

## 2006 Q1 Lesson 1     A Family of Families

Page three of the study guide top paragraph – “Christian families face....” Read – any thoughts?

What does it mean “true Christians grasp by faith the sinless life of Christ and claim that life as their own, the foundation upon which they can build a relationship with God...”?

What is the basis for our relationship with God? What is the foundation upon which that relationship is made? What is our faith to be in? Is it in the “sinless life” He lived? Or is our faith to be in God? And does the sinless life reveal the evidence of God’s true character which our trust/faith is based on? And is the basis of our relationship God’s very character, nature? If we must claim the life of Jesus as our own before we can build a relationship with God what would that say about God’s attitude? Would that indicate God is willing to relate to sinners?

But when Adam and Eve sinned, who came after them? God! God was reaching out, seeking them, wanting to reestablish the relationship they broke. Had they claimed the life of Jesus in order for God to do this? No! The perfect life that Jesus lived is not a ticket which you claim as your passport to heaven. It is the revelation of truth to dispel lies so that our trust in God can be re-established.

### SABBATH

Memory text read – what does it mean to you? What does it mean to be part of God’s family? What qualifies one to be a member of this family? Is this family limited to humans only?

“In the great plan of salvation it is the Lord's will that the members of his **family on earth** shall become workers together with him in **fulfilling his purposes of love**. He has called his followers to imitate his life of self-denial and self-sacrifice. Heaven's wonderful Gift, with his holy influence **unites the family in heaven** with the **family on earth** in **this work**, that they may co-operate in winning souls for Christ. God bids us with one hand, the hand of faith, take hold of his mighty arm, and with the other hand, that of love, reach perishing souls. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; he desires us to walk even as he walked.” {RH, November 3, 1896 par. 5}

In one sense are all created beings God’s children – some are loyal and some rebellious? But in this context it means something different to be part of God’s family, what is the difference?

*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. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 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. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God." John 8:42–47*

So what constitutes being a member of God’s family or being a member of Satan’s family? One’s character, methods, principle, who one loves and trusts and values and wants to be like.

What about the visual imagery Paul is using in this text – a building built on the foundation of the apostles with Christ as the cornerstone. What does this bring to mind? The Temple? The Sanctuary? What meaning might this have? Where does God want to dwell? What is the Temple of the HS? What needs cleansing a building in heaven or the minds and hearts of God’s children?

## SUNDAY

When God created Adam and Eve He created the first family, the lesson asks, what was the purpose of God for this first family?

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. Gen. 1:27. {SD 7.1}

“All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. **Human beings were a new and distinct order.** They were made "in the image of God," and it was the **Creator's design that they should populate the earth.** They were to live in close communion with heaven, receiving power from the Source of all power. Upheld by God, **they were to live sinless lives.**” {SD 7.2}

What was the purpose? Why were they made a new and distinct order? Why were they told to populate the earth? What was going on in the universe at the time of our creation? Did the creation of Adam and Eve have any bearing on the war in heaven? What?

Second paragraph read “It is not good...” Is there a difference in being alone and being lonely? What is the difference? Where does loneliness come from? As soon as Adam and Eve sinned what did they do? Ran and hid? What does running and hiding do to one’s relationships? Did God run from them? Did God hide from them or did He come after them? When we sin, when we act selfishly, when we hurt people what does that do to us? Does it make us withdraw, put up barriers, experience fear and subsequent loneliness?

Why wasn’t it good for man to be alone? Mankind was created as the repository of God’s law of love – what is the law of love? The 10 Commandments? How easy would it have been for Adam to keep all the 10 Commandments if he were alone? But the 10 Commandments are only a small dim reflection of God’s law of love. The law of love is a living law, can love be experienced written on stone or must love be seen in action to be fully understood and experienced? Can love be fully expressed, understood and experienced in isolation? So God knew if mankind was to experience the joy of love there must be an object of that love – and further, mankind was made in God’s image – as the Godhead comes into unity to create, so too man and woman join themselves in love and literally give of themselves, from their very being, from their very substance and bring forth new life the outgrowth of their love. How incredibly Godlike – could Adam accomplish this alone?

On the bottom of Sunday and Monday’s lesson it asks us to discuss how business, activities and even doing God’s work can interfere with families. Any thoughts? How can this happen? What are the two core/root principles at war? Loving others vs. self-centeredness, putting others first vs. putting self first. What about the person who neglects family because of work? School? Golf, football, shopping, giving Bible studies or doing church work? How would you suggest a balance?

## MONDAY

First paragraph – read – why does God hate divorce? Is it because it breaks His rule? God made a law “thou shalt not commit adultery” and divorce is a violation of this law? Is it? Why does God hate divorce? What is marriage to represent? The love amongst the Godhead, and if it did, if each partner really loved like that what would the marriage be like? God hates divorce because it results only when there is a breakdown in love, it results from selfishness. Thus God hates it because it results in pain and damage to His children. But, does that mean it is never appropriate to divorce?

Does honoring your father and mother mean doing whatever they say? What does it mean to honor them?

Question in middle if God values families why did Jesus say that he came to turn a man against his Father and a daughter against her mother or unless we hate our mother and father we couldn't follow Him or told a man not to bury his father or even say goodbye to his family before following Jesus? It is all about who is first in your heart, is God and Jesus and their principles and methods most important or only after family? Where would you prefer Adam have been on this issue?

## TUESDAY A Variety of Families

Read last paragraph – any thoughts?

Before we discuss it I must say that our attitude toward homosexual individuals should be absolute compassion, love, care, concern and longing for their health and happiness. With this in mind, with an attitude of true concern for their good why is the lesson correct?

God's ideal for marriage is that mankind experience AND express/reveal to the greatest extent possible the love and joy experienced in the Godhead. One of the greatest joys for a loving God is to create and then lavish upon His creation all the blessings for their good and happiness. Likewise, God designed marriage to reveal the blessings of the principle of giving, the Law of Love, when two individuals come together in love and unite themselves and literally give of themselves and bring forth new life in their image to bestow blessings upon. This process of giving for another, in this case to create another was designed to be one of the most pleasurable experiences possible because in God's universe nothing is more healthy, joyful, happy etc. than being in harmony with God's law of love. Satan's principles are not about giving for another with the subsequent joy and pleasure that results, but in seeking to please self, seeking pleasure for pleasure sake, seeking to gratify oneself thus the pleasure center designed by God to be stimulated in healthy ways is activated in unhealthy ways – drugs, illicit sex, gambling etc. Homosexual relationships are about doing what makes “me” feel good, they are about self-serving, self-seeking rather than self-denying for the good of others – thus they misrepresent God and bring forth no life – they are dead relationship.

In the context of the GC the healthy marriage, lived in harmony with God's principles of love results in new life – extension of life – continuation of life – but in homosexual relations which are about self-gratification there is no life promotion, no life extension and if followed to its end would result in death to the species – so consistent with Satan's principles which bring only death.

While we as a free society need to grant adults the freedom to choose their relationships, we should never fall into the mistake of thinking same-sex relationships are equally healthy or valid alternatives to marriage as God designed it.

## WEDNESDAY

What do you say to someone in the church who is single? Is there anything wrong with being single? Many people actually have the idea that there is something wrong with being single, that being single is the worst thing in the world. What is worse than being single? Being married to the wrong person!

The lesson suggests single people are often minimized – have you seen this? If so how?

**THURSDAY**

The church as family – do you experience church as family? Why or why not? Is it harder in a larger church? How do we deal with dysfunctional family members in the church?

What can we do to be more intimate, family like in the church?

**FRIDAY**

Question 1 read and discuss



## 2006 Q1 Lesson 2      God's Word on Family Living

### SABBATH

First paragraph read – any thoughts? How has God used His word to teach us about the family? Do you see families any different in God's word than you do when looking at society?

How does God use the family to teach us about His relationship with us? Abraham takes his son to offer on an altar, what does this tell us about God? Does it tell us that Abraham was angry and needed to kill his son in order to assuage his wrath? Does it tell us that Abraham was thirsty for the blood of his son? What was Abraham's attitude at the thought of his son dying? What was the attitude of the Father at the thought of Christ dying? Did Abraham actually end up killing his son? Did it look like he was going to for a while? Did God actually end up killing His Son? Have some thought He did?

Who would have suffered more if Isaac would have died? Isaac or Abraham? Who do you think suffered more? Jesus or the Father? If your child was put in a position of torture and you had the opportunity to take their place and knew they wouldn't have to suffer, would you? Which would be harder for you to watch your child suffer or to suffer in their place to protect them? Why do some think the Father was somehow enjoying what His Son was going through?

“That this redemption might be ours, God withheld not even **the sacrifice of Himself. He gave Himself in His Son.** The **Father suffered with Christ in all His humiliation** and agony. He suffered as He saw the Son of His love despised and rejected by those whom He came to elevate, ennoble, and save. .. The human heart knows the love of a parent for his child. We know what a mother's love will do and suffer for her beloved one. But **never can the heart of man fathom the depths of God's self-sacrifice.**” {Australian Union Conference Recorder, June 1, 1900 par. 11}

Does it change your view of God to realize what He went through? Does it make a difference to think about your family, your love for your child and then think about what God has done? Can you love and trust a God who would sacrifice all He had?

“The gift of God to man is beyond computation. **Nothing was withheld. God would not permit it to be said that He could have done more, or revealed to humanity a greater measure of love. In the gift of Christ He gave all heaven.**” {Australian Union Conference Recorder, June 1, 1900 par. 8}

What relational images has God used to represent Himself to us? Father, Husband, Mother, Brother, Friend.

In the church we frequently call ourselves a family – are we? What can we do to promote more of a family atmosphere in our church?

In a military unit there is a real sense of family. The most important thing that determines the effectiveness of a fighting force is moral and unity cohesion, this is the military's way of saying family connectedness. How tight, how close, how trusted are the members of the unit with each other. The closer, the tighter, the more trust the better the unit and more willing each member is to throw themselves in harms way for their brother unit members! Do you think we have this level of closeness in our church? What does it say about us that military units may have closer bonds of love than church members?

## SUNDAY

Family Commandments – what are the family commandment? Honor mother and father, don't commit adultery, don't covet neighbor's wife. Why did God give these commandments? Can love be commanded? How would you feel if you knew your spouse constantly lusted after another, they dreamed of another, longed for another, wrote poetry about another – but because of God's law stayed with you in an attitude of obligation merely? Is this fulfilling God's law? When you love your family do you need a law not to commit adultery? Where is the law supposed to be written? In the heart? So why did God write it on stone? How does it get written on the heart again?

“A mere creed, tho every jot and tittle of it may be sound, is not enough to restore in man the moral image of God. An ancestral faith, however tenaciously held, can not correct the evils of the natural heart. It is the **willing mind**, the **earnest spirit**, the **hearty, self-denying efforts**, imbued with **love** to God and man, which bring results approved by God. The **whole heart** must be given to God, else we shall fail to love Him supremely, and then, necessarily, we shall fail to love our neighbor as ourselves. We can not obey the law unless it is **written on the heart**. **Only the truth** as it is in Jesus can illuminate the soul, **enabling** us to do good and only good to those with whom we are associated.” {ST, September 12, 1900 par. 8}

What is necessary to write it on the heart? A willing mind, an earnest spirit, the hearty, self-denying efforts imbued with love. What brings us the point to be willing? “Only the truth as it is in Jesus” the truth about what? The truth about God Himself, that He is just like Jesus, a genuine loving, self-sacrificing Father who we can completely trust, and when we trust Him we open our minds/hearts to Him and the HS comes in and literally transforms and changes us.

## TUESDAY

Bottom green read – any thoughts?

“Through sin the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted. Sin has degraded the faculties of the soul.” {MH 451.2}

How does the gospel put people right with God and each other? What is the gospel? If this gospel is that Jesus has paid my legal penalty and now God cannot punish me, how does that put me right with Him or others? If my entire organism is deranged, if my mind is perverted, if I have virus of selfishness twisting everything and warring against God, how does someone paying a penalty for me fix the problem in my being? How does Jesus paying a penalty I owe fix adultery problems, fix child abuse problems, fix the problems with cruelty, selfishness in our families?

Or is it that the truth about God as revealed in Christ wins us back to trust, distrust is displaced the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts and minds and begins to actually, literally transform us back into the image of God? We actually have the virus of sin, the virus of selfishness eradicated from our character and have the character of Christ reproduced within us? Is this the Good News that God is just like Jesus? He freely forgives and heals all who trust Him without payment? That the death of Christ was the means necessary to bring us this healing truth?

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. {7ABC 464.2}

## WEDNESDAY

The Royal Love Poem – has anyone read the Song of Solomon lately? I have heard some say it is R rated, others have described it as erotic? Is the Song of Solomon R-rated?

Think how Satan attacks mankind through sex and how Christians have overreacted to this perversion by making sex evil.

This reminds me of the story of the Catholic priest who had worked selflessly with orphaned children throughout his life and after he died arrived in heaven and was told that because of his selfless work for the orphaned children, because he so consistently loved those less fortunate that he was privileged to make a special request. Well the priest replied, “I have always wanted to read the Bible in its original language, exactly as it was written from the hands of the inspired penmen.” No problem,” Peter replies, “Follow me” and Peter took him over to the heavenly library and showed him the original texts and told him if he needed anything just call. Well after several hours of quiet there came from the heavenly library a terrible moaning and groaning. Peter rushed over and asked the priest, “what’s wrong?” And the priest replied, “The word is celebrate!”

Why is SS in the Bible? What is it there to tell us? What do you think about the idea of God as your lover? How do we understand sexuality in harmony with God’s plan? What is the difference between sexuality as God designed and as Satan has twisted it?

What is the core principle to God’s government? Selfless giving, selfless love! What is the core principle in Satan’s government? Selfish taking, selfishness! Does it make a difference to seek to please the one you love, your marriage partner versus simply to seek pleasure for one’s self? Is it wrong to experience pleasure when giving to another, when acting in genuine selfless love? God designed the union in marriage to be a mutual self-surrender, a mutual giving of self to the other, a mutual union with the focus on loving and blessing and pouring your entire self out upon the other for their good. Satan, has twisted this process and has sought to make sexuality about getting yourself pleased, exploiting others to take, using your sexuality to control and manipulate others. And thus, through the misuse of sex millions are hurt and injured.

How do you feel about God pouring out Himself completely upon you to love and bless and benefit you? How about you pouring yourself completely upon God seeking to love and bless and benefit Him?

Who is the bride of Christ? If Christ loves His bride why doesn’t He come and get her? Because she is not ready! Why is she not ready? What prevents the bride from being ready?

*REV 19:7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!  
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,  
and his bride **has made herself ready**.*

*REV 19:8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."*

**(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)**

What does this mean? How does the bride make *herself* ready? She has finally accepted the truth about God, surrendered her heart to Him and received the transforming power of the HS and been transformed to be like Christ in character and thus her behavior reflects this transformation of heart. She has come to love God supremely. What is the only thing a bride must truly have in order to be ready to get married? A right heart toward her groom! The bride finally has been transformed in heart and has God’s law of love written in the heart and mind again.

“They must not put on their citizen's dress, but the wedding garment. They have been married to Christ, and the robe of his righteousness is to clothe them. 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.” {GH, May 28, 1902 par. 6}

“If you are to sit at Christ's table, and feast on the provisions he has furnished at the marriage supper of the Lamb, you must have a special garment, called the wedding garment, which is the white robe of Christ's righteousness. Every one who has on this robe is entitled to enter the city of God...” {YI, August 11, 1886 par. 5}

What does it mean to have be clothed in the robe of Christ righteousness? Where does the bride wear this robe?

“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. "I counsel thee," He says, "to buy of Me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Rev. 3:18. {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... 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}

“The guests at the marriage feast were inspected by the king. Only those were accepted who had obeyed his requirements and put on the wedding garment. So it is with the guests at the gospel feast. All must pass the scrutiny of the great King, and only those are received who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness.” {COL 312.1}

What does the bride need to do to get ready?

## THURSDAY

Parenting – does parenting determine the quality of the family life? When conflict broke out in God's heavenly family did that mean God parented poorly? If good parenting doesn't guarantee high quality family life, does that mean it isn't important?

What images, lessons, or stories from the Bible have helped you in your family?

## 2006 Q1 Lesson 3 Restoration

Restoration of what? Marriage is the focus of this week's lesson. When did marriage exist in a temptation free zone? God's ultimate restoration is when this world will be, not only sin free, but temptation free!

### SABBATH

Read memory text, What does it mean God will judge the adulterer? Does it mean God will inflict punishment upon the adulterer? Does it mean, if God would not judge, then there would be nothing wrong with adultery? That if God didn't judge, adultery wouldn't cause pain, heart ache, damage? Thinking only of the marriage partners, who gets damaged the worse in adultery? Is it the adulterer or the innocent party?

What is adultery? Is it bodily or heart/mind? Can you commit adultery without physical contact with another? Can you commit adultery without using your mind?

If you are hallucinating due to some toxin or illness and, in your mind you believe you are having sex with your spouse, but it is with another person is that adultery? If you have Alzheimer's dementia and no longer know who you are or anyone else and you act out sexually with another person in the nursing home, is that adultery?

If you lust after someone in the heart, but never have contact with them is that adultery? Why is it an issue of the mind and not the body merely? Where is the law of God to be written? In the heart! Fidelity is all about having love reestablished in the heart! Love brings life, selfishness brings pain, destruction and death!

Read week at a glance and first paragraph –

Give examples how the marriage relationship has been changed by sin:

1. live together without commitment
2. domination/abuse
3. polygamy
4. adultery
5. homosexuality
6. celibacy as an ideal
7. inequality
8. loss of freedom
9. unkindness and lack of love
10. perversions

How does the gospel heal the damage sin has done to marriage?

“The divine beauty of the character of Christ, of whom the noblest and most gentle among men are but a faint reflection; of whom Solomon by the Spirit of inspiration wrote, He is “the chiefest among ten thousand. . . . Yea, he is altogether lovely” (S. of Sol. 5:10-16); of whom David, seeing Him in prophetic vision, said, “Thou art fairer than the children of men” (Ps. 45:2); 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. ... {RC 68.6}

“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. {RC 68.7}

## SUNDAY The Genesis Marriage

Why was it not good for man to be alone? Was he defective in some way? Was he imperfect? What was the issue? Can love be experienced fully in isolation? But Adam had the animals, angels and God? Was he in isolation? What was the need for marriage?

What is different about marriage than love with anyone else? A separate yet totally equal and totally complimentary person, with animals Adam was clearly superior and true unity could not exist, there was the inherent disparity, with angels there was difference in substance, perspective, abilities that prevented complete bonding, with God there was inherent disparity with man being inferior. Regardless of God's graciousness would man ever be truly on equal footing and experience genuine equality? But with his wife, here was one who was made of his very self, gifted with comparable abilities, co-equals yet complimentary in their abilities and able to literally join in mental, emotional and physical unity and in love give of each other to create new life.

Could the heights and depths of love be experienced to such a degree with any other companion? What does it say about God that He created mankind in such an incredible way? But not only mankind, this entire planet was created in this special way for everything to work vibrantly giving of self to produce more life. This planet was the lesson book of God's character of love the very principle of life!

The Bible describes Eve as a “helper” for Adam, what was she to help Him do, primarily? Was it to help tend the garden? Was it to help herd the cattle? Was it to keep the house? Or was it to help him grow in selfless love, selfless giving? To help him experience the joy of loving procreation!

“It was then that God bestowed on man His two great gifts,--the Sabbath as a day of rest, and woman as a helpmeet. Marriage has received Christ's blessing, and is to be regarded as a sacred institution. True religion is not to counterwork the Lord's plans. God ordained that man and woman should be united in holy wedlock, to raise up families that, crowned with honor, would be symbols of the family in heaven.” ST, August 30, 1899.

What was the purpose? To live out love, which means to give of themselves and bring forth more life to love!

## MONDAY

After the fall the marriage relationship changed, did God intervene to make a change in marriage after the fall? Genesis 3:15,16 – read what changed? To the woman “your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.” What does this mean? The Hebrew desire is “shuq” and means “to have a violent craving for a thing.”

Did God make a change in woman to increase her desire for relationships? Why? Once the love was displaced in the human heart and selfishness was in control what would happen to relationships if not counteracted? So what do we see as soon as mankind fell into sin? God begins intercession – where? In two places, He intercedes between mankind and the devil and He



intercedes in our hearts and minds. In both places to hold back the destructiveness of selfishness giving opportunity for mankind to return to God for full healing and restoration.

What do you think about the idea that the subjection of woman in the relationship was not because she was female but because she was first to sin? Does anyone wish man would have been first to sin?

Was God's "subjection" of woman "punishment" for her sin? Or was it a loving emergency measure for the good of all mankind?

## TUESDAY

Several texts are suggested for us to consider in upholding marriage – what is the common theme to these texts? LOVE, putting the interest of the other before self, looking out for the welfare of the other, truly caring for the good, health, happiness of the other, being willing to help in any way to diminish the burdens on the other.

Have you seen marriages in which this doesn't occur? What happens? How can a marriage which doesn't operate in this way come to operate in this way? Look at Wednesday's lesson.

## WEDNESDAY Restoration is Christ

Can a marriage be truly restored without Christ?

Read text at the top – how does the gospel restore marriage? Can a marriage have love restored without restoring love in the hearts of both partners? In other words, does a healthy marriage require healthy individuals?

Read first paragraph – what is the penalty of sin and what is its power?

What is the penalty of sin? I went online and did a google search for "penalty of sin" and on the second hit found this, "Is sin serious? Yes! Sin comes with a great penalty. God is holy. He must, and will, punish all sin... All of us are justly condemned to face God's wrath in hell forever." Is this the penalty of sin?

What is the penalty of sin? If you refuse to brush your teeth, what is the penalty? If you choose to eat poison ivy, what is the penalty? If you choose to jump off the Empire State Building what is the penalty? If you choose to separate yourself from the source of all life, what is the penalty? Death. Is the death an external penalty inflicted on beings who would otherwise live by a powerful being who must execute in order to be just OR is death the inevitable consequence to choosing to separate self from the only source of life?

Does it make a difference how we see it? What difference?

What is the power of sin? Its basic power, its root power is fear resulting from lies which cause mistrust in God, where there is perfect trust in God sin loses its power! Thus the righteous live by trust! And when trust is restored and distrust is removed the heart is right with God even though old habits, conditioned responses and residual defects may remain.

How does this help us in marriage? Well several months ago Larry said, "My wife is not perfect, but I know she wants to be. So when she makes a mistake I don't look at the mistake I see the motive in her heart of wanting to be perfect." This is exactly what Paul was talking about in Romans 7. When our hearts are again right with God, we may have old habits that occur, but if we can see within our spouses that these residual defects are part of the old way of living that are slowly being removed and are not the hearts true desire it gives us grace to help and not be hurt!



## THURSDAY

The creation plan in a fallen world – What is God's ideal for marriage? Temporary or permanent? But what about in a fallen world?

Does God hate divorce? Why? Because it only occurs when love breaks down, it is the outgrowth of the principles of selfishness and results in pain and damage to His children. But what does God hate more than divorce? The eternal loss of His children!

What is the greatest commandment? Love God with the entire being, and what is second? Love neighbor – where does a spouse fall? God or closest neighbor? Our responsibility is to God first and neighbor second. If someone is in a marriage that is actually destroying their fitfulness for heaven, a marriage in which ones usefulness for God is being undermined and all attempts to heal the marriage have failed, do they have a God given responsibility to get out?

Con

-BC- 16MR

-TI- Manuscript Releases Volume Sixteen

-CN- 1229

-CT- An Appeal to a Self-Centered Wife to Repent and Reform -301-

-PR- 01

-PG- 301

-TEXT-

(Written March 23, 1890, from Chicago, Illinois, to "Dear Brother Craig," with internal messages to Mrs. Craig and her mother.)

At the same time she feels at liberty to give way to her feelings like a spoiled child, taking offense at nothing, and indulging in outbursts of passion until life is a burden to him...

She thinks that everyone must do as her mother and others have done--indulge her and consult her wishes; and she is determined to bring them to it. Should her husband yield to her, he would lose his manhood...

However earnestly her husband may endeavor to pursue a straightforward course to serve God, she will be his evil angel, seeking to lead him away from righteousness. In her own estimation she is the idol he must worship; in fact, she is Satan's agent, seeking to occupy the place where God should be. She has followed the impulses of her own unconsecrated heart until Satan has almost complete control of her...

She has well learned the secret of acting for effect, of creating a sensation to call attention to her small self. I have seen but few persons as successful in making self the center of attraction when there was so little sweet, noble, genuine attractiveness in the character.

But unless she changes her course, this acting for effect, this desperate maneuvering to force the attention of her husband and gain his sympathy, will finally be repeated once too many times, and God will give her fully into the hands of Satan. Unless there is a change, a time will come soon when this lower nature in the wife, controlled by a will as strong as steel, will bring down the strong will of the husband to her own low level. His will would then be merged in that of the impulsive, inconsistent, insane wife. He would no longer be a man, for the satanic mold upon the character of the wife would be upon him also...

Brother Craig has felt that it was his duty to fight her battles, become as inconsistent in her behalf as she is herself, see through her eyes, and contend for her rights; for unless he does

this, she will indulge in those awful outbursts of passion. Her oft-repeated assertions draw upon his sympathies, and a continual burden is cast upon him by her manufactured physical disabilities. In her mother's house her will was law. However inconsistent and perverse her course, it was regarded as resulting from a physical condition for which all allowance must be made. It was thought that her every demand must be met.

But the folly of the mother and other relatives must not become the folly of the husband. Should he follow in their footsteps, his life and hers also would be wrecked. Better would it be had they never been born. As it is, she is a fit subject for the insane asylum; for God has shown me that she throws herself wholly into the hands of Satan, soul, body and spirit, and his power through her is deadening the fine sensibilities of right and integrity in her husband...

Her tragical performances are enacted to frighten her husband into complying with her demands, and he must yield or have a scene. As Satan sees how he can work through her when she thus casts soul and body into his hands--that he can use her as he pleases--he will throw her into these paroxysms more and more, whenever her will is crossed. In this case it is not the woman whom Brother Craig is dealing with, but a desperate, satanic spirit.

The Lord has a work for Brother Craig to do, but if he is overcome by these outbursts on the part of his wife, he is a lost man, and she is not saved by the sacrifice.

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.

God has placed the husband at the head of the family; and until Sister Craig shall learn her place and duties as a wife, it will be best for him not to be connected with her in any way. The wife is to respect and obey; but if she utterly refuses to keep the marriage vow, she will be more and more the sport of Satan's temptations; and if her husband consents to keep her by his side, to wear out his life, he will become discouraged and unfitted for the Lord's service. He is under no obligations to keep one by his side who will only torture his soul. I was shown that he has already been losing his manhood, and has been influenced and molded by his wife. Their marriage was a snare of Satan.

Sister Craig is determined to rule or ruin. I was shown that she has so thoroughly yielded herself into Satan's hands that her husband fears for her reason, but he will make one of the gravest mistakes of his life if he permits himself to be controlled by Satan through the device of his wife. I tell you plainly, she is controlled by demons, and if these evil spirits have their way, your liberty, Brother Craig, your manhood are gone; you are a slave to her caprices. If you yield to her sway, she will surely be an instrument in the hands of Satan to separate you from God...

But if she will not heed the counsels of God, I have been shown that the only course for her husband to pursue is to leave her with her parents, that her mother may bear the affliction which her own mismanagement has caused...

Whatever course Brother Craig takes now, he will be censured. If he continues to live with her, she will make their married life a reign of terror. Unless he permits her to pervert his

senses, to poison his mind against his brethren, he will have to maintain constant warfare. Not only will his manhood be sacrificed, but he will lose his integrity, and all to please a woman who is so determined to rule her husband, both mind and body, that she will give to Satan her soul, body, and spirit, in order for him to accomplish the work she would see done. She is just as much possessed by a demon as was the man who tore and cut himself when Jesus cast out the devils...

If Sister Craig continues her present course, the time is not far distant when it will be impossible for her to break this power at will. Already Satan holds almost complete control of her will, her mind, and her judgment...

There are but few men strong enough to resist, day after day, week after week, such a will as that of Sister Craig, and she can create a scene whenever her will is crossed, or whenever the wicked one will play upon her, which is coming to be a common occurrence. But in this Brother Craig must let Satan rage, and not allow himself to be cut off from religious privileges because his wife desires it. If she runs away, let her go. Even if she threatens to take her own life, do not yield to her wicked demands. Even if she should carry out her threat, it would be better to look upon her silent in death than to allow her to murder not only her own soul but that of her husband, and be the means of destroying many others.

Thoughts? What is the principle? Can you see the issue is one of being restored into unity with God and we must separate ourselves from influences that undermine our healing, but of course this is the last option for marriage, not the first.

## FRIDAY

Questions 1 & 2 discuss

## 2006 Q1 Lesson 4 Living with Lambs

### SABBATH

Read paragraph “Children, indeed...” Are children gifts from God? Are all children gifts from God? Is it the children that are a gift from God or the ability to have children that is the gift?

When Arab men were raping women in Sudan last year in order to have more children with Arab blood lines, were those children gifts from God?

Are couples who cannot have children not gifted by God? ARE families with lots of children more gifted or less responsible or some of each?

“In view of the responsibility that devolves upon parents, it should be carefully **considered** whether it is **best** to bring children into the family. Has the mother sufficient strength to care for her children? And can the father give such advantages as will rightly mold and educate the child? How little is the destiny of the child considered! The gratification of passion is the only thought, and burdens are brought upon the wife and mother which undermine her vitality and paralyze her spiritual power. In broken health and with discouraged spirits she finds herself surrounded by a little flock whom she cannot care for as she should. Lacking the instruction they should have, **they grow up to dishonor God** and to communicate to others the evil of their own natures, and thus an **army is raised up whom Satan manages as he pleases.** {AH 162.4}

“Fathers and mothers, when you know that you are deficient in a knowledge of how to train your children for the Master, why do you not learn your lessons? Why do you continue to bring children into the world to **swell the numbers in Satan's ranks? Is God pleased with this showing?** When you see that a large family will severely tax your resources, when you see that it is giving the mother her hands full of children, and that she has not time intervening between their births to do the work every mother needs to do, why do you not consider the sure result? Every child draws upon the vitality of the mother, and when fathers and mothers do not use their reason in this matter, what chance is given to parents or children to be properly disciplined? The Lord calls upon parents to **consider** this matter in the light of future eternal realities. {AH 164.2}

“[Parents] should calmly **consider** what provision can be made for their children. They have **no right** to bring children into the world to be a burden to others. Have they a business that they can rely upon to sustain a family so that they need not become a burden to others? **If they have not, they commit a crime in bringing children into the world to suffer for want of proper care, food, and clothing.**” {AH 164.3}

Any thoughts? Does this sound like children are a gift from God? Or the ability to have children is the gift? Can the gift be abused? Who is responsible for the use of this gift? What about teachings that recommend no form of personal responsibility in reproduction, just “let God decide” or “let God’s will be done”?

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph? Thoughts? Does the Bible teach children are a gift from God? All children?

*A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother. Prov 10:1*

*To have a fool for a son brings grief; there is no joy for the father of a fool Prov 17:21*

*A foolish son is his father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping.*  
Prov 19:13

*He who robs his father and drives out his mother is a son who brings shame and disgrace.*  
Prov 19:26

Any thoughts? Does this sound like children are a gift from God?

What about the idea that children are the Lord's property? What does it mean to be the Lord's property? Does God treat us like property? He is our owner? Does that mean we are His slaves? Does God want us to be His slaves? John 15:15 – Jesus says He wants us to be His friends. If God is our owner and our owner sets us free and invites us to be His friends, why do so many insist on staying slaves?

What is the difference between slaves and friends? Do slaves think for themselves? Do slaves understand the master's problems/business? Do friends? Does God want us to understand Him and what He is going through and what He has done and is doing so we can cooperate intelligently or does He prefer we simply wait, like good slaves, for Him to tell us what to do? Does God want more from us than the obedience of a well trained dog?

Does it make a difference in how we parent our children if we understand that the Owner has set us free and invites us into understanding friendship versus the Owner is the Master and we do what we are told, no questions asked?

What might you do differently in parenting with these two approaches? What might be the difference in the outcome of the child?

## MONDAY

First paragraph suggests that women often connected their sense of value to bearing children? Why do we find this in the Bible? If a woman cannot have children is she less valuable? In Bible times? Why so in Bible times? Do you think the purpose in having children changed away from God's original plan after man fell into sin? Was it God's original plan for Adam and Eve to have children to work the garden? To help manage the cattle? To raise an army to defend their property? What was the primary purpose God wanted Adam and Eve to have children? What about after sin, what was the purpose many parents had children? Is this cultural value reflected in the scripture? Does this cultural change impact how women were viewed in scripture and why women found value in having children?

Read "Consider these comments.." Thoughts? What about "I've never been loved and I want someone who I know will love me without question."

Bottom section brings up the issue of infertility in Bible times. What about in today's world the process of infertility treatment? Good Godlike use of our brains and abilities or evil meddling into divine prerogatives?

Read first sentence last paragraph "Many couples struggle to understand why God withholds children from them." If a couple cannot have children is it because God withheld children? What is the problem with this theology? What are the implications if true? Then all children God decides upon so God determines a crack mother who has already had 7 kids taken by DFACS needed another but a loving, gracious, kind responsible couple who cannot have children God decided no! Is God this arbitrary?

What is the issue in the GC? The character of God! Do you see how subtle distortions of God's character can infiltrate issues that on the surface don't appear to be about God's character? It is

this type of presentations about God that cause thinking people to go, “wait a minute, I can’t believe in a god like that.” And good for them. But too often we fail to present the beautiful and winsome truth about God that they could believe in.

## TUESDAY

Last sentence of first paragraph “Before we parent our children we must be parented by Him [God].” What does this mean? That God won’t permit us to have children until we first get proper parenting from Him? Or that in order to be successful parents we need to have Him parent us and teach us His methods, principles, values etc.?

Last paragraph read – what do you tell a parent who did their best to raise a child in the Lord’s will but that child as an adult went astray? Is it the parents fault? Why do parents often look back over their lives and pick out events in which the parent had a bad day and beat themselves with it and tell themselves, “if I would have done this differently...”? How can you comfort such a parent?

What if you were raised with imperfect parenting, (who wasn’t?), regardless of parenting, as adults do we have a choice as to what we do with our lives?

Does it help for the parent to realize that God will provide what will make their child most happy in the long run?

## WEDNESDAY

Discusses discipline of children

What happens if there is too little control over children?

What happens if there is too much control over children?

Last paragraph speaks about following through on consequences, why is this so important? What do you teach a child if you tell them that if they study hard and get 100% on a spelling be you will give them \$5. They study hard and get 100% but you don’t give them the \$5, what do you teach them? What do you teach the child if you tell them that if they don’t make their bed they cannot have dessert. They don’t make their bed and when time for dessert comes they cry so you give them dessert, what do you teach them? In both cases, you teach them they cannot trust you!

Why do parents have consequences for their children? What is the purpose?

## THURSDAY

*“He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. “And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”*  
Matt 18:2-6

What does it mean to become like a little child? And how do we understand this in light of:

*“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.” 1 Cor 13:11*

*“We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. 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! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” Heb 5:11- 14*

Read second paragraph “Jesus affirmed...” can you be raised in a home where needs are provided, parents are available emotionally and physically, questions are encouraged yet children are taught God doesn’t exist?

## FRIDAY

Read second paragraph and question 1 and discuss. Is there a place for spanking?



## 2006 Q1 Lesson 5 Disciples Making Disciples

### SABBATH

The lesson this week is about teaching our children to know the Lord, about helping our children to become Disciples of Christ.

Why do we need to do this? What is the natural inclination of the heart? Selfish – was it this way when God created Adam and Eve? No! Then why is it this way now? Because Adam and Eve became selfish and they were given the ability by God to have children in their image and thus all children are born in the image of their parents- infected with selfishness.

So what do each of us need? Rebirth – which is what? Renewal of heart, recreation of mind, setting right of character – recreation within into Christlikeness, the law of God written on the heart and mind, for love to replace selfishness as the central operating principle.

How can parents help their children experience this? Thoughts from parents? And then what did your parents do to help you experience this?

My mother read us Bible stories, took us to church each week, sacrificed to put us through Christian schools, took us to pathfinders, vacation Bible school, played Bible games with us, disciplined us, shielded us from destructive influences, took us for walks in nature on Sabbath afternoons and loved us showing us the love of God in action.

### SUNDAY

Jesus gives definition of what it means to be His disciple – read first paragraph –

What are the teachings of the master we are to follow? Would it be to worship on the right day? To be baptized in the right way? To tithe on all of our pay? Or to work hard to obey? Is it the 28 fundamentals? What was the entire focus of Jesus teaching? In order to be one of Jesus disciples, what teaching must we be persuaded of and also promote? The truth about God Himself!

“We need to educate and train the mind so that we shall have an intelligent faith, and have an understanding friendship with Jesus. Unless we continually cherish friendship between God and our souls, we shall separate from Him, and walk apart from Him.” SD 27.

How do we become friends with God?

*“When anyone is joined to Christ, he 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 all mankind **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**!” 2 Cor 5:17-20 GNB*

What is the message which tells us how he makes us His friends?

What caused Adam and Eve to break their friendship with God in the first place?

“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}

What caused the breakdown in friendship? Belief in lies about God. What does belief in lies about God do? Breaks down trust! And if you no longer trust God, what happens? Fear and survival-of-the-fittest, selfishness.

How is friendship with God be restored? Does God need something done to Him to get Him to be willing to be our friend? Who needs something done in order for the friendship to be restored? We do, we need something done – what? The lies about God removed so that we trust Him again! Thus Jesus came to reveal God, to make Him known, to remove the lies in our minds. And by getting to know Him friendship is restored, thus “this is life eternal that they might know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.” John 17:3. When we truly know God we trust Him and if we trust Him then fear is removed, loved in imbued and we experience the power of God within and a change of heart. Thus, Satan’s strategy is always to obscure the truth about God.

So what are God’s true disciples to do? Present the truth about God as Jesus did. “As the Father has sent me, so send I you.”

As we come to know God more fully we begin to reflect His character and practice the principles of \_\_\_\_\_ ? Love! And in the family this is to be carried out.

How does love work in the family in regard to children? What does love look like? Time together, playing, laughing, hugging, sharing, providing, educating, feeding, listening, and disciplining.

*Heb 12:4 In your struggle against selfishness, you have not yet had to lay down your life so that others might live. <sup>5</sup> And you have forgotten that God loves you as his sons, for the scripture says:*

*“My son, 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 son.”*

*Heb 12:7 Endure difficulties as opportunities for growth; God is treating you as sons. For what father doesn’t want his son to be healthy and grow and mature and what son is not disciplined by his father? <sup>8</sup> 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 – you have rejected his offer of sonship. <sup>9</sup> 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! <sup>10</sup> Our fathers worked with us and taught us, for just a few years, the best they could; but God works to heal us for good, that we may partake of his perfect goodness and love. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> “Remove the obstacles to your recovery,” so that the infection of selfishness may not permanently deform your character, but rather you will be healed. TRJ version*

Thoughts about discipline?

## MONDAY

Top question “What special challenges face latter-day parents who stand near the border of the heavenly Promised Land?” Any thoughts? TV, video games, designer drugs, internet, pollution and chemical impact on the nervous system, electromagnetic radiation, denial of God by institutional authorities and society,

Read second paragraph “The passing of faith...” What does the passing of faith mean? Does it mean passing along doctrines? Traditions? Or does it mean bring our children to the point of experiencing trusting friendship with God? How do you pass trust in God along?

