this man's faith originated?

WEDNESDAY

The last sentence of the first paragraph states, "Whatever judgment they pronounce against Christ is ultimately the judgment they pronounce against themselves." Thoughts?

Why is it that the measure we use to judge others is the measure that is used to judge us?

Because our judgment of others is actually a reflection of the motives, character, principles and methods of our own heart. This is natural law at work. Our actions toward others reveal the very attributes of our own character. Do we promote mercy and love or vengeance and punishment? Do we operate on Design law, seeking to heal and restore, or imposed law seeking to stone and execute?

How do we represent God as judge and His judgments? Do we represent Him as a being who inflicts punishment and vengeance or do we represent Him as the Great Physician who intervenes in love with therapeutic judgments designed to heal?

Read last paragraph, "Likewise, Christ's..." thoughts?

What is the relationship between prayer and outcomes? Are we to pray for what we want? Are we to have any qualifiers? Do we allow, in our prayer life, for possibilities beyond our awareness and invite God to intervene to bring about His purposes, even overruling our request if He knows better? Or do we insist and plead for certain outcomes?

What does it mean to call listeners to a decision? A decision about what?



The classic question is “are you saved?” Do you like this question? Why or why not? Where does this question put the emphasis? Any better questions?

How about instead of asking people if they are saved, we instead ask, Do you know God – personally, as a friend? Do you walk with Him daily? Do you trust Him with your life, your eternal life? Do you trust outcomes to Him? Do you know Him well enough that you love Him and open your heart to Him inviting Him in all day long?

Are these better questions? Where is the focus? It is on God and our relationship with Him.

The “are you saved question” focuses on self and what must I do, and we too often boil it down to some formula that people can go through without ever actually coming to know God as Jesus revealed.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Christ’s earliest...” thoughts?

Notice they met in various places, but they didn’t actually have church buildings for worship until around 320 AD when Constantine outlawed home churches and required Christians worship in the worship centers set up by the state, which were the pagan worship centers, recently modified for Christians. This introduced the professional speaker, and moved Christian worship from community, discussion, fellowship, sharing, to spectators being entertained by the “Spiritual elite” who merit the special robes and elevated podiums.

Thoughts? Any impact on how we see God? Any impact on church parishioner relationships? Any impact on church leadership?

The lesson points out that political motives were frequently the motive for the rejection of the gospel and God’s witnesses. Do we have problems like that today?

Are politics limited to the state or are there politics within the church structure?

FRIDAY

The lesson points out that the powerful are often the most difficult to witness to, why might that be? What are some of the obstacles?

- Inaccessibility
- Guardedness of the powerful, conditioned to anticipate requests
- Star-struck mindset of the person witnessing – not treating them as equal?
- Fear of rejection by the powerful or just the opposite an over zealous belief in the need to “witness” to the powerful



Discipleship Lesson 10 1Q 2014

Discipling the Nations

SABBATH

Memory Text: “For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” Isaiah 56.7

Thoughts? What does this text mean?

Why is God’s house to be called a house of prayer for all nations?
What was the purpose of the Jewish Temple?

Does the phrase “my house” refer to the Jewish Temple?

Was the Jewish Temple the actual house of God? Or was it symbolic of God’s true house?

From Paul:

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's HOUSE built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord. And in him YOU too [you all] are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” Ephesians 2:19-22.

From Peter:

“As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- YOU also, like LIVING STONES, are being built into a SPIRITUAL HOUSE to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet 2:4,5.

Where does God actually dwell? What is God’s true house? Then, in light of this, what does it mean that God’s house is to be a house of prayer for all nations?

Read first paragraph, “Christ’s message...” thoughts?

Why is the gospel of Christ for everyone?

- Because all humans are part of the same creation, descendants of Adam, infected with the same condition and in need of the same remedy
- Because God’s government operates upon design law, protocols upon which life is constructed, and these laws, these protocols, work in all lives whether the persons realize it or not, just like gravity
- Because only in harmony with God’s design is there life, why?



What is the message of Christ that is to go to everyone?

How would you describe it?

It is the gospel of Jesus so what was His message?

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? **Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.** How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; (John 14:6-11)

Why is this good news? What is the war over? 2Cor 10:3-5 – the knowledge of God. Satan lied about God and those lies broke the circle of love and trust and broken love and trust results in fear and selfishness, we are infected with hearts deviant from God’s design.

What is the need, the purpose, the reason that Christ perfectly revealed the Father? To dispel lies and win us back to trust? So in response to this, what are we to do? What is our work?

⁸ Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” JN 6:28,29

What does this mean, to believe in the one he sent? To believe what? To believe that He paid some legal price? Is that what Jesus said? Or would it mean to believe in Him means to believe in what He taught, who He was, the truth He revealed about the Father and the Father’s methods and principles, and thereby be won back to trust in Him and His Father?

What did Jesus say is the result of this restored trust with the Father?

“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do... I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world.” John 17:3,4,6

So Jesus is the perfect revelation of God, to destroy the lies of Satan and win us back to trust, that we might truly know God and thus, in trust, be renewed back to God’s original ideal and live eternally.

What did Jesus teach regarding God’s law and government?

⁷ Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” MT 22:37-40

What is the law of God according to the gospel of Jesus? The law of love! And how does that



function?

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read John 12:20-32:

²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

²³ Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

²⁷ “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name!”

Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰ Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”

What do you hear about the gospel of Jesus in this passage? What is the gospel in this passage?

Do you hear God’s law, the law of love, described in this text? What do you hear? Do you notice Jesus uses nature to teach truth, in addition to Scripture – He uses the integrative evidence based approach.

Here is this passage from my paraphrase:

^{John 12:20} Now some Greeks who had come to worship at the Feast, ²¹ came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked, “Sir we would sure like to see Jesus. Would it be possible to meet him?” ²² Philip went and told Andrew; and Andrew and Philip together went and told Jesus.

^{John 12:23} Jesus replied, “It is now time for the Son of Man to have his character and nature fully revealed. ²⁴ I tell you the clear truth, unless a kernel of wheat gives itself up to be buried and die, it will remain a lone and a solitary seed. But if it surrenders itself and dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ The man who practices the principle of survival of the fittest, and loves his own life so much that he will kill in order to preserve it – will ultimately destroy himself and lose his life. But the man who loves others more than himself and is willing to give his life freely so that others may live is back in harmony with the principles of love, upon which life is based, and will preserve his life and live eternally. ²⁶ Whoever wants to serve with me in my healing ministry must practice my methods, value my principles and follow my ways. All those who serve with me will be with me where I am. My Father will fully heal, restore, and exalt all those who truly serve with me in this way.



John 12:27 “My heart is heavy, but what shall I say? ‘Father, deliver me from this hour?’ No, my entire purpose for being here is to come to this very hour. ²⁸ Father, may your true character and nature be fully revealed and may Satan’s lies about you be fully exposed!”

Then a voice came from heaven, “I have revealed my true character and nature, and will reveal it again.” ²⁹ The crowd, with their darkened minds couldn’t understand the voice; some thought it was thunder, but others thought an angel had spoken to him.

John 12:30 Jesus said, “This voice was to strengthen your faith, not mine. ³¹ Now is the time for the infection of selfishness and sin in this world to be fully diagnosed and revealed as destructive; now, Satan, the prince of this selfishness world will be driven out into the open, out of the shadows, out from behind his lies and distortions about God and God’s methods, out where all can see him as the murderer he truly is and thus out of the hearts of all who love me. ³² When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all intelligences throughout the universe to me.”

Thoughts?

What is the gospel of Jesus? Jesus described it in His sermon on the mount:

MT 5:3 "Blessed are those who are humble in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- The kingdom of God is the kingdom of humility, the kingdom of service, the kingdom of giving, the kingdom of love!

MT 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

- The kingdom of God is the kingdom of tender hearts, the kingdom that is heartbroken at cruelty, unkindness, pride, the kingdom that mourns as it sees people living for the kingdom of the world!

MT 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

- The kingdom of God is the kingdom of meekness, the kingdom that does not seek to serve self, the kingdom that puts others first, the kingdom of beneficence!

MT 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

- The kingdom of God is filled with people hungering to be like Jesus, longing to see God’s face, who have developed minds and hearts which love truth, who love to lift up others, who care more about doing good, doing what’s right than what happens to themselves.

MT 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

- The kingdom of God is forgiving, merciful, kind. The kingdom of God is compassionate to the homosexual, the abortionist, the prostitute, the murderer. The kingdom of God longs for their healing, their restoration in righteousness, their friendship!



MT 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

- The kingdom of God is pure, holy and true – no fear, no selfishness, no cruelty, no unkindness!

MT 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

- The kingdom of God is a unifying kingdom, a kingdom that seeks to reconcile, to heal, to restore, a kingdom of peace. A kingdom reaching out to all peoples, of all nations, of all races, of all cultures, of all backgrounds – through all time to restore oneness with God for all eternity!

MT 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- The Kingdom of Heaven – is at war with the kingdom of the world – the kingdom of the world will use its methods of coercion, control, intimidation, beating, imprisonment, sanction, legislation – But blessed are you who are persecuted for presenting the truth about God in love and leaving others free, for living like Jesus lived – For yours is the kingdom of heaven!

What is the message of Jesus? Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” John 18:36

What is the message that is to go to the world? God and His Kingdom are not like kingdoms of this world. God’s kingdom is the kingdom of love, truth, freedom, righteousness, purity, holiness. It is the kingdom upon which life is built to operate. God is not the source of death; God is the source of life!

Are we taking the message of Jesus to the world, or are we taking a false message, a distorted message, a message that misrepresents God and His kingdom to the world?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Ancient prophets foretold...” thoughts?

Is converting people to a scripturally based faith the same thing as converting people to the kingdom of God?

According to the Christian Encyclopedia there are 34,000 different Christian groups all claiming their beliefs are scripturally based. Are all those groups doing God’s will? Are all those groups accurately revealing God’s kingdom?

Did the Jews 2000 years ago base their religion on scripture? Were they part of God’s kingdom? Jesus said they were of their Father the devil.



How can it be, that people can value Scripture, cite Scripture, base their beliefs on Scripture and still crucify Jesus, burn people at the stake, shoot abortion doctors, stone the prostitute, burn witches, picket homosexuals, teach that God will use His power to torture and kill the disobedient?

Because they use Scripture piecemeal and separated from the other evidences God has given to anchor our understanding.

Jesus used Scripture, but also used nature and experience and harmonized all three in His teachings. Do we present the truth as Jesus did? Then we must integrate all three threads, the distorted views of God occur when the three threads are separated.

What about the idea that Jesus is the way to the Father, that there is no other name under heaven whereby men can be saved? What does this mean? Does it mean people must hear the life history of Jesus earthly sojourn? Does it mean they must take an affirmative stand accepting Him as their Savior? Does it mean they must have certain rituals, such as baptism done? Or does it mean that whoever is saved it is only saved because of what Jesus has accomplished, whether the individual realizes it or not?

Did Enoch get baptized? Did Elijah know the earthly life story of Jesus? Were they saved through some other path, or was Jesus the only path to the Father?

How could they be saved without knowing the earthly history of Jesus? How could they be saved without baptism?

Or were they baptized? What is true baptism, dunking the body in water, or immersing the mind/character/heart with the Holy Spirit for internal transformation and regeneration?

Did Enoch and Elijah experience renewal of heart and character? Did they have the law written on their hearts?

What do you make of Paul's comments in Romans, notice first Paul says in Romans 1:20

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Then he goes on to say this in chapter two:

¹² All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, **who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law,** ¹⁵ **since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts,** their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) Romans 2:12-15



What is the new covenant?

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

- ¹¹ No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,'
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest. Heb 8:10,11

What is the new covenant, writing the law on the heart, and when that happens, who do they know? They know God and what did Jesus say is life eternal? Knowing God.

Wait a minute – is Paul saying people can know God without hearing the gospel message, without the Scriptures being presented? How, by nature, God's divine nature has been seen in what he has made so that men are without excuse.

And what is seen in nature? God's design protocols for life, His law, His methods, and thus His character, which is the law of love, the protocol of giving. And nature reveals that only in harmony with this design is life possible. Those who see this in nature and love it and choose it open their heart to God's Spirit, even though they do it ignorantly, yet the Spirit still heals them.

Then how do they come to God through Christ, how is Jesus the only way if they come through nature?

He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Col 1:15-17

And Jesus procured the Remedy to cure our condition. Thus, when people see God's character in nature, open their hearts to the movement of the Spirit, they come through the evidence Christ has provided when Christ made earth, and the Spirit takes what Christ achieved in their behalf and reproduces it in them, thus they are healed by Christ. Christ is the way and means of restoration to God, even for those who have yet to hear about Him.

Thoughts?

This is an historic SDA view:

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the



missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God. {DA 638.2}

Don't you love it to know that God isn't some arbitrary being who requires some facts be understood, some ritual be enacted, some word be spoken before a person can be saved?

Read third and fourth paragraph, "Israel was to be the light..." thoughts?

What impaired Israel from fulfilling their mission of being lights to the world about the true nature of God and His kingdom?

- False ideas about God
- Failure to move past symbolism
- Believing ritual had saving power
- Pride and selfishness
- Legal religious constructs
- Misunderstanding God's kingdom and law, believing God operated like human governments and required appeasement
- Believing the rituals were primarily a means to save themselves, i.e. a religion focused on personal salvation, rather than realizing that it was all designed to reveal God to them

Do we struggle with any of these problems today?

Do we:

- Have False ideas about God
- Fail to move past symbolism
- Believe ritual had saving power
- Struggle with pride and selfishness
- Promote legal religious constructs
- Misunderstand God's kingdom and law,
- Believe God operates like human governments and requires appeasement
- Teach a religion focused on personal salvation, that puts self at the center, rather than keeping the truth about God at the center

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Christ wanted His own..." thoughts?



What about us? Do we need to wake up? Is the church asleep? Remember the parable of the 10 virgins, both the wise and foolish were asleep.

What puts us to sleep?

- Boredom
- Fatigue
- Anesthesia

Boredom – the long delay, get stuck in routines, forget our mission, and get caught up into a boring, uninspiring religious routine. Our minds shut down, we quit growing, quit advancing, quit working for God’s kingdom, we become complacent and fall asleep.

Fatigue – we get busy with our responsibilities in the world, or perhaps the church, and exhaust ourselves and stop our growth and ministry

Anesthesia – wine – not mere physical alcohol and drugs, but spiritual wine, false doctrines that put people to sleep – the wine of Babylon, the idea that God’s kingdom is like Rome, imposed law, which requires God to punish, but no worries, you can accept a legal payment, made by Jesus and you are saved. Boom, go to sleep now, all is secure.

Read bottom green section, “What about us?...”

Thoughts? What advantages did the Jews have?

- Sabbath
- Feast Days
- Sanctuary service
- Inspired writings
- Prophets
- Jesus Himself in person
- The 10 Commandments
- The civil and health laws

How were these advantages? How were they turned to be a disadvantage? What advantages do we have?

- The Inspired record
- History of Patriarchs, Prophets, OT, Jesus, Dark Ages
- Science
- The 10 Commandments
- Modern technologies in spreading the message
- Understanding of God’s design and methods
- Other advantages



Are any of these turned to disadvantages? How?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Some of the leaders’...” thoughts? Why? What caused their animosity and hatred of Jesus?

They also said He had a devil and was a Samaritan, what was the purpose of saying such things? To discredit Him and undermine other people’s views of Him and get others to not listen to Him.

Is this strategy used today? How? Calling people a heretic, or...

And Jesus countered their attacks by pointing out what mattered was character not ethnic origin. Does this apply today? Does character matter or is it genetics? What is more important, character or day of worship, character or denominational affiliation, character or diet?

Are we vulnerable to be just as biased and prejudiced as they, only our biases are related to doctrines and church affiliations and religious practices, yet we still fail to see what matters is character. Are we like Jesus, has fear and selfishness been replaced with love and trust?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “God’s final work...” thoughts?

What is the message that is to penetrate all racial, ethnic, national and geographic boundary?

It is the message of the Creator – the first angel, to worship the Designer, a call to design law, the protocols upon which life is constructed, and a refocusing on God’s true character and methods of love. This penetrates all these divisions. But Roman imposed law causes division, focuses on self, and stirs up contention.

It doesn’t matter ones race, geographic location, denomination – every human needs to breath, drink water, eat food, there are design laws upon which life is created, break those laws and suffer the painful results. We are called to present God as creator and His law as the protocols of life and show people how only in harmony with God’s design is there life, health and happiness.

We are to call people to reject the dictator views of God, to reject the imposed law construct the penal substitutionary lie that has infected Christianity and obstructed Christ’s return.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3



Discipleship Lesson 11 1Q 2014

Discipling Spiritual Leaders

Before we start class I wanted to share another email I received. I am getting about 100 emails or more per week from around the world. This is another representative of what we are experiencing all over.

I can't believe how well your DVDs took off in our church. Glory to God. I gave out fifty copies in Sabbath School within twenty minutes more and more members were requesting DVDs. The next Sabbath other church members were coming to me reporting, "I heard some good news about the DVDs you gave out, do you have anymore?" One of my spiritual mentors reported that this was the most powerful messages he has ever received and feels blessed for receiving it. I truly believe this message is right on time, as many people are turning away from the church due to the presentation of dictator God. So many forget we serve a God of love. People's faces are changed after viewing this DVD, I know God inspired you to create these series. Thank You Tim. I have bought 5 copies of "The God Shaped Brain" and I wont stop purchasing this book until every Sabbath School Teacher, Elder, Pastor and leaders in the church has one. It will take me some time, but it is my mission. Can you send me 50 more copies of the "God and Your Brain DVD", "Healing The Mind DVD" and "Truth, Love and Freedom Bible Study Guides. I am taking up a collection of a free will offering to send your ministry as you are much needed in this day and time. – Massachusetts

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Christ's earthly sojourn..." thoughts? Whom should Jesus select? What qualities should the persons possess that would be selected to be Jesus' Apostles?

Here is a view from more than a century ago:

The work of Jesus was to reveal the character of the Father, and to unfold the truth which He Himself had spoken through prophets and apostles; but there was found no place for the truth in those wise and prudent men. Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, **had to pass by the self-righteous Pharisees, and take his disciples from unlearned fishers and men of humble rank.** These who had **never been to the rabbis, who had never sat in the schools of the prophets, who had not been members of the Sanhedrin, whose hearts were not bound about with their own ideas,**--these He took and educated for His own use. He could make them as new bottles for the new wine of His kingdom. These were the babes to whom the Father could reveal spiritual things; **but the priests and rulers, the scribes and Pharisees, who claimed to be the depositaries of knowledge, could give no room for the principles of Christianity,** afterward taught by the apostles of Christ. The chain of truth, link after link, was given to those who realized their own ignorance, and were willing to learn of the great Teacher. {5BC 1088.9}

Whom should Jesus choose?



I like to remember, while Jesus did not choose one theologian to be amongst His Apostles, He did choose a physician – Dr. Luke! He wasn't against education, only certain types of education. Notice who else He chose, and see if we can discern what their educations had in common?

He also chose an accountant, Matthew, and fishermen, and Jesus Himself was a carpenter.

What do all these professions have in common? What professions did He noticeably not choose?

- Lawyers
- Theologians
- Priests

What is the significant difference between the education of doctors, accountants, fishermen, carpenters and lawyers, theologians and priests?

The first group all worked with and were educated to understand natural law:

- Doctors – the laws of health
- Accountants – mathematics
- Fisherman and carpenters the laws of nature and cause and effect

But lawyers, theologians and priests were all educated on imposed law; they worked in an arbitrary world of rules, restrictions, rituals, and legalities, that had been disconnected from the reality of the fabric of the cosmos. Thus, they presented things disconnected from their true importance, and taught an arbitrary deity. Thus these professions are particularly vulnerable to distorting the truth about God.

Jesus chose those who were open and connected to God's law in nature, His law of design, and thus with these minds he could enlighten with the greater truths of the Cosmic Conflict and the purpose of His mission.

So, what other qualities did His Apostles possess?

- Teachableness
- An open mind
- A desire to know God
- A longing to be better people
- A desire to help others
- A willingness to admit they were wrong
- Life experience in the natural world
- Yet all were imperfect, infected with fear and selfishness and in need of renewal of heart

Why do you think Christ chose 12? He didn't choose 10 or 13 or some other number, why 12?

Was it because He was making a statement that He was replacing the 12 tribes of Israel with a new system? As we read last week:



“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's HOUSE **built on the foundation of the apostles** and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord. And in him YOU too [you all] are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” Ephesians 2:19-22.

Was Jesus building His true House, of which the house built by the Jews was only a little theater?

Read second paragraph, “Choosing effectively...” thoughts?

Did Jesus choose Judas? Here is an historic SDA perspective:

While Jesus was preparing the disciples for their ordination, **one who had not been summoned urged his presence among them.** It was Judas Iscariot, **a man who professed to be a follower of Christ. He now came forward, soliciting a place in this inner circle of disciples.** With great earnestness and apparent sincerity he declared, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Jesus neither repulsed nor welcomed him, but uttered only the mournful words: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Matthew 8:19, 20.

Judas believed Jesus to be the Messiah; and by joining the apostles, he hoped to secure a high position in the new kingdom. This hope Jesus designed to cut off by the statement of His poverty. {DA 293.2}

What motive did Judas have for joining the apostles? Greed, selfishness, self-advancement.

What do you think about Christ's response, neither welcoming, nor rejecting, but articulating His earthly poverty?

Consider the different reactions and potential outcomes had Jesus done the following:

- Welcomed Judas – what is the potential result? Judas feels validated in his motive, and the other disciples have even more confidence in him
- Reject Judas – Judas feels rejected, and accuses Jesus of being just as bigoted as the Pharisees, not truly open to all who want to come to Him
- Tell Judas of His poverty – provide evidence for Judas to evaluate and consider, which has the potential to lead Judas to reexamine his motives, repent and become a true follower, or realize Jesus is not the worldly messiah he is looking for and thus, on his own, leave.

Does God work with us like this today? Give us evidence and leave it to us to consider its import and draw our conclusions?

Read third paragraph, “Having chosen...” Thoughts?

What is “spiritual authority?” Here is another historic SDA perspective:



Christ's words contain nothing that is nonessential. The Sermon on the Mount is a wonderful production, yet so simple that a child can study it without misunderstanding. The mount of beatitudes is a symbol of the spiritual elevation on which Christ ever stood. Every word He uttered came from God, and **He spoke with the authority of heaven.** "**The words that I speak unto you,**" He said, "**they are spirit, and they are life.**" John 6:63. His teaching is full of ennobling, saving truth, to which men's highest ambitions and most profound investigations can bear no comparison. He was alive **to the terrible ruin hanging over the race,** and **He came to save souls by His own righteousness,** bringing to the world definite assurance of hope and complete relief. {Counsels to Parents and Teachers 439.1}

What do you hear described? A list of rules, or something more? Is heavenly authority the authority of raw power, intimidation, and ability to destroy the disobedient? Or is it something else?

What do you think of this warning from *Conflict and Courage*:

No error accepted by the Christian world strikes more boldly against the authority of Heaven, . . . none is more pernicious in its results, than the modern doctrine, so rapidly gaining ground, that God's law is no longer binding upon men. {CC 210.3}

The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God. Upon this battle we are now entering. {CC 210.5}

What law? And nothing strikes more boldly against the authority of Heaven than to attack God's law – i.e. How is God's law attacked and how does that strike at the authority of heaven?

What does it mean to suggest that God's law is no longer binding on men? Do they suggest the law of gravity is no longer binding, or the laws of health, or the laws of thermodynamics. So, to suggest the law of God is no longer binding on me, means what? It means they have attacked God's law much more perniciously than simply saying we don't have to obey. God's law is attacked by replacing the design protocols, the parameters upon which life is built, with the idea of an Imperial Roman law, which is a list of rules without inherent consequence.

And many Christians fall right into the changed law trap arguing how this commandment or that commandment was changed by God, but is an arbitrary test of obedience. In other words, many of those arguing for the honor of God's law are actually spreading the lie and don't even know it.

How does the idea that God's law is not the design protocols but imposed rules attack the authority of heaven?

It represents God as dictator, representing His law as a list of rules that the rule giver must externally enforce, strikes at heaven's authority because it is a lie, and as such breaks trust and incites rebellion; AND because it is a violation of the law of liberty which incites rebellion, and because it misrepresents God as a dictator which instills rebellion.



Here is from a book called *The Desire of Ages*:

There stood the young Galilean [Jesus], bearing no earthly honor or royal badge. Surrounding Him were priests in their rich apparel, rulers with robes and badges significant of their exalted station, and scribes with scrolls in their hands, to which they made frequent reference. Jesus stood calmly before them, with the dignity of a king. **As one invested with the authority of heaven**, He looked unflinchingly upon His adversaries, who had rejected and despised His teachings, and who thirsted for His life. They had assailed Him in great numbers, but their schemes to ensnare and condemn Him had been in vain. Challenge after challenge He had met, **presenting the pure, bright truth in contrast to the darkness and errors of the priests and Pharisees**. He had set before these leaders *their real condition*, and the **retribution sure to follow persistence in their evil deeds**. The warning had been faithfully given. Yet another work remained for Christ to do. Another purpose was still to be accomplished. {DA 610.1}

The interest of the people in Christ and His work had steadily increased. **They were charmed with His teaching, but they were also greatly perplexed. They had respected the priests and rabbis for their intelligence and apparent piety. In all religious matters they had ever yielded implicit obedience to their authority.** Yet they now saw these men trying to cast discredit upon Jesus, a teacher whose virtue and knowledge shone forth the brighter from every assault. They looked upon the lowering countenances of the priests and elders, and there saw discomfiture and confusion. **They marveled that the rulers would not believe on Jesus, when His teachings were so plain and simple.** They themselves knew not what course to take. With eager anxiety they watched the movements of those whose counsel they had always followed. {DA 611.1}

What authority did Jesus wield? The authority of heaven, which is what? Truth and love, and He exposed the true “condition” of the Jewish leadership – which is what? A diagnosis, it is reality, it is not a legal condition, but a state of being. Their hearts were deviant from God’s design. They were in a terminal condition and believed in a false remedy, thus they only worsened. The retribution, was not an imposed punishment by God, but the inevitable pain and suffering that unremedied sin brings.

Christ’s teaching was simple, and appealed to the people. What obstructed the people from fully embracing His teaching? The church leadership, the theologians, why? Because the people had been conditioned to surrender their thinking to others. They had been deceived into believing that authority rests in rank, church office, or position, rather than learning that genuine authority is in truth, the reality of the cosmos, which originates in God and His character of love!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Information was an...” thoughts? Do you agree with this? Is there a difference between information and truth? What is the difference between information and truth?

What did Jesus mean when He said, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free”? Jn 8:32

What of this commentary on the work of the Holy Spirit:



The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. **It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind.** By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. **Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart.** Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

Can bad information, lies, damage? Can they destroy? Can good information, truth, heal?

The lesson points out that "Biblical knowledge coupled with God's Divine Spirit form a spiritual combination that transforms individuals and societies."

Is Biblical knowledge different from information?

The fourth paragraph states, "Christianity is not..." thoughts? What is the balance between truth, knowledge, facts and experience?

The integrative evidence based approach, requires harmony of all three. Satan wants to split the three threads, experience alone leads to mysticism or fanaticism, whereas scientific facts alone lead to godlessness, Biblical facts alone lead to distortions, confusion and ultimately false religions that misrepresent God and abuse others.

We need to harmonize the three threads.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Twenty-first century disciple-makers..." thoughts?

Absolutely, we need to be acquainted with Scripture, but what does it mean authentic spiritual information?

Are they saying if it doesn't come from Scripture it is not authentic spiritual information? And if not authentic, then what? Fraudulent? Are they suggesting that Scripture is the only place for authentic spiritual information?

But, can the Scripture also be a place where people claim authority for false spiritual ideas?

Let's give an example – there is a spiritual idea taught by some that God predetermines who will be saved and who will be lost, some even teach God predetermines who will be raped, who will be molested, who will go to prison, who will die in car crashes, that we have no free will choice, God is Sovereign and thus is in control and has predetermined some for eternal hell and others for eternal salvation.



They use texts like:

What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses,
“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

¹⁶ It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” ¹⁸ Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. Rom 9:16-18

Those who teach predestination would say they are basing their beliefs upon the Bible. Yet, those who teach freewill choice, that we decide our destiny, not God, use passages like:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. Jn 3:16-18

How can we tell which view is right, both say they use the Bible?

We use the integrative evidenced based approach. We examine the Scripture in light of God’s design laws. One of those laws, the law of liberty. Love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom. Once we understand this law, it is a predictable and reproducible law, then we know that the interpretation of Scripture that violates freedom cannot be right, we must find another understanding. Also, what kind of being would God be, if He predetermined everyone’s choices?

So how do we understand the Romans text? From my paraphrase:

^{9:14} How shall we interpret this? Is God unfair? Is God arbitrary or unjust? Absolutely not! In no way! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses,

“I choose to be merciful to all mankind, and I will have compassion on the entire human race.”

^{9:16} Our healing doesn’t depend on some effort, desire or work on our part, but on the fact that God is merciful and offers the Remedy freely to everyone. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says of Pharaoh: “I raised you up so that I might pour out my truth upon you and that my character might be known throughout the entire world. And even though you resisted me and fought against me I was patient and merciful with you.” ¹⁸ Therefore, God is merciful to whom he chooses, and stern to those he chooses.

Were God’s actions to Pharaoh merciful or unmerciful to him? Is a parent merciful or unmerciful to give their child vaccines? If your 3 y/o child is playing with lighter fluid and matches and you take them with a severe chastisement are you being merciful or unmerciful?



What was Pharaoh doing before God sent Moses? And because God's universe operates upon design law, what impact does worshipping false God's have upon the worshipper? It is destructive, damages the mind, warps the character and ultimately destroys the individual.

Was God's actions against Egypt punishments or therapeutic interventions to reveal the impotence of the Egyptian god's and lead Pharaoh out of darkness, where his terminal condition was only worsening, into the truth where he could experience eternal healing?

This week Dr. George Graves sent me an article I had not come across before, one of the historic documents filled with great insights. Here is a portion:

"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Before this opening of their understanding, the disciples had not understood the spiritual meaning of what Christ had taught them. **And it is necessary now that the minds of God's people should be opened to understand the Scriptures. To say that a passage means just this and nothing more, that you must not attach any broader meaning to the words of Christ than we have in the past, is saying that which is not actuated by the Spirit of God. The more we walk in the light of the truth, the more we shall become like Christ in spirit in character and in the manner of our work, and the brighter will the truth become to us. As we behold it in the increasing light of revelation, it will become more precious than we first estimated it from a casual hearing or examination. The truth, as it is in Jesus, is capable of constant expansion, of new development, and like its divine Author it will become more precious and beautiful; it will constantly reveal deeper significance, and lead the soul to aspire for more perfect conformity to its exalted standard. Such understanding of the truth will elevate the mind and transform the character to its divine perfection....** {RH, October 21, 1890 par. 1}

It is not God that puts the blinder before the eyes of men or makes their hearts hard; it is the light which God sends to his people, to correct their errors, to lead them in safe paths, but which they refuse to accept,—it is this that blinds their minds and hardens their hearts. They choose to turn from the light, to stubbornly walk in sparks of their own kindling, and the Lord positively declares that they shall lie down in sorrow. When one ray of light which the Lord sends is not acknowledged, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned, and so the darkness will constantly increase until it is night to the soul. Christ said, "How great is that darkness!" {RH, October 21, 1890 par. 3}

What kind of law is being described here?

Did God harden Pharaoh's heart? Without the truth presented Pharaoh would have had no opportunity to reject it and his heart would not have been as hard as it ended up. Did God present the truth to Pharaoh for the purpose of hardening his heart? No! Who was responsible for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart?



So, to whom does God want to have mercy? Everyone! And to whom does God want to harden – from His heart motive, no one, but from the outworking of His law of love and liberty, God wants people to be free and therefore experience what their freedom brings.

What makes an authentic Spiritual experience? The Holy Spirit – without the Holy Spirit the Scriptures are not useful, without the Holy Spirit church is not helpful, without the Holy Spirit prayer is not beneficial, what about Christ's death, can we benefit from it without the Holy Spirit?

Here is a historic Adventist View:

The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead,** who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. **It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure.** Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. **Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.** {DA 671.2}

Of the Spirit Jesus said, "He shall glorify Me." The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. **The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.** {DA 671.3}

"When He [the Spirit of truth] is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." **The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit.** This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. **Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit will it quicken the conscience or transform the life.** One might be able to present the letter of the word of God, he might be familiar with all its commands and promises; but **unless the Holy Spirit sets home the truth, no souls will fall on the Rock and be broken.** No amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light without the co-operation of the Spirit of God. The sowing of the gospel seed will not be a success unless the seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven. Before one book of the New Testament was written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying apostles. Then the testimony of their enemies was, "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." Acts 5:28. {DA 671.4}

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "It is of no small..." thoughts?



Why were they not graduates from the Jewish educational system? Why did Jesus not go to that system, they wanted him at age 12, why didn't he attend?

Here is another historic view:

The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother's knee. As He advanced from childhood to youth, **He did not seek the schools of the rabbis.** He needed not the education to be obtained from such sources; for God was His instructor. {DA 70.1}

The question asked during the Saviour's ministry, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" does not indicate that Jesus was unable to read, but merely that He had not received a rabbinical education. John 7:15. **Since He gained knowledge as we may do,** His intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures shows how diligently His early years were **given to the study of God's word. And spread out before Him was the great library of God's created works. He who had made all things studied the lessons which His own hand had written in earth and sea and sky.** Apart from the unholy ways of the world, **He gathered stores of scientific knowledge from nature.** He studied the life of plants and animals, and the life of man. From His earliest years He was possessed of one purpose; He lived to bless others. For this He **found resources in nature;** new ideas of ways and means flashed into His mind as He studied plant life and animal life. Continually He was seeking to draw from things seen illustrations by which to present the living oracles of God. The parables by which, during His ministry, He loved to teach His lessons of truth show how open His spirit was to the influences of nature, and how He had gathered the spiritual teaching from the surroundings of His daily life. {DA 70.2}

Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did. As we try to become acquainted with our heavenly Father through His word, angels will draw near, our minds will be strengthened, our characters will be elevated and refined. We shall become more like our Saviour. **And as we behold the beautiful and grand in nature, our affections go out after God.** While the spirit is awed, the soul is invigorated by coming in contact with the Infinite **through His works.** Communion with God through prayer develops the mental and moral faculties, and the spiritual powers strengthen as we cultivate thoughts upon spiritual things. {DA 70.4}

Did you notice Jesus not only studied Scripture, but science and nature as well and integrated them in His teaching? Did you also notice that each of us can learn this way as well?

Here is another historic perspective:

Jesus did not go to these schools, for they taught many things that were not true. Instead of God's Word, the sayings of men were studied, and often these were contrary to that which God had taught through His prophets. {The Story of Jesus 30.4}



God Himself by His Holy Spirit instructed Mary how to bring up His Son. Mary taught Jesus from the **Holy Scriptures, and He learned to read and study them for Himself.** {SJ 30.5}

Jesus also loved to study the wonderful things which God had made, in the earth and in the sky. In this book of nature He saw the trees and plants and animals, and the sun and the stars. {SJ 30.6}

Day by day He watched them, and tried to learn lessons from them, **and to understand the reason of things.** {SJ 30.7}

Holy angels were with Him, and helped Him to learn from these things about God. Thus, as He grew in height and strength, He grew also in knowledge and wisdom. {SJ 30.8}

Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did. We should spend our time in learning only that which is true. Falsehood and fables will do us no good. {SJ 30.9}

Only the truth is of any value, and this we may learn from God's Word and from His works. As we study these things the angels will help us to understand. {SJ 31.1}

Once again what method did Jesus use? The Integrative-Evidence Based approach. One of the reasons we have such problems with distorted views about God in the church today is the theory of Sola Scriptura, that we can only use Scripture and other threads of evidence should be excluded. This is false. **We are not to exclude or discard or in any way devalue Scripture, but our understanding of Scripture must be harmonized with nature and experience.**

Jesus also studied as a child to understand the reason for things, what does this mean? It means there are reasons, that God's laws are not lists of rules, but actual protocols upon which life is built. Thus, nature reveals it.

Christianity has been so infected with Imperial Roman law concepts that we have forgotten so much.

The schools in Jesus' day had become infected with so many distortions about God that they were ineffective in teaching and actually darkened minds. Jesus said of the Pharisees that when they won a convert they made him twice the son of hell, how? By darkening their mind with useless ideas and distortions about God.

Are our schools in danger of this? Do we have distortions about God being taught in our schools? Are we teaching our young people to avoid integrating the three threads of evidence? Are we teaching them to believe things that don't make sense? Are we teaching ideas that faith doesn't require evidence, that we shouldn't ask questions, we should just take the Bible as it reads?

What are these teachers afraid of? The truth sets free, and loses nothing by close investigation and inquiry, but lies, falsehood, distortion, misunderstanding all get exposed with investigation of evidence.



The lesson points out that Jesus was not against education, or those who were educated. What was Jesus against in regard to education? He was against false education, i.e. teaching lies, teaching distortions, teaching faulty methods and principles, but not true education which teach His methods, strengthen the mind, and ability to discern.

But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Heb 5:14

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Future generations...” thoughts? Does the success of a method mean it should be studied and practiced? If so, which has more adherents, Christianity, or Eastern Meditation practices? Which has thus far been more successful?

We need to study methods that are in harmony with God’s methods, character and principles, not simply on how it turns out.

Throughout earth’s history how many have actually usually been on God’s side?

- Noah’s preaching – how many responded?
- Moses teaching – how did the generations do?
- Elijah – how many on his side?
- What about fertility worship? How well did it do through the generation? Even today, 68% of Christian men use porn on a regular basis. The advertising industry uses sex to sell, should we use this because it gets such good sales results?

The third paragraph states: “Jesus established His kingdom and exemplified the principles that would perpetuate its growth.”

What is His kingdom and what are His principles?

- Truth
- Love
- Freedom
- Honesty
- Industry
- Determination
- Hope
- Patience
- Kindness
- Compassion
- Helpfulness
- Accountability
- Sewing and reaping/ allowing people to reap results in order to learn
- Humility
- Others?

FRIDAY

Discuss question 3



Discipleship Lesson 12 1Q 2014

The Harvest and the Harvesters

We continue to receive numerous emails each week. Here is one from the many that came in this week that I thought fit well with this week's lesson (emphasis by author of email):

*I thought that you might find it interesting that **I am listening to your Sabbath School discussions and making an attempt to bring those concepts and discussions to my Sabbath School class of 11 and 12 year olds.** The lessons that are in the quarterly for them do not seem to hold their attention, much.*

I am finding that they do not have a problem becoming engaged in thought when we study about the character of God, and even how we are to behave and disciple others when we understand a bit about that character. I believe that this is crucial for their spiritual development that we help them find as many answers as possible to their questions in a way that makes sense and gets them to examine their own beliefs and how it affects their interactions with people and with their God.

As you can imagine, some of these children have been schooled very well in "Adventist doctrine", and they can spout out pat answers with the best of them. But now, when certain concepts or questions are put to them, they have to put some energy into their answers. We sit at a round table so that each child feels equal and has an equal chance to be heard. It is great to see the wheels turning.

Even the boy who supposedly has a hyperactivity disorder sits there and interacts as a normal kid raising some pretty thought-provoking questions, himself.

I have asked them whether our discussions help them to have a better understanding of why there is a struggle for our race, and why there is a controversy about God at all, and they all invariable answer with a relieved, "Yes!"

These children are now even asking that we pray that some of the adults they know will come to understand God as the benevolent Father, and not the angry judge that their parents fear.

***I feel that this needs to be brought to our children.** I sense that if more children had had this sort of presentation of the reasons why Christ died, and all that it represents, rather than the angry God seeking blood to pay for sins routine, we probably would have retained far more children in this church than we have. Jesus becomes more relevant, and so does His Father become more real to us when they are presented with this integrated approach.*

*There are several of us in [our] church that have **wondered whether we could do a bible study for the adults, using your seminars that are on line.** We want to get your permission that this*



is acceptable to you.

*I also just have to tell you that **there is a preacher's wife from the local Pentecostal church who has a women's bible study, and who has benefited greatly** by listening to and sharing your DVD on God and the Brain, which my husband gave to her just a few weeks ago. We are delighted, and so are they.*

I just had an emergency patient, today, (I have no idea of her religion) with whom I fell into a conversation about why there were so many wars in the Old Testament and not in the New. I proposed the idea to her that I had learned from Dr. Jennings, which makes perfectly good sense. She literally "lit up" with understanding and a new concept of the love of God. She said she got "goose bumps" just thinking about how God loves us that much! We talked about this longer than it took me to take care of her emergency procedure! I gave her a "God and Your Brain" DVD that I had in my car and just told her to pass it forward when she was done. She said she would.

This is a healing message, and I feel privileged to pass it along.

Happy us, that we have such a God!

For those who want to present this material, on the God and Your Brain DVD set we have included PDF files with the entire slide deck so you can use them and present them yourself. So if you have one of the DVD sets, then you have the slides. Please be encouraged to go and share!

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "In many respects..." How would you describe the kingdom of God? What are the methods God uses to promote His kingdom?

I just love this description of God's methods:

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love;** and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. **God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** {DA 759.1}

Thoughts? Do you agree? Or do you think God does use coercive power, threats, intimidation and inflicted death to win the war?

Why can God NOT win the war by the use of physical power? What does a win look like for God? Intelligent beings love and trust Him completely and therefore live in harmony with His design for life. Can love and trust be obtained through force?



So how do we take the principles of truth, love, mercy, goodness and put them into practical application?

How many of those who teach a god who is punitive, one who must inflict torture, would argue with this? In other words, how many would say God is not a God of truth, love, mercy or goodness? The lie about God isn't between the God of love and a god who is merely power and unforgiveness etc. The lie is when they continue to promote the idea that God is love, truth, mercy and goodness, but then add things like He is also just, and then define justice as human justice of inflicted torment, rather than Godly justice of love and freedom.

This is the rub, many of those who are teaching a theology that misrepresents God don't even know it. This is why Jesus said,

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' MT 7:22,23

How is it people could dedicate their lives to sharing the gospel, yet be God's enemies?

What would constitute being an enemy of God? Would it not be persons who work against God's methods, principles, character, motives? Would it not be people who misrepresent Him and infect minds with lies about Him that undermine trust, whether the person realizes it or not?

Were the leaders of the Jewish religious system 2000 years ago enemies of God? Did they think they were?

Consider the problem we have with the conflict between Christians and Muslims, how did this happen?

Prior to Constantine, Christians met in homes, lived communally, shared to help each other, refused to war against others, perhaps the closest example of this today would be the Amish.

After Constantine converted, the church changed. It stopped meeting in homes and began meeting in large public buildings, which had been pagan places of worship. We were in Rome a couple of years ago and essentially all the Christian cathedrals had been pagan places of worship and still had statues of many of the Roman gods. Christianity became infected with many pagan beliefs and ideas, but the most pernicious change happened when God's law of love was replaced with the imperial Roman concept of law, imposed rules; and God was seen as a cosmic dictator.

Some have argued that Mohammad was the first protestant – protesting much of this distortion about God. As a result of this change in God's law, from love to imposed rules requiring imposed punishment, Christians didn't go to the Muslims with a message of love, compassion, grace, forgiveness, seeking to love them, but instead sent soldiers to massacre them.



What view of the Christian God do you think the crusaders planted in the minds of Muslims?

Are we any better today? How many Christians would give their lives for a Muslim? Did our leader – Jesus give His life for Muslims? Of course He did!

Do you think history might be different had Christians gone to Muslims with a message of love?

What could we do to insulate, protect, insure we do not find ourselves as one of God's enemies?

If we want to share God's message, using God's principles, might it be helpful to learn of God the way Jesus did when He was a boy? I found this description in a book called *The Story of Jesus*, written over 100 years ago:

Jesus did not go to these schools, for they taught many things that were not true. Instead of God's Word, the sayings of men were studied, and often these were contrary to that which God had taught through His prophets. {The Story of Jesus 30.4}

God Himself by His Holy Spirit instructed Mary how to bring up His Son. Mary taught Jesus from the **Holy Scriptures, and He learned to read and study them for Himself.** {SJ 30.5}

Jesus also loved to study the wonderful things which God had made, in the earth and in the sky. In this book of nature He saw the trees and plants and animals, and the sun and the stars. {SJ 30.6}

Day by day He watched them, and tried to learn lessons from them, **and to understand the reason of things.** {SJ 30.7}

Holy angels were with Him, and helped Him to learn from these things about God. Thus, as He grew in height and strength, He grew also in knowledge and wisdom. {SJ 30.8}

Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did. We should spend our time in learning only that which is true. Falsehood and fables will do us no good. {SJ 30.9}

Only the truth is of any value, and this we may learn from God's Word and from His works. As we study these things the angels will help us to understand. {SJ 31.1}

What method, according to this author, did Jesus use? The integrative evidence based approach. Notice Jesus learned from God's word, Jesus learned from nature and Jesus studied to know the "reasons" for things.

Do we have any evidence from Scripture to support this conclusion? Yes, the life of Jesus and His methods of teaching. Jesus quoted Scripture, Jesus used lessons from science and nature, and Jesus appealed to their experience.



We can learn as Jesus did, IF, we are willing to open our minds to all the threads of evidence God has given, think for ourselves, and REJECT the false ideas put forward by men that have infected our schools and churches.

Why do so many end up Jesus' enemies in the end? Because they have theologies based on what they think Scripture teaches, beliefs that operate contrary to God's laws in nature and science, and are inconsistent with experience and often unreasonable.

They haven't found the truth, the truth of God's character and design that is the very building blocks upon which reality is constructed. When we find this truth we have real wisdom, real understanding and real harmony with God. And Jesus is the source of this truth as He is the inspiring source for Scripture, the Creator/Designer and the Redeemer.

Thoughts?

The second paragraph states, "Whenever proselytizing displaces repentance, conversion, and spiritual transformation, the mission falters."

I couldn't agree more, well said. Do you think your church leadership would support a series of meetings designed to bring people to the truth about God's character of love, His methods of running the universe, His principles of goodness, mercy and truth, which teach how deviations from God's design are actually destructive, while harmony with God's design is healing (in other words the reason for things), call people to Jesus and harmony with His kingdom, offering baptism into Jesus Christ for those who desire it, but not merely focus on a list of fundamental beliefs or doctrines that one can hold to without actually know God? An evangelistic series focusing on people coming to a healing and transforming experience with God, without requiring a specific denominational affiliation?

Would you like to participate with such an endeavor?

When the Apostles preached they preached Christ, and argued against sects or denominations. In the end, when Jesus returns, how many groups will their be?

Two – and how would you describe those two groups?

- Sheep and goats
- Wheat and tares
- Pure woman and harlot
- Fruitful vine and withered vine
- Saved and lost

And what is it that is the demarcating factor amongst these two groups?
Will it be?

- The method of ritual baptism (immersion vs. sprinkling)?
- Which day one holds sacred?



- What food one eats?
- What clothing or jewelry one wears?
- How one takes communion?
- What one believes about the state of the dead?
- Whether one identifies correctly the king of the north?
- Whether one has the right idea regarding the trinity?
- Whether one has said the sinners prayer?
- Whether one has claimed the blood of Jesus for their sins or not?

What is it that will be the consistent, common, non-negotiable difference between the saved and the lost?

- Character transformation – actually partaking the divine nature, so it is no longer our selfish nature we live by but we have died to self and have been renewed in heart with new motives of love, thus it is Christ living in us.
- The saved will love God and others more than self; they will love the truth and long to grow in it every day, while the lost will love self and reject truth preferring their long held ideas and beliefs.

And how is it possible for any descendant of Adam to experience this change from fear and selfishness to love and trust? Only through the accomplishments of Jesus – He is the way and means of restoration of rightness within us.

Thoughts?

SUNDAY

First paragraph points out that the disciples were to wait for the empowering of the Holy Spirit before they went out to present the gospel. Then it states, “God could have commissioned angels, unassisted by human beings, to broadcast the gospel. Instead, He elected to appoint sinful, erring, unpredictable humans for this sacred calling.” Thoughts?

Does God have reasons for what He does? Has He invited us to, as far as we are able, understand His methods and reasons? (Jn 15:15)

What reason, might God have, for using sinful humans to take the gospel to the world and not unfallen angels?

- For the character development and healing of those taking the message
- To be able to identify with and share a common experience of the pain and despair of sin and the healing found in Christ
- Because God wants conversion, not submission – what would likely happen if an angel appeared with a message?
 - Would people, in general, be as critical?



- Would they be more vulnerable to accepting what is presented without thinking, without reasoning, without investigation?
- And then what happens to the character when we believe things based on someone else's authority, but not actual understanding and agreement? Our development is stunted, our ability to think is impaired, our ability to grow to the full stature of men and women that God designs for us to be is undermined.
- Thus, for the healing and recovery of our God-given capacities, "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong." 1Cor 1:27

Thoughts?

Read bottom paragraph, "How many of God's..." This is an excellent point. Just because you have never spoken to large crowds doesn't mean your sharing of the gospel won't impact many people. Consider:

- The woman with two mites
- Mary Magdalene
- Marian and Barbie Fisher
- The person who shared the gospel with Billy Graham, whether his parents, Sunday School Teacher, coach or whomever

But regardless of our sharing of the gospel – it only grows in hearts that are receptive under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

We are not responsible for converting anyone. We are responsible for being open to the work of the Spirit in our lives, for living in harmony with God's design, for studying to understand God's character, methods, and principles to the best of our ability, and for sharing what we know to the best of our ability to others.

We are never responsible for how others respond. Look at how they treated Jesus, was He crucified because He did a poor job of presenting the gospel? Of course not! Likewise, when you find a local pastor, elder, church board, conference committee etc. rejecting you, don't get discouraged or immediately conclude that you have failed, or not presented it right. No, we are responsible for presenting the gospel, the Holy Spirit enlightens and convicts, and others choose how they will respond.

How do we share the gospel?

My mother forwarded an email she recently received. Last year my mother went to the beach in Florida, while there she got to talking to a lady she met there and told her about the God we love and then, as a proud mom, about my book *The God-Shaped Brain*. She received this email a couple of weeks ago:



I just went to San Francisco and Napa with my husband. I tagged along on a business trip and guess what book I read while I was there – THE GOD SHAPED BRAIN! It is such a great book my husband is reading it now and I want my kids to read it. God has really been doing something in me and healing me from wrong thoughts that I didn't even know I had... I know He used you on the beach that day to tell me about your son's book. I even bought it for a friend of mine who is going thru a really bad divorce. Let me know if he ever comes to Florida to do a conference. It is such a powerful message and I have had many of the same beliefs that he talks about in the book and I could recognize many of the wrong thought processes I have had too. This has been such a difficult season of my life but I know that God has used this book to transform my thoughts. I am ready to move into the next season.

I will keep you and your family in my prayers. Especially Tim because this book can bring such freedom I know the enemy will be on the prowl. Please tell him I said Thank You for writing it.

Do we have to be preachers to share the gospel? My mother chose to share my book, but it doesn't have to be my book that is shared. Share a resource that has been meaningful to you and which you believe will be helpful to the person with whom you are speaking.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Through discourse and example..." Why did Jesus, since He was the Son of God and not only man but fully divine, have to have complete dependence upon the Holy Spirit?

What is the problem with the theology that says Jesus won His victory by the exercise of His divine nature?

Did Jesus win by relying on a power that is unavailable to us? Or did Jesus win His victory by relying on the same power that is available to us?

So, first reason, His victory was through the same resources available to us.

Second reason, "He was tempted in every way just as we are yet without sin" Heb 2:14. What does this mean? That Jesus' victory was achieved via the exercise of His human brain, not His divine self. This is hugely significant – why?

Why was it necessary that Christ achieve the victory by the exercise of His human brain, relying upon the Holy Spirit, rather than via the exercise of His divine power?

- The only way to fix what was broken in the human species was by replacing the law of sin and death with God's law perfectly restored into the heart, mind and being of the human creation. This could only happen by a human being, descended from Adam choosing to live a perfect life via the exercise of human brain. Any other being – angel, beings from other planets etc. would not fix what was broken in humankind.



- Further – it demonstrated that there was no manufacturer’s defect. God did not make Adam and Eve with some inherent flaw such that they were incapable of living in harmony with God’s design.
- Further – He did this with the same resources available to us – He had no advantage, thus through those resources we can experience freedom from the domination and control (NOT the temptation) of fear and selfishness.
- But because He was also fully divine, He had a level of temptation we never have to face – using divine power to advantage self. And because He was fully divine we also learn, by revelation of His conduct, God’s true character and How God wields power. Satan’s argument has always been that God is selfish. His temptations upon Christ were targeted to get Him to use divine power for selfish purposes, thus confirming Satan’s allegations. Jesus destroyed Satan’s lies by never exercising divine power for self.

Read green section at bottom, “How can our anxious...” Anyone want to share what helps them deal with anxiety, restlessness, uncertainty?

- Spend time with God, know Him and His methods
- Trust Him with outcomes
- Allow for possibilities beyond your awareness
- Remember history – we have nothing to fear for the future save we forget how God has led in the past.
- Examine one’s thoughts and replace any distortions or lies with truth
- Forgive if haven’t forgiven
- Repent if haven’t repented
- Lies, unforgiveness and unrepentance all disrupt the salience network and cause ruminating loops of anxiety and negative thinking
- Take focus off self and seek to help others – not to get their love and approval of you, but for the genuine good of others

TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Peter had expressed...” What are the keys to God’s kingdom?

The words of Christ – meaning what? The truth, reality. The keys to the kingdom of God is reality itself. God is Creator, Builder, Designer – and the key to being part of that kingdom is being in harmony with that kingdom. That requires, we who are deviant, to understand our condition, understand His true character and nature, trust Him for His regenerating Spirit, and choose with the power we have to live, as far as possible, in harmony with His design.

Or, are the keys to the kingdom some institutional authority to grant absolution from sin, condemn to eternal destruction, carry out various ordinances and sacraments? Are the keys of the kingdom found in secret rites, special words or incantations, such as “I baptize you in the name of...” Or are the keys knowing the reality of God’s nature and being? (JN 17:3)



Read last two paragraphs, “Sometimes human leadership...” How is it some seek to subjugate the thoughts, God-given creativity and individuality of others?

Where do we find the balance between leaving others free and engaging in spiritual warfare, as Christ said He did not bring peace but a sword?

Our responsibility is always in governance of self, while leaving others free to choose for themselves. We must also use discernment and wisdom as to where and when we present the truths we love. Jesus counseled not to cast our pearls before swine.

There are some individuals who are not interested in the truth and only interested in seeking some pretext to criticize and attack. A few years ago a pastor came to me and spoke to me asking me what I believe. He presented himself as having sincere interest in understanding our views. But immediately after our conversation went online and twisted what I said and accused me of being a heretic.

How do we deal with such people?

If we use Christ as an example He didn't seek to focus His work on evangelizing religious leaders. When they came to Him He sought to reveal to them the corruption of their motives and hearts through nature, parable, direct testimony and questioning them.

WEDNESDAY

Read top dark section, “But when he saw...” Many of us have been praying this prayer for several years, and God has been answering this as more and more people are sharing this message in their communities.

The lesson goes on to ask how can we find the balance between ministering to the needs of those in the church, while not neglecting evangelism?

What is the purpose of evangelism?

- To indoctrinate to believe certain tenants?
- To convert people to loyalty and membership in certain organizations?
- To lead people to the truth about God and His kingdom such that they freely choose to invite Him into their hearts and live in harmony with His design?

If the third is our goal in evangelism is there any synergy with our ministry to those in the church?

Would it not be an ever increasing unfolding of the truth about God and His character of love and continual growth in our ability to apply His methods to our lives?



Is the church itself not strengthened by outreach? Do we not grow as we share this truth to others? So wouldn't one of the best ways to help the church grow be in helping people learn how to use all their unique experiences to witness God's kingdom?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Through teaching and personal example..." What do you think about how the lesson suggests Jesus' comments of the prostitutes and tax collectors as being "lost" is a nice way to say sinner?

Was it that, or was Jesus describing reality? They were lost – they were lonely, empty, confused, they didn't have peace inside and the religious system treated them as outcasts without hope – they didn't know where to go or what to do. They didn't understand God's character nor His methods or design for life. And thus they sought to fill the emptiness of soul with worldly things. They were actually lost.

But what about the condition of the church leaders in Christ's day? Were they not even more lost? Why? Because the prostitutes knew they were lost and knew they needed a way out, but couldn't find it without Jesus, but the Pharisees though lost didn't know it, they thought they were actually standing in the light.

In the third paragraph the lesson quotes from a book entitled Christ's Object Lessons: "When you see yourself as a sinner saved only by the love of your heavenly Father, you will have tender pity for others who are suffering in sin. You will no longer meet misery and repentance with jealousy and censure. When the ice of selfishness is melted from your hearts, you will be in sympathy with God, and will share His joy in the saving of the lost."

Thoughts?

Did you notice this author suggests we need to realize we are saved by the love of God, and in this knowledge we experience melting of the selfish heart and have sympathy with God.

Could it be that presenting salvation as being not from the love of God, but from the selfless love of Jesus, who paid a legal penalty to His Father to turn away God's wrath, that we obstruct God's healing plan, we increase fear and selfishness and we fail to experience unity with God?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-4



Discipleship Lesson 13 1Q 2014

The Cost of Discipleship

Here is another email I recently received:

I have been ordering C&R materials & sharing them for a few years, thanks to my Uncle Martin & Aunt Antoinette that introduced us to your ministry several years ago. So many have been so blessed! Another couple in our church has also been so blessed that they have ordered the dvd's several times over the last few months for all the church members & many other folks (tho we got some flack from our pastor) & we continue to run out. :)! I have to share the following message I received from friends many states away that I sent the "God & your brain DVD to. These folks have been SDA's all their lives & have worked for many supporting ministries of the SDA church.

WOW! I'm so glad you shared this with me. We need to have a phone conversation when I get home it's too much to write here but these are an amazing NEED for all of us to see. Toni it is transforming! I have profusely thanked you but you have no idea the depths of which this is touching my family me included. Wish I had heard this long ago as well.

This is only one of many friends that are so blessed and excited about this message! And the fact that you send all this FREE. I have had many that are so touched by that fact, & have started ordering them to share as well! :) We will continue to support & uplift comeandreason in our prayers!! The blessings are evident in the many hearts that are finally able to begin healing!!

Thank you so MUCH!!

SABBATH

The title for this week's lesson immediately reminded me of Rachel's comments last week when she mentioned that before people are baptized they need to consider the cost of commitment to Christ.

And I thought perhaps I had confused things on this point last week so I wanted to clarify with you. Is there a difference in helping someone understand what it means to be a follower of Jesus, how it will impact their life, and indoctrination into a certain set of beliefs?

I think Rachel brought up a great point when cautioning that people need to consider the cost of committing to Christ – but isn't it also true we should not seek to place barriers in the way of people committing to Christ?



How do we strike that balance?

Read first paragraph, “Throughout history...” thoughts?

No doubt many good people have been persecuted for accepting Jesus as their Savior, but, what about:

- The six million Jews killed by the Nazis?
- The Muslims killed by so-called Christians during the crusades?
- What about the 80 million Hindus killed by Muslims between 1000-1500 AD?
- The witches burned by Christians in the colonies?
- The Protestants killed by Catholics and Catholics killed by Protestants?

Does being persecuted set one apart as being on God’s side?

Does the lack of persecution set one apart as being on God’s side?

What does persecution mean? That there is evil and selfishness in the world, and in the world the strong will prey on the weak. Jesus said:

The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks. Lk 6:45

So, when persecution happens what can we say with confidence? That those who are persecuting others are not operating on God’s methods or following God’s purposes.

But, can we draw any conclusions about the righteousness of those being persecuted? No, the attitudes and responses of the persecuted will reveal their character and upon whose methods they operate, not merely the fact they are persecuted.

What sets one apart as being on God’s side?

- Membership in church organization?
- Baptism by immersion?
- Partaking communion?
- Paying tithe?
- Claiming the blood of Jesus as your payment for sin?
- Acknowledging one’s sin before God?
- Or, actually be reborn, having a new heart, trusting God so that one dies to fear and selfishness and is recreated within by the HS.

Read third paragraph, “Despite the promises...” thoughts?

Is there anything wrong with wealth? Is wealth a sign of rightness with God? With what did Satan tempt Christ? Third temptation was with all the riches of the world.



Jesus said, “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?” MT 16:26

Are there some things worth dying for? What things could be worth dying for?

- Saving people you love?
- Some greater good?
- Standing up for principle, belief, God?
- What about riches, cars, houses, stocks, gold?

Do we ever over-value riches?

THURSDAY

Jump to THURSDAY’s lesson and read second paragraph, “In a sense...” thoughts?

Is this why we follow Jesus for the reward? Is this a good reason to follow Jesus?

Is the kingdom of God done good service when we promote a message that emphasizes either avoiding punishment or seeking eternal reward?

What is the problem with such preaching? To what motivation does it appeal?

Is it not feeding our selfishness under the guise of righteousness?

Here are a couple of historic quotes, written more than 100 years ago:

Love to God is the very foundation of religion. To engage in His service merely from the hope of reward or the fear of punishment would avail nothing. Open apostasy would not be more offensive to God than hypocrisy and mere formal worship.— PP 523

It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Christ to follow Him. They behold the Saviour's matchless love, revealed throughout His pilgrimage on earth, from the manger of Bethlehem to Calvary's cross, and the sight of Him attracts, it softens and subdues the soul. Love awakens in the heart of the beholders. They hear His voice, and they follow Him. {DA 480.3}

Why this emphasis on either hope of reward or avoidance of punishment? These are fear based motivation – the appeal to reward is really a way of pointing out what they will lose if they don’t accept the reward, which is a fear based appeal.

Fear is the infection of sin – and perfect love casts out fear. We are to present the truth about God’s character of love, which drives out fear and wins us as loyal friends and devotees to God and His kingdom.



What would you recommend for evangelism? What should we tell someone as the reason to follow Jesus Christ?

- There simply is no better way to live because
 - It is sensible
 - Reasonable
 - The basis of life
 - Health and happiness cannot be achieved outside the parameters upon which life was constructed to operate.
- If someone has a Ford Fusion – what fuel should they put in it? Unleaded gasoline – why? Why should they not put diesel or water in the tank? Because it was not designed to operate on diesel or water.
- Everyone of God’s instructions for us are for our good, to lead us back into the paths of life and health
- Do we present God as Designer and His law as the design protocols for life and thus returning to harmony with Him is the only sensible course?

Even if there were not an eternal reward, is there a better way to live.

SUNDAY

Read Luke 12:49-53:

I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! ⁵¹ Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. ⁵² From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

Thoughts? What fire? Was Christ speaking of combustion or something else? Is the fire Christ spoke of here different from the fire in the end of time, the fire that consumes sin?

Here is the same idea from Matthew – does it add any insight?

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn
“ ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—
³⁶ a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’
³⁷ “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and anyone who does not take



his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. MT 10:34-49

What is this idea of a sword? Why did Christ say He came to bring a sword, yet when Peter pulled his sword and struck the servant of the High Priest Jesus said: “Put away your sword”? Jn 18:11

Was Jesus speaking of a physical sword or something else? Is Jesus advocating violence or something else?

What is going on? Any other Bible verses come to mind?

Revelation 19:19-21 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. **The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse,** and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

Wait a minute – what’s going on? Is God using power to inflict death? Does God use His power to torment, torture and eliminate His opposition?

Notice the sword is coming out of the rider’s mouth, who is the Rider? The Rider is Christ. Do you think He will have a large piece of metal sticking out of His mouth when He returns? No, what comes out of a person’s mouth? Words and what kind of words does Christ always speak? Truth! Therefore, the sword is symbolic of the truth.

“The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12

Well how could the word of God kill? Is He condemning them? Is He speaking ugly words? Is He saying “Die, die, die”? Of course not.

The wicked are destroyed “because they did love the truth and thus be saved.” 2 Thes 2:10.

Why would it be that people die because they didn’t love the truth? How is it that truth is a sword that cuts and divides? How does truth destroy? Why do those who prefer lies die when confronted with truth?

The wicked have hardened their minds in lies, solidified their characters in falsehood, warped their selves in deception and the sword of God is the truth that cuts through their lies right to their inner self. And what happens in the mind, heart, character of someone who has lived lies when the truth shines in?



Here is an historic view originally written in 1888 and then republished in 1911, from a book entitled *The Great Controversy*, what do you think of this description:

God has given to men a declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin. "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering 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." Exodus 34:6, 7. "All the wicked will He destroy." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Psalm 145:20; 37:38. The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; **yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.** {GC 541.2} [Consider – how can the manifestations of retributive justice be consistent with God's character of mercy and benevolence? Which law lens do you look through? If one uses the Imperial Roman lens of imposed rules requiring externally imposed punishment, then one finds conflict. But if one looks through the lens of Design law, the protocols upon which life is built then we find a beautiful harmony.]

God does not force the will or judgment of any. [Would this be true if God were to be the one who inflicts externally imposed pain and death on those who don't obey Him? No, in order for this to be true death and pain cannot come out from God as an infliction upon them.] He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. **He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love.** [What makes someone worthy of love? Do men who physically abuse their wives engender love?] **He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes.** {GC 541.3} [When God is presented as a being who is the source of inflicted pain and suffering do those qualities draw forth admiration? Again, which law lens do you see God through?]

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** [How can we harmonize this idea that the principles of the divine government are to love one's enemies, with the torture and death of God's enemies? If one holds to imposed law one cannot because one sees God as inflicting torture and death, but when we return to design law we see the truth that the torture and death result from unremedied sin not an imposition by God] God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and **even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited.** He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character. He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive



hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided. **Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will?** {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters. Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? **Truth will never be agreeable to a liar;** meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1} [What is being described, imposed punishments or natural results?]

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; [Why not? What prevents them? Is God the obstacle?]** years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; **but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. [Why are they tortured? What is the glory of God to them? Is the glory of God harmful to the righteous? What causes the suffering and pain? Is it God or is it unremedied sin in the sinner?]** They would long to flee from that holy place. **They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC 542.2} [Who fixes or determines the destiny of the wicked? Is it decided in a courtroom in heaven? Or is it decided in the hearts of each person? And what is the determining factor? Character, whether one loves God and His methods or prefers Satan and his methods]

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable. [Why are the wicked lost because God doesn't want them saved? Why is a gangrenous foot amputated, because doctors don't want to save it? God's verdict is they are incurable – does that mean God's verdict makes them incurable? Is God's verdict the cause of their condition, the reason they die? The typical judicial presentation is that it is Gods' judgment that is carried out upon the wicked. No, God's verdict is His diagnosis, simply pronouncing the reality of the condition of the wicked. They are terminal and beyond healing, incurable and they are in this condition as a result of their own choice, not God's verdict.]

So, what does it mean that Christ brought a sword? A sword to do what? What does it mean to turn family members against each other? On what basis?

Read first paragraph SUNDAY, "Modern television..." thoughts?



What is the paragraph doing? While it is written to make obvious that they are “spinning” the words of Jesus to imply a meaning Jesus never intended, how many modern religious teachers do this very things to the message of Jesus?

Any examples?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, - “Discipleship...” thoughts? What do you think of the idea that we must be honest in the way we present our message? How would you present our message?

What is righteousness by faith? Is there a difference between righteousness by faith and justification by faith? What is the honest way to communicate this?

- That when we have faith in God that He declares us righteous and we have legal pardon, even though we are not righteous? That Jesus’ righteousness is credited to us and thus God declares we are righteous, even though we are not?
- Or is it legal pardon, forgiveness, that we are pardoned or forgiven if we accept the payment of Christ’s blood to our account?
- Or, justice required God to punish sin and thus He punished the only innocent One in our place to satisfy His justice?

Are any of these ideas honest? No, they are filled with falsehoods and distortions about God and His character and government because they are all based on the wrong concept of God’s law. Every one of these ideas comes through the Imperial Roman view of law.

We get an honest representation of our message when we return to the Creator God and view His law as the law upon which life was built.

- God is love and built His universe to operate upon the principles of love
- Adam was created in harmony with God’s character and principles and was capable of exercising his power of choice to solidify himself into loyalty. But he and Eve chose to believe a lie and instead broke trust and changed themselves to beings infected with fear and selfishness.
- We are born with a condition of fear and selfishness we did not choose, which is deviant from God’s design, and this condition, if not remedied, is terminal.
- God sent Jesus to fix what was broken in humankind and restore the species back into unity with God and His design protocols for life.
- Those who examine the evidence God has provided and choose to believe the truth are won to trust. This is a change of heart from natural state of distrust to trust. God recognizes that trust has aligned the heart with Him, opened the door to the soul and thus God recognizes that the person is no longer against God, but set right, or righteous by faith. In that trust relationship the Holy Spirit is poured out and transforms the inner person.



Read third paragraph, “Before baptism...” What is the cross we must bear? Why must we bear a cross? For what purpose?

This was written more than 100 years ago, what do you think?

The Lord brings His children over the same ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility fills the mind, and the character is transformed; then they are victorious over self, and in harmony with Christ and the Spirit of heaven. **The purification of God's people cannot be accomplished without suffering.** . . . He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. True grace is willing to be tried. If we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is one of peril. . . . {ML 92.2}

If when the Lord reveals your errors you do not repent or make confession, his providence will bring you over the ground again and again. You will be left to make mistakes of a similar character, you will continue to lack wisdom, and will call sin righteousness, and righteousness sin. The multitude of deceptions that will prevail in these last days will encircle you, and you will change leaders, and not know that you have done so. {RH, December 16, 1890 par. 19}

What is being described? What is the purpose of bearing a cross? It is for our victory, for our overcoming, for our strengthening, for our development of character.

We only develop, only grow stronger as we choose the right and say no to the wrong. It is true we don't have the power to overcome unaided, but we must make the choice, then God provides the power.

The HS works to enlighten and convict, to bring us to the cross road of decision, then we are left free to make our choice. When we choose the right THEN we receive divine power sufficient for the task, but we don't receive the power until we make the choice. Many people wait until they are empowered to choose.

Others, when God brings them over a difficulty in their character (notice I am not suggesting all trails are for our development, only those which serve to expose character flaw and give us opportunity for overcoming), a place where they are faced again with a choice to do right, but which would cause suffering, some instead of choosing the right and bearing their cross to overcome, use their suffering to garner sympathy and validate themselves as not needing to really change.

There are those here upon whom great light in warnings and reproofs has shone. Whenever reproofs are given, **the enemy seeks to create in those reprov'd a desire for human sympathy.** Therefore I would warn you to beware lest in appealing to the sympathy of others, and going back over your past trials, you again err on the same points in seeking to build yourselves up. **The Lord brings his erring children over the same ground again and again; but if they continually fail to heed the admonitions of his Spirit, if they fail to reform on**



every point where they have erred, he will finally leave them to their own weakness. {HS 137.4}

Why does God finally leave them, because He is fed up, or because at some point people destroy the faculties that respond to the Spirit of truth and there is nothing more God can do for them?

TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “The cost of discipleship...” thoughts? How do we overcome? Is it force of will? Does will have a role to play? Where do we exercise or will, to do what?

Have you ever heard the greatest battle we will ever fight is with self? What does it mean? Is it limited to addictions?

What about the person who is afraid of rejection – are they fighting with others or self? How?

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The rewards...” thoughts? What are the rewards of discipleship?

Well – it depends on whose disciple one is: Are you a disciple of the Designer or dictator?

Disciples of the dictator? What might such disciples look like?

- Rules, regulations, punishments
- Pharisees
- Seek to use force, intimidation, criticism
- What are the rewards to such disciples?
 - Power
 - Ego boosts
 - Worldly honor and recognition
 - Control over others
 - Wont associate with “sinners”

Disciples of the Designer, what might such disciples look like?

- Living in harmony with God’s design
- Principle based living not rules based living
- Loves people
- Compassion on sinners
- Seeks to use resources to help others
- Rules are not an end to themselves but only tools to help the immature

FRIDAY



Read first two paragraphs, “Fire comes down from God...” thoughts? How do you understand this?

What is the purpose of putting these paragraphs at this point in the lesson, when we are talking about counting the cost of discipleship?

Is it to incite fear? What does fear do to love? What does God want from us? Love, can you get love by threat?

Should we interpret such descriptions as God threatening us?

What other ways to understand such statements?

All are punished according to their deeds? How does this work in reality?

Which law does one hold:

Roman Imperial law – then punishment is something inflicted by an external authority upon law breakers. In this view some authorized body investigates the crimes (sins) and determines extent of guilt and then what is proper punishment and then some authorized agency inflicts the punishment upon the law breaker.

Many people criticize the eternal burning view of hell because it makes God out to be sadistic and cruel. But which God is actually worse in character, the God held by those who believe in eternal hell, or those who believe God punishes for days, but no longer than a person deserves?

The eternal hell proponents hold this view because they accept a false premise that God created humans in Eden with immortality. When humans sinned they were already immortal and thus could never die, so if they did not return to loyalty, sadly, not at God’s hand, they would suffer eternal torment separate from Him.

But the limited view some holds proposes a god who must perform a miracle in order to inflict proscribed amounts of torment and torture upon intelligent beings before he kills them.

What is a better view? Seeing God’s law as the design protocols upon which life is constructed to operate. Deviate from these and one punishes oneself and the punishment is according to their deeds.

- The smoker with COPD suffers according to their deeds
- The abuser of others experiences hardness of heart, distrust of others, fear, insecurity, has no real peace, constantly worries about exploitation and retribution – they suffer according to their deed.



2nd Quarter 2014 - Christ and His Law

Lesson 1: Laws in Christ's Day

From the lesson introduction:

““From the very beginning of the great controversy in Heaven, it has been Satan's purpose to overthrow the law of God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 582. Why? Because the law, as the foundation of God's government, expresses the moral integrity of the cosmos, and to overthrow that law would be to overthrow the moral order of the creation itself. Morality, though, means the ability to choose right or wrong, good or evil—and the only way for the universe to be moral, to allow the potential for good or evil, for right or wrong, would be for it to have a law that defines them.

“What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘Do not covet,’ ” (*Rom. 7:7*). Our universe is moral because God created free beings answerable to His law. If there were no law against coveting, there would be no sin of covetousness. Indeed, God created humans as creatures who can love. Love, though, can't exist without freedom, moral freedom. And moral freedom can't exist without law, moral law. Love rests on freedom, and freedom rests on law.

Hence, the topic for our quarter: Christ and His law. We will study the law, especially the question of why so many Christians—misunderstanding the relationship between law and grace—have fallen in the trap of denying the continued validity of the Ten Commandments and thus, unwittingly, have helped in the attempt to “overthrow” it. The Bible, though, is clear: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments ” (*1 John 5:3*). The link between our loving God and keeping His commandments is stronger than we realize, until we realize that we can love God because we live in a universe where love can exist. And it can exist because the universe is moral, and that morality is based, at least for us as created beings, on God's moral law—the subject we will now pursue.”

Wheels should already be turning in our minds as to which lens the author views Christ's Law. Natural? or, Imposed? Frankly, we should make this determination whenever we read, hear, or, discuss any spiritual topic.

My first thought after reading the intro was: If Satan's purpose has, from the beginning, been to overthrow the Law of God, then he must have, also, viewed the Law as an imposed law, and not a natural one.

My second thought after reading the intro was the following quote [special thanks to Tim's photographic memory for the reference]:



But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8. {MB 109.2}

SABBATH

“In New Testament times, a person could use the common word for “law” (nomos in Greek, lex in Latin, and Torah in Hebrew). In doing so, he or she could mean any one of the many laws. Often, the only example of the exact law depends on what law we are talking about. *So, as we study this quarter, we will always need to remember what subject we are dealing with in order to understand best what law is being discussed.*

This week’s lesson studies the different laws that worked in the community during the time of Christ and the early church. We will study these different laws to help us to understand God’s moral law, the Ten Commandments.” emphasis added.

We, absolutely, need to remember what law is being discussed.

SUNDAY – ROMAN LAW

The author correctly states that Rome’s legal system is used as a model for many modern legal systems. Why do societies need legal systems? Why do they need governments? Isn’t it because most of mankind cannot *self-govern*? Will we have a court system in Heaven? Will we have judges in Heaven? Will we have attorneys in Heaven? Trick question. So, if societies need to *impose* law on their citizens, who are unable to self-govern, then can’t we consider that Earthly governments were a necessity to check the results of sin [living out of harmony with God’s natural Law, e.g. “lawlessness”]?

In the last paragraph: “Many things taking place in the New Testament, from the death of Jesus to the imprisonment of Paul, make much better sense when we understand whatever we can about the environment of their times.” How does our knowledge of Roman Law help us make sense of the death of Jesus?? Who demanded Jesus’ death? Rome, or Israel? When confronted with their choice, what did the Jews publically declare?? What does Jesus’ death show us about imposed law? What does it show us about natural law??

MONDAY – MOSAIC LAW: CIVIC

Mid-2nd paragraph: “When God originally gave the laws to Moses, He envisioned a state where



He would be the head and the people would enforce His legal mandates.” Really?? Was not God’s actual purpose for Israel to reveal HIM to the rest of humanity??

How did Jesus deal with civic Mosaic Law?? Paying taxes? Stoning adulterers? Levirate marriage [widows marry her late husband’s brother]? Divorces? Did He comply with the imposed law of the time or try to reveal something of the natural design protocols He created life to operate within??

We are invited to read: Matt 26:59-61, Heb 10:28, & Deut. 17:2-6, which basically tells us that someone could be stoned to death on the testimony of two or more witnesses. The lesson asks us: “What does this tell us about biblical concepts of justice and fairness?? Thoughts??

Ps. 72:4. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, And will break in pieces the oppressor.

Ps. 82:3. Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy.

Isa. 41: 2,3. “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. Note: Re-quoted by Christ, himself [see Matt. 12: 18,20].

Zech. 7:9. “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Execute true justice, Show mercy and compassion Everyone to his brother.

What do these texts tell us about Biblical concepts of justice and fairness??

The pink section at the bottom of Monday’s lesson references Deut 21 for examples of some of God’s laws and “Considering who the Author is of these laws, what should this tell us about how we must learn to trust the Lord in all things, especially those things we don’t fully understand?” What do the expansion of the Ten Commandments, known as the Mosaic Laws, and the Ten Commandments themselves, really tell us about their Author?? What does Nature tell us about its “Author”?

Consider this:

“If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God’s law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from



Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}”

Does this give us any perspective?? The Ten Commandments were 3rd in God’s major attempts to preserve mankind’s knowledge of Himself, and they were so perverted that He eventually needed to come to Earth in the person of Jesus. Consider the state of mind of someone actually needing “Thou shalt not murder.” carved in stone, yet who would murder God, himself, for healing on the Sabbath.

Are we going to worship the Ten Commandments or the God who, condescended in great Love and patience to give them when they were most needed? Make NO mistake. We are not saying the Ten Commandments were ONLY for the Israelites, and are no longer binding. I am just wondering when we are going to grow up and get to know their Author.

TUESDAY – MOSAIC LAW: CEREMONIAL

We covered this extensively in the 4th quarter of 2013. I would encourage you to review on our web site: comeandreason.com. There are some wonderful insights on the Sanctuary service and the ceremonial laws, as well as indications how this was perverted by the Jews and Christians also.

WEDNESDAY – RABBINIC LAW

The lesson correctly states that Christ had to deal with the additional laws the Jewish rabbis [aka church leadership] interpreted from the Mosaic laws, and asks us what we can learn from how He dealt with the “church leadership”? Any thoughts??

Matt. 23: 1-36. Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe,[a] that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. 4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. 6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ 8 But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ,[b] and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. 13 “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in



yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. 14 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.[c] 15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. 16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.' 17 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies[d] the gold? 18 And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.' 19 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? 20 Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. 21 He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells[e] in it. 22 And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it. 23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 24 Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! 25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.[f] 26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. 29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'

31 "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. 33 Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? 34 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation

THURSDAY – THE MORAL LAW.

This is the memory text from Sabbath's lesson: "For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves" (Romans 2:14, NASB) Keep this in mind.

Is there any "Moral Law" in Heaven?



“The Ten Commandments provide Israel with the moral framework for maintaining it [their relationship with God]. The metaphor that the Bible uses to express this relationship is covenant. While the metaphor comes from the sphere of international law, it is wrong to understand the commandments merely as a summary of Israel’s obligations toward God. . . . Israel’s obedience to the commandments was not a matter of submission to the divine will as much as it was a response to love.” —Leslie J. Hoppe, “Ten Commandments,” Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), p. 1285.

This is an interesting take on things, especially the last sentence. It’s almost like the author is suggesting that if one allows the Love of God to transform them, then they will resemble the “Ten Commandments”.

Never forget that when Jesus was asked which is the greatest commandment, he answered: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”



Lesson 2: Christ and the Law of Moses

Introduction:

Thankfulness for Russell's Introduction to the Lesson Guide Watching it on YouTube was a blessing, but not as good as being here in person.

Watching it on another day did vindicate my wife's frequent comment to me after any given class: most of my comments could be left unsaid and the points would still be made by someone else most of the time. I will have to admit, that for this past week, most of the thoughts and notes I had made in my Lesson Guide were more than adequately defended by members of the class who were in attendance last week. Thank you.

Christ and Law of Moses:

One other use of the terminology of "law" not mentioned last week in the lesson study guide.

- It was mentioned on Thursday of this week's lesson
- "The Law and the prophets"
 - Matthew 5:17-20 ESV "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
 - Matt 7:12 Golden rule is "the Law and the Prophets" ESV "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."
 - Matt 11:13 prophesied until John
 - Matt 22:40 "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"
 - Luke 24:27 On the road to Emmaus
 - Luke 24:43 Later (in the same chapter) in the upper room he "the Law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms concerning me. Luke 24:44 KJV And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.
- Law, prophets, writings
- Tanakh
 - Torah, Prophets, Writings
 - It was with some consternation that I found out that the book of Daniel was not considered to be one of the prophets, but rather one of the "writings". That placed it in the same category as the Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, etc.



The lesson guide is directing us to the study of the ceremonial laws given to the Children of Israel by God through Moses during the period of the Exodus and continued until their dispersion during the time of Roman authority.

Galatians 3:19 GNB “What, then, was the purpose of the Law? It was added in order to show what wrongdoing is, and it was meant to last until the coming of Abraham's descendant, to whom the promise was made. The Law was handed down by angels, with a man acting as a go-between.”

- Here Paul says the law was “added”
- What was added?
 - Divorce law
 - Ceremonial requirements
 - Ten commandments
 - All Law
- How do we know what was added?
- When was it added?
- Why was it added?
 - If the law is inherent in the design, why did it have to be added?
- What does it mean “due to transgressions?”
 - Does “hardness of your hearts” help (Matthew 19:8) understand why it was added? The same description is given of the Jewish rulers at the time of healing of the man with the withered hand on Sabbath in the synagogue. They then plotted to kill Christ.
- If it was added, then was it an imposed law or a natural law?
- How can it be added if the Law of God has been forever?
- Matthew 22:37-40 GNB “Jesus answered, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' (38) This is the greatest and the most important commandment. (39) The second most important commandment is like it: 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' (40) The whole Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

In this class we have heard a quotation from the book Patriarchs & Prophets about how and why God gave additional directions to the Children of Israel.

- Russell read it last week
- I would like to read it again in relationship to our topic today, paying particular attention to the ending.
- PP 364.2 “If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God’s law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses.”
{PP 364.2}



- What do you understand the additional directions to be?
- Were these additional directions natural/ foundational or imposed?

Is the Law proscriptive or descriptive? (Yes, both)

- Early on, it may be proscriptive
- Later it should be descriptive
- **Negative Law:** The rule about not smoking tobacco in our household growing up
- **Positive Law:** The rule of sleep
 - When I was young there were certain rules made about when I had to go to bed and when I had to stop talking and when I had to stop bothering my brothers.
 - At times I have had external forces of society tell me I had to go to bed/sleep (Academy dorm life, mutual camping trips with clubs, etc)
 - I now have figured out my rules of sleep
 - I don't always adhere to the rules
 - Enforcement / consequences are not always immediate
 - Eleven rules of sleep hygiene. It is amazing how many do not know these or abide by them and wonder why things are not going well for them.

What is the difference between the ceremonial and the civic laws of Moses?

Let's look at some examples

- Levirate marriage
- rules on sexual relations
- rules on feasts (Passover, Booths, First Fruits) and sacrifices (sin, purification, dedication, thank)

Newton's laws of motion are three physical laws that together laid the foundation for classical mechanics. They describe the relationship between a body and the forces acting upon it, and its motion in response to said forces. They have been expressed in several different ways over nearly three centuries, and can be summarized as follows:

- First law: When viewed in an inertial reference frame, an object either remains at rest or continues to move at a constant velocity, unless acted upon by an external force.
- Second law: $F = ma$. The vector sum of the forces F on an object is equal to the mass m of that object multiplied by the acceleration vector a of the object.
- Third law: When one body exerts a force on a second body, the second body simultaneously exerts a force equal in magnitude and opposite in direction on the first body.
- Newton's law of universal gravitation states that any two bodies in the universe attract each other with a force that is directly proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them. (July 5, 1687)

Questions:

- Is Newton's laws enacted or natural?
- When did they become laws?



- Newton first published his laws of motion in 1687.
- Is that when they first became effective?
- What is the benefit if that is not when they went into effect?
- Is that (July 5, 1687) when these laws were first enforced?
- Who is enforcing these laws?

Just because God gave them a rule or law to live by, does not mean it was the best for them. Because of their sinfulness, they (we) failed to reach all that God had in mind for them. Some rules were better than where they had been, but were not as far as God wanted for them to go. Consider Christ's statements on divorce or his sermon on the mount "you have heard it said, but I say unto you. . ."

SABBATH

First paragraph: "Jesus spoke out against abuses of the religion, . . . but not against the religion itself"

- Why is this true?
- Any scriptural support for your answer?
 - John 4:22 GW You don't know what you're worshipping. We Jews know what we're worshipping, because salvation comes from the Jews.
 - Matthew 16:6 "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."
 - Matthew 23:1 - 12 Do what they say, but do not do what they do.
- If Christ knew what the pharisees and Jewish leaders were like, why would he say to do what they say? (Matt 23:3)
- How is the position of the people different in Christ's day from our position today with our church leaders?
- What was Christ commanding us to do?
- What is being "subject to the authorities" mean?
 - Read Romans 13:1 & Titus
 - Smoldering wick he will not put out.
 - Voice is not heard in the street.
 - "The malice of the Jews was so great in consequence of the miracle of Jesus in healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day, that he with his disciples withdrew to a more favorable field of labor. They went to the seaside of Galilee, and great multitudes followed him, for this new miracle wrought upon the Sabbath day was noised abroad through all that region." SP 201.1
 - "The news that had been carried to John concerning the success of Jesus, was also borne to Jerusalem, and there created against him jealousy, envy, and hatred. Jesus knew the hard hearts and darkened minds of the Pharisees, and that they would spare no pains to create a division between his own disciples and those of John that would greatly injure the work, so he quietly ceased to baptize and withdrew to Galilee. He knew that the storm was gathering which was soon to sweep away the noblest prophet God had ever given to the world. He wished to avoid all division of feeling in the great work before him, and, for the time, removed from that region for the purpose of



allaying all excitement detrimental to the cause of God.” {2SP 139.1, DA541} (See RH May 4, 1911 for a more complete statement)

- Christ was both the source of the Law as given to Moses and subject to the same law.
- The Law of Moses is an explanation of the Law of God (Law of Love) for humans.
 - Angels have the law of God, but not the same parameters as humans need, such as Honor parents and Not commit adultery.

SUNDAY: CIRCUMCISION AND DEDICATION

Circumcision

- Ceremonial

Dedication

- Civic (or both)
 - Time of registration of name
 - Registration into tribal lists / geneology
 - Birth

Mary & Joseph were pretty conservative in practice

Firstborn dedicated to the Lord

- Redeem with Shekel
- ½ shekel per year temple tax

MONDAY: JEWISH FEASTS

Which law: ceremonial function

Feasts

- Passover, then unleavened bread
- Pentecost (fifty days later)
- Feast of Booths, followed by Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)
- Purim
- Hanukkah (Feast of Dedication)
 - There is no recorded Biblical command to observe this feast but John 10:22 shows Christ partook of this as well as the “big three”
- Fifth paragraph: “Of course, the biblical feasts were done away with . . .”

How do we know this?

- Christ is the illustration of what the Law of Love is really like.
 - what parts of the law pointed to Christ?
 - Why are certain parts no longer needed?
 - What about Communion?



- The hymn “Sweet Hour of Prayer”
The last stanza says “and shout while passing through the air, “Farewell, Farewell, sweet hour of prayer”
Does that mean we are saying, “Jesus, I never want to talk to you again.”
Why will we say goodbye to something that is so crucial to a relationship with God?
- Pink section at bottom of page:
 - “Though we no longer keep the feasts, . . .”
Do you celebrate the feasts? If so, why? If not, why not?
- “What things can we do that help to keep before us the reality of God, what He has done for us, and what He asks of us?”

TUESDAY: JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

This is a story about Christ’s first Passover in the temple

- Age 12
- Bar Mitzvah

Each of the questions

- How does the story illustrate Jewish character?
- How is it significant that this story took place during the Passover?
- How many days. . . Of what does that remind you?
- Though Jesus was an obedient child. . . Submission in the right time and place. . .

WEDNESDAY: TAXES

Civil or ceremonial: (this is a religious tax)

- ½ shekel temple tax every year
- What significance is the fact that Jesus was not subject to the tax and still paid it?
- Offend them? . . . Read Romans 8 in its entirety.
 - Vs 12 “And so, by sinning against the brethren and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.” . . . “I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.”
- Larry Stevens
 - Pastor
 - Bible teacher
 - did not eat ice cream for an entire year for the sake of one of his students.
- Read pink section at bottom of page.
 - Is it ever appropriate to not pay tithe / offerings?
 - Money gains / is attention.

THURSDAY: LAW ENFORCEMENT



Read the first paragraph

Stories

- John 8:1-11 the adulterous woman
- Matthew 19:1-9 Teaching regarding divorce
- Deut. 22:23,24 Stoning for adultery delineated
- Deut. 24:1-4 Rules for divorce and remarriage

In all these stories, Christ upheld not only the civic law, the ceremonial law, the authority of the priests and rabbis, but also the Roman laws.

Read the highlighted area at bottom of page.

FRIDAY

Discussion questions:

- Dwell on the incredible truth that though Jesus instituted these laws, when He enters into humanity He places Himself under them. What does this tell us about the Character of God?

