



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.