The paragraph implores children to give God control of their lives – why do so many young people resist this? What ideas come to mind when the idea of surrendering control to God comes to mind? When you were an adolescent what ideas came to mind? How can we make it easier for young people to desire this?

“Too many, in planning for a brilliant future, make an utter failure. Let God plan for you. As a little child, trust to the guidance of Him who will “keep the feet of His saints.” 1 Samuel 2:9. 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.” {MH 479.2}

Doesn’t it come back to whether we trust God, which comes back to the kind of being we believe Him to be. If we believe God genuinely will lead us only in the way we ourselves would want to be led if we could discern the end from the beginning does that make a difference in our ability to trust Him from the person who thinks God is arbitrary and may lead you where you wouldn’t want to go?

What does it mean to give God control? Does it mean we become puppets? Does it mean we must stop thinking? Does it mean we lose our individuality? Can it sometimes be misunderstood in this way? Is it possible many resist surrendering their lives to God because they have misunderstood God and falsely believe to surrender to God means to lose one’s freedom?

“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}

How do we retain our freedom and yet follow God’s will? How does God accomplish this? By His methods of truth, love and freedom. God presents the truth in love and leaves us free to choose whether we agree with Him or not. For all those who have been persuaded by the evidence He has provided they trust Him and experience Divine power within to heal and transform.

## TUESDAY

Family worship – how can families make worship interesting and meaningful to the young people?

The first paragraph reflects on the Jewish ceremony of offering a morning and evening lamb sacrifice at the temple, what was this to symbolize? This was the daily sacrifice – symbolizing God’s daily sacrifice for our salvation, God’s daily and constant work to heal and restore us. The daily protection we receive from God’s intercession in our minds and lives as He holds the forces of evil in check while we are being healed. It symbolizes that this constant intercession, this holding in check evil, this process of removing rebellion and restoring unity cost Him everything He could give – His own life surrendered to free us. And it symbolizes how we are to daily keep our minds turned toward God and cooperate with Him for freedom, healing, restoration and spreading His healing message around the world.

Why is prayer important in our lives?

“Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted, and the health of the soul be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Well-spring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience. Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God. The spiritual faculties lose their vitality, the religious experience lacks health and vigor.” {GW 254.4}

## WEDNESDAY

Proverbs 22:6 read and discuss, mistranslation, a better translation is “raise a child according to his way and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Can parents accept there is room for them to grow and learn new insights and better ways to parent, even after their children are grown, without feeling guilty for not knowing sooner?

Bottom question read and discuss

For I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. Isa. 49:25 {ML 21.1}

Those who keep the law of God look upon their children with indefinable feelings of hope and fear, wondering what part they will act in the great conflict that is just before them. The anxious mother questions, "What stand will they take? What can I do to prepare them to act well their part, so that they will be the recipients of eternal glory?" {ML 21.2}

Great responsibilities rest upon you, mothers. . . . You may aid them to develop characters that will not be swayed or influenced to do evil, but will sway and influence others to do right. By your fervent prayers of faith you can move the arm that moves the world. . . . {ML 21.3}

The prayers of Christian mothers are not disregarded by the Father of all. . . . He will not turn away your petitions, and leave you and yours to the buffetings of Satan in the great day of final conflict. It is for you to work with simplicity and faithfulness, and God will establish the work of your hands. {ML 21.4}

The lifework performed on earth is acknowledged in the heavenly courts as a work well done. With joy unutterable, parents see the crown, the robe, the harp, given to their children. . . . The seed sown with tears and prayers may have seemed to be sown in vain, but their harvest is reaped with joy at last. Their children have been redeemed. {ML 21.5}

When the "well done" of the great Judge is pronounced, and the crown of immortal glory is placed upon the brow of the victor, many will raise their crowns in sight of the assembled

universe and, pointing to their mothers, say, "She made me all I am through the grace of God. Her instruction, her prayers, have been blessed to my eternal salvation. ML 21.6

#### THURSDAY

First sentence is about honoring mother and father. What does it mean to honor them? Does it mean to do what they say? Does it mean to give them what they want? What about when our parents are old and their minds are riddled with disease and they can no longer make reasonable decisions how do we honor them?

The lesson points out that children are to follow the Christlike leadership of the parents, they “are not expected to obey those commands or expectations of their parents that are contrary to the Christian faith.” Thoughts? Any examples come to mind? Is there an age requirement?

Parents are not to rouse their children to wrath – what does this mean?

The lesson suggests that parent’s “most significant task is helping children to have a relationship with God and an appreciation of eternal things.” What have you found successful in accomplishing this?

## 2006 Q1 Lesson 6 Wise Words for Families

### SABBATH

Memory Text Read – thoughts? What does it mean? Does this mean a mere intellectual understanding? What does it mean in all your ways? With all your heart? Would this require an intimate relationship, an intimate connection? Does John 17:3 come to mind?

When we have this intimate connection does it result in our losing our individuality? Then how does it work if we are intimately connected and acknowledge God in all our ways and lean not to our own understanding and yet retain our own individuality and thinking? What is God's methods for bringing us into this unity this close connection? Presenting the truth in love and leaving us free, convincing us on the weight of evidence and truth!

Does God want us to follow Him and do what He wants without our understanding cooperation? So, are we to understand? When God reveals truth to us and wins us over so now we understand is it our understanding? Might it be more helpful if the passage read, lean not to your own self-generated ideas and perspectives and beliefs but when you come to understand God and His ways, follow His ways as the Holy Spirit reveals the truth to your mind in ways you can comprehend?

John 15:15 – Jesus calls us into understanding friendship, Isaiah 1:18-20 says we are to reason with God and in so doing our characters are transformed, why? Paul says in Romans 14 every person is to be fully persuaded in their own mind, why fully persuaded, why not just be told what to believe by God and as long as they can recite the right answer they are okay?

When I was in undergraduate school I went several years at public universities, the professors did not believe in God and taught the theory of evolution as the origin of life. I understood what they taught and was able to recite back the information on the test so I got A's on my exams, does that mean it was what I believed? If I know the answer I am supposed to give, but have not been convinced then is my character changed?

A person convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. So how does God work? Truth in love and leaves us free! What does it say about God that He works in this way? Can you love and trust a God like this?

Recently an SDA physician from Loma Linda claimed to have received a message directly from God for the SDA church. He said that he really didn't want to proclaim this message but it was from God and he couldn't lean to his own understanding so he went and began proclaiming this message. In the message he rails against the SDA church, speaking in the first person as if God is talking and accuses the SDA church of being wrong on the Sabbath, state of the dead, sanctuary, second coming and then goes on to say that if the church doesn't give up all these teachings that God will use His wrath to punish the church in the tribulation. Now this man doesn't want to lean to his own understanding he wants to follow God with all his heart. What is the problem?

### SUNDAY

This lesson is about sexual sin, being lured into various forms of sexual sin. Why is sex outside of marriage – between a man and a woman sinful?

What is sin? Transgression of the law, which actually means rebelliousness or lawlessness or living outside of the law. Which law? The law of love, which is the law upon which life was designed to operate.



Why is adultery living outside of this law?

Why is premarital sex living outside of this law? What constitutes premarital sex? It has become fashionable to think that only intercourse is sex, anything else is not, what is the problem with this?

Christ said in Matthew 5 that if you lust in your heart you have already committed adultery, why? How can this be? Why can't you stand up in the judgment and say, "No way, I may have wanted to but I never actually did so you can't hold me accountable"? What is the issue, one of behavior or one of character? What happens to the character if you choose sinful activities in the mind?

James chapter one tells us as soon as we choose the activity with the mind it becomes sin. The temptation is not sin, but when with the mind we say yes then the character is marred, the soul is damaged, the conscience is seared, the reason is warped.

What about relationships in which two people live together but don't get married? Would this be living outside the law of love? Why? Why don't they get married? Afraid of commitment? Which means who are they thinking about? What are the two antagonistic powers? The law of love vs. the law of selfishness, which is being acted on if one avoids commitment? Is it not a revelation of unwillingness to give of oneself for another? Doesn't it mean, "as long as it's good for me I will be here"?

What about same sex relationships? Are these living outside of God's ideal for human beings? Do these operate on the principle of love to God first and love to others second?

The last sentence of the first paragraph states, "Most important, one must answer to God for the choices made in life." What does this mean? Any thoughts? Does this mean that the problem with sexual sin is that God is keeping account and if you don't get forgiveness stamped by your name He will be forced by holiness to punish you? Is it saying that if God were not to impose an external punishment then there really isn't anything wrong with sexual sin? Is there something wrong with sexual sin regardless of whether we answer to God? If you believe, as I do, that God is totally forgiving, and will never inflict an external punishment and loves everyone equally, does that mean there is nothing wrong with sexual sin or any sin? No! Why? Because sin actually damages the sinner?

How does sexual sin damage the sinner? Sexual sin is rooted in self gratification, self-seeking, self-pleasure, not in selfless love for another. Thus sexual sin damages the conscience, warps reason so that truth is more difficult to see, inflames the emotions and passions and weakens the will and slowly over time if delivery from sin is not experienced the character is deformed and the mind is destroyed.

Think about people who persist in any type of sin, they cannot change the truth so in order to avoid the guilt that comes with their sin they begin to try and bend their mind around the truth. Thus over time the mind is darkened and the light of truth is rejected.

What happens to the person who sins and is not healed when they come into God's presence? What happens when they see God's face? Will they be able to hide from themselves and their own history and guilt? What is the worst pain you could experience? Is it not guilt, unremitting, unquenchable guilt? Does God have to inflict this suffering on the unrepentant?

## MONDAY

Healthy Fathering, How do fathers pass along to their children traits of character, values, morals etc.?



Are there genetic and environmental influences? Can we affect both? Or can we affect only the environmental?

A study of genetically identical mice revealed that when mothers were given nutrients to include folic acid and B12 their offspring had different color coats than the genetically identical mice whose mothers didn't get the nutrients. Also the pups whose mothers got the nutrients had less obesity and diabetes. Why? Because it is not simply what genes you have but how those genes are expressed. A process called methylation and impacts how genes are expressed.

This process occurs in every woman as they get two X genes, one from mother and one from father – only one gene can be utilized in each cell of the body – so in each woman there is a random process in which one X gene turns off in each cell. Typically this is fairly balanced, but this means a woman can experience some genetic differences. For instance a woman whose father is color blind will receive a X chromosome from father which would be color blind. She would get a normal X from mother and in general not be color blind. But within the retina some of the cells that randomly turned off mother's X and kept father's X on would be color blind.

We can affect the genetic influences as well. Gene expression in the brain changes depending on the activities you engage in, the substances you put into your body and the character's we have developed. As we gain victories in our lives, we pass onto our children genes turned on and off is certain "sets" that will give our children advantages or disadvantages. Also, what the mother eats during pregnancy can affect how genes are expressed, not what genes they receive but how those genes are expressed.

Once the child is born, what impact does fathering have?

## TUESDAY Discipline with love

Any thoughts from parents on successful ways to do this?

Is it ever appropriate to use corporal discipline? The lesson suggests that the rod should be like a shepherd's rod which gently directs rather than beats, does this mean a spanking is always out of the question?

## WEDNESDAY Home atmosphere

Which member of the family typically has greater influence on setting the home atmosphere? Husbands, does it make a difference for the family what the atmosphere is like? What difference?

Consider living in a radiation fallout zone, a toxic environment, would it surprise you if you got sick? But if you moved out of the toxic zone and got treatment you would get well, what would happen if you moved back into the contaminated environment? Can homes be emotional toxic zones that ruin the health of members who live there?

What is the root source of toxic home environments? Selfishness or lack of love.

## THURSDAY

A truly wealthy wife – the woman of Proverbs 31 – what makes her so prized and so wealthy? What does the text teach us about what is most valuable? Character! And what are the traits of character that are valued? Selfless love, trustworthiness, diligence, perseverance, compassion, kindness, wisdom, and others.

Read question 3 from Friday and discuss – what are the differences in what Proverbs 31 values in a wife and woman and what modern society values?

## 2006 Q1 Lesson 7 The Royal Love Song

### SABBATH

The Jewish teachers believed God revealed Himself through all the OT scripture but of all the scriptures there was one book they considered the MH of scripture. In the OT Sanctuary the MH place is where the Shikinah glory of God was. It is where He shone forth. And in the book considered the MH of the OT is where His character shines forth beyond any other place. What book might that be? The Song of Songs (SS) like the Holy of Holies. Solomon wrote this beautiful love song for Shulamite.

Is God mentioned in SS? Not KJV or NIV but one time in Hebrew, NASB ASV, ESV.

Where? In our memory text – read our memory text.

*SS 8:6 Set me as a seal upon thy heart, As a seal upon thine arm: For love is strong as death; Jealousy is cruel as Sheol; The flashes thereof are flashes of fire, A very flame of Jehovah. ASV*

*SS 8:6 Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord. ESV*

*SS 8:6 "Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The very flame of the Lord. NASB95*

Why didn't everyone translate it this way? Because how can we put God's name in an erotic book? But the Greek is Yaweh.

But read verse 7:

*Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised. ESV*

Look at what the text is saying - your love for me is so strong you would give your life for me, your love is so strong that the grave cannot keep it back, your love is so strong that all the water in the world cannot drown it, your love is so strong it is the very love from the heart of God! Whose love is described here? God's love and who is this text describing? God's love for who? And who loved so much that they gave their life? And whose love was so great it couldn't be held by the grave? And why was this love able to conquer the grave?

Why is this love described as a fire? What other texts might reference God's love like fire? If God loves us so much why does He wait so long? Why not just come and get us?

*"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. 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. 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. Malachi 4:1-3*

What does the above text mean?

The rest of the lesson is going to deal with human sexuality – but to understand sexuality as God intended it we must see it in light of this incredible self-sacrificing love that knows no bounds.

## SUNDAY

The lesson asks us, what do we think of the human body – specifically how is the human body related to worship and God’s plan for us?

Can we worship God without a body? The crux of the issue in Christianity – most Christians believe that the part of our being that worships God exists outside or separate from the body – they fail to realize that the only medium through which we can commune with God is the brain He gave us.

Is it possible that failure to care for the body could undermine your ability to know God? Could it undermine your usefulness in His cause? Most Christians fail to care for their bodies, thus they fail to care for their brains and this undermines their ability to know God.

Let us give specific examples of how effecting the body can effect the spiritual life. In some forms of worship they use hallucinogenic drugs, which cause a chemical change in the brain in order to obtain religious experiences. Would this enhance or interfere with knowing God?

If the brain is the only medium through which God can communicate with us and you were the devil would you want to damage the brain? What strategies would you employ?

Diet – vitamin deficiencies, high fat diets, parasites, mad cow disease,

Lack of Physical activity – reduces proteins that are important for brain health

Toxins – heavy metals, pollution

Activities such as television during development – impairs prefrontal cortex development, as adults activates aggressive centers (limbic system) and inactivates thinking centers (prefrontal cortex)

Infections – sexually transmitted diseases, Hepatitis, syphilis, HIV,

Stroke, Alzheimer’s and other neurological disorders

Unremitting stress – increases risk for dementias and strokes

Why is it important to see the human being as an integrated being of mind and body?

The lesson suggests that we educate our children about sexuality in the context of Christian home – why do we have a hard time doing this?

Bottom question read and discuss – what does the Bible tell us – guard the heart, be careful about what we watch and look upon.

## MONDAY

Different aspects of healthy love – what aspects of healthy love did you encounter as you studied the lesson this week?

Friendship, companionship, devotion, loyalty, intimacy, trust, physical love.

## TUESDAY

Second paragraph – read and discuss – why is there no force or coercion? Can you win someone’s heart with force and coercion? Can you get someone to open themselves up to you completely with intimidation? Expand on the importance of this insight in relation to God’s plan for complete restoration with Him and His second coming? Will God use coercive tactics?

What is special about the word “know” or “knowing” in the Bible? How does this help us with the idea of life eternal is knowing God? How does this help us with the idea that those who know God have eternal life already?

How does the Bible define eternal life? Is it defined by quantity or quality? Is it defined in terms of the number of years or the experience? Can you experience intimacy with God now? If you have this intimacy of knowing God then you have eternal life!

## WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about chastity – why is this important?

If you were really hungry what does a fresh sweet orange taste like? But what does the orange taste like if you have just eaten some Hershey’s kisses? Has the orange changed? Is the orange less sweet or has our sensitivity to sweetness changed? It will take awhile for our sensitivity to return. But if we don’t abstain from sweets for a while then the only way to taste something sweet is to bombard ourselves with more candies and sugary sweet substances. Likewise, if we abstain until marriage the pleasure experienced is sweet and fresh and invigorating and rewarding, but if we bombard our senses with sexual experiences before marriage then it can diminish the sweetness of sex within marriage – but if we abstain and give ourselves time to recover then the sweetness can be restored. But those who don’t learn the importance of abstinence instead bombard themselves with more and more intense sexual experience until instead of their teeth getting cavities their souls get cavities.

The lesson speaks about guarding the affections – what does this mean? Why is this important? How is this applied to human relationships? What happens if one gets physically involved before one comes to truly know the other person?

Bottom of the lesson asks “What good news is there for individuals who regret their wrong choices in the expression of their sexuality?”

What good news is there for individuals who regret their wrong choices in the expression of their humanity?

Is sexual sin any different than any other sin? Or is it just one manifestation of the infection of selfishness in humanity? And the good news is first that God does NOT condemn and two God will heal and restore all who trust Him. And when God heals the mind we experience actual transformation here and now.

What do you say to someone who was violated sexually against their will and who thinks they are no longer pure?

## THURSDAY Sexuality—a special reflection of Godlike characteristics

How does the Bible regard practices that destroy the image of God in man? What practices do this and why?

Bottom question read – we will be discussing this issue next week in our first Let’s Talk Sabbath afternoon at 4 p.m.

## FRIDAY

Question 2 discuss

## 2006 Q1 Lesson 8 Keys to Family Unity

### SABBATH

Read Memory Text: " *'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'* " ([John 17:21](#), NIV).

Any thoughts? What does it mean to be one? What does it mean that the Father is IN Jesus and Jesus is IN the Father? And we are to be IN them in the same way? What does this mean? How do we get IN to God?

Jesus said unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood we have no part with Him, does this shed any light on how we get IN to God? What is it that keeps us from getting IN to God?

Read first paragraph – how do we fight this war? What are the weapons we use? What is the battle over? What are Satan's weapons? How can we cooperate for victory?

Read second paragraph – has all humanity been reconciled? If so how? How are those who hate God reconciled to Him? How are those who will lead the assault on the New Jerusalem at the end of the 1000 years reconciled to Him? How are those who abuse and assault and maim others reconciled to God?

*Ephesians 2:13 "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, <sup>15</sup> by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility."*

Does Ephesians tell us that all humanity has been reconciled to God?

But read 1 John 4:7-16

*"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. <sup>13</sup> We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. <sup>16</sup> And so we know and rely on the love God has for us."*

So is every human being reconciled to God?

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – what are the barriers that cause people to be separated? Fear, insecurity which manifest in sexism, racism, elitism, nationalism etc. but have at their root selfishness and distrust of God.

In the middle of the paragraph it talks about Christ making one out of two – what are the two components from which Christ makes one? What are the “two” that Christ makes a new humanity out of?

*Eph2:14 For Christ himself is the remedy that heals the mind and brings peace. He has removed from our minds selfishness and fear which brought division, mistrust, prejudice and hostility. <sup>15</sup> He did this by accepting human flesh and living totally victorious, ultimately dying on the cross, thus destroying in his flesh not only the lies of Satan and the selfish survival-of-the-fittest principle, but also the need for the law with its regulations to expose Satan’s lies and methods. His purpose was to be the template of a new humanity born out of the unification of the two – our selfish infected state merged with his sinless state thereby purging selfishness from the human heart thus healing, transforming, renewing, regenerating and recreating man to God’s original ideal. <sup>16</sup> And in this new being reconcile human race, regardless of ethnic background, into loving unity with God and each other through the revelation of truth at the cross, by which he destroyed the lies of Satan, reestablished trust and removed fear and hostility. <sup>17</sup> He came and demonstrated the truth of God’s character and offer of peace available to all humanity, to those far away in darkness and those blessed with the truth of God’s word. <sup>18</sup> For Jesus reveals the truth about God to all and through what Jesus has done all have access to the Father by one Spirit. TRJ version*

Read paragraph beginning “Picture a large...” What then needs to be the focus? What if we see someone in sin – what is the most important action we can take? Turn their eyes to Jesus!

## MONDAY

Becoming one through Love – any thoughts from the class?

What is love? Agape – what is it? Where does it come from? How do we get it?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, 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.*

What are the descriptors of Love? Is this a description of God?

Does love keep no record of wrongs? Does God keep records of wrongs? Do we teach that God keeps records of wrongs? If we teach this but He doesn’t do it what would the consequence be? Can we come into unity with God if we believe things about Him that are untrue? If we keep records of wrongs because we think God does, yet God doesn’t, then are we in unity with Him? (2 Corinthians 5:19)

Does love condemn? Jesus didn’t condemn the woman caught in adultery and said He did not come into the world to condemn the world but to save it. Do we ever teach God will condemn? How can we be unified with God if we hold to lies about Him?

Does love inflict punishment upon those who rebel or leave? Do we ever say God will use His power to inflict punishment upon those who reject His love? How can we be unified with God if we believe lies about Him? If God will not use His power to inflict penalties upon the wicked, because He doesn’t have to, but we say He will and we practice such methods – dark ages burning people for holding divergent religious beliefs, can we be in unity with Him?



Does love destroy? Or does love build up? Do we say God will destroy the wicked in the end? How can we be in unity with God if we believe things about Him that are not true?

Will the wicked be destroyed? Yes, by what?

- *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 NIV*
- *Psalms 34:21*
  - *Evil shall destroy the wicked – Darby*
  - *Evil shall slay the wicked - ASV, KJV, NASB, NIV*
  - *Evil will kill the wicked - GNT*
  - *Evil brings death to the wicked - NRSV*
- *Sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:15*
- *The wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23*

If we hold to views about God like this does that prevent us from loving others as God has loved us?

## TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs – any thoughts? What do the first two sentences mean? Is there some difference between sin and selfishness? Can you sin without being selfish? Can you be selfish without sinning? What does it mean selfishness is a curse? Does it mean something God pronounced, like the curse on the ground or just using it poetically to describe a very bad thing?

What about the idea that we “seem” to be born selfishly? Are we or does it just seem that way? Is selfishness a character trait? Or is it an infection that warps our entire character? Is selfishness a tendency or an inherent way of thinking, feeling, living that has totally warped us and without God’s grace intervening in our minds/hearts we would be totally destroyed by our own selfishness?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Was Christ just an example or did He actually purge His humanity through love at all costs, even the voluntary surrender of His own life – Christ would not act to save self!

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, What does it mean to submit? For what are we to place ourselves humbly before others? For them to tell us what to do? What does humble submission look like? I had a patient whose husband wanted her to submit to extra people in their bed, should she humbly place herself before him to be treated in this way?

In the paragraph it suggests that reverence for Christ is the motivator for our humble submission – what does this mean? Does it mean that we recognize what Christ did for us so we must choose to submit to mistreatment from others? Or does it mean that we revere Christ and recognize that Christ loved others more than self and that when He was being crucified by these evil men He related to them as His own children and loved them, forgiving them and longing for their good and their healing, but they would not. If you had a child who was rebelling against you, how would you treat that child? Would you love that child and long for their good? If we revere Christ

do we want to be like Him? Do we want to practice His methods? So does submission mean that we humbly seek to do all we can for the eternal good of others?

**THURSDAY**

Read first paragraph – any thoughts? What is the motivation for commitment? Isn't it love? Can one person's love keep a relationship healthy? Can one person's commitment keep a relationship together? Can a person who loves and is committed choose, as an act of love and commitment to end a marriage? How?

**FRIDAY**

Question 3

## 2006 Q1 Lesson 9 Home of Peace and Healing

### SABBATH

Read memory text – any thoughts?

What is this peace Christ is talking about? Why did He say don't let your hearts be troubled or afraid? When did mankind lose this peace? Where did the peace come from? Is He speaking of an internal sense of calmness, tranquility and wellness or a change in our relationship with God or peace with family and other humans or all of it?

*Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...*

Where does the peace come from? Being justified, but what does that mean?

How do we understand this statement of peace with His statement:

*MT 10:34 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> 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--*

*MT 10:36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'*

How is it He says He brings peace in one place but a sword in another?

What are the two antagonistic principles at war on this planet? Selfless love and selfishness also known as survival-of-the-fittest. Is there any peace within ourselves, with God or with anyone else if one operates from the motives of selfishness? So only if Christ brings us God's methods of love can we have peace, within ourselves, with God and with others. But because of Adam's sin, where do each of us start? What is our natural tendency? Selfish, so when Christ comes to a person and he and his family are all operating from selfishness and then one member of the family opens their heart to God they receive peace within, peace with God, but what if the other family members don't change from selfishness to love? There is no peace – we can have peace with others only if they also experience a change of heart – not because we have anything against them or have any desire to harm them but because they practice methods which we cannot abide with.

Give some examples of how living God's methods of love can bring conflict in families? A member converts and wants to go to church and the others members don't.

A spouse no longer wants to go to bars, watch certain entertainment, listen to certain music, ingest certain substances and if this happens what happens within the relationship, more peace or conflict?

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – what does it mean “we possess by faith the precious spiritual reality of being seated in heavenly places with Christ”? “*And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus...*” Eph 2:6

How are we seated with Christ? In heart, in mind, in attitude? As a race He is our representative in God's heavenly counsel? What does it mean?

*“And God raised the human race from its degraded and detestable state through Jesus Christ’ victorious life and humanity again occupies our seat in God’s heavenly counsel in Jesus Christ our Lord...” Ephesians 2:6 TRJ version*

What defines a relationship, the quality or type of relationship whether it is healthy or unhealthy? Is it by the problems they have? No, all relationships have problems to deal with, what defines a relationship is when those problems arise HOW are they handled?

What are ways in which problems are handled that are less healthy? Arguing, pouting, accusing, not listening, attacking each other, avoiding each other, silence, violence etc.

What are healthy methods – first seek to understand before seeking to be understood

Align yourself with your partner rather than drawing yourself apart – find areas of agreement first, areas where you can honestly appreciate the others position, find common goals or purposes and then explore the differences in how you are trying to reach those goals. For instance there may be differences in parenting style – first recognize you are both on the same side trying to achieve the same goals of doing what is best for your child – rather than interacting with some enemy who is trying to harm your child, then you can explore why you approach it differently and the reasons you believe a certain approach would be best.

When differences with your partner arises, do you experience yourself on the same team or as opponents, consider the example of a ball team...

Why is it important to face conflicts rather than avoid them? Remember Barney Fife? Nip it in the bud – a problem doesn’t go away by ignoring it, rather it just grows larger until it can no longer be ignored.

What practical actions can you take in your relationship that will work toward preventing the aversion of problems resolution? Practice creating an atmosphere of openness and appreciation. Specifically, make it your goal to create an atmosphere that your spouse knows they can come to you with anything and will be accepted and not rejected. Think about it, if your spouse or child has something in their mind or heart against you would you prefer to know it or not know it? Why do you want to know it? So you can work it out. So if they come to you with something that you find uncomfortable or even offensive rather than initially responding with hurt or defensiveness, respond with THANKS! “Thank you for coming to me and talking about this. I know it wasn’t easy for you to bring this up, but I appreciate you telling me so we can discuss it. While I don’t see it exactly the way you do, if that is how you see it that is important to me and I want to explore it.” And comments like this.

In all of these interventions what is the central underlying principle that differentiates the healthy from unhealthy? Love vs. selfishness, other-centeredness vs. self-centeredness.

## MONDAY

Anger – any thoughts about anger? Are there different types of anger or is all anger the same? Does it matter why you’re angry? Does it make a difference if you are angry because you didn’t get your way, because life isn’t fair to you, because someone stepped on your toes, because your plans didn’t work out and anger when you see someone abusing another, when you see injustice, when you see God’s name being misrepresented? Is there a difference? What is the difference? The energy that fuels the anger of the first is selfishness the energy that fuels the anger of the second is love.

Now what is the focus of the anger that stems from selfishness? What direction and action would it take if it could? Isn't such anger directed against others and seeks to make them pay or hurt etc. for some perceived wrong? What is the focus of the anger that stems from love? If you see one of your children stealing from a neighbor – do you have anger? Is it directed at making your child pay or are you angry that your child is acting in selfish and self-destructive ways and your anger leads you to intervene to redeem your child?

Why does God get angry? Imagine you are mayor of Collegedale and have a law not to be cruel to animals....

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph “Abusive behavior...” thoughts? It might just be me but is abuse a distortion or perversion of love or is it in fact not love at all but selfishness? Many people in abusive relationships fail to make this distinction and actually think the person who is mistreating them loves them – but does love abuse? Does love mistreat, tear down, destroy? No, it is important to make this distinction because many people stay in relationships because they think the other in some twisted way loves them, BUT THEY DO NOT. Love is self-sacrificing and abusers don't self-sacrifice they exploit!

While victims are not to blame for the conduct of the abuser is there something the victim is responsible for? What? Their conduct, their continual choice to stay or go back over and over again, the victim is not responsible for the fact another person abuses them but they do have the power to choose to not stay, and yes there are many factors such as threat of death, threat to children, threat of financial loss etc. but I don't know of one advocacy group who would say that because of the threats that the victim should choose to stay in an abusive situation.

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – discuss – how do you answer the question, where was God when I was being abused?

What is usually worse than the actually physical or sexual abuse that a child experiences? When the child confides or discloses the abuse to an adult, parent, and that person doesn't believe the child, doesn't protect the child or worse of all supports the abuse. Why is this even more damaging?

Last paragraph read – would you recommend such individuals be referred to clergy for such counseling? Why or why not? Do you think our institutions should require clergy to have more training in dealing with such problems?

## THURSDAY

Second paragraph “Through the Cross...” read – any thoughts? Is forgiveness only *offered* by God? Is forgiveness only *offered* but not actually granted until the offender asks? Is God saying, “I am willing to forgive all you need to do is ask and I will” What do you think it means that it is through the Cross that forgiveness is offered? Does it mean that if Christ didn't die God would be unwilling to forgive? That God only forgave because Christ died? Or did God forgive and Christ's death is part of the revelation of that fact?

The lesson states, “Humanly, forgiveness is a decision to let go of the destructive malice of revenge.” Is this merely humanly or divinely also? Or was God impaired in His ability to let go of a desire for revenge without Jesus dying and paying a price and pleading His blood to the Father? Are we saying that God is revengeful?

What is the fountain we are to wash in? What are we to wash?

Read first two sentences last paragraph – read – if forgiveness is to be effective – for what – must there be repentance? Effective for reconciliation there must be repentance, but does that mean if the offender doesn't repent forgiveness has no purpose and has no positive effects?

The rest of the paragraph lists recognizable earmarks of true repentance including stopping the offending behavior – Did David repent after adultery with Bathsheba? When did sex with her no longer constitute sin? Did he stop the behavior? Why was marrying her not sinful? If you suggest culture then are you saying that God's law regarding adultery is superseded by man's culture? And if so why do we tell converts in certain cultures they cannot marry more wives than they already have?

Repentance is not merely a turning away from but is the principle of not damaging further, not injuring further and restoring if possible what was taken. David took her husband as well and what place in that society would a widowed adulterer have? He not only took her husband but took her standing, her dignity, her livelihood, her security, her station in society and reputation. While he couldn't resurrect her husband, he could marry her and give her standing, security, dignity within that society.

## FRIDAY

Question 3 read and discuss



## 2006 Q1 Lesson 10 Families of Faith

### SABBATH

Read memory Text – thoughts? What does it mean Author and Finisher of our faith? What is faith? Trust? Or does it mean system of belief, our religion, our values and principles? And where does trust come from? Evidence and experience so how is Christ the Author and Finisher? What about our system of belief, does everyone who claims Christ as their Savior have the same system of belief? Are they of the same faith? Why? What makes the difference? What is essential that all the saved will agree on? Will it be the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath? Will it be the state of the dead? Will it be the inspiration of Scripture? Will it be the health message? Will it be the truth about the character and government of God?

Examples of those who claim to believe in God but value a different character than He actually has? Those who crucified Him, those in the dark ages – what is the essential difference?

What was the joy set before Christ?

The text says Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father – why has this text caused so much problems for some Adventists? How can we understand it in ways that resolve the problems?

Some suggest that this text indicates that Christ did not have two phases to His heavenly ministry after ascension, that He immediately went into the Father's presence and that the 1844 Investigative Judgment when Christ comes to the Ancient of Days cannot be true because Hebrews places Him at God's right hand immediately. What are the multiple problems with this type of reasoning on both sides?

That regardless of what ministry Christ was involved in that somehow He was physically restricted from His Father –

That the idea of sitting at the right hand of the Father means a literal location rather than a position of authority and power –

That there is a physical building in heaven made of heavenly brick and mortar in which Christ has been sequestered for 2000 years breathing incense and smoke –

Failing to see there are two phases to Christ's work through all time and they have an individual application and a global application the two phases are –

Restoration of trust – and then the healing of the damage – imagine being infected with a deadly bacteria and the only doctor with a cure has been accused of being a death angel and the cause of all sickness and disease, if the doctor intervenes to heal you there are two phases the eradication of the bacteria and then the healing of the damage caused by the infection. And when the doctor heals you there is not only your healing but the vindication of the doctor as you become a witness for the healing power of the doctor and his remedy. Christ's first phase is the eradication of distrust – the reestablishment of genuine trust and then the second phase the healing of character also known as restoring us to unity with God in thought, methods, motives, principles – character – which simultaneously results in vindication of God as the source of life and healing!

In each individual life this is accomplished for the saved and this was not limited to some period in time – Job experienced this, Moses experienced this, Enoch, Elijah, Paul, Daniel and others all experienced this second phase individually before 1844. But what didn't happen before 1844 is a worldwide, global healing which brings the entire body of believers into such unity with God that we are like Enoch ready to meet Him face to face. This is happening now.

*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*

Week at a glance – read – what is the power of the gospel? Is it the power of a payment made or truth revealed? How is truth powerful? Where does truth have its power? SGT Jones – the truth set his mind free – the lies were destroying him but the truth more powerful.

Read first paragraph – “this gospel” What gospel? Read middle paragraph from Sunday “Christ’s death was...” Is this the gospel to go to the world? What is the problem with this type of evangelism? Is it possible this message is one of the reasons Christ hasn’t returned? What is Christ waiting for? For His people to be ready to meet Him! And does a message that says your penalty is paid, your debt is removed, your records have been expunged, when the Father sees you He can no longer see you or your true character of sinfulness because you are now covered with Christ’s robe of righteousness or by His blood actually get people ready or may it actually prevent them from getting ready?

What is the message that actually heals the heart and mind? The message about God Himself!

*“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*

Has this gospel, the good news about God and His character, methods and motives been preached to the entire world? What can we as a class do to take this gospel to the rest of our community here in Collegedale and Chattanooga?

## SUNDAY

First paragraph read – any thoughts? What is the issue that needs to be the focus? Is it certain cultural practices? What is it? We just discussed it, the truth about God’s character, methods and principles when these are incorporated into the life and practices then the cultural issues fade away! Let’s take some examples of how cultural differences are resolved by focuses on God’s character and principles.

Last paragraph read and discuss – What examples can you give of how cultural influences have infiltrated and distorted the church? Pagan influence of a god who needs to be appeased by offering him some sacrifice in the main staple of Christianity with a god who needs to have his wrath and justice appeased by the blood of his son and the pagan notion of a god whose love is conditional and if you don’t do what he says he will use his power to destroy you for your disobedience, another main course offered up in Christianity with god presented as using his power in the end to torment and destroy those who disagree with him.

## MONDAY

First paragraph says “As we spread our message to these various cultures, we have to learn how to relate to them in ways that , while not compromising our beliefs, do not cause unnecessary problems.” Thoughts on how to do this? What about dress? Jewelry? Diet? Activities on Sabbath? Do any of these become issues? But are they really the issue?

What is the issue that removes such problems and what is the issue that generates such problems? The issue that avoids such problems is when we focus on God’s character and the reproduction of God’s character in people, what causes problems is when we think all good character is manifested in the same way regarding religious behavior. The principle is people who love others and are willing to give of themselves for the good of others, rather than impose by force, threat, authority, dictatorial edict etc ones personal opinion.

God’s principles results in the restoration of the image of God in man, beings who can think for themselves, who can stand firm in the face of conflict, who are not easily swayed by the opinions of others, who are humble and gentle and willing to consider opinions that differ from their own honestly evaluating the evidence in light of God’s Word! What I find is that those in religious leadership are often the ones most resistant to opening their minds and honestly considering ideas that differ from their own.

## TUESDAY

Change – how do you deal with change? What helps us handle change? What makes change hard? How do expectations play a role? How does one perspective on reality play a role – for instance does it make a difference if one sees things from a universal view considering the GC or just the human view of what is happening on this planet in human terms?

## WEDNESDAY

The lesson speaks of the faith of the fathers being lost as generations come along after them why? What factors contribute to the losing of faith and what can be done to enhance faith in our children? What traditions do we have? Do we ever have things passed down without meaning or with the wrong meaning?

The story is told of a man whose wife, every Thanksgiving, cut the ends off the ham before she cooked it. When he asked her why she did it she said “It tastes better that way.” He asked where she learned this and she said her mother told her. So at Christmas he asked her mother if she cut

the ends of the ham before she cooked it and she said yes and he asked why and she said because it tastes better that way. He asked her where she had learned that and he said from her mother. So he called grandma it Texas and asked her if she cut the ends off the ham before she cooked it and she said yes and he asked why and she said. “So it will fit in the pan.” Two generations had continued a tradition without understanding why and creating their own false meaning to perpetuate it. Do we do this in church? Any examples?

Traditions without meaning and without a Person are what lose faith. Faith is trust, and trust needs a trustworthy object, what happens is that slowly the focus is moved away from our Trustworthy God to the institution and traditions of the organization with its many weaknesses and errors and as the children see the injustice, the mistakes, the human sins of the organization they don’t have trust and walk away.

Do exactly what Jesus did, He didn’t focus on the organization, His constant focus was on God, and He said His mission was to reveal the Father. If we create an atmosphere where we are constantly seeking to promote the truth about God in word and action, in preaching and teaching, in living and dying in all we do then our children will have their minds directed to God rather than a faulty institution which often disappoints.

#### THURSDAY

Again about taking the gospel to the world, what can we do more effectively? We have our website. The conference this June 16, 17 in Redlands California is entirely focused on taking this final message of mercy about God’s character of love to the world. We want to wake up Christians everywhere to this incredible truth. If you haven’t yet visited the website [www.goodnewstour.com](http://www.goodnewstour.com) go there and check it out and if you can register to attend.

Other things we can do to spread this message?

#### FRIDAY

Question 2 read and discuss

## 2006 Q1 Lesson 11 What Have They Seen in Your House?

### SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts? What is the darkness? Darkness about what? Where does the darkness come from? What is the light that dispels the darkness? The darkness is the lies and misunderstandings about God and the light is Jesus – God’s very thoughts made audible and visible!

What is Peter referring to when he talks about a chosen people, royal priesthood and holy nation? Is he talking about genetic descendants? Is he using the understanding of Israel’s role and applying it to the believers in Christ? What were the Jews called to do? To reveal the truth about God! To work as His agents in spreading the truth! About what God and His healing plan? How?