Questions:

- Would Jesus be human if he were not under the law?
- Is it possible for anyone not be to under the Law of God?
- If the law is the design template for the universe, then it is not possible to live outside the law without some support mechanism.
- Angels have a different subset of the Law of God from humans. (No need for “Honor your father and mother . . .; Adultery prohibition, etc”)



Christ and His Law Lesson 3 2Q 2014

Christ and Religious Tradition

Recent Email feedback:

I want to thank you for the case of God and Your Brain that was sent to me. I have distributed them and have four left. I have given them to pastors of other churches, and the resounding affirmation has been incredible. I want more. I will be sending you a hundred dollar donation within the next week. I know it is nothing in comparison to the value, or investment you have made, but it is the most I have at the moment. I would that every Christian had this set of DVD's. Thank you so much. CA

*Hi Dr. J and Come and Reason Ministries,
Your seminar was presented as a sermon in my local church today. Many lives were touched. People are requesting more copies of your God and Your Brain DVD to share with families and friends. I gave your business card out to some people but some suggested a collective request. I am wondering if you could send more copies (a box perhaps). Thanks. Canada*

I am getting quite a response to your DVDs. I have friends in Denver and St. Petersburg that I have shared your DVDs and both places are telling me they are getting a great response to your material. It's generating conversation and people are examining their thought processes and actions more closely. There are so many churches here in the Washington DC beltway area, and just as great a need for closer self-examination. Please send 25 copies of the DVDs. VA

I saw this series on YouTube and they absolutely have changed my life! I want to help change the lives of others who are also suffering with depression, sense of worthlessness and fear of abandonment, insecurities etc. WA

Got the DVDs, thank you, will give you a Great Report in Class > Its a like the Latter Rain in a Berry Colored Box. HI

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

May 16/17: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Auburn SDA Church, in Auburn CA. Friday Evening – The Model of the Mind; and Saturday – The God and Your Brain Seminar

June 11-13: Dr. Jennings will be presenting at the *Rethinking Hell Conference: The Legacy of Edward Fudge and the Future of Conditionalism* in Houston, TX To find our more visit: <http://www.rethinkinghellconference.com/2014/>

June 21 Saturday – Jfest: Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth at J103's Jfest at Camp Jordan. We will give away our materials. We will still have class on June 21 at our regular time.



Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, Christian Psychiatrist and author of *Anatomy of the Soul*, will be conducting an 8-hour workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students.

There are several other discussions underway with interested parties in South Africa and Australia – we would appreciate your prayers that the Lord will enable us to go and speak where He would have us go.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that you can select a charity and a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support that charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select that, and whenever you shop in their smile.amazon.com site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called “Come Reason Ministries” and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN**.

SABBATH

Read memory text:

“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.
They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.” MT 15:8,9

Read first paragraph, “John Wesley...” thoughts?

If our ability to understand Scripture is impacted by our own intelligence and ability to comprehend, then, who’s clear teaching of Scripture is the lesson talking about?

In other words, they suggest that many people value their reason over the clear teachings of Scripture – but isn’t that just the problem, those they accuse of valuing reason over the “clear teachings of Scripture” could turn around and say back, you value your opinion over the clear teaching of Scripture, because we understand the Scripture teaches something different, and it is so clear to us that you are wrong.

How can we tell?

This past weekend I was in a church in California presenting the *God and Your Brain Seminar*. During



the question time a question came in challenging the idea that the Bible does *not* teach penal substitution. They asked about the legal language in Romans and Paul's writings.

What would you say?

Ask, when you read the Bible, what language do you read it in? If English, then there is a translation bias toward legal language.

When Constantine converted, Christianity accepted a change in the way it viewed God's law, away from the construction protocols for life and accepted the idea that God's law is like Imperial Rome. Thus Christianity began seeing God as a legal dictator.

ALL BIBLE TRANSLATIONS have been done AFTER Constantine converted. This means the translators, while sincere, all had preconceived ideas about the law being imposed and therefore when they translated projected legal language that was not in the original text.

A classic example is one of the favorite texts of the penal proponents, Romans 3:21-26:

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. (NIV)

Verse 25 in the NKJV:

whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed

Do you hear how this could sound like a legal problem and solution, with words like justification, atonement, justice, propitiation etc?

This is because of the fact that the translations occurred after the infection of imposed law into Christianity, and also because in English our legal language has a Latin basis.

But the Bible doesn't actually present a legal problem with a legal solution, it presents a problem of our actual condition with a healing solution.

The Greek translated as either "sacrifice of atonement" or "propitiation" is the word *hilasterion*, which is the word for the lid to the ark of the covenant.



Notice, this is no a legal word, it is a noun. So when the translators interpreted the word they projected onto it what they *believed* happened at the mercy seat. And what did they believe happened? A legal process of expiation of sin by the sprinkling of blood.

In other words, they already had false ideas about God's law and what the plan of salvation is; believing in an imposed law, they falsely believed the plan was to take care of legal requirements, thus when they interpreted the word they added legal ideas not actually in the text.

When one realizes God's law is not imperial, not imposed, but the protocols upon which life is built, then one realizes that humankind is not in legal trouble, but suffering from a condition, a state of being, that is terminal, out of harmony with God's design. In this light one realizes God's plan of salvation is to heal and restore. Thus, the sprinkling of blood was not for the purpose of taking care of legal penalties, but for the purpose of cleansing and restoring, regenerating and recreating in righteousness.

The lesson couldn't be more obvious – according to Leviticus the life is in the blood– and thus in sprinkling the blood the priests were symbolically sharing the LIFE of Christ. The application of the blood is the pure life, or character of Christ, partaken of by the believer, which regenerates and transforms us.

But Satan has so infected our minds with his lies about God that many Christians teach the blood is not the healing life of Christ, but instead is the contaminating defilement of sin or the death. How utterly twisted and wrong could one be!

Here is my paraphrase of Romans 3:21-26:

^{3:21} But now God has revealed, a healthy state of being – a character that is right and perfect in every way, that did not come from the written code, but is exactly what the Scriptures and the 10 Commandments were pointing your minds toward. ²² This perfect state of being comes from Christ and is created within us by God when we trust him. Our trust in him is established by the evidence given through Jesus Christ of his supreme trustworthiness. There is no difference amongst any ethnic group, ²³ for all humanity is infected with the same disease of distrust, fear and selfishness, and are deformed in character and fall far short of God's glorious ideal for mankind. ²⁴ Yet all, who are willing, are healed freely by God's gracious Remedy that has been provided by Jesus Christ. ²⁵ God presented Jesus as the way and means of restoration. Now, through trust established by the evidence of God's character revealed when Christ died, we may partake of the Remedy procured by Christ. God did this to demonstrate he is right and good, because in his forbearance he suspended, for a time, the ultimate consequence of being out of harmony with how he designed life to exist and has been falsely accused of being unfair. ²⁶ So, he did it to demonstrate how right and good he is at the present time, so he would be seen as being right when he heals those who trust in Jesus.

Here is a view of this very process, quoting Romans 3:26 in summation by one of the founders of our



church, demonstrating that the historic view in our church is what I am presenting, but sadly our church has embraced the infection of penal substitution:

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. **Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Did you notice this description is not a "legal" process but a healing regenerating process that is just or right and good!

How can we tell the difference between clear Bible teaching and the teachings of men?

Manmade teaching always are infected with self, infected with imposed rules, incite fear, incite insecurity, lead away from God's design, fail to actually transform and heal. Man's teachings are inconsistent, irrational, and often make no sense to anyone who thinks.

Examples:

- It is sin to walk so many feet on Sabbath
- It is sin to carry a handkerchief on Sabbath, but okay to pin it to your clothing
- It is sin to help a person on Sabbath but not sin to lift your donkey of the ditch
- What one eats makes one righteous or unrighteous
- It doesn't matter what one eats because all things are ceremonially clean
- People are saved or lost based on which day they worship
- One can't be saved unless one has the right words spoken during their baptism
- One can't be saved unless a Priest does some ritual
- One can't be saved unless one partakes communion
- One can't be saved unless one is a member of a particular organization

Do you notice how all of these ideas are not based in design protocols, but upon manmade rules, or taking a God given teaching tool and making it into a rule.

For instance, baptism by water is a God given teaching tool, designed to help us understand and experience what genuine baptism is. Genuine baptism is immersion of the entire being, mind, soul, spirit, into the Holy Spirit, where the old ways, methods, motives die and one lives a new life with a new heart and right spirit. But water baptism doesn't provide any of that, and people have been renewed and saved without water baptism, but no one is saved without baptism by the Holy Spirit, the rebirth, renewal experience. Yet, some teach that without water baptism, in the right ritualistic way,



one cannot be saved. The place the teaching tool, before the reality, the shadow before the substance. This is what the Jews did with the sacrificial system.

God's truth actually heals, brings peace, leads one to live in harmony with the design. God's truth is always sensible, rational, reasonable.

Examples:

- Sabbath is evidence of God's character given at the time in history when His character and methods were called into question
 - Sabbath therefore becomes a sign – and what do signs do? Are signs the reality or do signs direct, educate, illuminate, reveal, point toward the reality?
 - What happens if one makes the sign the ultimate test of reality?
 - What happens if one suggests the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience? Then one has just taken a sign, which reveals God's character of love, truth and freedom, and turned it around to it points in the opposite direction, to an arbitrary God who makes imposed rules. And then, with that way of thinking, one can kill the Creator of the Sabbath and want Him down by sunset in order to keep the Sabbath.
- God's health laws were not rules or tests of obedience but protections to promote our better health. Just like a parent's rule for a child to brush their teeth.
 - But what if the children took the rule to brush teeth as a test of obedience and required all members of the organization to be teeth brushers? Then they reject and accuse as rebellious those who use a water pick instead of a toothbrush. Why? Because they miss the point that the brushing is a helpful tool, but not a legal requirement.
- All the religious directions were teaching tools to stimulate thinking to help people break out of false understanding, just like the felt board or sandbox. The benefit was in helping one to think and learn the truth of reality, to lead people back to harmony with God and His design for life.

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, "In saying..." thoughts?

What do you think about the idea that the Pharisees took the responsibility to ensure the people were instructed in the way of the law? Does it sound like the lesson is suggesting this was a good thing? Was it?

What did Jesus say was the result of their instruction in the law? Look at Matthew 23, starting at verse 13:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.



Note they are teaching the law, and what was the result? Damaging the minds and characters of the people who accepted their teaching and making them more deeply entrapped into Satan's kingdom. Why?

What kind of law did they teach? They taught imposed law, rules without inherent consequence, legal restrictions, penal substitution ideas. This makes people more trapped into the hell of satanic lies. If you doubt, keep reading Jesus' words in MT 23 and you will discover Jesus is describing an arbitrary, imposed legal system, with irrational rules that ignore the reality upon which the cosmos is built. He points them to what matters, which is healing the mind, heart, character, inner transformation, but they are only focused on behavioral performance and external appearance.

I would like to share with you this section of Matthew from my paraphrase:

MT 23:13 "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! Your false teachings obstruct people from being healed and entering God's kingdom of love. You certainly are not healed and do not enter into salvation, but worse, you actively work to prevent others who want to be saved from being healed.

MT 23:15 "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You go around the world trying to convert one person, and when you do, you indoctrinate them so deeply into your false penal system they become twice the child of lies and selfishness as you are.

MT 23:16 "Misery is yours, you irrational and unthinking teachers! Unbelievably, you say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it doesn't count; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, then they are bound by the oath.' 17 You make no sense at all! Think about it, which is truly most important, the gold, or the temple that makes the gold holy? 18 Another of your sayings is, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it doesn't count; but if anyone swears by the gift on the altar then they are bound by the oath.' 19 You don't understand the simplest truths! Think about it, which is truly most important: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift holy? 20 Don't you get it, the one who swears by the altar swears by it and everything on it. 21 And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by the one whose dwelling place it is. 22 It is about integrity, honesty, fidelity, such that oaths are sworn before heaven, God's throne, and the one who sits on it knows the heart.

MT 23:23 "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You keep rules, like proudly paying a pre-tax tithe and even give a tenth of the herbs in your garden. But you fail to do what actually matters, live in harmony with God's law, his design for life. You fail to do what is right because it is right. You are not merciful, but judgmental, and you cannot be trusted to protect those struggling with sin. You should have lived lives of love for others, without neglecting the simple instructions of God. 24 You are truly irrational and unthinking teachers! You are so focused on keeping the rules, like dietary laws, that you fail to understand their purpose is to promote health. You're so confused you actually think it would be a virtue to die of starvation than to eat something not on the



approved list.

MT 23:25 “Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You work so hard to make yourselves look good on the outside, but the inside, the heart, is full of selfishness, arrogance, and greed. 26 You truly don’t understand anything about God’s kingdom! The mind, the character, the heart must be cleansed first, and then the outside will also be clean.

MT 23:27 “Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You are like highly polished burial vaults; they look beautiful on the outside but inside are nothing but the bones of the dead and everything that defiles. 28 You are just like that. On the outside you appear to people as good and righteous, but on the inside you are full of lies, selfishness and evil. You are great counterfeits.

MT 23:29 “Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You go to great lengths to give praise and honor to the prophets and church leaders of the past. 30 You say, ‘If we would have lived back then, we would never have rejected the prophets or joined those who killed them.’ 31 By such claims you condemn yourselves, because you acknowledge such actions are wrong, yet by your actions today you reveal you are the true descendants of those who murdered the prophets. You’re just like them 32 and your sins pile on top of the sin of your forefathers!

MT 23:33 “You slippery serpents! You brood of venomous vipers! You think you can cure yourselves with your own snake-oil? 34 It’s because of your false remedy, your penal legal trickery, that I am sending my spokespersons, instructors and Bible scholars. You will attack, kill and crucify some of them; others you will beat, some physically, some verbally, right in church, running them out of town with beatings and the most viscous gossip. 35 The pure and holy lives that have been sacrificed through history, from Abel all the way through to Zechariah son of Berekiah, who was murdered right in church, at the altar, testify the truth to you. 36 But, the sad truth is, this generation will reject all this evidence.

MT 23:37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you sick and hard-hearted people who have rejected the Remedy, killed God’s spokespersons and stoned those sent to you with the cure, how my heart has longed to pull you to safety, like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me. 38 Look around, I leave your house to you, abandoned without Remedy, infected without cure. 39 For I tell you plainly, when you see me next you will say, “He is the one sent by God to reveal God’s true character and provide the Remedy.”

Read last paragraph, “Most of the references...” thoughts?

Was their core problem that they taught one thing and did another? No, their core problem was accepting a false idea about God’s law and therefore viewing God as a cosmic dictator.

Here is a quote from historic Adventism:



The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for his fellow men. **A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard.** The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, **and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies.** {MB 123.1}

Wow – what insight? When we believe the law is a set of rules we must keep, then we focus on behavior and begin adding rules upon rules. And when we work so hard to keep the rules we get angry at those who are not keeping the rules, we begin to judge, criticize, belittle, demean those who don't eat like we do etc.

But that is only because we view the law as restrictive rather than protective. When you see someone smoking to you get angry, or sad, compassionate, understanding how they are hurting themselves? Likewise, any deviation from God's design should be seen in this way.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Although the scribes..." thoughts?

Do we have our own list of added rules? Any examples?

- Jewelry?
- Music?
- Food?
- Others?

Read fourth paragraph, "It does not appear..." thoughts?

What about the sentence, "No human has the authority to create religious restrictions and elevate them to the level of divine mandate."

Any concerns about this statement? This is a dangerous idea. This is so subtly the poison is so deeply hidden that most will accept it and not even notice.

This is a perfect example of a lie hidden beneath a truth. Can anyone see the truth and then the lie beneath it?

Is it true that humans cannot make divine decrees? This is the truth – what is the lie? That God is restrictive, He undermines liberty and makes mandates – it is the idea that God imposes laws, rules and restrictions upon us to curtail our liberty, to control behavior.



This is Satan's first lie in Eden, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"
Gen 3:1

Note, the lie, God is restrictive, you can't eat from any tree in this entire garden. Rather than the truth that God is liberal – You can eat of the entire garden, everything on the entire planet is yours save only one tree.

This same idea is woven into religion, the Sabbath. The Jews presented the Sabbath as the day of greatest restrictions, and sadly many SDAs do also. But, is the Sabbath the day of restriction or should it be the day of greatest liberty?

Now does God actually give us restrictions? Yes, are they designed to restrict or liberate? Here is one statement from one of the founders of our church:

The time will come when we may have to discard some of the articles of diet we now use, such as milk and cream and eggs; **but it is not necessary to bring upon ourselves perplexity by premature and extreme restrictions. Wait until the circumstances demand it and the Lord prepares the way for it.** {CCh 237.6}

What is the purpose of the restriction? Why? To protect? When is it necessary to apply? When is it damaging to partake? And does the restriction not to partake of the contaminated food result in loss of liberty or retention of liberty?

What happens when one is sick? One loses freedom. So, rightly understood, God's restrictions are always to promote freedom, not hinder it, by keeping us in harmony with His design for life.

In Eden, God's restriction of the Tree of Knowledge, was it to restrict them or to promote their eternal liberty and freedom?

But Satan, and false religion, misrepresent God and make it appear He places mandates, demands, and restrictions to test our obedience and loyalty, with no reason, just because He can.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "As we saw..." What of this idea "people thought they were as binding as Scripture?" Are the Scriptures binding? When you bind something or someone what are you doing?

Does this language suggest a system of rules?

What do you understand is the purpose of Scripture? Is it a code book?

Which is more binding, a medical textbook, or the laws of health?



Do you see Scripture as a revelation – a description of God’s interactions to save mankind and man’s struggle in sin?

If it is a revelation, what is it revealing? Is it revealing a list of rules or reality, who God actually is, how He constructed the universe to operate, what deviation from the design is, how deviations from the design damage, His plan to heal and restore?

If we read Scripture this way do we read it as a rule books to bind us? Or a truth book to free us from misunderstand and lies, thus freeing us from fear and selfishness and the destruction that comes from living outside the design?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The substitution...” thoughts?

Classic examples:

- Holy relics
- Priest to hear confessions and grant absolution
- Sabbath/Sunday
- Form of baptism
- Righteousness through sacraments

But are there any that are actually more damaging and dangerous that penetrate all church groups?

The substitution of God who is our Father, who is in character like Jesus, kind, merciful, benevolent, with a god who is severe, unforgiving, who is the source of inflicted pain and suffering. This is the most egregious lie told and it is a manmade idea of a god who runs his government like humans run theirs.

This leads to the replacement of the true Remedy, Jesus, His victory and development of perfect character, which we receive when we trust Him and experience a new heart and right spirit within, with a false remedy, one of legal payment, legal pardon, and declaration of righteous, even though one is not.

THURSDAY

The second paragraph states, “The Pharisees were so focused on the laws of human origin that they blatantly broke the law of God. Their righteousness was based on their own efforts, and as such, was defective.”

First question, what is the problem in breaking the law of God? Why is it bad to break the law of God? Is it bad because God said don’t do it, or did God say don’t do it because it, in some way, is bad – i.e. destructive to the breaker of the law?



What is righteousness? It is a state of being in harmony with God's character and design. We are inherently out of harmony, we cannot do anything to remove or fear and selfishness, thus our efforts to make us right, to restore our own selves to God's ideal fail. We can only experience righteousness, restoration to the design, as we receive it from Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and mind.

Read last paragraph, "Jesus calls for a righteousness..."

The false view suggest our righteousness come by faith from Jesus and is legally credited to our record book, our legal ledger in heaven and is a visual barrier that prohibits the Father from seeing our true condition of unrighteousness so the Father declares us righteous based on the record of Jesus, even though we are not.

True righteousness is when, having seen the truth about God as revealed in Christ, we are won to trust. In trust we open our hearts, surrendering ourselves in love and admiration to our Creator and the Spirit comes and actually reproduces in us the righteousness of Christ.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 3



Lesson 4 - Christ and the Law in the Sermon on the Mount

SABBATH

“ ‘Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot, or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled’ ” (Matthew 5:17, 18, NKJV).

What is Jesus telling us in this passage?? He’s telling us that God’s Law is Natural, NOT imposed. See Matt. 22: 34-40.

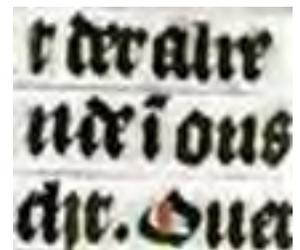
34 But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

37 Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

SUNDAY -- “ONE JOT OR TITTLE”

FYI: A *jot* is the name of the least letter of an alphabet or the smallest part of a piece of writing. It is the Anglicized version of the Greek *iota* - the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet, which corresponds to the Roman 'i'. This, in turn, was derived from the Hebrew word *jod*, or *yodr*, which is the smallest letter of the square Hebrew alphabet. Apart from its specialist typographical meaning, we still use the word *jot* more generally to mean 'a tiny amount'. Hence, when we have a brief note to make, we 'jot it down'.

A *tittle*, rather appropriately for a word which sounds like a combination of *tiny* and *little*, is smaller still. It refers to a small stroke or point in writing or printing. In classical Latin this applied to any accent over a letter, but is now most commonly used as the name for the dot over the letter 'i'. It is also the name of the dots on dice. In medieval calligraphy the tittle was written as quite large relative to the stem of the 'i'. Since fixed typeface printing was introduced in the 15th century the tittle has been rendered smaller. www.phrases.org.uk.



“...one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

Does this mean that when “all is fulfilled” God’s Law will change? Could we say “not one breath will pass from the law of respiration till breathing is no longer necessary for life”?



The lesson makes a nice point that the word used for “fulfill” is *plero* which means, literally, to “fill up” or “complete”. Jesus is the completion of God’s Law of Love. He lived it in its entirety, and because that Law is the Law of Life, he was able to “take up His life again” at the resurrection. I used to think that Christ’s resurrection was a result of God’s anger being appeased from the shedding of His Son’s blood, however, a better understanding of God’s Law, and character reveal something very different. Earth is the only place in the universe where death [sleep] is the norm. Christ showed us, clearly, that Life is the norm in God’s Kingdom, by living out God’s Law of Love.

19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

What is the “least of the commandments”? What was the “righteousness of the Pharisees”? What was our Savior trying to tell us??

MONDAY -- MURDER.

Jesus takes up the commandments separately, and explains the depth and breadth of their requirement. Instead of removing one jot of their force, He shows how far-reaching their principles are, and exposes the fatal mistake of the Jews in their outward show of obedience. He declares that by the evil thought or the lustful look the law of God is transgressed. One who becomes a party to the least injustice is breaking the law and degrading his own moral nature. Murder first exists in the mind. He who gives hatred a place in his heart is setting his feet in the path of the murderer, and his offerings are abhorrent to God. DA. 310.

1 John 3: 15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

John 17: 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

The lesson asks us, “What is the real issue here that Jesus is pointing to and what does this tell us about the real reach of God’s law?” Thoughts??

In the bottom section, the lesson asks, “What does such a high standard tell you about the need to be covered by Christ’s righteousness at all times?” More thoughts?? Which law lens is implied, Imposed or Natural??



TUESDAY– ADULTERY

The source of the adultery issue is the SAME as the source of the murder issue – a heart of stone, an unregenerate character, a heart at enmity with God [the metaphors are numerous].

Jesus was not only revealing that adultery/murder/theft/idolatry/etc were heart issues, he later revealed what our position should be in response to seeing them in others, AND more importantly what God's position is. [see John 8: 3-11 below] When we have an imposed law viewpoint, we want to punish those who "break" the law, however, when we adopt a natural law position, we can understand that we are ALL sick & in need of healing, though we manifest different symptoms of the same illness.

3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, 4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" 6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. 7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." 8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

The lesson, correctly points out that "The solution is not to follow through with the sin but to have a conversion of the heart."

"The surrender of the will is represented as plucking out the eye or cutting off the hand. Often it seems to us that to surrender the will to God is to consent to go through life maimed or crippled. But it is better, says Christ, for self to be maimed, wounded, crippled, if thus you may enter into life. That which you look upon as disaster is the door to highest benefit."—Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 61.

In reality, is surrendering our will to God like being maimed or crippled? Aren't we actually truly free, when we do this?? We are "free" to violate the laws of health, but is this really freedom? Is the obese, diabetic, smoker free?? Is the heroin addict free? We are free to violate the Law of Love, but is this really freedom? Is the child molester free? Is the manipulative spouse free? We are free to violate the Law of Worship, but is this really freedom? Is the rat worshipping Hindu free? Is the Satanist free? Is the Christian who worships an angry God that would kill his own Son free?



WEDNESDAY – PROMISES, PROMISES ...

We are invited to read Lev. 19: 11-13. I would suggest reading the entire chapter. Note the one prevailing theme throughout “I am the Lord [your God]”. Above & beyond the list of rules God is giving, what is He trying to teach the Israelites, and us?

I referenced this quote a few weeks ago, but it’s worth repeating:

“If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God’s law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}”

God’s mission, since Adam & Eve “fell” has been to reveal Himself to humanity, and win us back to trust, so He could heal us.

Everything He has done, from putting “enmity” between us & Satan, to the flood, to having the Earth swallow Korah, Dathan, & Abiram, to putting 185,000 Assyrians to sleep, to has been for the benefit of mankind. Even when mankind has “handcuffed” Him [by demanding meat, instead of manna, or by demanding to go to war, instead of letting God use the hornet to drive out the Canaanites], He has lovingly given us over to “what we want” that we may see the error of our ways, and repent and return to Him for healing.

Regarding divorce:

31 “Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

Any thoughts on this passage? I think this passage has been more misunderstood than any other in all of Scripture [with the possible exception of the prophecies in Dan / Rev].

What is God’s *ideal* for marriage?? Why the exception for “sexual immorality” above?? Might God actually want adultery to be forgiven / reconciled as well?? Might He understand the human spirit so well, since He designed it, that He knows that a breach of trust of that magnitude cannot be reconciled by some?? Have you known anyone who has been able to reconcile a relationship after an affair??

Regarding making oaths:



Have you ever known anyone whose “yes” meant maybe and their “no” meant maybe? Any gender patterns you’ve noticed? Any gender that gives long, evasive answers to simple yes or no questions?? Those questions were rhetorical. Were these people tolerable to be around for long??

THURSDAY – LEX TALIONIS.

“An eye for an eye, and soon the whole world will be blind.” generally attributed to Gandhi.

Who gave the “Mosaic Law” at the foot of Mt Sinai?? Was Christ contradicting Himself in His Sermon on the Mount?? How do we explain the apparent “change of tune”? Read Ex. 23: 4, 5 & Rom. 12: 20.

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’
44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Matt. 5: 43-45.

What does this passage say about our Designer??



Christ and His Law Lesson 5 1Q 2014

Christ and the Sabbath

Some recent emails:

I've been so blessed the last couple of years listening to your lessons. I've started to use your material when presenting the lesson to our youth class. The young people are so excited and some of them who used to stare down at their feet and weren't interested started to share some great insights. [One friend] in particular wanted to be baptised and asked me to do the baptismal class. I've never presented any baptismal classes in my life, so I decided to use some of your material that's on your blog. He was baptized last year and even started [teaching] the lesson at church. I was so proud and wanted to cry of pure joy when he gave his first sermon this weekend. It was awesome. He [used to be] totally goth and didn't want anything to do with God before. His girlfriend brought him to our Friday youth evenings and there his life started to change. I can't believe it's the same person. God transforming people is real. Having the right picture of God changed our youth group. We just have a struggle with our older people in church to understand this message. Although I'm an elder, the church board didn't want me to preach anymore. It's all because I'm presenting the natural law and not a legal penal law. Other churches asked me to come and preach at their churches this year. When one door is closed, God opens another. This message must be spread to the whole world. If there is any spelling faults, sorry... English isn't my first language. We would like to know if you could send us 100 copies of all 3 DVDs. South Africa

I would like to request all three sets of DVD's you have offered on your website. I have purchased and read both of Dr. Jennings' books and they have been a real blessing in my life. The message he presents is a balm for the soul and a message I (unfortunately) have never heard preached in our church. I want to pass this information along to my granddaughter. CA

SABBATH

Read memory text, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." Mk 2:27,28

Thoughts about this text? To whom was Jesus referring when He said the Sabbath was made for man? Just the Jews or for all mankind?

It was made for man – when? What was the condition of the world when the Sabbath was made? What was its purpose back then?

Do we have any evidence that there was a written commandment regarding how to behave on the Sabbath before Sinai?



Was the Sabbath in Eden about avoiding work?

What kind of things do you think Adam and Eve did during the rest of the week?

- Went for walks in nature
- Studied nature
- Played or interacted with animals
- Appreciated God and all He had done in the creation of the world
- Talked with angels
- Were there any weeds to pull?
- Any planting to do?
- Any harvesting and storing in barns to do?
- Any fertilizing, irrigating, pesticides to spread?
- Were there houses to build?
- Was there banking and investments to deal with?
- Was there laundry, vacuuming, dishes to wash?
- Was there anything to do that we call work?

In other words, were their weekly activities very similar to the activities we find valuable for Sabbath?

So what did Adam and Eve do on Sabbath?

- Attend church?
- Have communion ceremony?
- Go to confession?
- Do penance?
- Pay tithe?
- Would they still walk in nature, pick fruit from the trees to eat, play and interact with the animals, converse with God and angels?
- So what was different for Adam and Eve about the Sabbath than any other day of the week?
- Was the difference primarily in their behavior or something else?

Could the difference be in what the day itself revealed? Could it be in what the day itself represented? **Could it be in what God did differently on the seventh day of creation week, not what humans did differently?** Could it be in the purpose for which the Sabbath was created?

Do we miss the point of the Sabbath when we focus on self, on our behavior, on what we should or should not do?

Do you notice how much of the Sabbath is seen through the lens of self, what we should or should not do, and if God is ever thought of in regard to the Sabbath it is typically restricted to a memorial of creation and redemption.

But we often miss the most profound elements of what creation and redemption mean about God and His law - what kind of law does the Creator utilize?



The first angel's message of Revelation 14 calls us to worship Him who "created", the builder, and what kind of law is this focusing upon? Design parameter. Only the Creator can build the fabric of the cosmos and the protocols upon which it operates. Likewise, redemption uses what kind of law? Redemption is the process of restoring defective beings back into harmony with God and His design for life; it is healing, restorative and the application and reconstruction of God's design.

Doctors cannot cure patients outside the laws of health. Doctors don't alter the laws of health; they intervene in the sick patient to alter the patient restoring the patient back into harmony with the laws of health. Likewise, God doesn't operate outside His design in our salvation, but works to restore humanity back into harmony with His design. The Sabbath, rightly understood reveals both!

The Sabbath was made – just like the earth was made, animals were made, human beings were made – the Sabbath was made holy, built that way, and what is different about the building of the Sabbath from the other first six days of Creation week?

What did God do on the first six days? What did God do on the seventh? On the first six days we see God has power. On the seventh we see the character of the One who wields the power. God didn't use power over, God stepped back and stopped using power, and instead created a time for freedom to think and consider.

The Sabbath is a gift from God to his creation. As our memory verse states, it was made for man. Consider a gift, is it a gift for our blessing, or is it a gift with strings attached?

Why do you think the commandment has the direction not to work? Prior to human sin did God have to instruct Adam and Eve not to work on Sabbath? Why did He give this instruction at Sinai? The Sabbath was made for man, what about the instruction not to work, was that also for man? Several reasons:

- To help us stop the rat wheel of life long enough to think of heavenly things, to contemplate reality, so we can be healed. Remember the parable of the sower; the seeds overtaken by weeds were choked out. And the weeds represent the cares of this life.
- AFTER sin, in bodies that degrade, get sick and die, the rest prescribed on the Sabbath at Sinai would promote better mental and physical health.
 - Many of my patients are worn out and exhausted because they never rest their minds, they work all week, and even if they go to church on Sunday, then the rest of the day is busy cleaning house, doing laundry, catching up on yard work etc.
 - The Bluezones website document the zones in the world with the highest concentration of people living over 100. Only 1 in the US, Loma Linda, CA. And on this non-Christian website, they note that Loma Linda has a high concentration of SDAs who observe a weekly Sabbath. The website recommends a weekly Sabbath rest for better health.
- To weekly have an entire period where we practice saying no to what our selfishness tempts us to do. Where we sacrifice ourselves for another, where we discipline ourselves to wait, not merely avoiding harmful things, but denying self, restraining impulse, which would mature the



brain, develop self governance, and which would then grow to be a way of life all week long. But this only works when done from love and appreciation and thankfulness, when done from fear or threat it results in rebellion.

Satan works to get us to either discard the gift of the Sabbath or experience the gift as something else, as a leash, a slave collar, a imposition, a requirement we fulfill, a burden we must endure.

The Sabbath is evidence that Satan's allegations about God, that God imposes rules, that God imposes punishments, that God abuses power are all lies. This is why Satan hates the Sabbath, because rightly seen and understood it reveals Satan as a liar. Satan hates the Sabbath in the same way Richard Nixon hated the Watergate tapes or Clinton hated Monica's dress. Nixon would have loved to destroy the tapes, and in fact tried. Clinton would have loved to destroy the dress. And Satan tries to destroy the Sabbath, to distort and twist the evidence into something it isn't. How?

First, by replacing the day as a sign or evidence of God's character of love, and His law as the design law upon which life is built, with the idea that God's law is a bunch of imposed rules and the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience.

The Jews fell into this distortion and thought the Sabbath was a rule to be observed, rather than an evidence to be understood and a sign of God's methods to be practiced. Thus they burdened the Sabbath with all types of behavioral restrictions making it the most oppressive day of the week, distorting the freedom we have in God with a false sense of fear and enslavement.

Today, many Sabbath observers fall into the same trap, understanding which day is the Sabbath, but accepting lies about it such that the Sabbath is seen as an arbitrary test of obedience, a rule put upon us rather than evidence of God's law of love which frees us.

This week I received an email from one of our online listeners, Curtis Wiltse, who shared the following quote, which is from George Fifiield's book *God is Love* published in 1897:

God created all things by Jesus Christ, and therefore Christ is the "mighty God," the "everlasting Father" of all intelligent beings in all worlds. God the Father is the Father of Christ, and therefore through him of all these beings created by Christ...

Now the All-Father gave to his children certain rules or laws to regulate their conduct. These laws were not arbitrary, not designed to show his right or power to boss, or domineer, over his children, but, like the rules of well-regulated families, they were designed to promote the happiness of all the children, and the unity of the family life.

Although many might hesitate to express it thus, the thought that lingers in their minds is about like this: **"God is arbitrary and obstinate, and will not permit the slightest variation from his laws without plunging us into eternal death."** This is what Satan has ever said of God and of his government. I desire to show the contrary so that all may see. I desire to show that **it is the variation itself that plunges us into eternal death, and not the arbitrary decree of**



God. It is the love of God that will not in any way countenance that variation, because it leads to such terrible results.

The law of God is not simply fiat; it rests upon eternal principles of pleasure and pain, -- principles as unchangeable in their very nature as the laws that govern the seasons or control the motions of the planets. **The law is not so simply because God said so, but he said so because it was so,** and because it must eternally and universally be so.

On the correct understanding of these principles of the nature of God's law depends our power to comprehend God's love in all his dealings with his creatures. **On this rests the whole philosophy of the purpose of creation and of the plan of redemption.** The existence of misery and suffering, the need for an atonement, and how that atonement is accomplished by Christ, can be understood in the light of God's love only as the nature of his law stands revealed. It is for this reason that we purpose to dwell at some length in these pages on the nature of God's law.

We have always thought of the ten commandments as requiring our love to God and to all his creatures; **have we ever thought of them as an expression of his love to us? It would be absolutely foolish to demand our love by arbitrary fiat; love cannot be given in that way;** love is born only of love. The state might as well legislate that the sun should not shine or the water should not flow downhill, as for the Lord to make such arbitrary demands for love. In either case the law could not affect in the slightest the things legislated about.

Yet it remains true that all the law of God requires is love, and that, as the apostle says, love is the fulfilling of the law, -- of the whole law. How is this? -- Simply that the law itself, when we understand it, is the revelation of such infinite love as to beget within us a returning, responsive love that can and will fulfill the law.

“God is love.” Every word, every jot and tittle, of that law, coming from love, require only such service as love dictates. **When the same love which that law expresses to us is begotten by it in our hearts, and flows out toward God and all his creatures in loving action, then the law is fulfilled.** (Fifield, *God is Love*, p53-55, Theodore Reese, 155 LaSalle Street, Chicago, in 1897)

The Sabbath rightly understood stands as evidence of God's love, His character: truth, presented in love and leaving all His creation free. But, wrongly understood it is misrepresented as a rule that must be enforced, an arbitrary decree by an arbitrary god to test us. This is one way Satan attacks the Sabbath, twisting it. But, he attacks it in another way. How?

Second, by replacing it with another day. Any concerns as to which day is actually the Sabbath of the Bible?

Some argue that the current Sabbath was changed to Sunday when the Julian calendar was changed to the Gregorian calendar. This argument fails to realize that the Gregorian calendar is concerned with



the dates of the year, not the weekly cycle, so when the calendar went into place the “date” changed but the day of the week did not. For instance, Thursday October 4, 1582, was followed by Friday October 15, 1582. The dates changed, but the weekly cycle was not affected.

Evidences for a weekly Sabbath from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday:

- Genesis 2:2
- Exodus 16
- Exodus 20 the 10 Commandments
- The Jewish people who generation after generation, in an unbroken chain of human history worship on the same Sabbath each week since Exodus 16.
- Jesus worshipped on the same Sabbath as the Jews today
- The New Testament has many Sabbath controversies, but none revolved around which day was Sabbath. All were about what activities were appropriate for the Sabbath.
 - The point being is that if the Jewish leadership was upset because Jesus healed on Sabbath, or the disciples picked grain on Sabbath – how much more conflict would have occurred if any attempts to change the day the Sabbath was observed was taking place?
 - Also all Christians acknowledge Jesus died on Good Friday and was resurrected on Easter Sunday, and the Bible states that they took Him off the cross in order to keep or observe the Sabbath, so which day falls between Friday and Sunday? Saturday, the Bible Sabbath.
- The languages of the world, many of which have Sabbath for the name of Saturday, the seventh day of the week.

○ Arabic: <i>Sabat</i>	○ Greek: <i>Savvato</i>	○ Russian: <i>Subbota</i>
○ Armenian: <i>Shabat</i>	○ Indonesian: <i>Sabtu</i>	○ Serbian: <i>Subota</i>
○ Bosnian: <i>Subota</i>	○ Italian: <i>Sabato</i>	○ Slovak: <i>Sobota</i>
○ Bulgarian: <i>Sabota</i>	○ Latin: <i>Sabbatum</i>	○ Slovene: <i>Sobota</i>
○ Corsican: <i>Sàbatu</i>	○ Maltese: <i>is-Sibt</i>	○ Somali: <i>Sabti</i>
○ Croatian: <i>Subota</i>	○ Polish: <i>Sobota</i>	○ Spanish: <i>Sabado</i>
○ Czech: <i>Sobota</i>	○ Portuguese: <i>S ábado</i>	○ Sudanese: <i>Saptu</i>
○ Georgian: <i>Sabati</i>	○ Romanian: <i>Sambata</i>	○ Ukranian: <i>Subota</i>
- Documents of history which record the historical accuracy that Saturday is the day the Jews observed when Christ was on earth, and the early Christians observed.
- The seven day weekly cycle in history – all cultures regardless of religion operate on a seven day weekly cycle – why? Because of creation week, not astronomical events.
- The admission of the Catholic Church that the Sabbath of the Bible is Saturday. “The church after changing the day of rest from the Jewish Sabbath or seventh-day of the week to the first, made the third commandment refer to Sunday as the day to be kept holy as the Lord’s day.” Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 4, p. 153.

And what is so devastating about the change in the day? The change of the Bible Sabbath to another day is in actuality an attack on the entire law of God. How? Because one can only change the Sabbath,



AFTER, one accepts the idea that God's law is like human law, rules imposed and rejects the idea that God's law is the design parameters for life.

In other words, the change in the Sabbath, was really an exchange of the entire law, it is no longer protocols upon which life is constructed, but a list of rules requiring external policing and imposition of punishment. God is now seen as a cosmic dictator, who must be appeased, and Christ's mission is not taught as God's means to heal and restore humans back into harmony with Him, but as the way to pay our legal penalty and appease an angry and offended God.

Thus, with this change in the law to an imposed law, Christians claim Christ while worshipping Satan's version of God.

This has also corrupted the SDA church and its understanding of God, the purpose of Christ's mission to earth, prophecy and the meaning of the mark of the beast and seal of God.

As Fifield said:

On the correct understanding of these principles of the nature of God's law depends our power to comprehend God's love in all his dealings with his creatures. On this rests the whole philosophy of the purpose of creation and of the plan of redemption. The existence of misery and suffering, the need for an atonement, and how that atonement is accomplished by Christ, can be understood in the light of God's love only as the nature of his law stands revealed.

When SDAs recovered the fact of which day of the week is the Sabbath, many failed to recover the truth that God's law is the law of love, the design protocols upon which life is built. Thus, they became like the Jews in Christ's day, worshipping on the right day, but still holding to a false law and false god, as Jesus told them they were of their father the devil. Why? Because it is Satan's law that is imposed, rules enforced, external coercion, force, punishment. And many SDAs teach this version of God, albeit on the Sabbath.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has held a certain view of the importance of the Sabbath Sunday issue. I will read a view, often promoted in a misunderstood way by well meaning but misguided individuals, and would like your response. There are longer versions of this, but this gets the point across:

- The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord's memorial of creation. . . . The mark of the beast is the opposite of this--the observance of the first day of the week.--8T 117 (1904). {LDE 224.3}

Any concerns or questions about these statements? Statements like this are often misunderstood and misused, because they are viewed through the imposed law model. Let's see if we can understand such ideas accurately.

Questions:



- Is the issue in our salvation, in our preparation to meet Jesus, in our being ready to translate into heaven without seeing death as simple as which day of the week a person worships upon?
- If a person absolutely insists on worshipping on the Bible Sabbath does that guarantee they won't get the mark of the beast?
- Those who crucified Christ 2000 years ago wanted Him off the Cross by sunset why? So they could keep the Sabbath – does that mean they had the seal of God?
- Does Satan care if a group of people worships on Sabbath as long as they worship him?
- How should we understand the statements above that we just read?

What is a mark or sign?

A symbol that stands for or signifies something else:

- The sign of the cross stands for what?
- The mark of the fish stands for what?
- The goat's head symbolizes what?
- A pentagram is a mark of what?

So:

- If someone wears a cross are they saved because it is the sign of our crucified Savior?
- If someone has a fish sticker on their car does that mean they are saved because it is a sign of Jesus?
- If someone has a goat ornament hanging on their Xmas tree, does that mean they are condemned because a goat's head symbolizes Satan?
- Or, if someone has a pentagram on their car does that mean they are lost because pentagrams can represent the demonic?
- If someone worships on Sabbath are they saved because it is a sign of God?

So, the passages we read stated that the Bible Sabbath and its observance, is a sign or seal of God, whereas Sunday and its observance is a mark symbolizing the beast.

Question, are these days themselves the reality, or symbols, signs, marks of some deeper reality, just as a fish, cross, pentagram or goat's head?

Could a person wear the flag or uniform of one country, which marks them as being a member of that country; the uniform being an external visible sign of whom they serve, but could the person actually be a traitor and fighting for the other side?

US Army Major Nidal Hasan, shot and killed 13 people at Ft Hood November 2009. Whose uniform was he wearing? Whose side was he on?

Even if we accept that the day upon which one worships can be a mark of loyalty to one side or the other, does that actually inform us of whom is on which side?



Is it possible the days mentioned are signs because they symbolize something that demarcates God's government from Satan's? Could they stand as signals, signets, of the mode of governing each side uses? Could these days, in their origin as days of worship, contain the very elements of the two types of governing – God's vs Satan's?

Given what we have discussed thus far today – how do these two days stand as symbols or signs? Of what?

Here is another quote from one of our church founders:

Why are men not interested to know what constitutes the mark of the beast? Exodus 31:12-17. The Sabbath question will be the issue in the great conflict in which all the world will act a part. [How does the entire world act a part? Will Muslims give up Friday and start worshipping on Sunday? What about agnostics and atheists? Or, is it these two days stand as signs of something more, and everyone will choose one or the other of two methods, of which these days stand as symbols?] Revelation 13:4-17. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 3}

"Christ died to save sinners, not in their sins, but from their sins. [Imposed law constructs teach that we are saved in our sins, from the legal penalty, but not saved from our sins, that we continue to live sinfully until Christ returns. The truth is that God actually transforms us here and now and we stop living for self, and live to love God and others more than self. This is the heart of the Sabbath, a sign of design law, restoration, healing and that God is making us right in heart again.] The warning given in Revelation shows us the terrible consequence of transgression. By lips that will not lie, God's law is declared to be holy, just, and good. **Our duty to obey this law is to be the burden of the last message of mercy to the world.¹ God's law is not a new thing. It is not holiness created, but holiness made known. It is a code of principles expressing mercy, goodness, and love. It presents to fallen humanity the character of God, and states plainly the whole duty of man.** {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 4} "'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' This command contains the principles of the first four precepts. And 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Upon these two great principles, the Word of God declares, hang all the law and the prophets. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 5}

"These **principles** are made known by the third angel's message, which declares that **the Creator has always required and always will require obedience to his royal law.** [Why does the Creator require obedience? Why does the Creator require we breathe? Because that is how life is built to operate. Remember the law is not holiness created but holiness made known. The commandments did not impose a law, but made the law known. As Fifield said it was an expression of God's love to us!] But this law has been disregarded and transgressed,

¹ It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415}



and is now being ignored by the churches. **Human enactments are placed where God's law should be. [Imposed law has replaced design law in our minds and thus our view of God is one of dictator not designer]** Sunday, a child of the Papacy, has taken the place of God's holy Sabbath. As Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image, and set it up to be worshiped by all, so Sunday is placed before the people to be regarded as sacred. This day bears not a vestige of sanctity, yet it is held up to be honored by all. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 6} **[So recognizing Sunday as sacred is an acknowledgement that God's law is like Rome's, capable of being changed by decree. This is the real problem, not going to church on Sunday and more than going to church on Wednesday is a problem].**

What is the implication of changing the Bible Sabbath for Sunday? What does this act mean in regard to how God and his government are understood? How can a church vote to change the day of worship? What must first happen concerning God's law? What church committee has ever voted to change the law of gravity, or the law of thermodynamics, or the law of respiration? Why don't they vote to change these?

So what does it mean if an ecclesiastical board votes to change the Sabbath? That they believe God's law is imposed, and therefore believe God is like a Roman emperor a cosmic dictator. And accepting this change in the law is the root to the beast system.

The Sabbath stands as evidence of God's character and therefore is symbolic, a sign, of those who value God's law of love, and practice his methods of presenting the truth in love and leaving others free.

Then what is the mark of the beast?

The time has come for the true light to shine amid moral darkness. The third angel's message has been sent forth to the world, **warning men against receiving the mark of the beast or of his image in their foreheads or in their hands. To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the word of God.** {RH, July 13, 1897 par. 5}

What decisions did the beast make and what ideas did it advocate that are in direct opposition to the word of God?

That God's law is imposed, and as an imposed law it can be changed, amended, abrogated, altered, thus, under the imposed law construct Sabbath can be changed to Sunday. And, imposed laws require judicial proceedings, investigation, records, judgments, imposed punishments. Therefore, coercive pressure is used to punish lawbreakers and ensure obedience.

Presenting God as a being who imposes law, must punish sin, requires appeasement, requires legal penalties be paid is part of the mark of the beast system regardless of which day one worships upon!



Sunday, being established upon the basis of imposed law becomes a sign or insignia or mark of those who practice such methods. So:

- Muslims, who would kidnap and kill people who believe differently, who would gain governmental power to enforce their religious law, but never worship on Sunday, are still practicing the methods of the beast and thus will receive the mark of the beast.
- Seventh-day Adventists who worship on Sabbath but teach the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience, that God's law is imposed, and God is an imperial dictator who must impose punishment, will like the Pharisees 2000 years ago, oppose the kingdom of love and receive the mark of the beast – which is what? Coming to the same conclusions about God and his law and advocate the same ideas about God!

Thus the issue in the end, of which the two days stand as signs, is the issue of God's law of love, versus Satan's imposed law construct; God's rule of love versus Satan's rule of fear and selfishness; God's design law versus worldly imposed laws. It comes down to the methods one practices and the two days are symbolic of two systems.

Here is another quote from the same founder who wrote the others we have read:

In striking contrast to the wrong and oppression so universally practised were the mission and work of Christ. Earthly kingdoms are established and upheld by physical force, but this **was not** to be the foundation of the Messiah's kingdom. **In the establishment of his government no carnal weapons were to be used, no coercion practised; no attempt would be made to force the consciences of men. These are the principles used by the prince of darkness for the government of his kingdom. His agents are actively at work, seeking in their human independence to enact laws which are in direct contrast to Christ's mercy and loving-kindness.** {RH, August 18, 1896 par. 2}

Prophecy has plainly stated the nature of Christ's kingdom. He planned a government which would use no force; his subjects would know no oppression. [no arrests, no detainments, no imposed punishments, no force, no cosmic execution of the wicked by God] The symbols of earthly governments are wild beasts, but in the kingdom of Christ, men are called upon to behold, not a ferocious beast, but the Lamb of God. **Not as a fierce tyrant did he come, but as the Son of man; not to conquer the nations by his iron power, but "to preach good tidings unto the meek;" "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" "to comfort all that mourn."** He came as the divine Restorer, bringing to oppressed and downtrodden humanity the rich and abundant grace of Heaven, that by the power of his righteousness, man, fallen and degraded though he was, might be a partaker of divinity. **[which is healing and restorative, an expression of the law of love, the law life is built to operate upon]** {RH, August 18, 1896 par. 3}

Those who promote a god who acts like a Roman emperor, who imposes law, who inflicts punishment, are actively promoting the system of the beast.



Questions?

SUNDAY

The lesson points out that the commandments were given to Israel twice – and the Sabbath is stated differently in the two sets:

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ¹¹ **For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day.** Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Exodus 20:8-11

“Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. ¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. ¹⁵ **Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.** Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. DT 5:12-15

Two separate reasons for the Sabbath – why? What is the reason?

What makes the Sabbath holy? Is it a declaration from God, a proclamation, a decree, an arbitrary act that says its holy? Or, is the Sabbath built, created, instituted in a way that sets it apart as being different from the other days when it, as a day, was created? And is it this difference that makes it holy?

So, the two reasons for the Sabbath – Creation and Redemption; God created and then God rested, God delivered and rested. We focus on the creative aspects, which are right to do as we are worshipping the true creator God, and also that nature operates on design law not imposed law, but more than this the Bible says that after creating God rested – this is what separates the Sabbath, God’s activity, actions of resting, not ours. And then the delivery from Egypt?

Israel was an acting troupe, acting out the drama of the plan of salvation. Egypt stood for the sinful world, with Pharaoh as Satan, the many gods the false systems of the world, delivery from Egypt was metaphorical delivery from fear and selfishness, sin.

So the Sabbath is a day that reveals God as creator and recreator, deliverer, destroyer of the defects of sin, both aspects are design law in action, not rules imposed, creating and restoring creation back to His design.



MONDAY

In the middle of the first paragraph we read, “Although Christ was central in the creative process, when He was transformed into human flesh, He subjected Himself to His Father’s commandments.”

Thoughts about this? What does this mean?

Does it mean – He who lived in infinity, outside the bounds of time/space, entered into finiteness, and lived within the confines of the laws of time/space? Christ, as a human, didn’t know the future, wasn’t able to be omni-present, etc. He was subject to fatigue, hunger, required oxygen, water, food, and had a body that could be killed.

But what about the idea of love – was Christ’s relation to the law of love different as a human, other than He struggled with temptations as a human He did not experience before His incarnation? In other words, did Christ have “obligations” or “requirements” regarding God’s law of love that were different than God Himself practiced?

Was the Sabbath to Jesus as a human restrictive or freeing?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Many who claim...” What does it mean to keep the Sabbath holy?

Can the Sabbath be kept holy by behavior, by avoiding certain activities or affirmatively doing other activities?

Or, is the Sabbath only kept holy by beings who have been reborn, recreated within, to have the law written on the hearts and minds, such that they operate in harmony with the principles that the Sabbath signifies?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “When God created...”

Read second paragraph, “Each of the...”

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Sabbath...”

Does the Sabbath reach back past creation of this planet? Is there any evidence the Sabbath existed before earth was created? Was there a need for the Sabbath, the evidence of God’s character it reveals, before Satan started his war and lied about God?



Read second paragraph, “God created...”

Yes, creation has been defiled, and God is working to heal, cleanse, and restore His creation – this is not a legal problem, but an actual condition that needs fixing.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “From the very beginning...” Why is breaking the law in one point breaking in all points?

Read and discuss the questions.



God's Law Lesson 6: Christ's Death and the Law

For May 10, 2014

2 Peter 3:15-16 GNB "Look on our Lord's patience as the opportunity he is giving you to be saved, just as our dear friend Paul wrote to you, using the wisdom that God gave him. (16) This is what he says in all his letters when he writes on the subject. There are some difficult things in his letters which ignorant and unstable people explain falsely, as they do with other passages of the Scriptures. So they bring on their own destruction."

Memory Text:

Romans 7:4 GNB "That is how it is with you, my friends. As far as the Law is concerned, you also have died because you are part of the body of Christ; and now you belong to him who was raised from death in order that we might be useful in the service of God."

SABBATH

Christ's Death and the Law

Read the first three paragraphs. What is the difference between the speed limit and the law of God?

- One is enacted
- One is inherent

If the law was an enacted law, the law could be done away with to suit a change in circumstances. Why can't the law of God be changed?

- It is inherent in who God is and thus in how things are constructed.
- To do away with / change the law of God would end life / universe as it truly is.

This week's lesson assumes that the Law of God **is** an enacted law and therefore confuses two laws

- The Law of God (the law of love) of God's kingdom
- The Law of sin and death of Satan's kingdom.
- The law of selfishness and survival of self at the expense of all others.

At the cross, the epitome of both of these laws was demonstrated. Christ's death demonstrated the Law of God's kingdom (love) and Satan demonstrated the law of his kingdom (the law of sin and death).

"At the cross of Calvary, love and selfishness stood face to face. Here was their crowning manifestation. Christ had lived only to comfort and bless, and in putting Him to death, Satan manifested the malignity of his hatred against God. He made it evident that the real purpose of his rebellion was to dethrone God, and to destroy Him through whom the love of God was shown." {DA 57.2}

It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin, to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more



plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin.... Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it, is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is “the transgression of the law;” (1 John 3:4) it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.19{TMK 15.2}

“The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God’s original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found.” {Ed 190.2}

SUNDAY

Read the Text of the day: Romans 7:1-6

The Lesson Study Guide has it right in the first paragraph, “The emphasis is not on the dead but on the living”

Just a side note: Why are the dead no longer under the law? They are no longer in the universe?

If they were not sleeping; if they had gone immediately to some other of God’s realm: the law would still apply because they would still be part of God’s universe that was constructed on God’s principles.

Second paragraph: The old self is under the law of this world.

In the fourth paragraph the guide says: “the believer is now married to Christ means that the law is no longer an instrument of condemnation; the believer in Jesus is free from the condemnation of the law because he or she is **covered** in the righteousness of Jesus.”

He is not just covered. He is Christ through and through.

Romans 12:2 GNB “Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God---what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.”

The next paragraph ends by saying: “the law no longer hold him or her in the grip of condemnation because the person now “belongs to Jesus.”



Just as an MRI no longer “condemns” a person whose tumor has disappeared and been healed into a healthy person. The MRI scanner now no longer holds you in fear because you have been made whole.

MONDAY

The first paragraph states there is one law. I believe, as stated earlier, there are two. Read Romans 7:7-13

How does the law “cause sin to stir up all kinds of selfish desires”? It also says that Paul was “alive apart from the law.” Really? Or in perception

Second paragraph talks about a purse thief and purse owner. How does an enacted law protect the purse owner? Fear, risk of punishment, etc

How does an inherent law protect the purse holder? The Golden Rule as part of the DNA of all concerned.

The will of God is expressed in the precepts of His holy law, and the principles of this law are the principles of heaven. The angels of heaven attain unto no higher knowledge than to know the will of God, and to do His will is the highest service that can engage their powers. {MB 109.1}

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8. {MB 109.2}

“However, in the same way that God’s retributive vengeance does not stop Him from being a God of love, the law’s function as an agent of sin and death does not make it sinful.”

Wrong, wrong, wrong.

If God is truly a God of vengeance, then he is using force to coerce beings into law obedience, and he has destroyed his universe of love. It does make a difference!

Bottom pink question: “How do you relate to the law when you violate it?”

How do you relate to the MRI scanner when you have a tumor? When you go into the scanner is there any concern? Is because the scanner is going to hurt you?

I have often wanted to go in the scanner just to look at my innards. What I call a healthy curiosity. But



if I was sick, I would really like them to find what was wrong.

Psalms 139:23 - 24 “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Psalms 139:23-24 GNB “Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. (24) Find out if there is any evil in me and guide me in the everlasting way.”

TUESDAY:

The Power of the Law

First question: What is the function of the Law?

Romans 4:15 “PhillipsNT “For the Law can produce no promise, only the threat of wrath to come. And, indeed, if there were no Law the question of sin would not arise.” Where is there no law? No where.

Even if we do not know there is a law, that does not mean that it does not exist.

Acts 17:30 GW “God overlooked the times when people didn't know any better. But now he commands everyone everywhere to turn to him and change the way they think and act.”

Were they still dying? If the consequences of the law are inherent. If the consequences of the law are enacted.

Romans 5:12-14 GNB “Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death has spread to the whole human race because everyone has sinned. (13) There was sin in the world before the Law was given; but where there is no law, no account is kept of sins. (14) But from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, death ruled over all human beings, even over those who did not sin in the same way that Adam did when he disobeyed God's command. Adam was a figure of the one who was to come.”

Romans 7:7 GNB Shall we say, then, that the Law itself is sinful? Of course not! **But it was the Law that made me know what sin is.** If the Law had not said, "Do not desire what belongs to someone else," I would not have known such a desire.

Read first paragraph: “So the law is used to define sin. Had it not been for God’s law, there would be no absolute method of knowing what actions were acceptable or unacceptable to Him. And though sin cannot exist without the law, Paul makes it clear that the law is not a willing partner with sin:

So what is killing me? The Law? Sin! The wages of sin is death.

What about the angels in heaven? Did they know what they were supposed to do without a written law?



Why? / Why not?

Romans 7:13 GNB But does this mean that what is good caused my death? By no means! It was sin that did it; by using what is good, sin brought death to me, in order that its true nature as sin might be revealed. And so, by means of the commandment sin is shown to be even more terribly sinful.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:54-58

Second paragraph of Tuesday's Lesson Guide: "Had it not been for the law, there would be no death because it would be impossible to define sin."

No! "Death reigned from Adam to Moses" Romans 5:14

Just because you do not know the danger, doesn't mean danger does not exist. You are able to recognize danger and find a cure (Christ) when you are aware of the danger you are in. We should be thankful when we have guardrails and warning signs.

My experience hiking in Italy with my little children:

- ages 5 & 7
- Rode the cable car up into the mountains and walked out to a large cross.
- My surgery professor: if you need guard rails you don't belong up there.
- You should have enough self control to not need external controls.

WEDNESDAY:

The Impotent Law

Read the first paragraph of Wednesday's Lesson: Though in one sense, as we saw, the law "empowers" sin, in another real way the law is terribly impotent. How can the same object be both powerful and impotent at the same time.

Just like an MRI: it can diagnose but cannot heal. It would be like a physician that was trying to treat your disease with an MRI.

In the second paragraph it speaks about "God's will" What is God's will?

"All come to repentance" and "all to be saved"

Wednesday's texts are some of the most meaningful texts for God's love and restoration for us. Acts 13:38, 39; Romans 8:3; Galatians 3:21

The second paragraph is well said. Read it out loud for the class.



Why is the third paragraph true? Or not.

Romans 8:7 GNB “And so people become enemies of God when they are controlled by their human nature; for they do not obey God's law, and in fact they cannot obey it.”

“The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God.” {COL 97}

THURSDAY:

The Curse of the Law

What is the curse of the law? How do you get the curse of the law? Does the law do it?

Read the Bible texts for the day:

Psalms 51:5 GNB “I have been evil from the day I was born; from the time I was conceived, I have been sinful.”

Isaiah 64:6 GNB “All of us have been sinful; even our best actions are filthy through and through. Because of our sins we are like leaves that wither and are blown away by the wind.”

Romans 3:23 GNB “everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence.”

The first paragraph talks about a “natural person.” Is there such a thing anymore? In God’s universe, what is natural? Only by being infected with the disease of sin, are we what we are today. Some day soon, God will make all things new, and then the natural state of things will be restored.

The illustration of my laptop: I had been working on typing out my study notes when I heard an audio alarm from my laptop. My battery was almost expired. Only by connecting to the power source was healthy computing restored. We need daily and constant connection with our “Power Source” to truly live. We may think we are OK, and it may appear to be so for a short period of time, but we ultimately will cease to live without God.

The last sentence of the first paragraph says: “ The truth is, the law demands total and complete **conformity**, and who has ever always given that, except Jesus?”

Christ goal for us is not conformity... **It is Unity**



John 17:21 GNB “I pray that they may all be one. Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me.”

Why? We have a disease. We need a cure, not a legal pardon.

We need to read the last three paragraphs of Thursday’s lesson with an understanding of where the curse comes from. It is not from God.

Genesis 3: there are only two things that were cursed.

- The serpent
- The ground
- Genesis 3:17 GW Then he said to the man, "You listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree, although I commanded you, 'You must never eat its fruit.' The ground is cursed because of you. Through hard work you will eat food that comes from it every day of your life.

- The ground was cursed “because of you” (Adam)
- It wasn’t from God
- It was the result of what man (Adam) had done and it is played out of the succeeding generations / years.

FRIDAY:

Further Study

Read the first paragraph from EGW

Read the first two sentences of the second paragraph: “In summary, the death of Jesus powerfully demonstrated the permanence of God’s law. When our first parents sinned, God could have abolished His laws and taken away the penalties for violation.”

- This is impossible
- God can change not
- He is and always will be love personified

The last sentence: “This means that any one of us, through faith in Jesus, can have our sins forgiven and stand perfect in God’s sight.

How?

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

God’s graciousness is not a cover for sin, it is a transformation. It is a gift of transformation and restoration to his original ideal. This passage does not say “he **will be** a new creature” ; It says he **is** a new creature.



Christ and His Law Lesson 7 2Q 2014

Christ, the End of the Law

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

May 16/17: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Auburn SDA Church, in Auburn CA. Friday Evening – The Model of the Mind; and Saturday – The God and Your Brain Seminar

June 21 Saturday – Jfest: Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth at J103's Jfest at Camp Jordan. We will give away our materials. **We will still have class on June 21 at our regular time.**

July 11-13: Dr. Jennings will be presenting at the *Rethinking Hell Conference: The Legacy of Edward Fudge and the Future of Conditionalism* in Houston, TX. To find our more visit: <http://www.rethinkinghellconference.com/2014/>

Before we start the lesson I wanted to share a few emails I have received over the last couple of weeks.

I post your [Bible Study] classes on my facebook page and I got a message from an SDA Pastor in Northern Minnesota, today, [he said] there are some concerns about Tim Jennings' beliefs on the atonement and he sent me a website to try and give me better understanding on it!

I smiled to myself because I see people in the [church] that I [have] known for years [that] are thinking I'm misguided! For the first time in my life, I finally have found peace. Not only in Jesus, but in His Abba, too! Thank you for your Ministry. MN

Thanks for the ministry you're providing. My heart is glad every day as I continue to learn about this actuality of the character of God. It's my heart's desire to be available to God, every moment of every day, to adequately impart this life-changing truth to others. WA

Someone recently shared a copy of God and Your Brain with me, I found it a very enlightening presentation and want to share it with others.

That led me to your web sight where I have watched the April 19th, then April 5th [Bible Study] class. I cannot wait to go back and watch the 4th quarter on the Sanctuary and get caught up on this quarter. You have inspired me to an awakened interest in the lessons. The quarterlies have had an excellent subject matter for a time such as this; but have been biased in opinions that I don't believe correctly reveal my GOD the way He intended them to.



Thank you for showing me that there are Adventist People that believe as I do about the Love of GOD and not the demanding and punishing god. You are proof to me of the nearness of Christ's soon return: for, when Christ's character shall be revealed in His people He shall return. NE

From Simon Harrison our Distribution Manager in Australia:

*Perth had it's annual SDA "Big Camp" over the Easter weekend. Yesterday we were able to set up a stall outside the ABC bookstore with C&R materials. We gave away over two hundred of each DVD set, a box of each study guide, countless Fundamental Focus and brochures etc! We were able to sell *Could it Be This Simple?* and *The God-Shaped Brain* books through the ABC. Not sure of the final numbers as the ABC Manager also purchased some for the ABC stock.*

We had many positive comments, with many people saying they had heard good things from your visit. Made some good contacts and overall pleased with the response. I heard that today people were going into the ABC asking for more and bought all of your books that were in stock. Of all the people that came we only had one negative response. I know there were some of my very active opposers there, but they just walked past and tried not to make eye contact. But the message is going forward! Praise God!

For some time we have been teaching the truth about God's law of love, the design protocols upon which life is made to operate, and exposing how Christianity became infected with an imposed law idea, like a dictator uses his power to create arbitrary laws, laws with no reason other than the one in power said so. This infection of thought has deeply penetrated Christianity.

An online listener, Curtis Wiltse, in follow-up from our lesson on the Sabbath a couple of weeks ago, emailed me the following, which documents how this infection has penetrated our church. This is from a book entitled *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* published by the Review and Herald 1982:

In an arbitrary manner God appointed that on the seventh day we should come to rest with His creation in a particular way. He filled this day with a content that is "uncontaminated" by anything related to the cyclical changes of nature or the movements of the heavenly bodies. **That content is the idea of the absolute sovereignty of God,** sovereignty unqualified even by an indirect cognizance of the natural movements of time and rhythms of life. As the Christian takes heed of the Sabbath day and keeps it holy, he does so purely in answer to God's command, and simply because God is his Creator. Thus, the Sabbath command comes nearer to being a true measure of spirituality than any other of the commandments, and, as in the days of Israel of old, it is often more of a test of loyalty to God than is any of the others. (Raoul Dederen, The chapter is titled, "Reflections on a Theology of the Sabbath".)



Thoughts? This paragraph describes a dictator. This paragraph describes Satan's view of God. This paragraph is evidence of how deeply the infection has penetrated to our church, our church leaders, publications, institutions and why it is so important that each person think for themselves.

Listen to the position our church founders took, and notice the clear difference:

Again **the people were reminded of the sacred obligation of the Sabbath**. Yearly feasts were appointed, at which all the men of the nation were to assemble before the Lord, bringing to Him their offerings of gratitude and the first fruits of His bounties. **The object of all these regulations was stated: they proceeded from no exercise of mere arbitrary sovereignty; all were given for the good of Israel**. The Lord said, "Ye shall be holy men unto Me"--worthy to be acknowledged by a holy God. PP 311

As the Jews departed from God, and failed to make the righteousness of Christ their own by faith, the Sabbath lost its significance to them. **Satan** was seeking to exalt himself and to draw men away from Christ, and **he worked to pervert the Sabbath**, because it is the sign of the power of Christ. The Jewish leaders accomplished the will of Satan by surrounding God's rest day with burdensome requirements. **In the days of Christ the Sabbath had become so perverted that its observance reflected the character of selfish and arbitrary men rather than the character of the loving heavenly Father**. The rabbis virtually represented God as giving laws which it was impossible for men to obey. They led the people to look upon God as a tyrant, and to think that the observance of the Sabbath, as He required it, made men hard-hearted and cruel. **It was the work of Christ to clear away these misconceptions**. Although the rabbis followed Him with merciless hostility, He did not even appear to conform to their requirements, but went straight forward, keeping the Sabbath according to the law of God. DA 283,284

Another online listener, Dell Topel, emailed me a quotation from George Knight's new book, *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus*, Review & Herald Publishing, 2013. Remember, George Knight wrote the book *The Cross of Christ*, which was used a few years ago by our opponents in an attempt to refute our views about God. It would appear that George Knight is having a change of views and moving in our direction on these things. Listen to this from page 122:

I Am My Own Judge

The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son. John 5:22 RSV

Now there is a thought pregnant with meaning: Jesus as our judge. Many of us have seen pictures of the judgment in which a somewhat apathetic (if not fearsome) Father sits upon the judgment throne with Jesus prostrate before Him pleading for salvation of His followers.

Wrong on both counts. First, the Father is not indifferent, let alone fearsome. He is not someone who has to be persuaded by Jesus or anyone else. The plain fact of the case is that He "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him



should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (John 3:16,17).

Banish all thought of God as a stern judge who needs to be convinced by a soft-hearted Christ. No! It was the Father Himself who out of a warm and caring heart initiated the plan of salvation.

Not only did the Father begin the plan, but, according to Jesus, the Father has even handed the responsibility for judgment over to Him. And that is just the beginning of an interesting part of the story. Because Jesus tells us in John 12 that He is turning over our judgment to us.

Do you find that one hard to believe? Well, listen to Him: “If any one hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him: for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day” (John12:47, 48 RSV).

Now, I know that Jesus said that it will be His words that finally judge. But think about the implications of that statement. It is you and I as individuals who make decisions about accepting or rejecting that judgmental word. We have the final decision-making authority as to where we will spend eternity. The hinge is how we relate to Him through His Word. In that sense we are our own judges.

He is describing natural law, design law, sowing and reaping, that it is our decisions which change us and result in our salvation and loss. Rev 14 “Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of *his* judgment has come.”

But notice what this same author wrote in his 2008 book *The Cross of Christ*, page 39:

“God, as the Bible pictures Him, cannot and will not stand idly by while His creation suffers. His reaction is judgment on sin, and we should see this judgment as the real meaning of biblical wrath. God condemns sin in judgment and will eventually move to destroy it completely... Once sin fully matures so that all creation recognizes that God is right in His judgments on sin and sinners, He will react to annihilate both (Rev. 20:13-15...)”

God did react to sin – by doing what? Judging it? No, not in a legal sense, but diagnosing it certainly. Diagnosing it as being out of harmony with how He constructed life to operate, and then by overcoming and curing it in the person of Jesus Christ.

Judging it as described here is based on the imposed law lie, which leads to the inevitable lie, that God is the source of death, and death is inflicted upon people by God

Curing it, overcoming it, is based on the truth of God’s law of love, the design protocol upon which life is constructed, and those who refuse the Remedy provided by God, die as the result of uncured sin,



just as the Bible teaches, “the wages of sin is death” Rom 6:23, “sin when full grown brings forth death” James 1:15.

So, the good news is that perhaps, truth about God is penetrating the church and the infection of the false legal view is losing hold on people’s minds. The gates of hell cannot stand against the truth about God!

SABBATH

Read first three paragraphs, “A well-known magazine...” thoughts?

What does this mean, “we have been shown the only way to achieve immortality, and that is through faith in Jesus as opposed to the keeping of the law—even though we are to keep it.”

What does it mean, “though faith in Jesus?”

- We claim the legal payment of His blood to pay our sin debt?
- We are won to genuine trust, open our hearts, surrender our entire selves, lives, future, etc to Him and the Holy Spirit enters and transforms us to be like Him? We partake of the divine nature, as Peter says?

These two views of faith and salvation lead down two different paths:

- The first – a path in which people claim salvation, based on a legal payment, but with no power to change the life, because God is still misrepresented and people continue to live in fear. Thus Christianity has suffered for millennia under this view, with infant Christians, sick, abusing others in the name of Christ, including their own families.
- The second – a path in which people actually die to self, are renewed in the inner man and live victorious Christlike lives empowered by the Holy Spirit

SUNDAY

First sentence is fairly well said, “Though it points out sins, the law is powerless to save us from them.”

How could you say it better?

“Though it points out sin, the law is powerless to save us from it.”

What is the difference?

The way they state it emphasizes acts, behaviors, deeds, which is all based on an imposed law construct, which generally leads to payment theologies.



The way I said it, emphasizes our condition, being deviant or out of harmony with God's design, which is based on design law, which leads to the truth, God's plan of healing, or salvation.

Read the first paragraph, which is in reaction to Romans 5:12-20, "Notice in this passage..." thoughts?

Why is there an association between sin and death? Either because sin actually does something to the sinner which causes death, or sin breaks a heavenly rule God and God responds to the break in the rule by using His power to inflict death as a punishment. Which is it?

Notice the second paragraph, "Now read Romans..." thoughts? Did you notice how the paragraph said, "However, instead of bringing in the natural result of sin..." The lesson acknowledges here that death is the result of sin, not the infliction of God.

But then the lesson seems to struggle a bit with this, "no matter how bad sin is, God's grace is sufficient to cover it for those who claim His promises by faith."

What does this sound like? How can this be misunderstood? What is a healthy and correct way to understand this?

Here is how it was understood by Christians over 100 years ago, from a book called *Christ's Object Lessons*:

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. **Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us.** "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin..." By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

What, according to this view, does it mean to be covered by Christ's robe of righteousness? Notice, it is actual transformation of the believer, not a covering over of deformity and sin. So a covering over could be more accurately stated as a writing over, as we do with our computers we write over defective software with new software, thus the old is not merely covered, but destroyed. Or how we record over a VCR tape, not a mere covering over, a overwriting of a new character received from Jesus, when we trust Him.

This is the true Gospel, the power of the Creator God to heal and recreate His people back into His image.



Read the fourth paragraph, “Influenced by the translation...” Do you notice how the lesson focuses on behavior, but is this the primary issue of sin, or is sin a condition of heart and mind that leads to destructive behaviors? Which comes first sin or bad behavior?

According to Jesus, in MT 5, the behavior is the outgrowth of a sinful heart.

Here is an historic view:

Eve believed the words of Satan, and **the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors...** {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin

Here is my paraphrase of Romans 5:12-21:

^{5:12} Therefore, the infection of distrust of God, which deformed man's heart and mind with selfishness and fear and results only in death, infected the human race when Adam accepted Satan's lies about God and broke trust with him. This infection of fear and selfishness is inherited by all human beings, because all are born infected – ¹³ this is revealed by the fact that before the written law was given, the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness was already in the world. But this infection of distrust, fear and selfishness is not diagnosable without the law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, even without being diagnosed as infected with this terminal condition, humans still died from the time of Adam to Moses, even those who did not break a specific command, like Adam did – revealing that the problem is the infected state of our minds not a legal issue with God.

Adam, the first man, being the conduit through which the infection entered humanity, represents the one man who is the conduit of the antidote which cures the many who accept it.

^{5:15} But the gift of the antidote is not like the infection. For if everyone is born infected with a terminal condition because of the choice of Adam, how incredibly effective must the antidote, brought by Christ, be, since it cures all who take it! ¹⁶ Again the gift of the antidote is not like the result of the breach of trust. Adam's breach of trust infected all humanity and all humanity is diagnosed as sick and dying. This occurred without each individual choosing to be infected, but the antidote came after humankind had been severely damaged and deformed by selfishness and sin and brought cleansing, purification, health and complete restoration. ¹⁷ If by the choice of one man's distrust, selfishness and death permeated all humanity, how much more will those who accept the Remedy that Christ has achieved, experience restored trust and complete healing to live forever with God.



^{5:18} Therefore, just as Adam's distrust infected humanity with the fatal condition of fear and selfishness, so too Christ's choice to sacrifice self achieved the life-giving Remedy for all mankind. ¹⁹ Just as Adam's choice infected the human race with a terminal condition, so too Christ's perfect life has brought the Remedy to heal all who accept it.

^{5:20} The written law was added so that the infection of distrust and selfishness could be more easily seen and diagnosed. And where the exposure of sin and selfishness increased, God's willingness to heal increased all the more, ²¹ so that, just as distrust and selfishness brought deformity and death, even more importantly God's gracious Remedy, brought by Jesus Christ, results in complete healing and life eternal.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "One of the most difficult..." Do you find this concept difficult? It is only difficult for those who have accepted Satan's version of God's law, that it is a set of imposed rules. Notice how they use speed limit law as an example? What type of law is this? Imposed, which requires imposed penalties, which misrepresents God. When we understand God's law is the design protocol for life, it isn't hard to understand why we should live in harmony with it.

The paralytic healed by Christ – first Christ forgave him, then physically healed him, why? Because his physical illness was a result of breaking God's law. (DA 267) After healing, would he be free from destruction if he went out and broke the law of God again?

A person who contracted HIV from promiscuous behavior receives a miraculous healing from God – are they free from destruction and reinfection if they resume their promiscuity?

The lesson asks us to read Romans 6:15-23, this is from my paraphrase:

^{6:15} What then? Shall we indulge selfish desires because God has provided a gracious cure for our terminal condition? Absolutely not! ¹⁶ Don't you realize that when you gratify the selfish desires, you are slowly transformed and become more and more selfish destroying the very faculties that recognize and respond to God's healing truth – thus over time you lose your freedom to choose and become a slave to selfishness and lust, which leads only to self-destruction and death? Conversely if you accept God's gracious Remedy and choose his methods you are transformed and become Christlike in character. ¹⁷ Thanks be to God, that even though you used to be slaves to selfishness, you wholeheartedly accepted the truth revealed by Jesus, trusted God and practice his methods of love, truth and freedom, which you were taught. ¹⁸ Therefore, you have been freed from distrust, fear and selfishness and have been bonded to love, truth and liberty, doing what is right because it is right.

^{6:19} I state this as simply as possible, using human terms because it is easier to understand and learn that way. Just as you used to choose to use your bodies in lewd, vile and debasing ways, so now choose to use your bodies doing what is right, reasonable and healthy, which leads to purity and holiness. ²⁰ When you slavishly indulged the selfish desires you avoided what was



healthy, right and good.²¹ But what good did that do you? It only caused pain, heartache and ultimately death.²² But now you have accepted the truth about God, been restored to trust and been set free from fear and selfishness. You are wholeheartedly committed to God and receive complete recreation of heart and mind resulting in eternal life.²³ For the infection of selfishness leads only to death, but the gift of God is eternal life through the healing Remedy brought by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Read last paragraph, “Paul had ever exalted...” How do you understand this passage? First define the pertinent terms from Scripture:

- Divine law is what? The law of love, which is the template upon which life is constructed and an expression of God’s character.
 - Where do the 10 Commandment fit? Are they the eternal law or a distilled version, a codification for humans in sin?
 - In Sunday’s lesson it stated that in Eden “the 10 commandments had not yet been formally revealed.” Why? Because they weren’t even in existence anywhere in the universe in that codified form.
 - “By lips that will not lie, God's law is declared to be holy, just, and good. **Our duty to obey this law is to be the burden of the last message of mercy to the world.¹ God's law is not a new thing. It is not holiness created, but holiness made known. It is a code of principles expressing mercy, goodness, and love. It presents to fallen humanity the character of God, and states plainly the whole duty of man.** {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 4}
 - The 10 Commandments were added because of human sin to diagnose and reveal our condition and help us understand God’s character of love
- What is the penalty for disobedience? Death, why?
 - What is the penalty for breaking the law of respiration by jumping in the ocean with 100 pounds of concrete tied to your legs? Why? Can the law of respiration save you from breaking it?
 - So, does God’s law have any power to save someone who is out of harmony with it?
- What does repent mean? Turning away from, not confession, but actual desire to be changed, sick and disgusted with the selfishness which infects us.
- What is just or justice? Doing what is right, based upon the law of love
- What is wrath? Letting go to reap what one has chosen
- What is faith? Trusting God with everything, our lives, outcomes...
- What does the blood represent? According to Scripture, “the life is in the blood”
- What about pardon? Forgiveness, escape from the consequences

¹ It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415}



So what does it all mean?

Paul promoted the truth about God, His law and character of love. He revealed that the written law was a diagnostic instrument our gracious God provided to expose sin and lead us to Christ for healing. He taught that those out of harmony with God's design (wrongdoers) must have a fundamental transformation of the heart motives (repentance) and die to self (humble themselves). God's right or just action to those who choose to remain outside His design it to ultimately set them free to reap the result, (His wrath). And the only way to be restored back to God's design is by trusting Jesus and partaking of His character represented by His blood. Thus, once restored back into harmony with the law, there is reconciliation with God or pardon.

Do you like the language used in the paragraph from the lesson? Why do you think such language is used? Because different people understand in different ways, are at different levels of development, have different abilities to comprehend, speak different languages, within the same language, and God loves them all so presents the message in a variety of ways in order to reach all people. Such descriptions are intended to reach people whose minds are operating upon certain preconceived ideas or premises in order to give them hope and restore them to trust in God. Then as they walk with God, the Holy Spirit will lead them into ever increasing light and truth of His character.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Romans 7:13-25, it asks, is the passage talking about a converted or unconverted person. This is from my paraphrase and my view is obvious:

^{7:13} Did the law, which did good by diagnosing what was wrong with me, become the source of my terminal condition? Of course not! It only exposed what was already in me so that I could recognize how totally decayed, putrid and near death I was, so that through the lens of the commandment I might become utterly disgusted with evil and selfishness and long for a cure.

^{7:14} We know that the law is consistent, reliable and reasonable; but I am inconsistent, unreliable and unreasonable, because the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness has warped my mind and damaged my thinking. ¹⁵ I am frustrated with what I do. For having been restored to trust, I want to do what is in harmony with God and his methods and principles; but I find that even though I trust God, old habits, conditioned responses, preconceived ideas and other remnants of the devastation caused by distrust and selfishness are not yet fully removed. ¹⁶ And if I find an old habit causing me to behave in ways that I now find detestable, I affirm that the law is a very helpful tool revealing residual damage in need of healing. ¹⁷ What is happening is this: I have come to trust God and desire to do his will, but old habits and conditioned responses, which present almost reflexively in certain situations, have not yet been totally eliminated and thus cause me to do things I do not want to do. ¹⁸ I know that my mind was completely infected with distrust, fear and selfishness which totally perverted all my desires and faculties, so that even when distrust has been eradicated and trust has been restored, the damage caused by years of distrustful and selfish behavior has not yet been fully healed. So I



find, at times, I have the desire to do what is right, but do not yet have the ability to carry out the desire. ¹⁹ For the old habits and conditioned responses are not the good I want to do; no, they are remnants of my selfish unconverted mind. ²⁰ So, if I find myself doing what I no longer desire to do, it is not I, but vestiges of old habits and conditioned responses that have yet to be removed, and through God's grace will soon be removed.

^{7:21} So, I find this reality at work: When I want to do good, old selfish habits and residual feelings of fear are right there with me. ²² For in my mind I rejoice in God's methods and principles; ²³ but I recognize I remain damaged from years of being infected with distrust and practicing Satan's methods, so that even though the infection of distrust has been removed, the old habits of fear and self-promotion tempt me from within. ²⁴ What a damaged and corrupt man I am! Who will deliver and heal me from a brain and body so diseased and deformed? ²⁵ Praise be to God – for he has provided the healing solution through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I find that in my mind I am now renewed with trust for God and love of his methods, but my brain and body remain damaged by years of self-indulgent behavior.

Read second paragraph, "No matter..." Any concerns with this paragraph? "sin often starts before and act..." do you see how this reveals the false belief that sin is primarily behavioral. No, it always starts in the mind, with a breach of trust, fear, and *can* eventually behavior acts, but doesn't have to.

Then what about the next sentence, "Consequently, a person is in violation of the law simply by thinking something sinful."

This is a dangerous way to express it, because it is so easily misunderstood. Is it sin to have a thought of sinful things? Some patients come to me tormented because of this idea; if you think the wrong thought, you have sinned. This is not Biblical.

Here is what the Bible says:

¹³ When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, **after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin**; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:13-15

It isn't sin until the desire is conceived, which is choosing it with the will, saying "yes" with the heart, not merely having the thought.

Examples:

- Joseph when Potiphar's wife tempts him – did Joseph have to think about the sinful act, what she was asking him to do, in order to choose to say no? Was it sin to think the thought?
- Did the three worthies on the plane of Dura have to think about bowing to the idol in order to choose not to? Was the thought of doing it sin?



- Jesus, when tempted to avoid the cross, agonized and prayed to His Father, but chose the Father's will – thus no sin.

It is about character, motive, principles of the heart, not mere behavior, act, or thought.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks us to read Romans 9:30-10:4, this is from the NIV:

³⁰ What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. ³² Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone.” ³³ As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

10 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ² For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³ Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴ Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

How do you understand it?

This is from my paraphrase:

^{9:30} How then do we understand this? It is very simple – the Gentiles who had no idea they were infected with selfishness and were therefore dying, and certainly didn't have a clue that a Remedy to heal them was available, therefore, didn't pursue God's healing cure. But when they became aware of their condition and that a cure existed obtained it by trust in him who heals and restores; ³¹ but Israel, who knew their condition and knew a cure was available, who had been given the teaching tools designed to lead them back to trust did not attain it. ³² Why not? Instead of trusting God and accepting his free Remedy, they attempted to cure themselves by their own efforts. Thus they stumbled over the “stumbling stone” refusing to trust in him. ³³ As it is written:

“See, I have placed in Zion a stone of truth that reveals the stumbling and shortcoming of men, and a rock of righteousness that exposes how far short they fall, but the one who trusts in him will be completely healed and never stumble or fall again.”

Romans 10:1 Brothers, my heart's great desire and constant request to God is that the Israelites – the genetic descendants of Abraham – will accept the truth and be healed. ² I can assure you from my own experience that they are zealous to serve God, but their zeal is based on the wrong concept of God, for they don't really know him. ³ And because they do not know him -



his goodness, mercy, forgiveness, kindness, love and free gift to heal and restore, they have sought to please him by working to create their own Remedy, and thus have refused God's free healing plan already provided by him. ⁴ Christ is the total fulfillment of the law so that there may be perfection of character and healing of mind and heart for all who trust him.

Read bottom pink section, "People who take..." Is the problem of legalism that people take the law seriously? Or that people don't actually understand God's law – the law of love, the design protocols, and have instead accepted a false view of the law, as an imposed set of rules?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "In harmony..." thoughts? This is well said.

Read Gal 3:19,21:

What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator...²¹ Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.

Do you notice Paul says the law was added? What law was added? Some argue it was just the ceremonial law, but not so, Paul is stating that all written law, including, and especially the 10 Commandments were added after sin, because humans needed the help of the diagnostic instrument known as the 10 Commandments. Before sin the written law was not needed.

Our founders saw it this way:

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments... "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. {ISM 233, 234}

What is the danger to believing the 10 Commandments were always in existence?



- Misrepresents God as a dictator
- Misrepresents God's law as rules rather than design protocols
- Incites fear and leads to rebellion against God
- Leads to legalism
- Obstructs the gospel

FRIDAY

Read question #2, ““Godly living...” What is the healthy way to understand this? What is the dangerous and false way?

Healthy – we live in mortal bodies with, physical defects, and will be subject to temptation, and mistakes until Christ returns. Yet our characters our capable of constant growth, maturing, advancement, development and purification; we do experience regeneration of motive, desire, thought, and ability to love, losing our fearful self focused drive to protect self, until we are like Jesus in character, yet still subject to human weakness. Thus the quote we read earlier, that the covering of the robe of righteousness is actually a regeneration of heart and mind.

False and Dangerous: There is no victory here, we continue to live sinfully, and are only covered with Christ's record, obstructing the reality of our wicked, selfish, sinful heart and character. Don't expect victory until the second coming. This is a lie!



Christ and His Law Lesson 8 2Q 2014 The Law of God and the Law of Christ

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

May 16/17: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Auburn SDA Church, in Auburn CA. Friday Evening – The Model of the Mind; and Saturday – The God and Your Brain Seminar

June 21 Saturday – Jfest: Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth at J103's Jfest at Camp Jordan. We will give away our materials. **We will still have class on June 21 at our regular time.**

NEW: JUNE 27, 28: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Lakeport, CA Community Church, at 1111 Park Way, Park Way & Hill Road, Lakeport, CA 95453. Friday Evening – The Model of the Mind; and Saturday – The God and Your Brain Seminar.

CORRECTION July 11-13 is the date NOT June as in previous notes: Dr. Jennings will be presenting at the *Rethinking Hell Conference: The Legacy of Edward Fudge and the Future of Conditionalism* in Houston, TX To find our more visit: <http://www.rethinkinghellconference.com/2014/>

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, Christian Psychiatrist and author of *Anatomy of the Soul*, will be conducting an 8-hour workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

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NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**

TV BROADCAST: We have given permission to broadcast our DVD seminars on BETV an independent ministry that has satellite broadcasts over Glorystar, The Internet, RUKU, and broadcasts in North America, Parts of South America, The Middle East, North and South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. They were broadcasting in India, and may still be.

Before we start the lesson I wanted to share a few emails I have received over the last couple of weeks.

I am so pleased with the response your message is receiving at my church from the middle age and young adults. I have given out 100 copies of the first two seminars and there are more requests every Sabbath. One of my Sabbath School brothers came to me after viewing the series grateful, impressed with how easy the message was retained. He had been a Seventh day Adventist in fear all his life, and felt like the scales were removed from his eyes after viewing the seminars. I am so impressed by the change I see in members who have received this message, we are in one accord. I am saddened by the negative response of the older people in my church. I am verbally attacked anytime I talk about imposed laws, but I believe my mission is to enlighten everyone I can. I watch your Sabbath School Class on you tube every Friday night and I feel like I am apart of the class. All of you are in one accord and I am so blessed to



have found you. I pray that all of you continue to spread this message and I am committed to doing my part.

Can you please send me fifty more copies of the 3 Seminar DVDs and fifty of the truth love and freedom bible study guides. A lot of the members of my church are from other countries and I am told this study guide is much easier to understand. Many of the people I meet in the community receive this study guide more easily than amazing facts. MA

Christie and I have been praying that God would bring more people to help share this message and this week I received the following email:

I want to start off thanking you for the work that you do, and the blessing of the seminar "God and Your Brain". It was inspiring and I immediately started sharing it with the people I know. I'm a Bible worker and belong to a network of Bible workers all across the country. I have told them about your seminar and would like them to distribute them where they are as well. I'm not sure how many to ask for because combined we have thousands of Bible students every week. So I hope I'm not asking too much.

Please send 50 seminars to _____ CO and 100 to _____ CA

Thank you in advance. These are two of our hubs and therefore can get them out into the field with the other Bible workers. If there is any other literature we can pass out that will help you guys out as well please sent it along. Anything I can do to help advertise and help your ministry I would like to do. CA

I received this from another individual in MN:

We have shared close to 150 of the new DVD presentation. We shared the DVD with friends from his last district near the Twin Cities. They shared them for vespers and they were so well received. After the first one was shown over twice as many folks attended the second wk, and they had wonderful discussions, and folks were excited about the message. [Our pastor] happened to be visiting his past district during the 4th session. Up to that point he had not seen the DVD, however gave strong caution on it when it was shared with folks at our church, which caused many never watch it:(. Please remember this congregation and us in your prayers. I will be putting together food for thought with our friends there. Satan cannot stand the truth of God's character coming to light, and as you well know the battle is on. If there are some things in particular that I should not leave out in sharing with our friends please share. [Our pastor] will not be moved from his stance, he preaches that penal subt model theology more than ever. Makes our hearts so sad, and makes it VERY difficult to share truth in our congregation. We have small congregations up north here, and many miles in between churches. Most of all we covet your prayers!! MN



Thoughts? Let's remember this group, and all our friends around the world who are meeting similar opposition when they try and teach the truth about God as revealed by Jesus – and their opposition is not from atheists, but from theologians and pastors and church members. But this is not new, listen to this:

- When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, waiting to catch him in something he might say. Luke 11:53, 54
- But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me. 1Co 16:8,9
- Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. Philippians 1:27,28

Why is there ongoing opposition to this message?

- Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:3,4

Just as our listener wrote, we are in a war, a war over the truth about God and His character and methods of love. But the gates of hell cannot prevail against the truth. So, don't be discouraged wherever you are, keep presenting the truth, patiently, in love, and hearts and minds will be set free!

SABBATH

What do you think about the title of this week's lesson? Are there two laws? Do God and Christ have two different laws?

Read first paragraph, "In most nations..." Any concerns with this paragraph? Any fundamental flaws that foundationally undermine our ability to correctly understand God and His government from this paragraph?

Yes! This paragraphs uses kingdoms of the world as the template, model, example, comparator for us to learn about God's kingdom – why is that a problem? Why is that fundamentally flawed?

- Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." JN 18:36
 - What does this mean?
 - His kingdom is not like earthly kingdoms, if it were then His followers would use the methods of the world, fighting, power over. This is Satan's method, Satan is the prince of this world. The kingdoms of the world represent Satan's methods of governing.
 - But, God's kingdom operates upon a different law.



- Yet, our lesson uses the kingdoms of Satan as a template to teach God's kingdom – but in so doing misrepresent God and His kingdom and prevent the church from maturing to be ready to meet Christ.
- Here is what our church used to teach about God's kingdom:
 - The germ in the seed grows by the unfolding of the life-principle which God has implanted. Its development depends upon no human power. So it is with the kingdom of Christ. **It is a new creation. Its principles of development are the opposite of those that rule the kingdoms of this world. Earthly governments prevail by physical force; they maintain their dominion by war; but the founder of the new kingdom is the Prince of Peace. **The Holy Spirit represents worldly kingdoms under the symbol of fierce beasts of prey; but Christ is "the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world."** John 1:29. **[His government heals, actually removes sin, cleanses, renews]** **In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. [which means there is no use of brute force that threatens to destroy those who refuse to be healed, why? Because God's kingdom is built upon design law and deviations are destructive to the deviant]** **The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures.** They devised methods and plans. **[in other words they made rules, imposed laws]** **But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin.** {COL 77.1}**
 - What do you learn from this description?
 - Earthly governments are based upon imposed rules requiring external coercion and force
 - God's government is based on design principles, and grows naturally in the heart
 - Christ takes away sin – not pays for sins
 - The Jews 2000 years ago and many Christians today, look for God to establish a government in the same way humans do, by the use of force to punish and destroy His enemies.
 - But Jesus works by implanting the principle of love, which transforms the character and heals the person back into unity with God

Have you wondered why Christ hasn't returned yet? Because the church has not made herself ready to meet Him. And the church will continue to fail to be ready as long as it presents God's government to be like human governments.

Read second paragraph, "As the Supreme Head..." What does it mean "established laws for all of His creatures"?

Does it mean God made rules we must follow or else we will be legally guilty of breaking the rules and God, in order to be just, must impose punishments?

Or does it mean, God who is love, built His universe to operate upon principles that are in harmony with His nature, and deviations from these principles are incompatible with life?



Here are some quotes:

- In the **way of righteousness there is life**; along that path is immortality. Pr 12:28
 - Why?
- He who pursues **righteousness and love finds life**, prosperity and honor. Pr 21:21
 - Why?
- The **law** of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7
 - How does the law or the Lord revive the soul?
 - If you had a plastic bag over your head and were about to pass out, what happens if we remove the plastic bag and put you back in harmony with the law of respiration?
 - Harmony with God's law is restorative rejuvenating to the soul – why? Because it is God's design for life
 - And what is that law?
- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law**. Romans 13:10
- The **entire law** is summed up in a single command: "**Love** your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:14
- If you really keep the **royal law** found in Scripture, "**Love** your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. James 2:8
- Jesus replied: "**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: '**Love** your neighbor as yourself.' **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**" Matt 22:37-40

Here is how our church started out teaching this:

- In living for self he [man] has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. **For God is love, and love is life**. COL 258
- Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" **it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government**. GC 493
 - Sin is more than a behavior it is a principle opposed to love
- **The law of love being the foundation of the government of God**, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. GC 493
 - Why? Because God will make you miserable if you don't comply? Or because happiness is a result of healthiness, and deviations from the laws upon which life is built undermine health, thus destroying happiness
- As the Supreme Ruler of the universe, God has ordained laws for the government not only of all living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything, whether great or small, animate or inanimate, **is under fixed laws which cannot be disregarded. There are no exceptions to this rule; for nothing that the divine hand has made has been forgotten by the divine mind**. But while everything in nature is governed by natural law, man alone, as an intelligent being, capable of understanding its requirements, is amenable to moral law. To man alone, the crowning work of his creation, God has given **a conscience** to realize the sacred claims of the divine law, and **a heart capable of loving it as holy, just, and good**; and of man



prompt and perfect obedience is required. Yet God does not compel him to obey; he is left a free moral agent. {ST, April 15, 1886 par. 2}

Thoughts? Did you notice the last quote, as Supreme Ruler God has ordained laws, but what kind of laws did He ordain? Every one of these quotations and Scripture references reveal that the Creator builds, designs, constructs and His laws are the protocols upon which the fabric of the cosmos is built.

Satan has infected minds with the lie that God's laws are rules, which require imposed punishment. This is what Jesus came to reveal. Jesus didn't come to reveal a new law, but to educate humanity about the reality of what God's law really is. To elevate human thinking away from slave mentality of rules and punishment to the reality of our Creator God of love, whose universe is built upon the protocols of love!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Some believe..."

Do you see the struggle for the authors as they operate through the lens of imposed law. They forget their own teaching, in last week's lesson they pointed out that the law was only given to expose sin, to be a diagnostic instrument, but this week they are arguing for the importance of keeping the law. Do you notice how they are behavior focused?

This is infancy, not Christian maturity:

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. ¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ **Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.** ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have **trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.** Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of **repentance from acts that lead to death...** Heb 5:11-6:1

Notice – the immature, the infants, still don't experience righteousness, they still live in fear, in insecurity, specifically focused on "repentance from acts that lead to death." They are focused on the do's and don'ts they haven't figured out yet it isn't about behavior, it is about character.

God is longing for His church to mature, to grow up, to develop character like His, to die to self, to love like He loves. But this cannot happen when our teachings misrepresent God, misrepresent His government and methods, and incite fear and focus people back on themselves and their behavior etc.

We must reject the imposed law and embrace the Design law, the protocols of love!



Read second paragraph, "In the context..." Did the 10 Commandments contain the covenant of God? Or were the 10 Commandments given to expose sin and expose the desperate need of the Israelites for the covenant of grace?

Here is what our church used to teach, does it still?

As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two covenants. [What are those two laws? Which is the eternal and which is temporary? If one law is not eternal but temporary, then it was added later. What law was added?] **The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden**, when after the Fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. **To all men this covenant offered pardon**, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation. {FLB 77.2}

This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it, and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God's law. The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." The testimony of God concerning His faithful servant was, "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Gen. 17:1; 26:5. . . . {FLB 77.3}

The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the "second," or "new," covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. {FLB 77.4}

The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant. {FLB 77.5}

There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus. The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us today. . . . Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the author and the finisher of our faith. FLB 77.6

What is the law that is eternal? What law was added?

- The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more Rom 5:20
- What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. Gal 3:19

So, what law was added to help us see sin more clearly? The 10 Commandments!



So many people want to make the 10 Commandments the eternal law and the ceremonial system the added law – but think? Where was the 10 Commandment law kept? In the ark, which was the heart of the *ceremonial* system!

What did our church used to teach about this?

- If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}
- I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. **What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments...** "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is **speaking especially of the moral law.** {ISM 233, 234}

The eternal, changeless law is God's character of love, which is the foundation upon which life is constructed. The 10 Commandments are a codification of this law especially adapted to the needs of human beings in sin. Thus the 10 Commandments were ADDED, and part of the temporary system, NOT the eternal system.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read 1Co 9:19-23:

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Read second paragraph, "Ultimately, all who..." What about those who refuse to be part of His kingdom, will they not be subject to His laws?

Why will Paul's desire to save people not allow him to compromise God's law?

For the same reason a doctor's desire to save people will not allow him to compromise the laws of health. A doctor must move the patient back into harmony with the laws of health if he wants to save them.



If a doctor wants to destroy his patient then he teaches them to violate the laws of health. Likewise, religions that teach imposed law, undermine God's plan to heal because they are teaching people to practice methods outside God's design, thus they are, as Jesus told the Jews, making their converts twice the son of hell – they have their sin which is damaging them, and now they have a false law construct blinding them.

Here is 1Cor 9:19-23 from my paraphrase:

1Cor 9:19 Although I am free and not required to live by the rules of others, I freely choose to identify with everyone's plight and become a servant to all in order to inoculate as many as possible with the Remedy to sin and selfishness. 20 When I am with Jews I respect their customs and traditions in order not to offend so their hearts may open to be inoculated with the truth about Christ. When I am with legalists, who adhere to many rules, I respect their rules (even though I know they provide no remedy to sin), in order not to offend so that their hearts may be opened and inoculated with the truth about Christ. 21 When I am with those who don't know about God's law of love or his methods that heal, I respect their customs and don't act in ways that will make them feel inferior or condemned (but I continue to live in harmony with God's law of love as revealed in Christ), in order not to offend so their hearts may be opened and inoculated with the truth about God as revealed in Christ. 22 To the weak in faith I empathize with their weakness in order to win them to the truth about God as revealed in Christ. I meet all people where they are in order to open their hearts to the Remedy Christ has procured and thereby save as many as possible. 23 I do this for God and His kingdom of love, as one who is renewed and empowered by that love.

Read last paragraph, "We can also..." What do you think of the phrase the law of God and the law of Christ?

Why do the two work harmoniously? Because they are actually one and the same. The law of God he refers to is the written diagnostic instrument, the 10 Commandments. The law of Christ is the full revelation of love in action.

The law of love is a living law – not a code of conduct. Mankind was created as the repository of God's law of love – man was made in God's image, to operate upon God's law of love and to develop character like God's.

When man sinned, the law of love was replaced with fear and selfishness, i.e. the law of sin and death. Christ restored the law of God back into the human being, God's temple, God's showcase for His living law.

What is the new covenant in Hebrews? Writing the law on the heart and mind. Here is an historic view:

The life of Christ is to be revealed in humanity. Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; but Satan has labored to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image. Lift Him Up 48.



And from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

The fullness of the time had come. **Humanity, becoming more degraded through ages of transgression**, called for the coming of the Redeemer. Satan had been working to make the gulf deep and impassable between earth and heaven. **By his falsehoods** he had emboldened men in sin. It was his purpose to wear out the forbearance of God, and to extinguish His love for man, so that He would abandon the world to satanic jurisdiction. {DA 34.4}

Satan was seeking to shut out from men a knowledge of God, to turn their attention from the temple of God, and to establish his own kingdom. His strife for supremacy had seemed to be almost wholly successful. It is true that in every generation God had His agencies. **Even among the heathen there were men through whom Christ was working to uplift the people from their sin and degradation. But these men were despised and hated.** Many of them suffered a violent death. The dark shadow that Satan had cast over the world grew deeper and deeper. {DA 35.1}

Through heathenism, Satan had for ages turned men away from God; but he won his great triumph in perverting the faith of Israel. By contemplating and worshiping their own conceptions, **the heathen had lost a knowledge of God, and had become more and more corrupt. So it was with Israel...** {DA 35.2}

The people whom God had called to be the pillar and ground of the truth had become representatives of Satan. They were doing the work that he desired them to do, **taking a course to misrepresent the character of God, and cause the world to look upon Him as a tyrant.** The very **priests** who ministered in the temple had lost sight of the significance of the service they performed. **They had ceased to look beyond the symbol to the thing signified.** In presenting the sacrificial offerings they were as actors in a play. **The ordinances which God Himself had appointed were made the means of blinding the mind and hardening the heart.** God could do no more for man through these channels. The whole system must be swept away. {DA 36.2}

The deception of sin had reached its height. All the agencies for depraving the souls of men had been put in operation... Satanic agencies were incorporated with men. **The bodies of human beings, made for the dwelling place of God, had become the habitation of demons.** The senses, the nerves, the passions, the organs of men, were worked by supernatural agencies in the indulgence of the vilest lust. **The very stamp of demons was impressed upon the countenances of men.** Human faces reflected the expression of the legions of evil with which they were possessed. Such was the prospect upon which the world's Redeemer looked. What a spectacle for Infinite Purity to behold! {DA 36.3}

Sin had become a science, and vice was consecrated as a part of religion. Rebellion had struck its roots deep into the heart, and the hostility of man was most violent against heaven. **It was demonstrated** before the universe that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted. **A new element of life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world.** {DA 37.1} [not



a legal payment, an appeasement was NOT needed. Man was terminal, our condition out of harmony a new element of life and power needed to infuse the species human]

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible. [how much of Christianity teaches this satanic lie? How, when they teach Jesus died to pay the penalty of our sin, or offers His blood or pleads His blood to the Father. Think about it, if someone stole \$10,000 and couldn't pay it back, and then their brother comes along and pays the \$10,000 debt, does the one who received the payment say, "I forgive your debt?" When we teach Jesus paid our legal debt we represent God as unforgiving] Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. He was ready to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above. **But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it.** Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, **a way for its recovery was provided.** At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the Son of God came with the embassy of divine grace. **Through every age, through every hour, the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race.** Notwithstanding the perversity of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled. {DA 37.2}

Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. He came to lift us up from the dust, to reshape the marred character after the pattern of His divine character, and to make it beautiful with His own glory.
{DA 37.3}

Do you see it? The plan of salvation is healing, restoring, recreating humanity back to God's original ideal. Making us like Him! This is accomplished only through rejecting the lies about God, accepting the truth that Jesus revealed, and in trust opening the heart to become a Temple for the Holy Spirit who will take all Christ as achieved and reproduce it in you!

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, "According to Paul..." Why doesn't the message taught by Christianity move people to live victorious lives more often?

Here is what Paul says about the time right before Christ's return:

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the



good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵ **having a form of godliness but denying its power.** Have nothing to do with them. 2Tim 3:1-5

What does it mean having a form of godliness but denying its power?

- Are these atheists?
- Are these Christians and religious people?

What is the power they deny?

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.. Romans 1:16

What is the gospel?

The good news about what? About God, just as we read in *The Desire of Ages* quote above, it is the truth about God which sets us free and restores us to trust.

Those who have a form of godliness but deny the power, deny the truth of God's character and methods and present a false version of God, which is based on a distortion of His law. They present Him as the source of inflicted punishment and death.

Read third paragraph, "It is important..." thoughts?

Is human weakness sin? The lesson sounds like they are making it behavioral, but it is NOT, it is heart motivational, it is about character. A person who has been reborn, and has a new heart and right spirit, is still plagued by human weakness, conditioned responses, old habits, misunderstanding, confused ideas and based on all this human weakness will have moments of stumbling but this is not rebellion against God, it is manifestation of deficits not yet healed. Such a person, when aware of their shortcoming is grieved in their heart, hate the weakness in themselves and long to be purified and perfected by the Spirit so they no longer come up short.

Consider a husband and wife who are in a healthy love relationship, but they are encumbered by human weakness. Their hearts are for the other, but they get tired, fatigued, and in a moment might respond with a sharp reaction – have they given their heart to another, have they betrayed their love? And what do they do when they realize their cutting comment? They are grieved, they acknowledge their shortcoming and ask forgiveness.

So, too in our relationship with God, shortcomings for which we are grieved, repent of and long for deliverance to not separate us from God. It is only when we cherish the defect and want to retain it in our lives that we choose the sin over God.

As we walk with God in humbleness our characters are changed, our neurobiology is changed, our habits change and we come up short less and less.



THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Although God’s law is a law...” How does this sound?

This is worded to make it sound like God has a law, and we are compared to this law for the purpose of God making a determination and judgment about us, and to which He then must either pardon, if the proper penalty is paid, or punish if not.

But the Bible text they quoted actually reveals a different idea – notice it is not an active infliction that God “judges” or “pronounces.” What is described is a doctor’s judgment, a diagnosis – “Let the condition they have chosen, the character they have formed be theirs.”

Rev 14:7 the hour of God’s judgment means what? The hour God makes a judicial decision or the hour we judge God to be trustworthy or not?

Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, “That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.” Rom 3:4 ESV

Read second paragraph, “Although Christ had laid...” thoughts?

What do you think of this, “Because Christ has become one with the human race, He is in a position to judge impartially. Given His familiarity with the human experience, Christ would not condemn a person unjustly.”

First, the entire scenario is flawed. It is based on imposed law and misconstrues the judgment to be like a human court, which it is not. But, it gets much much worse. What else are they saying? Are they saying that God would? Or that God is incapable of judging impartially? Unbelievable they would suggest this about God on the one hand on the other, would Christ, who had suffered at the devil’s hand really be an impartial judge or would he be partial to us?

What actually happens in the judgment is not what they describe it is symbolically represented in Zech 3:

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. ² The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”

³ Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. ⁴ The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.”

Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.”

⁵ Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by...

⁸ “Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.



Notice – there is no investigation of records, there is no judicial proceeding. The Lord says to Satan, we are not listening to you. He did the same thing when He resurrected Moses. Notice what the Lord does do; He removes sinfulness and reproduces perfection of Christlike character in the believer who trusts in Him. This is symbolic of things to come, of the Branch Jesus coming to restore His character in humanity, and symbolic of all of us who partake of it!

God’s judgment is diagnosing and then healing all who will let Him.

FRIDAY

Read question 3 – can effectively do this ONLY when understand God’s law as design law. As long as thinking through imposed lens will fail. Example of teacher whose husband beat her...

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Jesus understood...” Can love be commanded? Then why the 10 Commandments? Because they are NOT rules of love, they are a diagnostic instrument, added for our need, to reveal or sick condition and lead us to Christ for remedy.



God's Law Lesson #9: Christ, the Law and the Gospel

For May 31, 2014

Memory Text: "For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17, NKJV)

Grace

- Your definition of grace will depend upon your perspective of what has gone wrong.
- If the object of salvation is doing away with records of sinful acts: you need a magic solution

Grace is Magic - Applied

- If you understand salvation as a destruction of a relationship and infection of character: then you need to know the characteristics of the people involved

Grace is an individual's characteristic

Grace is a description of what God is like

Would it bother you if you lost the word "grace" from your favorite texts?

When you read John 1:14, what do you hear?

John 1:14 KJV And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Would it bother you to read it from a more contemporary translation.

John 1:14 GW The Word became human and lived among us. We saw his glory. It was the glory that the Father shares with his only Son, a glory full of kindness and truth.

John 1:14 CEV The Word became a human being and lived here with us. We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. From him all the kindness and all the truth of God have come down to us.

John 1:14 - 17 NLT14 So the Word became human[d] and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness.[e] And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.15 John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"16 From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another.[f] 17 For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God,[g] is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

How you understand what the problem is, what your's and my problem is, will determine what you or I hear is good news.



Discussion about Bible translations

- No heritage of dominating translation and it's misuse
- Translators in my office
- Family members as translators
- Four professional

We need to be aware of where our wording and terminology of theology comes from.

Songs alter our perception. The translator's paradigm modifies the words they choose for translation.

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs

The second says: "And two manifestations of that passionate interest in humanity are found in His law (which is to guide how we live) and His grace (His means of saving us even though we have violated that law)."

We have often compared the law to an MRI scanner. Both are diagnostic instruments. Paul says he would not have known what sin was without the law.

Consider the MRI scanner:

- It does not tell me how to form my parts.
- It doesn't tell me how to get well.
- It tells me when my parts are not formed correctly.

How is the law different?

Can we truly mend our ways by seeing the perfect law or are we not brought to Christ by the law: Christ is the perfecter of our faith and healer of our lives. (Hebrews 12:2) "the founder and perfecter of our faith"

completer, finisher, bringing to maturity

The law does not have the power

We do not have the power

Law and grace are not external forces that are sprinkled on our exterior to make us look good.

They are inherent in the Christian that the Holy Spirit uses in our transformation from within to become like God.

"Now, this is the covenant that I will make with the people of Israel in the days to come, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 11 None of them will have to teach their friends or tell their neighbors, 'Know the Lord.' For they will all know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 I



will forgive their sins and will no longer remember their wrongs.”

SUNDAY

Sin and the Law

As a result of the discussion in the first six chapters of Romans, Paul is discussing the law and sin. The implication is that there may be something wrong with the law.

Is the law sin or sinful? Is the law bad or at fault?

Read the first three paragraphs. Is the second paragraph describing God's law? Could it apply to one location, time, place and not another?

Which law?

- God's Law of Love: no
- The Ten Commandments: yes
- Angels do not need guidelines for parents, etc
- But as a distillation of God's Law of Love for humans, they always apply. It cannot be changed to something else.
- They were not enacted

Read the third paragraph. Would a good law be good if it was enforced incorrectly? That is why the issue of who God is and what he is like is so crucial to the basis of the Great Controversy.

MONDAY

The Law and Israel (Deut 30:15 - 18)

The point of the first paragraph is that the Law was the distinguishing thing for the Children of Israel. Why is it not the distinguishing thing that Christ said would identify His followers? It is!!!

God's law of love is to be our distinguishing mark. Hint: What have we made the law into?

How do people see it? If we see it as an enacted entity, to control us, then it is external and coercive. If it truly is an internal design protocol that is inherent in how we are made, then it is a divine blessing.

Have we been part of changing "times and laws"?

Read Deuteronomy 30:15 - 20 from GNB/TEV.

"Today I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death. (16) If you obey the commands of the LORD your God, which I give you today, if you love him, obey him, and keep all his laws, then you will prosper and become a nation of many people. The LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are about to occupy. (17) But if you disobey and refuse to listen, and are led away to worship other gods, (18) you will be



destroyed---I warn you here and now. You will not live long in that land across the Jordan that you are about to occupy. (19) I am now giving you the choice between life and death, between God's blessing and God's curse, and I call heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. **Choose life.** (20) Love the LORD your God, obey him and be faithful to him, and then you and your descendants will live long in the land that he promised to give your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

"Choose Life" -- The Study Guide links to Matthew 7:24-27. The Wise Man and the Foolish Man each build a house. God did not intervene to knock down the Foolish Man's house. If we do not listen to what Christ says, we are being foolish and no one will have to destroy us.

The Pink Section:

"In your own experience, how are obedience and faith related? That is, when you obey, what happens to your faith in contrast to when you disobey? How does obedience strengthen faith?"

TUESDAY

The Law and the Nations

The third paragraph beginning "Whether God's will is revealed. . ." is a lot of "dark speech".

I remember thinking as a young person: "Don't learn anything more about God, that way you won't be responsible for anything else."

An Ellen White quote squashed that for me, but how sad that someone is tempted to learn less about God.

- He is our source
- Our friend
- Our closest family member
- Our best supporter and confidant.

In the last paragraph, it discusses the Law received in the Bible or Ten Commandments and the law of conscience.

- Is there a difference between these two laws?
- They are the same (if our conscience is healthy).
 - That is the point of a part of the Sermon on the Mount
 - The law of our life is internal, either the law of love or the law of sin and death.
- Is there a benefit from being a Jew and growing up with the Mosaic Law?
- Is there a benefit for the SDA Christian?
- Is there a benefit from living with your spouse as opposed to living 500 miles away?
- If your spouse is lovely to be with and a good person, it is beneficial to live as close as possible.
- God's word in all its forms help us live closer to Him.



WEDNESDAY

Grace and Truth

Are these things different from each other? What about the blind men and the elephant? These are the epitome of how things are revealed about God: Did God reveal grace and truth prior to Christ? What are your examples?

Read the first paragraph. The last sentence is excellent!

Question in middle of page: "What do Philippians 2:8, John 15:10, and Matthew 26:39 tell us about the kind of life that Jesus lived?"

Philippians 2:8 GNB He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death--- his death on the cross.

John 15:10 GNB If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

Matthew 26:39 GNB He went a little farther on, threw himself face downward on the ground, and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me! Yet not what I want, but what you want."

The second paragraph says: "When he disobeyed the express command of God, the first Adam plunged the entire world into disarray and bondage."

When did Adam sin?

When he distrusted God?

The chewing on the apple was a result of his sin and distrust of God.

Read the rest of the paragraph.

Psalms 85:10 GNB "Love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will embrace."

According to Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:8, what is the nature of the grace that originates in Jesus? How did Jesus supply grace for humans? In the same way that He provided law; it is inherent in His being.

Romans 6:23 GNB "For sin pays its wage---death; but God's free gift is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord."

Ephesians 2:8 GNB For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it.

The last sentence of the page says: "Grace not only frees us from the condemnation of the law, but it enables us to keep the law in the way that we are called to do." This is by changing us into His likeness so we will "be like He is." 1 John 3:2



THURSDAY

The Law and the Gospel

Read the first paragraph. Read Revelation 12:10

Romans 7:24-25 GNB What an unhappy man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is taking me to death? (25) Thanks be to God, who does this through our Lord Jesus Christ! This, then, is my condition: on my own I can serve God's law only with my mind, while my human nature serves the law of sin.

Romans 8:37-39 GNB No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! (38) For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, (39) neither the world above nor the world below---there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Read the second and third paragraph of Thursday's lesson. (We are terminal without salvation. Salvation is the Gospel / Good News)

This is the gospel.

My gospel is not about me.

The Salvation of me and others is not my gospel.

My gospel is that God is love.

Because of His love He has done everything necessary to heal me and return me to being human.

But the real good news is what He is really like.

That makes eternity Heaven.

What was the Gospel in Christ's day? What gospel did Christ preach? The word used 18 times in four books we call the gospels.

Matthew doesn't say what Christ was preaching when He preached the gospel.

Mark 1:14 "preaching the Gospel of God, and saying "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel (good news)."

Luke 16:16 "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the law to fail."

Why was this good news to those people? Would it be good news for us?

What is the good news we as 21st century Christians to be giving to those around us?



Christ and His Law Lesson 10 2Q 2014

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

June 21 Saturday – Jfest: Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth at J103's Jfest at Camp Jordan. We will give away our materials. **We will still have class on June 21 at our regular time.**

June 27, 28: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Lakeport, CA Community Church, at 1111 Park Way, Park Way & Hill Road, Lakeport, CA 95453. Friday Evening – The Model of the Mind; and Saturday – The God and Your Brain Seminar.

July 11-13: Dr. Jennings will be presenting at the *Rethinking Hell Conference: The Legacy of Edward Fudge and the Future of Conditionalism* in Houston, TX To find our more visit: <http://www.rethinkinghellconference.com/2014/>

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, Christian Psychiatrist and author of *Anatomy of the Soul*, will be conducting an 8-hour workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their **smile.amazon.com** site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**

Before we start the lesson I wanted to share a few emails I have received over the last couple of weeks.

I just finished two trips where I have been sharing your books and videos successfully and am about to leave for yet another one in PA where I hope to share more. However this is being financed, please offer our deepest gratitude to the supporters. I wish we were in a position to provide more ourselves, but the generosity of those who do have means it making it possible for many who do not have resources to be able to spread the good news to many who would not be able to hear it otherwise. IL

I woke up this morning at 3am and God impressed my mind to watch your DVD "God and your



Brain Seminar" which was handed to my wife from a friend yesterday. I watch all the four seminars in one setting. It was a phenomenal blessing to me and I'm so excited to give it to my church members and friends. I am planning to have a seminar in my church on your DVDs too.

With this impact from your heaven-sent presentation, I would like to avail your free DVDs so I could reach out others starting from my family, my congregation, friends and neighbors in the community. Thank you very much and God bless you more abundantly. Canada

Christ, the Law and the Covenants

Read memory text: "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant." (Hebrews 9:15 NIV)

Thoughts?

Read first paragraph, "God's eternal..." Do you hear any legal interpretation of the memory text?

I received this from Jim Harris in an email this week:

Thomas Lindsay in his book *A History of the Reformation* page 168.

The great men who built up the Western Church were almost all trained Roman lawyers. Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, Gregory the Great (whose writings form the bridge between the Latin Fathers and the Schoolmen) were all men whose early training had been that of a Roman lawyer,—a training which moulded and shaped all their thinking, whether theological or ecclesiastical. They instinctively regarded all questions as a great Roman lawyer would. They had the lawyer's craving for exact definitions. They had the lawyer's idea that the primary duty laid upon them was to enforce obedience to authority, whether that authority expressed itself in external institutions or in the precise definitions of the correct ways of thinking about spiritual truths. NO BRANCH OF WESTERN CHRISTENDOM HAS BEEN ABLE TO FREE ITSELF FROM THE SPELL CAST UPON IT BY THESE ROMAN LAWYERS OF THE EARLY CENTURIES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Do you agree? How does the false legal lens impact our interpretation of our memory text?

Here is my paraphrase of Heb 9:15:

Heb 9:15 For this reason – because he is the source of all truth and love – Christ is the administrator of the true healing plan, so that all those who desire may receive the promised recreation, healing and eternal life. He died to provide the ransom of the truth necessary to free



our minds from the lies about God and the perfect Remedy to heal our characters from fear and selfishness, which continued unabated during the little theater of the first covenant.

Do you notice the difference between reading through imposed law and design law?

When we conceive of God’s government like human governments we get all types of legal confusion and distortions of God’s character.

Imposed Law

Mediator - one who pleads
your case to a magistrate or judge

Covenant - legal contract

Inheritance - legal property or rights

Ransom – legal price

Sins – bad deeds

Thoughts?

Design Law

One who intervenes
in the disease process
to administer remedy (truth and love:
truth to restore trust in God and thus heal
our relationship with God, and God’s
law/character of love reproduced within us
to restore us to God’s design to live in
God’s presence)

Agreement between
Doctor and patient

State of being

What is necessary to free
from bondage (truth frees
from lies, love from selfishness)

Sin - condition of being out of harmony
with God’s design

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Covenants are based...” Can God make covenants without our agreement?

- Flood – never to destroy the world again
- Send Messiah to save this creation
- Provide Remedy to our condition

God can covenant or promise what He will do, but what is our responsibility in God’s covenant to save sinners?



Oswald Chambers *My Utmost for His Highest*

The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man's sin, but that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race through one man. But it also says that another **Man took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away** — an infinitely more profound revelation...

Sin is something I am born with and cannot touch— only God touches sin through redemption. It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin. **God nowhere holds a person responsible for having the heredity of sin, and does not condemn anyone because of it.** Condemnation comes when I realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver me from this heredity of sin, and yet **I refuse to let Him do so.** From that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation. **“This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.” (John 3:19)**

What is our responsibility? To accept and partake the remedy He has provided.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Although...” Does the Abrahamic covenant require those males who participate to be circumcised physically?

A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. ²⁹ No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God. Rom 2:28,29

Turn to Friday and read first four paragraphs for a historic perspective:

This same covenant [of grace] was renewed to Abraham in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it, and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God's law. . . . {FLB 77.3}

The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the "second," or "new," covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. {FLB 77.4}

The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant. {FLB 77.5}



There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus... FLB 77.6

As we come under the Abrahamic covenant must we be circumcised physically to benefit from this covenant of grace? Then why did they circumcise it in the OT? Why infants?

Because they were acting out the plan of salvation in theater, it is the reality that the theater taught that all must experience. Everyone doesn't have to act out the symbolic theater, but all have to experience the reality to which the symbols pointed.

When we are first converted we are considered babes, and it is then we are to experience the work of the Holy Spirit in cutting away ties to the world. In fact, until those ties are cut away, we would still be spiritual babes even if we have been Christians for fifty years.

Read second paragraph, "Because they detailed..." thoughts?

The lesson points us to Jeremiah and Hebrews and asks in what ways these passages "uphold the everlasting nature of God's law in the New Covenant?"

Is the lesson equating the 10 Commandments with the law written upon the heart in the New Covenant? Is it the same?

"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord.
I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Heb 10:16

Is this text talking about the 10 Commandments?

Here is the paragraph left out of the quotation from Friday's lesson, in fact this starts the original quotation:

As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two covenants. [What are those two laws? Which is the eternal and which is temporary? If one law is not eternal but temporary, then it was added later. What law was added?] The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this covenant offered pardon, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation. {FLB 77.2}

What is the eternal law and what is the temporary one? Which one was given at Sinai? What did the children of Israel do when they received it? They said they would obey and keep it, and what happened? They broke it. This is the first covenant – the law written on stone, which was given as a diagnostic tool but which the children of Israel said they would keep.



The new covenant is the full law, not the distilled codified version, the complete, full law and character of God reproduced in the believer.

Read third paragraph, “Under the Old Covenant...” Is this true? Were animal sacrifices necessary for the forgiveness of sins?

What is the problem with teaching animal sacrifice was necessary for the forgiveness of sins?

- God needs to be appeased
- Forgiveness is not freely given
- Christ’s death is superfluous, if sin could be forgiven with animal sacrifice, then why the death of Christ?

Did the sacrifices actually do anything to contribute to the forgiveness of sins?

With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

⁸ He has showed you, O man, what is good. **And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.** Micah 6:6-8

Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me ; burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Ps 40:6

Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll— I have come to do your will, O God.’” Heb 10:5-7

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings. Hosea 6:6

The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are **outwardly clean**.¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, **cleanse our consciences** from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! Heb 9:13,14

Notice the blood of animals “outwardly” cleansed, in other words, within the drama it acted out the cleansing of conscience, heart, mind that comes when we partake of Jesus.



Any examples of people in the OT times being in right relationship with God without animal sacrifices – at least without the ongoing, lifelong animal sacrifices, so no record of regular animal sacrifices for forgiveness of sin?

- Naaman
- Nebuchadnezzar
- Joseph in Egypt
- Daniel and the three worthies in Babylon
- Esther in Persia
 - Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶“Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.” Es 4:15,16

The sacrifices were NOT required for forgiveness they were only required for the play, the drama, but not the reality.

Christianity has been corrupted by the influence of Roman lawyers, and legal ideas, not in Scripture, have infected every aspect of our doctrines. God is waiting for a people who will see Him for who He really is and be in awe of Him, and with their lives glorify Him, because the hour in earth’s history has come for people to make a right judgment about who God is. We are to worship the Designer and reject this dictator view of God!

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “There were strong...” Why were they cut off from the people? Because they were going off script and what happens in reality when one goes off script i.e. leaves God design for life? They cease to exist, so to act that out the actors would have to leave the stage never to return, thus cut off from the people.

What about the curses in DT 27:11-26, how do we understand them? Is God threatening to inflict suffering, or describing reality?

¹¹ On the same day Moses commanded the people:

¹² When you have crossed the Jordan, these tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. ¹³ And these tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.

¹⁴ The Levites shall recite to all the people of Israel in a loud voice:

¹⁵ “Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol—a thing detestable to the Lord, the work of the craftsman’s hands—and sets it up in secret.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

¹⁶ “Cursed is the man who dishonors his father or his mother.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”



- ¹⁷ “Cursed is the man who moves his neighbor’s boundary stone.”
Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”
- ¹⁸ “Cursed is the man who leads the blind astray on the road.”
Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”
- ¹⁹ “Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow.”
Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”
- ²⁰ “Cursed is the man who sleeps with his father’s wife, for he dishonors his father’s bed.”
Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”
- ²¹ “Cursed is the man who has sexual relations with any animal.”
Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”
- ²² “Cursed is the man who sleeps with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.”
Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”
- ²³ “Cursed is the man who sleeps with his mother-in-law.”
Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”
- ²⁴ “Cursed is the man who kills his neighbor secretly.”
Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”
- ²⁵ “Cursed is the man who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person.”
Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”
- ²⁶ “Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out.”
Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

Why are they cursed? What is the curse?

The imposed law model would have us believe it is an infliction by God to cause pain and suffering to punish those who rebel.

Natural law understands the reality that it is the result of being out of harmony with God’s design, the curse of sin itself. Such acts sear the conscience, warp the character, damage the reason, increase guilt, fear, shame, destroy peace, rob one of happiness, corrupt relationships, and life becomes a curse.

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” Gal 3:10

An historic view:

The fall of man filled all heaven with sorrow. The world that God had made was blighted with **the curse of sin** and inhabited by beings doomed to misery and death. PP 63

Why were they doomed to misery and death? As Oswald Chambers said, because of the inheritance of sin, because the curse of being out of harmony with God’s design.



As the Israelites indulged the spirit of discontent, they were disposed to find fault even with their blessings... {PP 428.2}

Moses faithfully set before the people their great sin. It was God's power alone that had preserved them in "that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water." Deuteronomy 8:15. **Every day of their travels they had been kept by a miracle of divine mercy...**PP 428.3}

Because they had been shielded by divine power they had not realized the countless dangers by which they were continually surrounded. **In their ingratitude and unbelief** they had anticipated death, and now **the Lord permitted** death to come upon them. The poisonous serpents that infested the wilderness were called fiery serpents, on account of the terrible effects produced by their sting, it causing violent inflammation and speedy death. **As the protecting hand of God was removed from Israel**, great numbers of the people were attacked by these venomous creatures. {PP 429.1}

What happened? God granted them what they had chosen, freedom from Him, and what happens disconnected from our Creator, the Designer, the Sustainer? Curses – no infliction, but the natural result of deviation from harmony with God.

What happens in the character of those who do all the things described in DT above?

Questions?

Read second paragraph, "Heb 9:15-28" What does it mean Jesus is mediator of a new covenant?

Here is my paraphrase of these verses:

Heb 9:15 For this reason – because he is the source of all truth and love – Christ is the administrator of the true healing plan, so that all those who desire may receive the promised recreation, healing and eternal life. He died to provide the ransom of the truth necessary to free our minds from the lies about God and the perfect Remedy to heal our characters from fear and selfishness, which continued unabated during the little theater of the first covenant.

Heb 9:16 Consider the example of a will, in order for the true contents of the will to be known the one who made it must have died, ¹⁷ because the will of a person is revealed only when he has died; it is never made known while the one who made it is alive. ¹⁸ This is why even the symbolic stage play was not started without blood. ¹⁹ When Moses had read the entire script to the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the script and all the people. ²⁰ He said, "This is the blood of the symbolic healing plan, which God has given you to act out." ²¹ In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and all the props used in the play. ²² In fact, the script requires that nearly everything be symbolically cleansed with blood, because without the



shedding of blood there could be no restoration to God's original ideal – without the death of Christ we would not know the true loving character of God and could not be restored to God's original ideal for mankind.

Heb 9:23 For the script to be accurate it was necessary that the earthly model of God's heavenly temple be purified with these animal sacrifices, but the heavenly designed Spirit temple needed purifying with the truth and righteousness only Christ's self-sacrifice could provide. ²⁴ For Christ did not enter a man-made stone and mortar sanctuary that was only a copy of the true heavenly temple designed and built by God; he entered heaven itself, and now appears as the representative from earth in God's great heavenly counsel – in the living sanctuary built by God from the billions of intelligent loyal beings surrounding his throne. ²⁵ And he did not enter heaven to be sacrificed over and over again, the way the earthly high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with animal blood. ²⁶ Absolutely not, for that would mean he would have to die repeatedly since the creation of the world. But he appeared at the proper time and only needed to sacrifice himself once in order to reveal the truth about God, expose the lies of Satan, develop the Remedy and bring all things into unity with God. ²⁷ Just as each man is destined to die once and reap the eternal destiny he has chosen, ²⁸ so Christ sacrificed himself once to restore trust in God and purge selfishness from the hearts and minds of as many people as are willing; and he will come again a second time, not to remove selfishness from the heart and mind, but to remove the last residual traces of death, disease and the scars of sin and restore to complete perfection those who are waiting for him.

Read third paragraph, “In verse 16...” Why does the “covenant” require the death of each sinner? What are the possible reasons? Which are consistent with God and His character? How has imposed Roman law constructs perverted this idea?

What is the covering? How is this metaphor true and how is it perverted to misrepresent God and His kingdom?

Read last paragraph, “Then we shall...” How does the blood of Christ cleanse? Notice in the quote the cleansing is happening to and in the believer, not their records or the eyes of God.

Read bottom pink section, “God Himself...” thoughts? What is the punishment? Did Jesus bear it? Is the punishment for sin the second eternal death?

If it is the second eternal death did Jesus die that death? So when Jesus confronted death, who won, Jesus or death?

Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2Tim 1:10

The death Christ died is not the same event the wicked experience in the end:



- Christ died trusting the Father – Luke 23:46
The wicked die distrusting the Father – Revelation 6:16
- Christ died longing to see the Father – Mark 15:34
The wicked die hiding from the Father – Revelation 6:16
- Christ died when the Father's presence was hidden – Mark 15:34
The wicked die when the Father is fully revealed – 2 Thes 2:8
- Christ died less than 72 hours – Luke 24:1-8
The wicked die eternally – Malachi 4:1-3, Romans 6:23, James 1:15, 2Pet 3:10-12
- Christ died when love overcame selfishness – John 3:16, 10:17,18, 1John 3:16
The wicked die overcome by selfishness – Revelation 21:8
- Christ had His individuality preserved in death (Acts 1:11)
The wicked have their individuality destroyed in death

Those who hold penal models must undermine the beauty and reality of what Christ did accomplish. It is much more profound to realize Christ destroyed death than to teach He was destroyed by death, or He died the second death.

How is death destroyed? By life – and life originates in God and is constructed to operate upon the law of love. Death ensues from deviations from the design upon which life is constructed to operate. One destroys death by restoring things i.e. humanity, back to the right way, i.e. righteousness, or harmony with the law of love. Christ accomplished this in His human brain, when He loved perfectly and surrendered voluntarily to death, refusing to act in selfishness. Thus, He destroyed death and rose again in a humanity He perfected!

The Scripture says that “he was made to be sin though he knew no sin that we might become the righteousness of God.” 2Cor 5:21

What is the punishment for sin? Eternal non-existence – Christ DID suffer in our place, but NOT as a legal punishment for sin. Christ suffered in our place as the means to destroy death, destroy the devil and restore the image of God in man. In other words, Christ suffered in order to destroy sin and save man, not be punished for man's sin.

19th Century Theologian and Evangelist George MacDonald:

The Lord never came to deliver men from the consequences of their sins while those sins yet remained ... Yet, feeling nothing of the dread hatefulness of their sin, men have constantly taken this word that the Lord came to deliver us from our sins to mean that he came to save them from the punishment of their sins. This idea has terribly corrupted the preaching of the Gospel. The message of the Good News has not been truly communicated. Unable to believe in the forgiveness of the Father in heaven, **imagining him not at liberty to forgive, or incapable of forgiving forthright**; not really believing him God who is fully our Savior, but a God bound — either in his own nature or by a law above him and compulsory upon him — **to exact some**



recompense or satisfaction for sin, a multitude of religious teachers have taught their fellow men that **Jesus came to bear our punishment** and save us from hell. But in that they have misrepresented his true mission. George MacDonald, *Discovering the Character of God*, Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989, p. 39.

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “Think, for instance...” What is the problem with this idea?

Can people follow the 10 Commandments without being reborn? And once reborn where is the law of love written? In the heart, so living in harmony with it is an outgrowth of renewed motives and purified character, not something we work to achieve.

In fact, attempting to work to keep the Commandments actually worsens the condition making prideful self-righteous hard-hearted people, who are like those who crucified Christ.

I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. Rom 7:10, 11

My paraphrase:

I discovered that the very commandment given only to diagnose my condition, I had unwittingly attempted to use as a cure and thus my condition only worsened.¹¹ For selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the commandment could only diagnose and not cure, deceived me into thinking I could be cured by working to keep the commandments, but instead my terminal state only worsened.ori

Example: Teach a child to brush teeth, grows up and now does it to keep the rules and not get punished, or not upset mommy. While their teeth would benefit, their minds and characters wouldn't and they would likely criticize and be intolerant of those who didn't brush their teeth.

Likewise, not committing adultery, or not stealing, while one may benefit from avoiding diseases and prison etc., if the reason one avoids these behaviors is to keep the rules, to avoid punishment, etc. but not from an enlightened love of God and His methods, then one's character is still not transformed and a person is still not righteous. Heb 5-6.

FRIDAY

Read question 2 and discuss



Christ and His Law Lesson 11 2Q 2014

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

June 21 Saturday – Jfest: Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth at J103's Jfest at Camp Jordan. We will give away our materials. **We will still have class on June 21 at our regular time.**

June 27, 28: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Lakeport, CA Community Church, at 1111 Park Way, Park Way & Hill Road, Lakeport, CA 95453. Friday Evening – The Model of the Mind; and Saturday – The God and Your Brain Seminar.

July 11-13: Dr. Jennings will be presenting at the *Rethinking Hell Conference: The Legacy of Edward Fudge and the Future of Conditionalism* in Houston, TX To find our more visit: <http://www.rethinkinghellconference.com/2014/>

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, Christian Psychiatrist and author of *Anatomy of the Soul*, will be conducting an 8-hour workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Here is another email I received:

Just wanted to share with you what a wonderful GOD-inspired work you are doing, spreading the true, benevolent and consistent message about the character of Jesus Christ and the Father. The Christian world is due up for a revolution, and this would be one of the truths that MUST come to the fore...that GOD is love, in His Character, thought and deed - and that it is all consistent.

I am a middle-forties male who has been a Seventh-Day Adventist all my life. I am currently a Sabbath School "guide/instructor", a Pathfinder Counselor, a Deacon, and a proud & happy father of 3 beautiful children married to a God-given wife described in Proverbs 31. I am blessed in so many ways, I cannot begin to describe. I, however, harbored a struggle deep within. A conflict that had me challenging the very tenets of my faith, and had me tongue-tied when talking to my children about a God that loves us but yet was an apathetic Judge ready to pronounce judgment on sins. The struggle that nearly overwhelmed me was this image that I had of God the Father. It is the image that pervades Christendom thinking today, even in our own beloved Seventh-Day Adventist Church. This imposing, imperial dictatorial construct of a



God just did not fit with the God who would send His Own Son to die in my place, even were I the only sinner on earth! It just did not work, this ideology of what I had been taught versus a God of Love who would do anything to redeem me.

After some friends suggested that I take note of your [Bible Study] Classes on-line, I must admit that it was like torrents of water to a parched and thirsty land. I soaked up the image of a God who Loves me and whose character is consistent. Love engenders love, and I began to fall in love with my Lord and Savior once again. This message has saved my marriage, my family, my life if you will.

Here in California, the message of a Transformational God of Love is taking hold in the social and religious circles that I inhabit. It is just too bad that there is so much resistance in our own SDA Church to this message of a Truly Loving God. I feel that many Christians resist because they want to worship a God that is in many ways like themselves, ready to judge others for their sins. All the while they can justify this as not being judgmental because their God had already pronounced judgment on those they themselves are so quick to condemn. While obviously this is a deception that many of us live with, it is sad that we attribute to God the Father the exact opposite of what He really is. We do so much more damage in His Name we might as well advertise that we sell Indulgences or have red crosses on our tunics.

I am excited to share with others the message that I am learning and loving of my God who transforms my life into something that I never would have thought possible. Truly we serve a wondrous, glorious God who is worthy of all praise and honor.

Thank you once again for your message of a transformational God of Love, the true picture of how our God really is.

No more Conflicts in Northern California

The Apostles and the Law

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “With so much evidence...” How many of you read your lesson for the week? What evidence did the quarterly cite for the continued validity of God’s law?

The title of this week’s lesson gives a clue. They cite the fact that the Apostles didn’t argue for doing away with the law. Over and again the fact that the Apostles didn’t mention doing away with the law is the evidence they use.



Now, this is certainly true – the Apostles definitely did NOT ever suggest God’s law is done away with. But, is this the best evidence available?

What kind of evidence is this? It is the evidence of another’s testimony, of another’s understanding, of another’s opinion. It is the evidence of basing your faith on what another has experienced and understood.

The purpose of the testimony of the Apostles is to stimulate us to study, reason, evaluate the evidences for ourselves and come to understand God and His methods for ourselves.

But to use the testimony as the determining evidence undermines your own thinking, your own mental development. It is valid to take the opinions and perspectives of other but then one needs to examine the evidence and come to their own conclusion, but it is dangerous, and even damaging, to just believe because another said so.

Using Scripture like this makes mental cripples. This is NOT what God nor His true representatives want or do.

God wants us to have the mind of Christ, to grow up into the full stature of sons and daughters of God, to be renewed in our characters, to develop our own ability to discern right from wrong, not to rest on the conclusions of others, but to use those conclusions to learn the reasons for ourselves and thus the conclusions become ours.

It is a weak argument to say, red and yellow mixed together make orange, BECAUSE an artist instructor told me it does, even if your artist instructor was Michael Angelo. It is much better to say, my artist instructor taught me this, but I have actually mixed the colors myself and know from experience this is true. Or, I observed the colors being mixed and saw for myself they make orange. Or, I have studied light and the wavelength of visible light is between 400-700 nm. Red is 650 nm, yellow is 570 nm, and orange is 590 nm, so I know when you mix the red and yellow you get orange.

Here are some quotes from one of our founders:

Every human being, created in the image of God, **is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator-- individuality, power to think and to do.** The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. **It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought.** Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for **research in nature and revelation.** Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen.



Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions. {Ed 17.2}

Does God want us to have our faith based on what others have thought out? Here is another historical quote, from 1888:

We say decidedly, every minister of Jesus Christ must bind himself to the Source of all light and power and he must not follow in the shadow of any other living man, because there is Christ to whom he must become attached, and he should not bind his heart to any human being and **let man do his thinking for him**. He is not filling his position in society or in the world if he simply accepts what his father has said and what his father, or some great and good man in past generations, has done, and sinks himself, his individuality, in them. **Some who think that they preach the gospel are preaching other men's ideas. Through some means they have come to the decision that it is no part of a minister's calling or duty to think diligently and prayerfully. He accepts what other men have taught without asserting his individuality...** {1888 834.2}

Now Satan has his hand in all this work to narrow down the work of God. Ministers of Jesus Christ are to be constantly receiving light from the Source of all light. **They are not to be simply receivers of other men's thoughts**, they themselves not plowing deep into the mines of truth. If a minister is not a worker himself, digging for the truth as for hidden treasure to find the precious jewels of truth, he is forfeiting his God-given privileges. **He is not to put any human mind, any human intelligence, between his soul and God**. There is to come no authority from human minds that will in the least degree interpose between him and God's authority to lead, to guide, and to dictate. **The ministers of Christ should gather up every ray of light, every jot of strength and illumination from other minds whom God has blessed, but that is not enough. They must go to the Fountainhead for themselves. God has given men reasoning minds and He will not hold them guiltless if they trust in man or make flesh their arm**. He wants you individually to come to Him, to draw from Him, **to use the ability God gives to understand the living oracles**. If one man can see light in examining the Scriptures, so may every true Christian have the right to read, to examine, to search the Scriptures with unabated interest, and gather light therefrom. {1888 834.3}

As I have said in here over and over again, I am not to do your thinking for you, or tell you what to think. But I am here to challenge each of you to think for yourselves, to understand God, His design and methods and be able to tell the difference for yourselves.

What is the danger if we believe based on what others have concluded, without thinking things through for ourselves and understanding for ourselves the reasons for things?



This next quotation describes a natural law, a natural process that happens in the mind when we surrender our thinking to others, and it destroys the individuality, it corrupts the person and obstructs their salvation. Listen to this:

If we mistake the wisdom of man for the wisdom of God we are led astray by the foolishness of man's wisdom. Here is the great danger of many in -----. **They have not an experience for themselves.** They have not been in the habit of prayerfully considering for themselves, with unprejudiced, unbiased judgment, questions and subjects that are new and that are ever liable to arise. **They wait to see what others will think.** If these dissent, that is all that is needed to convince them that the subject under consideration is of no account whatever. Although this class is large, it does not change the fact that **they are inexperienced and weak-minded through long yielding to the enemy, and will always be as sickly as babes, walking by others' light, living on others' experience, feeling as others feel, and acting as others act. They act as though they had not an individuality. Their identity is submerged in others; they are merely shadows of those whom they think about right. Unless these become sensible of their wavering character and correct it, they will all fail of everlasting life; they will be unable to cope with the perils of the last days. They will possess no stamina to resist the devil, for they do not know that it is he. Someone must be at their side to inform them whether a foe or a friend is approaching.** They are not spiritual, therefore spiritual things are not discerned. They are not wise in those things which relate to the kingdom of God. Neither young nor old are excusable in trusting to another to have an experience for them. Said the angel: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." A noble self-reliance is needed in the Christian experience and warfare. {2T 129.2}

What happens when we surrender our thinking to another, rather than be stimulated to think for ourselves?

Why is the person who does this cursed? What is the curse? It is the curse of consequence, the curse of losing one's ability to think for oneself, the curse of losing one's individuality, one's personhood. This is not an infliction, but the natural result of choosing to squander the gifts God has given.

So, having said all this, what is better evidence that God's law is not annulled nor ever shall be than the fact the Apostles never said it was?

Understanding the nature of the law itself and then testing it in action, having experience with it.

First, what type of law is God's law – design or imposed?

Give examples of God's laws:

- Law of love – principle of giving – life is built upon this, examples?
- Law of liberty – love only exists in freedom, what happens when violated
- Law of worship – by beholding we become changed – examples



- Law of sowing and reaping – examples
- Law of truth – truth heals and sets free – examples
- Laws of health – examples
- Laws of nature – examples
- Law of strength acquired by effort or exercise - examples

When we understand God’s laws, what difference does this make for us?

So why is God’s law not done away with? Because it is the parameters upon which the cosmos is built.
To do away with the law would be destroy the universe!

What happens when we violate these laws? What does God do?

The lesson states, “As a result, they claim the Ten Commandments are not obligatory for those under the New Covenant.” Are the commandments obligatory to those who are under the New Covenant?

What do you make of Paul’s comments to Timothy?

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹ We also know that **law is made not for the righteous** but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim 1:8-11

The next paragraph states, “Second, others are so convinced that the Sabbath is not binding on Christians that, in order to justify this position, they claim that all the commandments have been crucified with Jesus on the cross.”

What have they done with these two ideas?

They have substituted the truth of God’s law of love, the blessing of freedom with imposed law ideas and given false reasons for the law that abuses and injures people who believe the lie.

What does obligation mean? How do you hear it?

Does obligation connote a sense of coercive pressure, a burden, do it or else?

This is an historic view, what our church used to know about our relationship to God’s law:

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not



obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. **True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God.** The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

It is true we are “obligated” to breathe if we want to live, but if we view the law of respiration as an obligation, an order we must do or else, our attitude about breathing changes, rather than a natural and enjoyable function we might come to resent it, why should I have to breathe. Why cant I just live without the need to breathe, it is so restrictive, I can’t go underwater, I can’t go out into space....

When we accept the lie that God’s law is like human law, imposed rules that must be enforced, then we oblige people to keep them, and we take the truth and turn it to a lie. We cheat people from the blessing of the Sabbath and rather than a day of freedom, a day of delight, we make it and the rest of God’s law into a burden that enslaves, burdens and grinds down, to the point of causing people to rebel.

Only by understanding God’s law in its right light, the design protocols for life, do we set people free to be transformed by God’s grace.

If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you **call the Sabbath a delight** and the Lord’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,¹⁴ then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” Isa 58:13,14

SUNDAY

Read Romans 3:28: “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.”

Romans 6:14: “For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”

Romans 7:4: “So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.”

Romans 3:31: “Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.”



What do these texts mean?

Read last paragraph, “For those who don’t...” Can someone explain justification by faith?

Here is a definition found on Wikipedia:

Justification, in Christian theology, is God’s act of removing the guilt and penalty of sin while at the same time declaring a sinner righteous through Christ’s atoning sacrifice. In Protestantism, righteousness from God is viewed as being credited to the sinner's account through faith alone, without works.

Thoughts? This sums up the classic view very nicely and notice this view is the view that comes when one accepts the false view of God’s law. Thus much of our own theology has been tainted through a wrong understanding of God and His law.

Here is a description of genuine justification, taught by one of the founders of our church:

Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God. He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, that men might lose the true views of God's character, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth. He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. **The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. **The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God.** Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes.** That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

Where was justification mentioned in this passage? Setting right. This is what justification truly means, setting people right with God.

What is wrong that needs setting right? The heart, mind, character of humans, primarily about God, and secondarily our underlying motives of selfishness.

Christ came to set us right in our minds and hearts about God, and in that renewed trust relationship, we are restored to right character. Thus the only way to set and keep us right was to destroy the lies



that cause mistrust, reestablish trust, which is faith, and in that trust we open the heart and experience the filling of the Holy Spirit, which takes all Christ achieved and reproduces it in us. Thus we become partakers of the divine nature and it is no longer our sinful selves that live, but Christ lives in us. We are set right, actually, literally, with God and His universe of love again.

Here true justification is stated more clearly in the book Desire of Ages:

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character[why?]; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character**, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."... Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

So what Paul is saying is this, the law is the protocols upon which life is built, we are born out of harmony and thus terminal. The written law was given to help us realize our condition, to diagnose us as such. Those, who have accepted the truth about God as revealed by Jesus, and in trust open the heart, are reborn with Christ's motives, methods and principles in their hearts; thus they are set right with God and are no longer out of harmony with Him. They are justified. Therefore, the law no longer condemns them because they live in harmony with it.

So, how did Christ take away the law's condemnation? By curing the condition which it condemns.

What does the law of respiration say about a person who hangs themselves with a noose? The law of respiration condemns them to death. What is necessary to take away the condemnation? Remove the noose and put them in harmony with the law.

Will having some other person hung by a noose take away the condemnation of the person you find hanging by a noose?

This idea of penal substitution is a lie and needs to be rejected. The church corrupts the gospel and obstructs the final message of mercy by misrepresenting God with this false teaching.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "John is the second..." Why does the lesson go on and on about how the Apostles did not set aside God's law?



Because they consider it imposed rules. Would the authors go on and on about how the Apostles never argued that gravity was done away with, any other natural law?

Here is an historic perspective, note God's law in this passage:

By the laws of God in nature, effect follows cause with unvarying certainty. The reaping testifies to the sowing. Here no pretense is tolerated. Men may deceive their fellow men and may receive praise and compensation for service which they have not rendered. **But in nature there can be no deception. On the unfaithful husbandman the harvest passes sentence of condemnation. And in the highest sense this is true also in the spiritual realm. It is in appearance, not in reality, that evil succeeds.** The child who plays truant from school, the youth who is slothful in his studies, the clerk or apprentice who fails of serving the interests of his employer, the man in any business or profession who is untrue to his highest responsibilities, may flatter himself that, so long as the wrong is concealed, he is gaining an advantage. But not so; **he is cheating himself. The harvest of life is character, and it is this that determines destiny, both for this life and for the life to come.** {Ed 108.2}

The harvest is a reproduction of the seed sown. Every seed yields fruit after its kind. **So it is with the traits of character we cherish. Selfishness, self-love, self-esteem, self-indulgence, reproduce themselves, and the end is wretchedness and ruin.** "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Galatians 6:8. **Love, sympathy, and kindness yield fruitage of blessing, a harvest that is imperishable.** {Ed 109.1}

What law is described? Why is it that Apostles don't argue that God's law was set aside? Because they knew what this author knew, that God's law is the design template and deviations are destructive to the deviant.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "There is only one book..." Could Jesus abrogate the divine law?

Not and have the universe continue, destroying the law destroys the very fabric of reality and thus destroys everything. This is what many Christians fail to realize.

Thus they have arguments about whether Christ intended to abrogate or destroy the law or not – the entire argument is already in the wrong playing field, because when one finally agrees Christ didn't set aside the law they are still in a false mental world where His law could have been set aside, i.e. an arbitrary imposed law maintained by the authority or force of the cosmic ruler.

Read last paragraph, "Misunderstanding Paul's..." What is the understanding of the relationship between faith and works?



The reason so many groups struggle is because they misunderstand the law as imposed. If my penalty is paid, and nothing I can do adds to the payment, then my salvation is obtained totally by grace, and I access it through faith. If I say I must do good works to achieve salvation then I am adding something to what Christ has done for me.

This is the confusion that results from operating on the false law lie.

Come back to the truth of God's law being the design upon which life is constructed and it all makes perfect sense.

Christ singly and alone revealed the truth about God which destroys the lies of Satan and wins to trust and He procured the remedy which cures and heals all who take it.

Yet, we still have to accept the truth, choose to trust God, partake the remedy and follow the treatment plan of our Savior.

- In accepting the truth are we the source of truth?
- In choosing to trust God are we generating His trustworthiness?
- In taking the remedy do we create the remedy? Do we add to the remedy? When taking the remedy does it do something in us we cannot do for ourselves?
- In choosing to follow the treatment plan, have we created the plan? Is it our human strength that enables us to follow through with the plan?
- Do we save ourselves? Absolutely not!
- Yet, is there a work for us to do in partaking what Christ has achieved and applying it to our lives? Thus we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, in the same way a patient works out their healing by taking their prescription and doing their therapy, but the patient doesn't create the cure nor do they save themselves.

THURSDAY

The lesson, midway states, "The very mention of grace demands the existence of law, because grace would not be necessary if there were no sin (Rom 5:18-6:15).

What is sin? Transgression of the law, which means what? Being deviant from the protocols life is constructed to operate upon?

What is grace? God's goodwill for us expressed in actions to restore us back to perfection and harmony with His design, which He originates in His character of love not because we have done something to earn it or influence Him to do so.

The lesson references Rom 5:18-6:15, this is through 6:18 in my paraphrase:



^{5:18} Therefore, just as Adam's distrust infected humanity with the fatal condition of fear and selfishness, so too Christ's choice to sacrifice self achieved the life-giving Remedy for all mankind. ¹⁹ Just as Adam's choice infected the human race with a terminal condition, so too Christ's perfect life has brought the Remedy to heal all who accept it.

^{5:20} The written law was added so that the infection of distrust and selfishness could be more easily seen and diagnosed. And where the exposure of sin and selfishness increased, God's willingness to heal increased all the more, ²¹ so that, just as distrust and selfishness brought deformity and death, even more importantly God's gracious Remedy, brought by Jesus Christ, results in complete healing and life eternal.

Romans 6:1 What, then, should we say about this amazing healing plan? Should we spread the infection of distrust and selfishness, cause more devastation and destruction so that the power of God's healing solution may be more fully displayed? ² Absolutely not! We have taken the antidote, and the infection of distrust and selfishness has been purged from our hearts and minds; how then, can we choose to be reinfected with distrust of God and practice selfish methods again? ³ Or don't you realize that all of us who were immersed into union with Christ Jesus were immersed into selflessness and have died to self-centeredness? ⁴ We symbolically demonstrate we have joined him in dying to self by being buried in water, in order that just as Jesus arose from the dead displaying the life giving glory of the Father, we too live a new life displaying God's glorious character in our lives.

^{6:5} If we have joined him in dying to self, we will absolutely join him in his resurrection and new life! ⁶ For we know that when our old selfish hearts and fear-ridden minds trust God and surrender to be crucified with Christ, the infection of selfishness is purged, and our hearts are no longer controlled by Satanic principles – ⁷ because anyone who dies to selfishness is free from Satan's methods, principles and control.

^{6:8} Now if we join Christ in dying to self, we are confident we will live with him forever. ⁹ Because Christ was raised from the dead and cannot die again; he has secured the Remedy and has revealed the truth, and death cannot touch him again. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died once destroying Satan's lies, the infection of fear and selfishness and restoring love and trust; therefore, the life he lives, he lives to glorify God.

^{6:11} In the same way recognize you are dead to the ways of Satan and alive to the ways of God as revealed in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not indulge the selfish desires and participate in destructive activities. ¹³ Do not use your physical body for evil, to indulge selfishness, but rather offer your entire being to God – revealing that Satan's principles of death have been replaced by God's principles of life. So offer your entire self to God doing what is right and healthy because it is right and healthy. ¹⁴ For distrust, fear and selfishness will no longer be what controls you, because you are no longer under the law's terminal diagnosis, but have partaken of God's gracious Remedy and are under his healing care.



^{6:15} What then? Shall we indulge selfish desires because God has provided a gracious cure for our terminal condition? Absolutely not! ¹⁶ Don't you realize that when you gratify the selfish desires, you are slowly transformed and become more and more selfish destroying the very faculties that recognize and respond to God's healing truth – thus over time you lose your freedom to choose and become a slave to selfishness and lust, which leads only to self-destruction and death? Conversely if you accept God's gracious Remedy and choose his methods you are transformed and become Christlike in character. ¹⁷ Thanks be to God, that even though you used to be slaves to selfishness, you wholeheartedly accepted the truth revealed by Jesus, trusted God and practice his methods of love, truth and freedom, which you were taught. ¹⁸ Therefore, you have been freed from distrust, fear and selfishness and have been bonded to love, truth and liberty, doing what is right because it is right.

MONDAY

Read last paragraph, “When Peter referred...” What covenant were the people to be reminded to live under?

What does it mean we are a royal priesthood? What is the function of a priest?

In the old system what did the priest do? What did this symbolize? So what are we to do today?

The priests assisted people fallen down in the guilt and shame of sin to find forgiveness, restoration, peace. Symbolically, they took the shed blood and ministered it around, they ate the meat of the sacrificial offering, they ate the showbread with fellow priests each Sabbath in the Holy Place, they taught the people.

What does all this symbolize?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Why should...” thoughts?



Christ and His Law Lesson 12 2Q 2014

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

June 21 Saturday – Jfest: Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth at J103's Jfest at Camp Jordan. We will give away our materials. **We will still have class on June 21 at our regular time.**

June 27, 28: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Lakeport, CA Community Church, at 1111 Park Way, Park Way & Hill Road, Lakeport, CA 95453. Friday Evening – The Model of the Mind; and Saturday – The God and Your Brain Seminar.

July 11-13: Dr. Jennings will be presenting at the *Rethinking Hell Conference: The Legacy of Edward Fudge and the Future of Conditionalism* in Houston, TX To find our more visit: <http://www.rethinkinghellconference.com/2014/>

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, Christian Psychiatrist and author of *Anatomy of the Soul*, will be conducting an 8-hour workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their smile.amazon.com site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**

I received this email recently:

I am writing to request a case each, if possible, of the free dvd's *God and Your Brain*, *Healing the Mind*, and *Modern Medicine*. I would also like any other recommended materials to saturate our library with!

They have been a wonderful blessing to me and my family and circle of friends! I had recently put out a case of your *God and Your Brain* dvd's at our church, and they are gone! We have about 300-400 regular attending members... I hope to bless them with your free materials that truly are sharing the Gospel Message!

Just a note- When I read your *God Shaped Brain* book, I was so impressed that this was the best (simplistic, logical, and well laid out) version of the good news I had ever heard! I had our late Administrative Pastor (who was diagnosed with Cancer and Parkinson's) read over just the part about Job and suffering and miracles. This 86 year old man who loved the church more than anything ...wept! It was such a blessing to me to know he REALLY got it before he passed!!! Thank you!!! My husband bought a case and we have been handing them out ever since.

I won't bore you with the stories, but they are more and more frequent. Praise God!



Thank you again for your part in HIS ministry and may God continue to bless and grow it for His Kingdom! FL

Christ's Church and the Law

SABBATH

Read memory text: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev 14:12).

What does this mean? What are the commandments of God?

Does it have anything to do with God's law? What law?

Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Jn 13:34,35

Is this what our memory verse is talking about, those who love each other and trust Jesus?

This is from an old Journal article, printed in 1893, consider how our church used to look at this issue:

It is through the mighty agency of the Holy Spirit that the government of Satan is to be subdued and subjected. It is the Holy Spirit that convicts of sin, and expels it from the soul by the consent of the human agent. [what does this mean?] The mind is then brought under a new law, and that law is the royal law of liberty. [Which law is this? Is it the 10 Commandments or something more? How is the law liberating?] Jesus came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul; for sin can triumph only when the liberty of the soul is extinguished. [what does this mean? How does sin take our liberty?] Jesus reached to the very depth of human woe and misery, and his love attracts man to himself. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, he lifts the mind up from its degradation, and fastens it upon the eternal reality. Through the merits of Christ man may be able to exercise the noblest powers of his being, and expel sin from his soul... {RH, April 25, 1893 par. 2}

It is essential that we who are fallen through sin, shall put on the robe of Christ's righteousness which has been prepared for us. [what does this mean? COL 311] The Holy Spirit was to convince "of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." [By whom? Who has judged the prince of this world? And what evidence was most persuasive? Who needed this evidence in order to judge correctly?] **The unfallen worlds have watched the conflict and trial of the Son of God in behalf of humanity. They have seen the crooked working of him who was once highly exalted of God, but who was expelled from heaven with a large number of angels, who has made this world the stage of his action, the field of his controversy against God.**



In heaven he complained against the law of God, declaring it unnecessary and arbitrary. [And according to this author, how did Satan describe God's law? Satan wanted anarchy without consequence. To be able to do anything without consequence, why was this not possible? Because of God's design law, but what did Satan do? He twisted the law in the minds of beings, and alleged God is the punisher. "Every sin must meet its punishment urged Satan." DA 761] **He misrepresented the Lord Jehovah, and the high Commander of heaven.** He claimed that he was above law, and maintained that right was upon his side; [what kind of law would it be for one to claim to be above it? Does anyone claim to be above the law of respiration, gravity etc? So again, Satan's view of God's law is a law imposed, not the protocols upon which life is built] **but he has fully made manifest that the principles he advocated were evil and injurious.** [Why are Satan's way injurious? Satan would have you believe because they get you in legal trouble and God must injure you with His divine power to punish you. Is this right? Then why are Satan's ways injurious? Because they deviate from the protocols God has built life to operate upon] **It has been proved that** "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." [How has this been proved? Has it been proved to you?] {RH, April 25, 1893 par. 4}

We are exhorted in the inspired records to "receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your soul." [How does the ingrafted word save? Save means to heal, the word is truth, truth destroys lies, restores trust, opens the heart to love, which drives out fear] A mere casual faith in the word is not enough; **it must be received into the heart, ingrafted in the very character.** It is only when this is the case that we have that faith which works by love, and purifies the soul. Then open wide the door of the heart for the entrance of sacred, solemn truth. The psalmist says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." **It is as we render obedience to the command of God that we have light and peace.** [What is genuine obedience? Is it blindly following rules, or understanding cooperation?] **As we make the testimonies of God our delight, we have guidance and counsel. We then eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God,** and find that his words are spirit and life. [What does it mean to partake the blood? Is the blood literal? Symbolic of what? Christ's life, NOT death, which is commonly taught in the penal view] {RH, April 25, 1893 par. 5}

As we walk in the commandments of God, we follow on in the way cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. The faithful of all ages have walked in this path, and they have shone as lights in the world. In this age the light transmitted from them has been shining with increased brightness upon the path of those who are walking in darkness. Some have received the truth, believed and obeyed it. **The light of the third angel's message has penetrated into many a darkened mind.** [what is the light of the third angel's message?] The light of the wisdom, the



goodness, the mercy, and love of God has been shining forth through his holy word. [Is this the third angel's message?] **We are not in the place where our fathers were. Advanced light is shining upon us in these last days. We cannot be accepted of God; we cannot honor him by rendering the same service, doing the same work that our fathers did. [Why not?] In order to be accounted guiltless before God, we must be as faithful in our time in following and obeying our light, as they were faithful in following and obeying the light that shone upon them... Every soul should place himself where the light will shine upon him. He should treasure every ray, that he may brighten and bless the souls of others with the heaven-sent radiance.** {RH, April 25, 1893 par. 6}

The darkness of the world is great, and individually we shall have light just to the degree to which we improve it. [what does this mean? Why is it so? Because only by thinking it out for ourselves, understanding it, comprehending it, studying it, do we develop the neural circuitry necessary to expand our understanding and grow in the light. Just as with any other endeavor. How does one grow in musical skill? By practice, by working the songs, my trying various compositions etc and in so doing the neural circuitry expands and ability and creativity and insight and ideas expand. So too in spiritual truth, if we want to grow we must exercise the faculties in studying these themes for ourselves! This is not an arbitrary edict on God. God doesn't choose to make one smart in spiritual things and another ignorant, God's truth is shining, the question is are we comprehending?] **We are to keep the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," by disseminating the light of truth that has blessed our souls, to those who sit in darkness. [Is this the commandment represented in the Rev 14 text?] Every soul is accountable for the talents intrusted. As a church, as individuals, we are to stand upon the elevated, holy ground where the truth has placed us. We are to represent to the world in character and unity the accumulated light which shines upon us in these last days...** {RH, April 25, 1893 par. 7}

What does it mean to keep the commandments of God? To love others such that we share the truth about God to them for the healing and redeeming of their souls!

What about the other major text that often goes along with the Revelation 14 text, Revelation 12:17:

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

What does Keep the commandments mean? To love God and others more than self and live seeking to save the lost, and what about hold to the testimony of Jesus?

Revelation 19:10 says:

I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.



Some interpret the passage and to mean the gift of prophecy, i.e. someone with the prophetic gift is a member of your organization. What is the problem with this interpretation?

First, the text is not talking about a single individual with the gift of prophecy, but about a group of people who all hold to a certain viewpoint, live by that view and share that same view or testimony, and that is the testimony Jesus gave about His Father. "If you've seen me you've seen the Father." Jesus said.

Consider this quotation:

The health reform is as closely related to the third angel's message as the arm to the body; but the arm cannot take the place of the body. The proclamation of the third angel's message, **the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus, is the burden of our work.** The message is to be proclaimed with a loud cry, and is to go to the whole world. **The presentation of health principles must be united with this message, but must not in any case be independent of it, or in any way take the place of it. . . . There must be a well-balanced, symmetrical development of the work in all its parts. . . {CM 138.1}**

Thoughts? What does this mean? Why is the health message to be the right arm of the third angel's message, which is taken by people who hold to the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus?

Because the health message operates on what kind of law? And when we give commandments of health, thou shall not smoke, it is understood to mean what?

Also, the health care team is never represented as being against the patient, even the patient who refuses treatment. And the cause of death for the patient who refuses treatment is from the unremedied disease not the doctor.

Likewise, the plan of salvation is the plan of healing. God's law is the law of life, the principles upon which life is constructed to operate. God is seeking to heal and never works to destroy his patients, even the unruly ones. But unremedied sin in the sinner will destroy them.

Has Christianity at large, and the SDA church in particular, given this message or has the message of the three angels, which our founders over and again said, "is the burden of our work" been corrupted by severing the gospel message from the health message and replacing natural/design law with an imperial imposed law construct which distorts God's character and actually promotes Satan's lies about God?

The sad thing in our churches today, is that Jesus is misrepresented in the character of those who profess to be his followers. Many claim to believe in and love Jesus, while they do neither. They advocate the law of God, but are transgressors of its precepts. The first four commandments require supreme love to God. **Parents, children, wife, husband, houses, lands, or any other earthly treasure, whether of friends or property, are not to be loved selfishly, and thus become an idol to divert the mind, the time, the service, from God.** He



that loves and serves mammon, cannot love and serve God supremely... "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." **Here idolatry is plainly revealed, as existing in those who claim to worship God.** The pure, refined, ennobling love is buried up by the love of carnal things. This the True Witness represents as a fearful loss in experience and character-building -- the loss of the first love... **Mercy and the love of God are the attributes of his throne. While claiming to be the subjects of the kingdom of God, and yet refusing to be converted from their selfish love, their stern, iron will, their own perverse ways, many are constantly bearing a false testimony of Jesus Christ.** {The Home Missionary, December 1, 1894 par. 13}

What does it mean to be part of God's last day people, to keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus?

Read second and third paragraph, "God's church is..." thoughts?

The problem is that the church today is carrying the wrong baton, ever since Constantine, the church has been carrying the false view of God's law. It has been representing God's law as imposed, and God as the supreme judge and imposer of penalties. Thus, the church has failed to prepare the world for Christ's return because the true gospel of the kingdom of love has not gone to the world.

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read the account in Genesis where God instructs Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and warns if he does he will die, and then the temptation and fall.

The lesson then asks, "What test was given to Adam and Even? Why would such a test be needed for perfect beings?"

It was a test of trust, of willingness to think, reason and choose. And why was it necessary?

- Was it necessary for God to know something?
- Was it necessary so God could know whether they would be loyal or not?
- No, God knows the future and God knew what they would do before they did it.
- Then why provide the test?

- What did God want for them?
- Did God want His children to suffer and die?
- Or did God want them to be eternally healthy, happy, and secure?
- What would be necessary for Adam and Eve to be eternally secure, beyond any possibility of choosing to deviate from God's design?



- To think through the issues for themselves and choose the truth and reject the lies. This could only be accomplished by their actually having an opportunity to make such a choice.

Thus the tree was in the garden for their development, their advancement, their solidification into holiness and perfection of character.

Here is a quote from one of the founders of our church, how she saw it:

Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. . . . They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be **rendered** eternally secure, **their loyalty must be tested**. At the very beginning of man's existence a check was placed upon the desire for self-indulgence, the fatal passion that lay at the foundation of Satan's fall. **The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden**, was to be a **test of the obedience, faith, and love** of our first parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. **They were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan**; but if they endured the trial, they would **finally be placed beyond his power**, to enjoy perpetual favor with God. . . . {CC 13.2}

God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automation. **Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character.** . . . It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. {CC 13.3}

What is Satan's power? Lies, then what places one beyond Satan's power? Being so settled into the truth nothing can move one from it.

What was the law in Eden which Adam and Eve violated? Is there any inspired evidence that the 10 Commandments were in existence in Eden?

Did they break the law of love and trust? Yes, why? What caused the breach? Believing a lie:

Eve believed the words of Satan, and **the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors...** {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
- This is a terminal condition



MONDAY

The lesson reviews the condition of the world from Noah to Abraham, how wicked the people were before the flood and how quickly after the flood they degenerated back into wickedness.

In Genesis 6 the Bible says that the sons of God married the daughters of men, which means that converted people, those with the law of God written on their hearts, married people who were selfish and were not converted. What is the problem with this?

What would you say of these ideas, which were written more than 100 years ago:

What the parents are, that to a great extent the children will be.

The physical conditions of the parents, their dispositions and appetites, their **mental and moral tendencies**, are to a greater or less degree reproduced in their children.--MH 371 (1905). {1MCP 138.5}

The nobler the aims, **the higher the mental and spiritual endowments, and the better developed the physical powers of the parents, the better will be the life equipment they give their children.** In cultivating that which is best in themselves, parents are exerting an influence to mold society and to uplift future generations.... {1MCP 139.1}

Through the indulgence of appetite and passion their energies are wasted, and millions are ruined for this world and for the world to come. Parents should remember that their children must encounter these temptations. **Even before the birth of the child, the preparation should begin that will enable it to fight successfully the battle against evil.** {1MCP 139.2}

Especially does responsibility rest upon the mother. She, by whose lifeblood the child is nourished and its physical frame built up, imparts to it also **mental and spiritual influences that tend to the shaping of mind and character.**--MH 371, 372 (1905). {1MCP 139.3}

In past generations, if mothers had informed themselves in regard to the laws of their being, they would have understood that their constitutional strength, **as well as the tone of their morals and their mental faculties, would in a great measure be represented in their offspring.** Their ignorance upon this subject, where so much is involved, is criminal.--HL (Part 2) 37, 1865. (2SM 431.) {1MCP 142.4}

- Grandfathers who grew up in famine conditions conferred greater risk of mortality on grandsons, while grandmothers who grew up in famine conditions conferred greater mortality risks on granddaughters Eur J Hum Genet. 2006 Feb;14(2):159-66. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/163>
- Men who smoke before the age of 11 confer greater mortality risks to their sons Eur J Hum Genet. 2006 Feb;14(2):159-66. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/163>



- Maternal stress during pregnancy alters the developing brain such that the child will be less capable of calming self and suffer with greater anxiety than they otherwise would have Medina, J. *Psychiatric Times*, April 2010, p. 16
- Experiences in adolescence can alter brain DNA expression which can pass down to the offspring. Study done on mice with gene defect for bad memory revealed those mice with healthier adolescence altered the defective gene expression passing along better memory to their offspring. Junko A. Arai, Shaomin Li, Dean M. Hartley, and Larry A. Feig **Transgenerational Rescue of a Genetic Defect in Long-Term Potentiation and Memory Formation by Juvenile Enrichment** *J. Neurosci.*, Feb 2009; 29: 1496 - 1502 ; doi:10.1523/JNEUROSCI.5057-08.2009
- A recent study of over 4000 mothers and their children, followed for over 18 years found that if the mother had negative, pessimistic, depressive thinking patterns when pregnant, then her child was much more likely to have such thinking patterns 18 years later. This association remained after accounting for maternal and offspring depression. The thought patterns of the mother accounted for 21% of the association between maternal and child depression. (*Am Journal of Psychiatry* 2013; 170:434-441).
- Recent research in PTSD individuals found that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy CBT resulted in positive gene expression changes in the hippocampus of the brain, turning on genes associated with neuroplasticity. PTSD individuals experience loss of volume in the hippocampus and orbital frontal cortex. They also have loss of gene expression of the gene *FKBP5*, which modulates the glucocorticoid receptor, i.e. stress hormones. Thus, they lose the feedback to reduce the stress hormones, which results in the brain tissue volume loss. CBT resulted in increased expression of this gene, with increased number of receptors, and thus reduction of stress hormones, with increased volume in hippocampus and orbital frontal cortex. CBT is a form of therapy which focuses on the truth, teaching people how to understand, deal with and apply the truth. Thus, the truth is healing and restorative. **Biological Psychiatry Volume 74, Issue 11** , Pages 793-800, 1 December 2013

Thoughts? So, if a person has been traumatized, this will likely negatively affect their gene expression, and they will pass along such changes to their children. However, if they deal with the trauma appropriately, CBT for instance, positive gene expression occurs, and we have every reason to believe these positive changes will be passed along to their children.

Science is confirming what Scripture and other Bible writers have said.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “After the Flood...” Why the Flood? Was it punishment inflicted by God for sin? Was it punishment that sin itself brings? Was it an act of mercy on God’s part? Was it an act of vengeance on God’s part? Or something else?

Two explanations given are reasonable for the Flood:



- The hearts of human beings closed completely to God and the HS was slowly withdrawn from the earth and Satan gained more and more access to the laws of nature and things ran amuck and the Flood came. When the wicked died and only Noah and his family were left, the majority of people were again open to the Holy Spirit, who stabilized the laws of nature and things improved. God foresaw and thus forewarned and provided a way of escape for all who would take it.
- God acted in love to keep open the channel for the Messiah. Satan was working to prevent Jesus from coming to earth by destroying every righteous person and getting everyone to permanently close their hearts to God. At this time in earth's history only one righteous man and his family remained, thus God's action at the flood was a mercy to save, to keep open the channel for Messiah to come.
- Why can we be certain the flood was not God using His power to inflict pain, suffering and death?
 - The people died the first not the second eternal death and all will rise again
 - God wants love and love cannot be achieved through the exercise of force
 - Coercive pressure is used only under Satan's government
 - God's law is the design law upon which life is constructed and God doesn't need to inflict punishment for deviations, the deviations bring their own punishment. However, God in love will often provide therapeutic interventions designed to heal and restore

What happened when God used power, therapeutically, in an attempt to redirect, excise, save, restore...

- Flood – Babel
- Carmel – Rebellion back into idolatry
- 10 Plagues of Egypt – Golden Calf
- 185,000 Assyrians – back to rebellion and eventual captivity

Thus Zech 4:6 “not by might nor by power but by the way the Spirit works” and as we read in the earlier commentary, it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit we can defeat Satan. And the Spirit is the Spirit of love and truth. These are the weapons to be used. God cannot win with power and might, because it is not a battle over power and might. It is a battle over love and trust!

Read second and last paragraphs, “God called Abraham...” “Abraham was not...” thoughts? Then what was the purpose of Israel?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph? “Though ancient law...” Was Israel's primary purpose to be stewards of God's true law? Or was their primary purpose something else, for which God's true law was necessary for them to have, understand, and apply?



I would suggest their primary purpose was to prepare a people for the advent of Jesus, and thus the law, diagnosing us as terminal, was important to let people know only through the coming Messiah would our condition be cured.

The second paragraph points out Israel was to be a kingdom of priests – what does this mean? What were they to do?

Are we a royal priesthood? What does it mean? What are we to do?

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “Unfortunately...” No question the Reformation was the beginning of returning to the truth about God, but what remnants of the infection remain?

The distortion of God’s law as imposed and the resultant distortion of God’s character and theology that it brings.

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, “The theme of greatest...” thoughts?



Christ and His Law Lesson 13 2Q 2014

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NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**

This is an email I received recently:

I'd like to report that I've used the DVDs you sent with great effect in the Jail Ministries and Earliteen. Many of the inmates are quite vocal about how it helps them understand their current situation, and after viewing the DVD one of the more "resistant" teens in my [class] ended up having an hour and a half conversation with me about some of the topics in the video.

Thanks, - CA

Christ's Kingdom and the Law

SABBATH

Read memory verse: "But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jeremiah 21:33, NKJV

What does this mean? What is the heart where the law gets written? What law? How is God's law



written on our hearts? Do we have any role in having it written there? What?

Read last paragraph, “Indeed, we have been...” What does it mean?

How do you understand it? What are the options?

- God destroys those which reject Him
- Sin is deviation from God’s design and automatically results in destruction. God has been using His power to hold destruction at bay and in the end He lets go those persons who insist on being separate from Him and thus they are destroyed by sin, not by God.

Here is a quote from Oswald Chambers that Dean sent me recently:

“When we speak of the wrath of God we must not picture Him as an angry sultan on the throne of heaven, bringing a lash about people when they do what He does not want. There is no element of personal vindictiveness in God. It is rather that God’s constitution of things is such that when a man becomes severed from God his life tumbles into turmoil and confusion, into agony and distress; it is hell at once, and he will never get out of it unless he turns to God; immediately he turns, chaos is turned into cosmos, wrath into love, distress into peace. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord” we persuade men to keep in touch with Him.”
Conformed to His Image, pg 363

Someone emailed me asking about the 7 last plagues, what about those? What do you think? Let’s see if we can reason it out.

What is happening in the world when the seven last plagues occur? Is the majority of the world becoming more Godly, or are they closing their hearts to God?

And where is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit on earth? The hearts/minds of humans, so if people are closing their hearts permanently to the Holy Spirit what happens? The Spirit is slowly withdrawn from the earth. Then who gets more and more control? Satan and his forces.

What would this mean for nature? What will happen to the world when Satan is given freedom to rule on earth and affect the laws of nature?

Here is what our church used to teach about this:

"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, reprovcs, 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.



"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

This is the exact same principle Oswald Chambers was describing.

There are others throughout Christianity who have understood it this way. It all goes back to how you understand God's law. If you know the truth, that God's law is design law, then you understand as Oswald Chambers and EGW did. If you accept the lie that God's law is like human law, rules put upon us, then you misunderstand and believe God is the cosmic executioner.

Consider this quote:

Jesus Christ is the Restorer. Satan, the apostate, is the destroyer. Here is the conflict between the **Prince of life** and the prince of this world, the power of darkness. . . . The world's Redeemer **did not design** that His purchased inheritance should live and die in their sins. What, then, is the matter? Why are so few reached and saved? It is because so many of those who profess to be Christians **are working in the same lines as the great apostate. They let Satan devise and plan for them.** He makes them apostates, disloyal to God, **rebels against His precepts and laws.** This brings severe, taxing labor upon the true Christian. He must convince the transgressor that he is a sinner, because "sin is the transgression of the law." {Christ Triumphant 247.2}

What does this mean? Sin is deviation from God's design, thus it injures, damages, taxes, burdens, exhausts, wears down and ultimately destroys. Satan tricks Christians into accepting the human views of God's law, as rules, and thus engage in religious and other rituals and legal processes for legal pardon and solutions, rather than actually participating with God for healing and transformation.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "When God..."

Any concerns about this paragraph? One minor concern, just a typographical issue, which no one would misunderstand, but we should clarify. God gave Adam dominion over all things *on earth*, not all things. But the bigger concern in this paragraph is the false conclusion that "ownership" of earth went to Satan.

This idea has led to all types of false conclusions about God and the plan of salvation. This is a false idea which fuels certain legal models of the atonement. The idea that Satan, after Adam's fall, had some legal claim, some "title" to earth, some actual legitimacy as ruler of earth that Jesus had to



confront and get back, i.e. earn the legal right to own earth again.

Not so. The earth was never Adam's property. Adam was steward, viceroy, governor, but Christ was owner. Satan "claimed" ownership but Satan is the "father of lies." It is a lie that Satan is the owner. Thus, when he presented himself in heaven, in the book of Job, claiming to represent earth, God rejected the claim – Not so fast, consider Job, he does not recognize you as the representative of earth. He recognizes my ownership and true Sovereignty.

Let's think about it and see if we can figure it out, understanding God's law and the parameters upon which the universe operates.

- Could Adam create from nothing? Could Satan?
- Could Adam keep the sun, moon and stars in the sky? Could Satan?
- Could Adam control and balance all the forces of nature constantly? Could Satan?
- Then, all Adam's rule was subordinate to, under, at the behest of the One who actually uses His power to uphold and sustain all things. So too, what Satan stole from Adam was the subordinate governorship, now ownership.
- What would happen to nature if God let's go His sustaining presence? The disintegration of life.

Here is a quote from one of our founders:

When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his **own purpose of deception**. Satan's dominion was **that wrested from Adam**, but Adam was the **vicegerent of the Creator**. His was not an independent rule. **The earth is God's, and He has committed all things to His Son. Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King.** Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "**The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.**" Daniel 4:17. Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits. {DA 129.4}

When the tempter offered to Christ the kingdom and glory of the world, **he was proposing that Christ should yield up the real kingship of the world, and hold dominion subject to Satan**. This was the same dominion upon which the hopes of the Jews were set. They desired the kingdom of this world. If Christ had consented to offer them such a kingdom, they would gladly have received Him. But the curse of sin, with all its woe, rested upon it. Christ declared to the tempter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." {DA 130.1}

Thoughts? Sadly, the lesson, having accepted the false view of God's law, inadvertently present Satan's dream, to be the owner of earth and Christ be subordinate to him.



The idea that Christ had to achieve some “legal” victory is fiction, falsehood, lies based on accepting Satan’s lies:

- Every sin must meet its punishment urged Satan
- God must punish sin if God is to be just
- The earth is now owned by Satan
- Satan has legal claim to earth

Reality is that God is and always has been the owner of earth. Satan’s lies have impact in the minds of intelligent beings. Thus Christ didn’t have to do some legal accomplishment in His battle with Satan. He had to defeat the lies of Satan in order to set intelligent minds free and He had to overcome the infection of selfishness in the human being in order to destroy death and restore God’s design of love back into humanity.

Then, why does the Scripture, including Christ refer to Satan as either prince of this world or ruler of this world?

Because the primary operating principle of the world today is Satan’s principle of selfishness, thus he is credited with being the leader or owner of:

- Lies
- Selfishness
- Coercion
- Disease
- Pain
- Suffering
- Exploitation
- Abuse
- Domination
- Death

This is Satan’s kingdom and this is what God wants you to realize.

But in Christ we have a different kingdom, “my kingdom is not of this world” meaning the principles of how this world operates. Christ’s kingdom is the kingdom of:

- Truth
- Love
- Freedom
- Healing
- Relief
- Restoration
- Self-sacrifice
- Protection
- Deliverance
- Life



Note the contrast.

