

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