What is the idea of a royal priesthood? Any other texts come to mind? Malachi 3:1-4

*“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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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 is this talking about? The Judgment and what is going on? What is being cleansed? The Levites and who would that be? The believers in Christ and how are they being cleansed? What is being cleansed their minds, they are being purified, and new character is being created within! This is what Peter is referring to! And so the question in Sabbath’s lesson – what have they seen in your house? Have they seen the character of God living in you?

### SUNDAY

Read 2 Kings 20:8-19

*2KI 20:8 Hezekiah had asked Isaiah, "What will be the sign that the LORD will heal me and that I will go up to the temple of the LORD on the third day from now?"*

*2KI 20:9 Isaiah answered, "This is the LORD's sign to you that the LORD will do what he has promised: Shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or shall it go back ten steps?"*

*2KI 20:10 "It is a simple matter for the shadow to go forward ten steps," said Hezekiah. "Rather, have it go back ten steps."*

*2KI 20:11 Then the prophet Isaiah called upon the LORD, and the LORD made the shadow go back the ten steps it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.*

*2KI 20:12 At that time Merodach-Baladan son of Baladan king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters and a gift, because he had heard of Hezekiah's illness. <sup>13</sup> Hezekiah received the messengers and showed them all that was in his storehouses--the silver, the gold, the spices and the fine oil--his armory and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.*

*2KI 20:14 Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked, "What did those men say, and where did they come from?"*

*"From a distant land," Hezekiah replied. "They came from Babylon."*

*2KI 20:15 The prophet asked, "What did they see in your palace?"*



*"They saw everything in my palace," Hezekiah said. "There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them."*

*2KI 20:16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD: 17 The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. 18 And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood, that will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."*

*2KI 20:19 "The word of the LORD you have spoken is good," Hezekiah replied. For he thought, "Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?"*

*2Chron 32: 31But when envoys were sent by the rulers of Babylon to ask him about the miraculous sign that had occurred in the land, God left him to test him and to know everything that was in his heart.*

Thoughts? What is the point of this story? Why did the Babylonians come? Because the Hezekiah was sick? Or because of Hezekiah's cure and the sign from God? What did Hezekiah do? Was that a good or bad or neutral thing? After the Babylonians left Hezekiah got a message from Isaiah – what was the message?

What does that message mean? Does that message mean God was punishing Israel for Hezekiah's sin? Or does it mean God was revealing the future which would unfold as the consequences of the Babylonians not becoming part of Israel and the Israelites going into idolatry?

Second paragraph read – thoughts? What happens in our minds if we leave it unattended? Consider the metaphor of a garden producing beautiful fruit, what happens if you stop tending it? Weeds, do you have to plant the weeds? No they come up automatically. This is what happens to the mind that is stayed on Christ that stops being tended, the weeds of selfishness automatically sprout up until the day we are sealed and delivered!

## MONDAY

The lesson tells us that earnest efforts for regular family worship must be done – can it be done in such a way that it actually turns children away from God? How and why? What happens if the rules become more important than the children? Remember when Christ healed the man on the Sabbath and those in charge were more concerned with the rules than the man, how can this happen in the home? When worship must be followed despite circumstances, when SS and church must be attended despite circumstances, when kids ask for reasons and we give rules, because – what do the children learn if worship is conducted in this way?

## TUESDAY

What do you recommend to a person married to a non believing spouse? What does it mean to be non-believing? Does it mean not believing the SDA message and doctrines and not being a member of the SDA church? Does it mean not believing in Jesus? Does it mean not believing in God? Does it mean not believing in the principles of love, freedom and truth? What does it mean to not believe?

How about a person who didn't believe in God but who wanted his wife's happiness and sacrificed for her, and supported her involvement in church, who was patient and kind and gentle and honest, but didn't attend church and wasn't a member versus the person who is married to the



head elder who is selfish, mean spirited, wants only his own way, argues and criticizes with his wife and undermines her dreams and aspirations – who is married to the unbeliever?

Is there opportunity to present the truth to a non-believer in ways they can agree with? How?

How is a spouse to relate to their non-believing spouse who doesn't want Bibles in the home? Who doesn't want them to attend church? Who doesn't want to eat healthy? Who actively works to get them to quit going to church and seduces them like Delilah did Samson?

### **WEDNESDAY**

The lesson speaks of modeling or influence of beholding others – how important is this? How important then to have a right picture of God?

Second paragraph read – the question came up in our Let's Talk regarding how parents should respond when their children have friends who are being raised by a homosexual couple, should they let the child be friends and go to the homosexual couples home? Do you think rather than being afraid of the homosexual couple this would be an opportunity to witness to the child of that other home the beautiful benefits of a relationship designed by God? Should we draw back in such occasions or is witness needed even more?

What if they came to your home and saw more arguments and fights and conflict and tension than in the homosexual home?

### **THURSDAY**

Read first paragraph – thoughts what was the sin of Sodom? Read Ezekiel 16:49 and discuss.

### **FRIDAY**

Question 1 and 3 discuss

## 2006 Q1 Lesson 12 Turning Hearts in the End Time

Read memory Text – What is this text talking about? Let's break it down – who was the original Elijah? Was there another Elijah? Who?

*MT 11:11 I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. <sup>12</sup> From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. <sup>13</sup> For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. <sup>14</sup> And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come."*

And is there another Elijah to come? Who?

What was the message of the original Elijah?

*1KI 18:36 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. <sup>37</sup> Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."*

What was his message? "That you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

What was John the Baptist's message?

*John 1:23 John replied by quoting the prophet Isaiah's famous reference about the one who would prepare for the Messiah's coming, "I am the voice calling in a dark and desolate land, 'Prepare your minds, untwist your hearts and prepare for the Lord to come with his healing truth'" TRJ Version*

What is the message prophesied by Malachi that would be the message of Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord?

Is the message the same for all three?

What does it mean turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers? If the hearts of the fathers and the hearts of the children are not turned toward each other then where are they turned? Toward self – to turn toward each other means to be other centered, to be loving, to having selfishness removed and love restored!

How does God accomplish this restoration of love, this healing, this turning of the hearts back to their original condition of pure love? Can He accomplish it by the exercise of force or the use of threats? Then why in Elijah's day did God send a drought for 3½ years and why did Elijah call fire down from heaven if God can't turn our hearts back with power and why did Malachi say "or else I will come and strike the land with a curse" if He can't turn hearts back into their original condition of love by the exercise of threats?

Can God restore our hearts without our cooperation? So what does He do if He loves us and He wants to restore us but we are so sick, so diseased of mind and heart, so deceived, so darkened that we don't even know it? What if we are so confused we don't even know who God is, what does He do? He first acts to awaken us that there is a problem that needs fixing, that there is something wrong that needs our attention, thus the drought. Then, in Elijah's day was there a threat made when the fire fell or did Elijah simply pray, let this be a sign that they will know who

you are, they are so blind, they are so deceived, in mercy Lord give them a small demonstration showing them you are indeed the living God.

In Malachi the Hebrew “cherem” means “a thing devoted to destruction” what does it mean to be devoted to destruction? Why are the wicked destroyed? What brings the destruction? To those who haven’t repented and haven’t been recreated to have a heart of love but instead have a heart of selfishness, to come into God’s presence is like a consuming fire – it causing tremendous amounts of psychological pain as they can no longer deny all their guilt and selfishness and they see the contrast of pure holiness and love. So God is saying “Please let me heal you, please turn back to me, please let me restore in you a heart of love and remove the selfish heart so that when I come you will be filled with joy and will not be destroyed by your guilt.”

So if God cannot turn our hearts back with threats and power how does He? What is the message that leads us to turn to Him? Romans 2:4 *“The kindness of God leads us to repentance.”*

“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 this final message of mercy the same as the Elijah Message?

Why does the Lord delay His coming?

*2PE 3:8 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. 9 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.*

Why does He delay? He doesn’t want anyone to be lost! Why would some be lost if He came today? And how is the answer to that question connected to the final message the Elijah Message?

*John 17:3 this is life eternal that they might KNOW you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

Will people be ready to meet God if they don’t know Him? And can they know Him if we are not telling the truth about Him? So the final message of mercy and the Elijah Message which prepares people to meet Jesus are one and the same – it is the truth about God Himself!

Does anyone have any thoughts on how we can do a better job of spreading this message?

## SUNDAY

Read bottom paragraph – “several applications are...” what is the one application that was left out that would subsume all these? By recreating Christlike character within each of us, turning our hearts back into Christlikeness!

What do you think it means God the Father has turned from His wrath toward His children – is it describing God the Father or the godfather?

We are going to have an entire Let’s Talk in April to discuss God’s wrath, it will be on Sabbath afternoon April 8 at 4 p.m. in the seminar room at the church.

But what do you think about the wrath of God? Does Elijah work on God to get God not to be wrathful? Does God need to be changed?

What is God's wrath?

What about this idea that the blessing on the land was directly related to covenant faithfulness? Does that mean if we are faithful to God we are guaranteed health and wealth? Why is this dangerous theology? What Bible examples can we give to expose the truth? Job, John the Baptist, the disciples, Jesus Himself, the blind man – all had problems with health or wealth yet not because of sin; what about Jezebel, Ahab, Belshazzar, Herod, Herodius, Pilate, Caesar – all wealthy and powerful yet all unrighteous.

## MONDAY

Family reunion – discusses the issue of the truth about God – the Elijah Message results in restoration within families – thoughts?

What causes division within families? Selfishness – can selfishness present itself or masquerade as Christian love? How? And how can such selfishness, manifesting as Christian love, result in division in the family?

A Christian woman who, “in love” criticizes her sister-in-law for wearing jewelry. Or a man who gives time helping construct a new church building only to criticize others who don't help. Refusing to let grandchildren visit grandparents because the grandparents gave the child a doll that had makeup and jewelry and such influences might contaminate the children spiritually.

How can we overcome such problems? Aren't there people, in the family, whose minds are so warped, so twisted, so bent, that they are incapable of actually being in healthy relationships? How do we relate to these family members?

## TUESDAY

First paragraph read – “On Mount Carmel...” thoughts? How did the people respond when the fire fell? And how long did it last? Why doesn't God use such methods today? Who will call fire from heaven at the end of time? Why did God use such methods in the past but not today? What happened every time God used such methods? More loyalty or more rebellion? Why did God do it? Was He learning from His experiences? Some who purport so called Open Theology say God can't know what choices people will make until they make them, God knows what He will do but He can only prognosticate, guess, at how people will respond so God used His power and when it didn't work He looked for alternate methods, is this what happened?

Do parents every use power and force with their children? Do parents when they do this believe such methods are the most preferable? Or are they emergency measures used in love and mercy to help the child learn while they are ignorant with the hope they will choose to learn and apply to their lives what the parents are trying to teach them. And even if you knew your child wouldn't learn, wouldn't you still choose to love that child and do all in your power for the best interest of that child? So we understand God, He knows the choices yet He always acts in harmony with His character of love not our sick selfish attitudes. And we see Jesus washing the feet of Judas even though He knew Judas would betray Him.

Last two paragraphs read – thoughts? Did fire from God fall upon Jesus? Did God use His power to execute His Son? Then what does the symbolism mean? Did the fire from God kill the animal sacrifice or was it already dead? And who killed the animal sacrifice? Elijah did. And what does this mean? Did God kill Christ or did we? How? Physically human beings executed His body, but

psychologically He somehow experienced a sense of anguish and guilt and separation from His Father that wasn't His to experience and was tempted to save self and chose to surrender self rather than exercise His power to save self. Do we see anywhere fire from heaven falling on Jesus?

Transfiguration – before His crucifixion and what happened? Did it consume Jesus? Did it harm Him or damage Him? Why not? Because the fire isn't harmful – it is life-giving. Sin is harmful and Christ was sin free therefore no harm came to Him at transfiguration.

Then what does the symbolism mean when the fire consumes the sacrifice AFTER it is dead?

Paul tells us to present ourselves as living sacrifices – and he also tells us we are to die daily to self, could this have any bearing on the meaning of the fire falling? What? What does the fire consume? The old, dead, internal organs of the slain lamb. Symbolic of the old dead internal heart and the life giving glory eradicates selfishness in those who trust God and establishes Christlike character within!

## WEDNESDAY

Read middle paragraph “Like a farmer...” thoughts?

What has God provided to help us come to an awareness of our true self? The Bible and His law – the written law is a diagnostic instrument designed to expose our defects – but can the law heal us? No it only diagnoses the problem the Great Physician does the healing.

What about the idea that repentance is a turning to God to help change our behavior? Is that what it is a behavior issue? Or is repentance a turning to God to experience a new heart and right spirit and then from the abundance of the heart the behavior follows? What was wrong with the behavior of Saul of Tarsus? What was it that woke him up and experience with Jesus and a reexamination of the Law and which commandment condemned him? The 10<sup>th</sup> – why? No behavior for the 10<sup>th</sup> it is all about the heart!

Read last paragraph – so what should our message be? Should it not be a message that prepares people to meet Jesus – and what message would that be? Would it be a message that gives false security and tells people no victory is possible here, no character change here we continue to practice and live sinfully until Jesus comes – don't expect Christian growth just claim the blood and the price paid and then all is well?

## THURSDAY

Third paragraph read – this is what the world needs to see God's character lived out by the way we love each other – like the apostolic church when we give of ourselves for the good of each other – when we really are united in heart and mind and purpose regarding the character of God and begin to live His principles here and now. They will now we are Christians by our love!

## FRIDAY

Question 1 – how can we do more to promote this message?

**2006 Q2 Lesson 1      The Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit**

Notes are not available



## 2006 Q2 Lesson 2 Jesus and the Holy Spirit

Read Memory Text – thoughts? His mother was human His Father was the HS, what does this tell us? Can we FULLY understand the significance? Because we cannot fully understand the significance does that mean we cannot understand anything?

Read Sabbath's lesson – Why would the Spirit lead Christ into the wilderness to be tempted? Did Christ have to “develop” character? Or was He born with a fully developed character? Was the wilderness experience part of Christ's “development”? Was it necessary for Christ to solidify His human mind/character? Was He struggling with human temptation? Was He struggling to not surrender to the temptation to act selfishly?

Why did He have to come as a human?

- 1) if He came in unveiled glory would have destroyed those He came to save,
- 2) Divinity cannot be tempted James 1:13 and Christ needed to overcome temptation,
- 3) Satan did not allege that God could not keep God's Law of Love and Liberty but that the created beings couldn't, Satan did not allege that God's law was wrong for God but that it was oppressive to the created beings. Jesus as a human refuted this and revealed that only in harmony with God's law of love is life possible and God's law is beneficial to all creation.

*Luke 2: 40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him....52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*

*HEB 5:7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 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 10 and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

*Heb 7:27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.*

*1John 4:18 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.*

Did Jesus, in His humanity grow and learn and develop? Did He need to develop character? And what does it mean to be “made perfect”? It means to have fear and selfishness replaced by love – Did Christ have temptations to fear and selfishness and yet overcame them all with love? And what about us? Is it God's plan to make us perfect? And what would this entail? Loving God and others so much that we are no longer afraid of what is going to happen to us!

*Rev12 “These are they who did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death”*

The gradual development of the plant from the seed is an object lesson in child training. There is “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” He who gave this parable created the tiny seed, gave it its vital properties, and ordained the laws that govern its growth. And the truths which the parable teaches were made a living reality in His own life. In both His physical and His spiritual nature He followed the divine order of growth illustrated by the plant, as He wishes all youth to do. Although He was the Majesty of

heaven, the King of glory, He became a babe in Bethlehem, and for a time represented the helpless infant in its mother's care. In childhood He did the works of an obedient child. He spoke and acted with the wisdom of a child and not of a man, honoring His parents and carrying out their wishes in helpful ways, according to the ability of a child. But at each stage of His development He was perfect, with the simple, natural grace of a sinless life. The sacred record says of His childhood, "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." And of His youth it is recorded, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Luke 2:40, 52. {COL 82.3}

The Bible says of Jesus, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." As He worked in childhood and youth, mind and body were developed. He did not use His physical powers recklessly, but gave them such exercise as would keep them in health, that He might do the best work in every line. He was not willing to be defective, even in the handling of tools. He was perfect as a workman, as He was perfect in character. By precept and example Christ has dignified useful labor. {AH 507.2}

Thoughts? Not defective in handling of tools, what does this mean? Does this mean that as a child, with child neurodevelopment when he was learning to walk he never stumbled and fell? Does it mean when he was learning to write he immediately had perfect penmanship? When he first used a hammer he never missed a nail? Or does it mean he was not willing to be willfully defective, lazy, do a partial job, cut corners etc?

The lesson also said that Jesus surrendered His own inclinations – does that mean He had some inclinations that differed from the Father?

## SUNDAY

Read first and last paragraph – What about the idea that "Those who limit what they believe..." And "who else but the HS..." Can science give us insights into a virgin birth? Can we as humans explain a virgin giving birth? Can a woman who has never had sex be artificially inseminated? Can a woman who has never had sex have another's fertilized egg implanted? Can a woman, who has never had sex, have one of her own eggs implanted with DNA from her own skin cells and have a cloned child of herself? Can a woman who has never had sex have some of her cells, and in a lab under the influence of hormones have those cells turn into sperm and used to impregnate herself? If we can explain how Mary got pregnant without having sex, does that undermine the significance of what happened? Or do we need it to be mysterious in order to create an emotional sense of awe and wonder and fascination?

What about the idea that "what is faith other than belief in what we can't fully understand?" Is this a healthy position to take? When we get to heaven and our understanding of what God has done increases does that mean our faith decreases and our distrust of God increases? If faith is the same thing as trust (Greek *pistis* translated as faith or trust) then will we lose our trust in God as our understanding increases? Does God depend on us not understanding in order to trust Him? Or is such an idea backwards?

If we believe that we should have faith in things we don't understand why do we get upset at those who believe God is love but will also burn the unrepentant in hell forever – wouldn't their belief in something that has such little evidence to support it mean they have more faith?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph - Since Jesus is also God, why did He need the Holy Spirit? What does this tell us? Why is this important to realize?

Did Jesus have the ability, if He so chose, to access His divine prerogatives? But did He while He was here as a human for 33 years? What is the significance?

When Peter walked on water where did the enabling come from? When the Disciples healed the sick, where did the enabling come from? When Christ did the miracles He performed where did the enabling come from? Why was it important that He not use His own inherent ability?

What about those who say Christ was impervious to temptation and was beyond the possibility of sin because He was divine? Isn't this exactly why He became human? Divinity cannot be tempted by evil – James chapter 1, but Christ was tempted so therefore He was more than Divine, He was also human and His humanity was subject to temptation, fatigue, pain, suffering and death.

What is missing in the understanding of those who believe Jesus did everything with His own divine abilities, not the HS, and that He was impossible for Him to sin? They see sin as a problem with God and that God needed an appeasement or payment and Christ came down here not to be tempted and overcome sin in humanity but to come and die to pay a payment that mankind owed to an offended and angry God. They miss the point that God was never angry at us and God didn't need to be appeased, but that mankind was changed, infected with a process that results in death and mankind needed real and genuine transformation and Christ in the means of that transformation.

## TUESDAY

Read top Bible verse and first paragraph – If Christ needed the Spirit in order to speak the truth about God, what about us? Then does it mean that those who speak the truth about God do so by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit? Would that be true for the Bible writers? What about you and me if we preach or teach and we speak the truth about God is it not because the Holy Spirit has enlightened our minds? What about EGW? Isn't true for her also, that any truth about God she spoke would have been due to the Holy Spirit? Why has so many in our church had trouble realizing this?

## WEDNESDAY

Read top Bible text – thoughts? What is the message? What is the mission He describes for Himself in quoting Isaiah? Freedom and Restoration and Healing –

How is this achieved? Question in the middle of the lesson asks, “What part did the Spirit play in offering Jesus as a ransom for our sins”? And it quotes Hebrews 9:14—let's read this text:

*“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!”*

*“How much more, then, will the truth about God brought by Christ's great and perfect self-sacrifice according to God's will, through the working of the eternal Spirit heal the mind, cleanse the conscience and recreate the character so we no longer practice methods that lead to death but instead abide in constant love with the living God!” TRJ Version*

## THURSDAY

What about the idea, suggested from the KJV of 1 Peter 3:18 that it was the HS that raised Christ from the dead? What did Christ Himself say? I will lay down my life and I will take it up again! Was Christ dependent on the other members of the Godhead to raise Himself to life? Why is this important to realize? Other versions render it differently:

*Made alive in the Spirit ASV, ESV, Darby, NASB95, NCV (New Century Version), NRSV, YLT (Young)*

*Made alive spiritually, GNT*

*Made alive in the sphere of the spirit ISV*

Does it mean anything different to read it this way?

## FRIDAY

Discuss questions 1 and 2

The Holy Spirit Lesson 4 2Q 2006

**2006 Q2 Lesson 3      The Holy Spirit Symbolized in Scripture**

Notes are not available

## 2006 Q2 Lesson 4     The Promise of the Holy Spirit

### SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts? What do you think it means that Jesus would “pray” the Father? Do you think this means that Jesus pleads with the Father begging Him to please, please be kind and send the Spirit? Does Jesus need to pray to the Father in our behalf in order to get the Father to be kind and gracious?

*John 16:26 – Jesus says to His disciples, “I will not pray the Father in your behalf, because the Father Himself loves you.”*

*Romans 8 – “If God is for us who can be against us...”*

Does Jesus need to pray to God to get God to be on our side and work in our behalf? Then what did Jesus mean when He said He would pray the Father? Could it simply mean that Jesus will talk with His Father and they together will continue their plan for the healing and restoration of mankind? Could He been speaking like this for the benefit of the disciples who still had misconceptions about the Father, in order to give them reassurance?

Romans 8:26,27 the Spirit is for us, 31-35 the Father and Jesus are also interceding for us – we find that the entire Godhead are working harmony – in Oneness for our good. Thus Christ said that He and the Father are One!

Second paragraph Sabbath – read – thoughts? What does it mean that Christ ministers the merits of His atonement in the sanctuary above? Does it mean He is in heaven pleading to the Father, “My blood, my blood”? Does it mean He is in heaven applying blood to record books to erase the record of sins recorded there for those who have repented? Or does it mean He is directing all the agencies of heaven for the actually healing and restoration of you and men and the total eradication of sin from the universe? He is working to purge selfishness from the universe and bring all things back into harmony with God’s law of love and liberty.

### SUNDAY

Top Bible text read – What is it talking about? What is the focus? Is it not on a literal and actual recreation, transformation, regeneration and healing of all those who are willing? Is this not more than mere forgiveness?

The Spirit in this text is symbolized as water – why? What does water do? It cleanses and brings life!

Middle of the lesson has several texts to explore; consider

*2Corinthians 3:2,3 “You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.”*

Thoughts? What does it mean? Where is God working to write His law? What is His law? And why must it be written on the heart? Can love be imposed by external rule? Can love be experienced by codification? Can love be seen and understood written on stone? And what is the natural result of Godlike love? Life – it is the very basis and principle of life – and what is the natural result of a lack of Godlike love – of selfishness? Death! What it is saying is that God is infusing us with the remedy to death, He is removing the infection that is destroying us and instilling His love which restores us to health and life eternal!



*2 Cor 5:17-20 "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 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!"*

Again what is the meaning? That God is actually restoring us to love and harmony and unity with Him, that the ministry is not some legal transaction happening in a heavenly court room but a literal recreation and transformation happening in the hearts and minds of God's children here and now!

*2CO 7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

Again the focus is not on changing God but on healing and transforming us.

## MONDAY

In this lesson the Holy Spirit is described as fire – what is the significance of using fire? What does fire do? Can fire be used to destroy? Is the Holy Spirit the destroyer? It depends on what you are talking about – 2Cor 10:3-5 – *"We do not wage war... we demolish..."* The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and love and what does truth and love do to selfishness and lies and fear in the heart where it is received? Truth and love demolishes, destroys lies and selfishness – thus the HS is the destroyer of Satan's weapons and power of lies and selfishness and fear. Thereby the HS cleanses and restores the believers. Can any think of texts which support the fire as cleansing the believers?

*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.*

Where does Jesus come in this text? To His temple, but notice when He comes to His temple what is being cleansed? The Levites! And who are the Levites? The believers in God, the priesthood of believers!

How do we understand the symbolism of water and fire for the HS in the context of the sacrificial system? Do you remember that when the animal was sacrificed its internal organs were washed with water then placed on the brazen altar and burned with fire – what does this symbolize what does this mean?

Christ was the Lamb, did the Lamb take upon Himself perfect humanity or defective humanity? Did Christ need to overcome temptation or was He beyond temptation? Did He merely get tempted externally – like Adam and Eve in the Garden or did He have internal temptations? In the wilderness did He have hunger to tempt Him? In the Garden of Gethsemane did He have temptation to avoid the cross? On the Cross, did He have temptation to save self? So did Christ suffer temptation? And did He need the Holy Spirit to overcome? Do we see in Christ that He died to self totally? That the selfish temptations never got a foothold that they were all purged by

love in the life of Christ? Is this symbolized by the washing and burning of the internal organs of the animal? Christ achieved real victory – In Christ selfishness is DESTROYED by LOVE!!!!

And then it gets applied to the brazen altar – what does this represent? The blood of Christ, which represents the truth about God and all the issues in the GC that Christ revealed, is applied to the brazen altar. Could this represent the brazen unrepentant heart being brought into repentance, having the infection of selfishness burned up and a new heart created within? Then the heart is change and purified to a golden heart symbolized by the golden altar in the sanctuary? And a continual fire burned within the golden altar – representing the continual work of the HS in the transformation of character – and incense which represents the prayers of the saints are burned on the altar representing the working of the HS to transform our characters and improve our communications with God.

What about the fire in our lives – how does it work? In the Bible, is there more than one type of fire? Is there fire that consumes? Is there fire that doesn't consume? Is there fire that destroys? Is there fire that doesn't destroy? What is the difference? Does the fire of God's presence destroy or does it heal and purify? Or both? When the fire of God's presence enveloped the bush did it get destroyed? What about Solomon's Temple? What about Moses? What about Christ at Transfiguration? What about the sacrifices at Carmel? What about Sodom and Gomorrah? What about the fire in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace?

What about the fire of trials? What about the fire that burns the conscience? What about the fire in Malachi that purifies the Levites?

## TUESDAY

Top Bible text read – what does it mean the Spirit was not yet given? Why? What prevented the Spirit from being given? See Wednesday middle EGW quote – thoughts?

Bottom paragraph says that Christ's departure would enrich the disciples why?

1. Christ couldn't be everywhere at once and
2. Would the disciples think and reason and grow in character while Christ was here or would they run to Him to be told the answer to every question that would arise?

Does it make a difference for you if you struggle with a problem in school, get some guidance from the teacher, but actually work the problem for yourself and come to the answer versus simply being told the answer to every problem?

## WEDNESDAY

Is about preparing to receive the HS, what do we need to do today to prepare to receive the latter rain outpouring of the HS?

## THURSDAY

One of the meanings of the Greek *Parakletos* is advocate—what does it mean that the HS is our advocate? When we think of Christ as our Advocate do we think of it differently? Is God the Father also our Advocate? So in 1John when it says, *"I would that you sin not, but if you sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."* What does it mean?

## FRIDAY

Question 3

## 2006 Q2 Lesson 5 The Promise Fulfilled

### SABBATH

Read Memory Texts – thoughts? Questions?

What do you think this wind is or the tongues of fire and what does the Spirit mean? Or Ghost?

Spirit – Greek *pneuma* = breath, translated Spirit, Ghost

Greek *pneuma* translated to Latin *spiritus*, which literally means breath and was translated to English as *spirit*.

So one could say the Holy Breath – does that make it more understandable?

*JN 20:21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” 22 And with that he **breathed** on them and said, “Receive the Holy **Spirit**.”*

[*emphusao* /em·foo·**sah**·o/] From 1722 and *phusao* (to puff) [cf 5453]; TDNT 2:536; TDNTA 232; GK 1874; AV translates as “breathe on” once. **1** to blow or breathe upon. *Additional Information:* This word used only once by the LXX translators in Gen 2:7 where God breathed on Adam and he became a living soul. Just as the original creation was completed by an act of God, so to the new creation was completed by an act from the Head of the new creation. (AWP Jo 20:22)

What do you think this means?

What happened when God breathed into Adam the breath of life?

Is there a connection between the Breath of Life breathed into Adam in the Garden and the Holy Breath – the *Pneuma* – the Holy Spirit? What is the principle of life?

Why fire that looks like tongues? What does fire represent? Did this fire cause them harm? Did it burn them? Where else in the Bible do you see a fire that doesn’t cause combustion? Sinai, bush, Moses’ face, Stephen’s face, transfiguration, Temple dedicated – any relationship to this fire at Pentecost? Can you think of any other texts that can put these together?

*JER 51:17 “Every man is senseless and without knowledge;  
every goldsmith is shamed by his idols.  
His images are a fraud;  
they have no **breath** in them.*

*2TH 2:1 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*

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TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

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

GK Goodrick-Kohlenberger

AV Authorized Version

*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.*

*2Th 2:5 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.*

*What do you think it means he overthrows him with the breath of his mouth?*

*And of the angels He says,*

*"<sup>a</sup> Who makes His angels winds (pneuma),  
And His ministers a flame of fire." Heb 1:7*

*And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even <sup>1</sup> speak and cause <sup>a</sup> as many as do not <sup>b</sup> worship the image of the beast to be killed.<sup>1</sup> Rev 13:15*

*(Acts 2:2 "Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent **wind** (pnoe) came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting."*

*"nor is He served by human hands, <sup>a</sup> as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath (pnoe) and all things;<sup>2</sup> Acts 17:25)*

Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. **When God spoke the time, He poured upon us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses' did** when he came down from Mount Sinai. {Christian Experiences and Teachings of EGW 58}

Moses . . . lived as seeing Him who is invisible, and was therefore able to count the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. **If men would live in this way, we should see their faces aglow with the glory of God;** for they would be viewing the glory of the eternal, and by beholding, would be transformed into the image of Christ. {OHC 339.2}

As the third angel's message swells into a loud cry, great power and glory will attend its proclamation. The faces of God's people will shine with the light of heaven.--7T 17 (1902). {LDE 201.4}

<sup>1</sup>New American Standard Bible : 1995 update. 1995 . The Lockman Foundation: LaHabra, CA

<sup>2</sup>New American Standard Bible : 1995 update. 1995 . The Lockman Foundation: LaHabra, CA

As the members of the body of Christ approach the period of their last conflict, “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” they will grow up into Christ, and will partake largely of His Spirit. As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. **Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel** (RH May 27, 1862). {7BC 984.4}

## SUNDAY

Second paragraph bottom section “Faith, of course...” What is faith, where does it come from and how to we get it? How does God provide us faith? What prevents faith from growing?

The introduction into our belief system of things that are untrue and don’t make sense. Does your confidence, trust and faith grow with less information and less understanding or more? What happens if I told you that you had to walk several hundred miles to a temple, then get on your knees climb every step saying the Lord’s Prayer at each step and kissing that step and then at the top place a coin in the coffer in order for your deceased loved ones to enter into heaven? Would any of that make sense? And if it didn’t make sense would you have more or less faith?

What is taught today that actually undermines our confidence in God? What about that we need to hide behind the robes of Jesus so that the Father can’t see us? Does this increase our trust? What about that God is required by His Law and Justice to use His power to torture His unrepentant children?

## MONDAY

Last paragraph asks what caused dissension amongst the disciples??? Selfishness with the desire to promote self – what brought unity? Death to self- love for others, but the lesson suggests that in their unity differences had been put away? What about Peter and Paul? When we come to unity in Christ are differences put away? What does it mean to be in unity? Unity over what? And where can differences still be permitted?

Bottom question read and discuss – regarding differences that prevent the unity needed to be one in Christ. Do you think we are all working with the same goal in mind? Do you experience you are part of a cohesive whole in which your contributions are valued and make a difference?

## TUESDAY

What was the purpose of the Feast days of the OT? Did they serve to actually heal and transform the sinner? Could salvation be found in the observance of the feast days? Then what was their purpose?

- The OT system was a theater, an acting out of the plan of salvation and the Feast Days revealed the plan from the inception of sin until our restoration in the end:
- Passover – as soon as man sinned God passed over the sins, Romans 3:23–26
- The blood of the lamb is placed on the door posts symbolizing that the truth and character of Jesus is reproduced in the heart of the believer
- Unleavened bread – internalize the bread of life, the believer grows by ingesting the truth First fruits given represents Christ the first born from the dead

- Pentecost – The outpouring the HS and first fruits 2 loaves given representing the empowering of the HS and the first converts from Christ sacrifice and the converts begin to spread the gospel
- Trumpets – the Loud Cry the message for the end time that atonement is approaching, the Bridegroom is coming
- Atonement – reconciliation with God, unity in heart and mind and sealing
- Tabernacles – dwell with God eternally, and first fruits of the entire harvest are given

### WEDNESDAY

Question #4 read and following paragraph read and discuss – was this just an enthroning of Christ into an administrative position of authority that He had not previously held? Is it just about some office, some post, some seat? Or is it about being fully enthroned in the hearts and minds of all loyal beings in the universe as they comprehend the significance of Christ and His true character? Where did Satan dethrone Christ? In the hearts and minds of God's intelligent creatures.

Where does authority to rule come in free society? From the consent of those being ruled? Can God govern His universe, in freedom, in love, without the consent of His intelligent creatures?

### THURSDAY

The HS comes and they start speaking in different languages – what is going on?

When men were in rebellion after the flood, seeking to build their way back into heaven on their own strength at Babel, what did God do? He confused the languages so that their efforts to work together for their own self destruction would be undermined. In other words, the confused languages slowed the progression of the rebellion against God and the progression of the lies about Him. Now that the truth has come, God sent the given of languages to open the door for the spread of the healing remedy, the truth which will transform lives.

### FRIDAY

Question 2 discuss.



## 2006 Q2 Lesson 6     The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

### SABBATH and SUNDAY

What is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Baptize with the Holy Ghost – what does it mean to baptize? To immerse – what does it mean to immerse? What about us needs immersing in the Holy Spirit and if we are immersed in the Holy Spirit what happens to us? Does it include immersing our minds with understanding? The HS will lead us into all truth? But is it more than understanding? What else? Does it include immersing our hearts with God's qualities, character, principles, methods, attitude, thoughts so that we become saturated with Christlikeness in all we do?

The lesson suggests that baptism in the Spirit is the same thing as conversion? Is it? Or does baptism of the Spirit occur when we are converted? Can we come to conversion without the Spirit? When God told the serpent in Genesis that He would put enmity between the woman and the serpent what did that mean? That God would put a desire for good in our hearts – is that not the working of the HS? So the HS brings the conviction of sin and leads us to repentance – then at conversion – when we open our hearts to God we allow ourselves to be immersed in the Spirit.

Read Zechariah 4:11-14 thoughts?

You are God's delegated messenger. You are to act in His place. Then represent Christ, and not your individual, rash temperament. Angels of God are close beside you, and they will keep you in peace, and will give you words to speak which will be as a sweet odor. This will show that you have the Spirit of Christ and of the truth. It is not by your show of knowledge or of superior talent or philosophy that you reveal Christ, but by keeping your own soul emptied of your natural self. {16MR 296.2}

"Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the lord of the whole earth" [Zech. 4:11-14]. {16MR 296.3}

These empty themselves into the golden bowls, which represent the hearts of the living messengers of God, who bear the word of the Lord to the people in warnings and entreaties. The word itself must be as represented, the golden oil, emptied from the two olive trees that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. **This is the baptism by the Holy Spirit with fire.** This will open the soul of unbelievers to conviction. The wants of the soul can be met only by the working of the Holy Spirit of God. Man can of himself do nothing to satisfy the longings and meet the aspirations of the heart. {16MR 297.1}

Thoughts?

How is the Spirit our guarantee? What is it the guarantee of? Of eternal life with Christ – why? What prevents us from experiencing that? Being out of harmony – the HS brings us back into harmony, unity and thus we are set right and there is no reason we will not spend eternity with Him. Can someone come back into unity with God in their own strength? So then, when we experience this recreation it not only removes the barrier of our rebelliousness that would prevent us from being with God, but is evidence that God is real and will come again.

Think about it, if you had a child who fell and broke their leg and you saw the broken bone sticking out of the skin and the blood and heard the screams and crying of the child and you quickly run to call an ambulance and if when you got back your child was skipping and playing happily with no evidence of a broken leg – would you conclude someone had been there? That something had happened? The gift of the HS is our guarantee because the transformation that occurs is evidence that God is real and therefore our hope is not in vain.

### MONDAY

What does it mean that the HS convicts of guilt? Does it mean the HS condemns us? Does it mean He threatens us? Does it mean He opens our minds to our actual terminal state and when we realize the true condition in which we are in we long for healing?

Last sentence of second paragraph “...it was the sins of all of us that ultimately brought Jesus to the Cross.” Thoughts? Is it true that Jesus’ death on the cross provides what is needed for our restoration and healing and that without Christ’s death we would all be eternally lost? Absolutely! But did His death become necessary because of our sins, or were we born in an infected and sick condition from birth? Did we choose to become sinners, or were we born this way? So did Christ’s death not become necessary because of Adam’s sin?

*RO 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-- 13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. 14 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.*

### TUESDAY

Read top Bible verse – what does it mean?

Can you repent without the HS? What is the difference in the HS before and after repentance? What does it mean “the name of Jesus”? And what does the “Remission of sins” mean?

Name is another way of saying character – it is saying be immersed into the character of Jesus, into the methods, principles, values, attitude, thoughts of Christ and when you do this we are restored to our original condition – i.e. the sinful, selfish, defective character as gone into remission and we have remitted to our original condition as created in Adam.

The HS brings us to a change of mind about what? Is it not about God Himself and His character, methods and principles and our own condition?

### WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What is obedience? What kind of obedience does God want from us? God said wait they wait? I teach my dog to sit, He sits. Does God want the obedience of a well-trained dog?

Does God want us to have an intelligent obedience? Does God want us to obey blindly or with our minds open? Does God want us to use our creativity and imagination to help promote His cause or does He want us to restrain from taking any action until He tells us exactly what to do?

Consider David – David wanted to build a temple for God – God said no, Did David say, “Well I must obey therefore I won’t think about it anymore. I’ll do something else.” Or did David say, well if I can’t build it I can gather materials for it, I can begin to draw plans for it. While David

didn't build it literally, did he build it in his mind and heart and did he carry out in actions activities needed to build the temple? Did David disobey? Did David obey? What about if David would have turned completely from the idea altogether would that have been disobedience? Which do you think would have pleased God more, David blindly submitting and turning away from the idea altogether or what David actually did?

Read first paragraph – Can we obey without the HS? Then how can obedience be a prerequisite? If we must obey before receiving the HS do we somehow earn the HS by our obedience? If we cannot obey without the HS but obedience is a prerequisite, then can we ever receive the HS?

Are we saved by faith? No we are saved by God – by His gracious willingness to heal and restore us, through faith.

Faith is trust – Imagine being sick with a terminal illness and a doctor has a cure that will actually heal you, but you are Jewish and the doctor is Dr. Josef Mengele (the doctor who experimented on the Jews during the holocaust). Even if Dr. Mengele had a treatment that would cure you, would you let him inject you with the treatment? Why or why not?

But what if the doctor was your loving father or mother and they told you they had a treatment for you that would cure you would you take it? Why or why not?

In order to take the treatment, you must trust the doctor, but does your trust in the doctor cure you? Or does your trust in the doctor simply cause you to cooperate with the doctor in order to receive the cure? Once the remedy is injected, does it do something within you that you cannot do for yourself?