KINGDOM OF CHRIST

- Truth
- Love
- Freedom
- Healing
- Relief
- Restoration
- Self-sacrifice
- Protection
- Deliverance
- Life

KINGDOM OF SATAN

- Lies
- Selfishness
- Coercion
- Disease
- Pain
- Suffering
- Exploitation
- Abuse
- Domination
- Death

We must stop attributing to God the very attributes of Satan and Satan's kingdom!

Read second paragraph, "What happened..." thoughts? Given what we have just discussed how to you analyze this paragraph?

Is it true Christ could only win earth by His perfect life and sacrificial death? Why? Why was His death necessary? Who needed it?

What did Christ come to take back? He came to reclaim the love, devotion, loyalty, trust of human beings, while securing unfallen beings in their loyalty. Can Christ get this love and loyalty by force or coercion? No, love awakens love, the only way to achieve His goals was to expose the lies with truth and demonstrate God's perfect character and design of love, while simultaneously eradicating the infection of fear and selfishness from the humanity He assumed upon Himself.

Thus as the Scripture says His death was necessary to:

- Destroy him who holds the power of death Heb 2:14
- Destroy death 2Tim 1:9,10
- Destroy the devil's work. 1Jn 3:8 And the devil's work which was to efface the image of God in man and put Satan's image where God's should be.

MONDAY

The lesson talks about how in human governments sometimes one can hold dual citizenship, then states in paragraph two, "There's no..." What does it look like to be true to God's kingdom?

- "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Jn



13:34,35

- Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. Jn 15:13

Chakomboka Chama – April 14, 2012 – 16 y/o Collegedale Academy student was at Harrison Bay State Park swimming with friends when several tried to swim across the lake. When one boy got tired and called for help, Chama swam out to help him, and is reported to have pushed his friend into the shallows, but then went under himself. I was told by one person he died of heart failure, as he had no water in his lungs. He had a known heart condition, but didn't let concern for himself stop him from helping another.

Is this what God's kingdom looks like?

Notice the stark contrast from what happened in Rwanda in 1994, where over 1 million people were killed in four months, predominantly by Christians, and with many Christian leaders and churches involved. In fact, many churches were used as killing fields, pastors, priests and nuns would lead people to their churches for sanctuary and then call in militia to kill them, or trap them inside and burn them alive.

The international war crimes tribunal of Rwanda convicted Elizaphan Ntakirutimana a SDA pastor for encouraging Tutsi to assemble in his church in Kibuye Prefecture, then leading a convoy of soldiers and civilian militia to his church where they slaughtered 8000 refugees. In 1998 a Rwandan court condemned two Catholic priests, Jean-Francis Kayiranga and Eduoard Nkurikiye for luring people to their parish where soldiers and militia massacred them.

“Believing that their actions were consistent with the teachings of their churches, the death squads in some communities held mass before going out to kill... People came to mass each day to pray, then they went out to kill. In some cases militia members apparently paused in the frenzy of killing to kneel and pray at the altar.” Longman, Timothy, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*, p. 6,7.

In Longman's book he documents that those who identified with authoritarian God concept took part in the genocide, while others who identified with a God of love helped protect the refugees.

Catholic or Protestant did not matter. Church members killed their pastors and priests and pastors and priests killed their own members. The churches were the primary killing zones throughout the country

By beholding we are changed. If you want evidence that the doctrines of the SDA church will not stop Adventists from participating with the beast of revelation to unite with state militia to abuse and kill, Rwanda is that evidence. Over 11% of the population in Rwanda is SDA. Yet our church has buried its head in the ground and continues its evangelism along the lines of unique doctrine rather than taking up and promoting the message which is to be our mission, the truth about God's character of love in



the setting of the Great Controversy.

Rwanda also revealed regardless of denomination, those who worshipped a God of love helped to protect. This is what will happen worldwide when the four winds are let go.

Read third paragraph, “Once people...” Notice what the lesson did – being part of the “commonwealth” of Jesus means we obey His rules, His laws and His commandments.

What does this lend itself toward? Toward division, toward what happened in Rwanda. This is an authoritarian God construct, which has rules we must keep and violators must be punished, either by us or God.

But in reality, Jesus said, “my kingdom is not of the world if it were my follower would fight.” We don’t use violence, coercion or the methods of Satan. In Christ there is no Jew or Greek, no male or female, no Protestant or Catholic, no Adventist or Baptist... We are all united in our love for God and each other. We see the universe as it is, there are only two sides, the side of love truth and freedom, or the side of lies, selfishness and coercion.

We do follow the law of God and His law is the law of love. We seek to heal, save, redeem, not kill those who disagree with us.

We present truth in love and leave others free.

Jesus said, They will know we are His by our love for one another, not by our Sabbath keeping, not by our diet, not by our dress, not by our reading or TV watching, but by our love for one another. But we have lost sight of this and make demarcations based on the trivial and lose sight of what really matters.

And we wonder why the Lord hasn’t returned, we wonder why the non Christian world mocks us. Because we have a form of godliness but deny the power, which is the power of love!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The dominant...” How do you understand the language of “His love is revealed in the price that He Himself paid at the Cross.”

Can this language be misunderstood? How? How is it rightly understood?

Read second paragraph, “God’s love is...” How is God’s love related to His justice?

What is justice? Doing what is right – what is right? How do we know? What determines right and wrong?



God's law – which is what? An imposed list of rules, or the protocols upon which life is built, which is an expression of love?

Thus it is right to do that which harmonizes with God's character of love, that which is healing, restorative, freeing, truthful, kind, patient, beneficent etc.

Love will not force them into the kingdom of God – so true – why?

What happens to love when one tries to force it?

Is this ever NOT true? Is there ever a time, a place, a situation where one can threaten, use violence, force, coercion, intimidation and generate love upon people thus threatened? Could we generate love by acting as those murderers in Rwanda?

Then, why do so many say God does this very thing? They say, "God says, 'I love you! I only want your love, but if you refuse I will torture and kill you.'"

It is a lie and many don't see it all. Thus they don't think, their reason is damaged, the mind and ability to discern truth injured. Why? Because they hold beliefs that are opposed to each other and don't make sense. How do they resolve it? By more distortions – "I take that on faith" or "God's ways aren't mine, it must be love." Etc.

Read bottom pink section – "It is no arbitrary..." notice natural law, it is their actual condition that results in their exclusion, not a judicial proceeding.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "God created..." This is so true – so that perfection might be restored – what did Christ have to accomplish to restore perfection?

- Was the problem one of power?
- Was the obstacle to God restoring perfection that Satan has some power, might, force that physically obstructs or impairs God's ability to restore the universe to perfection?
- Was it a legal obstacle? Is there some heavenly tribunal, constitution, that must be met in order to be able to restore the universe?
- What was the obstacle? Was it the condition of God's intelligent beings?
- Angels needed what?
- Humans needed what?
- What is the remaining obstacle?

The next paragraph asks, "Could evil arise again?" Why or why not?

Read next paragraph – "When God created..." What were the conditions? What does the lesson



suggest? God's express commands, which makes it sound like what?

What might be their suggestion on why sin won't rise again? Is it that God is now in charge and any questions He doesn't like He commands not be asked? And anyone who persists He, now, in the aftermath of Christ's death, wipes out?

What is your answer as to why sin will never rise again?

Because all questions have been answered, all evidence is in, all intelligent minds will have been settled and have chosen God's methods for themselves, everyone will remember everything that transpired on earth and thus no lie, trick, deceit will in any way tempt the intelligences to ever again distrust God or deviate from His design.

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "With the power..." How does one kill death? What is it that kills death? Life! Where does Revelation say death and Hades are thrown? Into the lake of fire

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.
Rev 20:14

How does that connect with destroying death? What fire is this? The fire of God's life giving glory, thus the universe in which God's presence is fully revealed and we live forever in the fire of His presence, death will never enter because no one will ever be severed from their connection with God again.

The next paragraph states, "There is no question, death is related to sin, which means it's related to God's law, as well; because sin is violation of God's law."

How is death related to sin? What is sin? Why does sin relate to death i.e. result in death?

James 1 sin when full grown brings forth death – death is the fruit of sin – why? Natural law – for the same reason your car engine will die if you put water in the tank – no manufacturer will punish you or your car, but it will be damaged and stop working. This is what sin does to the sinner.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 3



The Teachings of Jesus Lesson 1 3rd Q 2014

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Here are two emails I received recently:

I hope all is well with you. I continue to enjoy and share resources from C&M whenever I can, either by giving away the books to friends, or creating my own presentations for Sabbath School, here where I now live, in North Carolina, and also for my previous church's teen VBS program in Florida. I've only received positive responses to all the presentations. This message is so liberating and transformational! I truly pray that it will span the globe. This is the true gospel and the 3rd angel's message! What's even more awesome, the more I study the Bible and the testimonies, the more evidence I find to reinforce what you are teaching. Not to mention in nature, and in my own experience. I'm truly thankful that I see clearly now, without the traditional distortions. May God continue to bless you and the C&M family! I love you all.

I have been introducing your DVDs at church and using your Bible Study outlines- Shared them with other instructors and now out of our Lesson Study three out of four instructors are using your outline. We initially got resistance, but with this inductive approach members are beginning to see a picture of GOD that is a friendly. Would it be possible to have additional DVDs as I now have given out my last one to one of my patient. I would prefer all the three seminars- A case would be nice. Thank- you so much for your ministry- So freeing... CA



Our Loving Heavenly Father

How many read their lesson for this week? I was very encouraged. Russell mentioned last week he thought he noticed a trend in the study guides of moving more toward the true picture of God's character of love. In this week's lesson I noticed much to be commended in what is said about God.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Father was not..." I loved how they emphasized Christ's mission was to complete the revelation of God that was initiated in the OT.

Who was the member of the Godhead who interacted with humans in the OT? Was it the Father or was it the Son? Any evidence for your answer?

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ² They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³ They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 1Cor 10:1-4

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds. Jn 8:58, 59

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² **There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush.** Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up." ⁴ When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, **God called to him from within the bush,** "Moses! Moses!" Exodus 3:1-4

For the **Lord himself** will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the **voice of the archangel** and with the trumpet call of God, and the **dead in Christ will rise first.** 1Thes 4:16

Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. **I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.** Rev 1:17,18

Do you see the same picture of God in the OT as in the New? Have you considered that it was Jesus in the OT as well as the New?



Why is there such difficulty for some in seeing the God of the OT as the same as Jesus revealed when on earth?

Several reasons:

- In the New Testament you have people recording Jesus' own testimony about God, and recording Jesus' actions. Thus a clearer manifestation occurred in the life of Jesus.
- The condition of the people was different in OT times than when Jesus came in person. Thus what they needed was different. In OT times they were constantly thinking other gods were better, more desirable, generally more powerful than the Creator God. Thus, God had to repeatedly demonstrate to them the impotence of the false gods, so we see:
 - The plagues of Egypt
 - The 3.5 years of drought followed by Mt. Carmel confrontation
 - The confrontation with Dagon
 - The prophets repeatedly threatening God's abandonment and the reaping of destruction
 - The 70 years captivity
 - The shriveling of the king's hand
 - The she bears
- Additionally, because they were constantly thinking other gods were real and more powerful or desirable than God, God spoke to them as causing things which He permitted.
 - The message from Micaiah to Ahab about lying spirits in the mouth of his false prophets
 - The threats of sending various punishments if they rebelled, yet always tempered with His leaving them to the consequences of their own choices
- But when Jesus came they had given up believing the gods of the various nations were better than Yahweh and they were finally following the script, yet with a distortion of God's character as a cruel being of legal exaction. Thus Jesus came to throw off the lies about God infecting their system. Jesus didn't spend His time trying to turn them away from Baal, or Dagon or Molech etc. He spent His time trying to enlighten them to the truth that God is their loving Father, their forgiving Creator, their compassionate friend. He wanted them to see they were sin-sick and needed healing and God had sent Him to be their Remedy.

Read second paragraph, "Jesus made..."

We absolutely believe in a loving Father God who is personally concerned with the needs, problems, concerns of His earthbound children. While we also believe that God's law is the design protocol upon which life is constructed, we do NOT promote naturalism, which is the philosophy or religion of a distant unconcerned god, who created natural laws and now lets everything run on its own. No way. We believe in a God who personally intervenes in human history for the purpose of saving, healing and restoring His creation back to perfection. Yet, He always works in harmony with His own character of love i.e. His design (laws) not in violation of them.



Why do millions of angels worship God? It is absolutely true that God is sovereign and all powerful – but are these the primary reason God is to be worshipped?

This is from *Could It Be This Simple?*

Many people conceive of God’s glory as great displays of might, power, and fire, but the Bible teaches that His greatest glory reveals itself in His character. Because we are finite beings, many humans frequently react in fear to our all-powerful God. Unfortunately, this fear often leads to rebellion. Once Satan had made his allegations, God could not win His case through the display of power, which would inevitably result in sub- mission based on terror.

God will never utilize coercive tactics, because they are contrary to His benevolent character. The use of might and power to pressure conformity violates the law of liberty and would result in further rebellion. Such methods belong to Satan. If God employed them, He would ultimately lose His case. Although He has immense power, it is not the source of His glory, because power alone would intimidate, leading us to fear Him and subsequently to destroy our love for Him.

Nineteenth-century theologian George MacDonald made this same point: “What is the deepest in God? His power? No, for power could not make him what we mean when we say God. . . . A being whose essence was only power would be such a negation of the divine that no righteous worship could be offered him: his service must be fear, and fear only.” “The Creation in Christ,” Unspoken Sermons, Third Series (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1889).

The power isn’t what is most important. Instead, it is the trustworthiness of the One who possesses all the power. It is the demonstration of His character—the character of the One who holds the power—that is the real source of divine glory. For example, although God is all-powerful, He can never be provoked—even in the most abusive and horrendous circumstance—to use His power for self-interest. When humanity fully recognizes this, it will restore trust and regenerate love, and we will then open our hearts and minds to Him for healing and restoration.

The Bible is clear on this issue. The book of Haggai declares that the glory of the second Jewish Temple would be greater than that of Solomon’s Temple (Haggai 2:7-9). The prophecy refers to the structure the Jews rebuilt after returning from Babylonian captivity. But in the book of Ezra we read that the older Levites and family heads who saw the second Temple mourned because it was so small when compared to Solomon’s (Ezra 3:12). If the second Temple was smaller than the first, how could it be more glorious? Most Bible students immediately explain that because Jesus walked in the courts of the second Temple His presence made it more glorious.



But in 2 Chronicles we read that when Solomon's Temple was dedicated, the priests could not enter because the brightness of God's glory was too great (2 Chron. 5:13, 14). In other words, God came to both Temples—one in His unveiled splendor; the other in human form—yet Haggai states that the second was the more glorious. Why? Because it was at the second Temple that Christ revealed the character of God. Because it was at the second Temple that Christ showed that He preferred to permit His creatures to abuse Him rather than use His power in selfish ways. At the second Temple Christ demonstrated that we can trust the One who has the power. (p. 126-7)

Why do we worship God? Because of who He is in character, not merely because of His abilities – but we are so thankful for His abilities, for if He were the same in character but had no power it wouldn't really be good for us. But if He were all-powerful but like Satan in character, worse for us.

What of the idea “The fact that He is our Father invites us to approach Him with the confidence of a child”?

What ideas come to you with this description?

Doesn't it depend on how the child conceives of or views the father? If a child views the father as a judge, a dictator, an enforcer of the rules will they go to their father with confidence? Especially after doing wrong?

What enables us to go confidently before God?

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Heb 4:14-16

What gives us confidence? Knowing Jesus is in heaven and that God knows our needs and sympathizes with us. Why does this give us confidence? What was undermining confidence that this addresses?

Here is a description taught over 100 years ago:

In Christ dwelt all the fulness of the God-head. **But the only way in which He could reach men was to veil His glory by a garb of humanity.** The angels beheld the hiding of His glory, that divinity might touch humanity. Christ ever retained the utmost hatred for sin, but He loved



the purchase of His blood. He suffered in the place of sinful men, taking them into union with Himself. This is the mystery into which angels desire to look. **They desire to know how Christ could live and work in a fallen world, how He could mingle with sinful humanity.** It was a mystery to them that He who hated sin with intense hatred felt the most tender, compassionate sympathy for the beings that committed sin. {ST, January 20, 1898 par. 3}

Satan had worked long to efface the true impression of God, and to represent Him as a God having no love. This is Satan's character. He is destitute of mercy and compassion. Overbearing and revengeful, he delights in the misery that he brings on the human family. **With these attributes he attempted to clothe the God of heaven.** {ST, January 20, 1898 par. 4}

Christ came to remove these unjust impressions. He came to assure men that they need not fear to approach God because of His greatness and majesty. He constantly sought to carry the attention of His hearers to God. He presented the greatness of the Father's love, declaring that He had so great a care for His children that even the hairs of their head are numbered. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without the notice of the heavenly Father. He sympathizes with all the creatures He has made, and if the heart is given into His hands, and attuned by His power, it will respond by strains of melody and thanksgiving. {ST, January 20, 1898 par. 5}

In His wisdom the Saviour teaches us to approach God with the confidence of a child. He instructs us to call Jehovah by the endearing name of "Father," that we may not separate from Him in awe and coldness. **Constantly He points us to the emblems of fatherly love, seeking to encourage faith and confidence in God. He pleads with us to have a correct idea of the Father.** He throws back the accusation of the enemy, declaring, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." **He would have the memorials of redeeming grace arrest our attention, that we may know that all the goodness, mercy, patience, forbearance, seen in Him, belong to God.** {ST, January 20, 1898 par. 6}

What does it mean to come to God as a child? Does it mean with childish thinking? Paul said, we are to put away childish thinking? Jesus said He wants us to understand His business, what He is doing and why. He wants us to be friends.

So, how are we to be like children coming to our Father? In love, in trust, in confidence, but not in childish, magical, unintelligent thinking.

Read last two paragraphs, "Not everyone..." The lesson points out that for some children, if they have abusive fathers it might be hard for them to appreciate God as our heavenly Father.

Do you think the type of father a person is, is impacted by the view of God they hold? What happens



when fathers have dictator views of God? Could this be a source of mistreatment of their children?

Studies show that those with authoritarian views of God abuse their children more than those with a loving God concept.

MAY 27, 2014: A woman was stoned to death by her own family in front of a Pakistani high court on Tuesday for marrying the man she loved, police and a defense lawyer said.

Nearly 20 members of the woman's family, including her father and brothers, attacked her and her husband with batons and bricks in broad daylight before a crowd of onlookers in front of the high court of Lahore, said police official Naseem Butt. He said Farzana Parveen, 25, had married Mohammad Iqbal, with whom she had been engaged for years in opposition to her family.

Arranged marriages are the norm among conservative Pakistanis, who view marriage for love as a transgression.

Butt, the police official, said Parveen's father surrendered after the incident and called the murder an "honor killing."

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, a private organization, said in a report last month that some 869 women were murdered in so-called honor killings in 2013. <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/pakistani-woman-stoned-death-family-article-1.1806700>

What type of heavenly father do you think this family believes in?

I think it is unlikely they did this thinking they were sinning against God, what do you think?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "In the great controversy..." This is well said, yes Jesus came to refute the false views of God Satan has infected humanity with.

Any other attack? He attacks God's creation perhaps for dual purposes – to have God misrepresented and blamed, and to hurt God by hurting His creation.

What is the importance to us in understanding the devil's attack is against God's character?

2Cor 10:3-5 – we war against everything that sets itself up against the knowledge of God. It goes to help clarify so much theology.



Christ's mission was never one of legal battles, rights, ownership, physical power, etc. The battle was always about revealing truth, exposing lies and fixing the human condition.

Thus God battles to free minds, not territories, not win court cases, but to win hearts!

The last paragraph points out that even the disciples, who spent 3.5 years with Jesus failed to fully comprehend that Jesus reveals perfectly who God is.

Satan's power is lies – as he gets us to believe lies he gains power over us. Think of the ugliness done in God's name because people believe lies about God, that their actions are actually what God would want?

TUESDAY

Read paragraphs 3-5, "Christ was not..." This is well said! So glad to see this truth being taught in the study guide, but what does "propitiation" mean? Jesus is our "propitiation" what is that?

Here is the KJV of Romans 3:21-26, which uses propitiation:

²¹ But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; ²² Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: ²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵ Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; ²⁶ To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Here is my paraphrase:

^{3:21} But now God has revealed, a healthy state of being – a character that is right and perfect in every way, that did not come from the written code, but is exactly what the Scriptures and the 10 Commandments were pointing your minds toward. ²² This perfect state of being comes from Christ and is created within us by God when we trust him. Our trust in him is established by the evidence given through Jesus Christ of his supreme trustworthiness. There is no difference amongst any ethnic group, ²³ for all humanity is infected with the same disease of distrust, fear and selfishness, and are deformed in character and fall far short of God's glorious ideal for mankind. ²⁴ Yet all, who are willing, are healed freely by God's gracious Remedy that has been provided by Jesus Christ. ²⁵ God presented Jesus as the way and means of restoration. Now, through trust established by the evidence of God's character revealed when Christ died, we



may partake of the Remedy procured by Christ. God did this to demonstrate he is right and good, because in his forbearance he suspended, for a time, the ultimate consequence of being out of harmony with how he designed life to exist and has been falsely accused of being unfair. ²⁶ So, he did it to demonstrate how right and good he is at the present time, so he would be seen as being right when he heals those who trust in Jesus.

Propitiation in this passage is *hilasterion* which is the word for the lid to the Ark of the Covenant – which is the place of reconciliation. So, Jesus is the means and place of reconciliation or restoration to unity with God.

What does mediation entail? How do we understand mediation?

Mediation is the process of being a “go-between” between two parties at odds, in opposition, at war even, for the purpose of bringing reconciliation.

Once humanity sinned, humankind was opposed to God in motive, heart attitude, method, principle, belief about God, etc.

Mediation involves the mediator trying to bridge the gap between the two parties to bring them to agreement and even reconciliation. Typically, this means both parties are called upon to “meet in the middle.” Is this true in regard to Jesus mediation? NO!

God doesn’t change; all change in the mediation is in sinful humans – why? Because it is the only way for us to live – we must be brought back into harmony with God’s design for life.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “There is no chapter...” How have you known God’s presence and love in the midst of suffering?

What is suffering?

- To experience pain, illness, injury
- To experience something unpleasant

What are the sources of suffering?

- Deviation from God’s design (sin)
- Our own choices
- Evil people
- Satan and his fallen angels
- Randomness of events in a sinful world
- Degeneration of nature that is not fully connected to God



- What about healing therapies, discipline, exercise needed for growth, do they cause suffering?
- What about crucifixion of the carnal nature? Does this cause suffering? Is this bad? Is such suffering from God?

Consider what Peter said:

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because **he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.** ² As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. 1Pet 4:1,2

What is this suffering? Must persons suffer in this way if they want to experience healing from sin? Why?

- If an addict has cravings but chooses to say no, do they suffer in their flesh?
- If an arrogant person chooses not to take the seat of preeminence, do they suffer?
- If a greedy person chooses to give, genuinely, do they suffer?
- If a controlling person chooses to surrender control do they suffer?
- If a perfectionist chooses to allow visitors to their home to ruffle the pillows, leave dirty dishes on the counter, do they suffer?

Is such suffering harmful to us? Such suffering is a result of sin, of being infected with it and partaking the cure. This type of suffering results in freedom from sin and ultimate peace and healing. This is in contrast to the suffering that comes from participating in sin, from deviating from God's design. Suffering from sin only damages, cripples, weakens, injures and causes further suffering and if not remedied, eventual death.

Here is 1Peter 4:1,2 from my paraphrase:

1 Peter 4:1 Therefore model yourself after Christ, who when tempted to save himself chose instead to sacrifice himself thus suffering in his human nature. So be like Jesus, love other first and say no to temptations to act selfishly. Your selfish nature will suffer but you will be done with sin. ² As a result, right now on earth, such a person no longer lives his life with feelings, passions and desires controlling him, but rather lives intelligently choosing to follow God's will living in harmony with the law of love.

As we view suffering in this way, can we see God's love never changes? He is always seeking to heal and restore, and even for those who choose to destroy themselves, God's love never stops!

What is the danger of suffering? Misunderstanding it and classifying it wrongly, i.e. sin as from God, or discipline as sin so one stops to avoid the suffering.



THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “In different ways...” Why is it important to recognize God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit?

What do we jeopardize if we attempt to deny one or more members of the Godhead? First and foremost we undermine God’s character of love.

Love, as we understand it, being other-centered, outward moving etc. requires an object to sacrifice self for, to love more than self. Eliminating the Trinity means at some point in time God was a singularity not a plurality, which means God was something other than love, something different than “other-centered” because there was no “other” to center upon – i.e. it means that at the core God would not be love. This is Satan’s position against God all along, that God is not love.

This is out of the book *Education* and I think it says it so powerfully:

Unselfishness, the principle of God's kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies. From the beginning of the great controversy he has endeavored to prove God's principles of action to be selfish, and he deals in the same way with all who serve God. To disprove Satan's claim is the work of Christ and of all who bear His name. {Ed 154.3}

When one understands love, how it functions, then one realizes to argue against the Trinity is to sustain Satan’s charge that God is not love.

Some, then attempt to argue against the Holy Spirit and suggest the Father and the Son are God, but not the Spirit – again it undermines God’s character of love, because three is the minimum number one can have to be able to genuinely have selfless love. Why?

Because two narcissistic people can spend all their time being the center of the attention of the object of their love, without ever having to deny self. But when a third is involved it presents the opportunity to step back and allow another to be the center of your loved one’s attention.

I have seen it in my patients, when a couple get together, date, marry, and get along great, happy, love each other and no apparent problems for years until... the first child – and then the wife/mother must spend time with the child and she is less available to the husband/father. Sometimes a selfish man will be jealous, will be angry, hurt, frustrated and even accuse the wife of not loving him. Why? Because he is unwilling to sacrifice himself for his own child. He wants the attention of the wife for himself. Thus, three exposes the true character of love, or not.

Issue number one when we deny the Trinity we obscure the truth of God’s character of love.



What other problems arise?

- If we deny the full divinity of Christ then His life and sacrificial death don't tell us about God they tell us about a lesser being. The answers needed to refute the Satan's lies about God remain unanswered if Jesus is not fully God.
- The argument against the Trinity diminishes Christ, which is another of Satan's goals, to diminish Christ to someone not equal with God, thus not deserving of our worship. Lucifer alleged equality with Christ, not with the Father, thus it would be essential that Lucifer make the case that Jesus is not fully equal to the Father. Those who argue against the full divinity of Christ are supporting Satan's allegations against Christ.
- John wrote:
 - But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. ²¹ I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because **no lie comes from the truth.** ²² **Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ.** Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son. ²³ **No one who denies the Son has the Father;** whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. 1JN 2:20-23
 - And notice what John says about the Son: “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** He was with God in the beginning. **Through him all things were made;** without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men... **The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.** We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-4, 14
- It undermines the creatorship of Jesus to do away with the Trinity.
- It undermines the need for Christ as our Savior
- It undermines our ability to participate in Christ's victory because it is through the effectual work of the Holy Spirit that we experience what Christ achieved. If the Holy Spirit isn't fully God then the Holy Spirit doesn't possess creative power to renew and transform us.

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, “God regards...” Do you believe you are part of the royal family of heaven? How does this impact how you view yourself, how you feel about yourself, how you live and act?

If you found out you were part of the royal family of some earthly country, a prince or princess, and suddenly had some title, would it change how you felt about yourself? Do you have that same experience when you think about being a child of God, a member of the royal family of heaven? If not, why not?

Read and discuss questions 1, 2, 4

3rd Quarter, 2014 “The Teachings of Jesus”

Lesson 2: The Son

SABBATH

“ ‘For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many’ ” (Mark 10:45, NKJV).

Why didn't Christ say “to give His life to appease His angry Father”? or “to use His blood to blot out entries in the Heavenly record books”?

What is implied by “to give His life as a ransom for many”?

The lesson, beautifully states, “Sooner or later everyone has to answer this same question [‘Who do you think I am?']. Each has to decide, individually, who Jesus is. It doesn't help to repeat what other people say or believe; the answer must be genuinely our own personal belief. And, of course, on that answer the destiny of every human being hangs.”

It needs to be personal, doesn't it? We must find, examine, & reconcile the evidence God has given us. We must think for ourselves. God wants us to come and reason with Him the things we don't understand. We must be teachable, without being gullible. He leaves us free to “experiment” with His laws, so we can be convinced in our own minds that He is, indeed, Love, and therefore, trustworthy.

SUNDAY

The lesson does a great job of compiling Scriptural support for Christ's “Son of Man” designation and the evidence of Him being “fully human.” In the bottom section it asks the question, “Why is it so important for us to know that Jesus was fully human?” Any thoughts??

Yes, it's important to know that He was “... in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” Heb. 4:15. It's important to know He is interceding with us and for us ALONG WITH His Father. It's important to know that He got tired, hungry, lonely, sad, etc. In our class, however, we have examined something far more important than these, though. Any thoughts??

How important is it to know that Christ suffered the torment of Calvary in his humanity, and though He had the power to stop the abuse[John 13:2-4], He used that power to wash dirty feet and not to save Himself?? This tells us everything about the character of Christ AND His Father [see the entire gospel of John].

MONDAY

The lesson, again, does a great job of compiling Scriptural evidence of Christ's Divinity.

Is it important that we recognize Christ as the "Son of God"? Is it important that we acknowledge that the Father and Son were in "unity" of character, mission, Love, methods, Law, and even "wrath"?

How many people did Christ condemn to Hell? How many did He compel to listen to His teaching, or to obey Him? How many did he put to death? How many laws did He impose while here on Earth?

As we understand the "great controversy", did Satan allege equality with God or with "Michael"?

Since Satan's attack on Creation, the universe witnessed mankind out of harmony with God's government. They saw the image of God virtually obliterated in man's mind, and the image of Satan written there. Might there have been angels or other intelligent beings thinking that, even though Christ displayed incredible power in the Creation, His government was actually represented here on Earth via mankind? Might they have wondered if God and/or His Son were provoked to "anger" they might be wiped out?? Considering these questions then, why is it important we recognize Christ as the "Son of God"?

TUESDAY

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man Luke 5:17-26.

17 One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. 18 Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. 19 When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. 20 When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." 21 The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 22 Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? 23 Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? 24 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 25 Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. 26 Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

What does the above passage tell us about Christ's understanding of His divine nature?? The Jews understood that only God could forgive sin[s], so without blaspheming, Christ has basically told them, "I am Immanuel [God with us]".

I often neglect to consider how smart Christ was on Earth. He was continually drawing lessons from history, nature, Scripture, science, and his listeners experiences, in order to bring them better revelations of the natural Law of God. He was subtle, crafty, mysterious, overt, confrontational, kind, sympathetic, direct; all when He needed to be and He was NEVER wrong about which teaching methods to use.

I've learned, over the years, to use different techniques to motivate patients to comply with the laws of tissue healing and regeneration, but my education has come at the expense of being wrong more times than I would like to admit, and I still have much to learn. Christ did it right the first time, every time, and never lost patience, even with the stubborn church leadership.

From the lesson: "Jesus claimed the divine prerogative to forgive sins. He also said that He Himself " 'will sit on the throne of His glory' " (Matt. 25:31, NKJV) and judge all the nations, deciding the eternal destiny of each one, something that rests on God's authority alone. How much more could He have done here to reveal who He really was?"

Will Christ actually "judge all the nations, deciding the eternal destiny of each one..."? Might there be a better way to phrase this??

WEDNESDAY

The lesson references John 8:58 [**58 "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"**] as a conclusive statement about Christ's divinity, and it is. I find his statement in verse 51 even more interesting. **51 Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death.** Any thoughts on either of these passages??

The lesson also, correctly, points out that Jesus accepted worship from believers as a tacit admission that He was God on Earth. Why is this important? Compare two different Law constructs.

When I was young, I didn't understand the implications of Christ being fully human and fully God. Anyone care to talk about what this means to them??

THURSDAY

The first two paragraphs in Thursday's lesson are right on point. Read them.

Christ, best defined his mission in Matt 20:28, stating: **"28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."**

How else has it been defined in Scripture [see Heb 2:14, 2 Tim 1:10, 1 John 3:8] ?? How can we define it now??

The wheels come off [? editors] in the 3rd paragraph of the lesson. “Why did Jesus have to die? It was because He voluntarily took our place and bore the punishment of our sin. We are all sinners (Rom. 3:10–12) and, as such, deserve eternal death (Rom. 6:23). The price for our salvation was so high that only the life of the Son of God was enough to pay for it.”

Rightly understood, the ideas in this passage are mostly correct. I take exception to the idea that all sinners *deserve* death. We are, certainly, all terminal in our condition, and if un-remedied, will die, but does that mean we deserve it? We didn't voluntarily become sinners.

What does this passage imply from its author? We need to be able to reason through difficult pieces like this one and the one below.

“The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner. In all the universe there was but one who could, in behalf of man, satisfy its claims. Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression. None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63.



The Teachings of Jesus Lesson 3 3rd Q 2014

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

July 11-13: Dr. Jennings will be presenting at the *Rethinking Hell Conference: The Legacy of Edward Fudge and the Future of Conditionalism* in Houston, TX To find our more visit: <http://www.rethinkinghellconference.com/2014/>

Aug 22/23: Dr. Jennings will be doing a spiritual emphasis weekend at Laurelbrook Academy.

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, Christian Psychiatrist and author of *Anatomy of the Soul*, will be conducting an 8-hour workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their smile.amazon.com site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN**.

From our facebook page:

"I just wanted to let Dr. Jennings and the class know how the Come and Reason Ministries has blessed us here in Japan. I'm an elder at my church and have the opportunity to preach on the Healing-Substitution view point which has been very well received. Unbeknownst to me, tapes and CDs of the sermons go out to people and churches in our area. I was just asked today to speak at another church about this view point. My first invitation to speak outside my home church. Praise God! It takes me way out of my comfort zone, but I'm claiming God's promise that He will always be with me and give me words to speak. Although my Japanese isn't that great, God always gets His message across to the people who need it the most. May His second coming be soon! I ask for your continued prayers for His message here in Japan. Japan is one of the areas in the world where the preaching and teaching of the eternal gospel is creeping a long at a snails pace. Love and Peace to all!"

An email:

When I ordered some of your DVDs in Febuary you sent some other materials as well and I want to thank you so very much. I have read and looked at all the materials and have shared them with many people but still have more people to share with so I'm requesting another box of what ever you can send me. I also bought Brad Cole's book "Servant God" and have read it and given about 12 away. We have listened to most of your [Bible Study] classes from the past 3 yrs.(some 2-3 times) as well as all the "Good News tours" and have been so blessed. We are sharing with everyone we can.



I gave a friend in College Place, WA the "God and Your Brain" DVD while we were visiting up there and she has already ordered more from you and is giving them out. She is in her 80s and loves the Lord and is very active in ministry. I'm praising God how this message is spreading.

We have found some people who are very excited about this material and some haven't taken time to listen yet. We just keep asking the Lord to not let the DVDs be forgotten but be used for His glory. So far we have not had any negative feedback.

Thank you again for the materials and may God continue to bless each one of you and your ministry.

One other email:

I have just had the privilege of hearing Dr. Tim Jennings at Lakeport CA. and it has changed the way I view God. I would like to order the DVDs to give to my friends.

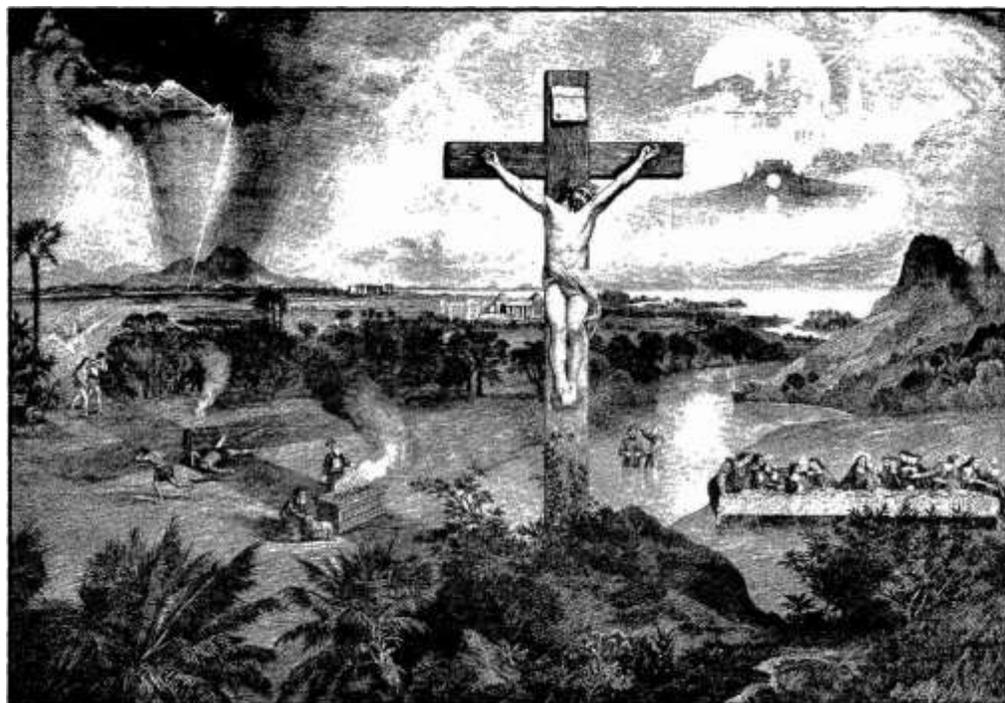
I received an email from Livius Chebeleu who took particular note of the picture in lesson 13 of last quarter, titled Christ's Kingdom and the Law:

If you have your lesson from last quarter, note the picture, the 10 Commandments stand out prominently. Livius recalled a similar picture and its correction.

The first picture below was created by James White, one of the three co-founders of the Adventist Church, and shows the plan of salvation from the Garden of Eden to the New Jerusalem. The picture is dominated by the law tree with ten branches, one for each of the Ten Commandments. In this picture Jesus on the cross comes under the tree. This represents early Adventism. Its burden was to tell other Christians how important the law was, especially the fourth commandment. Jesus was there but he was not central. This was published in 1876.



After a while, Ellen White, James' wife, and one of the other cofounders of the Adventist Church (Joseph Bates was the third), came to realize that our preaching of the law and the Sabbath was turning us into legalists. She tried to get her husband to change the emphasis of the church. In 1880 and into early 1881 James worked on a new and improved version (below left). He died in 1881, but in 1883 Ellen White published the revised picture.



(Full article about these lithographs can be found at:

<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1992/10/the-way-of-life-engravings>)

Thank you Livius for point this out to us!



The Holy Spirit

SABBATH

Read memory text: “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.” John 14:16

What does the word “another” mean? In addition? Different than myself and the Father? Would this language be used if the Holy Spirit were not a separate and distinct Person of the Godhead?

If the Father were going to extend His own individuality and be present with us, wouldn't Jesus have said, “I am going to pray the Father and He will come to you in Spirit and help you”?

Why do you think there is such an attack against the Trinity and the Holy Spirit?

What is the function of the Holy Spirit?

Turn to Friday's lesson, read second paragraph, I have included a couple of sentence past what the lesson quoted:

- The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a **regenerating agent**, and **without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** [why? If the legal model is right, then the legal penalty was paid by Jesus, why would the sacrifice be of no avail? Because the legal model is a lie. We are not, nor have we ever been in legal trouble. We are sick, deviant from God's design and in need of rebirth, regeneration, recreation, renewal, thus without the Spirit what Christ procured, i.e. the Remedy to our condition, would not have been accessible to us.] The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead**, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. **It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.** Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}

Do you agree with this position? Do you notice this is not a legal problem but an actual condition of being that needs remedy? Then, if you were Satan would you want people to acknowledge and receive the Holy Spirit? No! The attack against the Holy Spirit is an attack designed to prevent the healing and transformation of people, to keep people enslaved in the bondage of fear and selfishness.



Further, the infection of thought within Christianity that has taught a legal religion, with penal substitutionary plan also obstructs God's plan because people are not seeking the indwelling Spirit for renewal and recreation, instead they are seeking to have legal pardon, their debt paid, their sins covered, to be hidden from the Father by the robe of Christ's righteousness etc. All of which if thought about functions to keep the sinner in their sin.

Read third paragraph Sabbath's lesson, "Another reason..."

No doubt the Spirit is constantly working to focus our attention on Christ and all that Christ has revealed and done. But, what do you think about the word choice of "subordinate"? The lesson describes this as serving the Father and the Son, is that subordinate?

I think it reveals the mindset of an authoritarian viewpoint. To serve in an authoritarian structure means to subordinate. But...

Jesus said, that He did not come to be served but to serve. (Mk 10:45) Does that mean He is subordinate to us?

In God's kingdom the first shall be last and the last first, and amongst the Trinity is there any first or last or all equal? So notice this progression:

- Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name...Philippians 2:6-9

I prefer avoiding hierarchical designations amongst the Trinity and instead think of it as different roles, by choice, not by rank. Authoritarian distortions of God like to organize things by rank – not so with God. Why Christ is elevated above all others, because of rank? Because of title? Because of inheritance? Or because of the truth of His character of selfless love demonstrated by His life and death as a human on earth?

Christ gave the most – not that the Father or the Spirit wouldn't have done likewise – they would have – but Christ actually went through the agony of humility, lost ability, confrontation of the devil with human equipment and total surrender to death. He carried out love in the greatest degree, revealing perfectly the character of the Father, thus He is exalted above all in the kingdom of love.

As I understand their chosen roles, the Father acts as the source of all that is good. The Son is the medium, mediator, advocate, conduit, agent through which the Father reveals Himself or acts and the Holy Spirit is the actualizer or applier of what the Father and Son have achieved. Thus God was in the Son reconciling the world to Himself (2Cor 5:19), and the Spirit came upon Jesus to enable Him to do



so. Jesus' work on earth was the acting out of the Father's heart. His completed mission and victory over sin are applied to the lives of believers by the work of the Holy Spirit. In creation we have the Father as the source, the Son as the architect, designer, and builder and the Spirit as the actualizer or implementer of Their design.

- Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind. Proverbs 8:30 NIV
 - I was beside him like an architect, I was his daily source of joy, always happy in his presence- Proverbs 8:30 GNT
 - Then I was beside Him, as a master workman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him, NASB95

So, with this understanding we realize what Christ meant when He said, "I do nothing of myself." Christ takes from the Father to fulfill all the Father's purposes for His universe. In this sense we can see Christ turning to the Father, not to persuade the Father to be kind, but to receive the fullness of the Father's purpose of love for His creation and carry that purpose out in meaningful action!

The Godhead does not operate like a human corporation or military. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." God's kingdom of love is not represented by human nations or corporations which are constantly seeking to promote themselves at the expense of others. God sacrifices Himself for others!

Here is a quote that gives a historical view of the Trinity from one of the founders of the SDA church:

- There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.-- Evangelism, p. 615. {7ABC 441.9}

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "With fear..." Why was it a good thing for the disciples and us that Jesus left physically? How is the work of the Holy Spirit different than that of Jesus?

Jesus actually did God's will perfectly, lived love perfectly, taught God's kingdom perfectly all by the exercise of His human brain. The Holy Spirit takes all that Christ achieved, worked out, accomplished, and reproduces it in us, via a willing cooperation with the believer.

The Holy Spirit enlightens the mind with truth, convicts of duty and sin, and empowers when we choose the right. Thus the Holy Spirit leads us to choose the right, empowers us to succeed when we choose the right and thus works to transform us into the image of Christ. By so doing He produces the fruits of righteousness, which included discernment, ability to think and act rightly and self-control.



Thus the Holy Spirit works in cooperation with us for us to think, reason, weigh, conclude, decide and CHOOSE and Exercise our God-designed powers of mind in harmony with the Spirit for our growth and development.

If Jesus would have stayed physically on earth, there was the risk that people would have run to Him for all the answers. They wouldn't seek the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, exercise their own brains, expand their own thinking, develop by practice the ability to discern the right from the wrong (Heb 5:14), but instead simply believe because Jesus made a ruling and thus "God said it, I believe it, that's all there is to it."

Jesus does not want such infantile Christians. He wants us to grow up to the full stature of Jesus Christ,

- to be conformed to the image of Christ,
- to have the mind of Christ,
- to have the character of Christ,
- to have the heart that loves like Christ,
- to be friends who understand the master, like Christ.

Thus, Christ went to heaven and sent the Spirit to lead us into all truth,

- to lead us to comprehend,
- to lead us to think, reason,
- to be fully persuaded in our own minds,
- to grow up and partake the Spiritual meat and
- to know for ourselves God, His character, methods, principles and choose the right because it is right!

Read second paragraph, "Helper, Counselor, and Comforter..." With what is the Spirit to help us? What does it mean walk beside? What does God want from us and for us?

Notice the lesson mentions the idea of legal advocate – certainly if one were in legal trouble a legal advocate would be a helper and counselor – but we are not in legal trouble, so this idea of the Holy Spirit being a legal advocate is false – and is based on Satan's view of God's government.

With what do we need the Spirit to walk beside us to help us? With discernment, comprehension, understanding truth, new motives, right principles, strength, power, purpose, duty, clean and renewed conscience. In other words for our healing and transformation – NOT for a legal defense.

We earlier read the quotation from Friday's lesson in DA 761 regarding the Holy Spirit as a regenerating agent. What weapon or means does the Spirit use to accomplish this work?

This is the paragraph that precedes the one in Friday's lesson, do you agree with this?



- The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." **His work is to define and maintain the truth.** He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. **It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind.** By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. **Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul.** It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

Any examples of how believing a falsehood misshapes the character?

What about believing God must punish sin – what does the dark ages show about the characters of people who worship an authoritarian god?

How does truth heal? How does truth set free? How does truth comfort? How does truth conform people to the image of God?

What is the central truth that the Holy Spirit wants to bring the world to understand? Would it be God's character of love?

Listen to this historic quote:

We have need of divine illumination... **[God's] transforming grace upon human hearts will lead to unity that has not yet been realized;** for all who are assimilated to Christ will be in harmony with one another. **The Holy Spirit will create unity.** {1888 1017.2}

"He shall glorify me." "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." **[How does the Holy Spirit glorify God? Consider this answer] The Holy Spirit glorifies God by so revealing his character to his people that he becomes the object of their supreme affections, and by making manifest his character in them.** They see clearly that there was never any righteousness in the world but his, no excellence in the world but that derived from him. **When the Spirit was poured out from on high, the church was flooded with light, but Christ was the source of that light; his name was on every tongue, his love filled every heart. So it will be when the angel that comes down from heaven having great power, shall lighten the whole earth with his glory.** May the Lord help his people to see and understand what is truth. {1888 1017.3}

How does the Holy Spirit glorify Christ? By revealing His character and reproducing it in us. What angel is referred to here? The angel of Revelation 18 – the fourth angel which comes to give the message of the three angels again with greater power than the first time.

What is the message of the first of the three angels?



Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. ⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” Rev 14:6,7

The everlasting good news is about God and we are to be in awe of Him and reveal His character, give Him glory, for the time in history has come

- for God to be judged rightly to be seen in His true beauty,
- for the lies of Satan to be rejected,
- for the people of earth to come back into unity with God.

And this only happens when we worship the Designer and reject the dictator that has infected all of Christianity, including our own church.

What does this mean in regard to how the Spirit works? The Spirit works to lead us to UNDERSTAND the truth, and then it is up to us to CHOOSE the truth and the Spirit empowers us to follow through with the choice.

What of the latter rain – will the Holy Spirit be poured out in power for people to misrepresent God? No! God is waiting for a people to come back to the truth about Him, His character and methods of love. To reject the dictator, the authoritarian view of God and the authoritarian methods used to lead the people of God and instead to put Jesus again as the head of the church.

But, this requires we think, we reason, we study, we exercise those abilities God has given us to search for and follow the truth wherever it leads.

Many have a religion that obstructs the truth in favor of mystical or emotional experiences and claim the Spirit is leading, or a religion of rules and regulations and legal requirements, but any activity that undermines truth is not of the Holy Spirit.

TUESDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “While on this earth...” What is the significance that Jesus performed miracles via the power of the Holy Spirit? Why did Jesus not use His own power?

Was Jesus tempted to use His own power? Where?

- Rocks to bread
- Escape death

Why did Jesus not use His own power to perform miracles? Because He overcame with His human brain and had no advantages over us. What does this mean regarding Satan’s allegations against God?



Read last paragraph, "The comparison..." First it is a good point that blasphemy is when something is spoken against God and thus if the Holy Spirit were not fully God it would not be blasphemy.

But what is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? Is it primarily in words or in heart attitude?

How does one grieve the Holy Spirit?

Consider this description that our church used to teach a warning to teachers:

The Holy Spirit has been given us as an aid in the study of the Bible. Jesus promised... When the Bible is made the study book, with earnest supplication for the Spirit's guidance, and with a full surrender of the heart to be sanctified through the truth, all that Christ has promised will be accomplished. **The result of such Bible study will be well-balanced minds.** The understanding will be quickened, the sensibilities aroused. The conscience will become sensitive; the sympathies and sentiments will be purified; a better moral atmosphere will be created; and new power to resist temptation will be imparted. Teachers and students will become active and earnest in the work of God. {CT 357.1}

There is a disposition on the part of many teachers not to be thorough in giving religious instruction. **They are satisfied with a halfhearted service themselves, serving the Lord only to escape the punishment of sin.** Their halfheartedness affects their teaching. **The experience that they do not desire for themselves they are not anxious to see their pupils gain. That which has been given them in blessing has been cast aside as a dangerous element.** The offered visits of the Holy Spirit are met with the words of Felix to Paul, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Acts 24:25. Other blessings they desire; but that which God is more willing to give than a father is to give good gifts to his children; that which is offered abundantly, according to the infinite fullness of God, and which, if received, would bring all other blessings in its train--what words shall I use sufficiently to express what has been done with reference to it? **The heavenly Messenger has been repulsed by the determined will. Teachers have virtually said, "Thus far shalt Thou go with my students, but no farther. We need no enthusiasm in our school, no excitement.** We are much better satisfied to work with the students ourselves." **Thus despite has been done to God's gracious Messenger.** {CT 357.2}

Are not the teachers in our schools in danger of blasphemy, of charging the Holy Spirit with being a deceiving power and leading into fanaticism? {CT 358.1}

What is described? Service designed to escape punishment. This is false service, this is rejecting of the Holy Spirit. Because it creates a false view of God as a punisher and creates fear in the heart and mind. Thus church becomes a place with no joy, no excitement or enthusiasm, all must be quiet, somber, morose and call it reverence.



Is rejecting as fanaticism the true presence of the Holy Spirit blasphemy? Why? What does it do to the mind to teach people that any excitement or enthusiasm is not from the Holy Spirit?

How damaging to young people to stifle such positive energy. What happens in the mind when people believe the Holy Spirit is devoid of excitement and enthusiasm?

How can one tell the difference between the truth Spirit and a false spirit of fanaticism?

Does enthusiasm and excitement mean loss of self-control, disinhibition, acting out, flopping around like a fish, losing reasoning powers? No!

The Bible tells us the fruits of the Spirit include self-control, but self-control does not mean lifeless robotic emotionless behavior. John the Baptist was enthusiastic and passionate, and filled with the Holy Spirit, yet he never lost self control.

We must be balanced.

Here is a quotation I find quite eloquent and powerful on the sin of blasphemy against the Spirit:

Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the Spirit of God is grieved. {FLB 58.2}

Men have the power to quench the Spirit of God; the power of choosing is left with them. They are allowed freedom of action. They may be obedient through the name and grace of our Redeemer, or they may be disobedient, and realize the consequences. {FLB 58.3}

The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit does not lie in any sudden word or deed; it is the firm, determined resistance of truth and evidence. {FLB 58.4} [Did you hear that? The determined resistance of truth and evidence is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit – WOW]

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! . . . {FLB 58.5}

On the other hand, **every ray of light cherished will yield a harvest of light. Temptation once resisted will give power to more firmly resist the second time; every new victory gained over self will smooth the way for higher and nobler triumphs.** Every victory is a seed sown to eternal life. {FLB 58.6}



God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence. {FLB 58.7}
[How this contradicts the standard teaching of most Christians as they falsely teach God as cosmic executioner and justice require He punish]

No one need look upon the sin against the Holy Ghost as something mysterious and indefinable. The sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin of persistent refusal to respond to the invitation to repent. {FLB 58.8}

Is repent confined to repentance of bad deeds? Or does it include a turning away from false ideas, false organization, false methods, power over, dictator like leadership styles, turning away from stubbornness to learn and examine new evidence?

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “Who takes...” Thoughts? Do you like this way of saying it? It starts out quite nicely, but takes a turn, again revealing an imposed law construct infecting the thinking.

What is a more accurate way of saying it, that puts both our condition and God’s character in the right light?

The Holy Spirit convinces us we are sick, deviant from God’s design and in a terminal condition which God diagnoses accurately.

The problem with how they word it is it lends itself to misunderstanding our problem as a legal problem with God. If we are under God’s condemnation then we need to get God’s pardon, rather than our healing and transformation. Thus, we falsely think we need an advocate with God to get Him to be gracious and forgiving, rather than realizing we need an intercessor in our own minds and hearts to transform us to be Godly.

The fifth paragraph says it well, “Those who have tried...” notice that what is described here is healing, transformation, renewal, regeneration of the heart/mind of the sinner, not a legal adjustment with God in heaven.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “No doubt...” Does the Holy Spirit override your individuality? Does a false spirit, a satanic spirit, override your individuality?

Holy Spirit loves you and wants you to blossom, grow, develop into the highest possible levels of development, with freedom to think, choose, love, express yourself creatively and be free.



The false spirit loves itself and wants to control and impose itself upon you to make you do and be like itself, to prevent any real growth or development.

This false spirit frequently inspires people in their human relationships as they seek to dominate and control others, imposing their will upon others, damaging and destroying the minds of those they control.

What does baptism of the Spirit mean?

Read last paragraph, “In Acts 1:8...” thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-4

MONDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Ellen G. White...” What is the impact in our understand of God’s character to attack the Trinity, or teach there is no Trinity?

It destroys the functionality of God’s character of love. It would mean a time in eternity past there was a time when God was a singularity, i.e. no other for God to serve, thus God would not functionally be love. This is Satan’s allegation all along, that God is not truly love.



The Teachings of Jesus 3rd Q 2014

Lesson 4: Salvation.

Salvation -- Roots

Latin *salvus* means whole, safe, healthy and uninjured; the alleged Indo-European “root” is *sol* (whole). שלוה SHaLVaH is peace, quiet and ease; its SLV roommate at *Psalms122:7* is שלום SHaLOAM (peace – hear Shin-Lamed-Mem SILENCE at SOLEMN). Her twin sister is שלם SHaLaiM (whole, healthy, uninjured). Shi-Lamed/ SH-L or SL is the two-letter root – see SLAM. The Shin-Lamed/ SL family of loosened tensions is seen at LOOSE.

The Shin-Lamed theme is set by שלה Shin-Lamed-Hey (to be secure – Jeremiah 12:1), שלו SHaLahV (to be at rest – Job 3:26), שלו SHaLaiV (tranquil – Jeremiah של י SHiLeeY 49:31) and is rest, quiet – II Samuel 3:27. For the Shin-Lamed subroot at work, see SHIELD.

Branches

Listed cognates at IE “root” *sol* include CONSOLIDATE, SAFE, SAGE, SALUBRIOUS, SALUTE, SALUTORY, SALVAGE (to save), SALVO, SAVE, SOLEMN and SOLID. See EXULT and SOLEMN for alternative etymons. SALVE is not listed here, but שלו SHeLeV (ease -- Psalms 30:7) is a better etymon for soothing ointment, SALVE, than the invented Indo-European “root” *seip* (fat, butter) which has no convincing cognates.

SALVE is also a verb of soothing and easing.

In Modern Greek “safe” is *asfalis*. This is an M132 metathesis of SHaLVaH. Shin-Lamed-Mem and Shin-Lamed-Vav are often together in the Bible, so El SALVADOR and JERUSALEM are linked to SALVATION. SHaBHaH is to take capture during war (*Deuteronomy21:10*), but a typical built-in opposite is SHaBH (to return home ... to SAFETY). As Abraham does for Lot, returning a captive is to SAVE or to SALVAGE that person. If hoarding or SAVING loot does not evoke a spiritual SAVIOR, SHaBH also means to repent, to return, to restore and to redeem. SAFE might also be influenced by ספן SaF a N (covered, secured - *Deuteronomy33:21*), a variant of צפון TSaPH OON (hidden, closeted away – Exodus 2:2). In Chinese *pien so* is a closet or privy; read the syllables backwards to find the hidden TSaPHOON. So, SAFE and SAFETY may not be cognates of SALVATION.

In Spanish there is *salvacion* (salvation), *salvador* (savior), *salvar* (rescue) and *salvo* (safe). EDK links SALUTE, (Italian *salute* and Spanish *salud*, health), and SALUTATION to Latin *salvus* – which takes us back to SHaLVaH.

<http://www.edenics.net/english-word-origins.aspx?word=SALVATION>



From the Teacher's Lesson

- How do feelings of guilt and shame prepare us to seek the salvation that God freely offers? [Read *Could It Be This Simple* Chapter 10. – added]
- How do theologies that emphasize freedom from sin's punishment, but not freedom from its power, shortchange their adherents' experiences?

Any thoughts, comments, questions, suggestions, or brilliant glimpses of the obvious??

SABBATH

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life, (John 3:16, NKJV).

This is probably the most referenced text in all of Scripture. What does it mean?? How has Christianity missed the meaning of this verse?? How has it been misinterpreted to mean that God was so bloodthirsty that He demanded the life of His Son, or worse, executed Him, Himself??

We have often heard "Death is just a part of life" as the lesson states. What should we respond to this?

Bottom paragraph of the lesson:

"The Bible is clear. We have only two choices regarding our sins: either we pay for our sins in the lake of fire, or we accept Christ's payment for them on the cross. As we review the generous gift of God's grace through Christ, let us once again humbly renew our faith in Jesus as our personal Savior."

I hope this is an editorial addition.

I don't believe Scripture says, anywhere, that Christ paid anyone for my sins, or anyone else's. As for the lake of fire ... that's a topic for another day [Read Daniel 7, & Rev 15 for starters].

SUNDAY

The first three paragraphs in Sunday's lesson are so eloquent, and on point, I have to wonder if they were written by the same author as the last paragraph in Sabbath's lesson.

"The English verb to love, especially the casual way it is often used today, is totally inadequate to express the depth of solicitous interest expressed by the Greek verb agapao-, "to love." In the New Testament, this term and its related noun agape-, "love," reveal God's deep and constant love toward His creatures, who are completely unworthy of this love. Love is the preeminent attribute of God's character. He not only loves us, but also He is love (1 John 4:8).



God's love is not an impulse based on His feelings or preferences. His love is not selective, nor does it depend on what we do. God loves the world, that is, all human beings, including those who do not love Him.

True love is known by the actions it generates. Sometimes as human beings we may say we love someone, while our actions demonstrate the opposite (1 John 3:17, 18). The same does not occur with God. His love is reflected in His actions. Out of love, He gave His only begotten Son for our salvation. In so doing, God gave us all He had, which is Himself." [emphasis added].

If true love is known by it's actions, how in the name of everything holy, could God have demanded His Son's life or taken it Himself?? How could He kill his children by cooking them forever or as "long as they deserve"?

Please do NOT misunderstand me. There will be a "lake of fire", and great distress, wailing and gnashing of teeth. The wicked will suffer in proportion to their illness, and eventually "die" eternally. Since "true love is known by it's actions", however, we should be able to reconcile the end time events in harmony with "God is Love". Any ideas or thoughts?

From the bottom section: "If God gave you what you deserved, what would it be, and why?"

What's implied? THAT GOD'S LAW IS IMPOSED!

If you opened the door of your child's room just in time to see them step off of a chair with a rope around their neck in an attempt to hang themselves, what does the child deserve for violating the law of respiration?? What would Love do?

What may be urban legend tells of Jacques Lefevre, a man intent on ending his life. He drove a stake in to the ground on a cliff top, overlooking the sea. He tied one end of a rope to the stake and the other around his neck. Being thorough, Lefevre then drank a bottle of poison, set his clothing on fire, leapt off of the cliff, and attempted to shoot himself in the head on the way down. The bullet missed his head and cut the rope in two, dropping Mr. Lefevre in to the sea, where the salt water extinguished the flames and caused him to vomit up the poison. A passing fisherman picked Lefevre up and delivered him to a nearby hospital, where at last, the weary Frenchman got his wish, and died from hypothermia. Did he deserve death for so many violations of natural law??

While it's true that humanity has nothing inherent to merit God's favor, God loves so much that He offers healing as a gift. Humanity still has to cooperate with the process, because God is Love, and therefore, will not force healing on anyone who doesn't want it.

MONDAY

Since humanity has nothing inherent to remedy its illness, God had to take the initiative, if humanity was going to survive. Consider that God, the Father, was willing to come to Earth, reveal His character of Love, and allow His creation to kill Him, but Christ said the controversy is with me – I



will go and reveal your character, my character, and Satan's character. How difficult for a father to restrain himself and let his son be treated with disdain, physical/emotional torture, and to taste death.

In the 2nd paragraph:

“In spite of the fact that we were sinners and did not love God, He loved us and provided the means for our sins to be forgiven through His Son (1 John 4:10). This wondrous love is what draws us toward Him.”

Were sins not forgiven before Jesus came to Earth??

5 Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. 6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”. Ex 34: 5-7

If sins were not forgiven before Christ came, then how did Enoch & Elijah get admitted to Heaven?? Perhaps the healing remedy was unavailable until Jesus produced it in the human mind?

Consider what it reveals about the Godhead that they planned the “salvation” *before* the creation. See Eph. 1:4, 1 Peter 1:20, Rev. 13:8.

TUESDAY

Let's get this out of the way now. Christ's life, death, and resurrection was absolutely required for our restoration back to harmony with the Law of Love/Life.

Why was Christ's death “required”? Because character needed to be revealed. God's, Christ's, Satan's, and human character. God loved so much that He demonstrated he would allow His creation to kill Him. Satan revealed he would kill his Creator in an effort to save himself. Humanity revealed it was following a usurper and needed to be healed. Christ revealed that He was, indeed, God's Son, and that there was NO design flaw in the original human form. **He also secured the remedy to heal humanity and reconcile [not to be confused with “forgive”] humanity back to God, and its original state, in harmony with the design laws.** [This, for those who accuse us of teaching moral influence theory.]

It's important to remember that if at any point along the pathway to “death”, Christ used his divine power to stop the process, Satan would have won the war. He [Christ] had “all power” in Heaven & Earth [John 13:3], but didn't use it for His own benefit. Consider what would have been the results if Satan had “all power” in Heaven & Earth ...

There are many more facets to this that I don't have time to include, and more importantly, that I don't yet understand. We are told this will be our science and our song for eternity.



From the lesson:

“It is important to notice that Jesus died voluntarily. As the Father gave His one and only Son, so the Son gave His own life to redeem the human race. Nobody forced Him to do so. “ ‘No one takes it [my life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself,’ ” declared Jesus (John 10:18, NKJV).”

First of all, well said.

Consider this: If Christ’s death was voluntary, and it was, then any doctrine stating that God killed His Son or “punished” Him on the cross must be a doctrine of devils.

WEDNESDAY

From the 1st paragraph in the lesson:

“Without Christ, we were slaves of sin, slaves to the evil impulses of our fallen human nature. We lived in a self-centered way, pleasing ourselves instead of living to the glory of God. The unavoidable result of this spiritual slavery was death, because the wages of sin is death.”

Again, well said.

To review: Sin = Lawlessness [1 John 3:4]. God’s Law = Design protocols upon which life is built to operate. Therefore, sin is being out of harmony with the design for life, and sin pays its own wage [death]. Death is not God’s punishment; it is His letting go so we bear the consequences of our choices.

Were Adam & Eve free in the garden? Didn’t Satan question their freedom [see Gen 3:1-3]? Were they free out of the garden? Is the alcoholic free?? The heroin addict? The obese diabetic? The gossip? The proud vegan?

Consider what it will mean to be “free from sin”. Why will Heaven be “free from sin”?

THURSDAY

From the 1st paragraph:

“Because of our sins, we deserve to die. But Christ took our place on the cross and paid the death penalty that, otherwise, rested on us. He, being innocent, took on our guilt and received our punishment so that we, being sinful, could be declared innocent. Through Him, instead of perishing we receive eternal life. John 3:15 makes this amazing promise to us. It says that “ ‘whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life’ ” (NKJV), a promise repeated at the end of John 3:16.”



Enough with this “deserve to die” theme. Certainly sinners are in a terminal condition at birth, and if remedied, they will die eternally, but do they “deserve” death or “choose” death?

Does the smoker deserve lung cancer? Did New Orleans deserve hurricane Katrina? Does the homosexual deserve AIDS, the IV heroin user, hepatitis C? Does Satan [“The Accuser”] use the mantra of “deserving of death” and “unworthiness” to depress or demotivate humanity from seeking a remedy for our sickness?

The lesson does a great job of presenting the concept of eternal life in the present tense. I wish it made it more clear just what “eternal life” is [see John 17:3]. Since a knowledge of the True God is Life Eternal, then a lack of this knowledge must be death and destruction [see Hosea 4:6, Hab. 2:14, 2 Cor. 10:5]



The Teachings of Jesus Lesson 5 3rd Q 2014 Lesson 5 How To Be Saved

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for iPhones and Droid. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app!

Prayer: Please pray for those sharing this message. I receive emails from around the world of people being ostracized, barred from churches, banning on teaching and speaking for sharing this message about God. Pray they won't get discouraged and pray God to open opportunities for them to share.

Update: Last week I was at the *Rethinking Hell Conference The Legacy of Edward Fudge and the Future of Conditionalism*, in Houston, TX. There were people from all over the world, Australia, New Zealand, England, France, Lithuania and around the US. Members of a wide variety of Christian groups. I didn't find out all the various groups, but Church of Christ, Baptist, Anglican and many were theologians, pastors, priests etc. I presented our view and gave away our materials. An incredibly positive response. Many individuals came up to me and commented that our view was the most reasonable view they had ever heard and fit with the evidence most consistently.

Edward Fudge and his wife were there and were so nice. They had one portion when people shared their appreciation and thanks to him for his research etc. For those not familiar with Edward Fudge I recommend the movie *Hell and Mr. Fudge*, produced by an SDA producer. Mr. Fudge is a member of the Church of Christ and was a son of a Church of Christ pastor, himself a graduate from theological training and was hired by Robert Brinsmead to research the question of hell. Mr. Fudge, after long research, concluded the Bible does not teach eternal torment but annihilation of the wicked. He was ostracized, fired from his job as pastor, had falsehoods told and printed about him, had public tribunals to oppose him and generally treated horribly by his church and evangelical Christianity. Yet, the truth is the truth and his conclusions about hell continue to grow in evangelical circles.

What impressed me about the conference was the focus on God's character. So many of the presenters hold to the view that God is love and that the traditional views must be opposed because they distort God's character.

Aug 22/23: Dr. Jennings will be doing a spiritual emphasis weekend at Laurelbrook Academy.

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, Christian Psychiatrist and author of *Anatomy of the Soul*, will be conducting an 8-hour workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public.

Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their smile.amazon.com site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN**.

I received the following email this week:

I've received the cases of books and have already begun to give them to friends. I can't begin to express how much this message has helped me. There's one word that keeps coming to mind



when I think of it. Liberation. And then my mind goes to Jesus' mission as stated in Isaiah 61:1-3.

I've been reading the book Education for devotion. It eloquently illustrates that the message being presented by C&R. Here's a quote from it that I'm sure you've read before but I just had to share it. It's basically a summary of this message. It talks about how men came to have false conceptions of God--His character, and the nature of His law; why Jesus came, and how the principles of His kingdom are to be established through the integrative, evidence-based approach!!!:-) This made my morning. Hope it brightens yours as well!

"As the evil passions and purposes of men banished God from their thoughts, so forgetfulness of Him inclined them more strongly to evil. The heart in love with sin clothed Him with its own attributes, and this conception strengthened the power of sin. Bent on self-pleasing, men came to regard God as such a one as themselves—a Being whose aim was self-glory, whose requirements were suited to His own pleasure; a Being by whom men were lifted up or cast down according as they helped or hindered His selfish purpose. The lower classes regarded the Supreme Being as one scarcely differing from their oppressors, save by exceeding them in power. By these ideas every form of religion was molded. **Each was a system of exaction. By gifts and ceremonies, the worshipers sought to propitiate the Deity in order to secure His favor for their own ends. Such religion, having no power upon the heart or the conscience,** could be but a round of forms, of which men wearied, and from which, except for such gain as it might offer, they longed to be free. So evil, unrestrained, grew stronger, while the appreciation and desire for good diminished. Men lost the image of God and received the impress of the demoniacal power by which they were controlled. The whole world was becoming a sink of corruption. – {Ed 75.2}

There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new **leaven**; that there might be brought to mankind the **power** of a new life; **that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world.** – {Ed 76.1}

Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. **He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness.** – {Ed 76.2}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. – {Ed 76.3} [why? Because happiness is a by-product of healthiness, and health results from living in harmony with the way life is designed to work]

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. **Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil.** Fidelity to God involves fidelity to



man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. **It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience.** [notice the focus – the law of love, written in the heart, restrains the superior from oppression and the subordinate from disobedience – because they will be damaged by such action] It ensures man’s well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. **To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever.** – {Ed 76.4}

Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. [wait – haven’t we been taught that the regenerating is in the blood? That we accept a legal payment and then at the second coming a magic of sorts happens and we are regenerated? What is this about divine principles having power to regenerate?] He came to teach how these principles **are to be developed and applied.** – {Ed 77.1}

With the people of that age the value of all things was determined by outward show. As religion had declined in power, it had increased in pomp. The educators of the time sought to command respect by display and ostentation. To all this the life of Jesus presented a marked contrast. His life demonstrated the worthlessness of those things that men regarded as life’s great essentials. Born amidst surroundings the rudest, sharing a peasant’s home, a peasant’s fare, a craftsman’s occupation, living a life of obscurity, identifying Himself with the world’s unknown toilers,—amidst these conditions and surroundings,—**Jesus followed the divine plan of education.** The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. **His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life—God’s lesson books,** full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. – {Ed 77.2}

May God bless you each day and may this message go to all the world!
Thank you so much for bringing this message to my life. NC

Isn’t that quote from Education fantastic? This is the perspective on God and His law that we are to take to the world. Instead Christianity, including our church, has been infected with a distortion of God’s character that resembles humanity’s sinful, selfish character. And such presentations have no power to heal the mind or bring peace to the soul.

First – what does it mean to be saved? It simply and only means to be healed, or restored, or renewed, or recreated. It means to be taken from this defective state in which we currently exist and be rebuilt, regenerated back into God’s original ideal for humanity in every aspect – physical, mental, moral, spiritual, relational, intellectual – restored to perfection.

If you were bitten by a rattlesnake and went to the ER and said to the doctor, “Please save me.” What are you asking for? Forgiveness? Legal pardon? Of course not! You are asking to be cured, to be healed. That is EXACTLY what it means in Scripture.



Every metaphor of Scripture points to this reality. Some of our critics have taken the position that regarding the atonement, which is God's plan to put us back into harmony with Him, i.e. heal us to His original design, that there are many metaphors in Scripture and that we only emphasize one thus they claim we are restrictive of the Scripture and their view is a larger view. However, what they fail to realize is that **behind all metaphor is a reality, and without that reality the metaphor has no meaning.** And the reality, to which all metaphor of atonement point, is healing. So if you are dealing with people stuck in a legal metaphor and they try to suggest that our healing view is a metaphor, challenge them with the idea that healing and restoration is not metaphor. Ask them if they believe when the Bible speaks of a new heaven and earth if it is real or just metaphor? Then ask them, what words describe the process of taking something that is defective, diseased and broken and restoring it to perfection? Healing – it is not metaphor we teach, but reality.

SABBATH

Memory text: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:14,15)

What does it mean to believe?

We have power over what we believe but what we believe holds power over us.

We are changed to become like that we admire and worship? Our beliefs change us.

What changed Adam and Eve in the garden? Was it taking the fruit or believing a lie, which resulted in taking the fruit?

It was believing a lie that changed them and thus their behavior changed.

What is the difference in believing in Christ as our Savior and believing what the demons said when they confronted Christ – “we know who you are the holy one of God?”

They believed WHO Jesus was, but did they believe in Jesus? What is the difference?

To believe in Jesus is not merely to believe He exists, or to believe He has power, but to actually believe He is trustworthy in every way and thereby surrender yourself in trust to Him and intelligently appreciate and agree with His design and methods. The devils believe in His existence, in His power, but not in His goodness. This is the thing that frankly many Christians also doubt about God.

Many Christians believe in God's existence and power but also believe He isn't good – He needs to be persuaded, just as the book *Education* said, they conceive of God as being like themselves. Thus they really don't believe because true belief is believing He is good, trustworthy and believing in His methods and principles.



This is why the Jewish nation was often called an unbelieving nation, or a faithless people – not because they were agnostics or atheists, but because they didn't believe in the goodness of God. They saw God as a being, who was in character like Satan, and that is baal worship. This, sadly is the state of many Christians.

And this is why the church is so powerless to change lives and prepare the world for Christ's return. There is no power in false god concepts. They only damage. Thus, in every denominational church, including our own, the rates of pornography, spouse abuse, child abuse is no different than in the world at large. Why? Because as Paul said, they have a form of godliness but deny its power and the power is the truth about God!

Read second paragraph, "The Lord wanted..." What do you think of the idea that Christ became the bearer of our sins? In what way is this true and how is can this be misconstrued?

What did Jesus bear?

First he bore up under our sinful abuse of Him. Listen to this commentary from the book *Desire of Ages*:

Jesus did not contend for His rights. Often His work was made unnecessarily severe because He was willing and uncomplaining. Yet He did not fail nor become discouraged. He lived above these difficulties, as if in the light of God's countenance. **He did not retaliate when roughly used, but bore insult patiently.** {DA 89.4}

The angels of heaven witnessed every movement made against their loved Commander. They longed to deliver Christ. 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. How easily could the angels, beholding the shameful scene of the trial of Christ, have testified their indignation by consuming the adversaries of God! But they were not commanded to do this. **He who could have doomed His enemies to death bore with their cruelty.** His love for His Father, and His pledge, made from the foundation of the world, **to become the Sin Bearer, led Him to endure uncomplainingly the coarse treatment of those He came to save. It was a part of His mission to bear, in His humanity, all the taunts and abuse that men could heap upon Him. The only hope of humanity was in this submission of Christ to all that He could endure from the hands and hearts of men.** {DA 700.5}

What did Jesus bear according to this commentary? He bore our sin in the form our sinful abuse of Him, our taunts, our violence, our cruelty. He bore it in His humanity! Why? To develop a perfect human character and eradicate fear and selfishness from the humanity He assumed.

Secondly, He bore our infirmities our sickness the defects that sin brings and carried them away:



Isa 53:4 **Surely our griefs He himself bore, and our sorrows He carried;** yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.(NAS)

Notice how the New Testament writers apply the prophecy:

Matt 8:16-17: And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and **healed all who were ill in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases."** (NAS)

Bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows does not mean that Christ “paid the penalty” for our sins, but instead means that he took away from us our griefs and sorrows (ie took away our sicknesses). Yet, we would misunderstand and think that God was killing or punishing Him.

Third – He took our sinful condition and destroyed it, healing humanity back to God’s design:

Isa 53:5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, and **by His scourging we are healed.** (NAS)

1 Pet 2:24-25 and He Himself bore our sins [sinfulness] in His body on the cross, **that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.** For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. (NAS)

By His scourging we are healed does not represent a “legal” transaction in heaven where God’s attitude toward us is “healed”, but instead represents Christ’s victory over the infection of selfishness and fear and restoring the human condition back to God’s ideal, and through faith or trust in Him we can participate in His victory and be changed in our heart, where we die to sin and live to righteousness, returning to God instead of straying from Him.

How can the idea of Christ bearing our sin be misconstrued to teach false ideas?

- Every behavior, misdeed, act of sin is placed upon Jesus and He experiences the pain and guilt of each and every act of sin
- Every behavior, misdeed, act of sin is legally credited to His account and He is punished by the Father for every act of sin, past present and future
- God killed Jesus at the cross as an act of divine justice

SUNDAY

The lesson rightly points out that the first step to experience salvation is to recognize our need. What is our actual need and how has the devil replaced it with a false need?



Actual need: we are in need of new hearts and right spirit.

- The law of God exposes our true condition, it diagnoses us as being in a terminal condition, as being out of harmony with how God constructed life to operate and thus we need a remedy, a rebirth, a renewal of heart, the law written on the heart and mind etc.

False need: a legal payment.

- Satan as duped many to believe our need is a legal solution, that our problem is a legal one, that we have broken rules, are in legal trouble with God, and thus need to have a penalty paid, the wrath of God appeased, records erased, etc. Thus many, misdiagnose the problem and seek a false solution.

You see this distortion in last weeks lesson, Thursday first paragraph, “Because of our sins, we deserve to die. But Christ took our place on the cross and paid the death penalty that, otherwise, rested on us. He, being innocent, took our guilt and received our punishment so that we, being sinful, could be declared innocent.”

This is false in so many ways.

- It misdiagnoses the problem as a legal problem rather than a condition we are in, a state of being that is out of harmony with God and His design
- It makes our behavior and our shortcomings the problem rather than the condition with which we were born and had no choice in
- It makes Christ mission one of paying legal penalties to God
- It represents God as the source of inflicted pain and death
- It suggest God lies by declaring innocent those who are not

When in universal history will it be true that Adam and Eve are innocent? Or for that matter us? God will not declare any of us innocent – He will however, declare all those who trust Him and partake of Jesus – righteous, healed, renewed, at-one with Him. (Consider the Bible character – Job was not declared innocent. He was declared righteous. David didn’t get a new history, a new record, he got a new heart and right spirit. Paul himself declared himself to be the worst of sinners – not innocent, yet saved, because Paul was healed, reborn, renewed in righteousness).

What is so offensive about this penal substitutionary thinking is that it obstructs people from actually experiencing victory in Christ. It is a false theology based on Satan’s view of God’s law namely that God’s law is imposed and sin must be punished.

People who believe this lie then seek to appease God, gets sins paid, record books erased, coverings for themselves either robes or blood, or something to hide them from God so He won’t see their sinfulness. They long to be declared innocent, and then they languish in false security of eternal life, while living in fear and selfishness with no real victory over sin in their lives.



God wants so much more for us. He wants our actual transformation of character to be like Jesus, here and now!

Oswald Chambers understood this:

The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man's sin, but that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race through one man. But it also says that another **Man took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away** — an infinitely more profound revelation... **Sin is something I am born with** and cannot touch— only God touches sin through redemption. It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race. from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin. **God nowhere holds a person responsible for having the heredity of sin, and does not condemn anyone because of it.** Condemnation comes when I realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver me from this heredity of sin, and **yet I refuse to let Him do so.** From that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation. **“This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light . . . ”** (John 3:19) Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, <http://utmost.org>

This is quite right. We are born in sin conceived in iniquity, born with a condition we didn't choose. Thus God doesn't declare us legally innocent, because we are not in legal trouble. He cures us and declares us whole, healed, well!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Recognizing our sins...” thoughts?

The lesson focuses on “sins” rather than sinfulness which results in sins. True repentance is not merely taking responsibility for bad acts, it is a sorrow for the *condition of heart* which led to the bad acts and experiencing a change in heart motive.

Judas:

- Acknowledged his sin
- Expressed sorry for his sin
- Didn't want to do that act again

But, Judas wasn't sorry for the selfishness in his character which led him to do it. He was sorry his plans did not work out. He didn't want Christ to die; he wanted Christ to use His power to take the throne.

When we focus on legal problems and sinful acts merely, we lead people to be like Judas and acknowledge the sinful act, express sorry for the sinful act, and change in desire to never do that specific act again. But the heart isn't changed because we mislead people into believing sin is



behavioral rather than the truth it is characterological. Then they seek to do the same sin, but slightly modified, so it isn't the exact same act they did before. Thus they can falsely believe they are in a state of repentance, when they are not.

Read second paragraph, "We can see the importance..." From what was it they were to repent?

John the Baptist was to be the forerunner of Christ – to do what? Was it not to prepare the minds of the people to accept Jesus? Was it merely to turn the people from sinful behavior, or primarily from false concepts of God?

What about today? Do we have a work to do as John did 2000 years ago to prepare the way for the Lord's second advent? And is not our work to lead the people to repentance? Not the mere repentance from bad deeds but repentance from the false ideas about God with which so many live in fear?

We must turn away from the lies about God that infect our thinking and contaminate our evangelism. We can only fulfill the purpose God has for us in proclaiming a message to prepare the world for the Lord's return when we tell the truth about God. This requires we expel:

- the false law concept with which Rome infected the church, and
- the false atonement models based on the false law concept, and
- the false judgment models and
- the false imposed punishment and torture models.

Until we do this we present a lie that has no power to heal and restore but instead, we like the Jews 2000 years ago, we search the world for a convert and make him twice the son of hell. How and why? Because before we converted him he just didn't know God but now we have filled his mind with a false god, so now he still must learn the truth about God, but he also must UNLEARN all the distortions we have taught him.

These people are describe by Paul to Timothy as those who have a form of godliness but deny the power because they deny the truth about God.

Here is what our church used to think about this:

John was called to do a special work; he was to prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight His paths. The Lord did not send him to the school of the prophets and rabbis. He took him away from the assemblies of men to the desert, that he might learn of nature and nature's God. God did not desire him to have the mold of the priests and rulers. [Why? Why didn't he go to the schools which were established by God? Why not to Bible school, "Christian education"? Because it had been corrupted with lies about God. What about our schools today?] He was called to do a special work. The Lord gave him his message. Did he go to the priests and rulers and ask if he might proclaim this message?--No, [Should John have asked for endorsement from church authority? What about today? Should we seek



church authority to proclaim the truth about God? Do you know the church authorities of John's day came and asked him on what authority he was preaching, as he didn't seek theirs. What about today?] **God put him away from them that he might not be influenced by their spirit and teaching.** He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 40:3-5). **This is the very message that must be given to our people;** we are near the end of time, and the message is, Clear the King's highway; gather out the stones; raise up a standard for the people. The people must be awakened. It is no time now to cry peace and safety. We are exhorted to "cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isaiah 5:1). {1SM 410.1}

What is the message we are to take?

- The eternal good news about God and His character and methods of love
- The law of love as the design template for life
- Our natural, from birth, condition of being out of harmony with this design
- Christ is our Savior and Remedy to cure the defects of fear and selfishness in us
- To embrace God's methods of love and give Him glory by revealing His character in us
- To call people to see God for who He truly is as Designer not Dictator so people may make a right judgment about God and choose to trust Him
- That the religious systems of the world are infected with imposed law constructs and are a confused mess
- That those who embrace this false legal system of imposed penalties with a god who will inflict torture and torment will, by worshipping such a god, be conformed to the image of that god and thus suffer the very torment they desperately want to avoid. They become marked in character to be beastly just like the beastly god they worship.

I believe when the call to repentance is to repent of the lies we believe AND tell about God and begin telling the truth about Him and living in harmony with His methods of love, then the latter rain power of the Holy Spirit will fall and we will be enabled to lighten the world and Christ will return.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "According to Jesus..." There is much to be commended in this paragraph, such as faith being more than a feeling, or mental exercise, and that it is faith or trust in the person Jesus Christ. But what of this idea that faith is "trusting in Jesus and His death for us."

What does that mean? Why do they say it this way?



Why not say, “trusting in Jesus and His victorious life for us” or “trusting in Jesus and His victory over death for us”?

It is because of accepting Satan’s lie about God’s law being imposed, and that sin must be punished, thus the death represents the paid penalty and we must trust that our penalty is paid by that death.

This again obstructs God’s true plan of salvation. Jesus died to cure the condition, to restore in us His character not pay a legal penalty. Thus the Bible says, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2Cor 5:21)

Notice the purpose, not to pay a penalty but to make us righteous, to cure us.

Or in the text from Peter we read earlier:

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 1Pet 2:24

Again notice the reason – to heal us, NOT to pay a legal penalty.

Or other Scripture:

but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has **destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.** 2tim 1:10

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ **For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.** John 3:16,17

The mission of Christ was for the healing and regeneration of this world, the destruction of sin and death.

Read third paragraph, “God so loved...” What does it mean to be covered by His righteousness?

I agree with this description in a book called *Christ’s Object Lessons*:

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}



So how does believing in Jesus result in us having righteousness? Because when we believe, or trust, we open the heart and the Holy Spirit comes in and we actually are change. We actually desire holiness, truth, love, freedom, purity, we establish new pathways in our brain and the old fades away. We actually, literally, come to love God and others more than self and the fear and selfishness which dominates us loses its power over us.

This happens by daily partaking of Jesus, spending time with Him, meditating upon Him, considering and contemplating His methods, His ways, His designs. And as we appreciate it and long to be like Him and choose His ways we are changed.

But this is why our conception of God is so critical, if we have distorted concepts then we are not changed to be like God, but will be changed to be like the false god we worship.

Read bottom green section, “Why must...”

- Do we allow for outcomes beyond our understanding?
- Could God know that we are so settled into the truth about Him that we won't be shaken, so healing isn't necessary for our eternal salvation. But a nurse at a hospital hasn't seen God's love and God knows that our witness to them will be able to break through and reach them, so He doesn't heal us. Do we trust Him enough to trust Him with outcomes we don't like because we know He has a vision of reality that is greater than our own.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson speaks of the wedding garment, the parable Jesus taught about the wedding feast and guests being inspected to see if they were wearing the garment given by the king.

It then asks, “Why did the king want to be sure that every guest had a wedding garment for the feast?”

What would happen without the garment?

Why does NASA want to ensure every astronaut has a space suit and a sun shield visor before they go out into space?

We cannot exist in the presence of God without a character like His. It would be torment to us to be there. And thus God wants us to have the wedding garment, the mind, heart, character renewed to be in harmony with Him so we will love His presence and not flee from Him in pain.

Examples:

- Moses coming down from the mountain reflecting God's glory causes suffering in the people.
- The priests unable to enter Solomon's temple on the day of dedication – why? Was God unhappy with them? Why couldn't they enter? Because they were not fully restored to harmony with God and couldn't tolerate the presence of God.



- The wicked destroyed by His brightness because they were not transformed to be like Him.

THURSDAY

First sentence says, "When in faith we recognize our need, repent, confess our sins, and claim Christ's righteousness for ourselves, we become His disciples."

Could a person do all of this, have faith, repent, confess, claim the righteousness of Christ, but have such a wrong concept of God that their faith is misplaced and they trust in Satan's version of God and trust in legal payments, trust that their god will punish and destroy, trust that their enemies will pay for what has been done to them etc. etc. etc. and still not be saved?

Listen to this commentary:

When we speak of unbelief, we do not mean that a person believes nothing. The mind must rest upon something; and when it does not grasp truth, it lays hold of error. All men in one sense believe, and the effect produced upon the heart and character is according to the things believed. Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors, and it was only by repentance toward God and faith in the promised Messiah that they could hope ever to regain the lost image of God. **Paul had faith before his conversion; but it was not a correct faith.** His self-righteousness strengthened his faith that he was doing God's service in rejecting Christ, and he enjoyed a restful satisfaction. **False faith as well as true faith will give peacefulness for a time.** Paul verily thought that he was doing God service when he was persecuting the followers of Christ and putting them to death. **He was sincere in his belief; but sincerity will not make error truth, nor truth error.** "When the commandment came," says Paul, "sin revived, and I died." **He then received the truth as it is in Jesus, and experienced its transforming power upon his soul.** The truth was so firmly planted in his heart that he could say, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}

A genuine faith in the true God as Jesus revealed results in transformation of the believer to be like Jesus in character. Those who have a false faith will:

- have religion but will not love,
- they will have creeds but will not sacrifice self,
- they will have worship services but will not have the transforming power of worshipping the true character of God,
- they will have rituals but no unity with God,
- they will have their legal claim but they will not have a renewed heart,



- And when Satan appears, arguing that sin must be punished they will say, “This is our god we have waited for him.”

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 1, “Many try to drown...” Why do these methods not work? Because they treat symptoms not problems. They act to alter the mood, the feeling, the emotions, but don’t resolve the dysfunction which causes the dysphoria. It would be like taking pain meds for a cavity, but not filling the cavity. Eastern Meditation does the same thing, alters the feeling without actually changing the character.

How do you help people like this? By the truth, the truth of their condition, the truth of how their interventions only injure, the truth that real healing is possible, but many refuse because they are not willing to endure the pain of transformation.

Read and discuss question 3.



The Teachings of Jesus Lesson 6 3rd Q 2014

Lesson 6 – How to Be Saved

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for iPhones and Droid. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Aug 22/23: Dr. Jennings will be doing a spiritual emphasis weekend at Laurelbrook Academy.

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, Christian Psychiatrist and author of *Anatomy of the Soul*, will be conducting an 8-hour workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public.

Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their smile.amazon.com site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN**.

I received this email:

Just wanted to let you know that while we were in British Columbia a few weeks ago we shared the "God and your Brain" DVDs with some family there and a neighbor who broke her leg while we were there. Just heard today that she and her husband looked at them with a sister who was visiting and another friend. They were very excited about them and the sister said she had to have one to take back to New Brunswick to share with her family there. We had left several DVDs with our family living there, so she was given one to take home. We are sending more DVDs and books up with another family member going to visit for the pastor and some other people. We praise God that we have a way to get these to people there. Thank you for the box of materials you sent we are getting them out to people.

Our friends in Australia created a Facebook group called, Friends of the Designer, and on that site one of the proponents of this message in Australia posted this:

Hi fellow designer friends, Isn't it amazing how this message is moving around the world? Praise God!!!!

My younger brother in NZ has been relieved of his Sabbath school class because he's always talking about the true character of God unfortunately they prefer a God who punishes sinners. I



like to ask our group to remember him in your prayers... I told him they can stop him from taking the class but they can't stop him from talking from the pews and it actually makes it easier for him to expose their wrong ideas about our God. Thanks guys

SABBATH

Read memory text: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” (Jn 3:3 NKJV)

What is the context – in other words what is the subject this being “born again” regarding? Seeing God’s kingdom, being part of God’s kingdom, Salvation – then note what Christ did NOT say – Christ did not say, “No one can see the kingdom of God unless he has the penalty for his sins paid.” Or, He Didn’t say “No one can see the kingdom of God unless God’s wrath has been propitiated.”

Notice where Jesus puts the focus of change that is necessary for sinners to see God’s kingdom – it is a change in the sinner, NOT God!

And, why must we be born again? Because there is something wrong with our first birth, which means Christ is focusing on what type of problem and its resolution?

Christ is focusing on the problem of our actual state of being, our condition, which is deviant from His design and needs healing.

So what is wrong with our first birth? We are born fearful and selfish rather than trusting and loving.

