



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?