Where does this trust come from? Thus Christ came to accomplish several things, He came to restore trust for without trust in Him, no matter how effective the remedy we would not take it and thus would die. But trust without an effective remedy doesn't do us any good so Christ came also to establish the remedy, which is the eradication of selfishness and the implantation of love in the heart. And Christ also came to secure the universe eternally and thus He exposed the liar and proved forever the self-sacrificing nature and character of God so that trust in God will never be shaken again!

So what can we do to strengthen our trust and confidence and faith in God?

What does it mean that Christ's righteousness is credited to us? If you are terminal with cancer and Christ comes and allows Himself to be infected with cancerous tissue and dies and then rises cancer free and then they put His medical records in your chart does that do you any good? Or do you need the antibodies He developed injected into you to literally put the cancer into remission?

Last paragraph – can someone decode the meaning? Are they saying that if you don't keep the Sabbath you can't be filled with the Holy Spirit? Thoughts?

## THURSDAY

First paragraph read – Why is salvation inseparable from obedience? Why is healing inseparable from being healthy?

Second paragraph states that “the greatest and most important of all truths is that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, that at Calvary He paid the penalty for all human sin, and that anyone can, by faith, be forgiven his or her sin and stand perfect before God.”

Thoughts? Is this the greatest of all truths or perhaps the greatest of all distortions? Did Christ really die for sins? Or did He die to heal and restore sinners? And was it for humans only? Was the problem that a payment needed to be made or that healing and restoration needed to occur?

*Colossians 1:19, 20 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.*

All things in heaven and earth needed reconciliation through Christ's death at the cross – something much more significant was going on that merely the dying “for sins” such a teaching diminishes what Christ has done.

EGW one of the founders of our church saw it this way:

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}

Does God's forgiveness make us perfect? Does God forgive the lost? What about those who put Christ on the Cross, did Christ forgive them? Were they now perfect before God?

Bottom question – Answer – this entire heavenly legalism taught in Christianity that Christ had to die to pay a penalty that mankind now owed to an offended and wrathful God. This is heavenly legalism.

## 2006 Q2 Lesson 7      Gifts of the Holy Spirit

### SABBATH

Read first paragraph – are the gifts of the HS gifts that were sent only when Christ ascended into heaven or has God been giving gifts of the Spirit through all human history?

What about Samson’s strength? What about Solomon’s wisdom? Were these gifts of the HS?

*EX 31:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, 2 “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts-- 4 to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, 5 to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship. 6 Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you:*

Would this be a gift of the spirit? Why is it important to recognize that God has been pouring His HS on mankind through all history and not just since Jesus went back to heaven? Does it make a difference in how we see God if we believe God was somehow restrictive with His blessings and Spirit until Jesus had died and “paid the penalty” and now is up there working on the Father to loosen the Father’s grip on the Spirit? Rather isn’t it awesome to realize the Father has all along been pouring out everything in His heavenly arsenal to help us and heal us!

Do you think this gift to the Israelites of talent to work with gold etc. resulted in genetic changes in their abilities that have been passed down through the generations? Do the Jewish people seem to be talented in arts, and the production of jewelry and music?

Does the behaviors we engage in and practice result in changes in our own genetic expression that is passed along to our children? Yes,

- People who meditate regularly have enlarged prefrontal cortex and are less vulnerable to dementias,
- High stress states result in genes in the brain that make important proteins being shut down leading to greater vulnerability to depression.
- Illegal drug use turn on genes that make proteins which cause greater craving for illegal drugs.
- What mothers eat during pregnancy may change the expression of genes in their offspring – a study on genetically identical mice revealed that mothers who were given vitamin B12 and folic acid had pups with different colored coats than genetically identical mice without the nutrients in their diet.

*EX 20:4 “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. 5 You 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.*

Is this commandment a threat from God or an expression of how incredible we are made and based on the choices we make we can pass along to our children advantages or disadvantages as we cause genetic expression to change in us and thus our gametes?

“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}

How brilliant was EGW to recognize this in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

Last paragraph – What is the common goal of the church? Do we have a common goal in the church? What should be the common goal of the church? To spread the truth about God and His character, methods and principles to set hearts and minds free? How can we help make this the common goal?

Or are we like a body with an autoimmune disease (lupus, arthritis) in which the cells of the body attack itself? Or are we infected with elements that don't belong in the body? Like a splinter that is causing irritation and the body works to rid itself of the intruding agent?

Should our focus be on finding splinters in the body and removing them or working to bring greater unity and health to the body? What is the element the method that brings unity and health to the body? The truth spoken and lived out in love? And God's counsel is that we are to let the wheat and the tares grow up together until the harvest and at the harvest they will be separated because if we try to pull out the tares we will pull up some wheat with it.

## SUNDAY

One body but many parts – what is the message? In the human body each cell of the body has an identifying marker flagging it as part of the one individual body – if a cell from anyone else's body should try to get into the body the sentinels – the immune system recognizes them as not part of the body and destroys the invading cells. Thus people who undergo organ transplant must have their immune system suppressed to keep the body from rejecting the donated organ as not part of the body. What is the identifying flag of the Christian that identifies us as part of the body?

*JN 13:34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

*1JN 4:7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

## MONDAY

First paragraph read – what is the wisdom and knowledge of the Bible which we need to know? The truth about God's character, methods, principles – the law of love which is the basis of life,



the issues in the GC, the meaning of what Christ accomplished at the cross and our role in God's plan.

Read 1 Cor 2:5-7; thoughts? What is God's secret wisdom? Why has it been hidden? Is God stingy? Has God been trying to hide? Why has it been hidden?

*2 Corinthians – 4:3,4 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.*

So what blinds the mind? What has hidden the wisdom of God? The lies of Satan which blind the mind.

## TUESDAY

Top paragraph read- thoughts? Why as a church do we take the position of pursuing medical and health education and not exclusively pray for miraculous healing?

“Some have asked me, “Why should we have sanitariums? Why should we not, like Christ, pray for the sick, that they may be healed miraculously?” I have answered, “Suppose we were able to do this in all cases; how many would appreciate the healing? Would those who were healed become health reformers, or continue to be health destroyers?” {CME 34.2}

“The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way, [MIRACLES WILL ACCOMPANY THE MINISTRY OF GOD'S PEOPLE UNDER THE LOUD CRY (SEE CHAPTER 14), BUT THEY WILL NOT HAVE THE SIGNIFICANCE THEY DID IN CHRIST'S DAY. THE PERFORMING OF MIRACLES WILL NO LONGER BE A PROOF OF DIVINE ENDORSEMENT.] for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God's servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.--2SM 54 (1904). {LDE 169.2}

“God's people will not find their safety in working miracles, for Satan will counterfeit the miracles that will be wrought. --9T 16 (1909). {LDE 169.3}

Can truth be determined by miracles? If a serpent began speaking would that be a miracle? Does it mean what the serpent says is true? Miracles are NOT proof of truth nor that the work is of God.

Second paragraph read –

Is it miraculous only because we don't understand it? If we could explain it would it be less miraculous? If we could actually do it would it be less miraculous? Are miracles when God violates His laws in order to make something happen that cannot happen with the laws of the known universe in operation?

American Heritage Dictionary – Miracle –

- 1) An event that appears unexplainable by the laws of nature and so is held to be supernatural in origin or an act of God.
- 2) A person, thing, or event that excites admiring awe.

Which definition do you think God would prefer we have when we think of the miraculous?

## WEDNESDAY

What do you think the middle sentence is trying to say when it suggests the minister is humanity's spokesman to God? Is the minister humanity's spokesman to God?

First paragraph read – the prophet and the last days. Where is the prophet today?

*Revelation 12:7 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 this mean? Some contend this means that the gift of prophecy will be manifest – is that what it mean? Is the gift of prophecy being manifest in the SDA church? Where? EGW? If you accept that EGW had the spiritual gift of prophecy how is that gift currently being manifest in our church? If you accept she had the prophetic gift, then are not her writings the writings of a dead prophet? And what about the Bible? Is it not the writings of dead prophets so how is the gift currently manifested differently in our church than any other church?

*REV 19:10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! 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." NIV*

*Rev 19:10 I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Don't do it! I am a servant together with you and with your fellow-believers, all those who hold to the truth that Jesus revealed. Worship God!" For the truth that Jesus revealed is what inspires the prophets." GNT*

What is more likely the sign of God's last day people that they have a prophet among them, or that they reveal the truth that Jesus did, the truth that inspired the prophets, the truth about God Himself! Jesus said as the Father has sent me, so send I you and what did He send us to do? To reveal the truth about Him – is it possible the real end time mark is the truth about God's character being lived out in the characters of God's sealed and healed people? And then – we won't be a church with one recently deceased prophet – but will be:

*JOEL 2:28 "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.*

## THURSDAY

Tongues – any questions about the gift of languages and its modern day counterfeit?

Bottom question read and discuss – what is the easiest way to spot a counterfeit? Be absolutely sure of the genuine!

## FRIDAY

Questions 2 and 3

## 2006 Q2 Lesson 8      The Fruit of the Holy Spirit

### SABBATH

What is the difference between fruit and gifts? Fruit are changes in character that grow spontaneously as we internalize the Spirit of God, gifts are abilities the HS endows or magnifies within us to accomplish His work.

What is the key to fruit bearing?

*John 15:4 “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.”*

Read memory text – What do you think it means “against such there is no law.”? Doesn’t it mean that such things as this are totally in harmony with God’s methods, character, principles and Law of Love and there is no violation of God’s Law in these?

*Romans 7:23- 8:2 “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. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 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**. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the **law of sin** and death.”*

Did the law of sin and death come from God? Is there another law in the universe besides the law of God? If God is the Law giver, if God is the one who writes the Law, if God is the one who creates the Law, how can there be a law in the universe that God didn’t come from Him? What is the law of sin and death? What kind of laws are we talking about? Are we talking about rules, policies, legislative enactments or principles?

What is the principle/law of God? Love, selfless other-centeredness love which is the very basis of life, this is the principle of giving, of beneficence. And what is the principle or law of sin and death? Self-promotion/selfishness/survival-of-the-fittest which is the very source and basis of death.

Where did God’s law originate? It emanates from His character – it was not something He wrote to which He now must adhere. And where did the law of sin and death originate? In the heart of Satan and likewise is not a rule he wrote to which he must adhere but is truly the way his character now works. God is predictably loving, you can always count on God choosing the loving, selfless course (God is faithful even if everyone else is faithless) and you can always count on Satan taking the selfish course.

Bottom paragraph “Yet, no Christian...” Why? Because salvation is the process of healing, and when an illness is being cured the symptoms get less severe and are eventually gone. We were originally created to represent, reveal God and His character of love, when God heals us and His Spirit dwells within, the fruits of the Spirit are a natural outgrowth.

### SUNDAY

Love, thoughts from the class?

Why is love the first fruit listed? It subsumes all others and is the motivation for all others.

The first paragraph states, “If a human being is going to possess and manifest divine love (is there any other kind?), he or she must receive it from God. There is no other source.”

Thoughts? Is love like a commodity? A nutrient like water? That all the water starts with God and flows out and then fills various containers and when they fill up they flow over to the containers below and so on? So if someone said, here some water of mine and I want to share it with you, they really mean this is water I have received from God and I want to share His water with you? So when you say to your child “I love you, I love you so much I would give my life for you. You really mean, I don’t love you, God loves you so much He would give His life and my life for you?”

Is this love we receive from God something that simply originates with Him and flows through us or is it something that originates with Him and when it flows into our hearts it does something within us such that we are regenerated and capable, in our individuality of actually loving others also, or we will always be mere conduits of love that is never ours?

Are we simply ambassadors of God’s love, God loves you, it is my duty to communicate that love to you, but any love you see in me for you isn’t really love I have for you, I don’t really love you, only God loves you?

When love flows back from us to God is it merely God loving Himself through us or is it us loving Him? Are we puppets with God’s hand inside looking back at Himself saying I love you? Or are we soooo loved by Him it actually changes us and we genuinely become beings capable of loving, i.e. restored to God’s image, capable of loving?

What is the subtlest counterfeit to genuine Godlike love? Dependency, how can you tell the difference between dependency and genuine love?

Dependency is self-focused rather than other-focused:

Consider a husband’s birthday, and he would like to go out and golf on his birthday, but his wife states, “It’s your birthday and I love you and want to be with you. If you loved your family you would let us give you a party on your birthday.” Is this love? Is this dependency?

Love is healing. Dependency is destructive. Love is freeing. Dependency is controlling. Love is giving. Dependency is taking. Love is fearless. Dependency is fear-ridden. Love is interested in another. Dependency is interested in self. Love is stable. Dependency is wavering. Love is orderly and reliable. Dependency is chaotic and unreliable. Love is based on principle. Dependency is based on feelings. Love is consistent. Dependency is inconsistent. Love is honest and truthful. Dependency is dishonest and deceitful. Love is patient. Dependency is impulsive. Love is kind. Dependency is cruel. Love is forgiving. Dependency is resentful. Love protects. Dependency exploits. Love sacrifices self. Dependency sacrifices others. Love never ends. Dependency never lasts. Love never fails. Dependency never succeeds.

## MONDAY

Joy and Peace – any thoughts?

How does a Christian perspective help you deal with painful events?

The lesson states, “God also promises us an eternity of bliss. This realization should give us joy and peace that will enable us to better endure whatever difficult circumstances we find ourselves in now.” Is this the reason or perspective we need? Is this what really brings joy?

What brought Christ joy?

*“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.” Hebrews 12:2*

What is the motive set forth? What was the joy set before Christ? The impact His actions would have on others! Love is other centered, our motive is to be focused on how it will help others, thus when we know some suffering, pain or difficulty we are going through is working good for others, can that be a source of joy?

What is the problem with focusing on the reward God has for us? It is self focused and not other focused.

“The Lord desires us to rest in Him without a question as to our measure of reward. When Christ abides in the soul, the thought of reward is not uppermost. This is not the motive that actuates our service. It is true that in a subordinate sense we should have respect to the recompense of reward. God desires us to appreciate His promised blessings. But He would not have us eager for rewards nor feel that for every duty we must receive compensation. We should not be so anxious to gain the reward as to do what is right, irrespective of all gain. Love to God and to our fellow men should be our motive.” {COL 398.1}

Is joy and peace the same thing as feeling good? Can you have joy and peace even when you are in some type of pain or anguish? What does joy and peace require? A larger than self perspective. Those who go through life focused only on self, how life impacts them, how life isn't fair to them never experience joy or peace!

## TUESDAY

How do you understand long suffering? The lesson, in second paragraph suggests it has to do with not seeking to be avenged – does God seek to be avenged? Ever? Is there a point when His patience runs out and He gets tired of waiting?

What about Genesis 6:5-7

*“The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the LORD said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth--men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them.”*

What is going on? Did God get tired of waiting? What does this mean? Why did God do this? Why did He wipe them out?

How would it impact your heart if your children were completely wild with drugs, killing themselves, molesting your younger children and all attempts to speak to them to reach them, to teach them that they are killing themselves were ignored, would it break your heart? Would you grieve? And if they were on a course of self-destruction and you could freeze them in time, so they could no longer destroy the children who were living healthy would you put them in suspended animation? (Time out)? Isn't that what God did?

How do you approach someone you find difficult to deal with? How can the GC view help you deal with someone who is unpleasant?

## WEDNESDAY

The lesson states that “because as God, Jesus reflected these traits (gentleness and goodness) perfectly.” When you think of God do you think of gentleness? Will God always be gentle? What about when He comes a second time? Does God ever stop being gentle?

Then why is it so hard on those when Christ comes again, does it sound gentle?

*Malachi 4:1-3 "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. 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. 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."*

Someone explain this text keeping God's gentleness in mind.

Consider Gary, Tim and Buddy Lutes, lost in a cave in WV for 5 days, when rescuers finally found them, what would it be like to bring them out into the noon sun? But what if they brought them out at 4 a.m. and let them watch the sun rise?

## THURSDAY

Faith, questions about faith? Where does it come from what is it and how can we get more? How are evidence and faith related?

How are faith and works related?

What do you do that strengthens your faith?

## FRIDAY

What about the last fruit of the Spirit? What is it? Self-control. What does this mean? I thought God was to be in control? Are we to surrender our will to God? For Him to control? What does God do in us when we surrender to Him? He heals and sets us genuinely free and restores the ability in us to be self-governing! Living on His principles of other-centered love! Awesome!



## 2006 Q2 Lesson 9 The Christian's Guide

Is the HS the guide of the Christian only? What about the heathen? Is the HS guiding him?

Romans 2:12-16

“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 first two sentences of first paragraph – thoughts? Do you think this is the greatest truth? To you what else matters? Is there something that matters more?

What is sin? Selfishness – what about Jesus died for the selfishness of the world?

Memory text read – thoughts? What does it mean all truth? All truth about what?

Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness. “He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13), the Saviour declared. If men are willing to be molded, there will be brought about a sanctification of the whole being. The Spirit will take the things of God and stamp them on the soul. By His power the way of life will be made so plain that none need err therein. {AA 52.5}

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}

### SUNDAY

Top Bible verse – thoughts? Is this for the disciples only or for anyone? Is this a promise that the HS will bring to our memory what we have heard Jesus speak? What have you heard Jesus speak to you? Does it mean that if He speaks to us through His word the HS will bring this to our remembrance?

Second paragraph – read – Why not until after Christ's ascension? Does the HS go where He is not invited? Does the HS enlighten where light is not sought? Did the disciples open their minds to the Spirit before Christ ascended? So was the fact the HS didn't get poured out because Christ didn't go through a heavenly ceremony which gave Him the legal authority to send the Spirit or because the minds and hearts of the disciples weren't open to receive it?

Bottom pink – how can you know is it is the HS or not? See Friday first paragraph – but aren't the Scriptures open to interpretation? And aren't there many people who believe the Spirit has led them to understand the Scriptures in a certain way? Then what do you do?

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. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

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}

## MONDAY

What does it mean to walk after the Spirit versus the flesh?

Read first paragraph – thoughts? When we walk with the Spirit do we get a change in impulses so that one day we do follow our own impulses?

“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.” COL 311

When this happens is it the individual believer acting and choosing and deciding or is it God choosing for the believer? When this happens does the believer get new motives so he then does follow his own renewed and sanctified impulses? Or does he become a puppet controlled by God?

What about the idea that the dedicated follower “will never do anything” without seeking Jesus' advise? What about when you go to plant flowers in your front yard does He want to you seek His advice on how close to space them as you plant them? What colors to put on each side? Did Jesus want Adam to seek His advice when naming the animals? So does God want us to seek His advice in anything and everything? What does God want us to seek His advice in?

The next paragraph states our faith needs to be experimental – what does that mean? We need to exercise our faith and experience God's hand actually working in our lives so our confidence can build and trust in Him strengthen.

How many of you know what Chinese or Korean or German is? How many of you know Chinese? Is there a difference between know what something is and knowing it? Is there a difference in understanding what faith is and having faith?

Last paragraph read – thoughts? Who puts to death the sinful nature? Is it God? Is it us? Or is it a cooperative effort requiring both God and us to work together?

*RO 8:12 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

*COL 3:5 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. 7 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.*

*IPE 4:1 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.*

## TUESDAY

Read memory text at top, why is the Word of God called the Sword of the Spirit?

*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.*

*2CO 3:12-16 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a **veil** over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same **veil** remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a **veil** covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the **veil** is taken away.*

What does a sword do to a veil? What does the Word of God do to lies?

Middle paragraph – what strange beliefs have entered the Christian church? What about the SDA church, are any attempting to enter our church?

Bottom pink question – read and discuss – how about unity without individuality?

## WEDNESDAY

First paragraph – read – thoughts? So a group whose central focus is Jesus would be from the HS, one that even makes their name centered on Jesus, like The Society of Jesus a.k.a. the Jesuits? Or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints? Do you believe these movements are led by the Spirit? And if you say yes then why are you not a member?

Is it possible to be focused on “Jesus” and actually be presenting falsehoods about Jesus? Is every Jesus out there the same? Didn’t Jesus say that false Christ’s will arise? Won’t Satan come impersonating Jesus? So to talk about another being/person named Jesus and make that person the object of your focus in and of itself isn’t enough – we must examine the character of the “Jesus” being presented and determine if it is consistent with what Jesus revealed when here on earth.

Third paragraph “Being the Spirit...” Thoughts? What methods does the genuine Spirit of God use? Is the Spirit the Spirit of truth alone? What else? Love, can there be counterfeits who promote the “truth” facts without love? And can there be loving kindness without truth? Doesn’t the genuine Spirit bring both truth and love?

Give examples of truth without love? When a person learns a secret sin of another and they tell this “truth” around to others, they gossip, they call friends, they tell church leaders...

What about love without truth? When you know someone is on a course which is unhealthy, but you love them too much to say anything to them because you don't want to hurt their feelings? Or you don't want to risk conflict? When you accept all views as equally valid – a meeting I attended at Harvard...

Last paragraph read, Ephesians 2:8-10 we are God's workmanship – *poema*, His poem, His masterpiece, His showpiece, His grand work to display His true character methods and principles!

### THURSDAY

Simeon was moved by the HS to go to the Temple and see the baby Jesus and he was able to recognize Him. How? Why? Because Simeon had walked so closely with God that his heart and mind were in tune with God and were receptive to hearing the voice of God leading!

### FRIDAY

Question 2 discuss

Question 3 discuss

## 2006 Q2 Lesson 10 Life Through The Holy Spirit

What is the principle of life? Love.

Memory Text read – thoughts? What does it mean? How are Christ’s words “spirit” and “life”? How do Christ’s words quicken?

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Why would the Cross be of no avail without the Holy Spirit?

Remember the analogy of having a disease and a physician comes and tells you he has cure, but you are Jewish and he is Josef Mengele? Will you take his cure? What if it is your loving parent? What is needed? Trust – what was broken by Satan’s lies? Trust, so Christ’s death was necessary to step 1, restore trust – but that isn’t enough – we also need a remedy that works – The HS actually recreates within us Christlikeness as we trust Him?

Will we, through the working of the HS, actually experience victory of all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil here and now or only when Christ comes? Is this victory of all hereditary and cultivated weakness or tendencies to evil? It is tendencies to evil, which is? Selfishness, the HS will reproduce in us Christlike love such that we will love others more than ourselves – thus tendencies to evil will be overcome, but we still may have that post nasal drip.

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Is Christ our substitute? Yes! But for what? What was Adam created to accomplish? Did God have a purpose for the creation of mankind? What was it? To reveal the truth about Him in order to refute the lies of Satan!

See psalms 8. Adam failed so Christ came to finish the work Adam failed to complete.

But is that the only way Christ is our substitute? Is He our substitute in be punished by God for our sins? Is He our substitute in paying a penalty that sin or the law required? Is He our substitute in achieving victory over sin? In achieving a remedy—a cure which He now offers to each and every one? YES!

*Read John 3:15-18 “that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. 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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 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.”*

What is the key according to this text? Restoration of trust!

Last paragraph read – thoughts? What does it mean? If you are dying of cancer and the doctor changes your medical record for a person who is cancer free – does that do you any good? If God “credits” righteousness to our records in heaven how does that transform our hearts? How does that change us from enemies to friends how does that save?

What does it mean to save the world? If you have your finger bitten by a brown recluse and it is turning black and you say to the doctor “Save my finger” do you want him to forgive your finger? If you have been infected with Ebola and are dying and you say to the doctor, “Save me” are you wanting to be pardoned?

Why did Christ come and die? To pardon the world or to save it? To restore it? To heal it? And what does this mean? To bring the world back into unity with the principles of love, the principle upon which life is based!

If God were to change the records in heaven, but not change us wouldn't that be lying? Will God say something that is untrue? What about when Christians say that God will say we are innocent and there is no record of our sins if we have the blood of Jesus covering us? Will God do that? Wouldn't that be a lie? When someone accepts Jesus as savior and experiences healing of heart and mind and is in saving relationship with God does that undo the history of their lives?

What is God's grace? Greek *charis* – charismatic, charisma – God's grace is God being gracious, i.e. every action God takes because every action God takes is designed to bring us to repentance and healing. When God disciplines those He loves He is being gracious, When God sends rain He is being Gracious, gifts of the Spirit – graciousness, everything that comes from God is always designed to heal and restore and therefore is a manifestation of grace!

*Read Romans 3:21-26 <sup>3:21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> 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, <sup>23</sup> for all humanity is infected with the same disease of distrust and selfishness, and are deformed in character and fall far short of God's glorious ideal for mankind. <sup>24</sup> Yet all, who are willing, are healed freely by God's gracious remedy that has been provided by Jesus Christ. <sup>25</sup> God presented Jesus as the way and means of restoration, through trust established by the evidence of God's character revealed when Christ died. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness and goodness, because in his forbearance he suspended, for a time, the ultimate consequence of sin and has been falsely accused of being unfair. <sup>26</sup> 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. – TRJ version*

## MONDAY

First paragraph read- can you have salvation without this transformation? Can you be healed without getting healthy?

Second paragraph read – what does this mean? Does another being take up residence within us? Does another being control our decision making? Or does God through His Spirit reproduce in us His original design for mankind, He restores in us Love and the very elements of Gods' own character? And then we are set free to operate as free individuals who have been restored by the power of the Spirit?

What do you think about the idea of infiltrates? Does God infiltrate? When we infiltrate enemy lines what does that mean? Does He insidiously sneak in to our minds or do we invite Him in and then we are submerged into His goodness?

*Read Romans 8:6-11 “The mind of the selfish man is filled with death, but the mind governed by the principles of the Spirit of truth and love is filled with life and peace; <sup>7</sup> the selfish mind operates on the survival-of-the-fittest principle, which says: “I love myself so much I will kill you in order that I may live” and such a mind is at war with the God of love, who says, “I love you so much I will give my life in order that you might live.” The mind of the selfish man does not surrender to the principle of love which requires death to self-interest, nor can it do so. <sup>8</sup> Those controlled by the selfish nature cannot please God because everything they do is opposed to all God is. <sup>8:9</sup> If God's Spirit has recreated within you his methods, principles and character then you are no longer controlled by the desires*



*of the selfish nature, but operate by the principles of love and truth. But if anyone does not have a Christlike character and attitude renewed within, he does not belong to the family of Christ. <sup>10</sup> But if trust in God and Christlike character has been recreated in your mind, yet your physical body remains defective and dying, don't be distressed - your mind and character are alive because the principles of life have been renewed in you. <sup>11</sup> And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living within you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give you power to live victoriously here and now in your mortal bodies. This is accomplished by living in trust and receiving the power of the Spirit." TRJ version*

Thoughts?

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph "Here, too..." thoughts? Why does the flesh bring death? Is it because God is required to execute and kill? Or is it because the methods of the selfish nature naturally result in death? So in the Garden when God told Adam he would die, what did that mean? And if it meant that sin would kill Him then what was needed to resolve the problem? A substitute to take the penalty or someone to bring a remedy?

Bottom question read and discuss "How are we to understand..."

## WEDNESDAY

Read John 3:3-6 thoughts? What is Jesus talking about?

*John 3:3 Jesus ignored the attempted flattery and cut directly to the heart of the issue Nicodemus needed to understand. He said, "I tell you plainly, no one can see God's kingdom unless he is born again."*

*John 3:4 But Nicodemus was resistant to Christ's teaching and asked, "How can a man, once he has already been born and is fully grown be born again? Surely a man cannot reenter his mother's womb to be born again!"*

*John 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you plainly, no one can be part of God's kingdom unless he is first born into the world and then renewed by the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> The first birth, the water birth, gives birth to individuals infected with sin and selfishness, but the second birth, the birth of the Spirit, gives birth to a new mind and right heart - a new mind no longer controlled by sin and selfishness. TRJ Version*

First paragraph - why is it that if we are not reborn we will die?

Last paragraph read and discuss - what does the right action of the will mean? Does it mean making the right choice? Or does it mean having the right heart motive when making the choice? Can you make the wrong choice yet be right with God?

## THURSDAY

Read dark quote "the Bible is clear..."

*HEB 9:23 It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. <sup>24</sup> For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.*

What does this mean? Is Christ in heaven pleading to the Father in our behalf? Minister His "blood" to the Father?

*John 16:26, "I tell you plainly, I will not pray the Father for you, because the Father Himself loves you."*

What does blood represent? Truth – does Christ need to minister the truth to His Father? Does the Father have a deficiency of truth? Then Christ is not ministering His blood to the Father in heaven – then what is He doing?

*"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 impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb." COL 102*

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 9:9

*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 9:24*

*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*

What is being sprinkled by the blood? Our consciences are being cleansed! That is what the Bible says!

Then what does it mean Christ appears before God in heaven in our behalf?

This first sheaf of grain was called the "firstfruits" It was the firstfruits of the barley harvest that was used as part of the Passover feast of Unleavened Bread. The first part of the grain harvest. Thousands of years later, we find the same term used again in the Bible - describing Jesus Christ! "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the *firstfruits* of those who have fallen asleep" (1Corinthians 15:20).

In other words, Jesus died as the Passover Lamb, then He arose and ascended to heaven as the First of the harvest of all the souls who will become like Him in character, who because of His victory will stand with Him before God. Christ stands before God as the victor over sin and the template of a new humanity to which we will be transformed into. In Christ stands the human race. God's masterpiece has been restored!!!

## 2006 Q2 Lesson 11 The Restorer

### SABBATH

First paragraph read – What is Eternal Life? How have you heard eternal life described? How does the Bible define Eternal Life? Does the Bible define eternal life by quantity or quality?

*John 17:3 “this is eternal life, that they may know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”*

Why is eternal life defined by quality rather than quantity? What is the basis of life? What is the law upon which life is created to operate? What is the life principle? Love –

1 John 4:8 God is love – and we could then say love is God – so we could say:

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 God is patient, God is kind. He does not envy, He does not boast, He is not proud. God is not rude, He is not self-seeking, He is not easily angered, God keeps no record of wrongs. God does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. He always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. God never fails.

In John 17:3 what is the focus of the heart? On God, on knowing Him and to know Him is to love Him. But if we define eternal life as how long we live, then where is our focus? On self!

So, when does eternal life begin? When we know God, 1 John 5:11,12 “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

Read last two paragraphs

Why will the new heaven and new earth be paradise? Will it be paradise simply because there will be no disease? We know there will be no more sin, crime, death – but why? Will it be such a paradise because God, having paid the price for sin, will now be able to have His angels on every corner with flaming swords so that if anyone should step out of line He can just zap them on the spot? Or will it be paradise because everyone there will be just like Jesus in character, will be so loving of everyone else that everyone would rather die than hurt another. There will be absolute freedom there and only people who have been healed to the point they are “self-controlled” – the last fruit of the Spirit, will be able to handle the freedoms of such a place.

### SUNDAY

First paragraph read – thoughts? What do you say to those who suggest that God used the principles of evolution to create? What was the original purpose in the creation of this planet?

Bottom pink, from the class answer this question

### MONDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts – is freedom necessary to love? Absolutely! Is God love? Absolutely! What evidence can you cite that God has given us that we have true freedom? The existence of sin, the cross, Samson, Solomon...

Can this understanding, of the connection between freedom and love, help you discern between true and false doctrines? Give some examples:

A doctrine that teaches we have no free will – can love exist?

A doctrine that teaches God said, love me, obey me or I will be forced to kill you?

A doctrine that teaches God is keeping records to punish you by?

A doctrine that teaches Jesus had to die in order to pay a penalty so the Father would be willing to save us?

Read bottom paragraph - We were created in Adam with freedom of choice, but what about after Adam sinned, how is it we still have freedom of choice? Only by God's intervention and intercession in our hearts and minds and in holding back the power of Satan do we still have freedom.

## TUESDAY

Second paragraph – read – is it true that Jesus went over the same ground as Adam? Yes, is it true that that is all the ground Jesus went over or did Jesus go over ground Adam never went? What? Did Adam struggle with hunger? Fatigue? Human physical weakness? Did Adam struggle with the need to pray to God without seeing Him face to face? Did Adam struggle with temptation everywhere he went on earth or only at the tree or until Eve brought it to him? Did Adam struggle with being teased as a child? Did Adam struggle with older brothers pressuring him? Did Adam struggle with political and religious leaders pressuring Him? Did Adam struggle with racial biases? Did Adam struggle with the infirmities and diseases of those around Him? Did Adam struggle to avoid performing miracles in his own behalf? Did Adam struggle with being physically tortured? Did Adam struggle with temptations from within to save Himself?

Did Jesus cover the same ground as Adam? Yes, but did Jesus cover much more ground than Adam? Yes, and why? Why was it necessary that Jesus cover more ground than Adam?

Much of Christianity teaches that Christ came in a humanity that Adam had before His fall, this comes from Catholicism which teaches that Mary was sin free, because sin cannot reside in the presence of holiness therefore Mary had to be sin free and Christ's humanity had to be the perfect humanity God gave Adam. In such a view all that is required is that Jesus come in the same strength as Adam and not sin and then give His life to pay a legal penalty that Adam owed which would appease an angry and offended God and then all who accept the payment can be saved.

What is deficient about such a view and why did Jesus have to cover more ground than Adam? Because He needed to not only complete the mission Adam failed to complete, revealing the truth about God, but now Christ had to redeem, restore, heal, transform, purify, recreate humanity and the only way He could do that was to take the defects upon Himself and purge them from His humanity.

“Many look on this conflict between Christ and Satan as having no special bearing on their own life; and for them it has little interest. But within the domain of every human heart this controversy is repeated. Never does one leave the ranks of evil for the service of God without encountering the assaults of Satan. The enticements which Christ resisted were those that we find it so difficult to withstand. They were urged upon Him in as much greater degree as His character is superior to ours. With the terrible weight of the sins of the world upon Him, Christ withstood the test upon appetite, upon the love of the world, and upon that love of display which leads to presumption. These were temptations that overcame Adam and Eve, and that so readily overcome us.” {DA 116.4}

“Satan had pointed to Adam's sin as proof that God's law was unjust, and could not be obeyed. In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam's failure. But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him. He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with

the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings. It was not thus with Jesus when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation.” {DA 117.1}

Third paragraph – read – thoughts? What does atoning death mean? What does atone mean? To be at-one, to be reunited, reconciled – so how does Christ’s death atone? Is it that He pays a penalty to an offended God or to appease God’s immutable law? Or is it that His death somehow is involved in our actual healing and transformation and thus WE are AT-ONE with God?

What about the idea that because of what Christ accomplished the human race as a whole as been restored to favor with God? Does restored favor mean a second chance? Did Christ have to die to restore us to harmony with God? Yes, does favor and harmony mean the same thing? Do you see how important word choice can be and how easily our minds can slip into drawing conclusions that aren’t necessarily the clearest? Could one read this paragraph and draw the conclusion that Christ had to die in order to get God to be favorable to mankind? Rather than Christ death was necessary to restore us to unity with God?

In the online Review, an article entitled The Real King

“Why was this “Son of Man” High Priest treated like a prisoner before the bar? Because, as the people’s substitute, He was counted as a sinner; for our sake He went into court as a defendant, as if He Himself were on trial.

“The good news—in fact, it’s the best news that could ever be told—is that the Son of Man does not go in empty-handed. He goes in having paid the price for sin. By a blood sacrifice He has obtained a full pardon for the sins He is bearing.

“We talk about justification by faith. The Yom Kippur ceremony stands at the very heart of it. We talk about the gospel. The word “gospel” means good news, and what news could be better than this, that Jesus Christ, having taken our place on the cross, has earned the right to take our place in the judgment (Heb. 9:11, 12)?” WADE, Loron

Thoughts?

## WEDNESDAY

Second paragraph – thoughts? What is the gospel – good news- good news about what? Is it good news that we can be saved? Yes it is, but is that the eternal good news? The good news that always was and always will be? Would it be good news that we can spend eternity with God if God is like Satan alleges?

Can we have salvation without being healed? If you have your finger bitten by a brown recluse and it is swelling and turning color and you go to the ER and say to the doctor, “save my finger” are you asking for legal pardon? If you have been infected by Ebola virus and say to the doctor, “save me” are you asking him to legally pardon you? Can you be saved without being healed?

Bottom paragraph read – thoughts? What can we do to cooperate with this process? Can we experience the fullest level of recreation if we continue to hold to lies about 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.” 2 Co 4:3,4*

What is this saying? The good news is not understood to by those who are perishing, why? Because Satan has blinded their minds, with what? Lies about what? The truth about the glory of Christ who is the image of God. In other words, the truth about God is not understood because they hold to lies about God!

#### THURSDAY

Last paragraph read – thoughts? What does it mean Christ constitutes our perfection before God? If you were dying with HIV or Ebola and someone came and allowed themselves to be infected and somehow their immune system fought off the infection and they now are disease free – but you are still infected, how does that do you any good?

But what if the person offered to infuse into you the antibodies He has developed? Then does that do you good? Christ is the source- the source of truth, the source of love, the source of healing, the source of regeneration and renewal, the source of life! Christ is the one who came and opened the fountain of regenerating power to humanity. Christ took upon Himself our diseased state and defeated sin at every turn and purged from His humanity the infecting element and now offers to do the same in each of us! We can be fully healed and restored, by the power of God working in us through all that Christ has done.

#### FRIDAY

Read main paragraph – thoughts?



## 2006 Q2 Lesson 12 The Sin Against the Holy Spirit

### SABBATH

Read Memory Text – thoughts?

First paragraph read – What does it mean “what He did in order to be able to forgive our sins” and “the idea of a sin that even the Cross doesn’t make provision for”?

### TUESDAY

Last sentence first paragraph “Jesus died to earn the right to forgive repentant sinners.”

### THURSDAY

Bottom section “The commission of crime...”

Did Christ have to die in order for God or Christ to become forgiving? Did Christ have to die in order for God and Christ to actually in their heart and mind forgive sinners? Did Christ have to die in order for God to actually from His throne extend forgiveness? Did Christ have to die to earn the right to forgive sinners? Does God forgive only repentant sinners? Does repentance precede forgiveness? Does He not have the right to forgive all sinners? Did Christ have to die in order for us to be willing to experience and accept God’s free forgiveness? And is it that God’s forgiveness leads us to repentance? And even those who are lost are forgiven by God, in that, God doesn’t hold a grudge, God doesn’t have angry or vengeful thoughts, but they never accepted the forgiveness God so freely offers. Consider those who put Christ on the cross – He forgave them, but they never accepted it so they weren’t changed.

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.” MacDonald, George, *Discovering the Character of God*, Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989, p. 39.

Look at the first two sentences – if you rephrase ‘save’ as “heal” and ‘salvation’ as “healing,” does it make it more clear? And then how do we understand the aspect of crime or sin once those words are changed? Wouldn’t sin then merely be a symptom of a diseased and infected condition? Or the cause or both?

Third sentence – thoughts? Blotted out from where? Does this mean that Christ is applying His red corpuscles to record books in heaven? Or does it mean that the blood is symbolic of the life of Christ and as we partake of the Divine Nature the infection of sin is blotted out of our hearts and minds? And the record books in heaven merely record what is actually happening within us?

## SUNDAY

Read the top section and then the bottom section – thoughts, did sin require a legal penalty? They reference several verses, let's look at them:

*1 Timothy 1:15 "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst."*

*Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

*John 3:14-16 "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. 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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."*

*1 Corinthians 15:3 "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures"*

The words "for our" are supplied by the translators and are not in the Greek, the Greek simply says "Christ died sins according scriptures" which means the translators had to interpret and put their meaning in, but would it not be more accurate to the original Greek to say, "Christ died because of sin according to the scriptures"? In other words, in order to remedy the sin problem Christ had to die. So something about Christ's death cures, heals, restores, remedies the problem of sin rather than simply pays a legal penalty.