Parents have the responsibility of creating an atmosphere to counter fear and selfishness, to infuse love and trust into their children. One of the critical actions parents can take to instill trust is – never set boundaries you are unwilling to enforce. If you set boundaries, but because the child cries, begs, pleads, is hurt, disappointed etc. you allow your compassion to alter your enforcement, you undermine your child’s ability to trust. How?

- If you tell your child that if they study hard and get an A on their next exam you would give them \$20 and they do, but then you don’t give them \$20 what do you teach them?
- If you tell your child if they don’t pick up their room they can’t have dessert, and the room isn’t picked up and when dessert is passed out they begin to cry when they don’t get one, you then say, “okay, you can have one this time but next time pick up your room.” What do you teach them?
- It is okay to change a boundary when you believe it is in the best interest, and you have a reason. Just explain the reason and educate on the new placement of the boundary.

The lesson points out that the concept of being born again was difficult for Nicodemus to grasp because he was descended from Abraham and thought that gave him special favor with God. What



about today? Are there any beliefs similar that lead people to believe they have special favor with God?

Some still believe genetic Jews have special favor with God, but what about in Christianity? Do some believe that belonging to a particular denomination engenders special favor, or status, or position in God's kingdom? Does it? Or participating in certain rituals, or worshipping on a certain day?

Read third paragraph, "Patiently, Jesus explained..." thoughts?

No doubt the transformation of our characters, the healing of our minds requires the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. But, does that mean we are absent of the process? Or do we have a work to do in our own salvation?

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Phlp 2:12,13

What is the balance between our working out our salvation and God working in you?

This is another point upon which the legal model fails, but it is quite simple when we understand reality and that reality our condition is deviant from God's design, we cannot fix what is broken in us but God has a plan to do just – heal and restore us.

Who procured the Remedy to our sinful state? Jesus – did he receive any help from any other human? No – He did this singly and alone.

Who applies the Remedy into the lives of believers? The Holy Spirit – and when the Holy Spirit comes into the heart is there a process, an activity that occurs which a person CANNOT do for themselves?

Consider a person with an infection who needs an antibiotic, did the person develop and produce the antibiotic? No, does the antibiotic do something inside them they can't do for themselves? It brings a new element which is not already there. But, does the person still have a work to do? What? To partake of the antibiotic.

Is there a work to do in our salvation? What? To partake of Jesus, to surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit, to choose to do that which we understand and know is right and healthy.

Here is how one of the founders of our church put it:

- **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome**



only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a **partaker of the divine nature.** Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}

- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. [credulity - readiness/willingness to believe with little evidence]** **He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . .** Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

SUNDAY

Read fifth paragraph, "The fact that it is..." Of what is water baptism symbolic? Dying to the life of selfishness and rising to a life of love and unity with God.

Does the ritual change a person? Which is supposed to come first, the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart/mind, or baptism by water? It is baptism by the Spirit that is transformational.

Listen to this quote:

This new birth looks mysterious to Nicodemus. He asks, "How can these things be?" Jesus, bidding him marvel not, uses the wind as an illustration of his meaning. It is heard among the branches of the trees, and rustling the leaves and flowers, yet it is invisible to the eye, and from whence it comes and whither it goeth, no man knoweth. So is the experience of every one who is born of the Spirit. **The mind is an invisible agent of God to produce tangible results. Its influence is powerful, and governs the actions of men. If purified from all evil, it is the motive power of good. The regenerating Spirit of God, taking possession of the mind,**



transforms the life; wicked thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced, love, peace, and humility take the place of anger, envy, and strife. That power which no human eye can see, has created a new being in the image of God. . . . {ST, November 15, 1883 par. 9}

Our minds are not our brains; our minds operate upon the substrate of our brains like Windows operates on the substrate of a hard drive.

But our minds actually change the brain based on how and what we think.

There has been a great debate and some have argued that it is the brain that determines the mind – not so – the mind is much more than the mere results of chemical reactions in the brain.

There are different theories about the mind/brain relationship:

- *Mind-brain identity theory* asserts that mental events are created by and are identical to brain events. Thus we can have internal subjective experience “I feel great” but also external measures of that experience, increase activation of the nucleus accumbens, with increase dopamine release.
- *Eliminativism*, denies mental functions and claims there are only physical brain states. This view holds the mental world is an illusion.
- *Emergent mentalism* proposed by Nobel prize winner Roger Sperry, states that mental events are not possible independent of the brain, but the mental processes such as beliefs, values, feelings, etc. are activities beyond mere physical, chemical reactions.

One of the founders of our church saw it saw it much like the Nobel prize winner:

The brain nerves which communicate to the entire system are the only medium through which Heaven can communicate to man, and affect his inmost life. Whatever disturbs the circulation of the electric currents in the nervous system, lessens the strength of the vital powers, and the result is a deadening of the sensibilities of the mind.—2T, p. 347.

My view is that the mind is analogous to software, yet capably or rewriting and changing itself, and the brain analogous to hardware – can software operate without hardware? Does the hardware determine the quality of the software? But can a faulty hardware impact the functioning of the software?

Brain illness can impair the functioning of the mind, but doesn't determine the mind. So a person with a brain illness – MS, Sz d/o, brain tumor, schizophrenia, bipolar – may have altered hardware, but can still be kind, honest, faithful, loyal, noble, be repulsed by evil and love the good. In other words, their mind, their character, is not determined by the hardware – brain. However, their ability to carry out life's activities may be impacted by the hardware.



But, what we choose to believe, what we think, the methods we practice, the values we cherish will actually alter the brain:

Neurofeedback is a form of biofeedback – biofeedback is using some device such as heart monitor, skin galvanic meter, to give feedback about yourself, such as heart rate, or circulation to the skin which change with anxiety and stress levels. With this feedback people can learn to calm themselves.

Neurofeedback uses the brainwaves themselves, and gives the person conscious feedback regarding what brainwave state they are currently in.

A meta-analysis of 87 studies examining the effectiveness of neurofeedback on seizure frequency showed reduction in sz frequency in 80% of epileptics undergoing a certain form of neurofeedback, even when anti-seizure meds did not work. (Sterman et al, “Biofeedback in the Treatment of Epilepsy”; *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine* 77(2010): S60-S67.)

In other words, based on a change in thinking, using one’s mind, the brain changed.

ADHD children tend to have high amount of theta waves in their frontal lobes. These are the waves we get when we daydream and our mind wanders. Studies using neurofeedback with children with ADHD demonstrate children receiving neurofeedback, when compared to ADHD controls, not only had improved performance on attention, focus and hyperactivity, but showed enhanced brain activity in areas involved in attention and focus. The controls did not show any of these changes. Further investigation documented improved white matter connections in the brains of the ADHD children who did neurofeedback, but not in the brains of the controls. (Levesque et al, *Effects of Neurofeedback Training on the Neural Substrates of Selective Attention in Children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*, from Beauregard, M, *Brain Wars*, Harper One, New York, 2012, p 52,53)

The point of these studies and others like it is that we can, by focusing our thinking, change our brainwaves and thereby change our brain structure. Our minds are what make us who we are. And it is our minds that God takes to heaven when we die and which he brings back to earth at the second coming to put into new bodies.

Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. **The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved.** In the resurrection every man will have his own character. God in His own time will call forth the dead, giving again the breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend. There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him. {6BC 1093.2}



And Paul says the following:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those **who fall asleep**, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God **will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.** ¹⁵ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, **will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.** ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first.** ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be **caught up together with them in the clouds** to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words.
1Thes 4:13-18

How do we put together the mind goes to Christ at death, Christ brings with him those who have fallen asleep, that we alive will not precede those who have died into heaven, and the dead are being resurrected from the earth?

By understanding that the mind is like software, our identity, our individuality goes to Christ at death and is safe and secure with Him in heaven, perfectly stored in the Lamb's book of life. A great heavenly "server". When He returns He brings with Him the heavenly server and downloads all the saints into new heavenly bodies He creates from the dust. It is then they live again, until then they are, as the Bible states asleep, or as any software on a disc, in storage.

What can you do to develop your mind? Here is an idea from book called *Christian Education*:

It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. **As an educating power, the Bible is without a rival.** In the word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration. The Bible is the most instructive history that men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, and a divine hand has preserved its purity through all the ages. It lights up the far-distant past, where human research seeks vainly to penetrate. In God's word we behold the power that laid the foundation of the earth and that stretched out the heavens. Here only can we find a history of our race, unsullied by human prejudice or human pride. Here are recorded the struggles, the defeats, and the victories of the greatest men this world has ever known. Here the great problems of duty and destiny are unfolded. **The curtain that separates the visible from the invisible world is lifted,** and we behold the conflict of the opposing forces of good and evil, from the first entrance of sin, to the final triumph of righteousness and truth; **and all is but a revelation of the character of God.** In the reverent contemplation of the truths presented in his word, **the mind of the student is brought into communion with the infinite mind. Such**



a study will not only refine and ennoble the character, but it cannot fail to expand and invigorate the mental powers. {CE 65.1

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “Likewise, the Holy Spirit...” thoughts?

Do you agree? Does the Holy Spirit work on the heart of every person? What about those who have never had the Bible? What about those raised in pagan cultures?

Do we have any examples from Scripture of people, not part of Israel, that God’s Spirit worked with?

- Patriarchs
- Mechezedek
- Jethro priest of Midian
- Naaman
- Nebuchadnezzar
- The wise men from the East who came to visit Jesus
- The Roman centurion

What about since the time of Christ, does the Holy Spirit strive with people who have not heard about Christ and can they be saved?

This is what Paul said to the Romans:

since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse...

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law,¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. (Romans 1:19, 20; 2:12-16)

Have you ever heard that people can’t be saved unless they accept Jesus, or unless they are baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, or unless they perform some ritual etc.?

Why? Where do these ideas come from? Are there any truths behind such ideas?



These two texts are probably the most frequently used for such ideas:

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Jn 14:6

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

And they are both true – the problem arises when we understand these texts through the Roman imposed law construct. When we do that then we falsely believe it is a legal issue, rather than a condition of being, and if a person hasn’t had legal solution they can’t be saved. Thus it is taken very concretely, a person must hear the name Jesus, must accept the historic Jesus and must receive legal pardon.

But, the legal model is a lie, therefore these ideas about the meaning of the text is a lie. Paul’s description in Romans 2 reveals that.

What is the truth?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. Jn 1:1-3

For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. Rom 1:20

According to Scripture who is the one through which all of nature is created? Jesus, and whose divine nature is seen in nature? God’s. So if a person learns about God in nature, who put that lesson there? Jesus. So they are coming to God through Jesus.

And if they come to surrender to the God of love, as seen in nature, and trusts Him, the Holy Spirit comes in and recreates them into the likeness of Jesus. From where is the Holy Spirit getting this Remedy? Jesus, it is no longer “I that lives but Christ lives in me.”

Thus, everyone who is healed is healed (saved) only because Jesus presented the truth to win us to trust and provides the Remedy which restores us to righteousness.

Thus Peter’s statement, there is no other “name” whereby men can be saved. What does “name” mean in that culture? Character. Peter is saying you can possess no other character other than that of Jesus in



order to be saved, or healed. Or, it is only by possessing Jesus' character you are healed. Or, it is the character of Jesus, partaken of by the believer that heals and transforms.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "A flourishing spiritual..." What does it mean to be part of the vine? This is a metaphor – Jesus is not a vine, but every metaphor has some reality to which it refers. What is a more reality to which the vine metaphor is referring?

Does this text suggest anything?

As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.

¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. Dan 7:9,10

Or what about this text:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, **and in him all things hold together.** Col 1:15-17

This is the last paragraph in the five book series *The Conflict of the Ages* from the book *The Great Controversy*:

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, **flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space.** From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love. {GC 678.3}

Is this suggesting that God is the source of life and that from Him flows the very energy that sustains the universe, keeps the heart beating, etc. and only in actual connection with Him there is life? While He is not a vine, He is the source of everything and sustains it all.

Here is a paragraph from the book *Education*:

The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence



that has the jurisdiction of the soul. **From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. **For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same--a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin.** {Ed 99.2}

Wow – what kind of law is described here? And what then do we understand the vine to be? God Himself as the Creator and Sustainer of all. Only in unity with Him is their life.

Now search your databases and see if you can identify any stories in the inspired record that would be related to this phenomenon, of God being the source of life, energy, sustenance etc. and separation results in death, but reuniting results in life and transformation?

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that **his face was radiant** because he had spoken with the Lord.³⁰ When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, **his face was radiant**, and they were afraid to come near him.³¹ But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them.³² Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai.³³ When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face.³⁴ But whenever he entered the Lord's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded,³⁵ **they saw that his face was radiant.** Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the Lord. Exodus 34:29-34

All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. Acts 6:15

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves... The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. Gen 3:7,21

Our God is a consuming fire Heb 12:29

I came across this in an old journal from 1898:

Before the fall, not a cloud rested upon the minds of our first parents to obscure their clear perception of the character of God. **[notice the emphasis here – on clarity in knowing God's character]** They were perfectly conformed to the will of God. **For a covering, a beautiful light, the light of God, surrounded them.** The Lord visited the holy pair, and instructed them through the works of his hands. Nature was their lesson-book. In the garden of Eden the existence of God was demonstrated in the objects of nature that surrounded them. Every tree of the garden spoke to them. The invisible things of God were clearly seen, being understood by



the things which were made, even his eternal power and Godhead. {RH, November 8, 1898 par. 2}

But while it is true that God could thus be discerned in nature, this does not favor the assertion that after the fall a perfect knowledge of God was revealed in the natural world to Adam and his posterity. Nature could convey her lessons to man in his innocence; but transgression brought a blight upon nature, and intervened between nature and nature's God. Had Adam and Eve never disobeyed their Creator, had they remained in the path of perfect rectitude, they could have known and understood God. But when they listened to the voice of the tempter, and sinned against God, **the light of the garments of heavenly innocence departed from them; and in parting with the garments of innocence, they drew about them the dark robes of ignorance of God. The clear and perfect light that had hitherto surrounded them had lightened everything they approached; but deprived of that heavenly light, the posterity of Adam could no longer trace the character of God in his created works.** {RH, November 8, 1898 par. 3}

This commentary connects the knowledge of God's character with the robes of heavenly light. Jesus said in John 17 that life eternal is that we might know God – eternal death is not knowing God. Coming into a knowledge of God changes us.

This change is necessary in order to live in God's presence. God wants us to be shining lights, not just metaphorically, light of truth, but as we are conformed more and more in mind, thought, brain patterns to be like Him, then we experience closer connection with Him and more and more of His presence abides in us and shines through us, culminating in one day having faces like Moses and Stephen but even more.

Do you think we can experience this before the second coming – as Moses and Stephen did?

One of our founders did:

The service rendered in sincerity of heart has great recompense. "Thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly." **By the life we live through the grace of Christ, the character is formed. The original loveliness begins to be restored to the soul. The attributes of the character of Christ are imparted, and the image of the Divine begins to shine forth. The faces of men and women who walk and work with God express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven.** For these souls the kingdom of God has begun. They have Christ's joy, the joy of being a blessing to humanity. They have the honor of being accepted for the Master's use; they are trusted to do His work in His name. {DA 312}

And this from the book *The Great Controversy* describing the time just before Jesus returns:



The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people. Like peals of loudest thunder His words roll through the earth. The Israel of God stand listening, with their eyes fixed upward. **Their countenances are lighted up with His glory, and shine as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The wicked cannot look upon them...** {GC 640.2}

Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man. In solemn silence they gaze upon it as it draws nearer the earth, becoming lighter and more glorious, until it is a great white cloud, **its base a glory like consuming fire**, and above it the rainbow of the covenant. GC 640

This seem to be what John was saying:

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.³
Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. 1Jn 3:2,3

Do you realize that unity with the Vine, with God, is more than just unity of attitude, it is being reunited with the very fountain, wellspring, of life, the source of energy in the entire universe. As we come back into a right knowledge of Him, then our minds are transformed to be able to experience greater and greater connectedness with Him until we literally, one day, begin shining, radiating the heavenly light as Adam and Eve did in Eden, and Moses and Stephen did on earth.

Read last paragraph, "By reading the Word..." thoughts?

Where do Christ's words have their impact or effect? In our minds, changing our beliefs, our thoughts, our understanding, our trust, our reality dispelling lies and distortions and returning us to harmony with Him!

WEDNESDAY

The lesson speaks of the importance of prayer – no doubt, but what would you say is the most important aspect of prayer?

To whom you are praying!

- The 450 prophets of baal prayed at Mt. Carmel
- Manasseh prayed and offered his own son to Molech
- Many people pray God will take vengeance on their enemies

The most critical thing it seems is to know the one to whom you are praying.



Then next most critical thing is being real – being honest, if you have hatred in your heart and want someone to die – tell God, but don't stop with that, ask Him if there is a better way to lead you to it and change you to be like Him.

Read last paragraph, “Jesus is our Mediator...” thoughts? What does this mean? What does it mean to pray in Jesus’ name?

But to pray in Christ's name means much. **It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works.** The Saviour's promise is given on condition. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience. {DA 668.2}

Do you agree? Praying in Jesus’ name is not putting a tag line at the end of your prayer, but praying with the same character, motives and desire as Him, thus you will receive that which you pray for.

What does it mean Jesus is our Mediator in heaven?

Under imposed law models how is mediation described?

- Jesus representing us to the Father to plead mercy and forgiveness from the Father in exchange for the blood payment He has made
- Also, Jesus, in addition to Mary and the Saints pleading for mercy from God because God, in such views must be plead with
- Or, Jesus working to assuage or propitiate God’s wrath, to shield us from God etc.

All this is based on lies about God and lies about God’s design for life, His law.

What does mediation look like under Design Law?

In his efforts to reach God's ideal for him, the Christian is to despair of nothing. Moral and spiritual perfection, through the grace and power of Christ, is promised to all. Jesus is the source of power, **the fountain of life. He brings us** to His word, and from the tree of life presents to us leaves for the healing of sin-sick souls. **He leads us** to the throne of God, and **puts into our mouth** a prayer through which **we are brought** into close contact with Himself. **In our behalf He sets in operation the all-powerful agencies of heaven. At every step we touch His living power.** {AA 478.2}

God's people, rescued from the fire by Jesus Christ, have a sense of their sin, feel humbled and ashamed. God sees and recognizes their repentance, and notes their sorrow for sin, which they cannot remove or cancel themselves. But as they pray their prayers are heard, and this is the reason that Satan stands by to resist Christ; because He hears their prayers, **He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. He regenerates the sinner, and pardon is written off against his name.** This stirs Satan up to resistance. He steps in between



the repenting, believing soul and Christ. He seeks to cast his hellish shadow before that soul, to dampen faith, and to make of none effect the words of God. . . . {UL 20.3}

If Satan stands between the soul and Jesus Christ, then the love and acceptance and pardon of Christ are eclipsed--man will be constantly striving to prepare a robe of righteousness to cover his deformity and sin, when Christ wants him to come to Him just as he is, and believe in Him as his personal Saviour. In His tender love, **a forgiving Father** brings forth His best robe in which to array His returning child. . . . {UL 20.4}

How is Jesus our mediator? He is working in His Spirit Temple, the true temple set up by God and not by human hands, to restore His image in us. In the OT service, twice per day the High Priest would trim the wick on the lamps. This symbolizes working in our hearts to cut away unhealthy and selfish attributes and cause us to shine more brightly for Him every day.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Paradoxically...” Because we remain vulnerable to temptation from selfish impulses, many believe the old “self” is still alive – but in reality, the self has been renewed, and old habits, conditioned responses, and residual defects remain to tempt us.

The old nature, or fallen humanity that tempts us is not the same as our individuality, and thus we can, via union with Christ and the indwelling Spirit, live free of the control of fear and selfishness, but not the temptations until the second coming.

My paraphrase of a portion of Romans 7:

^{7:14} We know that the law is consistent, reliable and reasonable; but I am inconsistent, unreliable and unreasonable, because the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness has warped my mind and damaged my thinking. ¹⁵ I am frustrated with what I do. For having been restored to trust, I want to do what is in harmony with God and his methods and principles; but I find that even though I trust God, old habits, conditioned responses, preconceived ideas and other remnants of the devastation caused by distrust and selfishness are not yet fully removed. ¹⁶ And if I find an old habit causing me to behave in ways that I now find detestable, I affirm that the law is a very helpful tool revealing residual damage in need of healing. ¹⁷ What is happening is this: I have come to trust God and desire to do his will, but old habits and conditioned responses, which present almost reflexively in certain situations, have not yet been totally eliminated and thus cause me to do things I do not want to do. ¹⁸ I know that my mind was completely infected with distrust, fear and selfishness which totally perverted all my desires and faculties, so that even when distrust has been eradicated and trust has been restored, the damage caused by years of distrustful and selfish behavior has not yet been fully healed. So I find, at times, I have the desire to do what is right, but do not yet have the ability to carry out the desire. ¹⁹ For the old habits and conditioned responses are not the good I want to do; no,



they are remnants of my selfish unconverted mind. ²⁰ So, if I find myself doing what I no longer desire to do, it is not I, but vestiges of old habits and conditioned responses that have yet to be removed, and through God's grace will soon be removed.

^{7:21} So, I find this reality at work: When I want to do good, old selfish habits and residual feelings of fear are right there with me. ²² For in my mind I rejoice in God's methods and principles; ²³ but I recognize I remain damaged from years of being infected with distrust and practicing Satan's methods, so that even though the infection of distrust has been removed, the old habits of fear and self-promotion tempt me from within. ²⁴ What a damaged and corrupt man I am! Who will deliver and heal me from a brain and body so diseased and deformed? ²⁵ Praise be to God – for he has provided the healing solution through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I find that in my mind I am now renewed with trust for God and love of his methods, but my brain and body remain damaged by years of self-indulgent behavior.

Read fourth paragraph, "It is not easy..." This is why Eastern Meditation fail as a way to experience spiritual renewal, because it is self trying to empty self of self.

When we choose to say no to the desires of the selfish nature, we suffer in our flesh, but we are done with sin, or deviations from God's design, which occur when we act selfishly.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "The warfare..." thoughts?

Read and discuss questions.



The Teachings of Jesus Lesson 7 3rd Q 2014

Lesson 7: Living Like Christ

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Aug 22/23: Dr. Jennings will be doing a spiritual emphasis weekend at Laurelbrook Academy.

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, will be conducting a workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 10,11: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Vallejo SDA church in Glendale, CA.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their smile.amazon.com site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN**.

Last week we talked about the yoke, and how we are to be yoked together with Christ and how a yoke is not a harness but an instrument that shares the load between two animals allowing them to work as a team to pull the load.

Kent Johnson, one of our online listeners, sent this quote from the book *The Desire of Ages* page 329:

Take My yoke upon you," Jesus says. The yoke is an instrument of service. Cattle are yoked for labor, and the yoke is essential that they may labor effectually. By this illustration Christ teaches us that we are called to service as long as life shall last. We are to take upon us His yoke, that we may be co-workers with Him.

The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God... {DA 329.3} (notice she didn't say written on stone)

SABBATH

Memory text: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." John 13:34 NKJV



What does such love look like? Jesus is the revelation of God's love, then what about today, what does such love look like today?

Is there a checklist for love? Why or why not?

No checklist because love does what is best, and what is best differs depending on the need, depending on the situation.

Therefore, love may, in one place turn the other cheek – but in another place not turn the other cheek – any examples?

If a parent has an unruly 6 year old who, when he doesn't get his way, hits his mother, should the mother allow this to go on and simply turn the other cheek?

Our natural hearts do not want to love, we want to be loved, to be admired, to be adored, to be the center, to be the one praised, to be the one comforted, held, caressed, watched over, protected, delivered, hugged, kissed – but we don't naturally want to put ourselves out for another – especially one who has done us wrong.

It is only as we experience God's love, which takes away our fear and insecurity that we can stop seeking to get our selves filled and start loving others. This what Jesus meant to the woman at the well – the water from Him would overflow from her to others, because it is the water of love.

Read second paragraph, "Why, then did Jesus say..."

Why did humans not have a good understanding of God's love before the incarnation of Christ?

- Traditions
- Lies of Satan
- False theologies and theories of God as punishing
- Self-centeredness
- Unwillingness to be healed

What about after the incarnation of Christ? While it is absolutely true Jesus perfectly revealed God's character of love, do you think the predominate view of God taught around the world today is consistent with what Jesus revealed?

When we think of the remnant people of Revelation, they are described as having the testimony of Jesus – which is what? Is it not the same message about the Father that Jesus gave?

Are we giving the same testimony that Jesus gave about His Father, or do we misrepresent God when we present Him as a dictator who imposes rules and must inflict punishment on the wicked?



And if we are not giving the same message, the same testimony, about God that Jesus gave are we the remnant of Revelation?

Will God inflict punishment or forgive?

When Jesus was being murdered He forgave – do we see God revealed there? Is God two-faced? When He returns will He have a different character than Jesus revealed at the cross?

Louis Farrakhan thinks so, in March 2006 he said:

We are living at a time that was described by Jesus in these words: “If those days were not shortened for his elect sake, no flesh would be saved.” We know that we have now entered that period when we witnessed a tsunami killing over 200,000 people in Asia; an earthquake in Pakistan; storms raging throughout America, fire on one side, water on the other, snow, cold, ice in between...

At the townhall meeting in New Orleans, I pointed out the high Black-on-Black crime rates, rebellion against the will and law of God, and the love of partying and acting foolishness that prevails in the city. I asked them if they did not think that Allah (God) would handle the city as He did two ancient cities that lived in rebellion. I told them Allah (God) brought a punishment to America, but He also brought a punishment to Black people, and that punishment is going to spread. There will be many more disasters that we are not prepared for in this country.

This country glories in its cities and skyscrapers, but Allah (God) is going to bring them down. We are going to know that He is God. ..

The Bible says that in His Second Coming, He will have a sword dripping with blood in His hand. He is not coming back to teach. He is coming back to kill the enemies of His teaching and set up a new government.

Is this the god you worship? Many Christians teach God is like this. Would you treat your unruly children like this?

Note how Louis Farrakhan presents the troubles at the end of time coming from God to punish sin. Contrast that with how Ellen White, one of the founders of our church, presents the troubles at the end of time:

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, reproveth, 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.**

It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of. Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

Any Bible text to support this?

Rev 7:1-3:

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, **holding back** the four winds of the earth **to prevent** any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels **who had been given power to harm the land and the sea:**³ “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”

What are the four angels actively doing? Holding back, in order to *prevent* harm. Yet they are described as having power to harm – how? By letting go, of what? Satan and his forces of evil.

And why do they let go? What is the causation of their letting go? The persistent insistence of humans on earth to be out of God's care. Our freewill choices drive God's protective agencies away.

Back to our view of God – is He the source of inflicted punishment or does He forgive? Does God's forgiveness prevent the consequences of persistent rebellion?

In 2007 I was at a speaker's conference in Nashville and for part of the conference we were broken into small groups. One of the members of my small group was Kent Whitaker. In December 2003 he, his wife and two sons Kevin and Bart went out to dinner to celebrate Bart's upcoming graduation from College. They gave Bart a \$4000 Rolex as a graduation gift. Kevin, the younger brother drove home and as they approached the house Bart turned back to the car to get his cell phone. (see addendum at end of notes for full story).¹

As they entered the house a masked gunman shot and killed Kevin, Kent's wife and then as Kent stepped into the doorway, he was shot in the chest but survived. As it turned out Bart had arranged with a long time friend to have his family shot and killed so he could inherit the family money. Bart was arrested and put on trial for murder with the prosecutor seeking the death penalty.

If you were Kent, how would you respond?



Kent publicly forgave his son and publicly asked the prosecutor not to seek the death penalty. But the prosecutor sought the death penalty and Bart was found guilty and sentenced to death. He is still on death row today, where Kent visits him every week.

Does God love us less than Kent loves his son? Is God less forgiving than a human father?

Does this mean all will be saved in the end? Why or why not?

When Christ forgave those who crucified Him, were they now His friends? Why not? Were they then saved? Why not?

Salvation is actually healing, renewal, transformation of the character of the one being saved, not simple forgiveness. Salvation is not about getting God to forgive, as God comes to the situation already having forgiven. It is about getting sinners to trust God and allow Him to heal them.

And our trust is undermined by Satanic views of God taught from most religions of the world, including Christianity, when we present God as a severe judge who is the source of inflicted pain and death to the unrepentant. When we present the sin problem and a legal problem, which ends up in a heavenly court for God to judge we misrepresent God as a dictator, His law like human law, and undermine trust.

Last night Christie and I were going through our hymn book and came across a song entitled, *The Judgment Has Set* page 416. Here are the words:

The judgment has set, the books have been opened;
How shall we stand in that great day,
When every thought, and word, and action,
God, the righteous Judge, shall weigh?

Refrain

*How shall we stand in that great day?
How shall we stand in that great day?
Shall we be found before Him wanting?
Or with our sins all washed away?*

The work is begun with those who are sleeping,
Soon will the living here be tried,
Out of the books of God's remembrance,
His decision to abide.

Refrain



O, how shall we stand that moment of searching,
When all our sins those books reveal?
When from that court, each case decided,
Shall be granted no appeal?

Refrain

On the radio this week I heard a Christian preacher, preaching about the future judgment and how all will stand before the judgment seat of God and have their cases decided. This entire way of thinking is based on a false understanding of God's law and government and thus the character of God is misrepresented. We are not part of the remnant church if we present God like a heavenly dictator.

Tuesday on my way to work I was listening to Christian radio when the host said that sinners cannot stand in the presence of a holy God, but we should be so thankful because when God looks at us he doesn't see our sinfulness but sees the perfect life of His Son, thus He loves us as much as His Son because Jesus died to pay our penalty.

Do you hear the error in this thinking? It could be so beautiful if they simply taught reality – that the Father doesn't see our sinfulness, because we have been renewed by the Spirit to be partakers of the divine nature and it is “no longer I that live but Christ lives in me” and thus God sees Christ when He looks at us because we ARE like Christ in heart, mind and character.

It is unhealed, unrenewed sinners that can't stand, i.e. can't stand to be, in God's presence. But healed sinners will live there forever.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “In spite of...” Why did Christ come to serve and not be served? Because it is the design for life. It was the only course for Him if He wanted to reveal God and cure our condition. It would be like asking, why do you put gasoline and not water in the gas tank of your car? Because it is designed to run on gasoline and if you want it to run then you put gas in it. Likewise, life is designed to run on love, and thus Christ came to be the conduit of God's infinite love flowing back into the species human.

Jesus left the crowds and took time away to recover, rest and rejuvenate, was this an act of selfishness? No, it was living in harmony with the laws upon which life is built to operate. Consider a farmer who gives all his food away and never takes one meal for himself, how many does he feed in the end?

Does a good steward do regular maintenance on their car, home and anything they want to function efficiently? Is it selfish to do so? What about routine maintenance of your body and mind?

Does living God's law of love mean we should always give to those who are hungry?



What about “For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.”? 2Thes 3:10

Love focuses not merely on the physical, temporal, here and now, but on the eternal, on the character. The physical is a great way to reach people, but if it stops there it is meaningless. The healthcare ministries are pointless if they never lead people to understand God’s design, character, methods and ultimately bring people back to unity with Him.

What does it profit a person to gain the world but lose eternal life. What good does it do to live an extra 10 years as a vegetarian but lose eternal life. But what loss do you have if you die young but have eternal life?

Read last paragraph, “Every act of mercy...” well said!

This love is more than simply emotion, it is full of emotion, but it is also full of understanding, wisdom, comprehension, concern, realism, desire to heal and restore, intent for good, and willingness to suffer to do right.

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

When we think of this we often think of things like:

- running in front of a car to save someone
- or perhaps going to mission field and being stoned or executed
- Or the time of trouble when the righteous will be persecuted
- But what about purposely committing adultery to save someone? Is that an act of love? A Jewish mother in Nazi Germany purposely choosing to commit adultery to get her child on a train out of Germany? Is she sinning or sacrificing self in love? How about if she believes she will be eternally lost for this sin, but willingly sacrifices herself, is willing to never live again to save another. Is this fulfilling what Jesus said, “greater love has no one than to give their life for a friend”?
- what about a soldier who kills others? This was Sgt York, a very religious man who didn’t want to carry arms and didn’t want to kill anyone in WWI, but came to the conclusion he would use arms only to protect and save lives. He ended up the most decorated hero of WWI. Was his willingness to sacrifice self in this way an act of love?

MONDAY

Love you neighbor and the question is “who is my neighbor” Jesus answered that by the story of the Good Samaritan – thoughts? Who is our neighbor?

The lesson answers that basically everyone who needs our help is our neighbor – thoughts?



If you are in a restaurant and see a couple arguing, should you offer to help – they clearly need help, should you offer?

If you see a parent at the grocery store having problems with a child who wants candy and is throwing a fit, should you step up and offer to help?

What about a family member with sickness or injury who needs help – what then?

Where do you draw the line in helping? What does it mean to help? How do you define help?

Does helping mean we do what they ask? Does it mean we do what they want? What does it mean?

When dealing with someone recovering from injury what is more helpful: to do as much as you can for them or as little? Why?

The goal is to help the person recovering recover as much of their autonomy and independence and strength as possible. Therefore, you give as little help as possible, or another way to say it is you require the person to do as much for themselves as they are reasonably able, lest you delay their recovery and even foster their decline.

I had a patient I was consulted to see on the nephrology ward, who had chronic renal failure and was receiving dialysis. She was severely depressed and regressed to the point of not being able to feed herself. Her family was extremely supportive and attentive to her every need. So I transferred her to the psych unit where her family could not stay with her. Within the first 30 minutes on the ward the nurse call light went off and the pt asked the nurse “will you put my glasses on my face” in the most pitiful voice. What would you have done for this terribly sick lady?

Would you have noticed that she had to actually reach over her glasses in order to reach the call light. Noticing this, we, of course, did not do put her glasses on her face for her nor anything else she could do for herself. By the end of the week she was not only up doing all her own dressing, bathing, feeding, but was helping clean up the dining area, putting away dishes etc.

How many saw the movie or read the story *The Miracle Worker*? About Helen Keller – remember the state she was in with Annie Sullivan came? How did Ms. Sullivan treat Helen? Was she helping?

Helping does not mean doing what the other wants, but what is actually helpful, within the boundaries or lines of authority and responsibility one has to another.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read MT 25:31-46, here it is from my paraphrase:



MT 25:31 “When the Son of Man comes again in his unveiled fiery glory, all his angels will be with him and he will sit upon his throne in heavenly splendor. 32 All humanity will come before him and he will separate the healed, those who have partaken the Remedy, from the unhealed, as easily as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. 33 He will put the healed on his right and the unhealed on his left.

MT 25:34 “Then the King will gladly say to those on his right, ‘Come home, you who have been healed by my Father; receive your inheritance, the kingdom of love, designed for you at the creation of the world. 35 For you lived in harmony with my kingdom of love. I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you invited me home. 36 I didn’t have clothing and you gave me clothes. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.’

MT 25:37 “Then the healed, whose hearts are right with God’s kingdom of love, will answer the King and say, ‘Lord, what are you talking about? When did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 When were you a stranger to us or without clothes that we needed to clothe you? 39 When did we ever nurse you when sick or visit you in prison?’

MT 25:40 “The King will smile and say, ‘The truth of my kingdom of love is this, whatever love you gave to the least of my family on earth, you gave to me.’

MT 25:41 “Then the King will say to the unhealed, those on his left, whose hearts remain embittered with fear and selfishness, ‘Depart from me you who are terminal, doomed by your condition, go into eternal fire prepared to consume the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you let me starve. I was thirsty and you let me thirst. 43 I was a stranger and you left me on the street. I needed clothes and you gave me none. I was sick and you let me suffer. I was in prison and you let me be abused.’

MT 24:44 “They will be shocked and protest, ‘Lord, it isn’t so. We never mistreated you. When did we fail to feed you, or give you drink, or invite you home, or provide you clothing, or nurse you when sick or help you in prison?’

MT 25:45 “The King will reply, ‘The truth of my kingdom of love is this, whatever you did not do for one of the least of my earthly family, you did not do for me.’

MT 25:46 “Then they will pass away for all eternity, but the healed, those whose hearts are right, will receive eternal life.”

Why is it that when we love any human we love Jesus? How does Jesus’ kingdom work? How is it constructed? What is the design protocol?

Here is a description from the book *Desire of Ages*:



But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is **the glory of our God to give**. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. **In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: **through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.** {DA 21.2}

Functionally, how does God's kingdom operate? So when we love others, we reconnect the circuit of beneficence and increase the love flowing from God, through Christ, through us, back to Christ and the Father again.

God's kingdom operates on the principle of giving, the more you give the more you receive – consider the garden hose of your home, connected to a municipal source and the fire hydrant on the street. You open the garden hose up full and the fire hydrant up full, which gives away more water? Which receives more to it? And all water eventually runs back to the sea – so the more love we give to others the more love we actually give to God as not only our love goes to God, but so does the people who love in response to our love.

WEDNESDAY

What does it mean to love your enemies? Do you find this hard? What helps?

The more I understand reality, God's design, know God, understand what sin actually does to the sinner, the easier it is to love those who are against me.

Why do we forgive those who mistreat us?

- It is important to understand how sin is transmitted, the pathology and virulence of evil
- When someone does you wrong it plants a seed in your heart/mind, that if it takes root grows into resentment, bitterness, hatred, vengefulness, anger etc. and if not rooted out will harden your heart and ultimately make you like them, going around hurting others and infecting others with evil
- The tool God has given us to root out these seeds when transmitted to us, is the tool of forgiveness
- When we forgive who gets changed by that? We do, we root out the anger, bitterness, resentment, hostility and actually develop an attitude of wanting to see the other person enlightened, delivered, healed, transformed into a trustworthy person who loves others more than self. We develop compassion for them rather than hatred toward them.



- Does that mean we can trust them? No, because trust is only safely extended to the trustworthy. To trust the untrustworthy is to live a lie and injury comes from lies.

Read last paragraph, “In order...” How does God reward us for loving our enemies?

Remember the parable of the workers – the landowner went out in the morning and recruited people to work in the field and told them they would receive a full day’s wage, then more at noon, and then more with one hour left in the day. Then paid them last to hire first, and gave everyone the same full day’s pay, but those who worked all day were angry and upset. What do you think of this parable?

Why were they upset? Because they thought their pay was arbitrary, in other words simply determined by the landowner – but the metaphor points to reality and the reality is our reward is eternal life. Whether we come to God early and live our entire lives for Him, or late like the thief on the cross, all get the same reward, eternal life with God.

But what those who worked all day failed to realize is that they had the blessing of industry, accomplishment, purpose, meaning to their lives; they lived with hope, while those not working had none of these and lived in fear and uncertainty. Those who come to God early have peace with God, the joy of His presence in their life, meaning, purpose, industry, advancement in maturity, hope – while those not in active relationship with God have none of these, but live in anxiety, uncertainty, and franticness so even if they come to God before they die and experience eternal life, they cheated themselves of a blessed life on earth.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Jesus’ teachings...” thoughts? It is impossible if we think it is our work to do. It is impossible when we teach a legal religion in which salvation is getting sins paid and pardon stamped by our names. However, when we come back to the truth about God, His kingdom and methods we actually experience change in us, we expect, desire, pursue and choose to move toward a new life in Christ – this is transformational.

When we see others, not as criminals, who justly deserve punishment, but as children of God, dying in a terminal condition, our hearts are aroused with compassion to reach them with God’s Remedy.

Read bottom two paragraphs, “Our daily need...” thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions.



1 During Son's Trial, Father Describes Scene Of 2003 Family Murders
by Bob Dunn, Feb 26, 2007, 11 55 PM

In opening testimony in the murder trial of Bart Whitaker, the defendant's father, Kent Whitaker, described how he lay on his front porch with a gunshot wound to his chest, knowing other family members had been shot and wondering if any were still alive.

Bart Whitaker, 26, is on trial for his life in the 2003 shooting deaths of his mother, Patricia Whitaker, and younger brother, Kevin Whitaker. Like his wife and younger son, Kent Whitaker also was shot once in the chest as he entered his Sugar Land home that night, but he survived.

Bart Whitaker is accused of plotting with Chris Brashear, 23, Bart's former roommate, and Steven Champagne, 24, to kill Whitaker family members for the inheritance Bart Whitaker stood to gain. Fort Bend County District Attorney John Healey is seeking the death penalty in the case, against Kent Whitaker's wishes.

Testifying under questioning by Assistant Fort Bend County District Attorney Fred Felcman in the opening day of the trial, in 400th District Judge Clifford Vacek's court, Kent Whitaker, a long-time accountant in a family construction business, said he felt for months there was "an equal chance" that Bart was innocent in the shootings. But shortly after his son's arrest in September 2005 "I realized he was guilty."

Also during his testimony, Kent Whitaker described events that led up to the shooting. During that testimony, and throughout opening arguments in the trial, Bart Whitaker, wearing a gray suit, close-cropped hair, and a mustache and goatee, sat completely still, staring at the table in front of him.

It was Dec. 10, 2003, and Kent Whitaker's family was just returning from a Pappadeaux's restaurant where they'd been celebrating what they thought was elder son Bart Whitaker's pending graduation from Sam Houston State University. Patricia Whitaker had picked out a \$4,000 Rolex watch as Bart's present.

Kevin Whitaker was driving the family back to his parents' home on Heron Way. Since Kevin had his keys with him, he was the first to the front door, followed by Patricia and Kent, who testified that Bart told the others he had to go back to the car to retrieve his cell phone.

Killer In The House

"I heard a loud noise" as Kevin opened the front door and entered the house," Kent Whitaker testified. "I didn't recognize it as a gunshot."

He said he saw his wife walk through the doorway. "She said 'Oh, no,' and I heard another loud noise."

Kent Whitaker said he then "stepped forward into the doorway, and that was where I saw the gunman. If I remember correctly, he had on a dark sweater and a ski mask. He did not say anything."

But he fired again, hitting Kent Whitaker in the chest, the bullet traveling into his shoulder, where it broke his humerus – the upper arm bone.

"When I was shot it knocked me backwards, out of view of the front door, on the front porch," Kent Whitaker said. "When I rolled over, I realized my arm was broken...I realized there was a gunman inside."

Incapacitated and without a weapon, he said he called out, trying to get a response from his sons and wife. Instead, "I did hear a fourth shot," Kent Whitaker said. "And I thought to myself, 'my God, he shot all of us.'"

Bart Whitaker, the last family member to enter the home that night, was shot in the arm but, like his father, recovered. Prosecutors believe Brashear was the gunman, and shot Bart Whitaker as part of a ruse designed to make it appear to police that the family had surprised a burglary in progress.

Kent Whitaker testified that he was lying on the ground for perhaps only 20 or 30 seconds when his neighbor, Cliff Stanley, approached. "He said 'hang on, buddy, help's on the way. We called 911.'"

"By that time I had looked down at my chest, and noticed the red stain was spreading," Kent Whitaker said. He recalled Stanley taking off his T-shirt, balling it up and pressing it gently into Whitaker's chest.



Continuum Of Right And Wrong

Later, paramedics and police seemed to “come swarming out.” Kent Whitaker kept asking what had happened to his family, but paramedics wouldn’t tell him. Then, he said, he overheard one police officer asking another “what do you want to do with the DOA?”

“So I did know one of them was dead, but I didn’t know who,” Kent Whitaker testified. Then he heard a paramedic say his wife was going to be flown by helicopter to a hospital “and that made my heart jump with joy.” But then he realized one of his sons had to be dead. And shortly thereafter, his wife died, too.

Kent Whitaker testified that for some time he believed Bart Whitaker was innocent in the shootings. “The police had been telling me for some time that he was a suspect...but he was telling me he was not involved,” Kent Whitaker said of his son, Bart.

“I told him I didn’t know where he was on this continuum of right and wrong, but that I was going to stand with him, and he needed to stand up, too.”

Kent Whitaker hired an attorney and a private investigator on his son’s behalf.

But six months after the murders, aware that Sugar Land Police detectives had been talking regularly to some of his acquaintances, Bart Whitaker disappeared.

Felcman said in opening arguments that police learned Bart had paid a man \$2,500 to smuggle him into Mexico on June 28, 2004. Noting that police weren’t informed of Bart Whitaker’s disappearance until nine days later, Felcman asked Kent Whitaker why.

“We wanted to find him before the authorities did. He had not been told he had to stay in Fort Bend County. He had not been told he was a suspect. As far as I knew, he had every right” to leave the area, Kent Whitaker said, adding that at the time, he still “thought there was an equal chance he was innocent.”

Asked by Felcman if he now believes Bart Whitaker induced Chris Brashear to shoot the family members, Kent Whitaker replied that “the shortage of evidence I have seen” leads him to that conclusion.

Bart Whitaker [was arrested](#) at the Mexico-U.S. border in September 2005, transported to Fort Bend County and incarcerated in the county jail in Richmond.

Kent Whitaker described a visit with him there, with bullet-proof glass separating them.

“He said ‘dad, I’m so sorry. I’m sorry for everything.’ I realized he was guilty, and willing to confess,” Kent Whitaker testified.

Christmas Card For The Prosecutor

Kent Whitaker later said “Bart was trying to confess,” but added that Felcman and Bart Whitaker’s former attorney Dan Cogdell “did not seem to realize” it.

Cogdell was later replaced in the case by current defense attorney Randy McDonald.

Under further questioning by Felcman, Kent Whitaker revealed that in December 2006, while Bart Whitaker was in the Fort Bend County Jail, Bart purchased a Christmas card at the commissary, wrote several sentences on it, and sent it to Felcman.

As he entered the card into evidence, Felcman indicated language in the card had been upsetting to him. He asked Kent Whitaker, “Did the defendant ever tell you why I should concentrate on my family?”

“I see where you are going with this,” Kent Whitaker replied. “He told me he missed his family so much...he just didn’t want anyone to lose sight of that... I can’t see any reason it should have been interpreted any way other than the way it was intended.”

Kent Whitaker also said “a lot of time has passed since these things have happened,” adding that Bart “has confessed his sins to Christ, and accepted him as is lord and savior.”



During the trial Felcman played a recording of a telephone conversation during a call Bart Whitaker placed from the county jail to his father, on Dec. 10, 2005, the second anniversary of the murders.

Bart Whitaker referred to an apparent meeting between his attorneys and Felcman.

“Felcman said there were only two options – death or life without parole,” Bart Whitaker said in the taped conversation.

“When I left Felcman’s office, I felt like there was a very positive mood there,” Kent Whitaker replied. “The other possibility, Bart, is that Healey, the head DA, may be looking to just burn you... He may be listening to the police department.”

Bart was found guilty and sentenced to death.

Below are comments from readers regarding the case

Jonanna Zeagler - Feb 27, 07:44 PM

I think they should question the father further as a suspect as well. Also I think Bart deserves the death penalty.

Cheryl Cox - Feb 27, 10:02 PM

Oh my goodness, you must not know this case or this family to even suggest Kent would have anything to do with this. Bart might deserve the death penalty but I think they should give some weight to the father’s wishes. He lost more here than anyone.

JM - Feb 27, 10:26 PM

He absolutely does NOT deserve the death penalty. Hasn’t his wonderful family suffered enough? Just to lose another child? too much!

concerned.citizen - Feb 28, 12:10 AM

The pain and anguish Bart has caused his family is horrendous. I live in their neighbor and was home the night it happened. The whole neighborhood was terrified for weeks/months. Bart’s evil actions effected many many people....all for money...and the lies and betrayal to his family.....he is a socio-path and must pay for what he did.....

Shannon C. - Feb 28, 02:36 AM

To those who think he doesn’t deserve the death penalty: He was willing to murder his own family for money. What do you think he would do to yours if he thought he could get something out of you?? People like that don’t deserve to breathe the same air that my family does. Or yours for that matter.

someone else - Feb 28, 05:56 AM

Kent Whitaker has already lost his entire family. Giving the defendant life in prison won’t change that.

Sign of the Times - Feb 28, 07:58 AM

If there was ever a crime that warranted the death penalty...this is it. To kill your own mother and brother for money! That is the worst.

Elizabeth - Feb 28, 10:42 AM

I have already said something like this on another article, but I think it’s relevant to this topic: We don’t put to death EVERY murderer. We are only supposed to apply the death penalty under certain circumstances, and this case does NOT meet those specifications. Also, it is inappropriate to traumatize and re-victimize Kent Whitaker by killing his last living child. We are too blood-thirsty in Texas. It needs to stop.

someone else - Feb 28, 05:17 PM

you are wrong.

TexasRose - Feb 28, 05:41 PM

Bart is NOT a child...

John Zeagler - Feb 28, 07:05 PM

It takes a cold hearted, greedy son to sit and eat a meal with his family knowing he had hired someone to kill them in a matter of minutes. If you need someone to throw the switch on this boy, call me, it will make us all safer. We can and should take his life and let God decide about his soul. It’s funny how people like this animal only ask for forgiveness when they get caught. I too, think the father should be investigated further; it’s hard to believe this boy did the things he did prior to this and went completely undetected, or unchecked. Let’s not forget Jim Bakker’s misguided deeds for money.



The Teachings of Jesus Lesson 8 3rd Q 2014

Lesson 8 The Church

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, will be conducting a workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 10,11: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Vallejo SDA church in Glendale, CA.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon.

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NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called “Come Reason Ministries” and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN**.

SABBATH

What is the church? Who makes up the church?

My brothers, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. ¹² What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ.”

¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? 1Cor 1:12, 13

What is Paul saying? If he was speaking today what might he say, “One of you says ‘I follow Calvin,’ another ‘Wesley,’ another ‘Ellen White,’ still another ‘I follow Christ.’ Is Christ divided...?”

What is the church? Is it a denomination? Do we show we are growing up into maturity by divisions? Listen to Paul in Chapter 3 of 1Cor:

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. ² I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. ³ You



are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? ⁴ For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere men?

⁵ What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸ The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. 1Cor 3:1-9

Heb 5-6 says those who are on milk “are not acquainted with righteousness” – in other words they are not righteous. Those described as being on milk are still worldly – and what is his description of this? Divisions within the church arguing over who follows who, would this include denominational divisions?

My paraphrase of 1Cor 3:1-9:

1 Corinthians 3:1 My dear brothers, I was not able to address you as grown-ups who have been enlightened by the truth about God’s character of love, whose minds have actually been regenerated to be like Christ’s. No, I had to speak to you as those still infected with the principles of the world, the survival of the fittest methods, people who are just starting God’s treatment plan, newborn babes in Christ. 2 Therefore, I gave you baby food, the a,b,c’s of God’s treatment plan. And instead of growing up beyond the basics many of you have preferred the elementary teachings and are still not ready to grow up in Christ Jesus. 3 In fact, the infection of selfishness, which the world loves, still dominates your lives. Is this not demonstrated by your persistent jealousy, arguing, bickering and infighting? Are you not acting just like the rest of the world looking out for yourselves and promoting your own agenda rather than surrendering all you have for the cause of Christ? 4 You even promote the spirit of division and competition, just like the world, and turn the mind away from Christ when you say, “I’m a follower of Paul,” and another says, “Yeah, but I follow Apollos.”

1 CO 3:5 What, after all, is Paul? Or what is Apollos? We are merely aides of God, conduits of his who have brought you the same healing Remedy – each doing the part in the healing process the Lord has assigned. 6 I planted the truth about God and Apollos watered this truth with the wisdom God has given him, but it is God who causes the truth to grow and bring forth fruit of a Christlike character. It is God who heals; it is God who restores. 7 So neither he who plants the truth about God nor he who waters this truth is of any significance – the only important thing is God, who is the only source of life, the only source of healing. 8 So you see, the man who plants the truth and the man who waters it have the very same purpose – to see God’s image fully restored in man, and such labor brings its own reward. 9 For we are co-workers with God; and you are the field in which we labor. You are God’s building upon which we work.



Any thoughts on how we should view denominations?

John Wesley's Dream:

John Wesley had a dream which affected his life's work tremendously. He dreamed that he died and came to the gate of heaven. He was anxious to know who had been admitted, so he questioned the keeper:

"Are there any Presbyterians here?"
"None", replied the keeper of the gate.

Wesley was surprised. "Have you any Anglicans?" he asked.
"No one!" was the reply

"Surely, there must be many Baptists in Heaven?"
"No, none", replied the keeper.

Wesley grew pale. He was afraid to ask his next question:
"How many Methodists are there in heaven?"
"Not one," answered the keeper quickly.

Wesley's heart was filled with wonder. The angel at the gate then told Wesley that there were no earthly distinctions in heaven. "All of us here in heaven are one in Christ. We are just an assembly who love the Lord".

Wesley was then taken downward, downward to the entrance of Hell. He met the keeper of the gate there.

"Have you any Presbyterians here?" asked Wesley.
"Oh, yes, many," answered the keeper.

Wesley stood still, "Have you any Anglicans?" he asked.
"Yes, yes, many", answered the keeper.

"Are there Baptists in there"? Wesley continued to ask.
"Of course, many," replied the keeper.

"Wesley was afraid to ask the next question. "Are there any Methodists in Hell?"
The keeper of the gate grinned. "Oh Yes, there are many Methodists here."

Wesley could hardly speak. "Tell me, have you any there who love the Lord?"
"No, no, not one, not one" he answered. "No one in Hell loves the Lord"!



What about SDAs, will there be SDAs in heaven? What about in hell?

What do you take as the truth of this dream? It affected Wesley profoundly and his theology was shaped by it.

John Wesley's words:

"What then is the mark? Who is a Methodist, according to your own account?" I answer: A Methodist is one who has "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him;" one who "loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength. God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul; which is constantly crying out, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! My God and my all! Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!"

If any man say, "Why, these are only the common fundamental principles of Christianity!" thou hast said; so I mean; this is the very truth; I know they are no other; and I would to God both thou and all men knew, that I, and all who follow my judgment, do vehemently refuse to be distinguished from other men, by any but the common principles of Christianity, -- the plain, old Christianity that I teach, renouncing and detesting all other marks of distinction. And whosoever is what I preach, (let him be called what he will, for names change not the nature of things,) he is a Christian, not in name only, but in heart and in life. He is inwardly and outwardly conformed to the will of God, as revealed in the written word. He thinks, speaks, and lives, according to the method laid down in the revelation of Jesus Christ. His soul is renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and in all true holiness. And having the mind that was in Christ, he so walks as Christ also walked.

Did Wesley leave out anything essential from this statement?

How many groups does the Bible describe when Christ returns? Two:

- Sheep and goats
- Virtuous woman and harlot
- Fruitful vine and withered vine
- Wheat and tares
- Saved and lost

Do we equate our denomination with the God's church on earth? Is it?

This is what EGW said:



There is a strife between the forces of good and evil, between the loyal and the disloyal angels. Christ and Satan are not at an agreement, and they never will be. **In every age the true church of God has engaged in decided warfare against satanic agencies.** Until the controversy is ended, the struggle will go on between wicked angels and wicked people on the one side, and holy angels and true believers on the other. {Christ Triumphant 28.2}

Satan is trying to lead men and women away from right principles. The enemy of all good, he desires to see human beings so trained that they will exert their influence on the side of error, instead of using their talents to bless their fellow men. **And multitudes who profess to belong to God's true church are falling under his deceptions.** They are being led to turn away from their allegiance to the King of heaven. {Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students 494.1}

What might it look like to be led away from God's true principles? What is a principle? A design protocol – and how do people get led away from principles? By replacing them with imposed rules, arbitrary commands – this is how Rome infected the church with the idea that God's law is a list of imposed rules.

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and he longed intensely to **impart this love** to others in rich measure. **Compassion beamed from his countenance,** and his conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. **Every member of his church militant must manifest the same qualities,** if he would join the **church triumphant.** The **love of Christ is so broad, so full of glory,** that in comparison to it, everything that men esteem as great, dwindles into insignificance. When we obtain a view of it, we exclaim, O the depth of the riches of the love that God bestowed upon men in the gift of his only begotten Son! {Christian Education 76.3}

What is the church militant? It is a church at war – whereas the church triumphant is the church when the war is ended.

So, what kind of war is this and with what weapons do we fight?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Cor 10:3-5

What kind of war is this? Where is it fought? What weapons do we use?

From the quote above “Compassion beamed from his countenance, and his conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. **Every member of his church militant must manifest the same qualities,** if he would join the **church triumphant.**”



Why are these the weapons we use? Because they are the methods of God's kingdom, the opposite of the world, weapons designed to restore God's image in humanity:

- truth destroys lies and wins to trust
- compassion disarms guardedness
- grace overcomes prejudice
- humility defeats pride and arrogance
- love destroys selfishness and transforms the soul

How do we obtain and utilize these weapons?

We must choose them, we must develop an attitude of heart that loves and longs for the truth – and therefor spends time studying, searching, meditating, contemplating, considering, examining, praying, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. As we do so, studying and meditating on God's character and methods we are awed and want to be more like him and consciously and unconsciously begin incorporating His methods into our own lives.

But if we hold false view of God, then we study the Bible and come away with false conclusions and become more like the false god we worship.

When we consider the church do we find only those who are part of God's true church as members in the church? This is what our church founders thought of that idea:

Has God no living church? He has a church, but it is the church militant, not the church triumphant. [meaning what? the church is at war, and the war is for the hearts and minds of people, a war over two methods, principles of living, a war over love versus selfishness] We are sorry that there are defective members. . . .While the Lord brings into the church those who are truly converted, Satan at the same time brings persons who are not converted into its fellowship. While Christ is sowing the good seed, Satan is sowing the tares. There are two opposing influences continually exerted on the members of the church. One influence is working for the purification of the church, and the other for the corrupting of the people of God. . . . {FLB 305.2} [do you believe this? there are influences WITHIN the church that are working for the corruption of God's people? What would those influences look like? Would it not be those influences which are antagonistic to the truth about God? Those influences which represent God as severe, arbitrary, imposing laws, punishing, the source of inflicted torment and death?]

Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin... {FLB 305.3}

Then I found this perspective very interesting:



The church militant is not in this world the church triumphant. From generation to generation, the enemy has been marshaling his forces against God. **His enmity against the law of God has increased as time has passed.** And his followers are at enmity with any one who has moral courage to depart from evil, and bear witness to the truth. **They pay no respect to the divine law, but they are strict in enforcing human laws.** [How do you hear that statement? Do you hear it as, “They pay no respect to the design protocols of love upon which God constructed life to operate, but they strictly enforce imposed rules...”? And could those human rules be constituted around the commandments?] They are not in harmony with God. They are not attracted by his righteousness. In their human judgment they will condemn men who conscientiously keep the commandments of God. But God's children will not be frightened from their purpose by the proud, presumptuous opposition of evildoers. By faith they see a crown of life awaiting those who are victorious, and they press forward toward the mark for the prize of their high calling in Christ Jesus. {RH, July 26, 1898 par. 8}

Does conscientious commandment keeping mean conformity to a checklist of rules? Or is it about a heart loyal to God?

Does conscientious commandment keeping mean we are being led by a clear conscious to live in harmony with God's design for life, which is to love God and others more than self?

Would this mean we would be willing to heal a person on Sabbath? Or would we instead, refuse to heal a person, in order to keep the Sabbath rule?

Is keeping God's law about focusing on self and what we must do or not do, or is it about focusing on God, understanding His kingdom, seeking to magnify His methods, revealing His character in how we conduct ourselves and thus how we treat others? Thus on Sabbath we are eager to do anything which would be a blessing to God and our fellow humanity? Or do we refrain if it violates a rule of the institution?

Why did Christ heal the paralytic on Sabbath – the man had been paralyzed for decades – could Christ not have waited a day, or gotten there a day earlier? Why did Christ instruct the man to pick up his mat and carry it on Sabbath? Could He not have healed the man without instructing him to carry his mat? Why did He do it?

Because Christ was demonstrating the difference between God's law, God's principles, God's design for life and Satan's infection of imposed rules.

Which law is predominant in what you have seen in Christianity today?

Jesus had come to "magnify the law, and make it honorable." He was not to lessen its dignity, but to exalt it. The scripture says, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth." Isaiah 42:21, 4. He had come to **free the Sabbath from those burdensome requirements that had made it a curse instead of a blessing.** {DA 206.1}



For this reason He had chosen the Sabbath upon which to perform the act of healing at Bethesda. He could have healed the sick man as well on any other day of the week; or He might simply have cured him, without bidding him bear away his bed. But this would not have given Him the opportunity He desired. A wise purpose underlay every act of Christ's life on earth. Everything He did was important in itself and in its teaching. Among the afflicted ones at the pool He selected the worst case upon whom to exercise His healing power, and bade the man carry his bed through the city in order to publish the great work that had been wrought upon him. **This would raise the question of what it was lawful to do on the Sabbath, and would open the way for Him to denounce the restrictions of the Jews in regard to the Lord's day, and to declare their traditions void.** {DA 206.2}

Jesus stated to them that the work of relieving the afflicted was in harmony with the Sabbath law. It was in harmony with the work of God's angels, who are ever descending and ascending between heaven and earth to minister to suffering humanity. Jesus declared, "**My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.**" All days are God's, in which to carry out His plans for the human race. **If the Jews' interpretation of the law was correct, then Jehovah was at fault, whose work has quickened and upheld every living thing since first He laid the foundations of the earth;** then He who pronounced His work good, and instituted the Sabbath to commemorate its completion, must put a period to His labor, and stop the never-ending routine of the universe. {DA 206.3}

Should God forbid the sun to perform its office upon the Sabbath, cut off its genial rays from warming the earth and nourishing vegetation? Must the system of worlds stand still through that holy day? Should He command the brooks to stay from watering the fields and forests, and bid the waves of the sea still their ceaseless ebbing and flowing? Must the wheat and corn stop growing, and the ripening cluster defer its purple bloom? Must the trees and flowers put forth no bud nor blossom on the Sabbath? {DA 206.4}

In such a case, men would miss the fruits of the earth, and the blessings that make life desirable. Nature must continue her unvarying course. **God could not for a moment stay His hand, or man would faint and die. And man also has a work to perform on this day. The necessities of life must be attended to, the sick must be cared for, the wants of the needy must be supplied. He will not be held guiltless who neglects to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. God's holy rest day was made for man, and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent.** God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour's pain that may be relieved upon the Sabbath or any other day. {DA 207.1}

Read Memory text: “ ‘ I do not pray for those alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.’ ” John 17:20,21 NKJV



thoughts? What is Jesus describing? This is at-one-ment. This is the true Biblical meaning of atonement. This is restoring God's creation back into harmony, unity, oneness of heart and mind and motive and principle with God.

Biblical atonement is about regeneration, not about legal adjustment.

The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; **it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health.** It is the heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us, but in our hearts and characters.--Letter 406, 1906. {7BC 464.2}

The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. **Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world.** "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." God suffered with His Son, in the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary; the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption--The Home Missionary, April, 1893. {7ABC 472.5}

What does it mean "Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption"? What is the price? What was necessary for our salvation – which is the perfect life and death of Jesus – why is this the price?

Well it depends on your developmental level as to which answer you give. If one is still an infant, as we talked about in the beginning of the lesson, a person on milk, not acquainted with righteousness then the answer one gives as to the price is different.

1. **Reward and punishment** – most basic level of understanding whether something is right is if we receive reward and wrong if we are punished. This is a slave mentality. Nazi soldiers who put people in the gas chamber, why did they do it?
 - a. Why did Christ have to die? Because God said don't do something, they did, God got offended and responded with angry vengeance taking the life of Jesus. Jesus had to pay the price of our punishment to God.
2. **Marketplace exchange** – quid pro quo, you do something for me in exchange for something of equal value in return.
 - a. Why did Christ have to die? Because Satan now had rights to this earth; to the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve, and Christ had to pay the death penalty to Satan. Or Aslan had to give his life to the white witch to free the son of Adam.
3. **Social conformity** – at this stage right and wrong is determined by community consensus. This is the child who says, "Everyone else is doing it." Right is deemed right by the approval of peers.
 - a. Why did Christ have to die? To win the approval of His Father for the human race.



4. **Law and order** – right and wrong at this stage is determined by a codified system of rules, external judges and imposed punishments. Respect for properly elected or otherwise constituted authority.
 - a. Why did Christ have to die? To pay the legal penalty the law demanded and the heavenly judge imposed.
5. **Love for others** – right is seeking the best interest of others, realizing people have value in who they are irrespective of the rules. Right is determined, not by a checklist of rules, but by doing what actually is helpful for another.
 - a. Why did Jesus have to die? Because He loved us too much to let us go and His death was the means to reach us with His love.
6. **Principle based living** – realizing the design protocols, principles upon which life is designed to operate and living in harmony with them.
 - a. Why did Christ have to die? It was the only means to fix what sin had done to God’s creation – “he who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God.” 2Cor 5:21 As the early church fathers taught, Justin Martyr, Ireneus, Jesus died to destroy sin, death, the devil and take man broken off in Adam and restore humanity back to God’s original design. Why? Because only in harmony with how God constructed life to operate is life possible.
7. **Enlightened Friend of God** – Realizing the truth about God, His character, nature, God’s design for life, the origin of evil, the nature of sin, the weapons of Satan, the original purpose for the creation of humanity, the fall, God’s working through human history, the purpose of the Cross, and the ultimate cleansing of the universe from sin.
 - a. Atonement becomes at-one-ment with God, being restored to God’s full ideal, having the law written on the heart, and operating with the mind of Christ. Doing right because it is right and right doing is pleasing to God.
 - b. Why did Christ have to die? It was the only means whereby God could expose the lies of Satan, reveal the truth about Himself, destroy the infection of selfishness, restore the human species back to His original design, destroy death, and ultimately destroy Satan and sin.

During moral development a person is only capable of comprehending one level beyond their current level of operation. The majority of people operate at level four or below and level four people persecute those operating at level six. Worse, they don’t comprehend level six and claim what they teach doesn’t make any sense. This was what hap

How do we experience the unity Christ prayed for?

Turn to **MONDAY** and read fourth paragraph, “This kind of unity...” This is well said – we can only have unity, as we have God’s character reproduced within us.



As I tell patients in relationships, that healthy relationships require healthy people – consider Christ and Judas – how healthy was that relationship? Did Christ need to be kinder, more patient, more understanding, more gentle? No, Christ was perfect, but the relationship was still unhealthy.

We cannot have healthy relationships with unhealthy people – likewise people cannot have healthy relationships with us if we are unhealthy.

Thus, the number one action a person can take to have healthy relationships is to focus on becoming, through God's grace, the healthiest person they can be.

So, as we think about unity in the church, our responsibility is to grow ever more Christlike in our character, that is our responsibility. It is not our responsibility to ensure others grow like Christ.

And we can only have God's character reproduced in us as we come back to the truth about God's character. If we hold to lies about God, the lies obstruct the healing of our minds and characters.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "If we have Jesus..." Is the lesson suggesting unity requires we have the same doctrinal beliefs? Like a creed?

I suggest that creeds, fundamental beliefs, cause division, not unity. It provides fodder for argument, disagreement, and taking our focus off of Jesus.

For instance – how many groups fight over:

- the right way to baptize
- the right foods to eat
- the right way to hold communion
- the right form of music
- the right understanding of the Trinity
- the right day to worship upon etc.

But in doing so have either taken their focus off of God and His character and methods, or both groups hold to the same false view of God and His methods.

In the professedly Christian world many turn away from the plain teachings of the Bible and build up a creed from human speculations and pleasing fables, and they point to their tower as a way to climb up to heaven. {CTr 70.4}

The question is, "What is truth?" It is not how many years have I believed that makes it the truth. **You must bring your creed to the Bible and let the light of the Bible define your creed and show where it comes short and where the difficulty is.** The Bible is to be your



standard, the living oracles of Jehovah are to be your guide. You are to dig for the truth as for hidden treasures. You are to find where the treasure is, and then you are to plow every inch of that field to get the jewels. You are to work the mines of truth for new gems, for new diamonds, and you will find them. {FW 77.1}

Do not carry your creed to the Bible, and read the Scriptures in the light of that creed. If you find that your opinions are opposed to a plain "Thus saith the Lord," or to any command or prohibition He has given, give heed to the Word of God rather than to the sayings of men. Let every controversy or dispute be settled by "It is written." ... {OHC 207.3}

When God's Word is studied, comprehended, and obeyed, a bright light will be reflected to the world; new truths, received and acted upon, will bind us in strong bonds to Jesus. **The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union;** all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony. Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts. Man is fallible, but God's Word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, "It is written." Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline.-- The Review and Herald, Dec. 15, 1885. {ISM 416.2}

We have made a creed in our church, but we call it a set of Fundamental Beliefs, so people will not realize we have a creed. The definition of a creed, is a set of fundamental beliefs.

And we do injury to people with this, cause division, make it a test of fellowship and burden people making obstructions in salvation. We are divided as a body of believers over doctrines such as, state of the dead, which day to worship upon, how to baptize, how to perform communion etc. When we should be putting the truth about God at the center.

When we evangelize we do not baptize people when they surrender their heart to Christ – instead we require them to first, give up their Sabbath job, cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, porn, or whatever other identifiable sin we can perceive, and then study and then affirm the 28 beliefs before we baptize. Thus we:

- Require them to overcome sin before baptism into Jesus Christ – can we overcome sin in our won strength?
- Merge baptism into Christ with membership into an institutional/denominational church, not the church universal. Thus, if a person becomes hurt by something in the institution and leaves the institution, often they feel as if they have left God. This is not so.

Doctrines are only truly important as they inform us about God and reconnect us to Him. When we separate them from God and make them stand alone tenants, with proof texts, and tests of fellowship we place barriers between people and God and obstruct the healing and transformation God would have us experience.



WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out that gossip is a great barrier to unity.

Why do people gossip? Primarily it is driven by fear and insecurity and not love.

Fear is part of the infection of sin – people gossip because they feel insecure and want to be valued, be important, be special, be recognized as worthwhile, so they bring tales to ingratiate themselves with others.

Such action is not motivated by love – gossip injures – it injures:

- the one gossiped about by hurting their reputation, undermining trust, closing doors and opportunities
- the one gossiping by damaging their character, searing their conscience and destroying love
- the one who hears the gossip because they are now faced with temptation; they must wrestle with the tale, do they allow the gossip to alter their attitudes, thinking, beliefs, associations, do they spread the tale
- the group, who will often be divided into factions and subgroups

What is the best way to handle gossip?

- reflect back at the gossiper –
 - Why did you tell me this?
 - What is your motive?
 - Have you gone to the person to discuss your concerns with them?
 - Do you love the person you are talking about?
 - How is this protective of them?
 - Do you realize you are telling me I can't trust you, that you will share private information in ways that can hurt and destroy?

What do you think would happen if you responded to someone gossiping like this? Do you think they would come back and share more very eagerly?

Maybe that is why we often don't respond this way because some part of us likes hearing the latest tidbits?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "There were..." Were the animal sacrifices necessary, in reality, to experience reconciliation with God, or only necessary within the drama to act out reconciliation with God?



What is the limitation on making things right with others before being reconciled to God? It is one of heart, not action.

If, in your heart, you retain bitterness, hatred, resentment a desire for vengeance toward others, then your heart has a barrier to God operating within it. However, if, in your heart, you have a desire for the good of the other, for their healing, their restoration to righteousness, then you have no barrier with God.

Whether to actually interact with another person however, is determined by wisdom and circumstance. If your action would actually cause harm, or introduce temptation, or incite hostility then one refrains.

When did Christ seek those who were His enemies to initiate a conversation to bring them to reconciliation with Him?

If you committed adultery 20 years ago with your best friend's wife, but you both realized your sin and repented 20 years ago before God, but never told your spouses. Should you go today and tell your spouse or your best friend?

Why or why not?

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



The Teachings of Jesus Lesson 9 3rd Q 2014

Lesson 9: Our Mission

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, will be conducting a workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 10,11: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Vallejo SDA church in Glendale, CA.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their **smile.amazon.com** site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN**.

SABBATH

What is the mission of the church?

The Mission Statement of the United Methodist Church (from their website):

<http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/section-1-the-churches>

The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by proclaiming the good news of God's grace and by exemplifying Jesus' command to love God and neighbor, thus seeking the fulfillment of God's reign and realm in the world.

Mission statement of the Southern Baptist Convention (from their website):

<http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/missionvision.asp>

As a convention of churches, our missional vision is to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations.

Mission Statement of the Roman Catholic Church, (from askcatholic.com) citing the Roman Catholic Catechism:

http://askcatholic.com/_WebPostings/Answers/2000_08AUG/2000AugMissionOfTheChurch.cfm



849 *This missionary mandate.* "Having been divinely sent to the nations that she might be 'the universal sacrament of salvation,' the Church in obedience to the command of her Founder and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men.

850 *The origin and purpose of the mission.* The Lord's missionary mandate is ultimately grounded in the eternal love of the Most Holy Trinity: "The Church on earth is by her nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, she has her origin the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit." The ultimate purpose of mission is none other than to make men share in the communion between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of love.

The Official Mission Statement of the SDA church (from the official church website):

<http://www.adventist.org/information/official-statements/statements/article/go/0/mission-statement-of-the-seventh-day-adventist-church/spirituality/>

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to make disciples of all people, communicating the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels' messages of [Revelation 14:6-12](#), leading them to accept Jesus as personal Savior and unite with His remnant Church, discipling them to serve Him as Lord and preparing them for His soon return.

Which one did you like best and why?

Did you hear any problems with any of them, anything you were uncomfortable with?

The Methodist and Baptist mission statements were quite closely tied to the Bible mandate and thus kept the statements very general.

The Roman Catholic, did have two elements that concerned me – the first being

“sent to the nations that she might be 'the universal sacrament of salvation,’” which sounds to me that one must be a member of this organization in order to experience salvation. In other words, salvation is through this particular institutional church. And of course it has been taught that way for years, as a way to coerce kings and people with threats of eternal damnation if one doesn't do what the Pope says. And, the history of burning people at the stake, in order to give last rights and the church “save” them.

The second concern for me is the subtle change in the wording “make disciples” which in Scripture and in the Methodist and Baptist and SDA usage is used to mean to teach people. However, the Catholic version sounds slightly different to me: “The ultimate purpose of mission is none other than to make men share in the communion between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of love.” Does it to you? Perhaps I am reading this in the context of the history of inquisition, burning at the stake, crusades etc., but “make men share in...” sounds coercive here rather than educational. Thoughts?

Then what about the SDA mission statement, any concerns?



Many good things in this statement, “make disciples” is used as in Scripture to teach people, emphasis on the gospel in the setting of the 3 angels, which means in the setting of the Great Controversy over God’s character. This is excellent, presenting the gospel with its universal importance, using the whole of Scripture, all 66 books, not just 62 books that Luther used. I also liked the “leading men” aspect, which implies we leave people free, the importance of service and the expectation of His return. Many great elements – the only phrase that I wonder about is, as part of the mission, what does it mean, “to accept Jesus as personal Savior unite with His remnant Church”?

Are these two separate things, or are they seen as one and the same?

Have we fulfilled our mission if we lead people to Jesus, they are reborn, begin living to serve God and tell people the truth of God’s character in the setting of the Great Controversy and the imminent return of Christ, but not join the SDA organization?

Why am I an SDA?

- Because I don’t believe one has to belong to a particular organization to be saved – one does not have to join the Roman Catholic church and have that organization be the sacrament of my salvation.
- I believe the organizations we have in the world are the progressive steps in advancing truth. God is infinite and we are finite, there is always more truth to understand as we grow in our relationship with Him.
- After the New Testament church, Paul warned a counterattack of Satan would occur – the man of sin would set himself up in God’s temple proclaiming himself to be God. This is the infection of Imperial Roman dictator law and god construct infecting Christianity after Constantine converted. And the world fell in to an age of darkness.
- The Bible predicted however, a reformation and a cleansing of this temple would take place, culminating with a final group to take a clear picture of God’s character to the world for the preparation of His return.
- This groundwork for this cleansing began with John Huss in the early 1400’s, in the Czech republic. He rejected indulgences and taught salvation by grace through faith alone. He was summoned by the Catholic Church to attend the Counsel of Constance where he was found a heretic and burned at the stake in 1415. But from his teachings was founded the Hussites, later to become the Moravian church – the first Protestant church. As this group organized they received ordination through the Waldensians in 1467.
- The groundwork for the cleansing expanded with Luther (1517), but Luther, who rejected the sacraments, indulgences, relics, and also proclaimed salvation by grace through faith along. But he could only take the gospel cleansing so far. Luther rejected four books of the Bible, Revelation – which taught the war in heaven, Hebrews which also taught about the work going on in heaven and the work of our High Priest in heaven, Jude which taught about angels in heaven, and James. Having rejected these four books, Luther didn’t understand the fullness of Christ’s accomplishments, focusing only on one the aspect of the plan of salvation.



- After Luther other reformers carried the truth forward:
 - Calvin (1540's)– defended the reformation in Switzerland
 - John Smyth (1609) – brought in Biblical baptism by immersion to Christianity
 - John Wesley – who argued against Calvinism and predestination, and instead personal choice in relationship with God, which leads to actual heart transformation, living a life of love for God and others.
 - In 1735 Wesley traveled to Savannah, GA. During the trip a storm came up and broke the main mast of the ship. While the majority of the ship panicked, a group of Moravian Christians calmly sang hymns. This deeply moved Wesley. After returning to England he studied with the Moravians, and eventually had his famous dream we shared last week. In 1739 Wesley founded the Methodist Society.
 - William Miller a Baptist preacher began preaching in 1831 the fulfillment of Bible prophecy of the cleansing of the sanctuary, erroneously interpreting the sanctuary to be earth and thus predicted the return of Christ in 1844, which led to the Great Disappointment of 1844
 - Ellen G. White and others – from the seventh-day Baptist discovered the seventh-day Sabbath, also embraced the reformation teachings of Luther, Wesley. In the aftermath of the Great Disappointment discovered the sanctuary to be cleansed was not the earth, nor the physical building built by men, but the heavenly sanctuary, constructed out of intelligent beings. Thus the cleansing of the sanctuary is the cleansing of people from lies about God and selfishness in the heart in preparation for meeting God face to face when Christ returns.
 - This message puts the truth about God at the center of the conflict, we war, as Paul says, against everything that sets itself up against the knowledge of God. We understand the war between good and evil is a universal, not just earthly, war. EGW was raised Methodist, and came to value this larger perspective, which led to a realization of a controversy over God's character and trustworthiness. And led to insights like this, regarding our understanding of religion and our purpose:

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. **The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience;** how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. {Ed 190.2}



The reason I am a SDA is not because I believe one must be a member of this organization in order to find salvation, but because I see this organization having within it:

- the broadest, deepest, widest, clearest, most reasonable understanding of reality, and God,
- His design for life,
- the war which began in heaven,
- the understanding of sin,
- the purpose for the creation of humankind,
- what actually went wrong in humanity when Adam and Eve sinned,
- God's actions and purposes through human history,
- the purpose of the incarnation, to dispel the lies, to destroy sin, death, the devil, and restore mankind back to perfection,
- understanding of the two antagonistic forces at work in the hearts of men,
- the culmination of events on earth,
- the purpose of God's people on earth and
- the ultimate elimination of sin and restoration of creation to perfection.

No other organization, that I am currently aware of, has such a complete, harmonious understanding of the entire issue.

Yet, this organization, is also infected with false ideas, for which we, in love, work to address and see removed.

So, what is our mission?

Here is what EGW, one of the co-founders of the SDA church, wrote about the mission of the church:

The mission of the church of Christ is to save perishing sinners. It is to make known the love of God to men and to win them to Christ by the efficacy of that love. The truth for this time must be carried into the dark corners of the earth, and this work may begin at home. **The followers of Christ should not live selfish lives;** but, imbued with the Spirit of Christ, they should work in harmony with Him. {3T 381.1}

There are causes for the present coldness and unbelief. The love of the world and the cares of life separate the soul from God. The water of life must be in us, and flowing out from us, springing up into everlasting life. **We must work out what God works in. If the Christian would enjoy the light of life, he must increase his efforts to bring others to the knowledge of the truth. His life must be characterized by exertion and sacrifices to do others good; and then there will be no complaints of lack of enjoyment.** {3T 381.2} [why? Because it is a law that strength come by exertion. If you want to be strong physically you must exercise, if you want to strong musically you must practice, in any endeavor. Second, because it is the law



of love, that only by giving are you able to receive more. The more you love the more love you receive and more capable of you become.]

Angels are ever engaged in working for the happiness of others. This is their joy. That which selfish hearts would consider humiliating service, ministering to those who are wretched and in every way inferior in character and rank, is the work of the pure, sinless angels in the royal courts of heaven. **The spirit of Christ's self-sacrificing love is the spirit which pervades heaven and is the very essence of its bliss.** {3T 381.3}

Those who feel no special pleasure in seeking to be a blessing to others, in working, even at a sacrifice, to do them good, cannot have the spirit of Christ or of heaven; for they have no union with the work of heavenly angels and cannot participate in the bliss that imparts elevated joy to them. Christ has said: "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." If the joy of angels is to see sinners repent, will it not be the joy of sinners, saved by the blood of Christ, to see others repent and turn to Christ through their instrumentality? In working in harmony with Christ and the holy angels we shall experience a joy that cannot be realized aside from this work. {3T 381.4}

Come and Reason Ministries Mission Statement:

Come and Reason Ministries focuses on making God's methods and principles practical, understandable, and applicable to you here and now. We are dedicated to helping you learn to discern, to teach you how to think for yourself, to hone and refine your reasoning powers in order to increase your ability to know right from wrong and healthy from unhealthy, and to working with God to help bring truth, love, and healing to all who are seeking to know and understand their Creator. We accept the Bible as authoritative and believe, rightly understood, that Scripture and Science harmonize perfectly. To that end we actively seek to present an integrated understanding of nature and Scripture for the purpose of helping you develop your full potential and to experience healing of mind, character, and relationships.

Read memory text: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come" MT 24:14

- What gospel?
 - the good news about God – His character and methods
- What kingdom?
 - The kingdom of love, which means the law of love, the way love operates, functions, the design for life
- What witness?
 - To witness truth, love, freedom, helping others, not retaliating, loving enemies, giving to those who mistreat
- What end?



- The end of selfishness, lies, pain, suffering, death

Any thoughts on how we can do a better job of sharing this with the world?

What are obstacles to sharing this?

SUNDAY

We are to be the light of the world – what does this mean?

By the Babylonish captivity the Israelites were effectually cured of the worship of graven images. During the centuries that followed, they suffered from the oppression of heathen foes, **until the conviction became fixed that their prosperity depended upon their obedience to the law of God. But with too many of the people obedience was not prompted by love. The motive was selfish.** They rendered outward service to God as the means of attaining to national greatness. **They did not become the light of the world, but shut themselves away from the world in order to escape temptation to idolatry.** {DA 28.5}

thoughts? What was lacking? A desire to obey the law? No, a misunderstanding of God and His law. Thinking it rules to be kept, rather than understanding it as the law of love, the design principle upon which a person actually lives, which transforms the entire being.

"Ye are the light of the world." The Jews thought to confine the benefits of salvation to their own nation; but Christ showed them that salvation is like the sunshine. It belongs to the whole world. **The religion of the Bible is not to be confined between the covers of a book, nor within the walls of a church.** It is not to be brought out occasionally for our own benefit, and then to be carefully laid aside again. **It is to sanctify the daily life, to manifest itself in every business transaction and in all our social relations.** {DA 306.5}

True character is not shaped from without, and put on; it radiates from within. If we wish to direct others in the path of righteousness, the principles of righteousness must be enshrined in our own hearts. Our profession of faith may proclaim the theory of religion, but it is our practical piety that holds forth the word of truth. **The consistent life, the holy conversation, the unswerving integrity, the active, benevolent spirit, the godly example,-- these are the mediums through which light is conveyed to the world.** {DA 307.1}

You mean the religion of the Bible isn't in:

- getting people baptized in the right way?
- worshipping on the right day?
- getting people to know who the beast of Revelation is?
- getting people to believe the right doctrines?



The indwelling of the Spirit will be shown by the outflowing of heavenly love. The divine fullness will flow through the consecrated human agent, to be given forth to others... {COL 419.4}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. **When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin.** The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. **The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour. {COL 419.6}**

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, Let your light shine. If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord's glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence. {COL 420.1}

The revelation of His own glory in the form of humanity will bring heaven so near to men that the beauty adorning the inner temple will be seen in every soul in whom the Saviour dwells. Men will be captivated by the glory of an abiding Christ. And in currents of praise and thanksgiving from the many souls thus won to God, glory will flow back to the great Giver. {COL 420.2}

This is very much what John Wesley taught, the transformation of the inner person to live a life of Christ, a life of love for God and others. Real transformation and victory over fear and selfishness.

What are the obstructions that we must remove from ourselves in order for this light to shine through us?

The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance

Is this Christian perfection – being at perfect peace, perfect love and perfect assurance? Notice it is a state of inner being, not one of outward performance?

MONDAY

To Be Witnesses – witnesses about what and to whom?

Any methods you have found effective?

Why is a message about health effective and even essential to sharing the gospel?



What is the gospel? The Good News about God and His methods!

- What laws do the health message operate upon?
 - Does this mirror God's moral law?
- So those who practice the healing arts – what is their attitude toward the sick?
 - Does this mirror God's attitude toward sinners?
- What do doctors/nurses do to their non-compliant patients?
 - Does this mirror God's actions toward unrepentant sinners?
- What is the cause of pain and suffering in the sick?
 - Does this give insight into the cause of pain and suffering of sinners?
- What causes the death of the sick?
 - Does this give insight into the death of the wicked?
- How do doctors and nurses respond when the sick one who dies is their own child?
 - Does this give insight into how God will respond to the eternal death of His children?
- Can the laws of health be changed to meet the sick patient in their sickness?
 - Does this give insight into why God's law cannot be changed to meet sinners in their sin?
- If a patient is sick and dying what needs to change in order for the patient to live – the laws of health, the attitude of the doctor or the condition of the patient?
 - Does this given insight into what needs to change in order for sinners to be saved –and the purpose of Christ's mission?

Does such a perspective help in witnessing the gospel message?

What does it mean to be a Christian?

The question you need to put to yourselves is, "Am I a Christian?" To be a Christian is to be far more than many understand. **It means more than simply having your name upon the church records. It means to be joined to Christ. It means to have simple faith, unwavering reliance upon God.** It means to have childlike confidence in your heavenly Father through the name and merit of His dear Son. **Do you love to keep the commandments of God, because the commandments of God are God's precepts, the transcript of His character, and can no more be altered than can the character of God?** Do you respect and love the law of Jehovah? {FLB 130.4}

Is there a connection between being a Christian and:

- being joined with Christ?
- having complete confidence, trust or faith in God?
- Relying on God for outcomes?
- Obeying God's law?
- Loving to obey God's law?



Why can the commandments not be altered? For the same reason the laws of health cannot be altered – they are the principles upon which life is constructed to operate.

And what is true obedience? To love to do it – thus Isaiah says we must call the Sabbath a delight- if it isn't a delight to us, a joy, something we are glad to do we are not obedient. Why not?

Because what God wants is love, not behavioral conformity – when the heart loves then living in harmony with the Designer is a joy.

TUESDAY

So Send I You – what has Jesus sent us to do?

As the Father sent Jesus, Jesus has sent us – so the question – what did the Father send Jesus to do?

To reveal Him, to dispel the lies about God, to win people back to trust in God, and to provide the Remedy to sin!

"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." **We are to bear as definite a testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, as did Christ and his apostles.** Trusting in the efficiency of the Holy Spirit, we are to testify of **the mercy, goodness, and love** of a crucified and risen Saviour, and thus **be agents through whom the darkness will be dispelled from many minds**, and cause thanksgiving and praise to ascend from many hearts to God... {RH, June 25, 1895 par. 1}

It is [Satan's] purpose to cast his hellish shadow, like the pall of death, between God and man, in order that he may hide Jesus from our view, so that he may cause us to forget the ministry of love and mercy, cut us off from further knowledge of God's great love and power to usward, and intercept every ray of light from heaven. {RH, June 25, 1895 par. 2}

Christ alone was able to represent the Deity. He who had been in the presence of the Father from the beginning, he who was the express image of the invisible God, was alone sufficient to accomplish this work. **No verbal description could reveal God to the world.** Through a life of purity, a life of perfect trust and submission to the will of God, a life of humiliation such as even the highest seraph in heaven would have shrunk from, **God himself must be revealed to humanity.** In order to do this, our Saviour clothed his divinity with humanity. **He employed the human faculties, for only adopting these could he be comprehended by humanity.** Only humanity could reach humanity. **He lived out the character of God through the human body** which God had prepared for him. **He blessed the world by living out in human flesh the life of God**, thus showing that he had the power **to unite humanity to divinity.** {RH, June 25, 1895 par. 3}



Christ was the divine and human united, what about us – because of Jesus, because of His victory, can we be a unity of divinity and humanity?

- We have the mind of Christ 1Cor 2:16
- Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, 2Pet 1:4
- I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. Gal 2:20
- Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? 1Cor 6:19

Are we to be a unity of humanity and divinity? Can we experience victory over sin in our lives? What does that look like? Love!

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, “Jesus’ mandate indicates...” What is the purpose of baptism? When is baptism to be administered?

Do we administer baptism as they did in New Testament times?

What gets in the way of doing that?

Do creeds help bring unity, or are they sources of division?

I suggest that creeds, fundamental beliefs, cause division, not unity. It provides fodder for argument, disagreement, and takes our focus off of Jesus.

For instance – how many groups fight over:

- the right way to baptize
- the right foods to eat
- the right way to hold communion
- the right form of music
- the right understanding of the Trinity
- the right day to worship upon etc.

But in doing so have either taken their focus off of God and His character and methods, or another way to say it is, fighting over doctrines, without love results in both groups holding to the same false view of God and His methods.

People are no longer baptized into Christ they are baptized into sects, into divided groups based on their creeds.



We make our creeds, our fundamental beliefs, a test of fellowship and burden people with these systems thus making obstructions in salvation. We are divided as a body of believers over doctrines such as, state of the dead, which day to worship upon, how to baptize, how to perform communion etc. when we should be putting the truth about God at the center.

When we evangelize we do not baptize people when they surrender their heart to Christ – instead we require them to first, give up their Sabbath job, cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, porn, or whatever other identifiable sin we can perceive, and then study and then affirm the 28 beliefs before we baptize. Thus we:

- Require them to overcome sin before baptism into Jesus Christ – can we overcome sin in our own strength?
- And worse – we have merged baptism into Christ with membership into an institutional/denominational church, not the church universal. Thus, if a person becomes hurt by something in the institution and leaves the institution, often they feel as if they have left God, but this is not necessarily so.

Doctrines are only truly important as they inform us about God and reconnect us to Him. When we separate them from God and make them stand alone tenants, with proof texts, and tests of fellowship we place barriers between people and God and obstruct the healing and transformation God would have us experience. This is what the Jews did 2000 years ago, with their many doctrines – but disconnected from God they rejected and crucified their Creator when He stood among them.

Our challenge is to put every doctrine in its right setting, how it reveals the truth about God’s character of love. This is what the pamphlet, Fundamental Focus, does, demonstrates every doctrine is actually a revelation of God’s character of love, thus our only true Fundamental Belief is – God is love!