*Hebrews 2:9 "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."*

*1 John 3:8 "He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."*

Can anyone tell me where, in the references cited by the lesson authors, the Bible teaches Christ came to save us from a legal penalty? It doesn't, this is a sad and destructive misunderstanding about what Christ came to do and which prevents people from experiencing the full healing that Christ came to bring to us. Such concepts as Christ having to die to pay a legal penalty makes God out to be arbitrary – there is no reason for Christ's death other than God said death was the penalty, not that it really is mind you, but once God said it, Christ had to die in order for God's word to be true, not because God's word is true, that sin results in death.

## MONDAY

*Read Matthew 12:22-32, "Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. 23 All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"*

*MT 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."*

*MT 12:25 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? 27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then,*

*they will be your judges. 28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

*MT 12:29 “Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.*

*MT 12:30 “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. 31 And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”*

What is the problem in the story Christ is addressing? Is blasphemy of the HS merely cursing by using the words HS instead of those who curse by using the word Jesus or God? Is it not simply rejecting the truth about God that the HS brings, accepting and clinging to the lies about God which the devil tells? And when the HS manifests truth, which is rejected and one claims this is actually a manifestation of the devil how can God reach you?

If you were sick and dying with Anthrax infection and I bring you an antibiotic which will cure you, but someone tells you I have brought you more anthrax, and you believe the lie and believe the bottle of antibiotics is anthrax and so you throw them away, can you get well? This is what it means to reject the HS, we are terminal and only through the working of the HS in the heart and mind can we get well, but if we reject the HS as the source of our problem what else can God do for us?

I had someone treat me like this several years ago back when I was in the military. I went to church each Sabbath at the base chapel at Fort Stewart where the Adventists would worship each week. It was a small company of worshippers, around 25-30 each week. We had no musicians so a lovely Baptist woman volunteered to come out each Sabbath morning to play the piano for us and she of course participated in SS and church with us. One Sabbath, the lesson was on Matthew 5 where Jesus talked about not coming to change the law and prophets but to fulfill them and several of the local SDA leaders began to attack this Baptist woman for worshipping on Sunday and not Sabbath. I intervened and brought up that love is the fulfillment of the law and all the law and prophets hang on the principles of love and this woman was living God’s love by voluntarily giving of herself each week to play for us. Then one of the ladies in leadership told me I had a devil and I wasn’t welcome to worship there any more.

## TUESDAY

First sentence “Sin is fatal to our existence, but God delights to forgive our sins” Beautifully stated and ever so true.

If sin is fatal to our existence, how does God’s forgiveness resolve our fatal condition? Or is sin merely fatal because there is a legal penalty attached to which God is require to inflict a death penalty and thus when He forgives sin is no longer fatal? So the only problem with sin is that God is forced to inflict a penalty that the sinner would not otherwise reap? And if God would not inflict the penalty then sinners would live forever so Satan was right when he said there is nothing wrong with sin, the problem is with God who uses His power to kill those who don’t follow His ways???

“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}

Consider all the lies told by Satan, for which Christians continue to promote as true:

- God cannot forgive
- Every sin must be punished, either in Christ or the sinner
- Justice requires God to inflict punishment
- Man is no better than Satan and deserves the same fate

Read second and third paragraphs – what is being described? A process in which the sin actually transforms and changes the sinner such that one loses the ability to recognize and respond to truth, when this happens what more can God do for you?

### WEDNESDAY

EGW Quote in middle of lesson; read first sentence – notice how she says, “before we can find pardon and peace” not before God can extend pardon and peace? What a significant difference!

Bottom pink – read and discuss the differences between legitimate versus illegitimate guilt.

### THURSDAY

How would you counsel someone who feels they have committed the unpardonable sin?

### FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2

## 2006 Q2 Lesson 13 The Holy Spirit in the Last Days

Before we get started, I need to make a correction from last time. After class, Ben Martin went home and checked his Greek NT and found that the words “for our” in 1 Cor 15:3 are in the Greek. I can’t explain why those words were not in the resources I checked. But let’s take it as it reads “Christ died for our sins” does that mean as a legal payment or because we were infected with sin? i.e. because of sin? I think the meaning is the same. The reason I bring this up is to clarify for accuracy and also last time someone said that the Bible is open to the translator’s interpretation – and that is only true within legitimate options for translation.

### SABBATH

Memory text – read, thoughts?

If someone hears a voice behind them telling them to walk in it, how do you know that the voice is from God?

From the way it feels? From the conviction one gets? From “knowing” God so well? Is Satan trying to counterfeit the Spirit of God so that people believe they “know” the voice of God but it is actually a counterfeit voice?

My schizophrenic patients often hear voices, and some from God and they are certain the voice is from God telling them what to do, would you be comfortable with that? Why is the schizophrenic convinced the voice is from God? Because of the feeling of certainty, they get- in the limbic system is the part of the brain that attaches the feeling of significance or relevance – in schizophrenics this portion of the brain doesn’t work right so they get the feeling of significance or relevance when something is insignificant or irrelevant. They also get perceptual disturbances and putting the two together they get a perceptual disturbance, voice, with that attached feeling of significance and thus are convinced the voice is from God.

A person in an online Bible study group submitted the following this week:

A pastor of a Messianic Jewish congregation not far from here had a dream last fall that Portland, OR, would experience a 9.2 earthquake on June 18, 2006 and that Portland to Salem would be leveled. He didn’t tell anyone of his dream because he didn’t envision himself as a prophet or have much faith in such alarmist messages. Wondering if there was any event that coincided with June 18, he did some checking and discovered that there was a huge Gay Pride Rally on June 17 and 18. Then in May he had another dream instructing him to tell of his dream to warn people. So he has put it on a web site with the disclaimer that he does not see himself as a prophet and what anyone does with the information is totally up to him/herself. What follows is a Bible study on making our relationship right with the Lord. This includes obedience, and specifically being obedient to the 10 commandment (with a special emphasis on Sabbath). I did not get any sense of pride or arrogance in his tone, just a lot of fear that he would be considered a kook for speaking out and a sense of a sincere, dedicated Christian man.

So... do we listen to such messages and make sensible preparation in case it really is a message of warning, or do we just keep our relationship right and let come what may? Does God still give warnings as He did for Sodom and Gomorrah? Does God ever act in judgment against issues such as Gay Pride rallies? While He loves every one of those people that will be at that rally, does He ever make a statement today about behaviors as He did to Sodom? It might be different if Portland didn’t sit on top of a major fault line and all scientific predictions admit that it’s not if Portland will have an earthquake but when. As well as the fact that we live in the shadow of Mt.

St. Helens and earthquakes under it are a common occurrence (3.1 just a week and a half ago—not enough to do any damage, just enough to unsettle the ground and make the next one more likely). If we heed the warning, should I tell the pastor of our 1200-member church to announce it from the pulpit and thereby cause a big commotion?

Thoughts? How can you tell if a message is from God or not? Notice, there is no message of “repent” or “God loves you” Just a message of disaster – Similar to what Jonah said, and how did the people in Jonah’s day respond? Repented and what happened? No disaster. How can we tell this is a message from God or not?

*DT 18:21 You may say to yourselves, “How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?” 22 If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.”*

So then Jonah’s message wasn’t from God because it didn’t come true?

So do we just wait and see if it comes true? If it does come true, what does that prove? Does that prove it was from God? Can Satan predict what Satan will do? So could Satan predict and earthquake and then cause one?

“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 was the sin of Sodom?

*EZE 16:49 “Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy.”*

So could it fit Satan’s strategy to predict an earthquake in c/w a gay pride parade and bring it about? Why? And why would he be able to do it?

If we persist in going our own way and revolting against God, will God eventually remove His protection? And will Satan be able to have greater access? Now if Satan acts to cause an earthquake during a gay pride parade, after having posted a prophecy about it – what will be the impact amongst many so-called Christians? To become more tolerant, loving, patient, kind, open, gracious or more intolerant, demanding, controlling and ratchet up attempts to coerce others to act in ways they determine are best?

Was there homosexual problems in Christ’s day? Do you ever see Christ or the apostles trying to get the government of Rome to pass laws to restrict such behaviors? What is the focus of Christ and the apostles? To present the truth to convert the heart!

The true Spirit of God in the last days will motivate people to love others and give what they have to help others, the false, counterfeit spirit will motivate people to use government to coerce others and restrict the liberties of others. It will misrepresent the character of God, it will damage



the image of God in man and reduce the ability to think and reason clearly, it will excite emotions.

What other false manifestations of the spirit are there?

“There is constant danger of allowing something to come into our midst that we may regard as the workings of the Holy Spirit, but that in reality is the fruit of a spirit of fanaticism. So long as we allow the enemy of truth to lead us into a wrong way, we cannot hope to reach the honest in heart with the third angel’s message. We are to be sanctified through obedience to the truth. 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. {2SM 43.2}

“There are some who refuse to listen to the words of the Scriptures. They declare that they will have nothing to do with the Bible, for the Lord himself speaks directly to their souls. They declare that they are inspired by the Spirit of God; but when reminded that the Bible was written by men who were moved by the Holy Ghost, they reveal the fact that they are following the inspiration of another spirit. True inspiration never rejects true inspiration, but is in harmony with the Bible. Anything that leads away from the word of God is proved to be inspired from beneath. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” {RH, August 27, 1901 par. 3}

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the Word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.--General Conference Daily Bulletin, April 13, 1891. {1SM 43.2}

And still other false manifestations:

“And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.” Moroni 10:4

“Those who desire to follow a course which pleases their fancy are in danger of being left to follow their own inclinations, supposing them to be the leadings of God’s Spirit. The duty of some is indicated sufficiently clear by circumstances and facts; but, through the solicitations of friends, in harmony with their own inclinations, they swerve from the path of duty and pass over the clear evidences in the case; then, with apparent conscientiousness, they pray long and earnestly for light. They have earnest feeling in the matter, and they interpret this to be the Spirit of God. But they are deceived. This course grieves the Spirit of God. They had light and in the very reason of things should have understood their duty; but a few pleasing inducements balance their minds in the wrong direction, and they urge these before the Lord and press their case, and the Lord allows them to have their own way. They have so strong an inclination to follow their own course that He permits them to do so and to suffer the results. These imagine that they have a wonderful experience. {3T 73.2}

God's Spirit – always works in harmony with His character, supports scripture and is reasonable

In first paragraph it says “It is God who began the work, and he will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ.” What work did He begin? What is God working to accomplish?

In the Garden God finished all His work and rested – what did He just finish? Creating – but creating what? This planet – but what did He create on the planet? A world invested with God's own character and abilities – beings who could share in love and create beings in their image – a planet to be governed by beings operating on God's principles, with the process of new beings coming into the world needed to be educated and raised on God's principles. What happened to this masterpiece? It was vandalized by Satan – the image of God was marred in man; God's character was obscured – so what work is God doing? A work of restoration – He is working to restore His masterpiece.

*Ephesians 2:10 “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Workmanship—poema—means masterpiece.*

And who is the pressure on to restore us correctly? God – and what is our responsibility? Willingness to be restored and intelligent cooperation.

## SUNDAY

First paragraph – what does it mean to come to a “saving knowledge of Jesus Christ”?

*Matthew 7:22, 23 “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!’”*

What is a saving knowledge? John 17:3, life eternal is knowing God and Jesus Christ – yet many will do all kinds of good deeds in the “name” of Jesus and are workers of iniquity, why?

“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}

What about all those theories that say, Jesus paid it all, He paid the debt for all my sins past, present and future so no matter how bad I am I am still saved. There is no victory here, God doesn't transform us in character here we don't get victory until Christ comes again. How then can it be Christ living in us if we are living the same old sinful lives? How can we be revealing Christ to the world if we are not being transformed? Those who have a legal view and claim only legal payments and fail to experience genuine rebirth, heart change, recreation, Christlike character developed within—obedience to the Law of Love they are the ones who don't know God.

Last sentence—read—and how does the Bible define eternal life? Knowing God not in length of time.

## TUESDAY

What is the latter rain? What is its purpose? What does rain do to a field that hasn't been planted? Or what does the rain do to a field that is planted with weeds? Does this mean the pouring out of the latter rain impacts everyone in someway or only those who have the good seed planted within? Or is it that as the HS is poured out the hearts and minds of those who love Him, He is

rejected by those who don't thus opening their hearts for the false spirit of Satan? And will this result in counterfeit miracles and activities purporting to be the Spirit of God?

"Satan and his angels will appear on this earth as men, and will mingle with those of whom God's Word says, "Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1).--Letter 147, 1903, p. 3. (To Brother and Sister Farnsworth, July 14, 1903.) {8MR 345.3}

God has warned His people of the perils before them. John beholds the things which will be in the last days, and he sees a people working counter to God. Read Revelation 12:17; 14:10-13, and chapters 17 and 13. John sees the company who have been deceived. He says, "I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" [Rev. 16: 13-15]. {17MR 18.2}

From those who have rejected truth, the light of God has departed. They did not heed the message of the True Witness, "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" [Rev. 3:18]. But that message will do its work, and a people will be prepared to stand without fault before God. {17MR 18.3}

John beheld this company, and he says, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" [Rev. 19:7, 8]. {17MR 18.4}

Jesus well knew that Satan is constantly working to excite curiosity, and busy men with conjecture. Thus he seeks to eclipse the grand and momentous truth which Christ wished to be ever prominent before their minds. "For this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." {17MR 21.1}

## WEDNESDAY

Top Bible text – read – thoughts? Blotting sins out from where? The hearts and minds of people –

Why is it important to blot sins out before Christ comes? Is it merely the blotting out of the record of sins committing or something else? Is it not the blotting out of the selfishness, fear, distrust which leads to sinful behaviors and restoring trusting, loving, selfless character within?

Bottom paragraph read – thoughts? What is the everlasting good news? The truth about God's character of love!

## THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs – what is the 3 angels message? What is the final message of mercy to go the world for Christ's coming? What is the message of righteousness by faith? How is this connected to the three angels?

"Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message, in verity."-- The Review and Herald, April 1, 1890. {1SM 372.2}

“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 3<sup>rd</sup> angel’s message and the message of righteousness by faith and the message of God’s character of love connected?

Third paragraph read – thoughts? What will be the difference between the beast and the true system?

FRIDAY

questions 1 and 2

**2006 Q3 Lesson 1      “Principalities and Powers”**

Notes are not available

## 2006 Q3 Lesson 2 Judgment Must Begin

Read Memory text and then first paragraph – thoughts about the memory text? How can preconceived ideas impact our view of the text?

What does this passage all by itself lead one to think or emphasize? God is going to judge! But what is the actual emphasis of this verse? That something is going to happen in the day God judges, but we don't know what, so let's back up and read the verses before it, start with verse 13.

Does reading the previous verses have any impact on how we read the memory verse? Does the emphasis change? How so? Is it saying that God sits up there and He determines who is going to be saved and lost? That God has records to judge you by and you better be sure your records are right?

What does the Bible say about records? *1 Cor 13* – “Love keeps no records of wrongs.” Is God love? Then does He keep records of wrongs?

*2 Corinthians 5:19* God doesn't count men's sins against them, yet the Bible does teach there are records – so how do we harmonize these passages?

Does a doctor keep medical records? For what purpose? To publicly display in order to embarrass and humiliate you? Or does the doctor closely guard your privacy? Then what purpose are the records? If someone brings the allegation of malpractice against the doctor, who are the records there for? They are there to protect the doctor – they reveal the sickness of the patient, the remedy provided and the healing that transpired, or they may reveal the sickness, the remedy provided and the fact the patient was noncompliant and refused the remedy and didn't get well and in fact died. In any case, the records are never there to accuse the patient, but are merely there to reveal the truth and exonerate the doctor when he is accused of malpractice.

So in our memory text, what is this judgment about?

*Romans 2:13 “For it is not those who hear about love, truth and freedom who are healthy and right in God's sight, but it is those who internalize into their hearts and minds the principles of love, truth and freedom and have characters transformed to be like Jesus who are diagnosed as righteous.”<sup>14</sup> (Indeed, when Gentiles, who have not heard the truth about God's character, methods and principles as revealed in Scripture, but internalize into their characters God's methods of love, truth and freedom that they have understood from God's revelation in nature, they are in harmony with God and his great law of love and life, even though they have not had the benefit of Scripture,<sup>15</sup> since they reveal that the infection of selfishness has been removed and love has been written in their hearts, their consciences are cleansed and are in harmony with God, and their thoughts are able to discern right from wrong – healthy from unhealthy.)<sup>16</sup> This revelation, of the effect of God's healing plan and who has accepted it and who hasn't, will occur when God compares men's inmost secret self with the character of Jesus, as my healing message declares.” TRJ Version*

What is God doing? He is merely providing the accurate diagnosis of our condition – have we accepted the remedy and allowed God to heal us or not? Is it God's judgment that causes our condition to be what it is or does He merely confirm what our condition actually is?

### SUNDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

What is the good news? What was Jesus' message? What was Jesus' witness? What was Jesus' testimony? What did Jesus say His mission was?



*JN 17:1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 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... 6 “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... 26 I have **made you known** to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”*

What is the Good News? The truth about God, revealed by Jesus which restores trust so that we can know God and be restored back into His likeness.

What about the idea of Jesus as our substitute? Does it mean that He had to die to appease a wrathful and angry God?

*Read 1 Peter 2:24 – 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.*

What does it mean? What did we need in order to be healed? In order to be restored into our original Godlike state that God created Adam to be? First we needed restored trust – but we needed more, we needed a remedy – what is the remedy? How did Christ achieve it?

What do you think about the idea of paying a penalty? Look up Isaiah 53:6

*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.*

What does this mean? Does this mean every sin, ever committed by every person past, present and future was individually placed on Christ and He experienced the anguish of all that?

Or does it mean that He was made like us in every way and took upon Himself, bent, twisted, infected humanity and experienced the deformity of what sin has done to the human race and He, every step of His life, every moment of His earthly existence worked out the remedy, defeated the infection, purged the defects and healed His creation!!!!

Christ came, born of the HS,

*COL 2:9 “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form”*

with the circle of love in place in his heart,

But He was also born of a woman yet within a defective, weak, infected and sick humanity –

*GAL 4:3,4 “So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law.”*

*Romans 7:23 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. RO 8:1 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.*

Christ literally defeated and eradicated the infection of selfishness and in His humanity restored God's character of love in man – He cured, purified, regenerated, restored, healed His creation!

What about “that through faith in Him we stand perfect in God now because we are covered with perfect righteousness”?

*Romans 3:22 “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”*

*Romans 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 Ten Commandments were pointing your minds toward. <sup>22</sup> 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, <sup>23</sup> for all humanity is infected with the same disease of distrust and selfishness, and are deformed in character and fall far short of God's glorious ideal for mankind. <sup>24</sup> Yet all, who are willing, are healed freely by God's gracious remedy that has been provided by Jesus Christ.” TRJ V*

Thoughts?

Third paragraph read – thoughts? The lesson asks a question “If this isn't talking about judgment, what is?”

Is this talking about judgment? Or is this talking about simple reality? Why do the lost end up outside the city? Is it because God wants them there or even because God has decided that's where they need to be? Who decides they need to be outside the city? Who makes the choice for the lost to be lost? Who determines their fate? Does God ever say to anyone I won't let you be saved?

*REV 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. 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 14:8 A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”*

*REV 14:9 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 about this passage – what does it actually say?

The hour of whose judgment has come? Who is being judged? Is God judging us or are we judging God? And if we make judgments about God does that determine our destiny? If we judge God to be untrustworthy does that determine what happens to us? So this judgment is not about God sitting on a throne and making determinations about us, this judgment is about a time in history when enough evidence about God has been revealed that an entire population can make an accurate and right judgment about Him!

What about the fire passages – what about the idea that God will burn the wicked forever and ever – what do you make of that? What is the key in this passage? Where does this burning take place? “in the presence” of God and the holy angels – does that mean that God and the holy angels spend eternity in the traditional hell of eternal torment? Then what does it mean?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph – what determines the two classes of people? How we have judged God, do we trust Him and therefore open the heart to Him and receive His healing remedy or do we distrust Him and close the heart and thus die from our terminal condition.

Second paragraph – read – what sort of judgment divides the righteous from the wicked? Their very own condition – just like those infected with Ebola and some take the remedy and some don't. They are divided from each other by what? By death, the Ebola kills those who are infected – there is no need for anyone to do anything, their very condition is what separates and determines.

## TUESDAY

Second paragraph read –Who was Jesus judged by? Is the lesson referring to Pilate? It says “Jesus was judged and condemned at the Cross in our stead.” Did Pilate judge and condemn Him in our stead? Who might the lesson be referring to? God??? Did God judge Jesus and condemn Him in our stead?

This inference gets right to the heart of the matter, right to the heart of the distortions about God and the underlying lies of Satan in the GC between God and Satan. Basically, this view says God is the one who condemns, that sin isn't really our enemy, God is, if God wouldn't be so severe, exacting, unforgiving and would just let us be free in our sin we would be fine, but God is always so controlling that He will condemn us if we don't do what He says.

This is exactly Satan's lie from the beginning: Jesus said, “I did not come to condemn the world but to save it.” And “If you have seen me you have seen the Father. The Father and I are one.” And “I will not pray the Father for you, because the Father himself loves you.”

The truth is that sin destroys and results in death, “the wages of sin is death” “sin when it is full grown brings forth death” and God has been holding in check the full destructiveness of sin while simultaneously providing a remedy and working to convince us of His trustworthiness so we would take it.

*ISA 53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities  
and carried our sorrows,  
yet we considered him stricken by God,  
smitten by him, and afflicted.  
ISA 53:5 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.*

Everyone of those texts fail to support the false allegation that God judged and condemned His Son – they do support that God and the Son together gave of themselves to provide us the remedy we needed. To reveal the truth which restores trust and to purge the infection of selfishness from humanity and restore God's character of Love within humanity.

What about the EGW quote any thoughts?

Iniquity is the infection, the defects of selfishness which infect humanity since Adam sinned – Christ took upon Himself the humanity of fallen humans but had as His Father the HS thus His mind was in perfect harmony with heaven.

He was counted as a transgressor – in other words He was treated as a transgressor, yet He was without sin.

What about the statement that “The guilt of every descendent of Adam was pressing upon His heart.” Does that mean that every individual sin every committed by any sinner in all time was pressing upon His heart?

Or does it mean that Christ was aware of what guilt was doing to His children and He was aware of how guilt was damaging and destroying His children and this tore at His heart? If you had a child dying of painful bone cancer and the child is writhing in pain, could I accurately say that the child’s pain was pressing upon your heart? Does that mean you have taken the cancer and pain upon you? That the cancer has somehow been transferred to you?

So when we read this text that the guilt of every descendent of Adam was pressing upon Christ’s heart does that mean guilt was somehow transferred like a commodity to Christ or that Christ’s heart was being torn in compassion and empathy in His awareness of what guilt was doing to His children?

Bottom section “What difference does it make for you knowing that, in the end, God will judge both with mercy and with justice? Why do you want mercy more than justice? Why will you need it?”

Is there some difference between mercy and justice? What is justice? Doing what is right, what is just. What is the right and just action to take when your child is dying and you could save them? What if the child was dying because they disobeyed you, but you could still save them, what then is the right and just course?

On a scrap of paper, I read the story of a girl who was lost in the woods, imprisoned by snow. Days and nights passed, and she lost the power to make any effort, and lay motionless. At last some woodmen passed the place. The snow had melted, and they found her unconscious. They gently raised her, laid her on some boards, and carried her to the warmth of their own hearth. They cared for her tenderly, and had the joy of seeing her restored to consciousness. Then they learned who she was, and let her parents know in regard to her. The parents came for her, and when she was strong they took her home. {BEcho, May 30, 1898 par. 5}

It is a wonderful story of a hardy girl; but this is not why I tell it to you. I tell it because I want you to understand the anger of love. Suppose, if you can, that these men had seen the helpless girl, and had passed by on the other side, leaving her to die. Suppose the parents had heard what had been done to the child they loved. How would they have felt toward those men? Thankful, do you think? Would they have been simply indifferent? Would they not rather have been terribly grieved, wildly indignant? Would not the knowledge that their child might have lived, make more bitter their sorrow at her death? Had they chanced to meet these men, would their words to them have been soft, honied words? Would they not have denounced them with righteous indignation, hot as their tears, intense as their love? {BEcho, May 30, 1898 par. 6}

Here, I thought, was a human life, saved by human sympathy and tenderness; but how must the anger of God burn toward those who see souls in peril, ready to die, and yet say nothing, do nothing, to help them. They give all attention to the ninety and nine that are within

the fold, while souls in peril are all around them, and no hand is stretched out to save them. If one goes astray, they pass on indifferent. And that soul has all the responsibilities of an immortal life. To lose heaven is to lose everything, and yet how indifferent, how careless never to give him warning, or show him the way of life. {BEcho, May 30, 1898 par. 7}

The sufferings of every man are the sufferings of God's child, and those who pass by their perishing fellow beings without pity or help, provoke God's grievous anger. His righteous thunders gather. His vivid lightnings flash; it is the wrath of the Lamb. Be faithful to your fellowmen, and you will please God. He loves the world; love it too, and you will be accepted by Him.

What would we think of God if He didn't act to save us? What would the universe think? Who is really being judged?

### WEDNESDAY

Second paragraph – so what kind of judgment is this? Mere diagnosis of our actual condition.

### THURSDAY

Entitled "His Reward is With Him" And the lesson attempts to make the case that because His reward is with Him when He comes that therefore, some judgment must have transpired prior in order for God to determine who gets the reward. They use the analogy of human courts handing out a sentence before an inquiry that leads to judgment, but are human courts, based on human principles and the principles of this world a good analogy for how God works? As soon as we do this we misrepresent God!

What is the reward that we get? Eternal life- and what is eternal life? John 17:3 – Knowing God, and who determines whether we know God? We do, so what is the judgment about? Whether we can trust God or not, so who is being judged? God! What about the wedding feast analogy, what is the imagery about? About two coming into oneness – Christ is the bridegroom and the church is the bride and we are to be united with Him as one, in unity oneness in heart mind and purpose, before He comes and then when He comes He comes to take us to the wedding supper of the Lamb.

## 2006 Q3 Lesson 3 Daniel 2

### SABBATH

Read memory text – what type of kingdom will God set up?

Daniel two was the dream of a statue, review the statue and its meaning

### SUNDAY

Read bottom paragraph – what about the idea that God is in control? What CAN God control if He wants? Everything and everyone!

What DOES God control? Himself – anything else? The forces of nature? Does God control these? Are the insurance companies right that when natural disasters strike they are acts of 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 about the 3½ years of draught during the time of Elijah? Who was that from? And then when the rain came? What about when Christ said peace be still? Did God bring the storm? Did God make it go away? Does God micromanage everything that happens or does He choose select places to intervene? Does He control every molecule that moves by Divine choice or does He create the principles and provide freedom for His intelligent creatures to operate within and He intervenes selectively according to His knowledge of what is best for His creatures?

What about governments? Does He set up governments? All of them? Some of them? Did He set up the nation of Israel in ancient times? What about the others? Did He set them up? What about when Nimrod set up his kingdom?

Do such prophecies as Daniel 2 reveal a controlling God who is manipulating and micromanaging everything the way He wants it to go OR do they reveal a God who provides real freedom and even when His creatures rebel He knows their choices, He knows the future, nothing catches Him by surprise and He is constantly there to work for the restoration and healing of His creation? And that when necessary He can and will intervene to protect His children?

Is it God who moves on an earthly king and causes them to go to war and kill and rape and pillage and destroy? Or is it that God doesn’t intervene to prevent such activities and Satan is the instigator of war and violence?

Did Babylonia have to give way to Media-Persia because God prophesied it and now God must make sure it would happen this way or did God provide the prophesy of what His foreknowledge saw would happen?



Do prophecies like Daniel help us understand God more fully? Does it give us insights into God's ability to know our choices before we make them? What difference does it make if God knows or doesn't know our choices before we make them?

## TUESDAY

What is the significance of Rome in the Bible? What Bible texts refer to Rome? Daniel 2, Daniel 7, Revelation 13 – and how is Rome described in these passages? As persecuting the saints, as blaspheming against God, as changing times and laws, bringing the place of God's sanctuary low. And why does the Bible speak so badly against Rome? Because the system misrepresents God, His character methods and principles and obscures God's plan to heal and restore. It actually replaces the truth about God's character with the qualities of Satan's character.

When you think of rising and falling of kingdoms, what is typically involved? War, and what type of war? With military arms and physical fighting. But what about the fourth kingdom, while it started out its warfare that way, is its most deadly warfare one like men on earth fight or is there another aspect to this warfare? What?

How is the warfare between Christ and Satan fought? Is it a battle over might and power? What is it over? Truth, Love, Freedom, Righteousness versus lies, selfishness, coercions and control and wickedness. This is a battle in the hearts and minds of God's intelligent creatures.

Are there many Christian people who look for the final battle between Christ and Satan and their forces to be a military one fought on a plain in Palestine? Is there danger in this approach? What?

In the teacher's guide on Tuesday is the following comment: "For more than one hundred forty years the Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic meetings have featured, as their opening night's lecture, a survey of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of Daniel 2. this often includes a discussion of end-time events, the Second Coming, and God's control of history. Does this message still impress modern listeners? Which aspect of this amazing prophecy do you find most compelling? Most comforting?"

Thoughts? What do you think about the current method of evangelism? Is the message which we are taking to the world by focusing on the images and the beasts the message of present truth to prepare a world for God's return? Is there a better way to evangelize and if so what?

"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

Thoughts on how to include this emphasis in creating an evangelistic program? What obstacles do you see to this approach? Is it necessary to make everyone an SDA to evangelize?

## WEDNESDAY

Bottom green – read – thought? What is the purpose of apocalyptic prophecy? Is it to enable us to know the future? Is it for us to prepare and set dates and times? What is it for? Is it to instill faith and confidence in God that nothing catches Him by surprise?

## 2006 Q3 Lesson 4 Daniel 7

### SABBATH

Read Memory Text – what kingdom? And when do we possess it?

*But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the **kingdom of God** has come upon you. Matt 12:28*

*Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the **kingdom of God** ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him. Matt 21:31,32.*

*MK 4:30 Again he said, “What shall we say the **kingdom of God** is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. 32 Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade.”*

*LK 17:20 Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the **kingdom of God** would come, Jesus replied, “The **kingdom of God** does not come with your careful observation, 21 nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the **kingdom of God** is within you.”*

*MK 12:32 “Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. 33 To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”*

*MK 12:34 When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the **kingdom of God**.”*

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

*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, Romans 14:17*

*JN 18:36 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.”*

*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. John 17:14-16*

*1 John 2:16 For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the **lust** of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

*MT 25:34 “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.’*

Thoughts about these verses? How do we synthesize the meaning and how do they apply to our text in Daniel?

If when demons are driven away by God's Spirit the kingdom of God has come, and God's kingdom has to do with righteousness – or change of heart or character or rebirth. It starts out as a truth planted in the heart and grows to become a fruit bearing plant ministering to others.

The kingdom of God is within you, and is the kingdom of love, selfless giving for the welfare of others!

And no one can see this kingdom unless he is born again – what does this mean? Will the wicked see Jesus come in the clouds? Will the wicked and Satan and his angels see the New Jerusalem? But will they see the kingdom of God? Why?

When we pray Thy kingdom come what are we praying for?

So God's kingdom is the kingdom of love and righteousness which is to come now upon us – just like eternal life is defined by its quality of knowing God rather than its measures of time, so too God's kingdom is described by its quality, its character of love rather than by its measures of wealth and physical substance.

So then if this is the case – then what does it mean the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints and the time came they possessed the kingdom? How does judgment in favor of the saints connect to them possessing the kingdom?

What is it that has prevented us from possessing this kingdom? What power is described in the Daniel text as warring against the saints? The little horn power, what is this power? How does it war against the saints? Where does it get its power from? And how is this connected to the judgment described in our memory text?

Let's review quickly the vision – what the symbols stand for and then the conflict and its focus:

- Lion – Babylon
- Bear – Medo Persia
- Leopard – Greece
- Ugly Beast – Rome pagan
- Little horn – papal Rome

The Little Horn

- Grew great, but not by its own power -Power from Dragon Rev 13:2
- Threw starry host down & trampled them- Dragon's tail swept 1/3 of stars of heaven out of sky Rev 12:3
- Set itself up to be like the Prince- Dragon fought against Michael Rev 12:7
- Took away the daily sacrifice- Dragon creates false system Mark 4:15, 2Cor 11:14, 2Thes 2:9
- Brought the place of His sanctuary low—Dragon establishes synagogue Rev 2:9, 3:9
- Throws truth to the ground & Caused deceit—Dragon is Father of lies John 8:44
- Persecutes the saints—Dragon persecutes saints Rev 12:13-17

Where does the little horn get its power? From the dragon and what is the dragon's power? Hebrews 2:14 and John 17:3 The lies Satan tells about God that we believe which prevent us from knowing God and destroys the image of God within us. The abomination that causes desolation is the abomination of lies about God which we believe that results in desolation of the image of God within man! The destruction of the kingdom of love and the establishment of the synagogue of Satan, the principles of selfishness.

So how is all of this related to judgment? Read Daniel 7:25,26

*Daniel 7:25, 26 “He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time. ‘But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever.’”*

What is the time times and half a time? 1260 years and what does this mean? What is the power of the little horn? And how is it taken away by the court sitting? How is this connected to our memory text and the Ancient of Days pronouncing judgment in favor of the saints?

Well the Darby, American Standard Version, King James Version, and Young Bibles all translate Daniel 7:22 this way:

*“until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.”*

Does it make any difference when translated this way?

Daniel 8:14 Until 2300 days and then the sanctuary will be cleansed? What sanctuary? Cleansed from what?

*Revelation 14:6 “Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come.”*

Judgment is given to the saints – to judge what? Power is taken away from the little horn when the court sits. The power of the little horn is the power of lies and deceit about God. The abomination of desolation is the abomination of lies about God which we believe that destroys the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The Temple is to be cleansed, the kingdom of God is within you. Are all of these concepts connected? How?

How is the power of the little horn overthrown or taken away? What destroys a lie? The truth! What are the lies which give the little horn power? The lies about God. What destroys his power? The truth about God!

## MONDAY

Bottom paragraph – read – it says the little horn power is only destroyed after the judgment in heaven? Thoughts? Why is it destroyed after judgment and not before?

“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}

“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}

“... the end will come... Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off. Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch, (Mal. 4:1),--Satan the root, and his followers the branches... {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.” Eph. 4:18; Prov. 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}

“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}

“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}

So why does the little horn survive until judgment has taken place? And who is it that needs to make this judgment? God or us?

### WEDNESDAY

Teacher’s comments “Right now, today, in heaven, ten thousand times ten thousand are being judged. Those whose sins are covered by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus, are assured of forgiveness. Those hoping to make it on their own merit will sadly learn the rest of their own story.”

Thoughts? Where is the Bible text that says we are covered in the blood? What does this mean? Jesus said unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no part with me. What does this mean? We are covered by blood or we internalize the life, principles character of God, that we become partakers of the divine nature – which is love!

*HEB 10:19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 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.*

Where is the covering in this text? It is about cleansing the heart and mind, cleansing the conscience. There is no covering up but renewal regeneration recreation!

### THURSDAY

Last week we mentioned the idea of evangelism and how these prophecies are often used for evangelism. We asked the question if there might be alternate methods of evangelism. In the teacher comments state that “Daniel seminars have, for years, been an effective way of bringing people into our church. What are you doing with this incredible tool?”

What does it sound like the goal for using these methods are? To bring people into our institution? Does that automatically mean that, with these methods they will know the truth about God, His methods and principles and will be changed into loving friends of God? Do these methods introduce people to the remedy for sin? Or could we actually be suggesting a pseudo remedy? An idea that nothing really changes in you what changes is the records in heaven if you have been covered by the blood and the robe of righteousness then when the records are reviewed the Father really can't see how wicked and rebellious you really are?

Is that good news? Isn't the Good News about God and His plan to heal and restore? The kingdom of God now?



**2006 Q3 Lesson 5      Daniel 8**

Notes are not available

## 2006 Q3 Lesson 6 Daniel 9

Read Daniel 9:1-19 What is being described? How do you understand these events? Some read these words,

*“Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. 12 You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster.... The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.”*

And conclude, God uses His power to inflict pain and suffering on the disobedient and those who continue to disobey He will one day finally use His power to exterminate. What do you think? What do you say to those who say, “just read it, we must take the Bible like it reads.”

What is being described? Is it describing a process in which God says you better do what I say or I will be forced by righteousness to make you pay OR a process in which God is saying if you disobey you will reap terrible consequences because you are choosing to remove yourself from my protection? How do we know which is more reasonable? What evidence can we site?

*ISA 59:2 But your iniquities have separated  
you from your God;  
your sins have hidden his face from you,  
so that he will not hear.*

*HOS 5:3 I know all about Ephraim;  
Israel is not hidden from me.  
Ephraim, you have now turned to prostitution;  
Israel is corrupt.*

*HOS 5:4 “Their deeds do not permit them  
to return to their God.  
A spirit of prostitution is in their heart;  
they do not acknowledge the LORD.*

*HOS 5:5 Israel’s arrogance testifies against them;  
the Israelites, even Ephraim, stumble in their sin;  
Judah also stumbles with them....*

*HOS 11:7 My people are determined to turn from me.  
Even if they call to the Most High,  
he will by no means exalt them.*

*HOS 11:8 “How can I give you up, Ephraim?  
How can I hand you over, Israel?  
How can I treat you like Admah?  
How can I make you like Zeboiim?  
My heart is changed within me;  
all my compassion is aroused.*

*HOS 11:9 I will not carry out my fierce anger,  
nor will I turn and devastate Ephraim.  
For I am God, and not man--  
the Holy One among you.  
I will not come in wrath.*

What does it say? The people turn away from God, God doesn't turn away from them. But when they turn away from God and reject every entreaty and offer and merciful intervention and God finally let's go what happens?

## SABBATH

First paragraph read – Daniel 7:13, Daniel 8:14 and Malachi 3:1-3 all speak about the same event – what event?

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;”(GC, 426).

Read the second paragraph – agree or disagree? Does the Bible teach 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? Is this part of the sanctuary message? If so how?

“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).

What sanctuary needed cleansing? Both, the sanctuary in heaven and the sanctuary of the human soul.

What sanctuary was the first sanctuary contaminated with sin? Was it the heavenly sanctuary or the sanctuary of the human soul? And what was the sin that contaminated 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 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).

What was the first sanctuary to be contaminated? Heavenly! By what? Lies about God. What was the next sanctuary to be contaminated? By what?

"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, Jan 5, 1886 par. 8).

Both sanctuaries are contaminated by the same thing! What happened to humanity after the lies about God were accepted as truth? The defilement of sin, love and trust were displaced by fear and selfishness and behaviors based on fear and selfishness started, thus the lust, passions and earthliness.

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!

How does the prophecy of Daniel 7, 8 and Malachi 3 connect to the cleansing of these two sanctuaries?

In chapter 8, the little horn is described as defiling the sanctuary – who is the little horn? Pagan and Papal Rome, how can the little horn defile the sanctuary in heaven? Where does the little horn get its power? From the dragon, and who is the dragon? Satan. What is the power of the dragon? Hebrews 2:14 and John 17:3 – The devil holds the power of death, which is his lies about God that we believe that keep us from knowing God.