THURSDAY

The lesson focuses us on the three angel’s messages of Revelation 14 – and asks “How do these verses encompass the worldwide mission of the church?”

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3



The Teachings of Jesus 3rd Q 2014

Lesson 10: The Law of God

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Sep 27: Class Potluck Picnic 1:00 P.M. – At the Pavilion at Student Park in Collegedale. Plates, eating utensils, napkins and drinks will be provided, please bring food, friends, and lawn chair. Many of our class have responsibilities at local churches and don't often make it to class, but don't let that keep you away from the potluck – We want to see you!

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, will be conducting a workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 10,11: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Vallejo SDA church in Glendale, CA.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon.

The Weekend of **Jan 10, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

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NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**

SABBATH

When you hear the word "law" what comes to mind? Try asking people and see what answer you get? I have asked thousands and the predominant answer is: "Rules, regulations, ordinances." Then ask them what is God's law, and you will often hear, "God's rules, regulations and ordinances."

But is it really so? What do you understand God's law to be? What do you understand to be the main thrust of this week's lesson?

That Jesus did not come to change God's law – why is this a point that needs to be made at all?

Would they make the point that Jesus didn't come to change the law of gravity? Then why do they emphasize Jesus didn't come to change God's law? Because they view God's law as some list of rules, similar to manmade laws. Its evidence of the infection from Rome. I think it would be so much more



effective to teach the truth about God's law – the law of love, then no one would consider it could be changed.

Ellen White, one of the founders of the SDA church, understood this. Her very first words in the *Conflict of the Ages Series* are, “‘God is love.’ 1 John 4:16. His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be.” (PP 33)

The Bible writers also understood God's law to be love:

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Rom 13:10)
- The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Gal 5:14)

As Jesus said, the entire law is summed up in love for God our fellow man. (Mt 12:37-40)

This love is not sentiment, or emotionalism, it is the very element, code, or principle that life is fabricated upon. Ellen White explicitly wrote that God's law of love is the principle of life:

- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. ***For God is love, and love is life.*** COL 258 (emphasis mine)
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth *the great principle which is the law of life for the universe.* All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. ***And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.*** DA 21 (emphasis mine)

Satan began a war in heaven – and one of the main focal points in his attack against God was against God's law.

Can Satan change God's law? So how can he attack it? By teaching that God's law is something that it is not and infecting the minds of intelligent beings with false ideas about it.

The evil one taught that God's laws are the kind of laws created beings make – rules, regulations, ordinances – thus diverting loyal minds away from God's true law of love. And lowering God from that of Creator, He who constructs the fabric of reality, to a being no better than us, one who can only make rules and then use power to enforce those rules.



When one understands God's law as the design protocols upon which life is constructed to operate, one realizes that deviations from it are incompatible with life, and such deviations require the Designer to heal and restore the deviant (sinners) to harmony with it, lest death ensue.

But deviations from imposed rules are not incompatible with life and require the ruling authority to inflict death lest unpunished rebellion ensue. This is Satan's view of God – that God is no different than us and makes rules, like we do, and then inflicts punishment to enforce those rules. Ellen White describes her understanding of how the war in heaven began:

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

When mankind deviated from God's law, God's law did not change, God did not change, but humankind was changed. Thus Christ came to earth to fix what Adam and Eve did to God's creation. Christ did not come to fix God or God's law, but to actually heal and restore His creation back into harmony with God's design for life (God's law).

And Christ spent the majority of His time healing. Why? Because the laws of health are design laws. A doctor cannot get a patient well in violation of the laws of health, but must do something in the patient to restore him back into harmony with the laws of health. No appeasement, no payment, no legal pardon is of any value without actually restoring the patient to harmony with the laws of health. This was Christ's mission to restore humanity to harmony with God's law of love, the law upon which life is constructed to operate.

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. *I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.* (Heb 8:10 emphasis mine)

But Satan counterattacked all Christ accomplished. The man of sin arose and infected the church with Satan's view of God's law. (2Thes 2:3) Constantine converted and the truth of God's law of love was replaced with Imperial Rome's concept of law and government. Rather than understanding God's law as the design protocols upon which our Creator constructed life to operate, Christianity embraced the lie *that God's law is like Rome's, an imposed set of rules, with no inherent consequence, thus requiring the lawgiver to police breeches in the law and inflict punishment for disobedience.*

Eusebius (263-339 CE), the first church historian, documents how Christianity exchanged God's law of love for an imposed Roman construct: "With the Roman Empire monarchy had come on earth as the image of the monarchy in heaven."¹

Christians lost sight of God's law of love and accepted an imposed legal system modeled after human governments.



This idea of an imposed law altered the view of God held by Christians and changed how Christianity functioned. Christians went from a body of believers who lived communally, shared their possessions to help each other and died as martyrs, to an organization of Crusades, Inquisition, burning dissenters at the stake, and active participants in genocide (Nazis in Germany and Christians in Rwanda). Every doctrine of the church has been impacted by accepting the dictator view of God and His law.

Today we stand at the very precipice of eternity and “The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the *law of God*. Upon this battle we are now entering--*a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah*, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition.” (GC 582 emphasis mine)

How do you see God’s law?

But evidently many people think Jesus did come to change God’s law. Where would such an idea come from?

- Jesus definitely didn’t abide by the Jewish understanding of law when He was here
- Jesus changed many of their legal practices
 - He cleansed the temple from buying and selling
 - He healed on Sabbath
 - His disciples pulled heads of grain on Sabbath
 - He changed Passover to Lord’s Supper
 - He spoke to women and Samaritan women
 - He associated with tax collectors and prostitutes – and consider even today – what might we think if our conference evangelist, when traveling, stayed in the home of a prostitute? Didn’t Jesus do this?

What was Jesus doing? He was operating upon design law and overthrowing imposed rules. But the Jews couldn’t see it and accused Him of being lawless.

If one holds the idea that God’s law is imposed, rules, regulations, like humans make, then one doesn’t see any reason it can’t be changed – it is just that God is the only one authorized to change it.

Thus, I have heard arguments that God made the Sabbath holy, and no where do we find where God changed the sanctity from Sabbath to Sunday, thus Sabbath is still holy. Or, we honor the day God commanded us to honor – if God changed the day of worship we would worship on the day He tells us, but God hasn’t so we stick with the Bible Sabbath.

What is the basic problem with these arguments? They argue from a human level of understanding, that God’s law is nothing more than a list of rules imposed by the ruler of the universe, and as sovereign God has a right and we are obliged to obey. But since the law is nothing more than rules, God is free at any time to change His law.



What is the problem?

God's ways are not are ways – His ways are higher than our ways. The Bible says God never changes, He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow – thus God's law can never be changed, for if it were to be changed the universe would cease to exist. Matter would destabilize, galaxies would unravel, the integrity of molecular bonds would disintegrate. Everything we know would be destroyed.

Read third paragraph, “It is important...” Did Jesus argue for the “perpetuity of the Decalogue”?

Or, was Jesus talking to an audience that was completely incapable of hearing that the 10 Commandments were a temporary measure, added because of sin and are only need for a very short time in the history of the universe?

If Jesus had said such a thing, what would have happened? They wanted to stone Him for challenging their traditions, how much more if He actually suggested the 10 Commandments were added?

Were the 10 Commandments added or were they always in existence?

What evidence for either side of the argument?

- Did angels need a law that if they sinned the results of their sin would pass down three and four generations?
- Was there a Sabbath before the creation of this earth and sun?
- Did angels need a law to honor their mother's and father?
- The 10 Commandments are an adaptation of the law of love, especially **codified for fallen human beings**. Adam and Eve in Eden didn't need a law to honor their mother and father. The 10 were not written for Adam and Eve in Eden, they were written for sinful humans why?
- The law was added so that the trespass might increase. Rom 5:20
 - What law reveals sin? The 10 Commandments and Paul says it was added.
 - Why was this necessary? Because sin dulls the mind and people need the law to help diagnose what is wrong, like and MRI for the soul.
- What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. Gal 3:19
 - What was the purpose of the law? To act as schoolmaster, to diagnose and protect until the Remedy came
- We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹ We also know that the **law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels**, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim 1:8-11



The idea that the 10 Commandment law was added is what the founders of our church taught. Here are three quotes:

- If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}
 - Was there a law prior to Sinai – yes
 - Was it written in 10 Commandment form? No!
 - What was the law prior to Sinai? The law of love.
- I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments... “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). **In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law.** {ISM 233, 234}

Which law then was added? The 10 Commandments and the ceremonial system.

What was God’s law like in heaven before sin?

- But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, **the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of.** In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. {MB 109.2}

Why was the idea that God had a law something the angels never even considered? Because it is the protocols upon which life is built, and it never occurs to do it otherwise. If someone said – it is a law that you shall not jab thy eye with a pencil – wouldn’t you say? I never considered that a law. Why not? Because it makes such perfect sense. Yes, I am free to jab myself in the eye with a pencil – but the only result is pain and suffering. This is how it is with every violation of God’s law because God’s laws are not rules they are the protocols of life and health. Thus the angels never considered there was a law.

This battle over God’s law is still raging today. What has prevented God from clearing this issue up here on earth?

Human beings continue to think through our own way of doing things and ascribing to God our methods, our ideas, our concepts, rather than seeing God as God – as Creator, Builder, Designer of the universe.



SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, “The fact that Christ...” Do you find this paragraph helpful? What is the message of this paragraph?

What do you understand “binding” to mean?

I looked it up in the dictionary and it means:

- imposing an obligation
 - The contract is legally *binding*.
 - The parties agreed to settle the dispute through *binding arbitration*.

Is this how God’s law works? Some binding rules put upon us?

What problems arise when we present God’s law this way?

- We misrepresent God, so people don’t actually know Him
- Thus trust in God is undermined
- Obedience under such a construct stems from fear, not love, thus it actually causes one to become more of a rebel
- It leads to legalism in our behavior and our theology
- We make rules for behavior and have loopholes to those rules
 - The Jews in Christ’s day had a Sabbath rule you couldn’t walk more than ½ mile from your home. But if you have a second home within a half mile of the first you can walk to it, and then go on another ½ mile. What constitutes a home? Anywhere you have lunch the day before. So, if on Sabbath you want to walk somewhere more than a mile away all you need to do is drop a lunch every half mile and you can walk to where you want to go.
 - There was another rule they had; if you were traveling on Friday with your donkey, and the Sabbath arrives before you take the burden off your donkey, you are not allowed to remove the burden on Sabbath, but you can loosen the straps and whatever falls off is allowed. If a Gentile comes by the Gentile can remove the burden from the donkey, but you are not allowed to ask or indicate in any way that you need him to do so.
 - When I was in medical school there was a Jewish friend in my class. We did our surgical rotation together. One Friday evening we were in surgery and came out after Sabbath began. In the doctors lounge the TV was on. He loved to watch Memphis State basketball and a game was on, but the TV was on the wrong channel. He couldn’t change the channel because it would “spark” meaning it would start a fire on the Sabbath, so he asked me to change the channel for him. It was okay to fill the mind with worldly things from TV on the Sabbath, as long as one didn’t change the channel and make as spark.



- All of this leads to conceiving of God as a dictator, and the plan of salvation as a system of legal requirements.

There are many destructive results to presenting God's law as "binding" in this way.

But, if we present it as binding, in the same way the law of gravity is binding, the laws of physics and health are binding, then all of these problems evaporate. You see, no loophole gets one around the results of jumping off a bridge, or shooting IV heroine, or cheating on your spouse, or stealing from your employer. All violations of design law result in damage to the one in violation. The only option is healing, recreation, restoration to God's ideal, which is God's plan of salvation.

When we present God's law like this, then people realize it is for our actual good, health, wellness to live in harmony with the design.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "After establishing..." did Jesus establish the perpetuity of the 10 Commandments or the perpetuity of God's law of love?

Will the 10 Commandments ever be "wrong"? No – they will always be "right" but will they always be needed?

Why or why not?

The 10 Commandments won't be needed when the law is again written on the heart, when we operate in harmony with it. Thus the MRI is not needed where no sickness exists.

What was Christ doing in the Sermon on the Mount? He was demonstrating that the rules, which point out behavior, are exposing a sickness of character, a condition of being that is out of harmony with God's design for love. Thus, while they said, adultery is sin, Jesus said lust in the heart is the real problem.

Read last paragraph, "What's fascinating..." What about the meaning of the last sentence, "Law-keeping, in and of itself, as an end in itself, leads to nothing but death if the law is not understood as an expression of what it means to be saved by grace."

What kind of law are they talking about? Is that sentence consistent with these Scriptures:

- In the **way of righteousness there is life**; along that path is immortality. Pr 12:28
- He who pursues **righteousness and love finds life**, prosperity and honor. Pr 21:21
- The **law** of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7



What do these passages mean? Just as we read from EGW earlier, that God's law is the law of life, life is actually built upon it.

Can one live outside of God's law, or in violation of God's law? What are they talking about then?

They are thinking within a system of imposed rules, and they know that keeping rules can't save us, but in their model they have a solution, the rules also require a perfect sacrifice to pay the legal penalty, and thus we must have God's grace send Jesus to die to pay our penalty. Then we can have our records adjusted to say we are pardoned, or righteous, or innocent and thus we are legally saved. All legalism, all false, all manmade and based on Rome's infection to Christian thought.

Imagine a metaphor of the entire world being infected with tuberculosis. Everyone is sick and dying, coughing, fevers, fatigue, spitting up blood. There is a religious group who realizes this is not how God designed it. And they teach God will one day destroy all disease. Therefore, God keeps careful records, recording every slight defect, and when He returns He will investigate every case and if you don't have a clean record He will destroy you, because this disease must be destroyed. So, this group teaches that God sent His Son, who was TB free, and His record is free of any defects or symptoms or sickness. And if we accept Him as our personal Savior, He will photocopy Jesus' medical record and put it in our chart and when God investigates our record He will only find a record of perfect health, no recorded evidence of any sickness, symptoms or defects.

But, all the people who rely on this are not actually taking their TB meds, thus they continue to have coughing, fever, spitting up blood, just like all those people who don't belong to this religious group and don't claim to have Jesus' record applied to their record.

What is the application? In Christianity today, there is just as much addiction, pornography, domestic violence, child abuse, teen pregnancy as in non-Christian homes. Why? Because God's plan is to heal the heart/mind/character, to restore His design law into the person. But that plan has been replaced with a false legal lie, that our problem is in our legal standing before God and in what is written in our heavenly records and the solution is to have the blood of Jesus applied to our record to erase the record of sin. Thus, we claim the blood to get legal pardon, but don't partake the remedy to actually get well.

Is it any wonder Christ hasn't yet returned? He doesn't want any to be lost. He wants all to be healed, restored, saved, so He waits for the truth to go forward so people will actually be healed in heart/mind/character.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "In this passage..." thoughts? What about today? How do Christians understand adultery today?



What does it sound the like the lesson is teaching? Does it sound like the lesson is teaching that adultery is more than “overt physical sexual act”?

Then in the last paragraph it states, “Christ corrected the misuse of this passage by uplifting the sanctity and permanence of marriage: the only cause for divorce, before God, is “sexual immorality” or “fornication” (in Greek porneia literally “unchastity”).”

Would this include in the heart and mind or only the behavior?

What is adultery?

- Does the victim who gets raped commit adultery?
- Does a married soldier injured in combat and has his genitalia destroyed, who leaves his wife to move in with his nurse, loving her sleeping with her, giving his heart to her, but not committing physical fornication, commit adultery?
- Why were the children of Israel called an adulterous nation? Was it only if they worshipped a fertility god? Or if they worshipped any god other than Yahweh?
- Does a person whose spouse committed adultery, also commit adultery by dating someone else before the divorce is final?
- When is a marriage over, when the state says it is, or when the individuals involved end it in their hearts?
- When does God recognize a marriage is over, when the state says it is or some other criteria?
- Does God recognize the marriage certificates for homosexual couples? If God doesn't recognize these state issued certificates, then does he recognize state issued divorce certificates, or see someone as still married where the state hasn't issued a divorce certificate?
- I have a patient who filed for divorce from her husband 18 years ago. He is an attorney and has played legal games to prevent the divorce from ever being finalized. She can't get a state divorce certificate, should the church recognize her as divorced and give her a church wedding to someone else?
- Why does the church give authority to the state's divorce certificates and thus won't allow the woman above to remarry, but does not give authority to homosexual marriage certificates?
- What about in countries where polygamy is legal, and a man has marriage certificates from the state for more than one wife? Should the church recognize this? Why or why not?

What does the Bible mean when it says if we violate the law in one point we violate in all points?

If a person tries to murder their spouse have they committed adultery?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points to the interaction of Christ with the Pharisees over Corban, a tradition of dedicating one's wealth to the Temple, but you could keep it until you died. This meant that one couldn't use it for one's parents.



Read 3rd and 4th paragraph, “It seems as if the Pharisees...” What is the motivation for Corban – love for God or selfishness? There is no problem with dedicating resources to God’s service, the problem is when it is done for selfish purposes. Any examples of how this can be done today?

- Musicians performing for fame not to praise God
- Speakers speaking for money, fame, position, recognition, not to teach others
- Pastors pastoring for a paycheck, not as a calling
- People giving tithes and offerings because they believe if they do God will bless them and they will get more for themselves
- Going to church to get votes to get elected to office
- Say a certain prayer every day for 30 days believing one will have their influence expanded

What do you think of Christ’s comment that they should have honored their parents without leaving the tithe of mint and herbs unpaid?

My wife has a basil plant in a pot on our porch that she gets fresh leaves from to use in cooking. Should she pull every 10th leaf and bring to church and put in the offering plate?

Why would Christ say this? Several points:

- It was more of an agrarian culture, some of the individuals may have made their entire livelihood from producing and selling herbs
- But more likely, the people already believed it was required to do so. In that setting, what would have happened with His audience if Christ had said there is no need to pay tithe on your herbs? He would have lost His audience.

Is God concerned with mint leaves? No, God is concerned with hearts that love, hearts that are honest, integrity, devotion, loyalty.

What does it mean to honor one’s parents? Does it mean doing what they say?

If you are an adult, and your parent is an alcoholic and wants you to pick them up beer on your way home from work and drop it off at their house – do you dishonor them if you refuse? Why or why not?

- How about if a parent wants to talk to you on the phone every day of the week?
- I had a patient who was married for 40 years when she came to see me. Her husband, every Sunday of their marriage, picked up his mother, went to church with his mother, sat with his mother, went home and had lunch and spent Sunday afternoon with his mother. He stopped after work on his way home every day to have dinner with his mother. My patient was finally fed up with it and wanted her husband to go to church with her, have dinner with her, go on vacations with her. Was this man honoring his mother? Would he dishonor his mother if he stopped doing these things?

Where do you draw the line?



The Bible teaches that when a person marries they are to leave their parents and cleave or unite with their spouse. This means the spouse becomes the number one human in their affections and loyalty, even over the parents.

I have seen many families damaged when this doesn't actually happen. If you are considering marriage be sure you are marrying someone who is capable of loving you more than themselves, and they have the ability to put you number one in their human relationships. If not, do not marry them.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The rich young ruler..." Can one be saved in violation of the law? Then is the rich young ruler correct salvation comes from following the law?

It all goes back to how you understand law – imposed rules – you are lost, lost in fear, insecurity, short-comings, legal religious systems that don't save.

Design law, then we realize Christ lived the law perfectly, revealed truth to restore trust, and when we trust Him the Spirit comes and transforms us, we have greater insight, comprehension and intelligent choose to cooperate freely with God because it makes so much sense. We desire to live in harmony with how God constructed life to operate, which is obedience to His law.

FRIDAY

Read third paragraph, "Jesus, the express..." this is so well stated, what does it mean?

Discuss questions 1 & 3

¹ S.L. Greenslade, *Church and State from Constantine to Theodosius* (London: SCM Press, 1954).



The Teachings of Jesus 3rd Q 2014

Lesson 11: The Sabbath

I received this letter this week:

Your ministry has been a great blessing to our family. We discovered Come and Reason Ministries during a web search and have watched all of the material which is available through streaming.

We are SDAs living in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Our church is small and shares a pastor with two other churches. We have three daughters in college. We have watched your lectures and Sabbath School lessons on Sabbath afternoons and during the week. We have experienced several "ah ha" moments as your presentations of the Gospel has brought into focus God's love and true character.

Our church has agreed to begin to show your lectures as vesper programs extending over several weeks. We believe that both the church members and community will be blessed. Thank you for your ministry.

Yesterday evening a friend on The Designer's Friends Down Under Facebook page posted this quote from Christ's Object Lessons:

The great storehouse of truth is the word of God—the written word, the book of nature, and the book of experience in God's dealing with human life. Here are the treasures from which Christ's workers are to draw. In the search after truth they are to depend upon God, not upon human intelligences, the great men whose wisdom is foolishness with God. Through His own appointed channels the Lord will impart a knowledge of Himself to every seeker. — {COL 125.2}

Amazing, finding quotes that support the method we are using is exciting.

SABBATH

Read memory text: "And He said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath'" (Mk 2:27,28 NKJV)

What does this text mean?

From my paraphrase:

MK 2:27 After a moment to let them think he said, "The Sabbath was created as a gift for humanity, to be a blessing for human beings. Human beings were not created as a gift for the Sabbath. 28 Understand this clearly, the Son of Man doesn't serve the Sabbath, it serves him.



Does the Sabbath serve Jesus? How? What is the purpose and function of the Sabbath?

Jesus was speaking to the Jews when He said the Sabbath was made for man, was the Sabbath, the earth even, made only for the benefit of man?

For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like those condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to human beings. 1Cor 4:9

Is this earth a theater to the entire universe? Then does what happens here benefit intelligences beyond earth?

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Col 1:19,20

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,¹¹ according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. Eph 3:10,11

Here is an historical SDA perspective:

By coming to dwell with us, **Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels.** He was the Word of God,--God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"--"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"--"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." **But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe.** God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. **Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings** will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that **the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God;** and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. DA 19, 20

Was earth, and what has happened on earth only for humans? Or is there a larger reality being impacted by what is transpiring on earth?

What about the Sabbath? It was made for humankind to be sure – why? Why was it necessary? What benefit is there in the Sabbath? What is its purpose? How does the Sabbath serve God?



The Sabbath is a sign – a sign of what? Exodus tells us a sign that God makes us holy, but what does this mean?

If one holds to reformation theology, the ideas from some great men, but men who were burdened my millennia of tradition, then one struggles. Luther, a great man of God, who broke from tradition and gave the Bible to the people, but he only gave 62 books. He didn't find value in Revelation, Jude, Hebrews and James, and thus Luther didn't know about a controversy over God's character. Therefore, reformation theology tends to be legal, narrow, and misses the larger view of the war which began in heaven over God's trustworthiness. Some people operate in this narrow setting and present the Sabbath as an arbitrary test of obedience, and in so doing misrepresent God, misrepresent the Sabbath and support Satan's allegations against God.

But in the setting of the war between God and Satan, over God's character, government of love and methods of love, what does the Sabbath reveal?

It reveals God's character – that He doesn't use power to coerce, that He leaves us free. Thus, Sabbath observance is about the free exercise of our power of choice to acknowledge God and live in harmony with Him.

Remember the Sabbath because God created – what does this direct our minds toward?

What kind of law does the Creator use to create? It points us to design law, protocols upon which life is built, and away from imposed rules that created beings make. Thus the Sabbath is evidence that God doesn't make rules, He creates reality.

Why, in the end of time, does Sabbath and Sunday stand as signs of two opposing methodologies?

How did Sabbath come into existence? It was created as a day of rest. Thus, its purpose is to stop work, rest, reflect, relate, rejoice, celebrate, worship, adore, and value the Creator who built His universe to operate upon the law of love. Thus the Sabbath, the day God rested His case, and gave the universe freedom to consider for themselves, represents how the Creator rules – by truth, love, freedom and His laws are the design laws upon which life is built.

Sunday as a day of rest and worship, however, – was declared to be holy by an act of arbitrary power of human beings – thus Sunday represents how created beings rule, by imposed rules. A completely different type of rulership.

The Designer rules by love, and those who transgress His law are transgressing the protocols life is constructed to operate upon and thus are destroying themselves. Our God of love has been using every agency in His power to heal the deviant, in order to save, lest death ensue.



But the imposed law method teaches that God must inflict death upon the wicked, thus those who teach this idea about God – that justice require God to torture, punish and kill, regardless of which day they worship upon, are actually represented by Sunday the day of arbitrary power, not by Sabbath.

Conversely, for those who teach the truth about God, the Sabbath is a sign for them regardless of which day they *currently* worship upon. When governments begin enforcing worship upon pain of punishment, those who are like Jesus in character will not go along with such enforcement and will leave that style of worship and join with all those who honor God and His methods of truth, love and freedom

In C.S. Lewis' last book of the Narnia series Lewis describes a Calormene soldier named Emeth and his encounter with Aslan the lion. Emeth was a worshipper of Tash, and as a result was terrified when he came face to face with Aslan. This is that encounter from the book:

I fell at his feet and thought surely this is the hour of death, for the Lion will know that I have served Tash all my days and not him.

But Aslan's response?

Son thou art welcome. But I said, alas Lord I am no son of thine but the servant of Tash. He answered, Child all the service thou hast done to Tash I account as service done to me.

I questioned the Glorious One: Lord, is it then true that thou and Tash are one? The Lion growled and said, It is false. Not because he and I are one, but because we are opposites, I take to me the services which thou hast done to him. For I and he are of such different kinds that no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him. Therefore if any man swear by Tash and keep his oath for the oath's sake, it is by me that he has truly sworn, though he know it not, and it is I who reward him. And if any man do a cruelty in my name, then, though he says the name Aslan, it is Tash whom he serves and by Tash his deed is accepted".

Emeth questions once more:

Lord, I have been seeking Tash all my days.

Beloved, said the Glorious One, unless thy desire had been for me thou shouldst not have sought so long and so truly. For all find what they truly seek.

Will this be true regarding the day of worship? Are those who worship on Sabbath, but represent God as Satan alleges servants of Satan, while those who worship on Sunday, but represent God rightly servants of Jesus Christ?

Is it ultimately about the Sabbath, or the Lord of the Sabbath?

Then how does the Sabbath serve Jesus?



Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy. Exodus 31:12,13

How does the Lord make us holy? Is there any part we have to play in that process? Do we have choices to make? Do our choices have any impact in our development?

Can God make someone holy while they choose to rebel against Him? Can a person make themselves holy by the power of their own choice separate from God?

- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. [credulity - readiness/willingness to believe with little evidence]** **He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . .** Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

Then, is there something, some type of choosing that is involved in our transformation? What?

It is in choosing to trust God, choosing to value what He values, choosing to say yes to what He reveals to us, choosing to apply to our lives what He convicts us of, choosing to spend time with Him, choosing to believe the evidence Jesus gave, choosing to study His word, choosing to say no to the lies of Satan. Why is this necessary?

Because God doesn't want robots programmed by Him, He wants free intelligent beings operating in harmony with Him, and *the only way to heal us and retain our individuality is with our freewill cooperation.*

This is what God wanted Adam and Eve to do in the beginning. In Eden, sinless as they were, they were capable of making choices in harmony with God in their own strength and developing perfect character. But, in our fallen state, we are not. Thus Jesus came to do this for us, and in a united



relationship with Him, (we don't make choices alone, we don't fight battles alone), we yoke up with Christ, and with the yoke of love, we experience not only wisdom but divine power to strengthen us to make those healthy choices.

But, back to Eden, this is why the Tree of Knowledge was placed there, to give Adam and Eve an opportunity to exercise their own freewill and develop character in harmony with God. This is from one of the founders of our church:

Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. . . . They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, their loyalty must be tested. **At the very beginning of man's existence a check was placed upon the desire for self-indulgence**, the fatal passion that lay at the foundation of Satan's fall. **The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden, was to be a test of the obedience, faith, and love of our first parents.** While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. **They were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan; but if they endured the trial, they would finally be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favor with God.** . . . {CC 13.2}

God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automation. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. . . . It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. {CC 13.3}

What was the purpose of the Tree of Knowledge? Was it to trip them up, or provide a way for them to solidify their characters upon the law of love and loyalty to God?

What about the Sabbath – in the setting of the Great Controversy, with the Sabbath as evidence of God's methods, pointing us to His law of love, and being a sign that God makes us holy, is there a similar purpose that God knew we would need?

Does the Sabbath provide evidence of God's character of love, freedom, truth?

Does the Sabbath also provide us opportunity to choose to stop promoting self, to rest from all aspects of self-indulgence, whether seeking wealth (work for gain), whether pleasure seeking, or trying to save self by working hard to keep the rules, including the Sabbath? That we rest in trust in God and choose to set self aside in pursuit of God?

How does Satan corrupt the Sabbath and cheat us of this opportunity to experience genuine transformation and development of character in a love-yoked relationship with Jesus Christ?



By infecting our minds with imposed law constructs – regardless of which day.

If we worship on any day, including the Sabbath, but we worship a god who imposes rules to test us, and if we fail the test, then that god uses his power to punish and destroy, such obedience is coerced and is based on fear. This breeds the character of a rebel and we become people who would murder the Creator of the Sabbath and want Him off by sunset to keep the day. We become a people who make rules for behavior on Sabbath and then begin enforcing our rules on others, and then bring pressure to bear on those who don't follow our way of Sabbath keeping, we become judges and spies watching for breaks in the Sabbath rules and then gossip and malign those who are not behaving like us.

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. **All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for his fellow men.** A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. **The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies.** {MB 123.1}

Read second paragraph, “Today we are confronted...” What is the problem with resting on Sunday? Is there any problem? Do you find any instruction from God that says, “thou shall not rest on Sunday?” “Sunday shall not be used as a day to think about me, or meditate upon my creation, or sing hymns to me, or adore me or worship me.” Do we find this anywhere?

So what is the problem with worshipping God on Sunday? There is nothing wrong with worshipping on Sunday, or Wednesday night prayer meeting, or Thursday or Tuesday, the problem is failure to choose God and His methods of truth, love, freedom as represented by the Sabbath. The problem is in forgetting the Sabbath – Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy...

How do we do that? Is it really the Sabbath that is kept holy by our choices or is it ourselves that is kept holy?

What percentage of the world's population do you think observes the Bible Sabbath each week? 7 billion people, do you think 70 million people? That would be 1%, let's be generous and say 70 million people, that means 99% of the world is not observing the 7th day Sabbath – so does that mean the Sabbath is no longer holy? If these people are not “keeping” it holy is it no longer holy?

Of course not, the Sabbath is holy, it was created holy and we can do nothing to change that. Thus in keeping the Sabbath holy, we are not keeping the Sabbath holy, we are keeping ourselves holy.

We keep the day set apart, separate, distinct, and thus keep our minds set apart, separate distinct from the world of selfishness, separate from the lies of Satan. Rightly understood, the Sabbath safeguards us from the imperial dictator view of God, and we keep our minds focused on our God of love and His



methods. Thus, when one comprehends the meaning and purpose of the Sabbath, why it was created, one wants to participate in it, choosing to align oneself with the Creator God who uses such methods.

Here is the problem regarding days of worship, of which Sunday is a sign:

But when the decree shall go forth **enforcing** the counterfeit sabbath, **and** the loud cry of the third angel **shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image**, the line will be clearly drawn **between the false and the true**. **Then** those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast.--Ev 234, 235 (1899). {LDE 225.4}

Notice it is not about Sunday, but the “enforcing” about the use of arbitrary power to coerce, in a setting in which God’s true character is made known, that one rejects the principles of God for the methods of coercion – this is beastly. This is Satan’s way.

Here is a historic view:

"Whereunto," asked Christ, "shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?" Mark 4:30. He could not employ the kingdoms of the world as a similitude. In society He found nothing with which to compare it. **Earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power; but from Christ's kingdom every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion, is banished.** {AA 12.2}

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; **but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order.** His authority rests upon **goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** {DA 759.1}

What is the mark of the beast – not going to church on Sunday – but Sunday ENFORCEMENT or the enforcement of any other religious practice. Right now in the Middle East as Taliban and others gain political power they are enforcing religious practices on pain of death – this is beastly. This is the mark of the beast, even if they are enforcing Friday.

The quotation said, “But when the decree shall go forth **enforcing** the counterfeit sabbath, **and** the loud cry of the third angel **shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image**, the line will be clearly drawn **between the false and the true.**” When the line will be clearly seen between the false and the true what? Days of worship or what the days of worship are a sign or symbol of?

One of Satan’s strategies is to take God given signs, symbols, metaphors and have people focus on the symbols and lose sight of what the signs or symbols represent, thus darkening the mind.

Classic examples:



- cleansed by the blood – where the blood is seen as literal shed blood, rather than understood as a symbol of the perfect life of Christ, which the righteous internalize
- robe of righteousness – where it is thought to be an actual element that obscures the Father's ability to see us, instead of realizing it is the character of Christ reproduced in us
- And now Sabbath – a sign – Sunday a mark – of two methods, two laws. The law of God, which is the law of love, truth, liberty, the principles the Creator constructed life to operate upon – of which the Sabbath is a sign - is contrasted, at war with, arbitrary power, imposed rules by an enforcing authority of which Sunday is a sign in certain circles, but others Friday enforcement is a sign.

Consider these statements:

Why are men not interested to know what constitutes the mark of the beast? Exodus 31:12-17. The Sabbath question will be the issue in the great conflict in which all the world will act a part. [How does the entire world act a part? Will Muslims give up Friday and start worshipping on Sunday? What about agnostics and atheists? Or, is it these two days stand as signs of something more, and everyone will choose one or the other of two methods, of which these days stand as symbols?] Revelation 13:4-17. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 3}

"Christ died to save sinners, not in their sins, but from their sins. [Imposed law constructs all teach that we are saved in our sins, from the legal penalty, but not saved from our sins, that we continue live sinfully until Christ returns. The truth is that God actually transforms us here and now and we stop living for self, and live loving God and others more than self] The warning given in Revelation shows us the terrible consequence of transgression. By lips that will not lie, God's law is declared to be holy, just, and good. **Our duty to obey this law is to be the burden of the last message of mercy to the world.¹ God's law is not a new thing. It is not holiness created, but holiness made known. It is a code of principles expressing mercy, goodness, and love. It presents to fallen humanity the character of God, and states plainly the whole duty of man.** {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 4}

"'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' This command contains the principles of the first four precepts. And 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Upon these two great principles, the Word of God declares, hang all the law and the prophets. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 5}

"These **principles** are made known by the third angel's message, which declares that **the Creator has always required and always will require obedience to his royal law.** [Why

¹ It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415}



does the Creator require obedience? Why does the Creator require we breathe? Because that is how life is built to operate. Remember the law is not holiness created but holiness made known. The commandments did not impose a law, but made the law known] But this law has been disregarded and transgressed, and is now being ignored by the churches. **Human enactments are placed where God's law should be.** Sunday, a child of the Papacy, has taken the place of God's holy Sabbath. As Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image, and set it up to be worshiped by all, so Sunday is placed before the people to be regarded as sacred. This day bears not a vestige of sanctity, yet it is held up to be honored by all. {RH, April 27, 1911 par. 6}

So what is the problem in which day of worship? The laws that they symbolize – this means a person worshipping on the seventh-day Sabbath of the Bible, but teaching that it is an imposed law by God to test our obedience and that God uses coercive pressure and will inflict punishment upon the wicked in the end, is receiving the mark of the beast, even though they have the right day. This is evidenced by the Jews in Christ's day.

Here is a quote from more than 100 years ago, how one of the founders of our church thought of it:

The time has come for the true light to shine amid moral darkness. The third angel's message has been sent forth to the world, **warning men against receiving the mark of the beast or of his image in their foreheads or in their hands. To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the word of God.** {RH, July 13, 1897 par. 5}

FRIDAY

"Wherefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." These words are full of instruction and comfort. Because the Sabbath was made for man, it is the Lord's day. It belongs to Christ. For "all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1:3. Since He made all things, He made the Sabbath. **By Him it was set apart as a memorial of the work of creation. It points to Him as both the Creator and the Sanctifier.** It declares that He who created all things in heaven and in earth, and by whom all things hold together, is the head of the church, and that by His power we are reconciled to God. For, speaking of Israel, He said, "I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them,"--make them holy. Ezekiel 20:12. **Then the Sabbath is a sign of Christ's power to make us holy. And it is given to all whom Christ makes holy. As a sign of His sanctifying power,** the Sabbath is given to all who through Christ become a part of the Israel of God. {DA 288.2}

It is a sign of those who choose to participate in God's methods of truth, love and freedom, because it is evidence of God's methods, created by God for this very purpose, and by choosing to rest in God,



by choosing to stop self-indulgence, trusting God, we yoke up with Him to experience transformation of character to be like Him.

Can a person do this on Sunday – yes until the time that “enforcement” of Sunday takes place, then one can no longer, because such methods are contrary to God’s character of love and those who are like Jesus will say no to arbitrary enforcement of manmade rules.

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, “The same God...” Did Adam and Eve before sin have a need for physical rest?

Well if it was anything like the new earth, perhaps not:

No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. Rev 22:3-5

Doesn’t sound like we will have the same biorhythms in a world bathed totally in God’s life giving glory.

Now God did cause a deep sleep to come upon Adam, but it wasn't on Sabbath, it was on Friday and Eve came of that experience.

Was there a different rest that the Sabbath was created to provide for humans, as a protection, that the angels had not needed?

What abilities did Adam and Eve possess that angels did not? Procreation and authority to rule other living beings – the animals and the planet earth. Could this lead one to believe they were more than created beings? Thus the Sabbath, ever week, entering into rest with God, acknowledging Him as Creator, and self as a created being, and all one’s abilities as stemming from God would be a protection against pride, arrogance, self-exaltation. What a blessing the Sabbath provides.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Deuteronomy...” Why were such specific instructions written at all? Because the law of love was not written in the heart.

Imagine you had a field, and your son lived nearby and had his own fields. When your son came to visit would you be concerned at all if he pulled some heads of grain from your field to eat – or would you be glad to let him, because you love him and want to share what you have with him. And your son, who loves you, would he come with a sickle to steal your harvest? Of course not.



These types of instructions were written for selfish people who would begrudge someone picking some heads of grain as they walked by, and others who would not plant their own fields, but come in and steal someone else's harvest.

But the Pharisees in Christ's day also operated with selfish hearts and didn't love, thus they viewed the rules as something to be enforced and missed the entire purpose of the need God had in giving the rules in the first place.

So Christ takes them to Scripture and recounts how David at the showbread, which was only for the priests –why? Because preserving his life was more important than a symbolic act.

Read last paragraph, "After citing..." What about the last sentence, "Therefore, He alone had the authority to free the Sabbath from these man-made laws."

That doesn't make sense to me – if they are man-made laws, then doesn't any man, who loves God and embraces the truth have the authority to free the Sabbath from these rules?

TUESDAY

First paragraph states, "The word Luke uses in verse 16, *custom*, comes from a Greek word related to habits constant in time and practice. In other words, Jesus regularly attended the synagogue every Sabbath that he could."

I agree – and my personal view is it was because Jesus was the creator of the Sabbath, understood its purpose and meaning and enjoyed all the methods and principles of God for which the Sabbath was created to reveal and loved this day of the week which says so many good things about God.

But be prepared for the critics to say – of course He did, He was trying to reach the Jews and where were they on Sabbath, and what kind of influence would He have had had He not gone to synagogue on Sabbath?

So, while it is true that it was His habit, and my belief is because of the highest motives, this particular argument isn't necessarily persuasive regarding the value and validity of the Sabbath.

WEDNESDAY

Miracles on the Sabbath – why did Jesus heal chronic conditions on the Sabbath?

What laws are in operation in healing? Design law, laws of health, and the principle of giving, as "virtue" goes out from God and flows into the sick to heal and transform, the law of love in action. This is exactly what the Sabbath was created to reveal.



But, the Jews had burdened the Sabbath with manmade regulations and rules and made it appear as an arbitrary day of imposed behavioral conformity. Thus the Sabbath, created as the greatest evidence and experience of freedom, the devil turned to the day of greatest restriction and enslavement.

Do we struggle with this today? What is the root problem? Accepting the lie about God's law being imposed.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Many Christians..." In my experience most Christians don't go to church on Sunday for any theological reason – they do so primarily out of habit, routine, consensus of family and friends and lifestyle is built around that.

When pressed they will recite a number of theological reasons, but in my experience those are not the motivating reason – the motivating reason is comfort, convenience, routine, habit.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2,4,5,6

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us. And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Sep 27: Class Potluck Picnic 1:00 P.M. – At the Pavilion at Student Park in Collegedale. Plates, eating utensils, napkins and drinks will be provided, please bring food, friends, and lawn chair. Many of our class have responsibilities at local churches and don't often make it to class, but don't let that keep you away from the potluck – We want to see you!

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, will be conducting a workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 10,11: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Vallejo SDA church in Glendale, CA.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Sunday Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon. (Dr. Jennings will be teaching his class Saturday November 15)



The Teachings of Jesus 3rd Q 2014 Death and Resurrection

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

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Nov 22, 2014: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Placerville, SDA church in Placerville, CA.

The Weekend of **Jan 10, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their smile.amazon.com site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**

One of our online viewers, Mark Cox, a Navy Chaplain in HI, found this quote from one of the founders of our church, in support of what we said last week about the Sabbath and true Sabbath observance:



Satan is ever seeking to bring about a state of things in which righteousness may be termed unrighteousness, and unrighteousness righteousness. [Design law is seen as unimportant and obeying imposed rules is righteous, where reasoning for truth is seen as lack of faith and believing without evidence is seen as righteous, where leaving people free is seen as promoting wickedness and making laws to coerce conscience is seen as righteous] What are we to do?--We are to keep in living connection with the God of heaven, ranking in his army and under his banner, and we cannot afford to be in such gross blindness that we cannot discern truth from error. We want to know what is truth... God is going to bring around a condition of things where the good men and the men in authority will have an opportunity to know what is truth indeed... there will be oppression, and an attempt to compel the conscience; but those who have known the truth will be afraid to yield to the powers of darkness... Christ says of his people, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." We are to stand the trial and test of persecution because of allegiance to the truth. Not a move has been made in exalting the idol sabbath, in bringing around Sunday observance through legislation, but Satan has been behind it, and has been the chief worker; but the conscience should not be compelled even for the observance of the genuine Sabbath, for God will accept only willing service. {RH, April 15, 1890 par. 13}

And then Dann Wyatt, one of our online listeners, and a friend who gave me the plane ride on a recent visit to CA, sent this quote from Mount of Blessings p 50:

"Those principles that were made known to man in Paradise as the great law of life will exist unchanged in Paradise restored. When Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's law of love will be obeyed by all beneath the sun."

SABBATH

Read memory text: "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, thought he may die, shall live.'" (John 11:25, NKJV)

Questions about life and death and resurrection – then we will explore the answers:

- What is death?
- If one dies are they still alive?
- When the Bible says, the wages of sin is death, does that mean continued life or cessation of life?
- When God said in the day you eat you will die, does that mean cessation of life or continued living in an altered state?
- When Jesus said the God so loved the world... does perish mean die or continued living for an eternity of suffering?
- When Jesus said those who believe in him will never die, what does that mean?
- Do human beings possess immortality? Or were human beings created as immortal beings?



- What about the Bible passages that say the dead are sleeping? Are they dead or are they sleeping?
- What about the places where it says God killed people, did He kill them or did He put them to sleep? What difference does it make?
- What causes death?
- Does death come from God or from sin?
- Is there a difference between first death and second death?
- Which death is the wages of sin death?
- If first death is the wages of sin, and Christ died to pay the wages of sin for the righteous, then why do the righteous die the first death?
- Why is there a first death?
- Is first death a punishment from God?
- Is second death a punishment from God?
- Why does second death happen?
- What makes up a person – the constituent components?
- What happens to the person, the individual, at first death?
- What happens to the person, the individual, at second death?
- What is the purpose of raising the wicked at the end of the 1000 years if they are only to die again?
- Who causes the death of the wicked at the end of the 1000 years?
- What about Jesus' death – what death did He die? Some say the “second” death – did Jesus die the same death the wicked die in the end? Or, was His death, just like His life, unique?

Answers:

- What is death?
 - In the Bible the word death is used to refer to three states:
 - The state of being out of relationship with God “Dead in trespass and sin” (Eph 2:1, Col 2:13)
 - The state when our physical body ceases to function, but for which a resurrection occurs, what some call first death (Jn 11:25)
 - The state of eternal non-existence in which body and every other aspect of a person no longer exists, what some call the second death (Rev 20)
- If one dies are they still alive?
 - It depends on which of the deaths one is referring to – those dead in trespass and sin – are still capable of accepting Jesus and entering into life, their bodies still function, their individualities still exist, but, having not accepted the Remedy, they remain terminal.
 - All those who have died the first death are going to rise again – thus they are not eternally dead
 - No one has yet died eternally, but those in the future who do will truly be dead



- When the Bible says, the wages of sin is death, does that mean continued life or cessation of life?
 - This means cessation of all life, all individuality, all existence
- When God said in the day you eat you will die, does that mean cessation of life or continued living in an altered state?
 - Eternal non-existence
 - What God was saying in Eden was basically, “in the day you choose to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge you will deviate from the way I have designed life to operate, you will sever your connection with me and the only result is non-existence, or death” unless of course, God intervenes, through Christ to alter that outcome
- When Jesus said the God so loved the world... does perish mean die or continued living?
 - Eternal non-existence
- When Jesus said those who believe in him will never die, what does that mean?
 - That they would exist forever, their existence, individuality, would not be destroyed, but their bodies may cease functioning and they may enter an intermediary state, a state of suspended animation in which their individualities exist, but are not actively operating, thus are suspended in time.
 - The individualities of people in this state are safe and secure with Christ in heaven
 - **Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave.** The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. **The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character.** God in His own time will call forth the dead, giving again the breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend. **There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death.** God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him. {6BC 1093.2}
- Do human beings possess immortality?
 - no, God alone is immortal 1Tim 6:16
 - the wages of sin is death the gift of God is eternal life Rom 6:23
- What about the Bible passages that say the dead are sleeping? Are they dead or are they sleeping?
 - When Jesus entered the ruler’s house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd, ²⁴ he said, “Go away. **The girl is not dead but asleep.**” But they laughed at him. ²⁵ After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. ²⁶ News of this spread through all that region. MT9:23-26
 - When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child’s father and mother. ⁵² Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. “Stop wailing,” Jesus said. “**She is not dead but asleep.**” ⁵³ They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But he took her by the



- hand and said, “My child, get up!”⁵⁵ Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat.⁵⁶ Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened. LK 8:51-56
- Why did they laugh at Him?
 - Was Jesus lying to them? Was Jesus trying to deceive them?
 - Was Jesus being the light of the world and trying to enlighten them?
 - What was Jesus trying to help them see?
 - That what we call death is not what God calls death.
 - What are the implications? What does it mean in the OT if this is not death?
 - It means God has killed/murdered no one – God has put the body in the grave, suspended the activity of the mind, but each one is not dead, they are merely in a state of suspended animation and will come forth again to life, in either one of two resurrections.
- After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”¹² His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.”¹³ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead,¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” JN 11:11-15
 - Again was Jesus lying or trying to deceive?
 - Or was Jesus being the light?
 - Then what we call death is something different than what God calls death
 - But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 1Cor 15:20
- What about the places where it says God killed people, did He kill them or did He put them to sleep?
 - Some have gone to extremes to make a case that all the places in the OT where the Bible says God killed was actually something else happening. This happens because the Bible will describe God doing things that He permits. Let’s examine the possibilities:
 - A person kills themselves, but it is attributed to God – King Saul: 1Chron 10:4,14
 - Satan and his angels kill but it is attributed to God – Job and fire from the sky: Job 1:16
 - Evil people kill but it is attributed to God – the Sabeans in Job 1:14
 - But, then there are also times when God puts people to sleep and it is God doing it, yet some will try to make it out to be Satan and deny God is doing it because of the examples cited above. The reason some do this is because they want to put God in a good light, they rightly don’t want to teach God is a killer or source of death. They make the argument because in Exodus it uses terms like “the destroyer” and point out that Satan is the destroyer.



- The first born of Egypt – what is the problem we get into when we say it was Satan who slew the firstborn?
 - It undermines God and validates Satan why does this happen?
- The problem occurs because of several errors in thinking –
 - first those who do this are generally operating at level six thinking of moral development and understand God’s principles and realize that life emanates from God, and thus based on this principle conclude that it is either God letting go and death ensues, or Satan attacking when God moves back.
 - But several errors of facts contribute to this perspective. First, believing that first death is death, rather than realizing that first death is not death at all, but a state of mercy, an artificial state that exists because of God’s grace to hold at bay the actual destruction of individuality, soul, character of the people, which won’t occur until after the 1000 years.
 - Additionally, it occurs because they don’t understand the purpose of God’s actions in the setting of the Great Controversy. This is level seven thinking. In this setting one realizes God is exposing the gods of Egypt as frauds and powerless. Therefore, if God were to do as these good-hearted people allege, allow Satan to kill the firstborn, then the false gods of Egypt would be shown to actually have power over life and death and would be proven true. Further, in the case they set up, it would mean God would have to rely on Satan to make God look good, once God said, the first born would die.
 - If God is not killing in the OT, then what is He doing?
 - He is working to keep open the channel for the Messiah, to preserve life, to protect, to heal, not to punish.
- What causes death, the actual eternal destruction of the entire being?
 - Unremedied sin, which is deviation from God’s design and incompatible with life when God let’s go and stops hold back the results of our condition.
 - It is also a voluntary choice on part of the wicked
- Does death come from God or from sin?
 - If you have an imposed law construct, then one teaches that God is the source of death. In that Roman model, based on God’s laws being no different than human laws, one believes that God must use power to inflict punishment, death, like human beings do.
 - If one understands God’s law to be the construction protocols upon which life is built, one understands unremedied sin is incompatible with life and results in death. Thus EGW wrote:



- **We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself.** His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. **By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {1SM 235.2}

From *Hard Questions of the Bible*, published by IVP:

In some sense, God's wrath is built into the very structure of created reality. **In rejecting God's structure and establishing our own, in violating God's intention for the creation and substituting our own intentions, we cause or own disintegration.** P 542

Since the created order has its origin in God, Paul can say that the wrath of God is now (constantly) being revealed "from heaven." It is revealed in the fact that the rejection of God's truth (Rom 1:18-20), that is, the truth about God's nature and will, leads to futile thinking (Rom 1:21-22), idolatry (Rom 1:23), perversion of God-intended sexuality (Rom 1:24-27) and relational-moral brokenness (Rom 1:28-32). P 543

The expression "God gave them over" (or "handed them over"), which appears three times in this passage (Rom 1:24,26,28), supports the idea that the sinful perversion of human existence, though resulting from human decisions, is to be understood ultimately as God's punishment which we, in freedom, bring upon ourselves. P 543

In light of these reflections, the common notion that God punishes or blesses in direct proportion to our sinful or good deeds cannot be maintained... God loves us with an everlasting love. **But the rejection of that love separates us from its life-giving power. The result is disintegration and death.** P 543 Kaiser, W., et al., *Hard Saying of the Bible*, Intervarsity Press, 1996,

Is there a difference between first death and second death?

- Yes, first death is an artificial states of being permitted by God's grace to reduce pain and suffering for both the righteous and wicked, while God's plan of healing is being worked out
- The natural result of deviation from God's law is eternal non-existence, but God holds this at bay allowing time for salvation and securing of His universe.
 - "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished." Rom 3:25 NIV
 - "From my paraphrase: "God presented Jesus as the way and means of restoration. Now, through trust established by the evidence of God's character revealed when Christ died, we may partake of the Remedy procured by Christ. God did this to demonstrate he is right and good, because in his forbearance he suspended, for a time, the ultimate



consequence of being out of harmony with how he designed life to exist and has been falsely accused of being unfair.”

- Which death is the wages of sin death?
 - Eternal non existence
 - If first death is the wages of sin, and Christ died to pay the wages of sin for the righteous, then the righteous would not die that death, but they do. The death the righteous do not die is the second death. We confuse people and misrepresent reality by teaching first death is the wages of sin.
- Is first death a punishment from God?
- Is second death a punishment from God?
 - No it is the unavoidable result of choosing to separate oneself from the source of life, it is the wage or payment from sin, not from God.
- Why does second death happen?
 - Because life cannot exist separate from God and in violation of His design
- What makes up a person?
 - Body, soul, spirit – which is what?
 - Body – hardware, soul (psyche) software, identity, individuality, character, unique personhood, spirit – breath of life, energy
 - but sometimes spirit is also used to describe the unique individual person, identity
- What happens to the person, the individual, at first death?
 - body – disintegrates and returns to dust
 - energy – returns to God
 - individuality – stored in heaven, secure with Christ
- What happens to the person, the individual, at second death?
 - body – disintegrates and returns to base elements
 - energy – returns to God
 - individuality – gone for ever no stored consciousness anywhere
- What happens at the first resurrection?
 - ¹³ Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God **will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.** ¹⁵ According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words. 1Thes 4:14-18
 - What does it mean “will bring with Jesus”?
 - At the resurrection Jesus brings with Him the individualities, identities of the dead, and downloads them into new bodies and then they live again.



- What is the purpose of raising the wicked after the end of the 1000 years if they are only to die again?
 - To reveal that when God, put some persons to sleep in human history, His action in doing so in no way determined their ultimate destiny and each person will demonstrate persistent refusal of God and His methods of love and will voluntarily choose to surrender their lives
- The wicked will be resurrected at the end of the 1000 years at the resurrection of damnation into imperfect bodies. (Rev 20:5) At that time they have their individualities downloaded from God's record books (heavenly servers) and the heavenly server is "erased." No individuality is backed up or stored any longer. The New Jerusalem is on earth and a period of time goes by as the wicked gather together to attack the city. (Rev 20:7-9) During this time the righteous are in the city and the gates of the city are *open*. (Rev 21:25) When the wicked march upon the city, in mass, to attack it, then God unveils his full glory and the fire of his presence, the fire of truth and love, consumes all sin.
- What is the point of this resurrection? To reveal that God, when he put people to sleep in OT times, in no way determined the ultimate outcome of their lives. The wicked are raised to finish their lives by the exercise of their own choices. But, even with the New Jerusalem on earth, the minds of the wicked are so settled into the lies about God that they still won't surrender to him and come into the city. Thus it is proved beyond all doubt that it is unremedied sin that destroys, and God is truly the God of love and life. God stands exonerated of all charges in the minds of his intelligent creatures. The last lie, that God is the source of death, is fully disproved.
- Then, when the wicked are destroyed, because their individualities are no longer stored in heaven, they are eternally annihilated, or gone. This is the death of sin, the wages of sin, eternal non-existence. While both righteous and wicked "sleep" until resurrection, only the unhealed wicked are eternally destroyed (or die). Why? Because life was built to exist only in harmony with God's character of love, the wicked having never been restored to God's design for life cannot survive. God, in harmony with his law of love and liberty, sets them free to experience what they have chosen, eternal separation from him, the source of life, and thus they pass permanently from existence.

From the Book *The Great Controversy*:

At the close of the thousand years, Christ again returns to the earth. **He is accompanied by the host of the redeemed and attended by a retinue of angels.** As He descends in terrific majesty He bids the wicked dead arise to receive their doom. They come forth, a mighty host, numberless as the sands of the sea. What a contrast to those who were raised at the first resurrection! The righteous were clothed with immortal youth and beauty. The wicked bear the traces of disease and death... {GC 662.1}

As the New Jerusalem, in its dazzling splendor, comes down out of heaven, it rests upon the place purified and made ready to receive it, and **Christ, with His people and the angels, enters the Holy City.** {GC 662.3}



Now Satan prepares for a last mighty struggle for the supremacy. While deprived of his power and cut off from his work of deception, the prince of evil was miserable and dejected; but as the wicked dead are raised and he sees the vast multitudes upon his side, his hopes revive, and he determines not to yield the great controversy. He will marshal all the armies of the lost under his banner and through them endeavor to execute his plans. The wicked are Satan's captives. In rejecting Christ they have accepted the rule of the rebel leader. They are ready to receive his suggestions and to do his bidding. Yet, true to his early cunning, he does not acknowledge himself to be Satan. **He claims to be the prince** who is the rightful owner of the world and whose inheritance has been **unlawfully** [unlawfully – why? Because he promotes imposed rules, and he claims that Adam gave it to him so its his and it isn't far. Can't you hear him whining? But we realize that nature is sustained by connection to its Creator and operates on natural law and thus Satan has no claim and it is not unlawfully taken from him as it was never his to begin with] wrested from him. **He represents himself to his deluded subjects as a redeemer, assuring them that his power has brought them forth from their graves and that he is about to rescue them from the most cruel tyranny.** The presence of Christ having been removed, **Satan works wonders to support his claims.** He makes the weak strong and inspires all with his own spirit and energy. He proposes to lead them against the camp of the saints and to take possession of the City of God. With fiendish exultation he points to the unnumbered millions who have been raised from the dead and declares that as their leader he is well able to overthrow the city and regain his throne and his kingdom. {GC 663.1} [notice what methods Satan is proposing, violence, coercion, force – and the wicked believe this is right. Think about it, those who teach that God uses these methods and worships a God like this will find themselves in this group using methods of violence to attack the city]

In that vast throng are multitudes of the long-lived race that existed before the Flood; men of lofty stature and giant intellect, who, yielding to the control of fallen angels, devoted all their skill and knowledge to the exaltation of themselves; men whose wonderful works of art led the world to idolize their genius, but whose cruelty and evil inventions, defiling the earth and defacing the image of God, **caused Him to blot them from the face of His creation.** [God took action to take them off the face of the earth, yet, here they are alive again, and watch what happens, demonstrating God's actions did not determine their eternal destiny] There are kings and generals who conquered nations, valiant men who never lost a battle, proud, ambitious warriors whose approach made kingdoms tremble. **In death these experienced no change. As they come up from the grave, they resume the current of their thoughts just where it ceased. They are actuated by the same desire to conquer that ruled them when they fell.** {GC 664.1} [They pick their lives up right where they left off, God merely suspended them in time, but the trajectory of their lives was not altered by God. They are the same people, operating on the same principles, and reject truth and prefer lies in the same way they always have.]

Satan consults with his angels, and then with these kings and conquerors and mighty men. They look upon the strength and numbers on their side, and declare that the army within the city is small in comparison with theirs, and that it can be overcome. **They lay their plans**



to take possession of the riches and glory of the New Jerusalem. All immediately begin to prepare for battle. **Skillful artisans construct implements of war.** Military leaders, famed for their success, marshal the throngs of warlike men into companies and divisions. {GC 664.2} [Notice, a period of time is going by while these preparations for war is taking place – and the New Jerusalem is on earth during this time]

At last the order to advance is given, and the countless host moves on--an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle. Kings and warriors are in his train, and the multitudes follow in vast companies, each under its appointed leader. With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth's broken and uneven surface to the City of God. **By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed,** and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset. {GC 664.3} [Note, the gates are closed when they attack, which means they were open before the attack, which implies what? People were not locked out. So what kept the wicked from coming into the city? Their own freewill choices. They don't want to be there. What does this reveal? That there is nothing God can do for them, no about of truth or love has any impact. They are beyond healing. They have destroyed themselves.]

Why are the wicked raised again? To finish their lives, in the full light of all intelligences and all the saved, to reveal once and for all, God is not the source of death.

What happens next?

Now Christ again appears to the view of His enemies. Far above the city, upon a foundation of burnished gold, is a throne, high and lifted up. Upon this throne sits the Son of God, and around Him are the subjects of His kingdom. The power and majesty of Christ no language can describe, no pen portray. The glory of the Eternal Father is enshrouding His Son. **The brightness of His presence fills the City of God, and flows out beyond the gates, flooding the whole earth with its radiance.** {GC 665.1}

What does this mean?

Fire comes out from God – His life giving glory, the fires of truth and love, in which the righteous live, flow over the earth – and what happens?

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. **He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love.** He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And **all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes.** {GC 541.3}

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except



that which He had received from His Father. The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies." **God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited. He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character.** He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided. Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will? {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters. Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no;** years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; **but they have never trained the mind to love purity;** they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction,** that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. **Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves,** and just and merciful on the part of God. {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable.

Why do the wicked die?

Why do some live longer in these flames?



- Some live longer, because the more selfish, the more they struggle to live. But their characters are out of harmony with nature, with God, with the way life operates and to exist in their state in God's universe torments them. Thus in the end they choose not to live. Sin, which is being out of harmony from the way God created life to operate, and results as a voluntary choice on the part of the person to give up their life.

What about Jesus' death – what death did He die? Some say the “second” death – did Jesus die the same death the wicked die in the end? Or, was His death, just like His life, unique?

- Jesus was a unique being, a blend of human and divine, He didn't have sinful mother and father, but only a sinful mother. He had a humanity capable of being tempted like us in everyway, but He also had a mind/character capable of resisting and overcoming those temptations, in His own strength – we don't.
- The death of the wicked in the end is different from the death Jesus suffered at the cross, but also similar – how?
- God's actions toward both are the same – so when we examine God's role in the death of Christ we can learn something about His role in the death of the wicked. What did God do to His Son? He let Him go to reap what Christ had chosen, which was to go through the Cross. Likewise, God will let go of the wicked and let them experience what they have chosen, which is life separated from Him, eternal death.
- But, note the distinct differences:
 - Christ died trusting the Father – Luke 23:46
 - The wicked die distrusting the Father – Revelation 6:16

 - Christ died longing to see the Father – Mark 15:34
 - The wicked die hiding from the Father – Revelation 6:16

 - Christ died when the Father's presence was hidden – Mark 15:34
 - The wicked die when the Father is fully revealed – 2 Thes 2:8

 - Christ died with the power to stop death from taking Him – John 10:18
 - The wicked die without the power to stop death

 - Christ died less than 72 hours – Luke 24:1-8
 - The wicked die eternally – Malachi 4:1-3, Romans 6:23, James 1:15, 2Pet 3:10-12

 - Christ died when love overcame selfishness – John 3:16, 10:17,18, 1John 3:16
 - The wicked die overcome by selfishness – Revelation 21:8

 - Christ died yet arose with His individuality intact, in other words, death did not destroy His individuality, identity – Acts 1:11
 - The wicked die and their individuality is eternally destroyed



The last paragraph rightly states that Jesus conquered death – first what does that mean? If He conquered death, was He conquered by death? What about the wicked in the end? So, did Christ die the second death or destroy the second death? 1Tim 2:10 by his death he destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light.

Second, how did He destroy death?

What is the basis of life? Life originates in God who alone is immortal (1Tim 6:16). But, when God created life is there some basis for its continuation?

Yes – His design – harmony with Him the source, staying connected to Him, which means living in harmony with the law of love.

Sin – is deviation from this design, and severs our connection with the source of life and thus the result is ruin and death.

Then how did Christ defeat death? By destroying the infection of lies, fear and selfishness which sever our connection with God, and developing a perfect human character in harmony with God's design for life.

Christ was tempted by human emotions to act in self-interest and use His power to save self. But, Christ voluntarily chose, in love, to surrender self, thus crucifying the infection of self-interest, the survival of the fittest instinct, while simultaneously living in perfect love, establishing a perfect humanity. Thus He rose on the third day in a perfected humanity, perfected by His own choices, with the law of love, the protocols for life perfectly restored in the species human.

SUNDAY

In the first paragraph you will notice some confusion regarding the description of death. “sleep stands out as a fitting symbol to reflect the biblical understanding of the condition of the dead. Death is the total end of life. Death is a state of unconsciousness in which there are no thoughts, emotions, works, or relationships of any kind.”

Anything contradictory or confusing about this?

It seems to me they are mixing first and second death experiences. Is first death “the total end of life?” Or a suspension of being alive, but not yet being dead, like the sleep state the Bible describes it as? Will those who die the first death rise again? Did Moses die the first death and live again? Then was his death experience the total end of life?

Whereas, second death is the total end of life from which life does not occur again for those who experience it.



This confusion leads to many false ideas about God and His actions toward people in the Bible and false conclusions about how the wicked die in the end.

TUESDAY

read second paragraph, “The universality...” Any concerns about this paragraph?

It is viewed under the imposed law construct, as if God has rules like a Roman dictator and must have a court hearing and make judgments to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused. This is all false –

Notice the distortions – God is the judge – who determines the fate or final destiny of each person and then God executes the wicked – thus God is the source of death, pain and suffering.

This view teaches eternal dualism, the eternal existence of good and evil in the character of God. It creates a universe in which freedom from fear and selfishness, known as sin, can never occur. This is an infection, from accepting Satan’s view of God’s law and thus falsely concluding these ideas.

It also ignores what the Bible teaches:

- Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son Jn 5:22
- For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its saviour. Those who believe in the Son are not judged; but those who do not believe have already been judged, because they have not believed in God’s only Son. ¹⁹**This is how the judgement works: the light has come into the world, but people love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil.** ²⁰All those who do evil things hate the light and will not come to the light, because they do not want their evil deeds to be shown up. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light in order that the light may show that what they did was in obedience to God. JN 3:17-21

How does judgment work – God presents light and truth, and we make a judgment to accept or reject it, and as we reject truth we pass judgment on ourselves.

They thought themselves passing judgment on Christ; but in rejecting Him they were pronouncing sentence upon themselves. "He that is of God," said Jesus, "heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." {DA 468.1}

The lesson is true for all time. Many a man who delights to quibble, to criticize, seeking for something to question in the word of God, thinks that he is thereby giving evidence of independence of thought, and mental acuteness. **He supposes that he is sitting in judgment on the Bible, when in truth he is judging himself.** He makes it manifest that he is incapable of appreciating truths that originate in heaven, and that compass eternity. DA 468.2



The people who beheld the Saviour at His advent were favored with a fuller manifestation of the divine presence than the world had ever enjoyed before. **The knowledge of God was revealed more perfectly. But in this very revelation, judgment was passing upon men. Their character was tested, their destiny determined.** {DA 475.2}

What is the judgment of God?

You see under the imposed law construct, when we view God's law like Rome's then we teach a God who sits in judgment to determine guilt or innocence.

But, when we understand God is Creator and His laws are the protocols life is actually built upon, then we understand that judgment is actually diagnosis, diagnosing what actually exists. Each person determines, whether they have partaken the Remedy procured by Christ and been reborn, renewed, recreated in the inner man, and thus restored into rightness with God – i.e. healed, or whether they have rejected the Remedy and remained in their terminal condition.

When we understand this then the Bible makes so much more sense.

The last paragraph states, “Jesus indicated that our destiny will be decided on the basis of the moral quality of our deeds (good or bad).”

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” MT 12:33-37

Consider these two cases:

- The Pharisee who makes a big donation, prays regularly, fasts, pays tithe, and is very glad he is not an evil person. LK 18:10
- Rahab – who was a prostitute and lied

Who did good deeds? Who did bad deeds? Who will be in heaven and who will not?

The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” 1Sam 16:7



WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph, “In many Bible...” thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “Still, far more...” Why was it important that Jesus had the power to resist death? What does it reveal in the setting of the Great Controversy?

There was a television show called Stargate, and a couple of seasons had evil entities known as the Ori and these beings demanded worship and would kill all intelligent beings who refused to worship them. They had prophets that were given superhuman abilities and would go out to preach the message of the Ori to convert worlds to worship them. If worlds refused they were annihilated. The message over and over again from the prophets was “do you deny the power of the Ori?”

In one episode one of the heroes was talking to an Ori convert when asked, “do you deny the power of the Ori?” Answered, it isn’t their power that I question, but their use of power. To kill people for not worshipping them means they are not gods worthy of worship.

This is the issue in the Great Controversy – and Christianity has been infected with a false god concept in which many teach that God is powerful and will use His power to kill those who refuse to worship Him.

This is Satan’s view of God. Christ revealed just the opposite, when with the power to stop death, with the power to wipe out His enemies, He refused to use His power to protect Himself and thus proved our God is not like Satan, is not like the Ori. Our God would rather let us kill Him than use His power to stop us. This all powerful God is trustworthy and worthy of our worship.

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions



The Teachings of Jesus 3rd Q 2014 The Second Coming

SABBATH

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:1–3, NKJV).

Is the 2nd coming of Jesus the “capstone of our teachings”, as the lesson suggests? Should it be?

How does our “Law” understanding affect our understanding of the 2nd coming?

What is so important about Jesus’ return?

Is there a risk of falling in to the trap of hoping for a reward vs. fearing a punishment at the 2nd coming?

How does His 2nd Advent relate to the 1st? Any similarities / differences?

SUNDAY

The Promise

In what context was “the promise” of John 14: 1-3 made? See verses 5-11.

5 Thomas said, “Master, we have no idea where you’re going. How do you expect us to know the road?” 6-7 Jesus said, “I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him. You’ve even seen him!” 8 Philip said, “Master, show us the Father; then we’ll be content.” 9-10 “You’ve been with me all this time, Philip, and you still don’t understand? To see me is to see the Father. So how can you ask, ‘Where is the Father?’ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you aren’t mere words. I don’t just make them up on my own. The Father who resides in me crafts each word into a divine act. 11-14 “Believe me: I am in my Father and my Father is in me. If you can’t believe that, believe what you see—these works. MSG.

The disciples still didn’t understand that Jesus was God in the flesh [Immanuel – God with Us]. Hasn’t that been the misunderstanding from the Beginning of the Controversy? Lucifer didn’t believe or accept that the being, we know as Christ, was ONE with God in Spirit, Love, Truth, Freedom, Law, & Mission.



MONDAY

The Purpose of Jesus' Second Coming

What has been the purpose of EVERYTHING God has done since sin originated in Heaven? To fully reveal His character of Love to the Universe.

Might the 2nd coming play a role in that purpose? What about the 3rd coming?

The lesson states "The great plan of Redemption will find its culmination in the Second Coming. Without Christ's return to this earth, His incarnation, death, and resurrection would have no effect for our salvation."

I believe that the "plan of Redemption" will not find its culmination until after the return of the Holy City to Earth and the final destruction of the unrighteous in the "fire" of God's presence [see Rev Ch. 20-22]. Consider why it may take this long. Any other thoughts?

The lesson seems to be making the point that "justice" is the purpose of Christ's 2nd coming – "What's important about the promise in Matthew 16:27 is that justice will be done. We just have to wait for it."

Whose "justice"? God's or ours?

TUESDAY

How will Jesus Come?

Is it so important to know "how" Christ will come as to know the Character of the one who comes? The lesson emphasizes the display of Christ's coming – "Lightning cannot be hidden or faked. It flashes and shines throughout the sky in such a way that everyone can see it. So will be Jesus' second coming. No advertisement will be needed to call people's attention toward it. Every human being, good and evil, saved and lost, even "they who pierced Him" (Rev. 1:7, NKJV), will see Him coming (Matt. 26:64, NKJV)."

What does scripture have to say about lightening / fire from heaven? [see Job 1:16 & Rev 13:13-17]

So, lightening can be produced by a false god or even a man [see Nicola Tesla's Magnifying Transmitter or any Frankenstein movie].

The lesson, also, speaks, eloquently, on the resurrection of the dead "in Christ". Why is this important to keep in mind? How do we reconcile the text that the lesson gives us to consider [specifically v. 14]?

"13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no



means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. NKJV.

“God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus” What does THAT mean?

WEDNESDAY

When Will Jesus Come?

Let's see what the founder of our church has to say.

Q: When will Jesus come? A: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. Matt. 24:14 [see, also Mark 13:10].

I think that's pretty clear. So, by using our higher deductive powers, we may conclude that “the gospel of the kingdom [of Heaven]” has yet to be preached to all of the world.

Has a false gospel yet been preached to all of the world?

Does it matter when Jesus comes? Should it matter?

“I was shown the company present at the Conference. Said the angel: ‘Some food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus.’” – 1T 131,132. [1856].

“It is really not wise to have children now. Time is short, the perils of the last days are upon us, and the little children will be largely swept off before this.” Letter 48 [1876].

What are we to make of these statements from one of the founders of Adventism?

“The long night of gloom is trying, but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come so many would be found unready. –2T 194 [1868].

“Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory. –DA 633,4 [1898].

“Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the **character of Christ** shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. It is the privilege of **every Christian**, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain. – COL 69 [1900] emphasis added.



Have you ever considered that you & I have the capability to hasten the 2nd coming?

THURSDAY

Watch and Be Ready

“**Why** is it crucial for us to watch and always be ready for Jesus’ coming?” Good question. The lesson gives us Matt 24: 42, 44 to consider.

42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

It sounds like our Savior was speaking to those with a moral development in the stage 1 [reward vs punishment] or 2 [marketplace exchange] levels. Thankfully, He doesn’t leave it there. He gives another illustration in the next few verses.

45 “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. 47 Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

Note the character of the “wise servant”. He is charged with “feeding” the “household”. Who does the household represent, and what are they to be fed?



The Book of James 4th Q 2014

Lesson 1: James, the Lord's Brother

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Sep 27: Class Potluck Picnic 1:00 P.M. – At the Pavilion at Student Park in Collegedale. Plates, eating utensils, napkins and drinks will be provided, please bring food, friends, and lawn chair. Many of our class have responsibilities at local churches and don't often make it to class, but don't let that keep you away from the potluck – We want to see you!

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, will be conducting a workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 10,11: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Vallejo SDA church in Glendale, CA.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Sunday Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon. (Dr. Jennings will be teaching his class Saturday November 15)

Nov 22, 2014: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Placerville, SDA church in Placerville, CA.

The Weekend of **Jan 10, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their smile.amazon.com site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**

I received this email this week:

Your ministry has been a wonderful blessing to me. It has been like finding the missing pieces of a beautiful puzzle. You have confirmed for me many things I already believed and have enlarged and enhanced my understanding of many others. I am anxious to share the materials. I have been pointing people to your website, but am not getting the response I expected.



I would like to try passing out DVDs of the "God Shaped Brain" seminar. Perhaps after my fellow church members are introduced to you, they will be more interested in more of your materials. Please send 20 of them.

I would also like 20 of the truth love and freedom Bible study guides about the trustworthiness of God. And 20 copies of the Fundamental Focus booklets. FL

INTRODUCTION

The introduction to the lesson points out in the third paragraph, that Martin Luther considered the book of James to be an "epistle of straw." Luther relegated James, Jude, Revelation and Hebrews to the back of the Bible and stated he couldn't find Christ in these books and didn't consider them part of Scripture.

The lesson rightly points out in the fourth paragraph of the introduction, "Luther's emphasis on Paul's epistles, especially Romans and Galatians, and his rejection of James for anything more than devotional value, has influenced a large segment of Christian thinking through the centuries."

First I want to point out Luther was a hero of the reformation, a man of God used by God, but not a perfect person, a human being with limited understanding who didn't come to resolve all the distortions that had infected Christianity over the centuries.

How has Christianity been influenced by the rejection of James and the three other books by Luther?

- The loss of the larger view of a controversy involving the entire universe over God's trustworthiness
- The focus on a self-centered read of Scripture, it is all about me and my salvation
- In reaction to the infection of imposed law with all its arbitrariness, a legal religious emphasis, frequently referred to as penal substitution which focuses on legal pardon, legal solutions, legal adjustments and devalues or ignores actual transformation and regeneration of people
- Division and factions as Christians focus on the right legal and proper interpretation of a verse, doctrine, prophecy, rather than identifying God's design protocols and principles for living

Any other examples or thoughts?

SABBATH

Read memory text, "You are my friends if you do whatever I command you." Jn 15:14

Do you find that interesting way of making friends? Go up to a group and say, you are my friends if you do whatever I command you?



How is this true when Jesus says it and how can this be misunderstood?

If viewed through a dictator lens, a lens of authority being based on position or rank, then the king has the right to command and we show our friendship by obeying his commands without question. To question is seen as rebellious and unfriendly.

In the Designer view, we understand that authority rests on truth, and God is the source of all truth, and also has a character of love, with the best interest of all His creatures at heart. Thus, if we are His friends, we know Him, we know His character of love, we know that His methods work and are best, thus with intelligent understanding, appreciation for who He is, we do what He commands, even if we don't understand the purpose of the specific command, we do understand the one who gave the command and know it is for good, thus we do what He says and are thankful He cares enough to give us His directions.

- Which way have you viewed His commands throughout your life?
- Has your view of His commands changed over the years?
- What has impacted you to change your view, and how has your changed view impacted your desire to carry out His commands?

What is the consequence for viewing his commands like a dictator? That it increases fear and rebellion, that we might do the behavior but we are not being transformed to godliness. People who obey because the rule says so, because God must punish if we don't, and who refuse to grow beyond this point even when opportunity to grow presents itself, generally don't become trustworthy people because they require oversight and supervision or else they will rebel.

This is why many young people leave the church. They are raised in homes with dictator god concepts, given a list of rules, many of which don't make sense. They try to grow to a better understanding, but when they ask why, are told things like:

- The Bible says so
- God says so
- The pastor says so
- EGW says so
- Because "I" said so
- Because if you don't you will be lost
- Because if you don't it will be sin and you will have to face that sin in the judgment
- Because if you do go there your angel won't go with you

And when no better reason is given they end up leaving the church as soon as they are out from under the ruling authority.



Imagine something as simple as brushing teeth – the very young child is given the rule, and told to do so, and perhaps a punishment is threatened if they don't. But what happens if when they start thinking, they ask questions, “Mommy why do I have to brush my teeth?” And the answer is:

- The Bible says so
- God says so
- The pastor says so
- EGW says so
- Because “I” said so
- Because if you don't you will be lost
- Because if you don't it will be sin and you will have to face that sin in the judgment

If the child never had any reason other than these, what would the child likely do when they left home? And we wonder why so many of our children leave the church? We must bring them back to the truth of God's law of love, the design upon which life is built, and show them that life is built to operate upon this design, and to deviate from it decays more than teeth, it decays the mind, the heart, the soul, relationships and true happiness, peace and joy.

SUNDAY/MONDAY

The lesson points out that James started out doubting Jesus' mission and fitness, but later became a convert and devoted follower of Jesus. James became so devout that he was eventually called James the Just and was the first leader of the church in Jerusalem.

The lesson states, “Thus, despite starting out in great doubt about Jesus, James ended up being a spiritual giant in the early church.”

What does this tell us about us determining who is fit for God's work? How often do we limit people from working in the church because of some problem we have identified in their history?

Consider the list of people who have been God's agents recorded in Scripture, what do we learn about God from these people:

- Noah
 - The world is dying, bent on self-destruction, what do we learn about God through Noah?
 - Did God want the world to die? Or did He warn and try to save?
 - And after the flood Noah ends up drunk – should we throw Noah out of the church?
- Abraham
 - What about Abraham's idols? How did God treat Abraham?
 - What about Abraham's lies? How did God treat him?



- What about when Abraham argued over Sodom? Shouldn't Abraham have just gone along? Was Abraham referred to as a friend of God? Yet he didn't blindly obey, he objected, what does this mean?
 - What about when Abraham took other wives?
 - What does Abraham's life witness about God?
- Lot (and his daughters) – what do we learn about God?
- Jacob/Israel
 - What do we learn about God?
 - Jacob was a conniver and deceiver and polygamist
 - How did God treat him?
- Moses
 - Moses was a murderer – How did God treat Moses?
 - Would we allow Moses to be leader in the church?
 - When God called Moses, how did Moses respond?
 - When God said He was going to wipe out Israel what did Moses say?
 - What is Moses' witness about God?
- Samson
 - What does Samson's life witness about God?
 - God gives gifts but doesn't control
 - Patiently waits for us to be willing to be healed
 - Was Samson gifted by God?
 - Would we allow Samson to lead in our church?
- David
 - Murderer, adulterer, violent man – How does God treat David?
 - And what do we see in David's life?
 - Does it witness something about God?
- Solomon
 - What witness does he give about God?
 - God married 700 wives, and had 300 mistresses
 - He killed his own son to false gods
 - Who wrote Ecclesiastes?
 - What do we learn about God in His treatment of Solomon?
- Manasseh
 - Manasseh brought prostitutes into the temple
 - Sacrificed his own son to Moloch
 - Was taken captive, but repented and God had him restored to his throne
 - What witness does Manasseh give about God?
- Your life and mine – what do we learn about God from your life and mine?
 - If we have messed up, done awful things, can we still be witnesses for God if we surrender to Him and allow Him to work in our lives?
 - What do we witness about God?



- Do we witness about Him by what we tell others, how we describe Him? What about how we treat others?
- But what if we, in our human weakness, have moments in which we don't act graciously – what then?
- How will God treat us?
- Will He cast us off?
- How should we respond after a mistake?
- Can we still be used of God if we have made mistakes?
- How should we treat someone who has made mistakes?
- How would God treat them?
- Can we love people who make mistakes, someone who has a drug or alcohol problem, what about someone with a porn addiction, what about someone who has committed adultery, what about someone who embezzled, or lied, or murdered, or some other act of selfishness which hurt another?
- How should we treat people? How does God treat them? Does God see vengeance upon them? Or does God seek to heal them, to remove selfishness and fear, to remove guilt and shame, to restore them to love and trust? Should we do any less?
- How do we help people trapped in fear, guilt and shame? By loving them, in the same way a doctor or parent loves a child sick with fever, vomiting, diarrhea, cough, sores, rash, scars – as you look at your sick child do you ever want to punish them for being sick? What do you want to do? Heal them – this is how, we must come back to seeing sin for what it is – deviation from the way life is designed to operate, a sickness, which needs healing. We must stop presenting sin as breaking rules and God as a judge waiting to punish.

God takes the worst cases and heals, restores, cleanses, recreates. The weak things of the world to confound the wise!

TUESDAY

The lesson rightly points out in the first paragraph, “ ‘the Reformation did not...end with Luther. It is to be continued to the close of this world's history,’ because ‘grave errors’ were perpetrated by the Reformers and many ‘important truths’ were still to be revealed.”

What important truths were still to be revealed?

- The truth about God's character of love
- The truth about God's law of love being the design protocols upon which life is created
- The truth about God's plan to heal and restore, not merely pardon
- The truth about the false legal view that infected the church
- The truth about the nature of man, being mortal, awaiting the gift of immortality
- The truth about the final end of sin and sinners



- The truth about the purpose of the Sabbath and how it is a sign of the Designer who presents truth in love and leaves free, contrasted with any day of arbitrarily imposed worship enforced with coercive power.
- The truth about the purpose of Christ's mission to earth – which includes:
 - Revealing the truth about God and Himself
 - Exposing Satan as liar and fraud
 - Securing the universe unfallen in its innocence
 - Procuring the Remedy to our sinful condition
 - Revealing why death occurs and the Father's role in it
 - Destroying death
 - Destroying Satan and Satan's power
 - Developing a perfect human character
- others?

The lesson points out that the SDA church was raised up to proclaim the “third angel's message.”

Can someone tell me what that is?

It is the message of:

- the truth about God and His character of love (everlasting good news)
- being restored in character to be like Christ through trust in God, which results from coming back to the truth of God as Christ revealed (giving God glory)
- the time in earth's history for God to be seen for who He really is so people can make a right judgment about Him and accept His healing Remedy (the hour of his judgment has come)
- It is a message which exposes the legal system coming from the Dark Ages as an infection which misrepresents God as a dictator like Rome and keeps people in fear and thus separated from Him, a system of confusion based on arbitrary law and thus thousands of interpretations of Scripture. (Babylon is confused and fallen)
- It is a message calling people from that system and warning of the dire results of refusing to be restored in character to live in harmony with God's design for life. (all who receive the mark of loyalty to a beastly system of coercive power which enforces arbitrary rules, worshipping a god who must punish, will suffer terrible torment when the truth is revealed and they will be destroyed for all eternity)

What role does the law play in the third angel's message? Here are some thoughts of how are church used to teach it:

- **But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.**--RH, Apr 5, 1898. (2SM 211.) {2MCP 564.1} **Why? Because this is how life is designed to operate. It is the same reason the laws of health require one to breathe.**



- **The divine law requires us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves.** {A New Life NL 32.1} *why?*
- **His law requires your heart's supreme affection for your Maker. It requires you to do unto others as you would have them do to you.** {BEcho, February 15, 1889 par. 8}
- This is the voice of God to you, my brethren and sisters who profess to keep the law of God. **That law requires that you love your neighbor as yourself.** Are you doing it? {RH, March 11, 1884 par. 10}
- The Lord will give ample light to all who will be true and loyal to him, but he will show no more favor to Phariseism and self-righteousness today than when he walked in his humanity in our world. [*what is Phariseism? a legal religion, a religion focused on rule keeping with a god who must punish, a religion which requires payments be made to pay for our sins. In other words, penal substitution theology*] The soul that encourages an atmosphere of doubt, God cannot favor with constantly increasing grace. [*what encourages doubt? presenting a god who will be angry and inflict punishment upon you if you sin, thus we cannot grow in grace because w don't trust Him enough to open up to Him. We instead try to make ourselves better.*] His mercy and the gracious influences of his Spirit remain the same for all who will receive them. His offer of salvation does not change. **It is man who changes his relationship to God.** Many place themselves where they cannot recognize his grace and his salvation. ***They are under a delusion as to what constitutes Christianity.*** And while man refuses to become pure, holy, and undefiled, as God's law requires him to do, he is walking away from Christ. {RH, February 15, 1898 par. 10} [*Why would someone refuse to be healed, to be cleansed, pure, holy and undefiled? Because they have accepted a false version of reality which tells them they are legally guilty and they don't need healing, they need legal pardon.*]
- **...his law requires us to love God supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves.** {ST, November 23, 1891 par. 5}
- **God's law requires that justice and right be exercised between man and his fellow man; it requires that we shall not injure our neighbor in his property, his feelings, his health, or his good name. It requires compassion for the afflicted, even if he be our enemy, that in all our associations with our fellow beings we shall show the same love and care that we would wish to have exercised toward ourselves.** {ST, January 7, 1897 par. 3}

So if the law requires us to love our enemies, wouldn't that be true of God? Then do you see the fallacy of teaching that God hates, or inflicts torture upon His enemies!

- **Christ came to this world to live the law and represent the character of God, that the delusions which Satan had brought upon the world might be dispelled.** [*What is a delusion? – a fixed false belief and the world is fixed in a false belief about God*] In the sermon



on the mount, He who gave the law became an expositor of the law. That sermon, so full of what it means to love and obey God, is the unfolding of His character. **The law is shown to be a representation of God's character**, that man may see that he must render obedience to the law if he would become a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. **This law requires nothing short of perfect spiritual obedience.** {ST, February 24, 1898 par. 5}

How can experience what the law does require?

- While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. **God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.** {MB 54.2}

thoughts? Does this sound like legal pardon? Getting signs paid, a declaration of us being righteous, covering us with some magic robe so the Father can't see us? No, it is the reality of what God wants and is doing, the actual, real, literal transformation of our hearts and minds to be back in harmony with Him and His design for life – the law of love written again on our hearts!

WEDNESDAY

The lesson suggests that when James is referring to the Twelve tribes scattered abroad he is referring to those who have accepted Christ and thus became part of those who benefit from the promise made to Abraham.

What was the promise made to Abraham?

That God would send a Savior, who would overcome the sin problem and provide a Remedy to heal and restore all who are restored to trust in God, as Abraham was.

Thus, those who are heirs to the promise to Abraham are those who trust God as Abraham did, therefore James is referring to all humans who trust God like Abraham.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:28,29

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ



is all, and is in all. ¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col 3:9-12

Did you notice how we are to clothe ourselves with the character traits of Christ and it is by partaking of Christ this happens. This is what it means to be clothed in the robe of His righteousness.

Read the bottom pink section, "A church scattered..." What is it that is to unite God's people on earth for translation?

They overcame him by the **blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.** Rev 12:11

What does this mean?

The blood of the lamb?

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and **drink his blood**, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and **drinks my blood has eternal life**, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food and **my blood is real drink.** ⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and **drinks my blood remains in me**, and I in him. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. JN 6:53-57

What is the blood of the lamb?

- blood is symbolic of both the perfect character/life of Christ and the truth, the words of truth spoken by Christ
 - "In the **study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood** of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life." Fundamentals of Christian Education 378.1
 - "The leaven of **truth** works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By **it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb.**" Christ's Object Lessons 102
- We partake of the truth, which destroys lies and wins to trust and then open the heart and partake in a living relationship with Christ, and the outpouring of the Spirit the character of Christ reproduced within as we choose to love and align ourselves with Him

Thus, by coming back to the truth about God, and partaking of the character of Christ we are changed and our selfishness is replaced with love and we are willing to give our lives rather than work to save self.



So what unites us? The truth about God and having the law of God written in the heart so that we have a character like Christ's, thus we live in harmony with His principles of truth (having a love for truth and a willingness to be open, learn and follow the truth), love for God and others, and freedom.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "James had the..."

Why do you think he chose to use the word servant or bondservant? Perhaps to emphasize that the kingdom of God is not of this world, and there are no genetic benefits to salvation or being part of God's kingdom. One cannot by biological relationship be part of the kingdom of God, but must have the character of God reproduced within.

This, would significantly alter the way many people consider the Jews – many consider genetic relationship with Abraham to be of some value – but it adds nothing to salvation – what matters is restored unity with God through Christ.

Read last paragraph, "As we study..." What is weak faith? Superstition –

- Belief without evidence
- Belief in position
- Belief in symbols
- Belief in rituals

Examples:

- The Bible said it I believe it that settles it
- EGW said it, who are we to question?
- Believing without thinking, thus believing lies

When we speak of unbelief, we do not mean that a person believes nothing. The mind must rest upon something; and **when it does not grasp truth, it lays hold of error. All men in one sense believe, and the effect produced upon the heart and character is according to the things believed.** Eve believed the words of Satan, and **the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors,** and it was only by repentance toward God and faith in the promised Messiah that they could hope ever to regain the lost image of God. **Paul had faith before his conversion; but it was not a correct faith. His self-righteousness strengthened his faith** that he was doing God's service in rejecting Christ, and he enjoyed a restful satisfaction. **False faith as well as true faith will give peacefulness for a time.** Paul verily thought that he was doing God service when he was persecuting the followers of Christ and putting them to death. **He was sincere in his belief; but sincerity will not make error truth, nor truth error.** "When the commandment came," says Paul, "sin revived, and I died." He then received the truth as it is in Jesus, and experienced



its transforming power upon his soul. The truth was so firmly planted in his heart that he could say, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}

We have power over what we believe, but what we believe holds power over us!

While people are free to believe or have faith in anything, not all beliefs are equally healthy.

What is mature faith? – Evidence based understanding and confidence in reality and the God of reality.

The faith that works by love and purifies the soul is the only true faith. The faith that does not produce fruit, that does not reveal the Christlikeness, is a false faith. {ST, February 1, 1899 par. 8}

In regard to religious faith being sacred to one's self and not to be interfered with, I cannot harmonize this with the life mission and work of Christ upon the earth. Idolaters have a religion; they may make this same plea: My religion is sacred to myself. Hands off; do not interfere with my honest belief and worship. It is the work of God's servants to feel a deep solicitude for the souls for whom Christ died. **And if they see them in error or in danger, through a false faith, it is their duty to do all in their power to convert them to the truth and not leave them in darkness and deception.** {4MR 229.2}

What does this mean? How are we to do this? What lines do we not cross?

FRIDAY

Read question 1 – “The letter of James...” Is it actually about the day, or the God of the day and His methods and principles, of which each day is symbolic?