It says the dragon gave his power to the little horn – then what would be the power of the little horn? The lies about God that people believe that keep them from knowing Him. And what are some of the lies about God told by the little horn? God will torture His children in hell forever if they don't repent; God needs to be pleaded with; God needs to be appeased; God cannot forgive without legal payment; forgiveness is available only through a series of rituals administered by the church. And what will lies do to the sanctuary of the human soul?

So what is the abomination of desolation? It is the abomination of lies about God told by Satan and religious organizations which result in the desolation of the image of God within man! And these lies lead to destructive behaviors based on defective character and thus the records of such deformity kept in the heavenly record books.

What cleanses and why 2300 years for it to be cleansed?

“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).*

*“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).*

*Daniel 8:14 “Unto 2300 days and then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” If you look in your 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.*

Justify means to be set right, put right, harmonized so, What needs to be set right? What needs to be put right? What needs to be harmonized?

Read Malachi 3:1-3 What does this text say, the Lord will come to His temple to do what? Cleanse, purify, what? The Levites, which are who?

*“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).*

Why 2300 years? Why would it be this long until God could cleanse His sanctuary? If Christ died 2000 years ago, and the “blood” of Christ cleanses, why couldn’t the sanctuary be cleansed as soon as He shed His blood?

*2Th 2:1 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.*

Now what is this talking about? Who is the man of lawlessness? What Temple does he set himself up in? Did he go into heaven and set himself up in heaven and claim to be God? Or did he set himself up in the throne of the human heart and mind claiming to be God on earth?

So why did it take 2300 years? Where does the truth need to be applied to cleanse? In heaven or in the hearts and minds of people here on earth? Then why 2300 years?

*ZEC 4:6 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.*

How does the Spirit work? Can you persuade and convince and win the heart and mind with power and might? Can you gain loyalty, devotion with power and might? What must happen, The Truth must be seen, understood and believed!

What about the idea that the investigative judgment is God sitting up there going through record books? Where does that come from?

*“The Ancient of Days took his seat...The court was seated, and the books were opened.” (Daniel 7:9,10).*

Does the Text say that God began to judge out of the books or the books were opened? Whose books are these? Enron had tens of thousands of customers and accounts. They received millions of dollars and when their books were opened for examination who was being examined, Enron or the customers, the customers or Enron?

Who has kept these books, us or God? Who is being examined us or God? Who were the lies about that started the war in heaven? What contaminated the heavenly sanctuary? What contaminated the sanctuary of the human soul? What is needed to cleanse? The truth about God!

Why would God need to open His books and why would God need to open His books about us?

Imagine I present myself to your community and claim I have a cure for cancer and have cured 50 people of cancer. I tell you they are all cancer free. I even present 50 people and ask your medical experts to examine them to see if they can find any cancer and sure enough, not one has cancer. Would you now believe I have a cure for cancer if all were cancer free? How would you know if they ever had cancer to start with? Conversely, if instead I bring out some medical records that document the presence of cancer, and then, as you review the records you see where a treatment was given and the record indicates the cancer is cured. But, I won’t let you examine any patients, would you believe I have a cure for cancer?



Why is this analogy relevant? Because after Satan's original lies about God, which led others into sin, he had some new lies that needed to be dealt with as well.

"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... PP 41

"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

"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).

Have you heard any of these lies? Satan had his original lies, but then he had another set which needed to be addressed as well.

What were the new lies? Once a sinner always a sinner; God would not forgive; It is impossible to be healed and restored; Sin must be punished; God is unjust if He forgives and heals; Humans are no better in character than Satan and deserve the same fate. These are the new lies of Satan that came along after we fell into sin.

How does God handle these lies? He opens Himself up for investigation and how He has handled the issues and His methods of healing and restoration.

Imagine your child has been diagnosed with met cancer...

"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).

What cleanses the Temples – the lies about God are cleansed by the Jesus when He revealed the truth about God and purged the infection of sin from His humanity–

- The earthliness, lust and damage from sin is cleansed by God actually transforms and heals the sinners on earth and the records in heaven reflect this AND
- The final lies about God that He is unfair etc. are cleansed by God opening Himself up for inspection and in the healed lives of His saints, we are witnesses for the power of His healing solution.

Questions from the class?

## 2006 Q3 Lesson 7      The 70 Weeks

### SABBATH

Read memory text. Thoughts?

First Let's explore the actual time line:

What differences do you see in the visions of Daniel 7 & 8? The animals in Daniel 7 are unclean animals not used in the sanctuary service, whereas the animals in Daniel 8 are clean animals used in the sanctuary service. Do you think this might clue us in to a focus change of meaning in the visions?

Let's walk ourselves through the key elements of Daniel 8 and 9.

He had just had a vision of a Ram, a Goat with one great horn broken off with 4 horns arising out of it and then one of the 4 horns had another little horn arise out of it. This little horn started small but grew great to the south, east and beautiful land, it grew until it reached heaven and threw 1/3 of the starry host down and trampled on them. It set itself up against the Prince, took away the *continual*, and brought the place of his sanctuary low. Then it would be 2300 days until the sanctuary would be set right/cleansed.

Some argue this little horn is Antiochus – they cite the fact that this horn came up out of one of the horns of the goat – i.e. the body of the animal that represents Greece and thus cannot be Rome, they argue that it defiled the sanctuary as Antiochus did, they argue that the direction it grew in conforms to the direction of Antiochus – and thus they argue that this was fulfilled around 300 BC when the Macabees cleansed the Sanctuary – this is why the celebration of Hanukkah which is referred to in John 10:22. Thoughts?

While all these arguments are plausible, none are persuasive and all the elements could also refer to Rome—for instance, one could argue that the one horn which represented the Seleucus kings – Antiochus was the eighth of 26, not near the end or the line of kings, and there is already a horn that represents this line of kings why would another horn need to arise to represent this same line? Rather it represents a new power arising – Rome –But this also is not persuasive – additional information is needed to tip the balance – which is? The interpretation given in Daniel 8 the angel tells Daniel twice the vision concerns the “time of the end” was Antiochus living in the time of the end? No, so while such an interpretation is intriguing it must be rejected, but further evidence, Jesus in Matthew 24:9-31 describes the events prior to the second coming, the time of the end:

*MT 24:9 “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 24:15 “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet **Daniel**--let the reader understand-- 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great distress, unequalled 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. 23 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. 25 See, I have told you ahead of time.*

*MT 24:26 "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.*

*MT 24:29 "Immediately after the distress of those days  
"the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light;  
the stars will fall from the sky,  
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'*

*MT 24:30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*

In this passage what is Jesus speaking of, the past or the future? In relation to where Jesus was, where was Antiochus? In the past, and this little horn power is the power referred to as the abomination that causes desolation and Jesus refers this to the future, so again Antiochus cannot fit.

*DA 8:18 While he was speaking to me, I was in a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Then he touched me and raised me to my feet.*

*DA 8:19 He said: "I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end.*

Here again we have the "appointed time of the end" telling us this vision is going to take us down into the future, way past Antiochus. What does the "time of wrath" mean?

Romans 1:20-30 Paul tells us that when people reject the truth about God that God's wrath is revealed and what does Paul say 3 times God does? Let them go, and when He lets them go, what happens? They become depraved and decadent, just like what happened in the dark ages. And why did such a terrible time happen? Because the truth about God was rejected.

*20 The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. 21 The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. 22 The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power.*

*DA 8:23 "In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. 24 He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. 25 He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.*

*DA 8:26 "The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future."*

*DA 8:27 I, Daniel, was exhausted and lay ill for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.*

Notice several things here, The Bible explains explicitly what the Ram is and what the goat is, the first large horn and the 4 horns, and then a detailed description of the characteristics of the stern-faced king- which is that little horn power. No confusion or misunderstanding here. The Bible also tells us again that the vision concerns the “distant future.” So again, not Antiochus. The Bible also says that the portion concerning the 2300 days was to be sealed. So when Daniel at the end of chapter 8 says it was beyond understanding, what is the point that he most likely didn't understand? The 2300 days.

Now in chapter 9 starts out with Daniel realizing the end of Jeremiah's prophecy is at hand and he begins to pray and ask God for fulfillment of this prophecy. Gabriel then comes to give Daniel “understanding” vs. 22.

*9:21 while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. 23 As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision:*

What vision is he coming to give Daniel understanding of? What did Daniel not understand from the previous chapter? The time period of 2300 days – and what does Gabriel start explaining? Time.

*DA 9:24 “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.*

*DA 9:25 “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. 26 After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. 27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And one who causes desolation will come with abomination on his wings until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”*

First let's look at the time issues. 70 sevens, meaning 70 weeks or 490 days and in prophecy that translates into 490 years. 490 years remain for the Jews to fulfill the mission God had covenanted with Abraham to fulfill. This 490 years period is broken into several pieces. The first piece is 49 years, then 434 years, and then 7 years. This 490-year period is a period of time determined or decreed or cut off of a larger period of time, not previously explained—the 2300 days or years of Daniel 8:14.

When does the time start? With the decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem – which was in 457 B.C. Counting 49 years later is when the Temple was finished, and then 434 years (total 483 years) after that takes us to 27 AD when Christ was baptized and started His ministry. And then 3½ years later, in the middle of the last “seven,” Christ dies and puts an end to the sacrificial system. Christ completed the covenant with Abraham that through Abraham's seed all nations would be blessed. 3½ years later Stephen is stoned, the 490 years end, and the gospel goes to the Gentiles and shortly after, Saul is converted.

“The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.”

Pagan Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the physical sanctuary and Pagan and Papal Rome continued the war against the Spirit Temple. And this war causes desolation to the image of God within the Spirit Temple. 2 Cor 10:3-5.

*9:27 “and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”*  
NASB

Papal Rome and its abomination of lies about God that make Him into a cruel dictator who must be pled with in order to be assuaged, and this abomination continues with all those who continue to misrepresent God, even in our own church.

Let’s look at our memory text – read – thoughts?

Who is it pertaining to? The Jewish nation? And what is it saying within the time remaining is to be accomplished? What were they to be doing? Were they to be preparing to meet the Messiah? Were they to be a nation, totally dedicated to preparing to meet Jesus Christ? Is this prophecy talking about that? It says in the last phrase to anoint the most holy, could it be speaking of Jesus? As the next verse says the anointed one speaking of Christ?

And when Christ came did He fulfill the covenant He made with Abraham? Did He take sinful humanity upon Himself and instead of being overcome by sin He purged sin from His humanity and put an end to sin? Did He reconcile humanity with God? Did He establish righteousness that will never end? Did He ratify, by fulfillment, all the visions and prophecies? And was He anointed by the Holy Spirit in the form of a Dove?

Doesn’t the 70-week prophecy work out nicely? And is it because of the 70 weeks that we know Jesus is the Messiah? Were there other people claiming to be Christ at the same time in history? Could they lay claim to the 70-week prophecy to support them? So does the 70 weeks determine that Jesus was the Christ? What does?

What kind of kingdom did Jesus come to establish and promote? What kind of kingdom did the false Christ’s promote? Is there a lesson here as we prepare for the second coming?

Is it important that everyone know all the details about these prophecies in order to be saved?

Do you have to know how to bake bread in order to eat bread? And what is necessary to live, baking or eating? Christ is the bread of heaven, the truth about God and we don’t have to know how He accomplished everything He did, but we do have to believe and partake.

## TUESDAY

In the Teacher’s Guide it asks: “The ‘Anointed One’ in Daniel 9:25,26 is an obvious reference to Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus’ life not only anchors this prophecy in history; it reveals one of the outcomes of His ministry; ‘The Anointed One will be cut off,’ and ‘he will put an end to sacrifice and offering’. Why did so many, in the ages up to Jesus’ birth, misunderstand this prophecy? What is the greatest misconception about Jesus and His ministry now?

Donald Barnhouse, after investigating Adventism wrote: “The [sanctuary] doctrine is, to me, the most colossal, psychological, face-saving phenomenon in religious history. ... We personally do not believe that there is even a suspicion of a verse in Scripture to sustain such a peculiar position, and we further believe that any effort to establish it is stale, flat, and unprofitable. ... [It is] unimportant and almost naïve.” (Eternity, 7:67, September 1956, pp. 6-7, 43-45.)

What do you see as the basic problem people like Ford and Barnhouse have with the sanctuary doctrine? They have the wrong diagnosis, and if the diagnosis is wrong, the treatment is wrong. They have diagnosed the sin problem as a legal problem and that blood payment was necessary to atone for the offense to an angry, wrathful, and offended God. They see that at the Cross Christ paid the penalty, and in their view a complete atonement was made, in that total payment was offered and accepted and thus the sanctuary doctrine to them is heresy as they see it watering down what Christ did on the Cross. They fail to realize that the issue was never a legal issue, nor was God ever angry, nor was appeasement or payment ever needed. They don't appreciate the real destructiveness of sin and how it actually destroys the sanctuary of the human soul and thus don't see the need for Christ to come and purge the infection from humanity, reveal the truth about God, expose Satan, procure and remedy and then minister that remedy to all who are willing – thus His work in the sanctuary.



## 2006 Q3 Lesson 8      1844 Made Simple

Are there any questions from the class regarding this topic?

This lesson is focusing on the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week and what Christ accomplished for us.

At the top of SABBATH's lesson there are several Bible texts listed for this week's study. The last is 1 Peter 2:24:

*"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."*

Thoughts about this text? What does it mean? In the Teacher's Comments for SUNDAY it states:

Christ's death on the cross was an atoning sacrifice offered for the death-deserving world.

Christ died to restore a fallen human race to God, whose relationship to Him was broken down by sin.

Christ's death in our place should reassure us that no matter how far we have fallen away, the penalty for our past actions has been paid by His blood.

Thoughts about the text or these comments from the lesson?

What does the Bible passage actually say, the Greek word translated sins, actually most often is translated "sin" does it mean anything different to you if you read it in the singular rather than the plural?

Christ took upon Himself our sinfulness, the infection of sin, the disease of sin that brings death by taking upon Himself a defective human body born of a woman, born under the law of sin and death. He lived victoriously in that body, establishing a perfect character and restoring in mankind God's law of love which had been eradicated by Satan's law of selfishness – the law of sin and death. On the cross Christ purged the law of sin and death from His humanity and completely won the victory by the Law of Love.

Now, because of Christ's victory, we can, in trust, live in love and die to selfishness via the indwelling of the HS who recreates us in Christlikeness.

So Christ's death on the cross was the atoning sacrifice because first, Christ reconciled the human race to God in that He, as a human being, was totally loyal to God, defeated the infection of selfishness and purged His humanity from it and thus, the race was saved in that Jesus, a real human being was sin free and would live forever. Secondly, because of what He did, He has opened the way for every other human being who wants, to also experience healing and reconciliation, oneness with God through the indwelling of the HS and actual transformation of heart and mind.

- What about the idea He died to pay the penalty and only for past actions by His blood? What is the problem with this idea?
- Who does the penalty get paid to?
- How does paying a penalty change you and me?
- What does it say about God that He needed a penalty paid?
- If the penalty is only for the sins of the past what about the future?
- How does blood pay a penalty?

## MONDAY

Read bottom two paragraphs and then the question at the bottom, thoughts?

These statements and questions revolve around a premise that the problem with sin is a legal problem that requires payment or penalty. This assumption warps the understanding of what Christ did and misrepresents God. It results in a Christian construct no better than the perverse Jewish construct of the sanctuary during Christ's time on earth when they thought the blood of animals somehow appeased a wrathful and angry god. Now we offer the blood of the son to appease a wrathful and angry god. Have we really improved the situation at all? Or possibly made it worse, because now we have a god who would punish the innocent for the crimes of the guilty – doesn't most of Christianity, including our lesson, teach that God punished Christ for our sins?

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. The atonement was necessary because man stood under the righteous wrath of God...Christ’s perfect righteousness adequately satisfied divine justice, and God is willing to accept Christ’s self-sacrifice in place of man’s death.’”... “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.”

SDA Believe page 116

“Christ’s death and ransom satisfied the demands of the law (that sin needed to be punished), while justifying repentant sinners through His grace and mercy.”

Christianity Today Online an article entitled “The Good News of God’s Wrath” By Anglican Archbishop of Sydney Peter Jensen, posted 02/23/04 we read:

The New Testament again and again connects the death of Christ to our sins. And when it does, it means that God himself is one who actively punishes; it is not merely a matter of sin being its own reward. Thus the New Testament speaks of Christ “bearing sin,” of him “becoming a curse,” even of him “becoming sin.” There is no doubt as to the significance of these expressions: you “bear sin” by taking the penalty of sin, by paying the price of sin, by being punished for sin: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.... By his wounds you have been healed” (1 Pet. 2:24). It is useless hoping that there is no such thing as punishment in a just universe. It is useless hoping that you will not merit punishment in a just universe. You can only hope that somehow, someone will lovingly bear your punishment, and that the universe will still be just... Death itself is God’s judgment on our sinfulness, and the law of God reveals to our consciences that beyond death there is a judgment with a God before whose justice we should quail.

What does the Bible teach?

*EZE 18:19 “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.*

*EZE 18:21 “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?”*

*EZE 18:24 “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.*

*EZE 18:25 “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?”*

*EZE 18:30 “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!”*

What is this text saying? Will God kill the innocent for the guilty? If God will not execute the innocent so the guilty can get off then how do we understand texts like we read in Peter? Or in Isaiah 53? Let's look at Isaiah 53:

*ISA 53:3 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.*

*ISA 53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities  
and carried our sorrows,  
yet we considered him stricken by God,  
smitten by him, and afflicted.*

*ISA 53:5 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.*

*ISA 53:6 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.*

Thoughts? Does it say God punished Him? Does it say the we “considered” him stricken or punished by God? But then it says God laid our iniquity on Him so how do we reconcile these two ideas? God won't punish the innocent for the guilty, it is our misunderstanding to think that God

punished Him, yet He was made to be sin who knew no sin, our iniquity was laid upon Him, He bore our sin on the tree, how do we harmonize these?

Christ took upon Himself the infection of sin and purged it in His humanity – God did not act to execute or punish His Son, such concepts distort the beauty of God’s character. But God sacrificed His Son, allowed His Son to come and take the infection upon Himself and die to rid the race of the infection – it was in Christ that the literal victory over selfishness took place. Love purged selfishness from humanity in the very heart and mind and being of Christ Jesus. Christ did not purge wrath or anger or demand for punishment from the Father.

Imagine that Adam and Eve chose as their act of sin an action which resulted in infecting them with HIV and from that point on, every one of their children and children’s children on down the line are born infected with HIV. And Christ comes into humanity born of a woman who was HIV infected and thus Christ’s human body was also HIV infected, but Christ’s immune system was perfect, having the HS as His Father and thus Christ’s immune system fought off the infection and purged His humanity from the infection and Christ is a human being disease free. Now He offers, via the HS to transfuse into you the antibodies which will purge the infection from you as well, all you need to do is trust and follow His directions for your life.

EGW states “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}

The problem with the forensic view is that it is not only unjust as the innocent is punished for the guilty – it also fails to heal, it doesn’t provide a remedy to sin.

“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}

And in the Teacher’s comments they quote another EGW passage from DA 25:

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. “With His stripes we are healed.”

Is this passage talking about legal substitution and the innocent being punished for the guilty, or is it talking about medical substitution in which a healthy man takes the infection upon Himself and defeats the infection so the remedy can come to each of us?

Is it any wonder why Christ hasn’t returned? Is the message from Christianity Today or our own SDA’s Believe the same message we find in the Bible? Has the good news about God really gone to the world?

## TUESDAY

Read third paragraph “Though verse 26...”

Thoughts? What value did the earthly sacrifices have before Christ died? Was the blood of animals somehow able to heal from sin?

*Heb 10:1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. 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. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, 4 because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

Notice what the focus is? Is it on appeasing an offended god? Or is it on making perfect the sinner? In other words, healing and restoring those who are infected with sin. The blood of animals could never take away the infection. But Christ’s blood can – how and why? What is the infection? Selfishness which comes from? Distrust which comes from? Lies about God, so how does Christ’s “blood” take it away?

Christ’s blood is symbolic of the truth, the truth about God which removes the lies which break trust and then when we trust Him He pours Himself into our minds/hearts through the HS and purges the selfishness by filling us with love. We are literally healed and transformed from people who would kill others to save self to people who would give their lives to save others.

The paragraph also says that the rending of the veil signaled the end of the OT system – is that the main thing it signaled? It signaled that the way to God, which had been obscured, was now wide open!

What had obscured the way to God? What does the veil represent? Some suggest that the veil represents the body of Christ, but was Jesus the obstruction to God or was Jesus the way to God? Jesus was not the obstruction to God that needed to be removed, it was Jesus, by His death that He destroyed the obstruction to God. And what was that obstruction? Satan and his lies about God – the veil was sewn with angels and represents the lies about God that Satan tells that keeps us from knowing Him, but in Christ those lies are 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.*

In FRIDAY’s lesson read question 3 – thoughts? In TUESDAY’s teacher’s comments it states: “What characteristics is God looking for among His people today? Is He finding them in you and in your congregation?”

Is there a connection between these two questions?

In Tuesday’s Teacher’s comments it asks, “I what tangible ways are you, as an individual and as a congregation, involved in the task of taking the gospel to the entire world?”

## WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph “Thus, the 70-week...” thoughts? What was Israel exclusively chosen to do? What was their mission? Did they fulfill it? What is our mission? Are we fulfilling it?

## THURSDAY

Teacher's comments states "As a church, we place a lot of emphasis on the prophecies of Daniel. In a sense, you could argue that we were founded on our understanding of the prophecies of Daniel. What role does your belief in Daniel's prophecies play in your Adventist walk?"

Thoughts? Is the sanctuary doctrine the most significant contribution the SDA church has made to Christianity? Why or why not? Why do you think that the Sanctuary doctrine makes no sense to so many Christians and why people like Ford have rejected it?

Because they have diagnosed the sin problem incorrectly and the most significant contribution SDA church has made is correctly diagnosing the sin problem and therefore helping us see more clearly the real remedy.

If one has the wrong diagnosis, then one usually has the wrong treatment. Those who see the sin problem as a legal problem with God see the solution as a legal payment made at the cross and when Christ said "It is finished" they hear these words to mean a complete atonement, i.e. a complete payment and nothing is to be added or could be added. And when a doctrine comes along that says that Christ's work in the sanctuary is as important as what He accomplished on the cross they hear this to say that what He did on the cross was incomplete and they reject it.

The problem they have is they have diagnosed the problem incorrectly, it was never a legal problem with God and it never required a legal penalty. The problem was the very nature and condition of man was altered from its original design, mankind was infected with fear, distrust and selfishness. And the remedy required, not a payment, but a literally cure, a defeat of the infection and a rewriting in of the Law and character of God. Christ came and took upon Himself our humanity and in His personhood defeated the infection of sin, purified His humanity and now distributes the remedy to all who would have it. This is His work in the sanctuary.

"From the Holy of Holies, there goes on the grand work of instruction. The angels of God are communicating to men. Christ officiates in the sanctuary. We do not follow Him into the sanctuary as we should. Christ and angels work in the hearts of the children of men. The church above united with the church below is warring the good warfare upon the earth. There must be a purifying of the soul here upon the earth, in harmony with Christ's cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven." {Mar 249.3}



## 2006 Q3 Lesson 9 The Day–Year Principle

The picture is communicating in our language as we, in modern society have 365 days in a year, but in Bible prophecy and reckoning 1 year was 360 days.

We see in the lesson the Memory Text in which in that passage a day for a year is proscribed. How do we know this principle should be applied to the time periods in Daniel?

- Daniel was distressed when he was told it would be 490 days until the end of the time for his people and the finishing of the problem with sin – if it was going to be less than 18 months away would he have been so distressed?
- The prophecies are all in symbolic language, why would the time period be literal? (another reason why the sanctuary is symbolic of the Spirit Temple)
- The application of the day-year principle works out perfectly

Why would God use symbols and symbolic language to start with? Why not just state things plainly the way they are so people can readily and easily understand?

- Language changes over time and a description today explicitly stated may mean something different years/millennia down the timeline. (Gay fellow means something different today than 90 years ago).
- Symbols allow each person's imagination to explore aspects of the meaning that might be lost if explicitly stated – particularly when talking about attributes of God who is infinite
- When a teacher teaches a pupil, is it wise merely to recite to the pupil the correct answers to problems? Or is it better to present unknowns with principles for the pupil to grapple with and learn how to work out the answers? Does God want us to be merely able to recite the right answers or does He want us to reason out the truth? Why? Because in reasoning for ourselves we are transformed and grow and become settled into the truth such we cannot be moved.

### SABBATH

First paragraph – read – is it obvious that this temple referred to in Daniel which needs cleansing is in heaven? Why or why not?

### SUNDAY

Bottom blue question “What evidence do you see that we are living in ‘the end’ that Daniel talked about?” Thoughts?

- The 2300 day/year prophecy ended 1844
- 1260 years prophecy ended 1798
- Wars and rumors of wars
- Love is growing cold
- Disease and famine
- Easier communication
- Bible printed in many languages

What about

*“There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars.” LUKE 21:25.*

*“The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” MARK 13:24-26.*

*“There was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon become as blood.” REV. 6:12.*

We have traditionally interpreted these events as the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, the dark day of May 19, 1780 and that night when the moon initially wasn’t visible and then appeared as blood, which apparently affected the New England States of the US, and the great meteor shower of November 13, 1833 over North America.

Are these signs helpful for you? And if they occurred 250 years ago can we still can them “signs of the times”? Will they be repeated before Christ comes again?

The first, second, and third angels’ messages are to be repeated. The call is to be given to the church: “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. . . . Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” {RH, October 31, 1899 par. 11}

Many who went forth to meet the Bridegroom under the messages of the first and second angels, refused the third, the last testing message to be given to the world, and a similar position will be taken when the last call is made. {RH, October 31, 1899 par. 12}

This afternoon in our Let’s Talk we will explore more fully the aspects of the delay and why the delay has occurred and what we can do to hasten the day, but currently, did you notice, the message of the 3 angels is to be repeated? Why? Because the generation who first heard it is dead! The generation living on the earth today has not heard the message of the 3 angels. And who is the message directed toward? The church!

What about the signs in the heavens and earth? Well, the Lisbon earthquake was a 9.1 Richter scale quake, and guess what? The earthquake in the Indian Ocean which caused the tsunami which killed over 200,000 people was a 9.1 Richter scale quake. I wouldn’t be surprise, that God being as gracious as He is wouldn’t be willing to repeat the signs in the heaven and earth for the generation actually alive to see Him coming.

## WEDNESDAY

In the middle italics section read – what do you think it means “Rome’s attack on Christ’s heavenly ministry”?

Did Rome go into heaven and do something in heaven? Did Rome do something which defiled the heavenly realms? No, so what is going on? What did Rome do? It promulgated a system which defiled the Spirit Temple, which darkened the mind, which distorted the truth about God, which caused superstition to rise, which displaced love and promote selfishness, which obscured the healing truth brought by Christ.

In the teacher’s comments it says, “Daniel 7-9 predicts the course of history to the end of time when God will crush all earthly kingdoms, along with false religious systems. Before those final

days dawn upon the earth, God's last time prophecy predicts the restoration of the sanctuary. That is the purpose of the 2300 days."

Thoughts? How will God crush the earthly kingdoms and the false systems? How does God wage war? Christ said in Matthew 10:34 that He did not come to bring peace but a sword. 2 Cor 10:3-5, the weapons of God are not the weapons of the world... The Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12) God doesn't fight with might and power but by the Spirit (Zech 4:6).

So how does God destroy these powers? By presenting the truth, which restores trust and then the HS comes in and cleanses the heart and minds of those who trust – His Temple, the cleansing of the Sanctuary and thus the powers of darkness are defeated and then Christ comes and takes us to be with Him.

*ISA 14:12 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!*

*ISA 14:13 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.*

*ISA 14:14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;  
I will make myself like the Most High."*

*ISA 14:15 But you are brought down to the grave,  
to the depths of the pit.*

*ISA 14:16 Those who see you stare at you,  
they ponder your fate:  
"Is this the man who shook the earth  
and made kingdoms tremble,*

*ISA 14:17 the man who made the world a desert,  
who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?"*

## THURSDAY

Teacher's comments asks, "According to the prophecies, we are in the last phases of earth's history. Time is running out. And still we are lukewarm and laid back. We are content to sit back, relax and wait for the Second Coming. Knowing our place in time, through Daniel's prophecy, shouldn't we utilize every moment we have? Why aren't we on fire, making use of our short time?"

Thoughts? What can we do to spread the truth to prepare the world for Christ's coming?

In the teachers comments it talks about Einstein's theory of relativity. The relationship between speed, time and gravity as either time or gravity increases then time slows down. So if you have two people one on earth and the other traveling near the speed of light, while years go by on earth it would be mere seconds for the person traveling at the speed of light. Also, as gravity increases, then time slows down, so a few minutes near a black hole would be many years here on earth. What significance is this for our understanding of spiritual things? God is not locked in time like we are. When Peter said with the Lord a day is like a 1000 years, he might have been speaking more than metaphorical.

## 2006 Q3 Lesson 10 Rome and Antiochus

Why is this an issue?

Where does it come from?

What is the real hidden agenda of the argument that this is Antiochus? To attack God's foreknowledge. They date the book at being written in 160 BC after Antiochus. Where does the book of Daniel date itself? At the time of Babylon and Medo Persia.

What would it mean if the book was written in AD 160? That it is a fabrication and a lie and nothing in the book is worth trusting and by association the Bible itself is suspect.

What about God's ability to know the future? Can God know the future? Can God know what choices people are going to make before they make them and still preserve freedom? If God knows the choice a person will make and doesn't act to stop him before he makes the choice is God responsible?

What evidence is there to support the two views? What evidence is more credible?

*GE 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 the time. 6 The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth--men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them."*

But then why did He have them preach for 120 years, inviting people to repent and join the crew of the HMS Noah's Ark, and then have only one ark built? Was it a false hope and a grand deception to dupe people into help them build the ark and then leave those who accepted and wanted to get on to drown OR did God know they wouldn't accept?

What difference does it make if we conclude one way or the other?

What does it say about God if He doesn't know? What does it say about God if He does?

Other examples of God's ability to know our choices before we make them? Did Jesus know Judas was going to betray Him? Did Jesus force Judas or was Judas free to make his own choice?

**The law of love is the foundation of God's government, and the service of love the only service acceptable to heaven.** 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. {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." Rom. 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. 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. 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. {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 6}

To the angels there seemed to be no way of escape for the transgressor. 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. 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. {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. 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 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. Christ proposed to reach to the depths of man's degradation and woe, and restore the repenting, believing soul to harmony with God. 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. {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. 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. {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. 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. The highest gift of heaven, even the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, was able to redeem the lost. {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}

If one's primary approach to evangelism is through getting people to believe your interpretation of prophecies then would this be a critical issue? But is this really the most critical issue? What is? The truth about God as revealed in Jesus, His methods, His character, His abilities and that we cooperate with God to be like Him.

### **SABBATH**

Read second paragraph – thoughts? What is the message of 1844 that is to be proclaimed and that makes us special? What was the purpose of the movement that arose out of 1844?

To proclaim a message, which has the effect of preparing the world to meet Jesus. What message could do this?



What about Jesus died and paid the penalty of our sin and if we accept that payment then forgiveness is stamped by our names in the books of heaven?

What about Jesus is in the heavenly sanctuary reviewing the record books and removing the record of sin from the books for those who have asked the blood be applied?

Christ had come, not to the earth, as they expected, but, as foreshadowed in the type, to the most holy place of the temple of God in heaven. He is represented by the prophet Daniel as coming at this time to the Ancient of Days: “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came”—not to the earth, but—to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.” Daniel 7:13. {GC 424.2}

This coming is foretold also by the prophet Malachi: “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.” Malachi 3:1. The coming of the Lord to His temple was sudden, unexpected, to His people. They were not looking for Him there. They expected Him to come to earth, “in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel.” 2 Thessalonians 1:8. {GC 424.3}

But the people were not yet ready to meet their Lord. There was still a work of preparation to be accomplished for them. Light was to be given, directing their minds to the temple of God in heaven; and as they should by faith follow their High Priest in His ministration there, new duties would be revealed. Another message of warning and instruction was to be given to the church. {GC 424.4}

Says the prophet: “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, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.” Malachi 3:2, 3. Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God’s people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14. {GC 425.1}

When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing. 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. {GC 426.1}

Can we expect, through the working of Christ via the HS, to be actually healed in character BEFORE Christ comes?

*“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. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. 1 John 3:2,3*

*Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:*

*“Hallelujah!*

*For our Lord God Almighty reigns.*

*Let us rejoice and be glad*

*and give him glory!*

*For the wedding of the Lamb has come,*

*and his bride has made herself ready.*

*Fine linen, bright and clean,*

*was given her to wear.”*

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

*Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.” Rev 19:6-10*

*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. 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: “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.” Rev 7:1-3*

“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.” {FLB 287.7}

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.” Revelation 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. Revelation 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.” Daniel 7:14; Revelation 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 (Matthew 8:11; Luke 22:30), to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb. {GC 426.2}

The above Jesus receives the power, the kingdom, the authority – and

*John 13:3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*

Is it possible that when Jesus receives all power He then does the same thing, He cleanses the remnant defects from the remnant to prepare them to meet Him when He comes?

## TUESDAY

Bottom section suggests that Rome is never named directly because in God's foreknowledge He knew the scriptures would be held in the hands of the Roman power for a 1000 years and if it was named directly then Rome might have altered or destroyed the scriptures. Thoughts?

Teacher's comments states there are many questions about the Bible for which we do not have answers. If you had the opportunity to ask God one question about the Bible what would it be?

## WEDNESDAY

First paragraph "As we've..." how do people today try to undermine confidence in the Bible? By superficial readings which some use to allege contradictions. By misunderstanding God's use of emergency measures. By accepting erroneous science and trying to conform God's word to it.

## FRIDAY

Question 2 read and discuss

## 2006 Q3 Lesson 11 The Sanctuary and the Little Horn

### SABBATH

Read memory Text

*Hebrews 8:1,2: "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."*

What is this text referring to? Who is the high priest referred to? Jesus.

He sat down at the right hand of the throne of Majesty – what is this referring to? The Father, this is one of the texts used to support Ford's position that Christ didn't enter the Most Holy Place in 1844 but upon His ascension. Thoughts about this?

Several problems with the argument of Ford, as well as those who oppose Him in our church:

First, When did Paul think Christ was returning? 2000 years later or imminently? And because Paul understood that Christ had a work to do in the MH place before Christ returned again, where would Paul assume Christ was if His return was imminent? Did God give Paul revelation on the day and hour of the Lord's appearing? So was it left to Paul to consider when it would be?

*HEB 1:1 "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these **last days** he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."*

Secondly, what about where Christ is ministering? Where in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle built by God and not man. What is that? Is it a building in heaven merely? Or is it more? Any thoughts?

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." Ex 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}

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}

“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 Cor. 3:16, 17. 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.” Rev. 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 Cor. 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.” Eph. 2:21, 22. {DA 161.2}

Any Biblical evidence for this?

*“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 Cor. 3:16, 17.*

*“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.*

*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and*

*they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. 2Cor 6:16-18*

*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 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 are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Eph 2:19-22*

*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 Peter 2:5*

Thoughts? Is it possible the sanctuary which Christ is working to cleanse is the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit? Or is it merely a building in heaven? What evidence do we have?

- EGW stated that the pattern shown Moses on the mount was the pattern of character
- EGW states Christ, when He cleansed the earthly sanctuary announced His mission to cleanse the heart from sin
- EGW states that then entire pattern of the symbols of the sanctuary were God's way of symbolically showing His "purpose for the human soul."
- Paul states that we are the Temple of the HS
- Malachi states that when Christ comes to His Temple He cleanses the Levites
- Paul states again in 2 Corinthians that we are the Temple of God and that God dwells in us.
- Paul tells us in Ephesians that we are the building blocks of God's temple and God builds this temple upon the apostles with Christ as the chief cornerstone
- Peter tells us that we are "living stones" again building blocks of a "spiritual house", i.e. a Temple for God

Any thoughts about this? Then what about our memory text which says Christ "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."

*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."*

What was the sanctuary Moses built called? "The Tent of Meeting" what did Paul call this body? A tent – and then he says we have a building from God and eternal house in heaven not built by human hands, what is this referring to? How does this language compare to the Hebrews 8:1 text?

What is Christ working to do in His heavenly ministry? To cleanse us and prepare us to live with Him.

Every room in the soul temple has become more or less defiled, and needs cleansing. The cobwebbed closet of conscience is to be entered. The windows of the soul are to be closed earthward and thrown wide open heavenward that the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness may have free access. The memory is to be refreshed by Bible principles. The mind is to be kept clear and pure that it may distinguish between good and evil. As you repeat the prayer Christ taught His disciples, and then strive to answer it in the daily life, the Holy



Spirit will renew the mind and heart and will give you strength to carry out high and holy purposes. --MS 24, 1901. {1MCP 327.4}

Why is this necessary and why after 1844? Our lesson title is the Sanctuary and the Little Horn.

*Daniel 8:11 "It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low."*

*2 Thes 2:3,4 "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."*

Could the little horn go into heaven and tear up a building in heaven? Does Satan want to be enthroned in a building or in the hearts and minds of intelligent beings? Has the little horn power been able to introduce lies into the minds of people such that the dwelling place of God has been brought low?

So why after 1844, can God cleanse the inner recesses of the mind/heart/soul without our consent? Without our voluntarily opening our minds/hearts to Him? The reason it was after 1844, is because God knew it would take this long until enough truth about God had been recovered and the lies of the man of sin had been revealed such that we would genuinely trust God and open our hearts to Him completely.

In the teachers comments on Sunday it says, "and the little horn has set itself to hide the true meaning and significance of the sanctuary."

And, many, within our own church still don't see the true significance of the sanctuary.

## TUESDAY

Read last two paragraphs.

How has the attack of the little horn power on the true plan of salvation infected Christianity and how does that infection persist into our own church?

The lesson cites things like, a human priesthood replacing Christ, the mass, the power of the church to forgive sins etc.

But if we rid ourselves of the human priesthood, the mass, the power of the church to forgive sins, indulgences, and the other doctrinal distortions of the past, have we rid ourselves of the ultimate lie, the true distortion, the root evil to which all the other lies are tied?

What is the root evil? What is the underlying premise for which Christ had to die, for which the priest has to minister, for which the saints are pleading, for which the mass must be held and Christ's blood must be shed over and over again, for which sins must be forgiven, for which indulgences were sold? What is this underlying perversion?

That God needs to be appeased, propitiated, pled with, that the blood was shed to remove God's wrath, that Christ's death was designed to deal with God's offended sensibilities and get God to forgive us. And now we actually teach doctrines that have Jesus doing the work proscribed by the little horn, the work proscribed by Rome. Many have Jesus in heaven pleading His blood to the Father. And this underlying evil, this lie, still permeates and infects our church. And we don't deal with it or see it, why? Because we spend too much time throwing stones at others who hold doctrines different than ours rather than proclaiming the truth about God as revealed in Jesus!

Teachers comments states, “Satan has tried to replace the true worship of God with some kind of counterfeit.” What Satan wants is to replace God as the one worshipped with himself.

In the teachers comments it states “The earthly tabernacle, and later the temple in Jerusalem, was a powerful symbol of God’s abiding presence with His people. It represented not only His presence but the process by which His erring people could be reconciled and restored into a right relationship with Him. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest, how well do you understand the symbols connected with the sanctuary service?”

Thoughts or questions about any of the symbols associated with the sanctuary?