So who is the one that is part of God's kingdom:

- a person who honors Sunday, but does so with a mind filled with God's character of love, and promotes the principles of truth, love and freedom and would give their lives for another, or,
- A person who honors the Bible Sabbath as a test of obedience, and teaches that God as Creator has the right to test us and if we fail to pass the test, and don't keep the Bible Sabbath God will torture and kill us?

Why do you give your answer? What evidence to support it?



The Book of James Lesson 2 4th Q 2014 The Perfecting of Our Faith

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com
Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, will be conducting a workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 10,11: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Vallejo SDA church in Glendale, CA.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Sunday Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon. (Dr. Jennings will be teaching his class Saturday November 15)

Nov 22, 2014: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Placerville, SDA church in Placerville, CA.

The Weekend of **Jan 10, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

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SABBATH

Read memory text, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning it shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb 12:2 NIV)

The context – from the book of Hebrews, Paul (thought by most to be the author) has just recounted the lives of all the people who were healed through trust in God.

- What is faith?
- How is it that Christ authors and then perfects our faith?
- What methods does God use?

Faith is established upon evidence, not proclamations. I had a patient, whose friends were Christian and they kept telling her she needed to have faith in Jesus, but she said "I can't." To which I said, "Of course you can't." Which surprised her. So I asked her if she were at the mall and a stranger came up



and asked for the keys to her car and house and said, “Its okay you can trust me.” would she give the keys? She said no way. Well, “If you cant give the keys of your car and home to a stranger how can you give the keys of your life to a stranger.”

Trust or faith is established by experience, by evidence of trustworthiness. Jesus is the member of the Godhead who left infinity and entered linear time to interact with His creation.

Jesus is the member of the Godhead through whom all the evidence has been provided:

- all things were made by him
- he is the one who interacted with people through history
- he is the pillar of fire and cloud and rock that Israel saw
- he became a human and revealed God in human flesh
- he voluntarily surrendered His life to heal us
- he demonstrated he would rather let us kill Him than use His power to control us

Jesus authors our faith by creating us, revealing the truth about Himself the Father and God’s methods, and leaves us free to choose.

Then how does he perfect our faith?

This is my paraphrase of our memory text, but I am starting in 11:32 and going through 12:13, because I want to give you a feel for what is being described. How God perfects our faith.

Heb 11:32 And how much more do I have to say? How many more lives do I have to recount? I don’t need to remind you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets³³ who through their trust in God conquered kingdoms, administered God’s healing methods, received the promised blessings, shut the lions’ mouths,³⁴ cooled the heat of the flames, escaped being killed by the sword, had their weakness turned into strength and became unstoppable in battle, annihilating God’s enemies.³⁵ Women had their dead loved ones resurrected and brought back to them. Others were tortured and refused to compromise the truth to gain their freedom, so they will gain the resurrection of life.³⁶ Some were mocked, others beaten, while still others were put in shackles or imprisoned.³⁷ Some were stoned, others sawed in two and still others put to death by the sword. They lived in poverty wearing animal skins and were constantly ridiculed and mistreated—³⁸ this selfish, sick world was not worthy of them. They lived in desolate places wandering in desert and mountains and hiding in caves.

Heb 11:39 All of these were commended for their trust in God, yet none of them received the fulfillment of all that was promised.⁴⁰ But don’t get discouraged, God has planned something much better for us, that they and we together will be perfectly healed and rejoice together in the earth made new.



Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded with so much evidence of God's goodness and so many people who have experienced God's healing power that comes through trust, let us rid ourselves of everything that obscures our view of God, and selfishness with its desires that so easily distract and damage, and let us diligently finish the treatment course laid out for us.² Let us fix our minds on Jesus, the perfect revelation of God who establishes and fully matures our trust in God. Jesus, for the joy of healing and restoring God's creation, endured the cross, nullifying its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.³ Consider the significance of all Christ has done – the all-powerful Creator permitted his creatures to torture and kill him rather than use his power against them. So don't get tired or give up or lose heart.

Heb 12:4 In your struggle against selfishness, you have not yet had to lay down your life so that others might live.⁵ And you have forgotten that God loves you as his children, for the scripture says:

“My child, don't make fun of the Lord's treatment, and don't get discouraged when he sets you straight,

Heb 12:6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he works to heal everyone who becomes his child.”

Heb 12:7 Endure difficulties as opportunities for growth; God is treating you as his children. For what father doesn't want his children to be healthy and grow and mature and what child is not disciplined by his father?⁸ If you do not experience God working to heal, mature and improve you (and God works to heal everyone), then you are illegitimate children and not his true sons and daughters – you have rejected his offer of kinship.⁹ Think about it, we have all had human fathers who instructed and corrected us and we love and respect them for it. How much more should we willingly participate in the healing plan with the Father of all intelligent beings and live!¹⁰ Our fathers worked with us and taught us for just a few years, the best they could; but God works to heal us for eternity, that we may partake of his perfect goodness and love.¹¹ No discipline or therapy is enjoyable at the time, but painful. But if intelligently cooperated with, it results in healing of mind, development of Christlike character and peace of heart.

Heb 12:12 Therefore, stiffen your upper lip and straighten your spine and redouble your determination to stay the healing course.¹³ “Remove the obstacles to your recovery,” so that the infection of selfishness may not permanently deform your character, but rather you will be healed.

So how does God perfect our faith? What methods?

The law of exertion – strength comes from exercise – if you want something to be stronger you must exercise it. So what enables us to exercise our faith? Problems and situations that we ourselves cannot fix.



Another word for faith is trust – we must have experience in trusting another for trust to grow strong.

One of the human experiences that bonds trust like no other is war, combat, soldiers who literally trust their lives to their friends, experience a bond of trust that is stronger than most bonds in life.

When we find ourselves in situations beyond our own ability to handle and fix, and choose to do what we know is our responsibility in governance of ourselves, and then trust God with the outcome, we experience a strengthening of our trust or faith in God.

Problems are like weights, consider a person going to physical therapy and working with one pounds weights, and then as they master the one pound weight what does the therapist do? Increase the weight – for what purpose? But what does the devil do as the weight goes to four, 8, 10, 20, 50 pounds? The devil tempts, “Look, he keeps burdening you. Every time you succeed with one he puts more and more and more on you. He’s trying to crush you, not help you. You can never get ahead or win with this guy.”

How many of us, in life, when we have problems or stressors, hear this evil voice tempting us to doubt God?

Understand, what is happening – why does the physical therapist keep increasing the weights? For what purpose? For our recovery, for our restoration and complete independence and autonomy. The only way to be ourselves, to be healed is to cooperate with God and go through it, God cannot overwrite our characters by divine power or else it would destroy us as individuals. We must be active, willing, choosing participants and in so doing we experience transformation, through His love, presence, and power in our lives.

Specific steps we can take to increase our faith or trust:

- Spend time getting to know God, come to an understanding of His design, methods, principles – thus know His actions are always to heal and restore
- Realize what is happening in the Great Controversy
- Remember what God has done for us in the past, for others, the stories in the Bible – fill your mind with these examples, and then our own experiences. We have nothing to fear for the future, expect we forget how the Lord has led in the past.
- Faith is strengthened by works – how? When we are given an instruction, a duty, a direction from God, and then carry it out, in the outworking of God’s providence we see and experience His wisdom, presence, knowledge, love, and our faith grows stronger.
 - In human relationships it is the same thing. Have you ever taught someone something, how to do something, and they didn’t understand, they questioned why, and you said “trust me, do it, and see” and they trusted you enough, and did it, and having done it their trust in you increased.



- If we never actually put into practice what God says, we don't get the benefit, the healing, the blessing, the growth, the maturation, and therefore, don't get increasing faith, trust and confidence in God.

Here is an historic view from Counsels to the Church:

We all desire immediate and direct answers to our prayers, and are tempted to become discouraged when the answer is delayed or comes in an unlooked-for form. **But God is too wise and good** to answer our prayers always at just the time and in just the manner we desire. **He will do more and better for us than to accomplish all our wishes.** And because we can trust His wisdom and love, **we should not ask Him to concede to our will**, but should seek to enter into and accomplish His purpose. Our desires and interests should be lost in His will. **These experiences that test faith are for our benefit.** By them it is made manifest whether our faith is true and sincere, resting on the word of God alone, or whether depending on circumstances, it is uncertain and changeable. [what does this mean? True faith means we know God and have faith in Him, regardless of events around us. Faith based on circumstances is just that, we have faith in God when events are going according to what we believe is right for us] **Faith is strengthened by exercise.** We must let patience have its perfect work, remembering that there are precious promises in the Scriptures for those who wait upon the Lord. {CCh 305.5}

Anyone want to share how their faith has been strengthened by exercise?

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, "In short, we..." No doubt, trials are used to strengthen our faith, does this mean all trials are from God?

Just like weights, they can be used to strengthen our muscles, or they can be used to tie around a person's feet to drown them.

Trials can likewise be used to try and drown people, if they are brought by an enemy.

Job is a good example – the trials in Job's case were not needed to strengthen his faith. He was already mature in his faith, so settled into the truth nothing could move him. The trials were not therapeutic, but designed by Satan to try and destroy or overwhelm him, and perhaps his wife as well.

As the end of time approaches, the righteous will be "sealed" so settled into the truth both intellectually and spiritually they cannot be moved, and trials will come. Those trials will not be for the strengthening of our faith. But, we, like Job, could not handle such trials, if we hadn't previously handled smaller trials and had our faith strengthened.



What prepares us for the larger trials are the smaller ones we successfully handle. An Olympic power lifter doesn't start out with 500 pounds, and those who are able to stand in the end will be enabled by prior experiences with God.

Is there inherent benefit in a trial? Have you ever heard things like:

- no pain no gain
- whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger
- pain is fertilizer for the soul

These witticisms are expressing the law of exertion, that there is a positive benefit of going through difficulties. Thus, can people rejoice in difficulties, because they realize the trial is strengthening them?

Why do we rejoice more if we know God, than those who do not know God?

Because we are not alone, we know there is a higher purpose than just our personal strength and growth, because we know that the trial will never be greater than we can handle, and that God will provide the means to overcome.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "Read James 1:2-4..." First question – what is faith founded upon? Evidence!

In this conflict between God and Satan, where is the battle ground? Our minds, 2Cor 10:3-5. And how much truth is on Satan's side? None – he is the father of lies.

How much truth is on God's side? 100%, Jesus said, the truth will set us free (JN 8:32)

So, if you have no truth on your side, do you want people looking for evidence, facts truth or believing without evidence facts and truth?

Thus, ideas that teach:

- we have faith we don't need evidence
- to question is a lack of faith
- God said, we don't question, we just believe
- Reason must submit to the word of Scripture

Or any such idea are from Satan and designed to obstruct the mind from seeing the truth.

God says, "Come let us reason together..." "You will know the truth..." "Every person should be fully persuaded in his own mind." etc.



Here is another historical view:

- **"God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith.** His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His Word, are all established by testimony that **appeals to our reason**; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. **Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration.** Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth, will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith." *Steps to Christ* 105 (1892); *9MR* 202; compare *Education* 169
- **"God gives sufficient evidence for the candid mind to believe."** *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 232 (1876); *5T* 675; *2MCP* 672; *9MR* 204; *11MR* 288; *RH* Feb. 13, 1900
- "Here is a test which all may apply if they will. None need be left in uncertainty and doubt. **There is always sufficient evidence upon which to base an intelligent faith.** But God will never remove from any man all occasion for doubts. Those who love to dwell in the atmosphere of doubt and questioning unbelief can have the unenviable privilege. **He who turns from the weight of evidence** because there are a few things that he cannot make plain to his finite understanding, will be left to the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and skepticism, and will make shipwreck of faith." *Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1886 (*2ST* 83:2:2); *4T* 232

The lesson suggests that James says we need trials to test the genuineness of our faith, is that what you understand he is saying? Or is he saying we need trials to strengthen and develop our faith?

In the pink section at the bottom it asks, "If you died right now, would you be good enough to be saved? Or if you had died two weeks after you had accepted Jesus, would you have been good enough to be saved? Do you think in six months you will be good enough? What does your answer tell you about your need for the perfect robe of Christ's righteousness..."

What is the problem with these questions?

It would be like saying, "If you took your antibiotics would you be good enough to be healed, or if two weeks after taking your medicine are you good enough to be healed..."

The problem is that the questions arise from that false legal view of God and focus the question on us, like a human court does. Are we good enough? This incites fear of not being good enough, when that isn't even the question. Rather the question is what Jesus said, that He did not come for those who are well, but for the sick. So a better question is: Do you recognize you are sick and need God's Remedy provided through Jesus? For Christ came for the sick not the well. This is why the prostitutes and tax collectors were entering the kingdom of God before the Pharisees.



TUESDAY

How is wisdom different than knowledge?

- Knowledge is knowing facts or data; wisdom is knowing what the facts mean and what to do with them.
- Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is fruit, wisdom is knowing it doesn't go in a fruit salad.
- Knowledge is knowing smoking is damaging, wisdom is not smoking.
- Knowledge is knowing Jesus is God, wisdom is knowing to trust Him – the devils have knowledge but not wisdom
- Knowledge is knowing God is love and His law is love, wisdom is knowing how to put love in to effective action, when to give and when the most loving action is to withhold because to give would injure or enfeeble another.

James tells us that if we lack wisdom, we should ask, but not to doubt when we ask. Read bottom pink section “We must ask...” thoughts?

Why must we not doubt? Here is James 1:2-8 from my New Testament Paraphrase, entitled *The Remedy*:

James 1:2 My brothers and sisters in God's family, I want you to rejoice and keep a positive attitude whenever you face troubles of various kinds, 3 because every trial exercises your trust in God, which overcomes fear and selfishness and builds a confident steadfast application of the Remedy. 4 And this steadfast engagement in God's treatment must be completed so that you may be fully healed, mature and like Christ in character, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you don't understand God's methods, are confused in your thinking, or lack wisdom, ask God because he, without pointing out defects, enthusiastically gives to all who ask and it will be given you. 6 But when you ask, ask with the certain knowledge that he longs to give, not wavering back and forth in fear and uncertainty like a fishing bobber tossed about on ocean waves, for your fear will obstruct your ability to receive what he longs to give. 7 Those consumed by fear will not think they can receive anything from the Lord; 8 they are unstable, controlled by emotions, and can't make up their minds about anything.

So why do those who doubt not receive wisdom? Because God refuses to bestow, or because their doubt prevents them from receiving?

WEDNESDAY

What contributes to doubt?

- Lack of information – ignorance
- Lies
- Immaturity
- Lack of experience



- Lack of relationship with God
- Patterns of not thinking – history of believing things without evidence, and believing things that don't make sense
- History of having a previously held belief proved false in a system of absolutism
- Problems we cannot explain
- Feelings of fear and insecurity

What is the solution to doubt?

- Evidence
- Truth
- Experience
- Relationship
- Practicing thinking for self, weighing evidences
- Identifying testable laws
- Understanding principles
- Accepting one's limitation and finiteness, allowing for answers beyond current understanding
- Not trusting feelings to be accurate
- Remembering how God has led in the past

Read third paragraph, “When the disciples...” This is an excellent point, is our faith alive and growing? Only by exercise does it grow. If we don't use it... we...

The bottom pink section asks, “What are all the reasons you have for trusting in God and His promises and living by faith?” What reasons to you have for trusting in God?

- He is love – and has revealed Himself to us
- His methods of love, freedom, truth
- How He has risked being misunderstood to do what is right
- How He has let His enemies abuse Him, without using His power to put them down
- How He is able to know the future
- How He overrules evil and brings good out of it

Specific examples in my life:

- Putting into practice His methods and seeing the freedom, peace and healing in my life and the lives of my patients
- This ministry – teaching this class, having books published, seeing the transformed lives – this is an evidence of God's working. You all know how this ministry has grown despite opposition.
- The thousands of letters and emails from people whose lives have been transformed through embracing the truth about God's character of love
- When I was in undergraduate school pre-med, I was working full time as nurse to pay my way through, I was giving Bible studies to some students at UTC, and taking a full load. I lost track



of time and realized the day before that I had a major physics exam at 8 a.m. the next day, and I was on my way to work 3-11 at the ICU. I prayed that I would have a quiet evening, so I could get a couple of hours to study. When I got to work there was only one person in the ICU, and he was in for chest pain, r/o MI, which means he was in for observation and was to have a quiet evening. I immediately said “thank you Lord!” and was so happy. But then I went over to do my initial assessment, and as I was taking the history I discovered this man was a physicist who worked for TVA. When I told him I had a physics exam the next day, he told me to bring my book over and I got a tutorial and the next day got an A on my exam.

What does it mean to live by faith? To do what is right in the choices one makes in governance of self, and trust God with how things turn out.

Consider the three worthies on the plain of Dura. Their choice, bow or don't bow – that was their choice, how it turned out was not up to them. Likewise, in our lives, our responsibility is to choose to do what is right, healthy and reasonable in governance of ourselves and trust God with the outcomes. This is what it means to live by faith.

THURSDAY

The lesson examines the struggle of the rich to enter into heaven. Jesus said it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter heaven. Why?

Let's move away from riches and instead consider physical strength – when do people seem to have a maturing faith, when they are in the prime of life, or when they are aging? Why?

As we age, we lose vitality, we lose strength, and this causes us to look outside of self for strength, thus we are led to trust God more. Consider Samson, when strong he thought he could handle anything, and he did things his way. When blind and weak, he finally trusted God, his faith grew strong.

When we are financially well off, we are tempted to have confidence in ourselves, our portfolios, our stocks, savings etc. and thus the exercise of our faith is decreased. But when we struggle, we turn to God daily, and exercise faith and thereby grow in faith. Consider David, why was it wrong for him to number Israel? Because after numbering his army he would be tempted to put his faith in his chariots, bowmen, spearmen, and not in God.

There is nothing wrong with having wealth, there is something wrong with not trusting God. Whenever we become extremely competent, capable, expert in any endeavor, we are tempted to rely on ourselves and think we can do it without God. Every day I remind myself how little I know. This is one of the beauties of medicine – that every day new discoveries come along which help remind us what we know is so small to all there is to know.



I think this is a danger for theologians as well, as they are recognized as experts and come to write and lecture on a certain viewpoint, they might become locked in and incapable of growing into unfolding truth. The Pharisees and Sadducees in Christ day certainly had this problem. That is why we never want to arrive at truth, but always when advance in the truth.

Understanding design law helps, because we accept an unfolding of truth, not a system of rigid rules.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “God would have...” thoughts?

read and discuss questions 1-4



3Q 2014 The Book of James Lesson 3 – Enduring Temptation.

SABBATH

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12).

What does it mean to “endure temptation”? How does this relate to loving the Lord??

Consider Christ’s temptations vs our own.

From the lesson: “Sometimes it seems that the more we focus on not sinning, the more powerless against temptation we feel, and the more hopeless our condition appears. We wonder if indeed we are saved at all. It’s hard to imagine any serious Christian who hasn’t wondered about his or her own salvation, especially after having just fallen into sin.”

Where is the focus in this passage??

SUNDAY

The Root of Temptation.

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:13-15.

This should be a familiar passage for our class. Why is it so important for us to conclude that God cannot be tempted or does He tempt?? Also, consider the metaphor used – conception, birth, growth, death. Any insights??

From the lesson: “Thus, the battle against sin begins in the mind. As much as many might not want to hear it, the truth is that we choose to sin. No one can force us (Rom. 6:16–18). Sinful desires, inclinations, and propensities do constantly capture our attention. By using common hunting and fishing terms, James 1:14 describes these inward promptings. Our own desires lure and entice us, and when we give in to them, they finally hook and entrap us.”

No question, the battle against sin [for humanity] begins in the mind. Where else is the battle against sin being fought? Do we actually choose to sin?? What should our choice focus on?? Did we choose to be born infected with a sinful human nature?? Without the Holy Spirit, and a healthy conscience do we have any power to choose not to sin?? Does the TB patient have a choice of symptoms??



Again, from the Lesson: “Dwell on the idea that sin is always our own choice. (After all, if it weren’t our own choice, how could we be condemned for doing it?)”

How, indeed, “could we be condemned for doing it” [sinning]??

See Matt 12:37 [“For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”]

John 3:17-19 [17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.]

John 8:9-11 [9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?” 11 She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”],

Rom 8:1 [There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.]

Rom 8:33-35 [33 Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?]

Titus 3: 10-12 [10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.] Interesting, this concept of “self” condemnation. Any thoughts??

MONDAY

When Lust Conceive.

From the lesson: Several Greek words are used in this passage to describe how sin begins, and all of them are connected with giving birth. When a wrong desire is nurtured, sin is “conceived,” like a baby in the womb. “Sin, when it is completely grown, gives birth to death” (James 1:15, author’s literal translation).

The picture is paradoxical. The process that is supposed to give life results only in death (compare Rom. 7:10–13). Sin, like cancer, takes over and consumes its host. We all know this, for we have all been ruined by sin. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them [emphasis provided].



I think this is very well said. Sin, not God's anger or justice, is the problem, and un-remedied, will cause permanent death. Also correct, is the statement that our hearts are inherently evil [through NO fault or choice of our own], and we [alone] cannot change them.

The lesson invites us to consider the fall of mankind in Gen. 3. What went wrong??

- Eve corrected the “serpent”, missing the subtle questioning of God's trustworthiness. This should have been a major “red flag” that she was being approached by “the enemy” she had been warned about. The seeds of distrust had been planted, and were about to be fertilized.
- Eve believed the lie that the forbidden fruit would not cause death, was pleasing to the eye, and “was useful for obtaining knowledge”. This is at the heart of modern “spiritualism” – the quest for knowledge, above/beyond, what God has given us for our benefit.
- Satan, then, used Eve to tempt Adam. It's highly likely that some coercive pressure was used, given that Eve had already fallen, though Scripture is silent on this.
- Adam suspended his reason and judgment, and followed emotion/desire, and also consumed the fruit. Also noteworthy, men have been selling their souls for the approval of women ever since.
- They ran & hid “because they were afraid.”
- Note the blaming of God. “It was that woman you gave me ...” “That serpent [You created] deceived me ...”

God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of the divine government, and there can be no government without law. God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. Such a course would have been contrary to God's plan in dealing with the inhabitants of other worlds. It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. PP 49

Again, from the lesson: At its root, sin begins with distrusting God. Satan, using the same successful method by which he deceived a third of the angels (Rev. 12:4,7–9), raised doubts in Eve's mind about God's character (Gen. 3:1–5). Approaching the forbidden tree was not sin, but taking and eating the fruit was. Even so, wrong thoughts seem to have preceded her sinful act (Gen. 3:6). She adopted Satan's suggestions as her own.

Sin always begins in the mind. Like Eve, we may think about the supposed “benefits” of wrongdoing. Then our imagination and feelings begin to take over. Soon we seize the bait and fall into sin.

Again, well said.



TUESDAY

Every Good and Perfect Gift

“Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” James 1:16, 17.

Any thoughts on the above passage?? Why does this begin with, “Do not err, my beloved brethren”?? Why does James mention the Godly attribute of “no variableness, neither shadow of turning”??

At the end of the 2nd paragraph in the lesson it beautifully states “... God wants us to be saved. It was His will, from even before we existed, that we should have salvation and a new life in Him now and for all eternity.” Why does God want us ALL to be saved?? Is this consistent with any Scripture [Eze. 33:11, Isa. 6:10, Jer. 51:8, 9]?? What is it that prevents us from salvation/healing??

In the bottom section, the lesson asks us “What are the gifts you have been given “from above”?? Anyone want to mention a few?

WEDNESDAY

Slow to Speak.

“Better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to speak out and remove all doubt.” Abraham Lincoln

Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding. Prov. 17:28.

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1: 19, 20.

What do you think James meant by “the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God”?? Compare and contrast “the wrath of man” and the “wrath of God or The Lamb.” Any similarities? Differences??

When Mother Teresa was interviewed by Dan Rather for a “60 Minutes” piece, he asked her what she said during her prayers. Her response was, “I just listen.” Rather then asked what God said to her. Her response was, “He just listens.”

How many here prefer to be with someone who listens, instead of talks incessantly?? What is it about listening instead of talking??



THURSDAY

Saved by Receiving.

The lesson does a great job of comparing James 1:21 with Zech. 3:3, 4 [the illustration of Joshua, the High Priest, plucked from the fire and given a new, clean robe]. It also goes to great lengths to differentiate between just covering our filth, and actually cleansing us.

The first question in this lesson asks, “What role does the ‘word’ have in what James is saying?” Clearly he’s speaking of the Word of God. What is that??

The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever. Ps. 119:160.

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. John 17: 17 [From Christ’s prayer to His Father just before the Crucifixion].

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. Matt. 10:34.

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb. 4:12.

He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. Rev 1:16. [Description of Christ in Heaven].

And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. Rev. 19:21. [Description of Christ after the Holy City has been established on Earth]. Note in verse 13 that Christ’s name is literally “The Word of God.”

Using Scripture, the Word of God has the capability to heal [Sanctify in John 17: 17], and to cause death [Rev 19: 21]. What determines the outcome, healing vs death??

What does James mean in verse 25 by “the perfect law of liberty”?



2014 Q4 “The Book of James” Lesson 4 – Being and Doing

Memory Text: “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves”

What does it mean...what comes to mind when you think about being a “doer of the word?”

- Doing all the right things? Making sure you eat the right things, pay the right tithe, wear the right clothes, play only “Bible” games on Sabbath (Bible football, Bible Frisbee, etc.)?
- Participating in all the required sacraments and rights necessary for salvation...or at least to lessen the degree of judgment?
- Checking off a list of behaviors or obligations designed to improve our standing or curry favor with God?
- OR does it mean not just “talking the talk” but “walking the walk”?
 - Sabbath’s lesson recounts a story of “The Great Blondin”, a famous performer who walked across Niagara Falls on a tightrope in 1860...and actually carried an assistant on his back. The Prince of Wales witnessed this feat, and Blondin then offered to carry the prince across the falls too.
- Tim has used the example in class to contrast someone knowing the mechanics of swimming, the different types of strokes/kicks, the physics of buoyancy...but if that person were thrown into the deep end of the pool, could they actually *swim*?
- Is watching/witnessing, knowing *about* something or someone...the same as actually experiencing it for yourself?
- Experience is so important, this class has made it 1 of our 3-prongs in the Integrative, Evidence-Based model
 - Psalms 34:8 – Taste and see that the Lord is good.
 - John 20:27 – Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Stop doubting and believe.
 - Isaiah 1:18 – Come let us reason together, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow...
- Natural laws at work in being “doers of the word”:
 - Law of worship – by beholding we become changed
 - Law of exertion – we talked about this just a few weeks ago, and how we cannot develop/grow/increase a muscle or a skill or a habit or acumen without exerting it...stretching it...practicing it – ongoing and repeatedly. This repeated experience of actually doing and applying and putting into practice God’s words, God’s methods, God’s principles increases our confidence and builds our faith.
 - Others?



SUNDAY

Knowing Your Enemy

I'm not sure if others got the same overall impression I did when reading this week's lesson...that it seemed to be very commandment/behavior driven when referring to God's law...but do make some excellent points in several areas. It is just so almost automatic now to ask myself...what law lens is the author looking through? What law is being presented – natural or imposed?

Read James 1:23, 24...what do we think James is talking about here?

Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear! Those who hear and don't act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes later have no idea who they are, what they look like. (MSG)

For if anyone only listens to the Word without obeying it and being a doer of it, he is like a man who looks carefully at his [own] natural face in a mirror; For he thoughtfully observes himself, and then goes off and promptly forgets what he was like. (AMP)

A quote by Richard James says, "Whenever two people meet there are really six people present. There is each person as they see themselves, each person as the other person sees them, and each person as they really are. Thoughts?"

Has anyone other than me experienced this? Are there times when we are our own worst enemies? Aren't we so good at the art of denial and delusion...and even if we have moments of honest character revelation in the mirror, aren't we quick to forget as soon as we walk away? I find this to be one of the most remarkable and inspiring things about David's prayer after being confronted by Nathan in Psalm 51. He realized where not being truthful about his true nature and spiritual state had gotten him – to commit adultery and murder. He confessed his desire to embrace the truth about who he really was...with no desire to hide any of the bad or ugly...in fact he begged for God to search him and find even the smallest defect, because he knew once it was uncovered and acknowledged, then God could heal it and replace it with a new heart and a right spirit.

The lesson lists 2 examples from Matthew of men who had rather distorted self-images – the rich young ruler and Peter who were both self-deceived about their true spiritual states. The rich young ruler really thought he had it made...he had check off all the obligatory boxes he thought were required to be saved. Did anyone other than me grow up in an environment where behaviors and "doing the right thing"...or maybe "not doing the wrong thing" were given more emphasis than a heart transformation?



The Bible gives several examples of folks who seem to get caught up in the rituals and the symbols and the works, and completely miss the healing message about God's character of love they were originally designed to reveal. Can you name any?

- Israelites – Isaiah 1 ¹¹ “The multitude of your sacrifices — what are they to me?” says the LORD. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.
- ¹² When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? ¹³ Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations — I cannot bear your worthless assemblies. ¹⁴ Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. (NIV) ¹³⁻¹⁷ “Quit your worship charades. I can't stand your trivial religious games: Monthly conferences, weekly Sabbaths, special meetings meetings, meetings, meetings I can't stand one more! Meetings for this, meetings for that. I hate them! You've worn me out! I'm sick of your religion, religion, religion, while you go right on sinning. (MSG)
- Hosea 6:6 I'm after love that lasts, not more religion. I want you to know GOD, not go to more prayer meetings. (MSG) ⁶ For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. (NKJV)

So what was the problem here? If anyone had a direct word from God, it was these folks...and they were doing **exactly** what he said...why were they not considered “doers of the word”?

Because there was no heart transformation happening. They continued to hold on to their celebrity worship, their television, their facebook, their iDevices... oh wait... that's something totally different. I mean they continued to be idol worshipers and hold onto their other gods.

Pharisees – Matthew 23 (the famous “woe unto the teachers of the law” chapter) ²³ Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ² “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. ³ So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ⁴ They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

⁵ “Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries[a] wide and the tassels on their garments long; ⁶ they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷ they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by others.

⁸ “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹ And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰ Nor



are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. 11 The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Seven Woes on the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees

13 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. [14] [b]

15 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.

16 “Woe to you, blind guides! You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.’ 17 You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? 18 You also say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.’ 19 You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20 Therefore, anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it.

21 And anyone who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. 22 And anyone who swears by heaven swears by God’s throne and by the one who sits on it.

23 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. 24 You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

25 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

27 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. 28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

29 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. 30 And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ 31 So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started!



33 “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? 34 Therefore I am sending you prophets and sages and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. 35 And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 Truly I tell you, all this will come on this generation.

37 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’

As Sunday’s lesson states in the 4th paragraph, “The rich young man thought he had been keeping the commandments. Suddenly he was challenged to adhere to a different kind of obedience, one that he had never anticipated, one that went much deeper than mere outward compliance to rules and regulations.” So...where do we think the rich young ruler falls in Lawrence Kohlberg’s stages of moral development? (3-4)

Really quickly, those stages of moral development are:

1. Obedience and punishment orientation (Avoiding punishment)
2. Self-interest orientation (What's in it for me? Payment for benefit)
3. Interpersonal accord and conformity (Social norms/good boy/girl)
4. Authority/Maintain social-order (Law & order morality)
5. Social contract orientation
6. Universal ethical principles (Principled conscience)

So, does the Law of Love require unselfish service in action (not just hearing or talking...but doing)? Yes! And when we understand natural law constructs, we realize what we are being “commanded” to do and what the law “requires” are not rules or regulations or obligations at all...they are merely the principles upon which life was created to operate and are intended only to restore us to our original design. Just as the law of respiration requires breathing...and the law of my Volvo engine requires regular gas.

MONDAY

Being a Doer

The 1st paragraph rightly points out that James’ reference to “being” and “doing” are inseparable – in fact, the tense of the Greek word James uses for “be” does not refer to individual acts, but to an ongoing lifestyle of obedience. In this class, Tim has used the analogy of breathing. Just as obeying the law of respiration *requires* us to breathe, and we never even think about it – it’s just an



involuntary response. Well, when we are won back to trust...open our hearts to the Holy Spirit and allow the law of love to be re-written back on our hearts and minds...then unselfish behavior and loving others will be as natural to any of as breathing is! One of the founders of our church put it this way:

- “By His perfect obedience, He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with his heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; **we live His life!** COL 3:11

But please notice the timing and the sequencing of events...are you noticing what comes first? Trust, opening the heart, submitting ourselves to Christ, having the law recreated in our hearts and minds **MUST** come first...then we become **LIKE CHRIST** – in mind, heart, and behavior. We already talked about some folks who got it backwards and allowed an oppressively long list of rules to come first. In fact, they were so focused on the behaviors, that the very God they were trying to impress when He came and dwelt among them. I like the way Paul puts it Galatians 2:16:

- We know very well that we are not set right with God by rule-keeping but only through personal faith in Jesus Christ. How do we know? We tried it – and we had the best system of rules the world has ever seen! Convinced that no human being can please God by self-improvement, we believed in Jesus as the Messiah so that we might be set right before God by trusting in the Messiah, not by trying to be good. (MSG)
- If you need more evidence that it is about a heart transformation first, consider Matthew 7:21-23:

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' 24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

- How does being a “doer” justify or set us right with God?

So...if we are busy being “doers of the Word”...exactly what is it we should be doing? Let’s take that instruction straight from the Word...can someone look up and read aloud Luke 6:27-36?



- Has anyone here really had the opportunity to do this? I say “opportunity” not sarcastically and not because it is easy...quite the opposite, but can be life changing – for both parties. Is anyone willing to share the outcome?

I have a strong belief that maybe what we DON'T do is just as important in being a doer of the Word, so someone please finish that passage in Luke 6 by reading verses 37-38. Thoughts?

TUESDAY

The Law of Freedom

Teachers portion of the quarterly states: “Seventh-day Adventists have sometimes been characterized as hopeless legalists in bondage to the law. Nowadays, some SDAs go to the opposite extreme and seem afraid to even mention the law for fear of being misunderstood. After all, can God’s law really have anything to do with freedom?”

What kind of understanding of God’s law is required for it to be liberating or a source of freedom? Is obeying the law in order to avoid punishment freeing? Does that view differ dramatically from what you learned about God’s law growing up? When we understand design law principles and the constructs on which the universe and life itself were built to operate on, it helps us “understand our masters business”.

The 2nd paragraph is very well said, quoting Romans 2:13, and stating that we can become doers only through the work of the spirit writing the law on our hearts.

WEDNESDAY

Useful or Useless?

The lesson asks...how would you define true Christianity? Using James 1:26-27 and Matthew 25:35-36,40

2nd paragraph quote from Ministry of Healing 470:

- “The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian...To live such a life, to exert such an influence, costs at every step effort, self-sacrifice, discipline.”
- Do we have any issues today with unlovable Christians?

Repeatedly emphasized are orphans, widows, the sick, the poor, those most easily overlooked. Last paragraph: “From a worldly standpoint, it does not make sense to focus our resources on those who can give nothing back to society. But in God’s not-of-this-world kingdom, it is precisely how we love those who have been cast off and rejected by the world that reveals whether hearts have been truly transformed – by lending money to those who cannot pay us back; inviting to dinner those who cannot



reciprocate; or blessing and praying for those who mistreat us. A quote from someone who really seemed to understand and spent her life as a doer of the word:

- "I pray that you will understand the words of Jesus, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' Ask yourself 'How has he loved me? Do I really love others in the same way?' Unless this love is among us, we can kill ourselves with work and it will only be work, not love. Work without love is slavery." - Mother Teresa

Ephesians 2:10 – For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (NIV)

THURSDAY

Unlike the World

1st paragraph is right on the mark: “Some people seem to think that if only they could move far enough away from the world they could avoid most of its temptations, however it seems our problems and weaknesses tend to follow us wherever we go. The problem with sin isn’t so much about what is *out there*, though that certainly plays a role, as much as what is *in us*, and in our hearts. That’s where the true battle is, and we have to overcome that battle no matter where we physically live. Christ spent adequate time alone with His heavenly Father in order to know his will; however, he never shut himself off from people...He went to where they were. His “food” was reaching out to the needy, breaking down barriers of prejudice, and sharing the good news of who God is and has always been.



The Book of James Lesson 5 4th Q 2014

Love and the Law

What do you think about the title? What law do you think the lesson is suggesting with the term “the law”?

Does the picture give us any clues? We see the image of the 10 Commandments with a heart cut out of it and a person standing in the heart.

Last week I was in Glendale, CA and spoke at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church. During the Q&A session a gentleman asked, when I refer to the law of love am I referring to the law that was in heaven or the 10 Commandments – thoughts?

I answered, the law I am referring to is the protocols upon which life is constructed to operate, which is the law of love built into the fabric of the cosmos and has its origin in the character of God.

Then he asked, which law is eternal the 10 Commandments or the law of love?

I asked, what does eternal mean? Always in existence in eternity future and past, and then asked the audience has the 10 Commandments always been in existence in eternity past?

The audience answer was mixed, some said yes some said no. The answer is, No – Paul says the law was added, the 10 Commandments are a codification of the law of love, specifically designed for fallen humans to reveal our sickness of character and lead us to Christ. Angels didn’t need a law about sin passing down through the generations, or to honor mother and father. Thus Paul tells Timothy:

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹ We also know that **law is made not for the righteous** but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim 1:8-11

And of course the Sabbath didn’t exist until this planet was created. But the law of love did exist as the protocol for life in all eternity. So the Eternal Law is the law of love, which the Bible writers point our minds to.

SABBATH

Read memory text: “For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13, NASB).



Tell me what this passage means through the two law lenses, design law and imposed law?

Under **imposed law** this would mean if you are not merciful your unmerciful deeds will be recorded in the record books, there will be a judicial proceeding in which God will pass judgment, and He will show no mercy when He finds you guilty and executes the sentence of torment and death upon you.

Under **design law** this means that one who shows no mercy hardens their heart, sears their conscience, warps their character and on the day of “judgment” the absolute truth, the accurate diagnosis, of that person’s condition will be revealed and that person will not escape their condition but will experience what their unhealed condition causes.

Here is James 2:12-13 from my paraphrase:

Live like people who understand how God built life to operate. Act like those who are going to be diagnosed by the standard that health and freedom are founded upon, because one’s true condition will be diagnosed accurately without any covering over the actual terminal state of those who have not been restored to selfless love. But selfless love heals our terminal condition!

SUNDAY

James 2:1-4 from my paraphrase:

James 2:1 My family of God, as people who have taken the Remedy of our Lord Jesus Christ and seek to emulate him in all you do, don’t discriminate. 2 Imagine a famous person, decked out in expensive attire, comes to your meeting, and a poor stranger dressed in dirty torn clothes also comes in. 3 If you fawn all over the important person, paying them special attention and giving them the best seat, but ignore the poor person, leaving them to stand in the back or to sit on the floor, 4 haven’t you failed to love all people equally? Haven’t you selfishly sought to ingratiate yourself with the person you judged to be more desirable?

Imagine working in a hospital ER and a healthy Olympic athlete comes by and a chronic smoker with COPD in respiratory distress comes in – what if we ignored the person in respiratory distress in order to fawn over the athlete?

God wants us to see through the lens of His design of love and seek to love all people and bring all people back to unity with Him where they experience His love and therefore love others.

Read the third paragraph, “In the Greco-Roman...” Is it only in that ancient culture that the rich and famous expect special treatment? We don’t do such things today do we? No one expects a building named after them if they donate? No institution would seek to promote such desires by soliciting donations as naming opportunities?



If one donates to have a building named after them – would that be like the rich publican who gave his money so everyone could see? Didn't Christ say something about that was his reward? In other words, giving to get something for self is not giving and doesn't result in transformation of Christlike character.

Giving in order to give, with no expectation of return, results in transformation of character. But, how often do we appeal to selfish motives in people and thus cheat them of the opportunity to grow in their giving?

Do we treat all people equally in church – pastor, conference president, GC president, Medal of Honor winners, politicians, doctors, television personalities?

How do we insulate ourselves from allowing the expectations of a me-first worldview from infecting the way we treat each other at church?

It all comes back to love – when we love well we experience joy in doing for others, and celebrate in the successes of others, but when we don't love we experience irritation and feel put out when doing for others and jealousy when others succeed.

Read last paragraph, "It is not a sin..." thoughts?

Do we treat all people with equal value and worth? In our church what are some of the differences that make us vulnerable to prejudice, discrimination, bias?

- socioeconomic status
- education
- intelligence
- race
- religion
- sex
- health
- personal hygiene?
- tattoos, body piercing, jewelry, dress?
- what about sexual orientation?
- what about our view of the way to obey? i.e. to keep Sabbath etc?
- what about our view of church authority?

What do all of these focus on? They focus on externals – the outward appearance, such that we use these to compare ourselves to others – why? Because we are filled with fear and selfishness, we are insecure, and we look for ways to comfort ourselves, to make ourselves feel better – thus we find something in others that, in our mind is worse than ourselves, and we attack the other, criticize, etc.



This is what the Pharisees did in their prejudice toward non Jews, women, tax collectors, prostitutes etc.

What does God focus on? Character – can a person have the character of Christ, where they love others more than self and would give their life for others, and be:

- rich or poor?
- healthy or sick?
- well groomed or disheveled?
- intelligent or intellectually challenged?
- educated or ignorant?
- black or white or Hispanic or any race?
- Tattooed or not?
- Sabbath or Sunday church goer?
- SDA, Catholic, Jewish, Evangelical, Islamic, Buddhist, Atheist?
- Male or female or intersex?
- Heterosexual or homosexual?
- What about if they believe God to be a dictator?
- What if they surrender their thinking to church authority?

The things that matter are those things that interfere with having the law of love written in the heart and having our character restored to be like Christ's. The biggest of those are lies about God, and then any lifestyle issue that damages our ability to think, reason, understand and comprehend truth, or activities that incite guilt, shame, or the retention of bitterness and resentment, as all of these incite fear and selfishness and impair our ability to love.

TUESDAY

Loving our Neighbors – what does this mean? The principle of love is doing what is in the best interest of the other person – we know this definition – but what does this look like in various situations and what are the obstacles to loving others in this way?

First what are the obstacles

- Obstacles in our hearts/minds
 - fear
 - selfishness
 - distrust
 - prejudice
 - fatigue
 - apathy
 - ignorance (unaware of the need)
 - lies – beliefs that the other deserves something other than love



- lies – beliefs your action is love, being duped or tricked
- Obstacles in the heart/mind of the other person
 - fear
 - selfishness
 - distrust
 - see acts of love as manipulation
 - prejudice
 - lies
 - love looks like being beaten
 - love is having sex
 - love is being liked or popular
 - false beliefs
 - I don't deserve your love
 - I'm too sinful to be loved
 - I'm too dirty, too ugly, to worthless
- Situational obstacles
 - separated by time/space
 - not having the ability to help (whether it be knowledge, helping a child with calculus, repairing a car, or physical ability helping move furniture but you have an injured back, finances and you don't have the money) – but what can you provide in these situation – your understanding, encouragement, love for them despite the situation
 - being obstructed by some other force – whether it be physically restrained, or by sickness, or obligations

Read last paragraph, “Sin is the greatest...” Did you notice the idea that our responsibility is to pity and help the sinner – not to judge and punish the sinner? Why? What law is this operating through? This is design law – it is the same as saying ours is to pity and help the sick patient. That is what sin is, deviation from God's design law which always results in pain and suffering to the one deviant.

What is sin?

From the book, *Servant God*, chapter two, (the chapter I wrote):

Recently I had the opportunity to speak with over 350 Christian high school students. I passed out cards and asked them to write down their answers to the question, “What is sin?” Here are a few of their responses:

- An act against what God stands for
- It is something that separates us from God
- To do something that is morally wrong



- Anything evil or unjust
- Something that brings us down
- The absence of anything good/anything not of God
- Doing anything you know in your gut is wrong
- Bad stuff
- A bad thing that Satan discovered and brought upon us
- The cause of all pain and suffering
- When you do something you feel guilty about
- Anything that makes God unhappy
- Something to be forgiven
- Whatever you do wrong and you don't even care what you did

And the following two answers were submitted by more than ten percent of the students:

- Sin is not following the Ten Commandments
- Sin is going against the will of God

As I contemplated these answers, I realized they seemed to break down into two general categories: (1) sin is bad behavior, an act of disobedience, something we do wrong; or, (2) sin is some evil commodity, entity, element, some “thing” or some “stuff” that separates us from God or makes us unhappy. It almost sounded like if we could just get rid of this sin stuff, things would be a lot better. Is sin a substance we can transfer to someone else? Is sin simply doing bad acts? Or is it more?

Three students saw sin differently. Their answers pierced a deeper level of truth. To them sin was something more than bad behavior and was certainly not a commodity that could be passed from one person to the next. These three saw sin as:

- The absence of love
- The opposite of God's character – sin is being selfish
- Focusing on self. It all started with Satan and how he wanted to be greater than God. This is the root of all evil.

They saw sin as a state of being, a defect in character, a deviation from God's heart of love. How do you answer the question, “What is sin?”

Does it make a difference how we define sin? What difference? If we make the wrong diagnosis – then what follows? The wrong solution.

When we diagnose sin as behavioral what kinds of solutions are promoted? When we diagnose sin as legal what kinds of solutions are promoted?



But when we diagnose sin as a condition of being deviant from God's design, with which we were all born, then what solution is needed?

The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man's sin, but that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race through one man. But it also says that another **Man took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away** — an infinitely more profound revelation...

Sin is something I am born with and cannot touch— only God touches sin through redemption. It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin. **God nowhere holds a person responsible for having the heredity of sin, and does not condemn anyone because of it.** Condemnation comes when I realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver me from this heredity of sin, and yet **I refuse to let Him do so.** From that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation. **“This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light . . . ” (John 3:19)** Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, <http://utmost.org>

So what is the Bible definition of sin?

“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.” (1John 3:4)

Sin is being lawless or without the law, or being outside the law.

But that brings us to the next critical question – what is the law?

What are the options?

- Design law, protocols upon which reality is constructed to operate
- a list of rules imposed by a dictator

What does the Bible say?

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:10)
- The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Galatians 5:14)
- If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. (James 2:8)
- Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37-40, Leviticus 19:18, Deuteronomy 6:5)
- He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor. Prov 21:21



When the God of love created, He created all life in harmony with His own character of love. Life is constructed to exist only when operating in perfect other-centered love. All life, health, and happiness are dependent upon harmony with this law... (Romans 1:20, 13:8).

Sin is stepping outside the law of love, breaking its circle of life's normal operation, severing the outflow of selfless giving, violating the construction protocols for life. In other words, sin is "lawlessness" or being outside the design template of life, outside of love.

But the Bible describes sin in another way:

- "Everything that does not come from faith is sin." (Romans 14:23)

What does this mean? Another way to phrase this idea is "Failure to trust God is sin." But why would failure to trust be the same as sin or "lawlessness"? Because God is love, and failure to trust God is failure to value love. And broken trust breaks down love.

Remember the falling dominoes of destructions:

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust results in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness results in acts of sin
- Acts of sin damage to mind, body, character, relationships this is a terminal condition

Believing lies breaks love and trust, incites fear and selfishness and destructive acts – but what does it do to the mind? It damages our ability to think clearly, to reason, to comprehend truth, we end up lying to self and thus we become lost in darkness and inability to find our way out or even know how sick we are.

Thus human mind is deceitful above all things and utterly wicked...

When we violate God's law of love and do wrong, our orbital frontal cortex OFC becomes active and convicts us, causing a sense of anxiety, guilt and shame and trying to redirect us away from the inappropriate action. Simultaneously when the OFC is active it impairs activity of the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex DLPFC, where we reason and think. Thus our ability to comprehend, think, reason is impaired.

Further, when people do wrong, they feel guilt, guilt is an unpleasant emotion and people want it to go away. There are two ways to resolve guilt (appropriate guilt, which is guilt that result from violating God's design law of love. Inappropriate guilt is the guilt we experience when we have done no wrong and it is always based on believing a lie. Therefore, inappropriate guilt is resolved by the truth.) But appropriate guilt can be resolved in two ways – one healthy – repentance and restoration, and one unhealthy – denial and distortion. Adam said, "It wasn't me it was the woman..."



Thus, when human beings sinned, their minds became damaged, they became less capable of understanding truth, and actively sought to distort truth in order to avoid guilt and shame.

God intervenes with diagnostic and therapeutic tools design enlighten humans to their true condition and lead them back to Him for healing and restoration. These included:

- The animal sacrifices instituted to Adam and his descendants
 - What was the diagnostic and therapeutic intent of the animal sacrifices given to Adam?
 - To demonstrate that deviation from the design (cutting the circulation) destroys life, and that destroyed life comes at our hand, not God's. Confessing sin, then cutting the throat of the animal was designed to teach this vital truth, and show that a substitute would come and take this condition upon Himself in order to cure the condition and restore life to us.
 - Further, it was designed to make us sick, to make a gut revulsion to ever deviating from God's design.
- Circumcision
 - To symbolically demonstrate a cutting away of worldliness and purification of heart to God
 - The reproductive organs are specially designed by God to endow humans with Godlike abilities and to share in Godlike privileges of the voluntary union of love with another being in which jointly one gives of self to create new life.
 - Sin corrupted the heart with selfishness and God's design for reproduction, relationships, intimacy, love was also corrupted in so many ways:
 - Men dominating and subjugating women, instead of sacrificing themselves for their wives
 - Fertility worship
 - pornography
 - polygamy
 - prostitution
 - fornication in all its forms
 - paraphilias
 - And all the genetic and medical issues, which in themselves are not sin but are a result of sin damaging God's design like:
 - infertility
 - hermaphroditism
 - Androgen insensitivity syndrome
 - Swyer syndrome
 - Sexual identity confusion
 - Circumcision was designed to symbolically demonstrate a purification of the most intimate parts of ourselves to God to be renewed in heart, mind, character and relationships to love like God loves.
 - Additionally, it was an intervention for a people at a point in history when they would be especially attacked on this issue by the fertility cults around them.



- The 10 Commandments
 - Were given to diagnose and expose selfishness and lead us to Christ
 - Romans 7:7-12 from my paraphrase:
 - ^{7:7} What shall we say then? Is the law evil and selfish because it increases the amount of evil and selfishness we see? Absolutely not! For I would not have known what evil and selfishness looks like if it wasn't for the diagnostic efficacy of the law. I would not have realized that coveting was evil and selfish if the law didn't say, "Don't covet."⁸ But selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the law is only a diagnostic instrument and not a Remedy, magnified every covetous desire within me. For apart from the diagnostic ability of the law, sin is unrecognizable.⁹ Once I thought I was healthy and free from the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness, but then the commandment examined me, exposed how utterly infected I was and diagnosed me as terminal.¹⁰ I discovered that the very commandment given only to diagnose my condition, I had unwittingly attempted to use as a cure and thus my condition only worsened.¹¹ For selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the commandment could only diagnose and not cure, deceived me into thinking I could be cured by working to keep the commandments, but instead my terminal state only worsened.¹² So understand this, the law diagnoses perfectly, and the commandment is the standard of what is right and good, set apart by God, to reveal what is evil and destructive.
 - the Commandments were given to diagnose, not as treatment
- The Sanctuary service with its rules and regulation and holidays
 - A little theater to act out God's plan for restoring us back into full at-one-ment with Him
 - However, this system became corrupted through the lens of imposed law and came to be understood as an appeasement system, rather than a plan whereby God leaves heaven, comes to earth, takes up humanity and cures us.

This quote was sent last week by George Graves from the devotional compilation *Our Father Cares*:

[He] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15. – {OFC 259.1}

Christ, at an infinite cost, by a painful process, mysterious to angels as well as to men, assumed humanity. Hiding His divinity, laying aside His glory, He was born a babe in Bethlehem. **In human flesh He lived the law of God**, that He might condemn sin in the flesh, and bear witness to heavenly intelligences **that the law was ordained to life and to ensure the happiness, peace, and eternal good of all who obey....** – {OFC 259.2}



THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Nothing is clearer than...” What kind of reaction does this perspective incite? Peace, love and trust or fear and doubt?

This is all based on accepting the lie that God’s law is imposed – and the lesson authors acknowledge that their view is problematic and leads to mental health problems, note what they say in the fourth paragraph and their solution:

“If we thought about it long enough, we could become so paranoid about the judgment that we would give up in despair. But that is not what it means to ‘fear God... for the hour of His judgment has come’ (Rev 14:7 NKJV)! Instead, we must always trust in the righteousness of Jesus, whose merits alone are our only hope in the judgment.”

If they would only come to the truth about God’s law they would bring people so much peace.

Consider the heroin addict, using dirty needles – sick with endocarditis – does he want to go before the magistrate to have his deeds read and sentence pronounced.

Now, lets consider the lesson’s view – heroin addict sick, infected, goes before the judge and is found guilty, but Jesus stands up and offers Himself as a substitute and the judge examines Jesus and finds him innocent and therefore pronounces the heroin addicted not guilty on the basis of Jesus’ merits – how does that help, the addict is still dying from a heart infection?

There view and this teaching of penal substitution is a lie that keeps people trapped in false security with unrenewed hearts, consumed with fear and doubt.

We must come back to the truth that God’s law is the law of love, the design protocols of life and that when we understand that we realize the covering is a healing of the inmost being to be like Jesus. Here is an historic view of how our church used to teach this:

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul...

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us... By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf



garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

So, the right understand of us humans being judged is “diagnosis” God diagnosis accurately the true condition of each person, either restored to trust and renewed to be like Him, for “when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” 1Jn 3:2 or so solidified in the lie that no amount of truth can impact us. Here are examples of God’s judgment or diagnosis:

- Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone! Hos 4:17
- Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy. Rev 22:11

But the lesson cites Revelation 14:7 – and this passage is not about God sitting in judgment of us, it is about the conclusion of the war over God’s character here on earth. It is about calling people out of the lies and false religions being taught and calling people to the everlasting good news of who God is, of giving God glory by living His character for the time in history has come for God to be judged. As Paul said, “God may you win your case when you take it into court” Rom 3:4.

We are called back to judge God rightly, as the Creator, the Maker, the Designer of all and His law as the protocols of love. Then, when we see this correctly we are able to leave Babylon, the confused system of imposed religious rules and legal requirements to be healed so we avoid the pain and suffering that comes from unremedied sin in our lives.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “As every...” Any explanations for why this might be? Could it be that in our struggles we became more acutely aware of our limitations and our need for something more, thus we are more open to look outside of ourselves for divine aide, wisdom, insight, help?

Whereas the rich are more likely to find themselves either complacent or distracted by all the entertainments that their wealth can afford?

The lesson asks us to read James 2:5,6 – this is from my paraphrase:

James 2:5 Listen carefully my brothers and sisters: God has chosen to take the people the world scorns - those poor in the eyes of the world, but rich in spiritual health and restore them to his original design, making them heirs of the kingdom of love, which he promised to those who love him. 6 Yet you look down on and belittle the poor. But is it not the wealthy and politically connected who manipulate, exploit and harass you? Aren’t they the ones who sue you and bring allegations against you in the courts?

Read last paragraph, “Their bad behavior...” Any examples of misrepresenting Christ by doing evil in His name?



- Christians who protest homosexuals with signs “God hates fags...”
- Shooting abortion doctors and blowing up abortion clinics in the name of Christ?
- What about Rwanda and the mass murders that occurred in churches?
- What about attributing to God natural disasters as punishments for sin?
- What about threatening people with God’s wrath?
- What about teaching God will torture and kill?
- What about the White Americans who held slaves but went to church and then later the southern white Christians who violently fought for segregation?
- What about passing laws that force people to observe your religious practices?
 - Sunday observance?
 - Baptism?
 - What about marriage law or laws about abortion? Where does the Christian draw the line?

WEDNESDAY

In the fourth paragraph the lesson states, “any transgression of God’s law damages to some extent our relationship to God and to others.” This is true, but is it all that is damaged?

Why does sin result in death? Because sin actually damages the sinner.

- In rejecting God’s structure and establishing our own, in violating God’s intention for the creation and substituting our own intentions, we cause or own disintegration. Kaiser, W., et al., *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, Intersity Press, 1996, p. 542
- “We **are not** to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. **The sinner brings the punishment upon himself.** His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. **Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character,** and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, **cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.**” 1SM 235
- The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction. (Galatians 6:8)

This is design law – but when people believe God’s law is like ours then rather than realizing we destroy ourselves, they falsely teach God is the source of inflicted death.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for iOS and Android mobile devices. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phone and tablet. Please download the app! Simply type **Come and Reason Ministries** in your app store's search bar.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Sunday Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon. (Dr. Jennings will be teaching his class Saturday November 15)

Nov 22, 2014: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Placerville, SDA church in Placerville, CA.

Jan 10, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

Jan 24, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Monterey Peninsula SDA Church.

February 7, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Living Well: Organizing Your Brain to Achieve Optimal Health Conference, at Fort Worth Colonial Country Club, Ft Worth, TX. For info www.newstepstohealth.org

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, Dalles, Oregon. For more info and to register for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Alabama Baptist Boomers Conference.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates



May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May 17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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2014 Q4 “The Book of James” Lesson 6 Faith That Works

Intro:

Imagine my delight when I saw the subject matter for this week’s lesson! For those of you who were here two weeks ago, I taught on being a “Doer of the Word”...and this week is just a continuation of that concept as we study how true, transforming, saving faith manifests itself in our works. In fact, I get to use some of the material from a couple of weeks ago that we didn’t get to cover because we ran out of time...so that made me happy.

Memory Text: “For as the body without spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” James 2:26

I want to read this verse in context starting earlier in the chapter with verse 14 from the Message:

4-17 Dear friends, do you think you’ll get anywhere in this if you learn all the right words but never do anything? Does merely talking about faith indicate that a person really has it? For instance, you come upon an old friend dressed in rags and half-starved and say, “Good morning, friend! Be clothed in Christ! Be filled with the Holy Spirit!” and walk off without providing so much as a coat or a cup of soup—where does that get you? Isn’t it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?

18 I can already hear one of you agreeing by saying, “Sounds good. You take care of the faith department, I’ll handle the works department.” Not so fast. You can no more show me your works apart from your faith than I can show you my faith apart from my works. Faith and works, works and faith, fit together hand in glove.

So...what is faith? What do you think of when you hear the word “faith”? We have discussed the meaning of faith in this class before...that it means trust or belief in something. When I looked up the word in the dictionary, one of the definitions said “belief that is not based on proof”. Is that the kind of faith God asks us to have?

There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies – **divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith**. It is in this way only that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity**. He does not dishonor the human understanding, but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be **strenuously exercised** in searching out the truth *as it is in Jesus*...Ye are laborers together with God. {OHC 310}.

Hear any reference to the natural law of *exertion* referenced here?



God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

So faith is critical...trust is critical...but what are we putting our faith in? In what or whom do we trust? “Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. **Sincerity will never save a soul from the consequences of believing an error...** The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the divine credentials, **which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action.**” – 2SM 56.1

Saturday’s lesson tells the story of a respected doctor and elder in a high-profile church. He prayed eloquently, filled in preaching when the pastor was gone, gave generously – and even encouraged and inspired others to give. But everything was obviously not as it seemed...and it almost never is!

Quote: **We don’t see things as they are...we see things as we are.** – Anais Nin

The end of the story says “**Though we must leave all judgment in God’s hands, the doctor’s actions certainly call into question the reality of his faith.**” Any thoughts about that statement? Any other examples in the Bible of folks whose actions might call the reality of their faith into question?

- Rahab
- Samson
- David
- Peter

So...should we use a person’s works to determine if a person’s faith is “real”? Do a person’s works have to be perfect...for their faith to be “real”? Or can God use our imperfect works to still be a blessing to someone...to meet someone else’s need...to be an answer to someone’s prayer. A true, living, saving faith manifests itself with Christ-like behaviors and the fruits of the Spirit...however, don’t mistakenly believe that anything less than perfect works indicate a lack of or absence of faith.

SUNDAY

Dead Faith



Contrast the concept of salvation by faith alone versus the text in James that says “if someone has faith but does not have works...can faith save him?”

I think we have to go back here and really focus on the order of events...and the motivating factors that must initiate and compel our “good works”.

As we’ve discussed, faith is trust...evidence-based, reasonable, rational belief. In this class we have studied that only when we discover the truth about who God is and what God’s character is like...can we dispel the lies and distortions about his character and be won back to trust. Only when this happens, are we able to open our hearts to him...to his Spirit...Then His perfect love casts out all fear and selfishness, and the Holy Spirit pours out the healing remedy Jesus achieved for us through his life, death, and resurrection – His ways, His methods, His principles...He writes His law of love on our hearts and minds. This faith/trust cascade then manifests itself in unselfish, loving, other-centered acts and behaviors we call “good works”...the exact opposite of the sinful acts cascade.

The quarterly asks: “How can we learn to better express our faith through works while protecting ourselves from the deception that our works can help save us?” Can we ever “protect ourselves”...from ourselves?

MONDAY

Saving Faith

James 2:18 is the text used here...it says “**But someone will say, “One person has faith, another has actions.” My answer is, “Show me how anyone can have faith without actions. I will show you my faith by my actions.”** (GNT) Works are only good works if they spring from faith. Faith and works are inseparable...they are two sides of the same coin, and one cannot exist without the other. And just like a coin with two sides, 1 is the head and the other the tail. The faith comes first...then the good works – motivated by and originating from the heart transformation we just discussed.

One of the founders of our church thought this concept was so critical that she wrote an entire book called “Faith and Works”. This is the quote at the bottom of Monday’s lesson:

“If man cannot, by any of his good works, merit salvation, then it must be wholly of grace, received by man as a sinner because he receives and believes in Jesus. It is wholly a free gift. Justification by faith is placed beyond controversy. And all this controversy is ended, as soon as the matter is settled that the merits of fallen man in his good works can never procure eternal life for him.” {FW 20}

Paul’s attitude toward good works? He was not against good works per se...but he was against using works as a means to salvation. I used this text 2 weeks ago...and I still like the way Paul puts it Galatians 2:16:



We know very well that we are not set right with God by rule-keeping but only through personal faith in Jesus Christ. How do we know? We tried it – and **we had the best system of rules the world has ever seen!** Convinced that no human being can please God by self-improvement, we believed in Jesus as the Messiah so that we might be set right before God by trusting in the Messiah, not by trying to be good. (MSG)

He also says in Ephesians 2:7-10:

Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all his idea, and all his work. **All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish!** We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving. He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing. (MSG)

TUESDAY

The "Faith" of Demons

Third paragraph says, "The most fundamental statement of faith in the Old Testament is Deuteronomy 6:4: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!'" This verse summarizes belief in one God. "Every other Biblical teaching flows from this cardinal truth." Any thoughts about those assertions of absolutes?

Next paragraph – An intellectual faith that has no effect on how we act is useless, even demons have that type of faith. 1 Timothy 4:1 states:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." (NIV)

The Message puts it this way: "The Spirit makes it clear that as time goes on, some are going to give up on the faith and chase after demonic illusions put forth by professional liars. These liars have lied so well and for so long that they've lost their capacity for truth."

My perception of what this means has changed dramatically in the past several years. At one point, I thought this referred to an increasing interest in magic...the supernatural, the growing popularity of things related to the occult, spiritualism, even Satan worship...and all these things have become wildly popular. But, could Paul also be referencing those who adopt Satan's methods and practices of fear and coercion...or those who preach about an angry, arbitrary, vengeful, imperial God who must punish sinners in order to be "just" and enforce his laws? One of our favorite Desire of Ages quotes in this class, "Every sin must meet its punishment...urged Satan." This is a Satanic picture of God being



presented. What are your thoughts? Am I off base here? Is the language too harsh? Are not Satan's beliefs/distortions/ lies about God's character...by their very definition...the "doctrines of devils" and "demonic illusions".

The time spent and concepts learned in this class... I have to be honest with you...have made me uncomfortable sitting in quite a few pews and squirming...because I hear this picture of God being preached in many pulpits all around here...and it makes me really sad. Is it just me...or have the natural law model we are learning...the designer versus dictator concepts...made you hyper-sensitive to having an imposed-law, imperial, dictator view of God presented?

Well, last week at Connect, Pastor Litchfield shocked me a bit by using material from a book called "Finding the Father" by Herb Montgomery. It shocked me because the ideas and picture of God presented were incredibly consistent with what we teach here...and I got afraid for him for a minute. The book's premise is that we have been lied to about God and have long accepted an incorrect picture of him. Even the few passages Litch quoted were so consistent with what we teach in this class, I immediately downloaded the book and have been reading it all week. Here is a little bit from Finding the Father:

Today, loving relationships are many times the weakest perceived quality of those who claim to be God's people. **We have become more concerned with being correct than with being Godly, right rather than righteous.** Intellectually and behaviorally correct, we have allowed love – both in our understanding of God and as the principle by which we relate to those around us – to wither by the wayside. I believe this is largely because **we have failed to understand, not in our treatment of others, but in our own perception – our own heart-level understanding – what it truly means that God. Is. Love.** The root of both our misplaced spiritual zeal and our religious malaise is that **deep within our hearts we have embraced, silently and subtly, even unknowingly, a wrong picture of God.**

Could it be that we don't have a clue what God is really like? I contend that we have been told things about God that are not true. He is not what we think. **If we are not encountering the fulfillment of every one of our desires by our experience with God, we still don't see Him for who He really is.** He is beautiful – if we could just see Him. If our minds, hearts, and eyes could be opened for just a moment, there would be a strange resonance inside each of our aching hearts, saying, "This is it. This is what I have always been seeking. This is the reason I was made." We need to ask ourselves, "How can my internal picture of God be corrected?" The answer, although quite simple, is profound. There is a doorway through which we will find ourselves surrounded by amazing love, extravagant grace, and intimate friendship. **This doorway is the greatest revelation ever to grace our planet. It is the revelation of God's character, made not by someone else, but by God himself through the transparent veil of humanity.** (A reference to Jesus' words in John 10:9). See why I am loving this book?



WEDNESDAY

Abraham's Faith?

The quarterly asks us to compare some passages from James and Paul...and although they both quote the story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 15:6, they seem to arrive at opposite conclusions regarding being justified by faith or works. We have discussed the basis of Abraham's being declared "righteous" in this class several times before. The key order of events is that 1) Abraham believed (trusted), then 2) it was credited to him as righteousness.

Romans 4:20-25: That's why it is said, "Abraham was declared fit before God by trusting God to set him right." But it's not just Abraham; it's also us! The same thing gets said about us when we embrace and believe the One who brought Jesus to life when the conditions were equally hopeless. The sacrificed Jesus set us right with God. (MSG)

Gal 3:5-6: Answer this question: Does the God who lavishly provides you with his own presence, his Holy Spirit, working things in your lives you could never do for yourselves, does he do these things because of your strenuous moral striving or because you trust him to do them in you? Don't these things happen among you just as they happened with Abraham? He believed God, and that act of belief was turned into a life that was right with God.

James 2:21-24: Wasn't our ancestor Abraham "made right with God by works" when he placed his son Isaac on the sacrificial altar? Isn't it obvious that faith and works are yoked partners, that faith expresses itself in works? That the works are "works of faith"? The full meaning of "believe" in the Scripture sentence, "Abraham believed God and was set right with God," includes his action. It's that mesh of believing and acting that got Abraham named "God's friend." Is it not evident that a person is made right with God not by a barren faith but by faith fruitful in works?

Last paragraph says, "Good works are not just the outward sign of faith; they are an *outworking* of faith." Are good works necessarily an outward sign of faith? We talked a couple of weeks ago about some Biblical examples of folks who were consistently performing "good works", but not experiencing any sort of heart transformation or saving faith.

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}



A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

And...lest you think that we are the only folks or the only denomination who understand this concept, I offer this quote from someone who spent her entire life in unselfish, sacrificial service to others...and who obviously understood the concept that it is **not all about your works**:

"I pray that you will understand the words of Jesus, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' Ask yourself 'How has he loved me? Do I really love others in the same way?' Unless this love is among us, we can kill ourselves with work and it will only be work, not love. Work without love is slavery." – Mother Teresa

Similarities between circumcision flaunted as a “badge of righteousness” in Paul’s day...and distinguishing SDA behaviors (Sabbath keeping, no drugs, no alcohol, no smoking, vegetarian diet, etc.). Do we risk these behaviors becoming merely “badges of righteousness”, and how do we avoid that trap? Is there a place for taking pride in the good things we do?

THURSDAY

The Faith of Rahab

Why is Rahab – a lying prostitute – listed in the “hall of faith?” Rahab was not saved because of her dishonesty, but in spite of it. Her heart was for God...she trusted Him, even though she was not spiritually mature or well-versed in his methods. She believed, obeyed, and trusted God with the outcome. Perfect works were not required to perfect her faith.



The Book of James Lesson 7 4th Q 2014 Taming the Tongue

SABBATH

Memory text: “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”
(Matt 12:37, NKJV)

What do you think this text means?

- Is it a matter of finding the right incantation to speak and if we say the right magic words then we are saved, but if not we are lost?
- Is it a matter of having our words recorded in a heavenly deposition and if we have a record of good words we get judged positively but bad words we get condemned?

Here is my paraphrase of this passage:

The words you speak reveal the true condition of your heart, either healed or terminal.

The lesson states that words hold tremendous power, either for good or evil, whether spoken or written. Remember the adage, the pen is mightier than the sword?

Why is this so? What do words do? They communicate ideas and ideas become part of our mind. They can become like code, changing our beliefs, our views, our way of seeing the world, ourselves, some of these ideas get uploaded even before we know it and alter our functioning.

Consider how we learn language – how do we learn to speak? And how deeply wired into us is our language? Do you ever get up and think, “I am going to think in English today?” But English language is not in our DNA, it is uploaded after birth. How many other ideas, thoughts, beliefs, ways of thinking were uploaded in a similar fashion?

A child whose parent tells them critical words will internalize those words in such a way that they form a view of themselves that is altered from reality, but then begin acting on that view of themselves.

It is not only the words spoken but how they are spoken – the tone, the voice inflection, the look, the body language all communicate ideas, which impact how we hear the words.

In the movie My Cousin Vinny... So it is not the specific words, but the ideas that are conveyed by the words that are powerful.

What about Bible inspiration – is it the words of the Bible, or the ideas the words communicate?



This is from the book *Christ's Object Lessons*:

The **leaven** hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the **leaven of truth** works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. **New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed;** the faculties are roused to action in new lines. **Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified.** The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God. p. 99

- What is the leaven? – truth
- truth about what?
- The first truth is the truth about God – “this is life eternal that they might know...”
- Why is the truth about God the most important truth?
 - because this truth is necessary to win us to trust so we will invite God into our heart
- What happens when truth comes into the heart? Lies are displaced, and new desires are set up.
 - Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
 - Truth believed destroys lies and restores trust
 - Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
 - Restored trust results in opening the heart and experiencing God’s love which casts our fear and selfishness
 - Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
 - Love and trust result in acts of righteousness
 - Acts of sin are damaging to mind, body and relationships a terminal condition
 - Acts of righteousness, stemming from a renewed heart of love, result in growing in Godliness and spreading the kingdom of God
- But also the truth about ourselves, our condition, and the solution through Christ

A few pages later in the same book we read:

The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb. p. 102

What piece of information is added here and why is it important?

The blood of the Lamb, often spoken of in the Bible, is metaphor for the truth.

When we partake the truth and are restored to trust, we reconnect with God in a love relationship and thus love, the lifeblood of the universe, flows from God into our hearts again.



Why is it important to move past the symbols to reality? I have patients who have dreams and will often be disturbed by their dreams – but dreams are merely symbolic representations of emotional content. The problem is that people often misconstrue their dreams. A classic dream, you have a performance coming up – it could be pitching for your varsity team, or starting in your first basketball game, or presenting a scientific paper, or sermon, or playing special music, or any other performance. And you have a dream of standing on the church platform in your underwear.

The dream is not about being in church in your underwear, it is about the fear of embarrassment, of exposing yourself, about insecurity and what others will think of you. But, if one takes the dream concretely, one might become afraid of going to church.

Likewise, the Bible is full of symbols, many people fail to understand the symbols and take them concretely.

Consider again the metaphor of blood – how is the “blood” typically used when describing the plan of salvation?

- Jesus is in heaven pleading His blood to the Father?
 - But if we translate the symbol, the blood representing truth or life, the perfect character of Jesus, then does Jesus need to plead to the Father for the Father to recognize and accept the truth or to partake of the perfect character He developed? Isn't the Father the source of all truth? Isn't the Father the one with perfect character upon which all life is designed to operate? Then this idea of Jesus pleading His blood to the Father for the Father's need is wrong.
 - Why might someone, say, one of God's apologists, present the idea that Jesus is pleading to the Father, if it isn't for the Father's need? Who might need this idea? Someone who, in their current understanding, believes lies about the Father, and believes that Jesus needs to do something to protect them from the Father. To calm that person enough to feel safe enough with God, to get to know them for themselves.
 - But Jesus is pleading His blood before the Father – but to whom is He pleading? The plan of salvation is the Father's plan – Jesus came to fulfill the Father's will, “not my will be done but thy will be done,” Jesus said. He said His words and works were that of the Father. So, the plan of salvation is being carried out before the Father. Then to whom is Jesus pleading?
 - Jesus said, it was good for us that He leave, for then the Comforter would come. The Comforter would not speak on His own, but speak only what He hears. To whom will the Comforter be listening? To Jesus, thus the pleadings of Jesus, the pleadings of truth are from Jesus, being communicated to your heart and mine by the Holy Spirit!
 - From one of the founders of our church:
 - ST, January 20, 1898 par. 6 “...Constantly He points us to the emblems of fatherly love, seeking to encourage faith and confidence in God. **He pleads with us to have a correct idea of the Father..**”



- The blood of Jesus is taken into the sanctuary in heaven in order to remove a record of sins from the heavenly ledgers?
 - Does truth need to be taken into the building in heaven and engraved on stones, or written in ledgers, then filed away to gather dust?
 - No! The sanctuary is also symbolic of the dwelling place of God, via His Spirit, which is the sanctuary of the human soul. It is our minds which are cleansed by the application of truth and the partaking of Jesus – it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me...
 - “For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building [Temple]...Don't you know that you yourselves [the church] are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you [you all] are that temple.” 1 Cor 3:9,16,17.
 - “As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- YOU also, like LIVING STONES [building blocks of the Temple], are being built into a SPIRITUAL HOUSE [Temple] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet 2:4,5.
 - “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's HOUSE [sanctuary/temple], built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building [sanctuary/temple] is joined together and rises to become a HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord. And in him YOU too [you all] are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22.
 - From one of the founders of the SDA church, how we are supposed to understand the sanctuary:
 - Your faculties are separate and distinct, yet each is dependent for its success upon the other. **So each day God works with His building, stroke upon stroke, to perfect the structure, which thus grows into a holy temple for the Lord.** One stone mislaid affects the whole building. **This figure represents human character, which is to be wrought upon, point by point. There is not to be a flaw in it, for it is the Lord's building.** Every stone must be perfectly laid, that it may endure the pressure placed upon it. God warns you and every worker to take heed how you build, **so that your building may bear the test of storm and tempest because it is riveted to the eternal Rock.** Take heed how you build. Every hour may be spent in placing the stone on the sure foundation, ready for the day of test and revelation, when we shall be seen just as we are. This warning God presents to me as essential in your case. He loves you with a love that is immeasurable. He loves your brethren in the faith, and He works with them to the same end that He works with you. **His church upon the earth is to assume divine proportions before the world, as a temple composed of living stones, every stone emitting light. This building is to be the light of**



the world, a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. It is composed of stones laid close together, stone fitting to stone, making a solid building. All the stones are not of the same form or shape. Some are large, some are small, but each has its own crevice to fill. And the value of each stone is determined by the light it reflects to the world. This is God's plan, and He would have all who profess to believe His word fill their respective places in the great, grand work for this time.

We are, dear and much-beloved brother, living amid the perils of the last days. Every mental and physical power is to be cultivated, **for all the powers are essential to make the church a building which will represent the wisdom and character of the great Designer.** We are to cultivate the talents given us by God. They are His gifts, and are to be used in their right relation to each other, so as to make a perfect whole. **God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; man makes the character.** The mind is the Lord's garden, and man must cultivate it earnestly in order to form a character after the divine similitude. The Lord has wrought with you, my much-respected brother, enabling you to act your part as His workman; but there are other workmen who must act their part as God's agents, His members, who help to compose the whole body. Bear in mind, all are to be united as parts of a great machine. **The Lord's church is composed of His living, working agencies who derive their power to act from the Author and Finisher of their faith. The great work resting upon God's individual workers is to be carried forward in symmetrical harmony.** *Manuscript Releases, Volume 2 [Nos. 97-161, 1958-1964]. 1993; 2002 (339). Ellen G. White Estate.*

- The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use. {3MR 231.3}

Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity



with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}

- The blood of Jesus is used as a payment to legally pay my debt?
 - How does the truth make a legal payment? It doesn't, the truth destroys lies, and where are lies operational – in the mind and heart of God? No! In the minds and hearts of sinners. Thus the blood, the truth must be taken into the sinner. This is why Jesus said, "Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no part with me."

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, "James uses the image of a..." The paragraph states, "Pure religion is rooted in faith, which is self-authenticating, just as a pure spring needs no proof other than the water that flows naturally from it."

What does this mean?

That if one has faith then one has a pure life and the pure life is what authenticates the faith? This is true, yet not that helpful, why?

What then does a pure life look like?

The Pharisees in Christ's day believed a pure life meant washing your hands before eating, and criticized the disciples for not doing so.

What about people who believe a pure faith is praying five times per day, or going to church on Sabbath, or avoiding alcohol, or any other such behavior?

These people have faith and it leads to what they define as purity, does their faith and their subsequent lives confirm their faith?

Or, does it actually matter upon what our faith is based and in whom we have faith?

The Pharisees had faith in their belief system, and followed it, and thought they were pure. Faith in falsehood may lead one to observe certain rituals, and falsely believe one is pure, because one has claimed the blood as a legal payment etc.

So, faith is not enough, the critical question is, in what or whom is your faith placed?



Why do some attack evidence when God has gone to such lengths to reveal Himself to us and provide us the evidence of His trustworthiness?

The reason the attack on evidence, thinking, reasoning, is that some have faith in a god that is irrational, or a system that is corrupt and they are terrified that thinking people will expose the fallacy of their system. But God Himself invites us to come to Him and reason and in doing so we will be purified!

Read last paragraph, “God’s will, of course...” What does this mean? What does forgiveness mean in God’s system?

Consider the two law lenses – under the imposed law lens the idea of forgiveness is legal, it means pardon, yet even in this theology there are lies upon woven lies – for those who teach that God forgives claim He only does after He has received the legal payment of His Son’s blood. Think about it, if someone owes you \$10,000 and can’t pay it, and their brother comes and pays their debt for them, can you turn the former debtor and say, “Now that I have been paid, I forgive your debt”? No, this penal view of God is false and needs to be rejected as part of the infection that has corrupted Christianity and obstructs Christ’s return.

Under design law – forgiveness is constantly extended from God and it was because of His love and forgiveness that Christ came, “For God so loved the world...” However, forgiveness means more than God’s personal pardon, it means restoration of Godliness in the believer.

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1

As the Saviour is lifted up before the people, they will see his humiliation, his self-denial, his self-sacrifice, his goodness, his tender compassion, his sufferings to save fallen man, and will realize that **the atonement of Christ was not the cause of God's love, but the result of that love.** Jesus died because God loved the world. **The channel had to be made whereby the love of God should be recognized by man, and flow into the sinner's heart in perfect harmony with truth and justice.** {RH, September 2, 1890 par. 7}

What was the purpose of Christ’s life and death? To reveal God and create the avenue whereby God’s love, God’s character could flow again into the human species, into your heart and mine!

Why does sin bring sadness to God’s heart? For the same reason any destructive behavior brings sadness to a parents’ heart. Sin damages and destroys us!



SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “At the entrance to...” Prov 9:10 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” This is a good text to examine the meaning not merely the words.

What does it mean “the fear of the Lord?”

Does the Bible teach that we are to love God? With how much of our being? With all our heart, mind, soul and strength. And does perfect love cast out all fear? Then how is it that we are to fear God?

Several meanings are possible with this passage, two which are true, one which is false:

- Fear is awe, admiration – the more love we have and the more of God we come to know the more we admire Him
- If we are in wild living worshipping a golden calf and God thunders and it frightens us, but we stop the orgy and start listening to God, wisdom has begun – the beginning of wisdom, and as we spend time to get to know God we love Him and the fear goes away.
- It means we become wise by being afraid of God and we should live in terror of our terrible and powerful God. – this is a false interpretation

What do they mean by, “Some teachers of theology, in striving for credibility, also may utilize methods that leave little or no room for faith”?

It was unclear to me, what were your thoughts on the meaning of this passage?

Are they suggesting that the more understanding we have, the more knowledge, the more comprehension of how things work, evidence for things that faith is undermined?

If that is the case then they don’t understand Biblical faith. Biblical faith is not believing in something strongly, hoping, wishing and convincing oneself that something is true despite the evidence. Biblical faith is based upon the evidence, and the more God reveals Himself, the more knowledge we comprehend about Him, His design, methods principles, including in science and nature, the more faith we have.

Read third paragraph, “Paul understood...” What does it mean, “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2Tim 3:7 NKJV)

Well the context is speaking of women who are vulnerable to the manipulation of exploiting religious teachers.

Here is my paraphrase starting in verse 6:



Such people scam their way into homes of weak willed women where they manipulate them with guilt from past mistakes. These women are vulnerable because they are emotionally unstable, swayed by all kinds of selfish desires. 7 They constantly seek help, but reject the Remedy and all truth that would actually heal them.

What this means is that they seek to know things, but don't seek to be changed, transformed, renewed, which means they don't have a knowledge, or experience with God.

What does it mean to seek God's wisdom?

- To come to know reality
- To know God personally, His character of love
- To know His design for life, the protocols upon which reality is built
- To know God's methods for healing and restoration
- To know how you fit in and how you can cooperate with God

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "If anyone..." The lesson points out a very important reality, that our thoughts lead to words, but spoken words reinforce the thoughts. Thus it is important to guard our words, often people will say things they are only speculating about, but once said, it reinforces in their mind and they come to believe something they themselves created in their imagination.

TUESDAY

The middle of the first paragraph quotes Prov 15:1 "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."

What does this mean? Is it wisdom that is generally true or a promise?

When Jesus gave no answer did it turn away wrath?

Does this mean we are to roll over and become a doormat to the demands of others?

Does talking softly work best if one carries a big stick?

What about the words of not casting pearls before swine lest they turn and rend you asunder? Are pearls grievous words? So is there something more to it than just what we speak, than just avoiding grievous words?

What about Christ, "I have much to say but you cannot bear it?"

Read last paragraph, "As drops of water..."



WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “We’ve all experienced...” The lesson points out how sin spread in heaven and on earth, through words inciting doubt and creating desire, confusion, uncertainty leading to choosing selfishness.

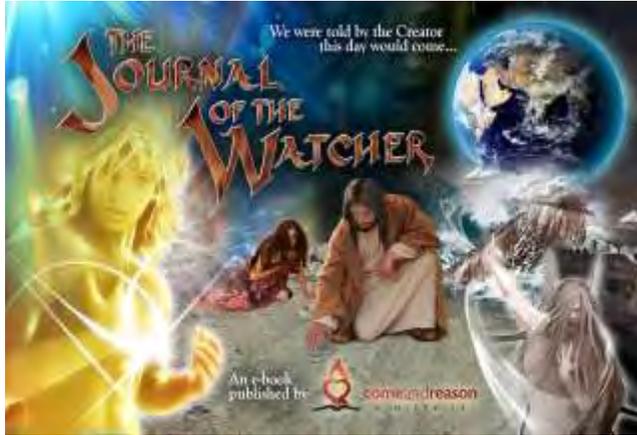
FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 3

From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks – so many of my patients don't know this and thus when ugly things are said to them or about them, they react with hurt feelings rather than reacting with compassion and sadness for the one who is so selfish and hard hearted to say such mean things.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:



The Journal of the Watcher is an illustrated e-book available in the APP STORE for your smart device. Above is the front and back of the postcards we have printed to help share this with others. This book tells the story of the Great Controversy over God's character. Every page is illustrated, with a cinematic audio score and professional voice talent reading.

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We are very excited about this new e-book and hope you will be too!

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Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Sunday Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon. (Dr. Jennings will be teaching his class Saturday November 15)



Nov 22, 2014: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Placerville, SDA church in Placerville, CA.

Jan 10, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

Jan 24, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Monterey Peninsula SDA Church

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, Dalles, Oregon. For more info and to register for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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The Book of James Lesson 8 4th Q 2014 The Humility of Heavenly Wisdom

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “In many...” What is it that drives people to be entitled? Is it not fear and a failure to love, or another way to say it, fear and selfishness?

People have fear of not being recognized, fear of not getting one’s own and an inability to celebrate and rejoice in the successes of another?

This is the “survival of the fittest” drive or motive, which is an infection to God’s creation. This motive contaminates and destroys relationships, peace, joy, happiness and ultimately life.

Do we see this mentality in society in general?

- Entitled to benefits not earned, position not qualified for, respect not deserved?
- Not taking responsibility for one’s own shortcomings, it’s someone else’s fault?
- And if it is someone else’s fault, then where does one look for the solution? To someone else – so people don’t look to see how they can learn, better themselves, overcome, but instead seek to punish the other or get compensation from another.
- How does this play over into theology?
 - It isn’t fair not to punish sin
 - We can’t do anything to overcome sin, so we claim the legal payment of Jesus for sins past present and future, and keep on sinning until Jesus comes.
 - While it isn’t our fault that we are born in the condition with which we were born, it is our fault if we refuse to partake the Remedy provided freely to us.

But is humility the same as passiveness, as failing to stand up for oneself? Does humility mean one allows other to abuse, control, dominate them? Does humility mean being intimidated, backing down, giving in, surrendering to the more aggressive?

Was Christ humble? Did He give in to the demands of others? Did He do what others wanted Him to do? Did He change His methods, purposes, goals, agenda, or ministry?

- Did He stop teaching the truth about God?
- Did He stop healing on Sabbath?
- Did He stop associating with publicans and prostitutes?
- Did He stop speaking with women and Samaritans?

But did He go out seeking to antagonize His opposition? No, He sought to heal, restore, reveal truth, dispel lies, reconcile, build bridges, disentangle confusion, restore love, destroy selfishness.



Can our actions, be misunderstood and misinterpreted by others?

Were Christ's actions misunderstood or misrepresented?

Christ was not trained as a theologian. He didn't have a seminary degree and what was the result? Some of those with a degree were unable to consider what He taught objectively, but discounted it because He had no degree.

It was the pride, the arrogance, the inability of the theologians to humble themselves and consider they could be taught something by a carpenter that prevented them from accepting the truth Jesus revealed and taught.

Did the twelve Apostles have seminary training? And what was the result? Did the religious leaders, those with professional theological degrees have difficulty accepting what they taught?

Can this be a problem for us today?

How should we deal with this? By being humble, meaning we present the truth in love and leave people free. But we don't back down and give in on points of truth just because someone who disagrees is in a position of church leadership or has a seminary degree. We leave them free to hold to their belief. We love them, but we continue presenting the truth, praying for better enlightenment for ourselves as well as others.

The same type of pride contributes to the factions in Christianity. How many people won't learn from someone not of their own denomination?

The truth stands on its own; if it is true, it is true, does it matter who says it. For instance, the devils at one point acknowledged Jesus as the Son of the most high God – were they wrong? Should we reject Jesus because a demon said He was God's Son? No – but should we believe it because a demon said it? No, we believe it because it is true!

Why should we believe Jesus is the Son of God?

- Because of the evidence revealed in Scripture, in the life of Christ, in our own personal experience with Him, and how the law of love in nature harmonizes perfectly with the life Christ lived.

Where do we draw the line between believing because someone said it and believing because we have thought it through for ourselves and examined the evidence for ourselves?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Some commentators..." What do you understand Bible wisdom to be?



Is it not understanding and living in harmony with God's methods, design and purpose?

Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it. Lk 17:33

Does this sound wise? Does it make sense from the world's point of view? Why is this unwise in the world, but ultimately wise?

From the world's point of view there is no God, there is no afterlife, there is only here and now. Further, from the world's point of view no one watches out for you except you. This is your life and you better do all you can to protect it. Once it's gone its gone. So, to lose your life you lose, but saving your life, at any cost, is winning – you are the fittest because you have survived.

But such thinking is based on falsehood, based on the lie that there is no God, and on the lie that survival of the fittest is adaptive.

When one realizes God's design for life, one realizes that life only exists in giving, in surrender to unity with our Creator, in loving God and others more than self. Jesus said:

Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Jn 12:24

This is designed right into nature. Thus Jesus surrenders His life in order to give life to us.

Any other examples in nature?

Read second paragraph, "Interestingly, the only place..." Do we look at the nation that lived 2000 years ago, and who rigidly kept the rules given by Moses as wise and understanding?

- Was it wise and understanding to reject Jesus?
- What about today? Are there people who keep the rules, eat only the right foods, worship on the right day, etc. who are not wise?
- What about those who today in the Middle East keep these rules of Moses, and especially want to keep the eye for an eye rule, do we find them wise?
- Or was Nelson Mandela wiser when he set up forgiveness tribunals, in which everyone who admitted their crimes during that period were legally pardoned? Which is wiser?
- Now am I suggesting the wisdom of God is not wise? Absolutely not! I am pointing out how one can read the Scripture, and misunderstand it such that they carry out God's directives foolishly, thus losing the wisdom intended.

What is the basic problem with the law as kept by Israel ancient and modern and many Christians today? They have accepted the lie that God's law is imposed rules we must to which we must adhere.



The wisdom comes when we recognize God's law as design law, protocols for life, the law of love in function.

Here is a description of foolish law keeping contrasted with wise law keeping:

- A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}
- The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

What makes law keeping foolish? When it is viewed as a system of rules, imposed that we must keep.

What makes law keeping wise? When it is understood as a principle, as a design protocol upon which life is built and then becomes internalized as a principle of action that motivates are choices and behavior.

What motivates people to be one of those who work hard to keep the law?

- It is rooted in believing lies about God – which results in inability to trust Him
- Without trust one will not surrender self, will not open their heart to God and thus one works to prove themselves, to earn their keep
- This results in intolerance, judgmentalism, desire to force others to ones way – a failure to love
- This results in destruction

Here is a quote from a book *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*:

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for his fellow men. **A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard.** The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, **and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies.** {MB 123.1}



MONDAY

The top of the lesson states, “Read James 3:15,16. What is his description of worldly wisdom? What are the common ways we see this ‘wisdom’ manifested in the world, or even the church?”

James 3:13-16 my paraphrase:

James 3:13 Who of you is wise enough to understand God’s methods and principles? Then show it by living in harmony with God’s design for life, a life of love in action, giving in humility to bless and uplift others. 14 But to cherish self-centered, arrogant, mean-spirited, jealous motives in the heart misrepresents God and defames the truth. 15 Such principles do not originate in God nor come from heaven, but are profane and destructive, and originate in Satan. 16 For selfishness, envy and all violations of God’s law of love, break his design for life and cause chaos, disease, suffering and everything evil.

So what are ways the wisdom of the world is commonly manifested in the world and in the church?

In the world:

- Vengeance – hunting down to kill those who do us wrong
- Coercion – sanctions to force people to do what we want
- Violence designed to injure, hurt, exploit, dominate or take advantage of another
- Pleasure seeking for pleasure seeking – live for today for tomorrow we die
- Racism, sexism, bigotry, prejudice – valuing some humans less than other humans
- Exploitation of God’s creation for selfishness
- Killing for pleasure and sport (hunting)
- Sexual perversity marketed as sexual diversity
- Idolatry
- Seeking to get ahead, highest office, most recognition, biggest paycheck...
- Other examples?

In the church:

- Sexism, bigotry, prejudice
 - Restriction of leadership in the church to men
 - Restriction of leadership in the church to seminary trained individuals (Jesus chose His Apostles from a wide background, most of whom were not trained theologians)
 - Denominationalism – arrogance that we are the saved because we belong to a certain denomination and others are lost because they don’t belong to our denomination
- Coercion
 - Sanctions in the church – coercion to conform rather than leaving free to think and explore new ideas honestly and humbly



- Teaching that certain rituals are required for salvation or exaltation and then holding those rites hostage to paying tithe, which one must demonstrate by providing income tax records
- Teaching that the church holds the keys to your salvation and one must participate in church rituals in order to be saved, or belong to a certain organization etc.
- Teaching God's kingdom runs like human governments, legal models of atonement
- Idolatry
 - Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. {FLB 59.8}
- Seeking the biggest church, paycheck, highest office
- Others?

Read last paragraph, "While James..." What enables a person to do this? What enables a person to not fight to get ahead?

A personal experience and trust in God, such that our focus is on fulfilling God's purpose in our lives and trusting God with outcomes.

We don't have to "make it turn out" a certain way, we have to choose in governance of self to do what we know is right for us to do in harmony with God's design, purposes and will.

TUESDAY

Read James 4:1-3 my paraphrase:

James 4:1 Why is there so much hostility, fighting, and arguments among you? Because the survival-of-the-fittest instinct controls you; 2 if you want something, but don't get it, you are willing to kill. You are selfish, coveting what you cannot have, constantly fighting, trying to get for yourselves. You do not obtain, because you do not seek God. 3 And when you finally do ask God, because your motives are selfish, because you focus only on self-gratification, you don't get what your asking because God doesn't use his power to supply you with means to further damage yourselves.

Our minds are out of balance from God's original design. We have two antagonistic motives – our higher cortex, in connection with God desires to live in peace, love, truth, harmony. Our limbic system is dominated by fear and selfishness and seeks to protect self even at the expense of others.



Which is most healthy?

An interesting study was done recently examining **Hedonistic vs. Eudaimonic State of Wellbeing**

- 80 individuals were assessed
 - Hedonistic: Material or bodily pleasure (food sex)
 - Eudaimonic: deeper meaning, purpose, altruism
- Both scored same on measures of affect (in other words both groups would have reported they were equally happy and had equally good moods)
- But WBC gene expression markedly different
 - Eudaimonic: Downregulated inflammatory genes, upregulated infection fighting genes
 - Hedonistic: Upregulated inflammatory genes, down regulated infection fighting genes.
PNAS · vol. 110 no. 33; Barbara L. Fredrickson, 13684 –13689, doi:10.1073/pnas.1305419110

Only in harmony with God’s design is there life, health and true happiness!

This is design law, it is not an imposed rule. God doesn’t send angels from heaven to change the gene expression in our bodies based on our choices. But God did create life to operate in harmony with His design and only in unity and harmony with Him is there life:

Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor. Pr 21:21

Why?

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The next verse, James 4:5...” What is the message of James 4:4-6?

Here is my paraphrase:

James 4:4 You disloyal and unfaithful people, don’t you realize that embracing the me-first, survival-of-the-fittest principle of this world is warring against God? Anyone who allies him or herself with this selfish world chooses to be an enemy of our God of love. 5 Don’t you get it? The Scripture is clear, God longs intensely for you and gives his Spirit to live in you 6 to graciously heal you. That is why the Scripture says: “God opposes selfishness, arrogance and pride, but heals the selfless.”

When we understand God’s law is the law of love upon which life is built, and that sin is deviation from that design based on fear and selfishness, then we can read passages like this and understand what the author is trying to say. However, when we have a false view of God’s law, thinking God’s law is like human law, rules imposed and requires God to enforce, then passages like this become hard to understand.



The bottom pink section asks, “Look at yourself. What in you makes you worthy of salvation?” I don’t like the word selection here or this question – it suggests, based on the word “worthy” that we don’t have worth. But we do have worth – we are God’s workmanship, created by God in Adam to reveal Him and recreated/healed in Christ to reveal Him.

I have many patients who struggle with low self worth, thinking they are unworthy of salvation, too sinful, too dirty, too defiled, too ugly for God to save, and questions like this only reinforce a false idea.

Each of us has worth as God’s creation and this is demonstrated in Christ’s sacrifice for us.

So what in me makes me worthy of salvation?

- The handiwork of God – the life given me by God
- The purpose of God in the creation of humanity
- God’s purpose for me now as a redeemed child of His
- God’s love for me!

Perhaps this question would have been better worded, “What can I do or bring that originates with me that earns the right for me to be saved?” Then the answer is nothing.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Submit yourselves....” My paraphrase of James 4:7-10:

James 4:7 Surrender yourselves to God and his treatment. Tell the devil NO, and you will escape him. 8 Move close to God and God will come close to you. You selfish people stop choosing to indulge your desires. Stop going back and forth between love and selfishness, purify your hearts with love. 9 Stop playing around and get real. Let your hearts break, cry over your terminal condition; admit you are sick, stop pretending all is well. 10 Then go humbly to the Lord and he will heal and restore you.

What obstacles prevent us from surrendering ourselves to God?

- Misunderstanding God, or not truly knowing Him
- Distrusting God
- Misunderstanding the problem of sin, the plan of salvation, God’s solution
- Believing in a false remedy, that doing the right ritual, going to church on the right day, eating the right foods will result in our salvation

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “There are many...” Read and discuss questions 2, 3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New Mailing Address: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOK:

**PO Box 28266
Chattanooga, TN 37424**

The Journal of the Watcher:



The Journal of the Watcher is an illustrated ebook available in the Google Play APP store for Android mobile devices.

Apple does not allow books to be offered as apps, instead, it will be available as an iBook. We will announce when it is available.

Above is the front and back of the postcards we have printed to help share this with others. This book tells the story of the Great Controversy over God's character. Every page is illustrated, with a cinematic audio score and professional voice talent reading.

How You Can Help Us Share This e-Book:

- Get the announcement from our Facebook page and post it on your social media page
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We are very excited about this new ebook and hope you will be too!

Come and Reason Ministries FREE APP is now available for Android and iOS. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.



And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Sunday Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon. (Dr. Jennings will be teaching his class Saturday November 15)

Nov 22, 2014: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Placerville, SDA church in Placerville, CA.

Jan 10, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

Jan 24, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Monterey Peninsula SDA Church

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, Dalles, Oregon. For more info and to register for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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The Book of James Lesson 9 4th Q 2014 One Lawgiver and Judge

Thoughts about the Title?

What comes to mind? What mental images? Doesn't the title lend itself toward presenting God as a dictator rather than Designer? Is it important what view of God's law we hold?

Here is a quotation from the book *The Great Controversy*:

In seeking to cast contempt upon the divine statutes, Satan has perverted the doctrines of the Bible, and **errors have thus become incorporated into the faith of thousands** who profess to believe the Scriptures. The **last great conflict** between truth and error is but the final struggle of the **long-standing controversy concerning the law of God**. Upon this battle we are now entering--**a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah**, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition. {GC 582.2}

What do you hear?

Before we can understand what the Bible means regarding God as Lawgiver and Judge, we must first understand the controversy over God's law.

According to the passage above it is between the law of God and the laws of humans. What is the difference between those two laws?

Listen to this:

“From **the opening of the great controversy** it has been Satan's purpose to **misrepresent God's character** and to **excite rebellion against His law**, and this work appears to be crowned with success.” PP 338

“**God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary**. He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. **The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan**, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God.” ST Jan 20, 1890

What does arbitrary mean? On a whim, without reason, because a person in power says so, what kind of law operates this way? Imposed law!

God is Creator – His laws are the laws the fabric of the cosmos is built upon – created beings, including Lucifer, cannot create reality, we can only make up rules. Thus, the character of Satan is severe, exacting, revengeful, arbitrary – this is the characteristics of imposed rules – this is the attack



on God's character and law by Satan in the beginning, suggesting God's law is no different than ours, rules made up, but God, being more powerful, is able to enforce His rules.

God's law is design law, the law of love, the protocols for life. Here is what Scripture says:

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law**. Romans 13:10
- The **entire law** is summed up in a single command: "**Love** your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:14
- If you really keep the **royal law** found in Scripture, "**Love** your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. James 2:8
- Jesus replied: "'**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: '**Love** your neighbor as yourself.' **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**" Matt 22:37-40
- In the **way of righteousness there is life**; along that path is immortality. Pr 12:28
- He who pursues **righteousness and love finds life**, prosperity and honor. Pr 21:21
- The **law** of the Lord is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7

Commentary from one of the founders of our church:

- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. **For God is love, and love is life**. COL 258
- Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the outworking of a principle at war with **the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government**. GC 493
- **The law of love being the foundation of the government of God**, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. GC 493
- **The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man.** "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: "Thy law is the truth"; "all thy commandments are righteousness" (Ps. 119:142, 172). And the apostle Paul declares: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). **Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author.** {RC 46.5}
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth **the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service,



a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.**

DA 21

- As the Supreme Ruler of the universe, God has ordained laws for the government not only of all living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything, whether great or small, animate or inanimate, is under fixed laws which cannot be disregarded. **There are no exceptions to this rule; for nothing that the divine hand has made has been forgotten by the divine mind.** But while everything in nature is governed by natural law, man alone, as an intelligent being, capable of understanding its requirements, is amenable to moral law. To man alone, the crowning work of his creation, God has given a conscience to realize the sacred claims of the divine law, and **a heart capable of loving it as holy, just, and good;** and of man prompt and perfect obedience is required. Yet God does not compel him to obey; he is left a free moral agent. {ST, April 15, 1886 par. 2}

What is Satan's attack on God's law?

That it is an imposed set of rules in which there is no inherent consequence for breaking, thus requiring God to sit as punisher of the sinner:

“In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. DA 761.4

Notice Satan's argument and what kind of law is it Satan presents?

If God's law is design law and not rules imposed, then why the 10 Commandments, and the ceremonial laws?

What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.²⁰ A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.

²¹ Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.

²² But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.



²³ Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. Gal 3:19-25

What does this mean?

From my paraphrase:

Gal 3:19 If God promised to heal us, then what was the purpose of the law? It was added because of our sin-sick state, our darkened minds and the rapid rate at which we were destroying ourselves in order to diagnose our condition and teach us a healthier way to live until the only true cure, Jesus—the promised one—had come. God communicated this law through angels and then through Moses as an intermediary to the people. ²⁰ But an intermediary is not needed when there is only one party involved; and God and his Son Jesus are one.

Gal 3:21 Is the written law, then, somehow in opposition to the promises of God? Of course not! The written law was simply a tool to diagnose our sickness and lead us to God for healing. If the written law could somehow cure the infection of selfishness and promote life, then healing would certainly have followed the giving of the law. ²² But Scripture is clear: All humanity is infected with selfishness and is imprisoned by this terminal condition. It is by trust that we experience the only cure, the one promised—Jesus Christ, who was given to humankind as the Remedy to this terminal condition.

Gal 3:23 Before Christ came we were quarantined by the written law, restrained from continual self-destruction until Christ procured the only true cure. ²⁴ So, then, the written law was provided as a safeguard to protect us and lead us to Christ—the Great Physician, so that we might be restored to unity with God by trust in and partaking of Christ. ²⁵ Now that trust in God has been restored and we are set right in heart, mind, and character and again practice God's methods, we no longer need the law to diagnose our condition or lead us back to God.

This issue of the law in Galatians, the law that was added, was debated in our church and this is the conclusion:

I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments...In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. {1SM 233, 234}

With this clarity in mind – God's law is design law, Satan's lie is God's law is imposed rules, we can examine the lesson.



SABBATH

But the lesson gets the title from the Bible, from our memory verse, James 4:12 is cited, lets read James 4:11, 12:

NIV:

Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. ¹² There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

What do you hear? What does it mean?

My Paraphrase:

James 4:11 Brothers and sisters, don't bad-mouth each other. When you demean one another you distort God's law of love and make God's methods appear questionable. When you misrepresent God's law of love you are no longer living in harmony with it, but acting as if you have a better design for life than God. ¹² There is only one Designer of life and one Diagnostician who is able to heal our terminal condition. So who do you think you are to diagnose your neighbor as beyond healing?

Does seeing God's law as design law weaken the law? Why or why not?

There are no loopholes in Design law – it is unbiased, it makes no difference regarding race, gender, creed.

- If a rich man and poor man both jump off a building will gravity treat them different?
- If a black woman and white woman both tie a plastic bag over their head will the law of respiration treat them differently?
- If a Christian and a Jew cheat on their spouse will the law of love treat them differently?
- If a Christian or non-Christian harbor resentment, selfishness in their heart, will the result on the character, hearts, minds be different? What if the Christian does rituals, goes to confession, footwashing, communion, but harbors hatred, selfishness, and pride in the heart?

However, if the law is a set of arbitrary rules, then one can make loopholes and exceptions for various groups or persons. Our view makes God's law much stronger and uncompromising. Thus, God, through Christ had to actually fix what was wrong in humanity in order to save humanity. This is profoundly more difficult than merely paying a legal penalty.

This is from the Review and Herald Sept. 21, 1886:



The gospel of the New Testament is not the Old Testament standard lowered to meet the sinner and save him in his sins. God requires of all His subjects obedience, entire obedience to all His commandments. He demands now as ever perfect righteousness as the only title to heaven. Christ is our hope and our refuge. His righteousness is imputed only to the obedient. Let us accept it through faith, that the Father shall find in us no sin. (RH Sept. 21, 1886)! {6BC 1072.8}

How do you hear this? What would this passage mean through the imposed law lens?

- Interpreted through the imposed law lens this offers false guilt, fear and false security. How?
- By suggesting that
 - Perfect performance in behavior is required
 - We are incapable
 - We need a substitute to provide a legal solution
 - Imputed righteousness is taught to be a legal application to our records in heaven
 - We go on living in sin, feeling inadequate, being taught God declares us righteous even though we are not

Imputed righteousness is often synonymous with justification by faith. Those with a legal view think this is when God declares us righteous even though we are not. They say it is an application of Christ's merits to our legal record in heaven. This is all fiction, it is all based on the false view of God's law. The truth is that the believer, the one who trusts in God receives a new heart and right spirit and are set right, or put right, or are justified with God, in there heart, mind, character here and now. Here are some quotes from one of the founders of our church:

Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul **may be kept free from sin**; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation. . . . In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. **Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.** He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. {God's Amazing Grace 181.4}

- note – “having made us righteous” NOT having “declared us righteous”

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. **By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy**



Spirit, we become like Him. The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. {God's Amazing Grace 96.4}

- Again – we are actually transformed to be righteous, not merely declared legally righteous

We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the provision of God. **We are to reflect the highest attributes of the character of God. . . . The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain through the imputed righteousness of Christ.** {OHC 364.2}

- Do you see how the idea that we are legally declared righteous obstructs people from attaining righteousness?

He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might **counteract evil, remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness.** TMK 206

- What is the workmanship of God?
- What does it mean to removing the defiling stains from that workmanship?
- The soul is cleansed through the imputed righteousness – it is literal, real, actual, in the mind, heart, character of the believer.

Notice each of these quotes is applying the imputed righteousness of Christ into the believer to bring healing and restoration of the person.

Why? Because this is how reality works.

- The only way a doctor can heal a patient is by putting the patient in harmony with the laws of health, **not by doing something to appease the laws of health, or doctoring the medical record to say the patient his healthy, even though he is not.**
- Likewise, the only way God can save sinners is by putting sinners in harmony with His design for life, His law of love.

Here is another quote:

When we look to the cross, and there behold the suffering Son of the infinite God, our hearts are moved to repentance. Jesus volunteered to meet the **highest claims of the law,**[**what does the law claim? What does it require? we will read some other quotes and come back to this one**]

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the **claims** of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a **free gift** to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have **remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, Christ **imbues men**



with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2} **Notice Christ developed a perfect character and this free gift is not offered to God to pay a legal penalty. This gift is offered to you and me to heal and transform us!**

But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.--RH, Apr 5, 1898. (2SM 211.) {2MCP 564.1} **[why? Because this is the protocol upon which life is built. It would be like saying the laws of health require you eat]**

While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. **God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.** {MB 54.2}

Christ came to this world to live the law and represent the character of God, that the delusions which Satan had brought upon the world might be dispelled. In the sermon on the mount, He who gave the law became an expositor of the law. That sermon, so full of what it means to love and obey God, is the unfolding of His character. **The law is shown to be a representation of God's character**, that man may see that he must render obedience to the law if he would become a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. **This law requires nothing short of perfect spiritual obedience.** {ST, February 24, 1898 par. 5}

What delusion has Satan brought upon the world? That God is a dictator and His law is an imposed set of rules!

Do we know what the law requires and why? So back to the quote we started with:

When we look to the cross, and there behold the suffering Son of the infinite God, our hearts are moved to repentance. Jesus volunteered to meet the **highest claims of the law**, **[what does the law claim? What does it require?]** that he might be **the justifier** **[what does justifier mean? It means the one who sets us right. So Christ came, to develop a perfect character, in harmony with the law upon which life is built, in order to put us back in harmony with that law]** of all who believe on him. We look to the cross, and see in Jesus a fully satisfied and reconciled God. **[Fully satisfied and reconciled what does this mean? What satisfies a parent whose child is dying of cancer? The cancer going into remission. God is satisfied because in Christ the infection of sin is remitted and a humanity exists again as God originally designed it to be. Thus God is satisfied in a healed humanity and that humanity is reconciled to Him or**



back in unity with Him] Jesus is righteousness. What fullness is expressed in these words! And when we can say individually, "The Lord is my righteousness," then we may indeed rejoice; for the atoning sacrifice seen through faith brings peace and comfort and hope to the trembling soul weighed down beneath the sense of guilt. **The law of God is the detector of sin, [which means what? The 10 commandments are a diagnostic tool to expose where we are out of harmony with God's design. Just as Paul taught]** and as the sinner is drawn to the dying Christ, he sees the grievous character of sin, and repents and **lays hold on the remedy, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.**[**The Remedy – Jesus who developed a perfect character and destroyed the lies which break trust and destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness purifying the human species in His own humanity at the Cross]** {RH, September 2, 1890 par. 6}

We feel deeply thankful that some of our brethren are making an application of the truth to their own souls, through which new hopes and joys are sure to find place within the heart. A deeper Christian experience is greatly needed. The promises are sure; they stand fast forever; we must individually take them to ourselves. Christ is speaking to us in his word. May the Sun of Righteousness send **his bright beams into the chambers of the mind and into the soul temple, that the mist of doubt and uncertainty may be dispelled.** Then may the soul, all warm with the **love of God**, in earnestness and power preach Christ and him crucified. Such preaching will not be in vain, but as it was when Christ, the great teacher, was upon the earth, many will be astonished and charmed, and hearts will be melted and subdued as they contemplate his matchless love. **As the Saviour is lifted up before the people**, they will see his humiliation, his self-denial, his self-sacrifice, his goodness, his tender compassion, his sufferings to save fallen man, and **will realize that the atonement of Christ was not the cause of God's love, but the result of that love. Jesus died because God loved the world.** [note the death of Christ was in no way to do something to the Father, it was an expression of the Father's love and for purpose not the next sentence] **The channel had to be made whereby the love of God should be recognized by man, and flow into the sinner's heart in perfect harmony with truth and justice.** {RH, September 2, 1890 par. 7}

This is healing, this is restoration, this is recreation, this is God's plan of salvation, to regenerate us back into harmony with how He built life to operate, this is the gospel, this is the message to go to the world to prepare the world for Christ's return. This is design law!

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "Only someone who knows..." Do you see that those who wrote this lesson are viewing the law of God through the imposed law lens? We cannot complete our mission to prepare the world for Christ's return until we come back to worshipping him "who made the heaven, earth, seas and all that in them is." We must come back to worship the Designer.

It would be much better to say, “Only the Creator, the Designer, the One who actually constructed life is capable of identifying and fixing deviations from that design.”

Read last paragraph, “God designed that...” Is Christ capable of judging? Of course – but does He need to act in the role of judge **to determine** who is saved and lost?

You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. ¹⁶ But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. Jn 8:15,16

You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” MT 12:34-37

What is being described? Natural law – the condition of the being determines the outcome, not the decision of the judge. So, from scripture, some examples of God’s judgments:

- Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone! Hos 4:17
- He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. Rev 22:11

What is being described? God’s judgments are the diagnosis of the actual condition of the people. His judgments do not determine our destiny. It is not a court scene like we have, where evidence is presented and arguments are made, and the judge makes a determination. No, it is the diagnosing and stating of what the actual condition of each heart is. And what determines that?

Our judgment of God – Rev 14 – Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come.

Be in awe of God, and reveal His character rightly in your life, because the time has come in history for God to be judged. And how one judges God determines whether they trust Him or not, and that determines their eternal destiny.

WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph, “We see so much...” What do you say to those who see unfairness in the world? How do you respond to those who question the existence of God because He allows evil to occur?



THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “Read verse 17...” Is sin primarily behavioral? Those who operate under the false law lens, see sin as deeds, as behaviors, but when we understand God’s design law we realize that the behaviors are a manifestation, or a symptom, of a defect of heart.

As Paul says in Romans 14:23: “everything that does not come from faith is sin.”

What does this mean?

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust....

Thus when we realize God’s law is design law, the protocols upon which life is built, which is the law of love, then we realize, as Jesus taught that the behaviors are manifestations of a heart out of harmony with God’s design:

see Mt 5, adultery and murder.

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions 1-3

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New Mailing Address: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOK:

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Chattanooga, TN 37424**

The Journal of the Watcher:

The Journal of the Watcher is an illustrated ebook available in the APP store for your android smart device. (ANDROID – App store)

Apple version is not yet available, we will announce when it is, but it will be an **iBook, NOT AN APP**. We will announce when it will be available in the iTunes iBook Store.

When Available How You Can Help Us Share This e-Book:

- Get the announcement from our Facebook page and post it on your social media page
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Come and Reason Ministries FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Nov 22, 2014: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Placerville, SDA church in Placerville, CA.

Jan 10, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

Jan 24, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Monterey Peninsula SDA Church

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, The Dalles, Oregon. For more info and to register for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.



April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May 17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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“The Book of James” 4th Q 2014 Lesson 10 –Weep & Howl!

Lots of exclamation points in this week’s lesson...did anyone else notice that? This week’s lesson from the book of James focuses in on the issues of greed, excess, overindulgence, ill-gotten gains, and gluttony...and at first glance may seem kind of like an indictment of all “rich”, but I honestly do not think that’s the intent. I mean...how many here have been on a mission trip? How many have been to a third-world country. I hate to tell you this, but relatively speaking we are all “rich”. I believe this lesson is more about the difference between being blessed and prospering versus stealing/extortion/embezzlement as a means of acquiring wealth...and about the damage that can be done by holding tightly to the things of this world, and about the difference between storing up earthly treasure versus investing in heavenly/eternal things. Saturday’s very familiar memory text sets the tone:

Don’t hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or—worse!—stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it’s safe from moth and rust and burglars. It’s obvious, isn’t it? The place where your treasure is, that is the place you will most want to be, and will end up being.” (MSG) Or, in the more familiar translation “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 2:26

The quarterly starts off talking about “rags-to-riches” fantasies, mentioning “Who Wants to be a Millionaire” specifically...but these fantasies are the basic underlying premise of almost all game shows, multi-level marketing pyramids, reality television, the lottery, and any number of other “next big things”. And while there are some real Shark Tank success stories out there, the odds of hitting the jackpot so to speak are really slim.

And how much is enough? Is more always better? The lesson points out how research suggests that ever-increasing income follows the **law** of diminishing returns.

Just as an aside, what sort of law do you suppose the law of diminishing returns is? Was it legislated by a governing body? Voted in by an electorate? So...how did it become a law? Does anyone else find it interesting that so many natural laws seem to be accepted or embraced without much resistance or argument...while trying to change minds or shift folk’s deeply entrenched paradigms of God’s law from imperial, imposed, dictatorial, arbitrary rules...to one of natural laws and design protocols upon which life was created to operate...seems to be a bit more difficult? Am I the only one who has been met with some resistance on that front? I think last week’s lesson on one “Lawgiver and Judge” provided several examples of this concept.

Anyway, sorry for veering off on that tangent. Has everyone here heard of the law of diminishing returns...understand what it means? It basically disproves the theory that more is always better...or



that your rate of return on investment or effort will continually climb at a steady or ever increasing rate. Those of you with children or grandchildren probably saw a perfect illustration of this law recently as it relates to Halloween candy. The first piece tastes sooo good...the second and third pieces might each taste even better. But...there will come a point at which the incremental gain or pleasure derived from each additional piece of candy will start to decrease...and will eventually even decline.

The lesson details how this law also applies to income, wealth, material possessions...after a certain point, more money more possessions do not buy more happiness. When measuring what contributes most to happiness and quality of life, meaningful relationships, family, job satisfaction, finding ones purpose all generally measure higher than wealth or income. Has anyone other than me discovered this to be absolutely true? How many were told that this was true, but maybe didn't really believe it and had to experience it for themselves before they could look back & say...wow, they were right about that. I mean, when you are young and first starting out – from scratch, with nothing. Or maybe even have some student loan debt...so starting out with *less* than nothing, it's pretty easy to buy into the "more is better" concept. And, it might be for awhile...until you look up and years have gone by...and maybe you have made some \$\$, saved some \$\$, gotten promoted, paid down some debt...but your family relationships have suffered, you barely see your spouse, your kids are strangers. Am I the only one? Like most of you, I acquired this wisdom the hard way.

Pretty much anything that has to do with this world...whatever is rooted in selfishness and survival of the fittest methods is subject to this law of diminishing returns. So then, logically, what do you imagine is **not** subject to this law? Anything based on God's methods of beneficent giving, unselfishness, and love. Such as? The quarterly lists:

- Loving/encouraging words
- A smile
- Acts of kindness
- A listening ear
- Respect
- Genuine friendship
- A hug
- Uncovering more and more transforming truth
- Ever-expanding revelations of God's character and the nature of his law of love

I mean, think about the fruits of the spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law – certainly no law of diminishing returns! Boy does that mean something different to me based on what I have learned in this class. This is the good stuff...no limits or diminishing returns on getting or *giving* these free gifts. This is the stuff where more is always better!



Does anyone remember Gordon Gecko's famous line from the movie "Wall Street"? He said "Greed is good", and I think it can be...but for sure whether greed is good or not...depends entirely on just what you are greedy for.

SUNDAY

Justice Will Be Done!

Another exclamation point there for those who are counting. The lesson title comes from James 5:1 – a call for audible grief and lament...and warnings about impending misery that will cause weeping and wailing and howling for the rich. But are these warnings and admonitions aimed at simply "the rich" or is there more to it? The chapter subtitle in the NIV reads "Warning to Rich *Oppressors*" and in the MSG "Destroying Your Life From Within", which hints even a little more toward natural law constructs and consequences. Reading the passage in context makes it even clearer. It reads this way from The Message:

And a final word to you arrogant rich: Take some lessons in lament. You'll need buckets for the tears when the crash comes upon you. Your money is corrupt and your fine clothes stink. **Your greedy luxuries are a cancer in your gut, destroying your life from within.** You thought you were piling up wealth. What you've piled up is judgment. All the workers you've exploited and cheated cry out for judgment. The groans of the workers you used and abused are a roar in the ears of the Master Avenger. You've looted the earth and lived it up. But all you'll have to show for it is a fatter than usual corpse.

What do you think...is simply being rich problematic? In what way? Do we tend to be more dependent on God when we are rich or when we're poor? Is it more typical to step out in faith and really trust when we are rich or poor? Is it easier to pay your tithe when you don't even have enough money for rent...or when it's not even a sacrifice? (Luxury/comforts, self-sufficiency, control) We will get to some scriptural support and advice for those who think they are "rich and in need of nothing". But were there some Godly folks in the Bible who were wealthy? What about Abraham? Solomon and kings? Job? Bottom line is that your earthly net worth does not have to determine the condition of your heart.

The story of the rich young ruler in Luke 18/Matthew 19 describes a wealthy young man who was just sure he was doing all the right things and keeping all the right rules...until he was asked to really sacrifice and let go of the "treasures" of this world. Jesus' response is enlightening: "Do you have any idea how difficult it is for people who **have it all** to enter God's kingdom? I'd say it's easier to thread a camel through a needle's eye than get a rich person into God's kingdom...Then who has any chance at all?" the others asked. No chance at all," Jesus said, "if you think you can pull it off by yourself. Every chance in the world if you trust God to do it.

One of the founders of our church, Ellen White, had some things to say on this subject as well.



And while working for the poor, we should give attention also to the rich, whose souls are equally precious in the sight of God. Christ worked for all who would hear His word. He sought not only the publican and the outcast, but the rich and cultured Pharisee, the Jewish nobleman, and the Roman ruler. The wealthy man needs to be labored for in the love and fear of God. Too often he trusts in his riches, and feels not his danger. The worldly possessions which the Lord has entrusted to men are often a source of great temptation. Thousands are thus led into sinful indulgences that confirm them in habits of intemperance and vice. – {AA 15.1}

There is another danger to which the wealthy classes are especially exposed, and here also is a field for the work of the medical missionary. Multitudes who are prosperous in the world and who never stoop to the common forms of vice are yet brought to destruction through the love of riches. Absorbed in their worldly treasures, they are insensible to the claims of God and the needs of their fellow men. Instead of regarding their wealth as a talent to be used for the glory of God and the uplifting of humanity, they look upon it as a means of indulging and glorifying themselves. They add house to house and land to land, they fill their homes with luxuries, while want stalks in the streets and all about them are human beings in misery and crime, in disease and death. Those who thus give their lives to self-serving are developing in themselves, not the attributes of God, but the attributes of Satan. These men are in need of the gospel. They need to have their eyes turned from the vanity of material things to behold the preciousness of the enduring riches. They need to learn the joy of giving, the blessedness of being co-workers with God. – {AA 16.2}

The Scriptures teach that wealth is a dangerous possession only when placed in competition with the immortal treasure. It is when the earthly and temporal absorbs the thoughts, the affections, the devotion which God claims, that it becomes a snare. Those who are bartering the eternal weight of glory for a little of the glitter and tinsel of earth, the everlasting habitations for a home which can be theirs but a few years at best, are making an unwise choice...It is the love of money that the word of God denounces as the root of all evil. Money itself is the gift of God to men, to be used with fidelity in His service. God blessed Abraham, and made him rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And the Bible states, as an evidence of divine favor, that God gave David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, very much riches and honor. Like other gifts of God, the possession of wealth brings its increase of responsibility, and its peculiar temptations. How many who have in adversity remained true to God, have fallen under the glittering allurements of prosperity. With the possession of wealth, the ruling passion of a selfish nature is revealed. The world is cursed today by the miserly greed and the self-indulgent vices of the worshipers of mammon.”—The Review and Herald, May 16, 1882.

God brings death and God brings life, brings down to the grave and raises up. God brings poverty and God brings wealth; he lowers, he also lifts up.” 1 Sam 2:6 MSG



Tell those rich in this world's wealth to quit being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Tell them to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever manage—to do good, to be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous. If they do that, they'll build a treasury that will last, gaining life that is truly life.

Money deceives. The arrogant rich don't last. They are more hungry for wealth than the grave is for cadavers. Like death, they always want more, but the 'more' they get is dead bodies.”
Hab 2:5 MSG

Middle bold section of Sunday's lesson: “There is so much injustice in the world, especially economic injustice. Sometimes it is so hard to understand why some people get rich exploiting the pore, and, worse, why they seem to get away with it! (Exclamation point) Do you agree or disagree with this premise? Jesus consistently advocated for the poor and disadvantaged during his earthly ministry...and promised we would always have the poor with us. I also found this in Ms. White's writings, and I think it is profound regarding perhaps the conventional views of economic inequality:

It was not the purpose of God that poverty should ever leave the world. The ranks of society were never to be equalized; for the diversity of conditions which characterizes our race is one of the means by which God has designed to prove and develop character. Many have urged with great enthusiasm that all men should have an equal share in the temporal blessings of God; but this was not the purpose of the Creator. Christ has said that we shall have the poor always with us. The poor, as well as the rich, are the purchase of His blood; and among His professed followers, in most cases, the former serve Him with singleness of purpose, while the latter are constantly fastening their affections on their earthly treasures, and Christ is forgotten. The cares of this life and the greed for riches eclipse the glory of the eternal world. It would be the greatest misfortune that has ever befallen mankind if all were to be placed upon an equality in worldly possessions. – {AA 230.1}

What about the mention of how the exploiters seem to “get away with it”? What kind of law lens must you be looking through if you are worried about folks “getting away” with wrongdoing...or about injustices that seemingly go unpunished? What have we learned about design law and the natural consequences of being out of harmony that can explain how none of us actually gets away with anything?

One of my favorite quotes in this class from {1 SM 235}. We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.



MONDAY

When Wealth Becomes Worthless

Describe the effect wealth (or the lack of it) had on these Biblical characters:

- Nabal (1 Sam 25:2-11)
 - Abigail's former husband, wealthy, arrogant, suspicious, stingy, selfish
 - Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?"
- Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:12-19)
 - Wealthy king who fell ill and when warned he was about to die, he humbled himself, wept, and begged God to be healed. But even when the prophet told him he would be healed, he questioned whether he would know if God healed him or if he just had a super-effective plaster of figs...and he requested that the sundial turn back an hour as a sign from God. After he was healed he got even a little smug...invited the prince of Babylon into his palace and showed him "silver, gold, spices, aromatic oils, his stockpile of weapons—a guided tour of all his prized possessions. There wasn't a thing in his palace or kingdom that Hezekiah didn't show them." Then, when he was warned about Israel's impending Babylonian exile, he believed what Isaiah said was true, but kind of thought to himself "Who cares? It won't happen during my lifetime—I'll enjoy peace and security as long as I live."
- Peter (Acts 3:1-10)
 - Peter and John on their way to temple services were stopped by a beggar who had been crippled from birth. Peter told him "I don't have a nickel to my name, but what I do have, I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!"

The quarterly states "Sooner or later, worldly wealth loses its luster for all of us. We learn its limitations and maybe even its dark side. Money has its place; the problem is when people put it in the wrong place." This passage in Luke 12 mirrors our memory text from Matthew:

What I'm trying to do here is get you to relax, not be so preoccupied with getting so you can respond to God's giving. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Don't be afraid of missing out. You're my dearest friends! The Father wants to give you the very kingdom itself. Be generous. Give to the poor. Get yourselves a bank that can't go bankrupt, a bank in heaven far from bankrobbers, safe from embezzlers, a bank you can bank on. It's



obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being." Luke 12:28-34 MSG

So...what is this **treasure**? In my mind's eye, I immediately see a wooden chest...perhaps retrieved from a shipwreck at the bottom of the ocean...and full of shiny coins and glittery jewels...but I think the treasure Christ refers to is different than that. We have studied the natural laws of worship and exertion in this class – by beholding we become changed, and that this is how we were created and designed to operate. What we focus on, what we pay attention to, what we invest time and effort in we become like, we strengthen, and entrench...and because we are God's highest created beings on this planet, He is the only One we can worship and not devolve. He is the only One we can worship and still grow, develop, and progress. Louis Giglio wrote a little pocket book about this concept called *The Air I Breathe: Worship as a Way of Life*, 2006. He starts his book this way:

You, my friend, are a worshipper! Every day, all day long, everywhere you go, you worship. It's what you do. It's who you are. I don't know whether or not you consider yourself a "worshipping" kind of person, but you cannot help but worship – something. It's what you were made to do. Should you for some reason choose not to give God the worship He desires, you'll still worship something – exchanging the Creator for something He has created. Worship is simply about value...Worship is our response to what we value most. This person, this thing, this experience, this whatever is what matters most to me...it's the thing I put first in my life. And we are not just talking about the religious crowd, churchgoers, Christians...we are talking about everybody on planet Earth...a multitude of souls proclaiming with every breath what is worthy of their affection, their attention, their allegiance...proclaiming with every step what it is they worship. So how do you know where and what you worship? It's easy. You simply follow the trail of your time, your affection, your energy, your loyalty. At the end of that trail you'll find a throne...and whatever or whoever is on that throne is what's of highest value to you – on that throne is what you worship. Sure, not too many of us walk around saying, "I worship my stuff. I worship by Xbox. I worship my job. I worship this pleasure. I worship her. I worship my body. I worship me!" But the trail never lies. We may **say** we value this thing or that thing more than any other, but the volume of our actions speaks louder than our words – our worship is more about what we **DO** than what we **SAY**. To me, **this** is the treasure referred to in our memory text...taking an honest inventory of how and where your time, energies, talents, and resources are being used can be a sobering indicator of the sorts of "treasures" we are building and heaping up for eternity.

"The image of flesh-consuming fire is meant to wake us up to the seriousness of the choices we are making with our money." Is it really?

"In God's plan there is no place for selfish rivalry. Those who measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves among themselves, are not wise." {CG 294.1}



TUESDAY

Cries of the Poor

The lesson lists several different categories of wealthy people singled out by James – rich merchants who will be cut down in the midst of their pursuits (James 1:11), business people who sue to protect their investments (James 2:6), and agricultural landholders who have withheld wages from their laborers (James 5:4) “These verses describe the rich negatively based on their past behavior, present attitude, and **future punishment**...for “heaping up treasure” at the expense of the poor. An especially heinous behavior is mentioned of withholding wages from laborers, and several other Old Testament verses are listed cautioning against the same practice. This was a particularly oppressive to the poor laborers who likely needed that day’s wages to buy that day’s food.

Don’t abuse a laborer who is destitute and needy, whether he is a fellow Israelite living in your land and in your city. Pay him at the end of each workday; he’s living from hand to mouth and needs it now. If you hold back his pay, he’ll protest to God and you’ll have sin on your books. Deut. 24:14-15 (MSG)

Is there anything about our current financial climate that leads you to believe things have changed drastically since Israel in Bible times? Google says that in 2012, the average American household with at least one credit card has nearly \$15,950 in credit-card debt. I have people who work for me who most certainly live paycheck to paycheck and who would be seriously impacted if their pay was held back even for a day.

“Riches bring with them great responsibilities. To obtain wealth by unjust dealing, by overreaching in trade, by oppressing the widow and the fatherless, or by hoarding up riches and neglecting the wants of the needy, will eventually bring the just retribution described by the inspired apostle: ‘Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.’” {2T 682}

WEDNESDAY

Fat and Happy (For Now)?

Today’s lesson talks about those who live earthly lives of luxury and self-indulgence. I think every generation must think they are the most self-indulgent and that things can’t get any worse...but the contrast between James’ luxurious reality and ours still strikes me as fairly significant. This description is also given to the Laodicean church in Revelation 3:17:

“I know you inside and out, and find little to my liking. You’re not cold, you’re not hot—far better to be either cold or hot! You’re stale. You’re stagnant. You make me want to vomit. You brag, ‘I’m rich, I’ve got it made, I need nothing from anyone,’ oblivious that in fact you’re a pitiful, blind beggar, threadbare and homeless. Here’s what I want you to do: Buy your gold



from me, gold that's been through the refiner's fire. Then you'll be rich. Buy your clothes from me, clothes designed in Heaven. You've gone around half-naked long enough. And buy medicine for your eyes from me so you can see, really see."

Thoughts on what gold, clothes, and eye ointment we are buying here? This eye salve is the spiritual discernment given by the Holy Spirit – the spirit of truth and love – so that the spiritually bankrupt can see God for who He really is...and see themselves for how needy they really are.

Then the lesson mentions the famous parable Jesus told about the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. Does someone want to read this story starting in verse 16 of that chapter?

"There once was a rich man, expensively dressed in the latest fashions, wasting his days in conspicuous consumption. A poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, had been dumped on his doorstep. All he lived for was to get a meal from scraps off the rich man's table. His best friends were the dogs who came and licked his sores. Then he died, this poor man, and was taken up by the angels to the lap of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell and in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham in the distance and Lazarus in his lap. He called out, 'Father Abraham, mercy! Have mercy! Send Lazarus to dip his finger in water to cool my tongue. I'm in agony in this fire.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that in your lifetime you got the good things and Lazarus the bad things. It's not like that here. Here he's consoled and you're tormented. Besides, in all these matters there is a huge chasm set between us so that no one can go from us to you even if he wanted to, nor can anyone cross over from you to us.' The rich man said, 'Then let me ask you, Father: Send him to the house of my father where I have five brothers, so he can tell them the score and warn them so they won't end up here in this place of torment.' Abraham answered, 'They have Moses and the Prophets to tell them the score. Let them listen to them.' 'I know, Father Abraham,' he said, 'but they're not listening. If someone came back to them from the dead, they would change their ways.' Abraham replied, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the Prophets, they're not going to be convinced by someone who rises from the dead.'"

Ms. White has this to say about the parable:

"In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Christ shows that in this life men decide their eternal destiny. During probationary time the grace of God is offered to every soul. But if men waste their opportunities in self-pleasing, they cut themselves off from everlasting life. No afterprobation will be granted them. By their own choice they have fixed an impassable gulf between them and their God. This parable draws a contrast between the rich who have not made God their dependence, and the poor who have made God their dependence. Christ shows that the time is coming when the position of the two classes will be reversed (he who is first shall be last, and the last shall be first?). Those who are poor in this world's goods, yet who trust in God and are patient in suffering will one day be exalted above those who now hold the



highest positions the world can give but who have not surrendered their life to God.” {COL 260}

This is really the antithesis of earthly math and the worldly measure of status or wealth or success.

The quarterly does a good job of pointing out that the real focus of this parable is **this** life, and not the afterlife...with both men depicted as being in the same place – the grave (hades). Some folks seem to get wrapped around the axle on that one.

The first paragraph talks about the antiquated idea that wealth and success are a zero-sum game...that someone can only grow their wealth or get richer if someone else correspondingly gets poorer. The quarterly says, “Actually creating new wealth without adversely affecting the wealth of other, however, seems to be a relatively modern idea.” It is a relatively new idea that has accompanied freedom, personal liberty and responsibility, free markets, and capitalism.

THURSDAY

Blame the Victim

The blame game...our natural tendency when we have done something wrong is to try to blame others, shift responsibility, rationalize and excuse the behavior...starting with Adam and Eve’s first sin until today. What motivates those actions? Fear. Jesus warned the disciples that “the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.” The quarterly asks, “How many times have you condemned others only to realize later that you were really the one who was wrong?” Which leads me to ask...is it okay to condemn others as long as you are right?” Or does the practice of speaking the truth in love and leaving people free...leave no room for condemnation?

What does Jesus mean by “turning the other cheek” in Matthew 5:39? How are we supposed to do this on a practical level without letting people walk all over us?

I think the quarterly concludes Thursday’s lesson nicely by saying, “James never condemns the rich simply because they are rich. It is their *attitudes and actions* that matter to God (i.e., their hearts and minds). Similarly, the bare fact of being economically poor does not in itself endear a person to God. It is the *poor in spirit* and *rich in faith* who will be heirs of the kingdom...and these inner qualities have no inherent relationship to ones economic circumstances...except that those who are “rich and increased with goods” may be more needy spiritually than they think.”

The Book of James Lesson 11 4th Q 2014 Getting Ready for the Harvest

SABBATH

What do you think of the title? What is necessary to get ready for the harvest?

- Mature
- Ripen
- Grow up
- Develop

But what does this mean in practical terms?

What is Christ waiting for? Is He waiting for the harvest to ripen, for people to mature, for the bride to get ready, for His children to grow up? What does this look like?

¹¹We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. ¹²In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

^{6:1}Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death... Heb 5:11-6:1

Does growing up, maturing, have anything to do with the seal of God?

Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads--it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved--just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. {FLB 287.7}

The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character.--7BC 970 (1895). {LDE 221.1}

Love is expressed in obedience, and perfect love casteth out all fear. Those who love God, have the seal of God in their foreheads, and work the works of God.--SD 51 (1894). {LDE 221.4}



Why is this important? What is the functional difference between the mature and the immature Christian? Because only those who mature, grow up, settle into the truth, are healed etc. are actually trustworthy, and are in a condition to be brought into God's kingdom.

Remember the 7 levels of moral development?

1. **Reward and punishment** – what determines whether something is right at this level is if we receive reward it is right or if we are punished it is wrong. This is a slave mentality. This is Israel in Egypt – slaves doing what the masters says to avoid punishment.
 - a. At stage one a ruler establishes his right to rule by displays of power and vengeance upon his enemies. He rules by threat of punishment and hope of reward.
 - i. Mercy, or failure to punish, is seen as evidence of weakness, not morality by stage one standards.
 - ii. People at this level see a God of mercy as a marshmallow God and insist God use His power to torture and kill in the end.
 - b. God meets people where they are and with Israel in Egypt He first established His credentials to rule Israel by acts of punishment upon the Egyptian gods, and by mighty, spectacular miracles. "I did this so that you might know that I am the Lord your God." (*Deut. 29:6 NIV*)
2. **Marketplace exchange** – quid pro quo, you do something for me in exchange for something of equal value in return. This is Israel at Sinai, "an eye for an eye and tooth for tooth". Sadly, many in the Middle East still practice this level.
 - a. At this level, vengeance is a moral duty – people who do evil must be paid back with an equal amount of pain and suffering. This is Israel saying, when the law was first read, "All the Lord has said, we will do."
 - b. This is the health wellness gospel, if you say this prayer every day for thirty days God will expand your territory. If you do right, you are blessed by God, if you don't do right you are not blessed by God.
3. **Social conformity** – at this stage right and wrong is determined by community consensus. This is the child who says, "Everyone else is doing it." Right is deemed right by the approval of peers. Individual vengeance not allowed, forgiveness is preferred, but group punishment is deemed just. If group punishment doesn't happen, "If he can get away with it why can't I?"
 - a. This was Israel when they wanted kings, all the other nations had kings, so it must be right.
 - b. Israel collectively punishing those who don't conform to the agreed norm
4. **Law and order** – right and wrong at this stage is determined by a codified system of rules, impartial judges and imposed proscribed punishments. Respect for properly elected or otherwise constituted authority. Right is getting a proper pay or reward for good work, and proscribed and inflicted punishment for breaking the rules. Authority figures are rarely questions, "He must be right he is the President, the Judge, the Pope, God" This was Israel at the time of Christ – "we have a law!"
5. **Love for others** – right is seeking the best interest of others, realizing people have value in who they are irrespective of the rules. Right is determined, not by a checklist of rules, but by



- doing what is actually helpful for another. Individuals have inalienable rights as free moral agents and are valued for who they are. Circumstances dictate what is right and wrong.
- a. This was Jesus healing on Sabbath and the Pharisees wanting to stone Him for breaking the rule.
 - b. The story of the good Samaritan
6. **Principle based living** – realizing the design protocols, principles, upon which life is designed to operate and living in harmony with them. It is not doing something because a rule says to do so, but because it is understood to actually work this way.
- a. This was Jesus and the Apostles after Pentecost
 - b. It is understood, at this level that God says what is right because it is right, because it is the way things actually are. It isn't right simply because God said it.
 - c. Dealing with people at level four and below explains why the detailed instruction in the books of Moses. Just like our laws in the US, must make a rule for almost every situation. At level six, however, the Law may be summed up in two statements: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (*Luke 10:27*), when we live on principle the rules are no longer needed.
7. **Enlightened Friend of God –not only loving others, not only understanding God's design, living on principle, but intelligently fulfilling God's purpose for humankind. Jn 15:15** "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."
- a. Realizing the truth about God, His character, nature, God's design for life, the origin of evil, the nature of sin, the weapons of Satan, the original purpose for the creation of humanity, the fall, God's working through human history, the purpose of the Cross, and the ultimate cleansing of the universe from sin.
 - b. This is Jesus and those who are ready for translation when Jesus comes, those who the Scriptures describe as being sealed in their foreheads with the seal of God, those who do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. They live in the world with purpose to advance God's kingdom and fulfill God's purposes utilizing God's methods, but are not of the world.

During moral development a person is only capable of comprehending one level beyond their current level of operation. The majority of people operate at level four or below and level four people persecute those operating at level six and seven. Worse, they don't comprehend level six and seven and claim what they teach doesn't make any sense. This was what happened to Jesus and the religious leaders of His day.

Consider a child brushing their teeth:

1. Level 1 punishment/reward- Don't Brush your teeth mommy will be mad child will be punished but do brush teeth get praised
2. Level 2 market place exchange – brush teeth for a bedtime story – let's make a deal
3. Level 3 social conformity – don't brush teeth get teased at school, do get accepted



4. Level 4 law and order – don't brush teeth get a proscribed punishment – no dessert, if do get reward – dessert
5. Level 5 love for other– because realize it would inconvenience to parents to take you to dentist, pay dental bills and you want to reduce burdens on them
6. Level 6 – principle base living – realize that if you don't then the teeth will decay and don't want teeth to decay
7. Level 7 – Enlightened friend of God – realize man was made in God's image, the body is the Spirit temple, understand the 2nd law of thermodynamics, if no energy in things decay and choose to brush teeth as it is sensible, good steward, maintains one's health so can be of greatest benefit in God's cause, good witness to others, shows love for God and fellow man.

Notice – people at all levels are brushing their teeth – but the reason they brush their teeth changes over time. And only those at the highest levels of moral decision make can be trusted – those at level four and below require oversight, supervision, threat, enforcement to continue on. With no higher reason they would stop the behavior if not for the authoritarian enforcement. For such individuals the law is not yet written in the heart, it is not assimilated into the character. This is what Paul describes Hebrews that we just read, those who are still babes, not acquainted with righteousness.

This is from one of the founders of our church:

A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. **If he dared, such a one would disobey.** His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

Level 1-4 development – doing what is right for fear of punishment. Such people are immature, not ready for the harvest. But notice this next quote:

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. **True obedience is the outworking of a principle within.** It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

Notice, true obedience is principle based living – doing what is right because it is right – this is level 6,7 living. These people can be trusted.

God wants us to grow up into full maturity, so what is the functional difference?

This failure to mature beyond levels 1-4 is why many young people, when they reach adulthood, leave the church, because they have only been taught level four and below. Imagine if your child only knew to brush their teeth because of mother's rule and threat of punishment, no other reason ever entered their mind – when they leave home and the threat is no longer there, they quit brushing.

We must help our children grow up to the highest levels of moral development, to understand God, His methods, design for life and then they will never choose to leave

We must move past the penal legal views of God that are enshrouding the world and come back to the truth about Him as revealed in Christ and how He has constructed reality to operate.

Now with this in mind, consider this historic view:

Men will surely set up their laws to counterwork the laws of God. They will seek to **compel the consciences** of others, and in their zeal to **enforce these laws they will oppress** their fellow men. {DA 763.2} **What kind of law is being described? Arbitrary, imposed, rules without inherent consequence.**

The **warfare against God's law**, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. **All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men.** Here the dividing line will be drawn. **There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed;** and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion. {DA 763.3} **What do you understand this war over God's law to be about? It is over Design law versus imposed rules. Satan alleged in heaven that God's law is arbitrary, rules imposed, and that God must punish sin, thus putting God in the role of punisher, executioner and source of death. Satan's lies take God down from His role as Creator and put Him on the same plane as created beings.**

Then the end will come. **God will vindicate His law** and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion **will be cut off.** ... {DA 763.4} **What does cut off mean? Let go, abandoned, set free to reap what they have chosen, disconnected from God the source of life. This is not an infliction, this is a granting of freewill choice, with built in inherent consequence. This is natural/design law, not arbitrary imposed rules. Notice the very next words:**

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, **he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life.** He is "alienated from the life of God." Christ says, "All they that hate Me love death." Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. **God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice.** By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him **place themselves so out of harmony**

with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them. {DA 764.1} **What kind of law? Design law – and why has it taken so long for this to be realized?**

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. **Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin.** A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe. {DA 764.2}

So why hasn't Christ returned? Because the children of God are stunted in their growth – they are being fed a pabulum of lies and distortions about God that prevents maturing. Listen to this:

The coming of the bridegroom was at midnight--the darkest hour. **So the coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history.** The days of Noah and Lot pictured the condition of the world just before the coming of the Son of man. The Scriptures pointing forward to this time declare that Satan will work with all power and "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10. His working is plainly revealed by the rapidly **increasing darkness, the multitudinous errors, heresies, and delusions of these last days.** Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are **leavening the professed churches** of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight, impenetrable as sackcloth of hair. To God's people it will be a night of trial, a night of weeping, a night of persecution for the truth's sake. **But out of that night of darkness God's light will shine...** {COL 414.3}

"Behold," says the Scripture, "the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; **but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.**" Isaiah 60:2. {COL 415.2} **Which means what? Remember Revelation 14 Fear God and give him glory... this is the same thing – we re to give him glory, how? By revealing His character in our lives, why? Because the hour in which the truth light of His character is to shine forth into the world so that people may judge God correctly and trust Him. Notice the next words:**

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth... {COL 415.3}

Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "Behold your God." The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415.5}



Why hasn't Christ returned? Because His bride is not ready! Is the Bridegroom returning for a child bride? No – He wants a mature bride!

What preparations are we making for the Lord's return?

- Are we presenting the truth about Him and His design of love?
 - Any thoughts on how we can do this more effectively?
 - What we are doing:
 - giving away free DVDs
 - giving away free Bible study guides and pamphlets
 - webcasting, podcasting and making recordings of this class available
 - Making *Could It Be This Simple?* & *The God-Shaped Brain* available at essentially cost (if purchased by the case)
 - networking with others who are sharing this picture of God
 - conducting seminars around the world
 - Other suggestions?
- Are we requiring our understanding of Bible doctrines to harmonize with the character of God as revealed in Christ?
- Are we moving past symbolism and metaphor to reality?
 - Any symbols we are stuck on, that keep us from growing up?
 - Perhaps in the SDA church the biggest symbolic system that obstructs growth is the sanctuary, but others?
 - Washed in the blood? (which means what?) I like this description:
 - The **leaven of truth** works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By **it [the truth]** the impure are cleansed, **washed in the blood of the Lamb**. Through **its [the truths]** life-giving power it brings all there is of mind and soul and strength into harmony with the divine life. Man with his human nature becomes a **partaker of divinity**. Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. As these changes are effected, angels break forth in rapturous song, and God and Christ rejoice over souls fashioned after the divine similitude. {COL 102.3}
 - What does it mean to be washed in the blood? To partake the truth and life of Jesus which transforms the inner person.
 - We are to mature, to grow up, to understand reality, to move past symbols!
 - Covered by the robe which means what? I agree with this description
 - **Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul...** This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. **Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character**, and this character He offers to impart to us... When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is**



united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 3:11.4}

- What is being described? This is not a legal solution, it is not a covering over, it is a transforming, healing, regenerating, recreating, restoring within the believer in Christ the perfection of love which is the character of God. We are partaking of Christ and thus becoming conformed to His likeness.
- Are we partaking of the truth about God, thus being transformed, maturing, growing up? Or are we ingesting into our minds, our souls, distortions about God that continue to keep us stunted and immature?

Do we know what the “final message of mercy” to the world is?

Do we understand the cleansing of the sanctuary is the cleansing of the minds and hearts of God’s people from lies and selfishness and restoring Christlike character within?

Do we understand that Rev 14 is about God being judged to be completely trustworthy and our role is to reveal His character, i.e. give Him glory so others can see God’s true character and choose to trust Him?

Do we understand Babylon is a system of confusion – confusion over God and His character, confused because lies have replaced truth, and this has occurred by several factors:

- Accepting the lie about God’s law – that it is no different that created beings make – rules.
- Accepting the lie that the Bible is the only source of truth and that it should be used in isolation disconnected from the other threads of truth provided by God. This is why we have 34,000 different Christian groups all claiming the Bible – talk about confusion.
- Accepting the lie that good and evil exist forever in a dualistic universe either in eternal place of torment, or in the character of a god who is presented as the source of pain, suffering and death

Do we understand the Elijah message – which is God is not like Baal – God does not require appeasement – “For God so loved the world...”

SUNDAY

What is the latter rain? What is its purpose? Is there anything necessary for the latter rain to come? Will God pour His Spirit upon those who would tell lies about Him?

The Bible uses the metaphor of the wheat and tares and it is stated that only at harvest time can the wheat and tares be distinguished from each other. What are the lessons about this?



- We are not to try and uproot the tares from the church lest we uproot wheat with it – it is only separated at the harvest
- But that means that not everyone in the church are God’s people, which means what?
- It means we must all think for ourselves, come to our own conclusions, be sure we are maturing as God would have us mature and not simply believe because someone in the church tells us something. We must not trust our view of God to the authority of another person, regardless of what role they hold in church.
 - **We must not think, "Well, we have all the truth,** we understand the main pillars of our faith, and we may rest on this knowledge." **The truth is an advancing truth,** and we must walk in the increasing light. {Counsels to Writers and Editors 33.2}
 - **A spirit of pharisaism** has been coming in upon the people who claim to believe the truth for these last days. They are self-satisfied. **They have said, "We have the truth. There is no more light for the people of God." But we are not safe when we take a position that we will not accept anything else than that upon which we have settled as truth.** We should take the Bible, and investigate it closely for ourselves. We should dig in the mine of God's word for truth. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Some have asked me if I thought there was any more light for the people of God. Our minds have become so narrow that we do not seem to understand that the Lord has a mighty work to do for us. **Increasing light is to shine upon us;** for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."--Review and Herald, June 18, 1889.
 - Are we growing, advancing in our understanding of truth, or are we stagnant, resting satisfied on ideas that are decades, centuries or millennia old?
- In the end, when the wheat and tares are separated, what is the basis of their separation? Is it the opinion of the harvester that determines it, or the actual condition of what is being harvested?
- Likewise in the “judgment” God’s judgment does not determine the destiny of anyone – God’s judgment is merely the final diagnosis of the actual condition of each person’s character. Those who have been won to trust in God have been healed and restored to Christlikeness, while those who have retained the lies about God have solidified themselves in the Satanic character. Our eternal destiny is determined by who we trust and thus whom we become like.

MONDAY

Read third paragraph, “The word establish...” What does this mean? Does it mean we have the right doctrines? That we understand the interpretation of Bible prophecy in the correct way?

What does it mean to be settled into the truth?



For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Cor 10:3-5

It is the truth about God, His character, methods, principles that we must be settled into – the darkness that covers the world is about God. And thus the truth that heals and sets free is about God.

Doctrines become unhelpful if they become stand alone ideas that we promote and argue with Bible texts disconnected from the truth about God. Doctrines become beneficial as we connect each one to the truth about God.

The last paragraph states, “believers, redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb...” What does this mean?

After our earlier discussion, what does it mean to be redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb?

TUESDAY

The lesson asks the question, why are we still here and then points out that the greatest threat to the church is not from outside the church, but from within the church itself.

How do you understand that to be true? Here is a description from more than 100 years ago:

The goodness, mercy, and love of God was proclaimed by Christ to Moses. This was God's character. When men who profess to serve God ignore his parental character, and depart from honor and righteousness in dealing with their fellow-men, Satan exults, for he has inspired them with his attributes. They are following in the track of Romanism. Those who are enjoined to represent the attributes of the Lord's character, step from the simple platform, and **in their own human judgment devise rules and resolutions to force the will of others.** The devisings for forcing men to follow the prescriptions of other men are **instituting an order of things that overrides sympathy and tender compassion,** that blinds the eyes to mercy, justice, and the love of God. Moral influence and personal responsibility are trodden under foot. {1888 1435.2}

The righteousness of Christ by faith has been ignored by some for it is contrary to their spirit, and their whole life experience. **Rule, rule, has been their course of action. Satan has had an opportunity of representing himself.** When one who professes to be a representative of Christ engages in sharp dealing, and pressing men into hard places, **those who are thus oppressed will either break every fetter of restraint, or they will be led to regard God as a hard master. They cherish hard feelings against God, and the soul is alienated from him, just as Satan planned it should be. This hard-heartedness on the**



part of men who claim to believe the truth, Satan charges to the influence of the truth itself, and thus men become disgusted, and turn from the truth. For this reason no man should have a responsible connection with our institutions who thinks it no important matter whether he has a heart of flesh or a heart of steel. **Men think they are representing the justice of God, and they do not represent his tenderness and the great love wherewith he has loved us.** Their human inventions, originating with the specious devices of Satan, appears fair enough to the blinded eyes of men, because it is inherent in their nature. **A lie, believed, practiced, becomes as truth to them. Thus the purpose of the Satanic agencies is accomplished, that men should reach these conclusions through the working of their own inventive minds.**

Ty Gibson posted a blog on his website recently entitled, *The Old Covenant Brood* which is about the conflict in the SDA church post 1888 and how the legal model has infected the church and our church has still not recovered. He describes this process and history in our church in great detail. The link is:

<http://www.lightbearers.org/the-old-covenant-brood/>

Read last paragraph, "Ultimately..." After our discussion – how do you understand this? How do you understand judgment through the two law lenses? What is Satan's view of God's law and judgment? What is the Bible view?

WEDNESDAY

Patience and endurance – how is patience and endurance related to getting ready for the harvest?

"The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." James 5:7. So the Christian is to wait with patience for the fruition in his life of the word of God. Often when we pray for the graces of the Spirit, God works to answer our prayers by placing us in circumstances to develop these fruits; but we do not understand His purpose, and wonder, and are dismayed. Yet none can develop these graces except through the process of growth and fruit bearing. Our part is to receive God's word and to hold it fast, yielding ourselves fully to its control, and its purpose in us will be accomplished. {COL 61.2}

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New Mailing Address: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOK:

**PO Box 28266
Chattanooga, TN 37424**

The Journal of the Watcher:

The Journal of the Watcher is an illustrated ebook available in the APP store for your android smart device. (ANDROID – App store)

Apple version **IS NOW** available, in the ibooks store. Open the ibooks app, then within the ibooks app go to the store and search for *The Journal of the Watcher*. Due to the amazing graphics and incredible sound track it is a large file, so with wifi it will take about 30 minutes to download – so be patient.

How You Can Help Us Share This e-Book:

- Get the announcement from our Facebook page and post it on your social media page
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- Give the app a 5 star rating in your app store
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- Tell friends at church
- Hand out the *The Journal of the Watcher* postcards (email us a mailing address and we will ship them to you at to cost, they come in packs of 100)

We are very excited about this new ebook and hope you will be too!

Come and Reason Ministries FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Jan 10, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

Jan 24, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Monterey Peninsula SDA Church

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, The Dalles, Oregon. For more info and to register for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.



April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May 17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their smile.amazon.com site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**

The Book of James Lesson 12 4th Q 2014

We continue to receive emails from around the world expressing thanks for our materials and this message. Here is a one received yesterday:

I would greatly appreciate if you could please send me 3 copies of each of the seminars:

I wanted to let you know that I have greatly enjoyed your latest project, "The Journal of the Watcher", it is a great resource that I will be sharing with my family and friends.

I am also planning to visit family over the holiday season and would like to gift away some of these video seminars, since I have been so personally blessed by them already.

Please receive my most sincere THANKS, and please extend our best wishes to your staff and supporters of your Bible study class, which we never miss out.

May God continue to bless your ministry, and that His Truth be continually shared through all your efforts.

Prayer, Healing, and Restoration

Any questions about this?

SABBATH

Read memory text: "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed: The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." James 5:16

What is the connection between confessing sins to one another and healing?

When we sin, by definition, this is deviation from God's design. It is violation of the law of love, and within our brain it results in disruption of the salience network. This activate fear circuitry, disrupt healthy thinking, activate guilt and rumination cycles. We begin having fear, guilt and shame based thinking. This causes to take self protective actions like:

- avoidance
- lying
- covering up
- rationalization
- blaming
- denying
- appeasements
- penances
- disengagement
- anger
- resentment
- attempts to sooth self with alcohol, drugs, work, games, relationships, shopping, gambling, adventure, movies, fantasy books
- escapism
- false theologies to avoid the guilt and shame of a selfish character through penal substationary constructs



All of this contributes to inflammatory cascades that increase illness of various kinds. Diseases associated with alteration in immune system and inflammation include (but are not limited to)

- Alzheimer's dementia
- Depression
- Schizophrenia
- bipolar d/o
- cancer
- obesity
- DM I and II
- arthrosclerosis
- Heart attacks
- Strokes
- fibromyalgia
- chronic fatigue syndrome
- inflammatory bowel diseases
- sjogren's diseas
- rheumatoid arthritis

Where does confession come into the healing process?

Confessing to others, others who are mature in Christian love, grace, character and who understand the struggles of the heart and mind and God's plan to heal – results in experiencing love and acceptance, which drives out the fear and shame. We experience we are still loved, but not the destructive behavior.

Consider an addict at a 12 step meeting, who says “Hello I'm John and I'm an addict” he is met with acceptance and support, there is no condemnation of him, which works to reduce his fear and shame, prevent isolation and draw him back to community where he can find the support to overcome. But, in the 12 step meeting there is never a message that it is okay to continue in the addiction cycle.

The first two steps read:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a power greater than could restore us to sanity.

Why does it read “We admit...” Rather than “I admit?” Because we cannot overcome in isolation. We cannot gain victory alone. One of Satan's traps is to get people to sin, in sin experience fear and shame, and then as a result of fear and shame isolate, hide, disconnect from those who love them and would be there to help them.

This leads them to find others who are also living in fear and shame and who rather than longing to see them overcome instead feed the destructive cycles of behavior.

Christianity is to be like the 12 step program, sending messages to others that we are all loved and accepted, but never that destructive lifestyle patterns are health and acceptable.



Thus, when we confess and experience love, we connect with God and others and we can more easily stop the dysfunctional coping of lying, escapism etc. We reconnect the salience network; we “get real” meaning we begin to be truthful; we calm the fear circuitry; we reduce inflammatory cascades; we sleep better, eat better, have healthier immune systems and many illnesses improve.

Listen to this commentary about Joseph’s brothers:

After the burial of Jacob **fear again filled the hearts of Joseph's brothers.** Notwithstanding his kindness toward them, **conscious guilt made them distrustful and suspicious.** It might be that he had but delayed his revenge, out of regard to their father, and that he would now visit upon them the long-deferred punishment for their crime. They dared not appear before him in person, but sent a message: "Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father." This message affected Joseph to tears, and, encouraged by this, his brothers came and fell down before him, with the words, "Behold, we be thy servants." **Joseph's love for his brothers was deep and unselfish, and he was pained at the thought that they could regard him as cherishing a spirit of revenge toward them.** "Fear not," he said; "for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones." {PP 239.1}

When we live in guilt, what does it do to our ability to relate to others?

- Unresolved guilt makes us fearful, suspicious, distrustful
- We, rather than looking inward and being truthful, and seeking healing for our souls, instead project outward and find fault in others
- This causes further alienation, our own fear and self condemnation, causing us to believe no one could love us if they really knew, and then projecting our own defect onto others and seeing them as untrustworthy

This gives us some insight into why the unrepentant, the unhealed, are not in heaven – they can’t tolerate it, they hate being there. Listen to this commentary about the children of Israel:

During that long time spent in communion with God, **the face of Moses had reflected the glory of the divine Presence; unknown to himself his face shonen with a dazzling light when he descended from the mountain...** Aaron as well as the people shrank away from Moses, and "they were afraid to come nigh him." Seeing their confusion and terror, but ignorant of the cause, he urged them to come near. He held out to them **the pledge of God's reconciliation, and assured them of His restored favor. They perceived in his voice nothing but love and entreaty,** and at last one ventured to approach him. Too awed to speak, he silently pointed to the countenance of Moses, and then toward heaven. The great leader understood his meaning. **In their conscious guilt, feeling themselves still under the**



divine displeasure, they could not endure the heavenly light, which, had they been obedient to God, would have filled them with joy. There is fear in guilt. The soul that is free from sin will not wish to hide from the light of heaven. {PP 329.5}

One of the reasons we are to confess our sins to each other, is to free us from the fear of condemnation, which happens internal to us when we are out of harmony with God's design.

Read first paragraph, "People are fascinated..." Thoughts about miracles? Is it wise and reasonable to trust when miracles happen? Do miracles prove the working of God?

When the serpent spoke in Eden, was that a miracle? Did it make what the serpent said true?

Deuteronomy 13:1-3. "If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder which he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the word of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams." (RSV)

How did Christ use miracles? When they asked Him to perform a miracle to prove who He was, whether it was the devil in the wilderness, or the religious leaders, what did He do?

When miracles happen, who are they generally for – the strong in faith or the weak in faith?

- 10 plagues of Egypt who were the miracles for?
- Gideon – why did he need the miracle of fleeces?
- 3.5 years of no rain and Mt. Carmel – who was it for?
- When Jesus and the Apostles healed people who was the miracle for?
- When Peter and Paul were miraculously delivered from prison and death (viper, shipwreck), who were the miracles for? In the end were they miraculously delivered?
- All those who Christ healed of sickness – what happened to them?
- Thus the lesson points out God has a desire for a more substantial healing – what is that healing?

Listen to this from the book *Desire of Ages*:

When the message of truth is presented in our day, there are many who, like the Jews, cry, Show us a sign. Work us a miracle. **Christ wrought no miracle at the demand of the Pharisees. He wrought no miracle in the wilderness in answer to Satan's insinuations.** He does not impart to us power to vindicate ourselves or to satisfy the demands of unbelief and pride. **But the gospel is not without a sign of its divine origin. Is it not a miracle that we can break from the bondage of Satan? Enmity against Satan is not natural to the human heart;** it is implanted by the grace of God. When one who has been controlled by a stubborn, wayward will is set free, and yields himself wholeheartedly to the drawing of God's heavenly agencies, **a miracle is wrought;** so also when a man who has been under strong

delusion comes to understand moral truth. **Every time a soul is converted, and learns to love God and keep His commandments, the promise of God is fulfilled,** "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Ezekiel 36:26. **The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals an ever-living Saviour,** working to rescue souls. A consistent life in Christ is a great miracle. In the preaching of the word of God, the sign that should be manifest now and always is the presence of the Holy Spirit, to make the word a regenerating power to those that hear. This is God's witness before the world to the divine mission of His Son. {DA 407.1}

What is the miracle we are to look for? Hearts and minds being set free from lies about God and character changing to love God and others – people becoming mature, kinder, gentler, more patient, honest, trustworthy. Such a change is evidence of God's regenerating power!

This miracle, of people who love God and stay that way in the face of adversity is of greater value and reveals more clearly God's truth power to regenerate the inner man, than healing of physical sickness.

Think about it – for God to heal a physical malady is as easy as snapping His fingers – but what about healing someone's heart/character? It is much more difficult – why? Because it requires the cooperation of the person and the working out of patterns of thinking, feeling, relating, believing, while maintaining the autonomy of the individual.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Though dealing..." Why is it joy to fall into trials? What is your goal for yourself and your children?

- Graduate college?
- Financial security?
- Happy marriage?
- Children or grandchildren?
- Win Olympic medals or some other awards?

What about character development? What about overcoming fear and selfishness in the heart? What about becoming like Christ? Which is most important – success of what the world says or being like Christ in character?

- What helps us overcome our weaknesses of character?
- Trials and struggles
- Thus we rejoice because each trial is an opportunity to either overcome or to grow in godliness
- Why do we rejoice in going to PT? I know when I had to go I was very happy and eager to go and did rejoice in it – why?



- In the same way, when we participate with Christ in His plan there will be difficulties but these can be useful in helping strengthen us.

That doesn't mean every difficulty or trial is brought upon us by God – as Joseph's experience demonstrates, the brothers brought the trial on Joseph because of evil in their hearts. The trial did not come from God – but God permitted it and overruled the evil bringing about greater good. But God was only able to overrule because Joseph trusted God with his life and how it would eventually turn out.

One of Satan's tools to defeat us is to get us to take responsibility upon ourselves for how things turn out. Thus we try to force events, or worry about events or outcomes we have no control over. Or, we get discouraged, feel abandoned by God and walk away from Him and don't allow Him opportunity to overrule for good.

Consider Joseph – sold at 17 into slavery and it wasn't until 13 years later that he was finally set free. For 13 years he lived as a slave, God did bless him within the confines of being a slave, yet he still had further trials of false allegation, being sent to prison etc. But God was working through it all for a larger and greater good. Do we allow for this in our trials.

In our own experience as a ministry we went through a trial, in which things were said falsely about us, (and still are) in which we were misrepresented, and mistreated. And yet, out of this what has happened? We now have a worldwide ministry that is producing enduring materials and reaching tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands and more. None of which would have happened had we not gone through the difficulties.

MONDAY

Read James 5:14,15:

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. NIV

Here is my paraphrase:

If anyone is sick, be sure to call the spiritual leaders to both ask God to intervene and treat you with appropriate medicinals such as applying soothing oil, working in harmony with God's design, methods and principles. ¹⁵ Ask God to intervene, then trust him enough to follow his methods and principles. This will heal the character, and if it is in harmony with the Lord's plan, result in making the sick physically well; and the Lord will raise them up. If illness is due to willful deviation from God's design, it won't matter once trust in God is restored and the ill are well again.



Read first paragraph, “The fact that the sick...” Why is it we can’t get well if we refuse to repent from sin? What is sin? It is deviation from God’s design – and thus one cannot heal outside the design.

We are tripartite beings – body (soma), mind (soul/psyche), and energy (spirit/pneuma).

Health requires all aspects be healthy – if we are out of harmony with God’s design physically, it alters brain function and thus our mind doesn’t work as well.

If we are out of harmony with God’s design spiritually, i.e. living in sin, exploiting others, stealing, lying, cheating, etc. we cause disruption in our minds, which increase guilt, refusing to repent caused disrupted salience network, increased activation of inflammatory cascades, rumination, distorted thinking. To avoid the guilt we deny, distort, deflect, create false thinking patterns, which cause further negative changes in our brains and bodies.

Only, by returning to God’s design for mind and body is there peace and health.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “More important...” What is the soul? It is the character, the individuality, the personhood.

What do you think of the connection between sickness and sin?

If there were no sin would there be any sickness? Why not?

How is it sin is the cause of sickness?

Is every sickness a direct result of a specific act of sin in the life of the sick person?

What does the story of Job tell us about this?

Read second paragraph, “Faith in Jesus...” What do you think of the sentence, “In a sense, every healing Jesus performed was a parable meant to draw people’s attention to their deeper need of salvation.” ?

This is absolutely true – and what does salvation mean? It means healing!

The plan of salvation is the plan of healing, the healing of the entire being, not just the body!



Read last paragraph, “Healing includes...” This paragraph needs discussion – should one confess to the wrong party in all occasion? Thoughts? Should one?

The twelve steps of AA are the steps in spiritual conversion and renewal:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. **Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**
10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Notice in the 12 steps the confession is to one other person, the amends are only if doing so won't cause further harm. I have had patients, who early in their marriage, had a one night stand. It occurred more than 20 years ago, but recently were told by a counselor, pastor, marriage seminar that old wrongs need to be confessed to the spouse – thoughts?

Should this be confessed to the innocent spouse who has no knowledge of it, and it is not an ongoing problem? Why or why not?

WEDNESDAY

The first paragraph talks about Elijah's prayer that it would not rain – why did Elijah pray for this intervention?

Baal was worshipped as the god who brought the rain, so praying it would not rain was not designed to punish the people, but to demonstrate to them that Baal is not God.

Are there any types of prayers like this we could be praying today?



The lesson points out that the work of Elijah was a type of the work of John the Baptist being the forerunner of Christ and a revival movement on earth before the second coming to prepare the world to meet Christ.

What is the essence of this final message, this final Elijah message?

What was it that made Baal worship wrong? It was the idea that Baal was a god who needed appeasement, propitiation, payment. It was the legal aspects of atonement of an offended god that made Baal worship pagan.

Thus, today, Baal worship has infected Christianity in the guise of legal/penal models of atonement that teach Jesus died to appease or propitiate God's wrath.

The Elijah message is to call people back to worship the truth about God as revealed in Jesus, that:

- God so loved the world...
- God was in Christ reconciling the world...
- If God is for us...
- That God is Designer not dictator – choose who will you worship!

The final message of mercy is the truth about God's character of love!

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "God's Spirit..." Certainly God's Spirit wanted to restore the relationship between God and Israel – but did that actually happen after Carmel?

Were the people after Carmel more loving, kind, gentle, faithful, loyal and Christlike? Or did they persist in idol worship until they eventually went off into captivity?

Read James 5:19, 20:

My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, ²⁰ remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

What does this mean?

my paraphrase:

JAM 5:19 My brothers and sisters, if a person walks away from God's treatment plan, you should do all you can to bring them back. ²⁰ For whoever turns a selfish person from the terminal path of self-indulgence will deliver them from death and make irrelevant a multitude of self-destructive acts.



Last paragraph states, “Saving souls from death is possible only through the ‘covering’ of sins, by apply the gospel to our lives, and become instruments of mercy.”

What does this mean?

This quote is one of the clearest in addressing the metaphor of “covering” sin:

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul... This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. **Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character,** and this character He offers to impart to us... When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 3:11.4}

Note the covering isn't a covering over, but more along the lines of a computer hard drive, a writing over the old code, operating system and writing a new one in its place?

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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We are very excited about this new ebook and hope you will be too!

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Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

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The Book of James Lesson 13 4th Q 2014 The Everlasting Gospel

We continue to receive emails from around the world expressing thanks for our materials and this message.

Thank you for your ministry!!! I have been totally blessed with the new understanding of God's Love Law that I find myself excited to share with everyone who gives a hint of interest.

I have been a Christian all my life but not until reading your books am I able to say with experience "The truth will set you free." Today, God reveals what He would have me do day by day with victory as He does in me what I can not do for myself!!! Such freedom trusting Him to lead me, clean me take me where He would have me go!

Please send copies of all books and all DVDs to share with my church family, community, friends and family.

Thank you again for your generosity and Ministry sharing the truth about God!

What is the Everlasting Gospel?

I went online and these are some of the definitions I found:

- The word Gospel literally means “good news.” It is the plan that God has designed to save sinful humans from eternal separation from Him. www.allaboutgod.com
- The word *gospel* means “good news,” so the gospel of Christ is the good news of His coming to provide forgiveness of sins for all who will believe www.gotquestions.org
- The gospel is the message that God will give us pardon from our sins and eternal life with Him in heaven... www.harvest.org

There are many definitions of the gospel on the net, but these are fairly representative of the most common ideas. Do you notice how these descriptions of the gospel focus on us and our legal status?

But the gospel is the everlasting or eternal good news; we find the everlasting gospel in Revelation 14 as the message that is to go to the world to prepare the world for Christ's return.

Now, is it eternally true – meaning in eternity past as well as eternity future, that Jesus died, or even that humans needed Him to die for their sins?



It is true Jesus died to save us and was willing in eternity past to do so, but it wasn't evidenced or needed in eternity past. It is true that this is *part* of the good news, but is this part, the part about us being saved, eternal, or is this part a more recent expression, revelation and unfolding of the good news that has always been true?

As we reason this through, what light does this passage add?

Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2Tim 2:10

What do you hear this saying? That the gospel *is* the destruction of death and bringing forth of life, or that the gospel is the means by which Christ destroys death and brings immortality to light? In other words, is the good news that death has been destroyed – or is the good news what had destroyed death?

This was written by one of the founders of our church over 100 years ago:

The gospel and the medical missionary work are to advance together. **The gospel is to be bound up with the principles of true health reform.** Christianity is to be brought into the practical life. Earnest, thorough reformatory work is to be done. **True Bible religion is an outflowing of the love of God for fallen man...**We are to present the **principles** of health reform before the people, doing all in our power to lead men and women to see the necessity of these **principles** and to practice them.--Testimonies, Vol. 6, p. 379. {CME 41.5}

Do you see any connection between the gospel and health reform? This author says the gospel is to be bound up with the “principles” of true health reform. What does this mean?

What is a principle? Is it a rule, an arbitrary law, or is it design protocol?

So, what is the basis of true health reform? Understanding God's design, how He actually constructed life to operate and intelligently live in harmony with it.

And what is the basis upon which life is constructed to operate?

Love – the principle of giving. We cannot get well outside this design.

- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. **Thus he has rejected life. For God is love, and love is life.** {COL 258.3}

Why is love life?

Because God is love, and God created, constructed, built all life to operate in harmony with Himself.



The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. **From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same--**a life sustained by receiving the life of God,** a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will. **To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe,** to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin. {Ed 99.2}

How does this work? It is design law, not imposed rules.

We must receive nutrition from the plants (and yes it all comes from the plants, if you eat animal products you are only getting nutrition second hand, hand-me-down nutrition) and then we give back the products of digestion to fertilize the plants. If something goes wrong with our system and we don't give back, we will eventually die.

How is this principle related to the gospel?

Here is another quote from the book *Christ's Object Lessons*

No man can rightly present the **law of God without the gospel,** or the **gospel without the law.** The **law is the gospel embodied, and the gospel is the law unfolded.** The law is the root, the gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears. {COL 128.2}

What does this mean? How do you understand the law and the gospel to be related? What does the root and blossom metaphor suggest is happening? A natural outgrowth.

So, while in eternity past Christ had not died for sinners— What was true in eternity past?

- What is true in eternity past and eternity future that Christ brought to earth resulting in death being destroyed and immortality being brought to light?
- What is true through all time, past, present and future, that is bound up with true health reform?
- What is the relationship between the law and the gospel?

Here is another quotation from more than 100 years ago, things that used to be taught in our church:

When the gospel is received in its purity and power, it is a cure for the maladies that originated in sin. The Sun of Righteousness arises, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. Not all this world bestows can **heal a broken heart, or impart peace of mind, or remove care, or banish disease.** Fame, genius, talent—all are powerless to gladden the sorrowful heart or to restore the wasted life. The life of God in the soul is man's only hope. {Counsels for the Church 216.5}



The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part—the brain, the heart, the nerves—it touches with healing. By it [love] the highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It [love] frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces. With it [love] come serenity and composure. It [love] implants in the soul, joy that nothing earthly can destroy—joy in the Holy Spirit—health-giving, life-giving joy. {CCh 216.6}

Our Saviour's words, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest" Matthew 11:28, **are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills.** Though men have brought suffering upon themselves by their own wrongdoing, He regards them with pity. In Him they may find help. He will do great things for those who trust in Him. 367 {CCh 217.1}

What do you hear? Do you hear healing, restoration, recreation, and somehow it is connected to the gospel – how?

And one more quote from history, from *Counsels on Health*:

The very essence of the gospel is restoration, and the Saviour would have us bid the sick, the hopeless, and the afflicted take hold upon His strength. {Counsels on Health 31.2}

The power of love was in all Christ's healing, and only by partaking of that love, through faith, can we be instruments for His work. If we neglect to link ourselves in divine connection with Christ, **the current of life-giving energy cannot flow in rich streams from us to the people.** There were places where the Saviour Himself could not do many mighty works because of their unbelief. So now unbelief separates the church from her divine Helper. Her hold upon eternal realities is weak. By her lack of faith, God is disappointed and robbed of His glory. (32) {CH 31.3}

Why does death come? Through the gospel Christ destroys death – so why does death come?

If one believes the lie of Satan, then death comes from God as a punishment for breaking His law.

If this were true multiple problems:

- God is the source of death – so Eastern religions which teach eternal dualism, the eternal existence of good and evil, would be true, because both life and death originate in such a god. But it is not true.
 - The Bible says Satan is a murderer from the beginning – or murder began with Satan, i.e. death originated with Satan not God. God is the source of life. Here is what our church used to teach:



- **“Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. {2SM 288.2}**
- If one believes the lie, it would mean that there really isn't anything wrong with sin, there is something wrong with God who can't get a grip on His anger and wrath. If He could just control Himself we could live forever in sin, but alas, we can't because God lashes out to kill...
- Believing the lie would also result in creating false remedies or solutions, namely penal substitution ideas in which Jesus took our legal penalty and God had to use His power to inflict punishment upon His Son. Or God had to be propitiated so He wouldn't kill us. Thus, it results in a distorted god who resembles Satan in character.
- This results in a “form of godliness but denies the power” because it denies the gospel, or the good news, because the good news is NOT we have a legal solution. The good news is that God is not like Satan alleged, that God is love and love is life – and that harmony with God is life.

So why does death come?

- The wages of sin is death Rom 6:23
- Sin when full grown brings forth death James 1:15
- whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; Gal 6:8

So why does death come? Because sin is deviation from the way God has built life to operate and it, unremedied results in death.

And what caused that deviation?

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- fear and selfishness result in destructive acts (sins)
- destructive acts are damaging to mind, body, character a terminal condition

So what is the good news the eternal good news? That God is love and His design for life is love – it has always been so and will always be so. And that good news was brought to earth by Jesus, both in truth to reveal God's character and action to restore God's character into the species human while destroying the infection of fear and selfishness with which we are born.

So the Bible says:

Jesus said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” MK 1:14,15



The good news is about God, His character and methods of love, perfectly revealed in Christ and through Christ perfectly restored into the species human, thus returning life to this species and destroying death! Can we believe it?

Many struggle to believe the good news about God and instead of repenting of the lies about God and believing God is really this good, present God like a dictator who runs the universe like we run our governments.

SUNDAY

The gospel in the Old Testament – what is the gospel in the Old Testament?

Jesus said, regarding the Old Testament:

You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. John 5:39

Do you find the good news about God and Jesus in the Old Testament? Where?

"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering 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." Exodus 34:6, 7.

What does it mean? Why will God by no means clear the guilty? What law lens do you view the statement through?

Here is a statement from a journal written in 1886, what do you hear?

"Sin is the transgression of the law," and "the wages of sin is death." [why? because God must inflict death or because God's law is how life is built and deviations are incompatible with life?] **It was sin that brought death into the world.** [Does death come from God? No! It comes from sin, which is deviation from God and His design] **Had there been no sin, there would have been no death.** Christ died as the sinner's substitute, to save him from **the penalty of his disobedience.** [What is the penalty of disobedience? Is it inflicted by God or the result of deviating from God's design? If a child drinks poison in disobedience to their parent's rules to stay out of the medicine cabinet, is there a penalty for that disobedience? What is that penalty? Why?] Could the law of God have been changed or abolished, Christ need not have died; **for death was not necessary in order to abolish the law.** [If death was not necessary to abolish the law what did get abolished by Christ's death? Satan's power (Heb 2:14), death (2Tim 1:10), the devil's work (1Jn 3:8), which are the lies about God and the carnal nature). The fact that God spared not his own sinless, beloved Son from the



penalty he pledged himself to bear as the sinner's substitute, is the most telling argument that could be produced to show that the **claims of his law will not be released**, even in the slightest degree, to save the transgressor. [What does the law claim? Perfect accord with it, why? Because that is how life is built. It is uncompromising. If you jump overboard in the ocean with 100 pounds of lead tied to your legs, the law of respiration is uncompromising. It cannot be changed to meet you in that condition. So you must be delivered from that condition if you are to be saved. Likewise, Christ came to deliver humanity from the condition deviant from God's design] So in the death of Christ we have evidence, not only of God's love for sinful man, but of the changeless character of his law. **The law could not be abolished; one precept could not be altered to save the sinner and meet man in his fallen condition; [why?]** but God so loved the world that he gave his Son to suffer the penalty of its transgression in the sinner's stead. {ST, July 29, 1886 par. 2}

MONDAY

The gospel made flesh – what is the gospel? The good news about God, and that good news, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Read last paragraph, “Both stories...” What does it mean paid the full price? What was the full price? To whom was it paid?

If your child was dying of renal failure and you donated your kidney to save them, could we say, “you paid the full price necessary to save your child?” Would it mean it was a legal price?

Why was donating your kidney the full price you had to pay to save your child? To whom was the price of your donated kidney paid? Why?

So, in the plan of salvation – when Adam sinned did God get changed? Did God's law get changed? Did humanity in Adam get changed?

Then if restoration and unity with God and God's law is to be achieved where must Christ's work be effectual? In humanity. Thus, Christ's activity was not to do something to God, or God's law, but was to actually provide to humanity what humanity needed in order to restore it back to rightness, or righteousness with God.

What was needed? Well, what separates us from God? Lies we believe and our carnal natures – then what reconciles us?

The truth will set you free and a new nature, we become partakers of the divine nature, so it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.



This price, the price of bringing the truth and providing a new nature was the price our condition required, because it was the only way to restore the species human back to God's design for life. Thus the price was paid to us!

TUESDAY

Read last paragraph, "The gospel..." How do you hear this? What is the correct understanding of these metaphorical terms and what is a distorted understanding?

Which law lens do you hear them through?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – "The book of..." Did God establish the Old Covenant? What was the Old Covenant?

The Old Covenant, which was faulty, was when Israel said "All the Lord said WE will do." It was when Israel took the responsibility to save themselves and of course failed.

The covenant of grace was revealed to the patriarchs. The covenant made with Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the law was spoken on Sinai **was a covenant confirmed by God in Christ, the very same gospel which is preached to us.** "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." **The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant.** The plan of redemption was not conceived after the fall of man to cure the dreadful evil; the apostle Paul speaks of the gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, as "the revelation of the mystery, which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith." (Revised Version.) {ST, August 24, 1891 par. 10}

There has only and always been one eternal or true covenant, and it is the covenant of God's character of love, revealed in Christ and restored in humanity through Christ.

THURSDAY

The climax of the gospel – the end time gospel presentation – how would you describe it? What is the final message of mercy that is to enlighten the world?



It is the truth of God's character of love, as Creator who designed His universe to operate upon design law, not imposed law. It is a message to free minds from the infection from Imperial Rome which distorts in the minds of men the character of God, making Him out to be like us.

Thus the three angels messages:

- Be in awe of God and reveal His true character of love in your life for the time in earth's history has come for everyone to make a right judgment about God and His character and methods – call them back to worship and adore Him who made the heavens, earth, sea – call them back to His Design Law of Love
- Because Babylon, that confused system of imposed law, in which God's law is misrepresented as imposed, has resulted in a contradictory system in which Christianity has fractured into 34,000 different groups all with different interpretations and regulations, because they have accepted the lie that God's law is like Rome's, imposed rules and God must punish like a dictator must punish.
- And everyone who accepts this lie about God and marks themselves in their forehead by truly believing God is like a dictator and His law is imposed and God is the source of imposed punishment and death, and those who mark themselves in their hands by going along with such a perverse system of coercion, based on human law, will be tormented in mind, heart and character when they come into the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb, for having rejected the truth about God, there is no healing for their terminal condition in a legal solution of appeasement.

We must come back to worship our Creator and Designer and present the truth about His character and law of love!



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings' Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

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