- Lamb
- High Priest
- Moses
- Twelve Tribes
- The population of the earth
- The brazen altar
- The horns
- The laver and water
- The daily priests
- The vessels
- The holy place
- The lampstand/ and bowl
- The showbread and drink offering
- The golden altar
- The horns
- The incense
- The curtain
- The shikinah
- The angels
- The manna/law/rod
- The chest
- The lid

## 2006 Q3 Lesson 12 The Pre-Advent Judgment

The text I couldn't remember last Sabbath was "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus," Ephesians 2:6

### SABBATH

Read second paragraph – thoughts? Is it a message of hope and promise that God is going to return to punish evil? What does it mean to punish evil? Can evil be punished without punishing intelligent beings?

If God were to restrain Himself and not use His power to inflict an external punishment upon evildoers, would evil doers then have no punishment?

Does sin and evil have no inherent consequence and penalty? What is it?

*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." Genesis 2:16,17*

*"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4,5*

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23*

*When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:13-15*

So, who was telling the truth? Was Satan right, there is nothing wrong with sin, the only problem is with God, He is a power monger and if you don't do what He says He will use His power to kill. But if God would leave us alone and not interfere we could live forever in a much happier state than with His constant meddling? Was Satan right? Would sinners, left alone live forever?

Or if God had not immediately interceded then sinners would already be dead and it is because of God's gracious intercessions that we are given opportunity to live and find eternal healing?

Does sin damage the sinner? Does it change the nature, character, methods? So does God have to inflict a punishment upon the sinner? Does evil have to be externally punished? Is there a punishment for evil? What is it? Self-destruction and death without God's grace.

Read Memory Text "And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" ([Revelation 22:12](#)).

Go to WEDNESDAY's lesson and read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

What do the memory text and these two paragraphs really mean? Does it mean that God is in heaven weighing all the good deeds you have ever done against all the sin you have committed in order to figure out your reward? Or is God in heaven weighing your sins against the blood of Jesus in order to figure out your reward?

What is the underlying premise from the quarterly? That God is determining the outcome of our lives and our reward – is that premise correct?

What is more reasonable? That each of us determine whether to accept the remedy Christ has provided and based on our choice we are either healed or we die from our own sick condition.

The works we do are merely a reflection of the condition of the heart, “from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” So the works are merely evidence or signs of the condition of the heart and thus the determination of our destiny is not based on our works but on the condition of our heart. And what determines the condition of our heart? Whether we have trusted God and opened the heart to Him for healing. We are born infected with a terminal condition and only by receiving the remedy of God’s love/character reproduced within us are we healed.

What is the reward for the righteous? What is the reward for sin? The wages of sin? So who determines who gets life and who gets death? Is the eternal destiny of each person determined in a courtroom in heaven? Or is it determined in the heart/mind of the believer? What determines your eternal destiny? Whether you have trusted God and experienced healing in the inner man! And what is the reward? Life for the righteous and death for the wicked! And why does He bring His reward with Him? Because when Christ reveals Himself those who are in harmony with Him are transformed by His life giving glory and those out of harmony beg for the rocks and trees to fall on them and are tormented in their hearts/minds by such overwhelming pure love.

One of our distant SS members, Ray van den Hoven sent this in:

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}

## SUNDAY

Second to last paragraph read “Notice a theme...” What is the kingdom they will be given? Jesus prayed, “Thy kingdom come thy will be done.” Jesus said, “the kingdom of God is within you.”

Is it not the kingdom of love? And how do the saints get this kingdom and how does this kingdom eradicate evil? What does this have to do with 1844?

*“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 7:13,14*

This is one of our texts for today, what is being described? There are 4 texts describing the same event, Daniel 8:14, Daniel 7:9-14, Malachi 3:1-3 and parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25. So this is one of the texts referring to the events of 1844. And what is it describing? Christ receiving authority, power and glory – for what purpose?

*“Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.” John 13:3-5*

What did Jesus do in John 13 when “the Father had put all things under his power”? He washed the feet of His disciples! What does the dirt on the feet represent? Sin! And what does the washing represent? Cleansing from sin. And what does the Daniel text say happened in 1844? Jesus

receives all power and authority from the Father and then what do you think He does with this power? He cleanses – what does He cleanse?

Malachi 3 – the Levites – the priests – the believers. And how does He cleanse? By revealing the truth, by pouring out the Spirit, by recreating us in heart/mind/character.

And how is evil eradicated? It is eradicated in the hearts/minds of God's creatures who trust Him.

## MONDAY

Middle paragraph read "It is very clear..." Thoughts? Is it very clear? What does it mean the little horn is punished? What is the little horn? Is it a person? How do you punish an non-individual? How do you punish a political power? Take away its power? How is power taken away from someone? By taking away its followers and how does God do that? Does He do it by killing everyone who doesn't agree with Him or by revealing truth so that those who have believed in the lies of the little horn power reject that power?

*MT 16:15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"*

*MT 16:16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

*MT 16:17 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."*

What does this mean the gates of hell will not prevail? What are gates used for in war? Defense – they are not used for offense – Satan took this planet by deception and lies. He holds it by keeping people in darkness and filling the hearts and minds with fear. Christ came in human form and said, upon His life His victory He would build His church and the devil's kingdom would not be able to stand. The truth we have about God as revealed in Jesus will destroy the gates of hell, destroy the gates of lies, fear, insecurity, misunderstanding that holds people in bondage and set people free!

*ISA 14:12 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!*

*ISA 14:13 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."*

*ISA 14:14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;  
I will make myself like the Most High."*

*ISA 14:15 But you are brought down to the grave,  
to the depths of the pit.*

*ISA 14:16 Those who see you stare at you,  
they ponder your fate:  
"Is this the man who shook the earth  
and made kingdoms tremble,*

*ISA 14:17 the man who made the world a desert,  
who overthrew its cities  
and would not let his captives go home?"*

What happens? The truth is revealed and the people look upon Satan and his puppets and recognize the truth and the power of Satan is broken, he loses his hold on people, his power is taken away.

What about the idea that these are critical elements in Hebrew thinking – does God think in Hebrew cultural context? Or were those Hebrews trying to understand God from the confines of their context? Do you think we can see God better if we think like a Hebrew of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC?

Why did God give them an eye for an eye, death for picking up sticks on Sabbath and their system of “justice”? Was it because God gave them the greatest revelation of His character and methods or because He stooped to meet them where they were and gave them a very dim light because that is all they could handle?

Bottom green read – are we vindicated? Does God in the judgment declare the saints “innocent”? Some suggest that in the judgment God looks upon us and doesn’t see our sinful and wicked character but sees the robe of His Son’s righteousness covering us and then declares us innocent or vindicated. Yes or no?

No, God does not simply declare us innocent or perfect! Why? Because we are all really sick and terminal and what good would it do if Christ replaces our medical records with His medical records and tricks God into thinking we are healthy when we are not? Or is it that we have actually partaken of the remedy Christ has provided and that we have actually been healed in the inner man?

Consider Zechariah 3

*ZEC 3:1 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?”*

*ZEC 3:3 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.”*

*ZEC 3:4 Then he said to Joshua, “**See, I have taken away your sin,** and I will put rich garments on you.”*

*ZEC 3:5 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.*

So what happens? Satan accuses and God says...

## WEDNESDAY

Teacher’s comments states “God isn’t just sitting around doing nothing. Jesus isn’t reclining on a heavenly chaise lounge. The Holy Spirit isn’t on vacation. Instead, the lives and works of all who’ve ever lived are under review...That’s good news. God actively is involved in our lives. Better news. Jesus pleads our case, if we’ve trusted Him for salvation. Best news: He’s on His way, and a reward is with Him!”

Is Jesus in heaving pleading our cases? To whom?



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? We who teach the people must ourselves have a vital connection with God. In spirit and work we should be to the people a wellspring; because Christ in us is a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. Sickness and pain may test and try our patience and our faith, but the brightness of the Presence of the universe is with us and we must hide self behind Jesus. . . . {2MR 37.1}

Who is Jesus pleading with? When Jesus is pleading the Holy Spirit is doing something what? Working in us to do what? When Jesus talks to us today how is it accomplished? If Jesus is in heaven, limited by His humanity to one place at a time, then when He is pleading can we hear Him? No, so the Holy Spirit is the way Christ speaks to us. The Holy Spirit transmits Christ's heartfelt pleas of love from Christ to you and me. Christ is in heaven pleading to you and me!

*"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 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. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."* John 16:12-15

*"In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God."* John 16:26,27

Who is Christ pleading with or to whom is Christ pleading?

Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, that He might know how to succor those who should be tempted. His life is our example. He shows by His willing obedience that man may keep the law of God and that transgression of the law, not obedience to it, brings him into bondage. The Saviour was full of compassion and love; He never spurned the truly penitent, however great their guilt; but He severely denounced hypocrisy of every sort. He is acquainted with the sins of men, He knows all their acts and reads their secret motives; yet He does not turn away from them in their iniquity. **He pleads and reasons with the sinner**, and in one sense -- that of having Himself borne the weakness of humanity -- He puts Himself on a level with him. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." {4T 294.1}

"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: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezekiel 33:11

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3:20; 2

Everything that God could do has been done for the salvation of man. In one rich gift He poured out the treasures of heaven. He invites, He pleads, He urges; but He will not compel men to come unto Him. He waits for their cooperation. He waits for the consent of the will, that He may bestow upon the sinner the riches of His grace, reserved for him from the foundation of the world. . . . The Lord does not design that human power should be paralyzed; but that by cooperation with God, man may become a more efficient agent in His

hands. . . . The Lord holds out to man the privilege of copartnership with Himself.--The Messenger, Apr. 26, 1893. {Ye Shall Receive Power 41.3}

With whom does Jesus plead? And the Father? And the Holy Spirit?

## THURSDAY

Asks us to Read:

*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Hebrews 9:22-24*

What does this mean? Does this mean God couldn't forgive without Christ dying? Or we couldn't be restored to our original condition without Christ dying? When you have cancer and the doctor treats you, you want the cancer to go into... remission. The cancerous cells remit back to their precancerous condition. Likewise, without the shedding of Christ's blood we could not be restored to our pre-sinful condition.

Now what about the application to "heavenly things"?

*For we know that when this tent we live in—our body here on earth—is torn down, God will have a house in heaven for us to live in, a home he himself has made, which will last for ever. And now we sigh, so great is our desire that our home which comes from heaven should be put on over us; by being clothed with it we shall not be without a body. While we live in this earthly tent, we groan with a feeling of oppression; it is not that we want to get rid of our earthly body, but that we want to have the heavenly one put on over us, so that what is mortal will be transformed by life. God is the one who has prepared us for this change, and he gave us his Spirit as the guarantee of all that he has in store for us. 2 Corinthians 5:1-5 GNT*

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}

Christ is working to cleanse us, you and me and bring us back into full unity with Himself and His Father.

## 2006 Q3 Lesson 13 The Gospel and Judgment

Any thoughts from the class regarding this lesson? After reading this lesson what impact did it have on you? If you take it as the quarterly reads did you experience good news or was it depressingly sad news?

### SABBATH

Memory Text Read: What does it mean? Does it mean we have one who is pleading with the Father in our behalf, or we have one who along with the Father, in addition to the Father is working in our behalf?

*“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. In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.” Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. John 16:25-29*

*What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 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? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 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*

So, is Jesus up there pleading to the Father or pleading along with the Father to us?

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. {2MR 37.1}

*“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 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. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.” John 16:12-15*

Where does the Holy Spirit get the message He brings to us? From Christ and what is Christ doing in heaven? Pleading? For and with whom?

Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, that He might know how to succor those who should be tempted... **He pleads and reasons with the sinner**, and in one sense -- that of having Himself borne the weakness of humanity -- He puts Himself on a level with him. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” {4T 294.1}

*“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: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?” Ezekiel 33:11*

*“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” Revelation 3:20; 2*

Everything that God could do has been done for the salvation of man. In one rich gift He poured out the treasures of heaven. He invites, He pleads, He urges; but He will not compel men to come unto Him. He waits for their cooperation. He waits for the consent of the will, that He may bestow upon the sinner the riches of His grace, reserved for him from the foundation of the world. . . . The Lord does not design that human power should be paralyzed; but that by cooperation with God, man may become a more efficient agent in His hands. . . . The Lord holds out to man the privilege of copartnership with Himself.--The Messenger, Apr. 26, 1893. {Ye Shall Receive Power 41.3}

Read the entire Sabbath lesson – thoughts?

What is the point of the second paragraph that atonement comes only through the Cross? What do the lesson authors mean? How are they using the word Atone and Atonement? In its definition of appeasement or payment or expiation or propitiation, to pay a debt, to make up for a deficiency, is this the Biblical meaning of Atonement?

Atonement is an English word, and thus was not used in the Bible. But back in 1611 when the KJV of the Bible in the NT the word atonement is only used once and it is in Romans 5:11 “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” What did Atonement mean in 1611?

At-one-ment, unity, oneness, harmony, reconciliation. There was nothing in the meaning at all that meant appeasement or payment or propitiation or make amends, it means to bring two parties which are at odds back into “one”.

Does it make a difference to think of what Christ came to accomplish if we view the atonement as a legal payment, propitiation, expiation versus seeing the atonement as God working to restore us to unity with Him? Which is more likely?

*“And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 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.” Ephesians 1:9,10*

*“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. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 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 1:16-20*

So what is the purpose of the Day of Atonement? To bring all things back into unity and oneness with God! In order to do this is it about reviewing records and removing sins from record books or about cleansing hearts and minds and restoring intelligent beings into unity with God?

## SUNDAY

Read all three paragraphs – thoughts? Does this encourage you? What do you think it means “with such a God?” What kind of God have they described?

Does it worry you to have every secret thing to come into review? Is it, as the lesson suggests frightening?

What if you were sick, having internal pain, nausea, vomiting and felt a lump growing in your abdomen and you went to your doctor, would you want your doctor to exam you closely? Would you want every secret and hidden thing to be exposed? Or would you prefer that when you go to the doctor your healthy brother stands in as your substitute and your brother is examined in your behalf?

What is the purpose of the atonement?

*“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 7:13,14*

This is one of our texts for today, what is being described? There are 4 texts describing the same event, Daniel 8:14, Daniel 7:9-14, Malachi 3:1-3 and parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25. So this is one of the texts referring to the events of 1844. And what is it describing? Christ receiving authority, power and glory – for what purpose?

*“Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.” John 13:3-5*

What did Jesus do in John 13 when “the Father had put all things under his power”? He washed the feet of His disciples! What does the dirt on the feet represent? Sin! And what does the washing represent? Cleansing from sin. And what does the Daniel text say happened in 1844? Jesus receives all power and authority from the Father and then what do you think He does with this power? He cleanses – what does He cleanse?

Malachi 3 – the Levites – the priests – the believers. And how does He cleanse? By revealing the truth, by pouring out the Spirit, by recreating us in heart/mind/character.

What about the idea of judgment and the text that says judgment starts with the house of God?

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}

Why does judgment start with the house of God? Because they are where the revelation of God begins and thus they are the first to make judgments about whether to accept God, as Christ revealed Him to be and trust Him, or reject this God and not trust Him.

What about the idea that Christ in our place in the judgment? That we are covered with Christ’s righteousness and the Father doesn’t see us?

Is God in the deception business? Is He in the business of declaring righteous those who are not? Is heaven no more than a con job? Some unrighteous people have Christ’s robe of righteousness covering them and the Father overlooks the fact they are unrighteous or He can’t see through the robe of His Son and therefore God doesn’t really know? Is this what is going on?



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. "I counsel thee," He says, "to buy of Me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Rev. 3:18. {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. "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 311.4}

## MONDAY

Read middle paragraph "Central to the..." What does the blood symbolize? What is the purpose of ministering the blood in the old system? It symbolizes the life of Christ and the death of sin. Where did Christ say the blood was to be administered?

*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. 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. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. John 6:53-56*

Where is the blood to be administered? Into what temple? Into the temple of the Holy Spirit? To do what? What is the blood symbolic of?

"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

So what is happening? Jesus took upon Himself our defective Humanity, Jesus a unique being in all creation, born of a woman under the law of sin and death yet His Father was the Holy Spirit so that even though His physical body was defective, within His heart and mind was the perfect, unadulterated Law of Love the Law of God. And this is the source of all life, and is symbolized by the blood of the Lamb, the shed blood of the Lamb is symbolic of the war between these two antagonistic principles, when Christ was tempted to save self, but chose instead to love and voluntarily surrendered self – thus love defeated selfishness in the person of Jesus. Now in us, we are to partake of the "blood" life of Christ, have our hearts and minds so united with His that we are recreated within and die to the old man and then it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me. This is what it means to apply the blood and this is what Christ is working to do in each of us.



## WEDNESDAY

Romans 8:1 there is not condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus? Why? What does it mean to be “in Christ Jesus”? To be in unity with Him, to be at-one with Him. And why is there no condemnation? Because there is nothing to condemn? The rebellious selfish condition has been purged and unity with God and His Law of Love has been restored.

Read first paragraph, How would you explain this paragraph?

## THURSDAY

Read the entire day – notice in the first paragraph that the sinner must defend themselves against the scrutiny of God, it says “And though they have nothing in and of themselves to give them merit before God...” and “while these things never could justify them before God...” But in the EGW quotation she describes that Christ defends the saints against the attacks of Satan, she says, “We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us.” And “He [Christ] is able to silence the accuser...”

Does it make difference to picture us cowering before God and worrying about how we can stand before Him versus the picture that God is actually working to free us from Satan’s powerful deceptions?

What is Satan alleging and what is the purpose of the records?

Satan alleges it isn’t fair that God saves some and not others. He points to our sins and says, “See these are as bad as me and if You save them then You must save me. You are not fair. You are arbitrary. You are untrustworthy and Your actions in saving these sinners reveals that I was always right about You.”

But Christ opens the records which reveal the history of our sickness, but also reveal that we have accepted Christ’s remedy and that we have actually been healed and restored back into unity with God, that God’s law of love is written again in our hearts and thus God is not arbitrary.

I had a patient who was a Jehovah’s witness and she was in a helicopter crash and crushed her pelvis and refused a blood transfusion. Multiple doctors and nurses and staff pled with her to accept the blood transfusion but she refused and she died. Others, who were in accidents and accepted transfusions lived. Now if someone sued the doctor and alleged that doctor is arbitrary that he saves some but lets others die – will the medical records become important in the case? This is the reason for the heavenly records – they exonerate God revealing why some are saved and some are not.

Teacher’s comments states “we, as Christians, find it hard to accept the simplicity of salvation. Why do you think that is?” Could it be that so many erroneous, nonsensical, distorted and twisted theories have entered into Christian teaching that makes what is taught confusing and unintelligible?

## 2006 Q3 Lesson 14 The Meaning of the Judgment Today

Read Memory Text – thoughts? Does this mean the time when God is sitting in judgment of us or the time when we are making our judgments about Him?

*“Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,” John 5:22*

The hour of His judgment has come, but Christ said the Father judges no one – do we believe Christ or do we say, Well, Christ didn’t really understand?

Or is it that Revelation is saying that the hour when Christ will judge us has come?

*You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. John 8:15*

*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 12:36,37*

Jesus says He passes judgment on no one, do we believe Him? Is there evidence that God is the one being judged?

*“Some of them were undoubtedly faithless, but what then? Can you imagine that their faithlessness could disturb the faithfulness of God? Of course not! God must be true, even if every living man be proved a liar. Remember the scripture? That you might be justified in your words, And might prevail when you come into judgment.” Romans 3:3,4 Phillips translation*

Do we have other evidence that God was the one accused? How did Satan tempt Adam and Eve? Was it not an accusation that God was untrustworthy? That God was selfish?

There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the un-fallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,--all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King. {DA 834.1}

All the powers of his master-mind were now bent to the work of deception, to secure the sympathy of the angels that had been under his command. Even the fact that Christ had warned and counseled him, was perverted to serve his traitorous designs. To those whose loving trust bound them most closely to him, Satan had represented that he was wrongly judged, that his position was not respected, and that his liberty was to be abridged. From misrepresentation of the words of Christ, he passed to prevarication and direct falsehood, accusing the Son of God of a design to humiliate him before the inhabitants of Heaven. He sought also to make a false issue between himself and the loyal angels. All whom he could not subvert and bring fully to his side, he accused of indifference to the interests of heavenly beings. The very work which he himself was doing, he charged upon those who remained true to God. And to sustain his charge of God’s injustice toward him, he resorted to misrepresentation of the words and acts of the Creator. It was his policy to perplex the angels 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. His high position, in such close connection with the divine administration, gave greater force to his representations, and many were induced to unite with him in rebellion against Heaven’s authority. {GC88 496.1}

Where did rebellion begin? In heaven, over what? Over an attack on God Himself, which spread to this planet. And What do you think the war will end over? What will bring an end to the war? God is the one on trial, God has always been the one on trial. Consider the story of Job...

Let's consider some more judgment statements from Jesus:

*Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." John 9:39*

What does this mean?

*Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." John 12:31,32*

I thought judgment wasn't until 1844 – what did Christ mean when He said, "Now is the time for judgment on this world" or could it mean "now is the time for judgment of this world"? Well, what did He say would cause this judgment? His crucifixion – would do something, draw all beings to Him. Is He saying that by revealing the truth about Himself, that this is what brings judgment? Does it mean the revelation of truth causes all intelligent beings to make a judgment about God?

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}

When who comes into judgment? God, how is it that God comes into judgment? Who can judge God what does it mean?

Why does the Cross of Christ bring judgment? What does the Cross of Christ force us to make judgments about? God Himself – what He is like, the methods of Satan vs. the methods of God...

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}

What is the principle Satan hates? What did the Cross prove? That God is truly unselfish, even to the point of letting His creatures torture and kill Him.

Is the first angel's message teaching a time when God sits on His throne judging us or a time when all the world will make judgments about God? Is it saying, wake up, be in awe of our incredible God and reveal in your life the glory of His character for the time when He opens Himself up fully to the scrutiny and judgment of His intelligent creatures has come?

What does this have to do with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary?

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.

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.” 2 Thes 2:3,4*

He is talking about that same little horn power who 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. Why does this defile the heavenly sanctuary?

What do you think the building blocks of the heavenly sanctuary are? Do you envision bricks and mortar, goat’s skin, granite or brass and silver and gold? Does anyone really think God’s Temple is made of mere inanimate materials and that Satan wanted to occupy a building? What are the building blocks of God’s Heavenly Temple? What are the actual structural components upon which this temple is 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.*

And Jesus says,

*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*

*By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. Ezekiel 28:18*

*Revelation 2:9 & 3:9 states those who are like Satan are called the “synagogue of Satan.”*

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!

## SUNDAY

Read second paragraph- thoughts – what is this greatest injustice? I thought the cross was all about God's justice? Why is it an injustice?

“To put it generally, there are two views of the Cross, one objective and one subjective, or one that thinks of the Cross as doing something to God, and the other that thinks of the Cross as doing something to man.

“The first view of the Cross is just this – and I suppose it is the commonest view of the Cross – that on the Cross Jesus bore the agony, the pains and the penalty that we should have borne. The idea is that we were under the condemnation of God, and God was going to eliminate us, when Jesus came to God and said, ‘Let me bear it for them.’ Jesus is our substitute, bearing the punishment that we should have borne.

“Brought up in that view, very early, while still a boy, I began to feel there was something quite desperately wrong with it. I thought there were two things wrong. First this, that it implies or actually says that something Jesus did changed the attitude of God, that God's hand was posed to strike, his condemnation poised to obliterate, and Jesus came and begged us off as it were, by taking it upon himself. Somehow or other Jesus changed a wrathful, angry God into a gentle God. I could always understand, even then, the saying of the little girl, ‘Mummy, I love Jesus but I hate God.’ And when I went to the New Testament and I could find no evidence for this at all, for the New Testament has nothing but God's love – ‘God so loved the world that he sent his Son.’ In Jesus God proves his *love*, that while we were yet enemies Christ died for us. The whole thing is inside the love of God. I saw this; I could not help seeing it. Jesus did not change the attitude of God; Jesus shows what the attitude of God is like. And then there was something else which came to me. It was supposed to be for the sake of his justice that God punished Jesus – to satisfy God's justice someone has to take the punishment, and that someone was Jesus. It came to me while I was still young that this means that in order to satisfy his justice, God had to do the unjustest thing this world has ever seen; that in order to satisfy his holy justice he punished the only perfectly good man there ever was, his own beloved Son. I began to feel I could not believe in a God like that or trust a God who did such a thing. For awhile I was out of Christianity altogether, completely.

“I began to think again and I came to that thing which is always in my mind – that in Jesus we see perfectly displayed the mind of God. This is God – in these last days, in that last week – this is God from beginning to end, saying ‘I love you like that; you can batter me, you can bruise me, you can forsake me, you can crown me with thorns, you can treat me with injustice, you can scourge me – I love you, nothing will stop me from loving you.’ And this is why, in the end, Jesus had to die – because if Jesus had not died it would have meant that at some point the love of God said, ‘Thus far and not further. Stop, I can't love you any more.’” William Barclay, *Discovering Jesus* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000) pp. 55-57.

Did a great injustice occur to Christ? Was it from His Father or was it from His creatures? Did Christ have to die because God demanded it?

Read first sentence of third paragraph – thoughts? Who is it that will need to come to the conclusion/judgment which condemns evil as evil and sees righteousness as righteous? Remember Isaiah 14 – what happens but Satan is exposed for the fraud he is and when he is seen for what he is his power is broken and the lies about God are removed and rest again on Satan. No longer will people say the hurricane, tornado, earthquake that destroyed their home is an act of God. No



longer will people say when illness or murder takes a loved one in death that God took their loved one, no longer will people say when a disaster strikes that God is punishing the nations for wickedness. No, for God will have written His law in the hearts and minds and everyone will know God and Satan will have been exposed as the source of all suffer, disease, pain and death!

## MONDAY

Bottom paragraph read – thoughts? Some have expressed the desire to practice explaining these concepts, would anyone like to explain this paragraph to us?

When I read something I am always asking questions, what does that mean, is that really true, always true, are there exceptions? If so, why? What would such a concept say about God?

Is there a difference between justice and righteousness? In the Greek they are the same. What does it mean to be justified? To be set right or put right, in order for us to be set right or put right what needs to happen? Does something need to happen to God or us? If Christ stands in our place in the judgment in heaven, so that when the Father judges us He actually sees Christ how does that actually put us right? How does that change us? If such theory were true wouldn't it be a big heavenly deception? A con game? Here are all these unrighteous people who are "declared" righteous because Jesus prevents the Father from seeing their true condition?

Isn't it more reasonable, that Christ actually works in us to cleanse our hearts and minds, to regenerate us, to transform us to be like Jesus in character here and now so that when the Father sees us He sees the character of His Son because it is reproduced within us?

*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. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. 1John 3:2,3*

Bottom question asks, "What are some of the questions that you want to ask God? What are some things that you, right now, just can't understand?"

In Teacher's comments the study guide quotes Romans 8:1 "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for through Christ the law of the Spirit has set me free from the law of sin and death." What does this mean? Why is there no condemnation?

We are back into unity and oneness with God, the Law of Love is written again on the heart and selfishness has been purged. We are healed!

## TUESDAY

The lesson observes that the judgment scene in Daniel 7 ends with the second coming of Christ, why does the second come follow? What is this time in heaven all about? It is the final culmination of the healing and transforming of the hearts and minds of believers so that we are ready to meet Him when He comes. It is the time when every person in the world becomes either so settled into the truth both intellectually and spiritually that they cannot be moved or so settled into the lie they cannot be moved. This is not a time of going through records and once all the paperwork in heaven is complete He will come.

## WEDNESDAY

Does Christ stand in a court room scene in our place being judged? No, there is no Biblical evidence for this. In Zechariah 3 the judgment scene has Joshua the High Priest standing there Himself, in the book of Job a mini-judgment scene is carried out and no one stands in for Job.



If you were sick and dying and went to the physician would you want your perfectly healthy brother to stand in for you during the examination? What good would it do you for the physician to find your brother healthy?

Why do we deserve death? Is it because God is required to kill us? Or is it because without intervention from God our condition is terminal?

If you had a child and told them never ever to touch the pesticides in the garage for if they do they will surely die, and one day your child drinks the pesticides, does that mean you will now have to kill them? Does it mean you will have to punish them? Or if it were your child would you immediately begin trying to save your child? And what do we mean when we say save? Do we mean setting about getting you to forgive your child for their disobedience? Or do we mean healing? As soon as mankind sinned God set into motion His plan of healing/salvation.

Is the judgment about vindicating us? Or God? Who stands accused? Then what role do we have? We are merely witnesses, evidence if you will, of God's incredible grace, goodness, love and the healing power of His methods.

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Is there still more growing for us to do? Have we fully understood the meaning? Have we been presenting a clear message?

“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.

“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).

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 1 Foundations

Before we start this new quarter, we just finished 14 lessons on The Gospel, 1844 and Judgment and I wanted to get some feedback from the class as to what the last quarter meant to you? What did you learn during the last quarter?

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Go around the room and each person read a paragraph from the introduction on page 2.

Thoughts?

What about the idea put forth by the “scientific” view which says we are here by pure chance? Is that true for the human race as a species? No, God created the human race, no accident no chance. But what about you and me as individuals? Were we created by a special act of God? Or did we come into existence because of our parents? And was there some random chance involved in which of the billions of sperm got to that egg first?

Does it undermine faith in God if we believe that we as individuals were not created by God the way we are? Or do we believe that God creates each human being individually? Did God give mankind the ability to procreate or does God act to bring forth each individual human?

What would it mean if God were the one bringing forth each human? Did anyone in this room choose to be born a sinner, defective, diseased? Then if God made us each individually would it not be His fault you and I are the way we are? But when we realize that He created Adam and Eve perfect and gave them the ability to procreate in their image we realized God did not create each of us individually.

Does that mean God loves us less? Of course not.

What about the comment that life is pain, sorrow, loss, fear and it remains inexplicable – any thoughts? Can we explain it? How, what explanation would you give?

The lesson states mankind was created in a “purposeful act” and EGW states:

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 was God’s original purpose for the world and mankind? Was this world God’s answer to the allegations raised in heaven? What were those allegations?

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}

The allegation Satan made is: “God is selfish” – and what did this creation reveal? What would have been seen if this creation had stayed loyal? Mankind was made in God’s image and just as

the Godhead in unity creates, so too, God made mankind so that in the unity of love a man and woman can create beings in their image, the object of their love. And how would parents treat their children in a perfect world? Selfishly or selflessly? How would Adam and Eve governed the rest of the life forms on this planet had they stayed loyal? Do you think God had a purpose for the creation of man? Do you think Satan targeted this planet?

And what happened to the lesson once mankind fell? What did mankind then reveal? Adam offers up Eve, Eve blames God, Cain kills Abel and the entire world plunges into violence and men exploit the creation killing for sport. What lesson does that teach?

Why then was it necessary for Christ to come? To finish the work Adam failed – reveal the truth about God, clear up the further lies Adam and mankind have told about God, to expose Satan for the liar he is and that sin is the source of death, to overcome the infection of selfishness which brings death and to restore into the heart and mind of mankind God's law of love. All of these were objective realities that needed to be accomplished and had nothing to do with payment, or appeasement, or assuaging of wrath.

## SABBATH

Memory text read – thoughts? What is the foundation upon which we build?

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

*Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 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. 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.” Matthew 6:15-19*

What does this mean? Who is the rock upon which the church is built? If some say Peter how do we know that it is not Peter?

- Peter denied Christ not a very stable foundation
- Peter was a sinner and needed a Savior not a stable foundation
- James was the first human head of the church
- Peter himself tells us that Jesus is the foundation upon which the church is built:

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.” 1 Peter 2:4-6*

Paul tells us Jesus was the cornerstone upon which the church was built in Ephesians 2:20

Who is the foundation upon which we build? Jesus, why? What is to be built upon this foundation?

In our character building we must build on Christ. He is the sure foundation--a foundation which can never be moved. The tempest of temptation and trial cannot move the building which is riveted to the Eternal Rock. {Child Guidance 166.1}

He who would grow into a beautiful building for the Lord must cultivate every power of the being. It is only by the right use of the talents that the character can develop harmoniously. Thus we bring to the foundation that which is represented in the Word as gold, silver, precious stones--material that will stand the test of God's purifying fires. In our character building Christ is our example. {CG 166.2}

In character building it is of the greatest importance that we dig deep, removing all the rubbish and building on the immovable, solid Rock, Christ Jesus. The foundation firmly laid, we need wisdom to know how to build. . . . In His law God has given us a pattern, and it is after this pattern that we are to build. The law is the great standard of righteousness. It represents the character of God, and is the test of our loyalty to His government. {OHC 84.3}

What is Christ building upon Himself? His church, how does He build? What are His methods? He says that the gates of hell will no prevail against it, what does that mean? Are gates used offensively or defensively? Defensively.

Understand this, Satan stole this planet, he holds it only as a usurper, only by deceit, trickery and falsehood. Christ came into Satan's domain, faced him down and defeated him – how? How did Christ defeat Satan? Did He defeat Satan by force of arms?

He revealed the truth exposing Satan as a liar. And as the truth about God goes forward minds are deprogrammed, adherents to Satan's team are converted and the ranks of Satan are thinned while those on God's side increase. Satan's weapons cannot stand against what God has provided – His only hope is to get Christians to exchange the truth for a lie and ignorantly promote falsehoods about God so that people exchange one set of lies for another.

But Jesus said you will know the truth and the truth will set you free! We can go out in power, the power of love and truth and set captives free!

What are the keys of the kingdom?

“The keys of the kingdom of heaven” are the words of Christ. All the words of Holy Scripture are His, and are here included. These words have power to open and to shut heaven. They declare the conditions upon which men are received or rejected. Thus the work of those who preach God's word is a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. Theirs is a mission weighted with eternal results. {DA 413.6}

Christ seeks to engage the attention of repentant sinners, that they may read the expression of love in his face, and receive him as their Saviour. He would turn men's minds from every sound that emanates from him who abode not in the truth. He has knowledge to impart,--the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, who comes to the believing soul under the great seal of solemn assurance. I speak to you, he said; I, who speak not merely as a man,--I, who am the Truth,--I, who am acquainted with heaven, and all the characters that shall be there admitted,--I, who hold the keys of the kingdom of heaven,--I say, “Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God.” The realization of the absolute necessity of regeneration through the Holy Spirit comes to all who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality. {RH, July 19, 1898 par. 20}

There is majesty in the truth. Those who possess that faith which works by love, and purifies the soul, have a message, plain and decided, to bear to those who know not the truth. They have an important work entrusted to them. They are to live close to the One who has said, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.” The messenger who bears the word of life to a perishing world, is bound to speak the truth. The Lord Jesus is by his side, ready to enlarge the narrow confines of

human knowledge, that all may see that the teacher is presenting the gift of imperishable wealth to all who will believe on Christ. There is power in Christ to redeem the mental and moral character, and to mold the man after the divine likeness. {RH, July 19, 1898 par. 21}

What are the keys? And what do those keys do? They unlock the gates of hell? What are those gates? The lies that have held is in fear and insecurity and open our hearts and minds to receive God's love! Thus we experience a real transformation.

If you want to get into a secure computer do you need? A password or key! Christ holds the password, the key that unlocks the mystery of Godliness and opens our minds to His and we are infused with His thoughts, His attitude, His principles and are recreated within.

## SUNDAY

The lesson states that Genesis begins with the origin of our world and in Wednesday's lesson it points out that Stephen began his great speech with Genesis and the origin of this world, but for us today – is Genesis and the origin of this world the best starting point? Where does John start his gospel?

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? Is it wrong to ask questions? Does asking questions mean one doesn't have faith or might it mean that one doesn't have answers? Is faith a replacement for answers? So can you in faith ask questions? What question would you like to ask?

How has the Genesis account come under attack? What theory has substituted for the account of Genesis? The theory of evolution – what do you say regarding these two theories? What reasons do you have for believing in the Genesis account?

## MONDAY

Bottom pink section read – did anyone write a paragraph of how they see God they would like to share with the group?

## TUESDAY

First paragraph read – thoughts?

What is the emphasis here? What makes God most awesome?

“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.” MacDonald, George, *Discovering the Character of God*, Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989, p. 29.

## WEDNESDAY

This lesson is about Stephen's speech presenting to the Jews the reality that Jesus is the Savior. Who would like to share with us what you would say to someone who didn't believe in Jesus as to why Jesus is the Savior?

## THURSDAY

Read the top Scripture Romans 1:17 – what does it mean?



Does it mean that we don't think? That we don't ask questions? Or that we are able to tolerate difficult situations because we trust that in the end all will be healed and restored? We trust the outcome with God?

The lesson asks us to read Hebrews 11:1-22 the hall of faith and discuss the characters there – are there any you would like to discuss?

*“Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen..” Hebrews 11:1*

What does this mean? Greek = Hypostasis, Latin = substance, English = understanding.

### FRIDAY

Read third paragraph “Night, dark...” thoughts? What theories are perversions of Scripture? What man made theories are doing the most harm in our church?

Discuss question number 1.

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 2 In The Beginning

New Scientist, August 19 2006 – A survey of 32 European nations, US and Japan on the belief in evolution vs creation. What percent of people do you think believe that mankind evolved from lower life forms? What percent believe in special creation?

I have been warned that henceforth we shall have a constant contest. Science, so-called, and religion will be placed in opposition to each other, because finite men do not comprehend the power and greatness of God. These words of Holy Writ were presented to me: “Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” This will surely be seen among the people of God, and there will be those who are unable to perceive the most wonderful and important truths for this time, truths which are essential for their own safety and salvation, while matters that are in comparison as the merest atoms, matters in which there is scarcely a grain of truth, are dwelt upon and are magnified by the power of Satan so that they appear of the utmost importance. {Ev 593.1}

So what evidence did you bring with you regarding our origins either for or against? And what things cause you questions?

News article of skeleton of woman 3.3 million years old according to radiocarbon dating –

How do we as Christians handle radio dating techniques?

### Where does C -14 come from?

Radiocarbon dating relies on a simple natural phenomenon. As the Earth’s upper atmosphere is bombarded by cosmic radiation, atmospheric nitrogen is broken down into an unstable isotope of carbon - carbon 14 (C-14).

The unstable isotope is brought to Earth by atmospheric activity, such as storms, and becomes fixed in the biosphere. Because it reacts identically to C-12 and C-13, C-14 becomes attached to complex organic molecules through photosynthesis in plants and becomes part of their molecular makeup. Animals eating those plants in turn absorb Carbon-14 as well as the stable isotopes. This process of ingesting C-14 continues as long as the plant or animal remains alive.

### C-14 Decay Profile

The C-14 within an organism is continually decaying into stable carbon isotopes, but since the organism is absorbing more C-14 during its life, the ratio of C-14 to C-12 remains about the same as the ratio in the atmosphere. When the organism dies, the ratio of C-14 within its carcass begins to gradually decrease. The rate of decrease is ½ the quantity at death every 5,730 years. That is the half-life of C-14.

So when something like the bones found recently are dated at 3.3 million years, what do we say? Are they measuring the amount of radiocarbon correctly? Probably not for items over 50,000 years but probably so for things 50,000 years and less, but what is the problem? The assumption that radiocarbon has always been at its current levels.

This is totally untestable and unprovable, which makes it not scientific. And what if the amount of carbon 14 was significantly less in the recent past? Then anything which lived during that time would appear much older when dated today.

This is exactly what the Biblical record indicates. It indicates that prior to the flood there was a layer of water above the earth, similar to our Ozone which would have caused a global temperate climate and significantly reduced the amount of radiocarbon in the atmosphere. All of this would

result in the carbon dating techniques being invalid for determining the age of fossils which lived prior to the flood.

So the evolutionary theory has the assumption radiocarbon has been constant for millions of years and creation science has the assumption that radiocarbon significantly spiked after the flood. Can we prove which is the correct assumption? And not being able to prove either then can scientists honestly, scientifically “prove” the age of this skeleton?

### **What about the other radiodating techniques for rocks?**

Rocks are dated from a variety of radio decay dating techniques up to 40 different types. Imagine an hourglass, as the sand runs from the top to the bottom at a constant rate time can be measured. Likewise the decay rate of various radioactive substances is constant and can be measured from parent to daughter or top of the hourglass to the bottom. And depending on the rate and how much of each is present dates can be determined.

Now rocks on the earth have been dated to around 4.5 billion years of age. Meteors have also been dated – to ??? around 4.5 billion years of age. What does this mean? Can the rocks of the earth be 4.5 billion years of age and God still have created life here less than 10,000 years ago?

Yes, day one could describe the dispersing of a black hole, not the creating of matter out of nothing. In other words, God began creating 4.5 billion years ago and created an immense universe with numerous planets and species. Sometime in the recent past a conflict broke out in heaven and in order to bring this conflict to a close a black hole in space was chosen and Lucifer was given first opportunity and could do nothing. Then Christ comes and disperses the black hole, the mass of matter remaining, which had been created 4.5 billion years later he created into this earth and on day 4 He created the sun, moon and stars of this solar system i.e. the planets of this solar system.

Evolutionary theory states that the earth developed from a proto-earth around 4.5 billion years ago in a semi-molten condition. They claim over millions of years the cooling took place and different types of rock were formed from this process. Again totally untestable and unprovable – another pseudo science assumption.

But there is testable and provable scientific data that **PROVES** this theory wrong. Namely the polonium radio halos found in bedrock granite biotite all over the entire world. On every continent of the world the bedrock granite biotite contains millions and millions of these radio halos. And why is this significant? Because their half life is only micro-seconds and they could not possibly be there if the earth cooled over millions of years as the evolutionary theory has suggested. But they would be there if God spoke them into existence as the Bible states. The world's foremost leading evolutionary geologists have been publicly challenged to explain how these could possibly exist in light of their theory and they have been unable to give an answer. These radio halos are not assumptions they are testable and provable scientific facts which supports the creation story and which disproves evolutionary theory of the big bang.

SDA church allows for life on this planet to have been created anywhere between 6000 and 20,000 years, why? It appears that in the genealogies of the OT some scholars believe there were some significant abbreviations in which not every generation was represented but just the major players in the lineage. So dating by only the names listed in the Bible could be a deficient list, leaving out names and result in an artificially shorter time line.

Now I have heard this reported, and if any Biblical scholars are in the room maybe they can share more on this, but I have heard that in Christ's day there were three different textual families of the Scriptures, the Egyptian (represented by the Septuagint), the Palestinian (represented by the

Dead Sea Scrolls) and the Babylonian (represented by the Masoretic Text). Reportedly the Egyptian family is the Scripture Paul used, the Palestinian family is the Scripture Jesus used and the Babylonian family is the one we use. In the translation of the OT for the NIV the primary text used throughout was the Masoretic text.

In some books like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the minor prophets they are nearly word for word in all families, but other books of the OT have some differences depending on which family you use. One of the places of disagreement is the genealogies that we use to date the age of life on this planet. We get our 6000 years from the Babylonian or Masoretic text. The ancient copies of the Egyptian or Septuagint would suggest 7000–10,000 years and Palestinian text around 9000 years, which means they would have seen the world turning 7000 years old around the time of Christ, which is another reason they were looking for the Advent in keeping with 1000 year Sabbath metaphor.

Light from stars takes millions of years to travel from various points in space to reach out planet – how can we say the Genesis account of creating the sun moon and stars happened just 6000 years ago?

New Scientist – missing links found, 4 different interspecies identified.

### Missing links

Some so-called missing links, like *Tiktaalik*, may not be the direct ancestors of the creatures alive today but cousins of those ancestors, so researchers prefer the term “transitional form”. Darwin acknowledged that the lack of transitional fossils was a problem for his theory, but many, many thousands have turned up since and the discoveries keep on coming. We now have fossil evidence of all the major changes in vertebrates, such as the evolution of mammals from reptiles. Some notable finds include:

***Archaeopteryx*** (pictured right): The first fossil was discovered just two years after Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*. Like modern birds, it had wings, feathers and a wishbone, yet retained a reptile-like pelvis and teeth. It is unlikely to be a direct ancestor of modern birds, but its mix of characters - and the beautiful state of preservation of several specimens – make *Archaeopteryx* one of the iconic fossils in the history of vertebrates.

This, *Archaeopteryx*, is a fraud, it is a bird fossil they have attempted to claim is a missing link.

***Cynodonts***: This group of reptiles laid eggs, yet had mammalian features such as molar teeth for chewing and a secondary palate separating the mouth from the nasal cavity, enabling them to breathe while chewing. Some of the bones that in other reptiles form part of the lower jaw instead helped transmit sound through the middle ear. *Cynodonts* probably had hair covering their bodies and were warm-blooded. Many fossil species have been found.

***Rodhocetus***: This early whale is intermediate in the transition from early hoofed land mammals back into a fully aquatic lifestyle. *Rodhocetus* still had hind limbs, and both front and hind limbs ended in webbed feet rather than flippers. However, it also had a very sturdy tail, and the vertebrae near its hind limbs are beginning to free themselves from the hips - a key step in whales developing their tail-pumping form of locomotion. (full article below)

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 gen-

erations 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}

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. {1SP 78.2}

Thoughts? What about the idea that these so called interspecies were genetic mutations from human experimentation on animals?

### **ANIMAL-HUMAN HYBRIDS SPARK CONTROVERSY**

Maryann Mott

[National Geographic News](#)

January 25, 2005

Scientists have begun blurring the line between human and animal by producing chimeras—a hybrid creature that’s part human, part animal.

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. They were allowed to develop for several days in a laboratory dish before the scientists destroyed the embryos to harvest their stem cells.

In Minnesota last year researchers at the Mayo Clinic created pigs with human blood flowing through their bodies. (Full article below)

Thoughts? Couldn’t the antediluvians, who lived for hundreds of years have done what we are doing with our short lives? And with life being more hearty, less devolved wouldn’t it be easier to make these amalgamations? And what about their intelligence, were they less intelligent than we?

So can we give, reasonable explanations for the evidence that fits with Biblical accounts?

But what is the core difference in evolutionary theory as the source of life and God as the Creator of life – other than the obvious God created, what is the core difference in principle?

Survival of the fittest principle is the source of life and growth and development

Other flaws in the evolutionary theory:

Life can come from no life

Order can come out of chaos – violates 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics

### **Geologic columns**

There is no geologic column anywhere in the world that actually contains the various layers of the supposed millions of years of evolution. The entire theory of geologic columns was constructed by a guy named Charles Lyle, a lawyer in Scotland, in 1830. This was long before any type of radio-dating techniques were available. They extrapolate from columns that contain several layers.

Geologic columns have been found on every continent with trees standing up traversing multiple layers that were supposedly laid down over millions of years.

Grand Canyon, supposedly represents millions of years of geologic sediment, and the Colorado River supposedly eroded it over millions of years. But the Colorado River enters the canyon at an altitude of 2800 feet and then there is the Kaibab uplift in which the earth rises 5000 feet so the top of the canyon walls are at an altitude of 700–8500 feet. The Colorado River exits the canyon at 1800 feet. Also there is no delta, so where did all the dirt go?

Why is this important? If the evolutionary theory is right, the river would have had to run uphill 5000 feet in order to erode away the canyon.

Human knowledge of both material and spiritual things is partial and imperfect; therefore many are unable to harmonize their views of science with Scripture statements. Many accept mere theories and speculations as scientific facts, and they think that God's Word is to be tested by the teachings of "science falsely so called." . . . {FLB 321.2}

Men have endeavored to be wiser than their Creator; human philosophy has attempted to search out and explain mysteries which will never be revealed, through the eternal ages. {FLB 321.3}

To many, scientific research has become a curse. God has permitted a flood of light to be poured upon the world in discoveries in science and art; but even the greatest minds, if not guided by the Word of God in their research, become bewildered in their attempts to investigate the relations of science and revelation. {FLB 321.4}

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. {FLB 321.5}

God is the author of science. . . . Rightly understood, science and the Written Word agree, and each sheds light on the other. Together they lead us to God, by teaching us something of the wise and beneficent laws through which He works. {FLB 321.6}

A knowledge of true science is power. . . . But while the knowledge of science is power, the knowledge that Jesus came in person to impart is still greater power. The science of salvation is the most important science to be learned in the preparatory school of earth. The wisdom of Solomon is desirable, but the wisdom of Christ is far more desirable and more essential. {FLB 321.7}



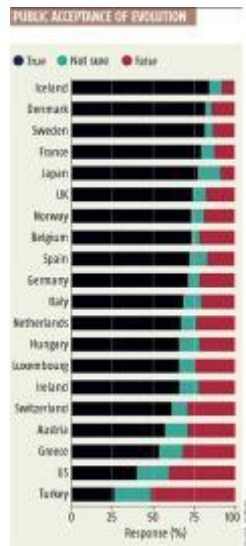
## REFERENCE ARTICLES

Why doesn't America believe in evolution?

19 August 2006

From New Scientist Print Edition. [Subscribe](#) and get 4 free issues.

Jeff Hecht



[Enlarge image](#)

### Public acceptance of evolution

Human beings, as we know them, developed from earlier species of animals: true or false? This simple question is splitting America apart, with a growing proportion thinking that we did not descend from an ancestral ape. A survey of 32 European countries, the US and Japan has revealed that only Turkey is less willing than the US to accept evolution as fact.

Religious fundamentalism, bitter partisan politics and poor science education have all contributed to this denial of evolution in the US, says Jon Miller of Michigan State University in East Lansing, who conducted the survey with his colleagues. “The US is the only country in which [the teaching of evolution] has been politicised,” he says. “Republicans have clearly adopted this as one of their wedge issues. In most of the world, this is a non-issue.”

Miller’s report makes for grim reading for adherents of evolutionary theory. Even though the average American has more years of education than when Miller began his surveys 20 years ago, the percentage of people in the country who accept the idea of evolution has declined from 45 in 1985 to 40 in 2005 (*Science*, vol 313, p 765). That’s despite a series of widely publicised advances in genetics, including genetic sequencing, which shows strong overlap of the human genome with those of chimpanzees and mice. “We don’t seem to be going in the right direction,” Miller says.

There is some cause for hope. Team member Eugenie Scott of the National Center for Science Education in Oakland, California, finds solace in the finding that the percentage of adults overtly rejecting evolution has dropped from 48 to 39 in the same time. Meanwhile the fraction of Americans unsure about evolution has soared, from 7 per cent in 1985 to 21 per cent last year. “That is a group of people that can be reached,” says Scott.

The main opposition to evolution comes from fundamentalist Christians, who are much more abundant in the US than in Europe. While Catholics, European Protestants and so-called mainstream US Protestants consider the biblical account of creation as a metaphor, fundamentalists take the Bible literally, leading them to believe that the Earth and humans were created only 6000 years ago.

Ironically, the separation of church and state laid down in the US constitution contributes to the tension. In Catholic schools, both evolution and the strict biblical version of human beginnings can be taught. A court ban on teaching creationism in public schools, however, means pupils can only be taught evolution, which angers fundamentalists, and triggers local battles over evolution.

These battles can take place because the US lacks a national curriculum of the sort common in European countries. However, the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind act is instituting standards for science teaching, and the battles of what they should be has now spread to the state level.

Miller thinks more genetics should be on the syllabus to reinforce the idea of evolution. American adults may be harder to reach: nearly two-thirds don't agree that more than half of human genes are common to chimpanzees. How would these people respond when told that humans and chimps share 99 per cent of their genes?

From issue 2565 of New Scientist magazine, 19 August 2006, page 11

## MEET YOUR ANCESTOR—THE FISH THAT CRAWLED

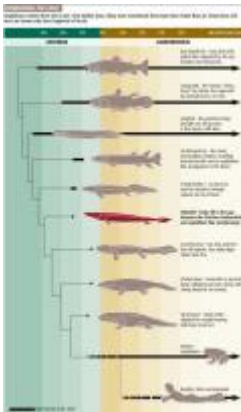
09 September 2006

[www.NewScientist.com](http://www.NewScientist.com) news service

Bob Holmes



The exquisitely preserved Tiktaalik fossils fill the gap between early fish and the first land vertebrates (Image: Ted Daeschler/Academy of Natural Sciences/Vireo)



## Conquering the land

At first, Ted Daeschler thought the fossil was just a fragment of a lungfish snout - interesting, but not earth-shaking. He and his colleagues were after bigger quarry. They had come to Ellesmere Island, high in the Canadian Arctic, in search of the fish that first dragged itself out of water nearly 400 million years ago, the evolutionary forebear to all land vertebrates - and, as such, our own very distant ancestor.

Daeschler carefully packed up the fragment and set it aside to study another day. It sat for months in a drawer at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, until one day a graduate student, Matt Friedman, happened to look at it and notice some unusual features. He showed it to Daeschler. "It was like light bulbs going off," Daeschler recalls. "This is what we're looking for. Of course it is!"

"It was like light bulbs going off. This is what we're looking for. Of course it is!"

That unassuming fragment of bone helped lead Daeschler and his colleagues, Neil Shubin of the University of Chicago and Farish Jenkins of Harvard University, to one of the most important fossil finds of the decade: several specimens of an almost perfect intermediate between fish and land vertebrates, or tetrapods. All are so beautifully preserved that the researchers could see almost every detail of their skeleton. The new creature, which they named *Tiktaalik* - from the Inuit name for a large, shallow-water fish - gives us a rare and vivid glimpse of how, and why, vertebrates took their first tentative steps toward land.

Other experts are ranking *Tiktaalik roseae* with some august company. "Everybody points to *Archaeopteryx* as a link between reptiles and birds," says Jennifer Clack, a palaeontologist at the University of Cambridge, referring to the iconic fossil found in all the textbooks. "This creature does the same thing for the origin of tetrapods, in that it's got a combination of fish-like features with some clearly tetrapod-like features. It's one of those things you can point to and say, I told you this would exist - and there it is."

"It is one of those things you can point to and say, I told you this would exist and there it is"

The evolutionary path from fish to tetrapods was fairly clear even before *Tiktaalik*. First came lungs. Some early bony fishes evolved an air-breathing system, probably to cope with water low in oxygen. One group, the lobe-finned fish, also had fleshy fins with internal bones, unlike most fish today. Yet only later, about 385 million years ago towards the end of the Devonian period, did the first signs of adaptation to life in the shallows appear. Several fossil fish with amphibian-like features have been found, including one called *Panderichthys*. Roughly a metre long, this was a vaguely crocodilian fish, with eyes atop a flattened head, front fin bones that are more arm-like in their shape and mobility, and changes in the bones that eventually formed the middle ear of tetrapods.

*Panderichthys*'s opposite number - the most fish-like tetrapod for which we have good fossils - is a thick-bodied animal called *Acanthostega*, one of the most significant of a profusion of new fossils uncovered in the past two decades (*New Scientist*, 19 August 2000, p 28). *Acanthostega* had limbs and fingers - albeit eight on each limb - but by modern standards the limbs were stiff and inflexible, more suited to swimming or dragging the animal along than any sort of walk. With prominent gills and a broad tail, *Acanthostega* clearly spent most of its time in water, though it may have made short forays onto land.

Even with all this information, many questions about how fish evolved into land animals still remained. "We take a pretty big jump from *Panderichthys* to *Acanthostega*," says Daeschler. The fish's fins became the amphibian's rudimentary legs. The head, bound rigidly to the body by

bony plates in *Panderichthys*, turned into a mobile neck. The shape of the skull, and the role played by some of its bones, changed dramatically. Like a thriller in which you know the identity of the bad guy, the suspense was not in the who or what, but in the how. Which traits changed first? How fast did they evolve? The hope was that the answers to these questions might give some hints to why our ancestors moved from estuaries or rivers onto land around 375 million years ago.

In 1998, Daeschler and Shubin decided to hunt for new fossils to fill the gap between *Panderichthys* and *Acanthostega*. They knew exactly where they wanted to look: sedimentary rocks dating from the early Frasnian age of the late Devonian period, about 375 million years ago. A quick glance at an introductory geology text pointed them to the Canadian Arctic, and after a bit of trial and error they focused on a fjord along the south-eastern coast of one of the most northerly land masses on Earth, Ellesmere Island.

After being dropped off at their base camp by helicopter, Daeschler, Shubin and their team spent their days wandering the barren hillsides looking for fossils. It is hard, cold work, with temperatures barely rising above freezing even in July. Good boots and a sharp eye are essential. “This kind of palaeontological exploration is a skill game,” says Daeschler. “But you’re not going to walk out on the first day and find that great thing. A lot of energy goes into it.”

That first, portentous snout - the one that caused so much belated excitement in Daeschler’s lab - turned up in 2002. Two years later, finally aware of what they had, the team returned to the site and immediately started excavating the area where they had found the snout. “*Tiktaalik* everywhere!” Daeschler recalls. “Why didn’t we find it the first year? If that one fragment hadn’t been found, we wouldn’t have gone back, and three inches under the surface was all this stuff.” Using a gasoline-powered jackhammer, and hand tools for the delicate bits, the team carefully extracted the fossils, still enclosed in rock, wrapped them in protective plaster jackets, and brought them back home.

Later that autumn, as Daeschler’s fossil preparator, Fred Mullison, painstakingly chipped bits of rock away from the bone, and other workers exposed a second specimen in Shubin’s lab in Chicago, the researchers began to realise just what they had found. These were no minor fragments - both fish had heads, shoulders and fins that were nearly complete. “We said, ‘Look at that! Look at how short the skull is!’ Then, ‘Holy Moly, look at the shoulder girdles! Look at the scales!’ I was sending images to Harvard and Chicago. Ten minutes after we exposed something, it was on Neil’s desk. I was showing everybody who walked by, ‘Look at this!’” says Daeschler. “We would have been ecstatic to find any one of these bones. But here we have all of the bones, in articulation. It’s an embarrassment of riches, really, to have such amazingly preserved material.”

### **Half fish, half amphibian**

What emerged from the rock was an animal almost perfectly intermediate between fish and amphibian. “We describe this as a fishopod - part fish, part tetrapod,” says Shubin, only half in jest. The team published their findings earlier this year in *Nature* (vol 440, p 757 and p 764).

Other experts agree. “*Tiktaalik* is significantly closer to the midpoint of the transition than *Panderichthys*,” says Per Ahlberg, a palaeontologist at Uppsala University in Sweden. “*Panderichthys* is clearly a fish. With *Tiktaalik*, you’re not entirely certain what to call the thing.”

*Tiktaalik*’s front appendages, for example, end in a flat paddle, rather than fingers, so Shubin and Daeschler call them fins. But inside them, several rows of bones extend beyond the wrist region. The researchers are not prepared to call these fingers, because they cannot prove they are identical to the fingers of tetrapods - for one thing, one row of bones branches into three, rather like a

trident - but the presence of anything remotely finger-like calls into doubt the widely held notion that fingers were a purely tetrapod innovation. “It shows that a lot of stuff that’s needed to make fingers was going on in *Tiktaalik*,” says Shubin.

Even more exciting is the way the bones of the fin fit together. The fossils are so well preserved that the shape of the joints between the bones can be seen. Their position suggests that the tip of the fin could turn up and out much more than it could bend down and in - a clear hint that the fish might have propped its body up on this “wrist” to support itself in shallow water. Compared with other fishes, the main bones of *Tiktaalik*’s forefin also show much larger facets to which muscles can attach. Moreover, these bones seem to line up, suggesting that the entire fin could flex along a single line at the wrist - a significant change from earlier lobe-finned fishes, in which the joints between parallel fin bones are staggered to form a rigid flipper that could not bend. (Ahlberg is sceptical about this. If the spacing of the reconstruction is altered just a little, this apparent line of flexion disappears, he notes.)

### The first ever neck

Taken together, though, these traits strongly hint that *Tiktaalik* may have propped its body up on its front fins to support itself in shallow water. “They can be weight-bearing,” Daeschler concludes. “You would not have developed the robust muscle attachments or some of the mobility at the fin joints if you were not supporting weight.”

Does *Tiktaalik*’s fin represent the first steps toward limb-like function? “Steps” may be too strong a word. “Is it able to walk with this thing?” asks Shubin. “Probably not. It was just too small and too restricted in motion. I’m seeing this as more of a push-up action than a walking action.”

Not all experts are convinced. Many of these specialisations might have evolved in a fully submerged fish, to help it stay on the bottom in fast-moving currents, says Michael Coates, a vertebrate palaeontologist at the University of Chicago. This would have been handy for a predator lying in wait for prey.

Other features of *Tiktaalik*’s anatomy, however, also point to life in the shallows. For example, its ribs overlap one another to form an unusually rigid corset to support the torso. “You’re looking at an animal that’s starting to strengthen up the middle part of its body, allowing it to resist bending and buckling forces,” says Ahlberg. “That makes sense if it’s starting to haul itself out of the water a little bit.”

In addition, none of the *Tiktaalik* specimens show any trace of the bony plates that in other fish anchor the head rigidly to the rest of the body at the gill region. Because the specimens are so well preserved, it seems unlikely that these were lost during fossilisation, which suggests *Tiktaalik* was the first fish with a neck. This new-found freedom of movement would have helped an ungainly animal look around and catch prey in shallow water or on land, Daeschler speculates.

For all its amphibian-like characteristics, *Tiktaalik* is highly unlikely to be the actual ancestor of tetrapods. After all, most fossilised species represent side shoots on the tree of life, rather than parts of the main trunk or branches. *Tiktaalik* was probably just one of many evolutionary experiments going on about the same time.

Together, however, *Tiktaalik* and *Panderichthys* tell a stronger story. “The shared characteristics of *Tiktaalik* and *Panderichthys* are attributes of the trunk of that part of the tree. That’s why they are present in these two branches,” says Ahlberg. “Our actual ancestor, which was living somewhere at the time of *Tiktaalik* - probably just over the next hill - had these same characteristics.”



If *Tiktaalik* is any indication, these proto-amphibians spent most of their time in the water. *Tiktaalik* still had well-developed gills, and a laborious thrashing was probably the best it could muster for movement over land. Still, even a mostly aquatic fishopod would have had good reason to venture into the shallows or even ashore.

*Tiktaalik* lived at the time that the first major terrestrial ecosystems were establishing themselves. Full-grown forests with roots a metre deep were developing where formerly just mosses and other tiny, shallow-rooted plants grew. This greater biomass brought with it a burgeoning invertebrate fauna on land, and the fallen leaves and other decaying plant matter would have poured extra nutrients into shallow swamps and streamside habitats. That is where the opportunities would have lain.

“If you’re standing at the margins, you’re seeing a small stream choked with vegetation,” says Shubin. “The stream is teeming with life. There were large fish, 10 to 12 feet long, that for all intents were functioning like crocodiles. What you have is a really fish-eat-fish sort of world. What’s on land? No predators yet - at least none with backbones. There are advantages to being able to exploit the shallows and mudflats: to avoid predators and gain access to a competition-free world.”

And exploit them life did. Within just a few million years of these new ecosystems forming - an evolutionary eyeblink, really - vertebrates like *Tiktaalik* had already colonised the shallows. As their descendants mastered terrestrial life, the land turned from a haven for creatures like *Tiktaalik* into a death trap. That is why fish evolved into tetrapods so quickly the first time, but never got so far again. “The ecological door was only open once,” Daeschler says.

It was also a timely move. Just a few million years later, the end of the Devonian is marked by a mass extinction that wiped out huge numbers of marine creatures. Many groups of fish perished. “It might be that animals like *Tiktaalik* are going to give us a clue about why one particular group of lobe-finned fishes squeaked through,” says Coates.

Answers to that question - and a better understanding of the next step beyond *Tiktaalik* in the evolution of tetrapods - must await new discoveries. This summer, Daeschler and Shubin went back to Ellesmere Island and excavated more *Tiktaalik* specimens. They also hiked over a ridge and down into the next valley, where sediments a few million years younger are exposed, in hopes of finding fossils of the next step in the evolution of tetrapods. Bad weather and a disappointing lack of good rock outcrops thwarted the team, but they are already planning their next trip.

From issue 2568 of New Scientist magazine, 09 September 2006, page 35-39

## MISSING LINKS

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Wed Sep 20, 3:16 PM ET

LONDON (Reuters) - A 3.3 million-year-old skeleton of the earliest child ever found shows the ancient ancestor of modern humans walked upright but may also have climbed trees, scientists said on Wednesday.

They found the well-preserved remains of a three-year-old girl of the species *Australopithecus afarensis* -- which includes the fossil skeleton known as "Lucy" -- in the Dikika area of Ethiopia, 400 km northeast of the capital Addis Ababa.

"It represents the earliest and most complete partial skeleton of a child ever found in the history of paleoanthropology," said Dr Zeresenay Alemseged, of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany.

The skull, torso and upper and lower limbs, including the hand, show both human and ape-like features. The state of the ancient bones suggests she was buried in a flood which may also have caused her death.

The remains provide the first evidence of what babies of early human ancestors looked like. The nearly complete skeleton will also provide information about the child's height and structure.

"This child will help us understand a lot about the species to which it belongs," said Alemseged, leader of the international team of scientists who reported the findings in the journal *Nature*.

"The lower part of the body, which includes the foot, the shin bone and the thigh bone clearly shows us that this species was an upright walking creature," he told Reuters.

But some of the features from the upper part of the body, including the shoulder blade and arms are more ape-like. The fingers are long and curved which suggest she might have been able to swing through trees.

"The finding is the most complete hominid skeleton ever found in the world," Zeresenay Alemseged, who is head of the Paleoanthropological Research Team, told a news conference in Addis Ababa.

He said the fossil was older than the 3.2-million-year-old remains of "Lucy" discovered in 1974 and described by scientists as one of the world's greatest archaeological finds.

"The new bones belong to a three-year-old girl who lived 3.3 million years ago, 150,000 years before Lucy," Zeresenay said.

The fossil has been named "Selam," which means peace in Ethiopia's official Amharic language.

## Juvenile “Lucy”

Dr Simon Underdown of Oxford Brookes University in England described it as a massively exciting discovery of a juvenile “Lucy.” “This tremendous fossil will make us challenge many of the ideas we have about how and why we came to walk on two feet,” he said.

An analysis of the sediment in which the remains were found enabled researchers to build a picture of the type of environment in which the child lived.

It was a lush area with flowing water, forests and grassland which was also affected by volcanic eruptions. The range of habitats was suitable for hippos, crocodiles and relatives of the wildebeest.

“We can see from the sediment that the region was very much characterized by a mosaic of environment that ranged from forests and woodlands near the rivers, to seasonally flooded grasslands to a flood plain that would have supported more open vegetation,” said Dr Jonathan Wynn of the University of South Florida who dated the sediments surrounding the remains.

## ANIMAL-HUMAN HYBRIDS SPARK CONTROVERSY

Maryann Mott

[National Geographic News](#)

January 25, 2005

Scientists have begun blurring the line between human and animal by producing chimeras—a hybrid creature that’s part human, part animal.

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. They were allowed to develop for several days in a laboratory dish before the scientists destroyed the embryos to harvest their stem cells.

In Minnesota last year researchers at the Mayo Clinic created pigs with human blood flowing through their bodies.

And at Stanford University in California an experiment might be done later this year to create mice with human brains.

Scientists feel that, the more humanlike the animal, the better research model it makes for testing drugs or possibly growing “spare parts,” such as livers, to transplant into humans.

Watching how human cells mature and interact in a living creature may also lead to the discoveries of new medical treatments.

But creating human-animal chimeras—named after a monster in Greek mythology that had a lion’s head, goat’s body, and serpent’s tail—has raised troubling questions: What new subhuman combination should be produced and for what purpose? At what point would it be considered human? And what rights, if any, should it have?

There are currently no U.S. federal laws that address these issues.

## Ethical Guidelines

The National Academy of Sciences, which advises the U.S. government, has been studying the issue. In March it plans to present voluntary ethical guidelines for researchers.

A chimera is a mixture of two or more species in one body. Not all are considered troubling, though.

For example, faulty human heart valves are routinely replaced with ones taken from cows and pigs. The surgery—which makes the recipient a human-animal chimera—is widely accepted. And for years scientists have added human genes to bacteria and farm animals.

What’s caused the uproar is the mixing of human stem cells with embryonic animals to create new species.

Biotechnology activist Jeremy Rifkin is opposed to crossing species boundaries, because he believes animals have the right to exist without being tampered with or crossed with another species.

He concedes that these studies would lead to some medical breakthroughs. Still, they should not be done.

“There are other ways to advance medicine and human health besides going out into the strange, brave new world of chimeric animals,” Rifkin said, adding that sophisticated computer models can substitute for experimentation on live animals.

“One doesn’t have to be religious or into animal rights to think this doesn’t make sense,” he continued. “It’s the scientists who want to do this. They’ve now gone over the edge into the pathological domain.”

David Magnus, director of the Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics at Stanford University, believes the real worry is whether or not chimeras will be put to uses that are problematic, risky, or dangerous.

### **Human Born to Mice Parents?**

For example, an experiment that would raise concerns, he said, is genetically engineering mice to produce human sperm and eggs, then doing in vitro fertilization to produce a child whose parents are a pair of mice.

“Most people would find that problematic,” Magnus said, “but those uses are bizarre and not, to the best of my knowledge, anything that anybody is remotely contemplating. Most uses of chimeras are actually much more relevant to practical concerns.”

Last year Canada passed the Assisted Human Reproduction Act, which bans chimeras. Specifically, it prohibits transferring a nonhuman cell into a human embryo and putting human cells into a nonhuman embryo.

Cynthia Cohen is a member of Canada’s Stem Cell Oversight Committee, which oversees research protocols to ensure they are in accordance with the new guidelines.

She believes a ban should also be put into place in the U.S.

Creating chimeras, she said, by mixing human and animal gametes (sperms and eggs) or transferring reproductive cells, diminishes human dignity.

“It would deny that there is something distinctive and valuable about human beings that ought to be honored and protected,” said Cohen, who is also the senior research fellow at Georgetown University’s Kennedy Institute of Ethics in Washington, D.C.

But, she noted, the wording on such a ban needs to be developed carefully. It shouldn’t outlaw ethical and legitimate experiments—such as transferring a limited number of adult human stem cells into animal embryos in order to learn how they proliferate and grow during the prenatal period.

Irv Weissman, director of Stanford University's Institute of Cancer/Stem Cell Biology and Medicine in California, is against a ban in the United States.

"Anybody who puts their own moral guidance in the way of this biomedical science, where they want to impose their will—not just be part of an argument—if that leads to a ban or moratorium. ... they are stopping research that would save human lives," he said.

### **Mice With Human Brains**

Weissman has already created mice with brains that are about one percent human.

Later this year he may conduct another experiment where the mice have 100 percent human brains. This would be done, he said, by injecting human neurons into the brains of embryonic mice.

Before being born, the mice would be killed and dissected to see if the architecture of a human brain had formed. If it did, he'd look for traces of human cognitive behavior.

Weissman said he's not a mad scientist trying to create a human in an animal body. He hopes the experiment leads to a better understanding of how the brain works, which would be useful in treating diseases like Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease.

The test has not yet begun. Weissman is waiting to read the National Academy's report, due out in March.

William Cheshire, associate professor of neurology at the Mayo Clinic's Jacksonville, Florida, branch, feels that combining human and animal neurons is problematic.

"This is unexplored biologic territory," he said. "Whatever moral threshold of human neural development we might choose to set as the limit for such an experiment, there would be a considerable risk of exceeding that limit before it could be recognized."

Cheshire supports research that combines human and animal cells to study cellular function. As an undergraduate he participated in research that fused human and mouse cells.

But where he draws the ethical line is on research that would destroy a human embryo to obtain cells, or research that would create an organism that is partly human and partly animal.

"We must be cautious not to violate the integrity of humanity or of animal life over which we have a stewardship responsibility," said Cheshire, a member of Christian Medical and Dental Associations. "Research projects that create human-animal chimeras risk disturbing fragile ecosystems, endanger health, and affront species integrity."

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 3     The Early Earth

Follow up from last week, New Scientist (article attached at end of notes) has another article on the laws of nature and now scientists are theorizing that even the laws of nature evolve. The most important difference to me between Creation and evolution is the principle that underlies each. Love is the principle of creation – other centered giving, whereas survival of the fittest is the principle that underlies evolution. And the survival of the fittest principle is in reality the principle that brings death, but Satan is so good at twisting the minds of men they have exchanged God's principle of love/life for Satan's principle of death and now claim the death principle brings forth life.

### SABBATH

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Does Genesis explain “why we are what we are?” If you only had the book of Genesis what kind of picture of God would you have? Would there be aspects of the GC we wouldn't understand? What would you wonder about if Genesis was the only book you had?

- What did God mean when He said in the day you eat you will die?
- What was the purpose for the creation of this planet?
- What is God really like?
- Where did Satan come from?
- What is the war over?

What about “the test of allegiance to God”? What was the purpose of the tree of knowledge of good and evil? Why did God need to test them?

This present life is our time of test and trial. God placed Adam and Eve in the beautiful garden of Eden, saying to them, “Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat.” But there was one prohibition. “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. 2:16,17). God wished to test and try the beings He had made, to see if they would be loyal and true to Him. {1SAT 318.4}

Did God not know what they were going to do so He put this tree there to find out? Was God setting them up to fail? Why put temptation in their way? Why not create a home without a tree which would be used to tempt? Was God giving them an exam to test them and if they pass they live and if they fail – too bad death sentence?

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 obedi-

ence 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? What was happening in the universe at the time of the creation of mankind? War – over what? Over two methods of running the universe – God's methods of love, which emanate from His character and Satan's method of survival of the fittest –

Satan alleged God to be selfish:

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... {Ed 154.3}

One principle is the basis of life the other principle is the basis of death. If mankind were to be eternally secure – where must that security be found?

I had a patient who threatened suicide constantly, anytime something was going the way she wanted she threatened to harm herself. One holiday the family was gathered together for a cook-out and were all outside when they heard a shotgun blast and a window of the house was blown out. Everyone came running to the house and when they entered she was sitting there with the barrel of the shotgun in her mouth and the finger on the trigger. Everyone panicked and stopped the cookout and took her to the ER – but the shotgun was unloaded. How dangerous is an unloaded shotgun? She just demonstrated she knew how to load and fire the gun, so what did it mean that she had an unloaded shotgun in her mouth? She didn't want to die, she wanted to control her family. I asked the question – who is the only person that can keep her safe from herself 24 hours a day 7 days a week? Only she can. She must have a change inside her in which she will not choose to harm herself.

Likewise, in order for God's creatures to be eternally secure they must have a change inside them in which they will never choose the path of destruction. In order for this to happen the issues must be presented, each person must freely weigh the issues and consider them for themselves and must make a decision which they will choose. Thus character is formed and established and we move beyond vulnerability and unreliability into firmness and trustworthiness of character. Thus God presented the tree as a necessary means of assisting Adam and Eve in being presented with the issues and coming to their own conclusion.

And think of how gracious God was in this minor test. He protected them from constant harassment as Satan could only approach them at the tree. He could not follow them all over the planet and bother them all day long.

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – what was/is the purpose of the Sabbath? Why did God rest? What does it mean He rested? Why is the Sabbath Holy? What makes the Sabbath Holy?

What was happening in the universe at the time of creation of this planet? God answered the allegations that He is selfish by the creation of this world – and then after giving this evidence – He says, "I rest my case, consider the evidence for yourself, no pressure, no coercion, you are free to make up your own mind." What does it say about God that in the context of a war rather than use His power to force every knee in the universe to bow, He creates time for free thinking, contemplation and decision making? Can you trust a God like that?



God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. He needed to lay aside his own interests and pursuits for one day of the seven, that he might more fully contemplate the works of God and meditate upon His power and goodness. He needed a Sabbath to remind him more vividly of God and to awaken gratitude because all that he enjoyed and possessed came from the beneficent hand of the Creator. {PP 48.2}

What does this mean? The Sabbath was created in the context of the war – between two antagonistic motives: self-sacrificing love vs. selfishness/survival-of-the-fittest. The Sabbath was designed to help us turn our minds away from self, away from our projects, our interests, our desires and each week back to God from whom all blessings flow. The Sabbath was designed as an aide to keep love flowing and a hedge of protection to avoid selfishness from taking root. The Sabbath rightly understood is a day of freedom and love.

So why is it holy? Because it is embodied, imbued, created with the very elements of God's character freedom and love!

But what about this EGW quote?

As the tree of knowledge was the test of Adam's obedience, so the fourth command is the test that God has given to prove the loyalty of all His people. The experience of Adam is to be a warning to us so long as time shall last. It warns us not to receive any assurance from the mouth of men or of angels that will detract one jot or tittle from the sacred law of Jehovah (Review and Herald, Aug. 30, 1898).

Is the fourth commandment a test? Have you ever heard taught that it is an arbitrary test of obedience which separates those who have God's seal from those who have the mark of the beast? What do you say about this? And will we celebrate the Sabbath in the new heaven and new earth?

Imagine that first Sabbath together after all is made new and we gather around to celebrate all that God has done, will we say, "Wait a minute, are we still being tested? Will we have to do this next week too? Will we be tested each week through all eternity?"

## MONDAY

Nephesh – "And God breathed into man the breath of life and he became a living being." A living being, all living beings have life from God – is this confusing for anyone? Is there a difference in being a living being and a living soul? Does the soul have life separate from the body? Then what did Christ mean when He said"

*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." John 3:36*

Doesn't this mean that they are still alive even though they die? No, the Bible never describes life without a body. Just a few verses later Jesus Himself makes this clear:

*For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. John 5:21*

*For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:40*

There is no life without the body – then what about the idea that the breath goes back to God who gave it? Or absent from the body present with the Lord?

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}

What does this mean? Consider the analogy of a laptop computer connected to a server via a wireless connection.

## TUESDAY

First paragraph read – what happened to Eden?

The Garden of Eden remained upon the earth long after man had become an outcast from its pleasant paths. The fallen race were long permitted to gaze upon the home of innocence, their entrance barred only by the watching angels. At the cherubim-guarded gate of Paradise the divine glory was revealed. Hither came Adam and his sons to worship God. Here they renewed their vows of obedience to that law the transgression of which had banished them from Eden. When the tide of iniquity overspread the world, and the wickedness of men determined their destruction by a flood of waters, the hand that had planted Eden withdrew it from the earth. But in the final restitution, when there shall be “a new heaven and a new earth,” it is to be restored more gloriously adorned than at the beginning. {AH 539.1}

Imagine what it would have been like to go to see the Garden and cherubim guarding its entrance? And still the world rebelled into decadence and wickedness.

Bottom paragraph read, “Read Genesis 2:15...” Why is work such an important part of healthy living? It is part of being within God’s circle of love, it is part of giving, of ministering it is part of the very basis of life. It is one way of loving others.

Read bottom pink – provide tests of obedience and threats of death if one should disobey? Of course not.

## WEDNESDAY

Second paragraph read – thoughts? Read second paragraph from Friday. Mankind is incomplete without both male and female without both husband and wife. It is only in unity together that we have the privilege of entering in a small degree the joy of intimate love that the Godhead shares. And God wanted to create beings, that could as close as possible know the joy of the love amongst the Godhead, thus He created us in His image, male and female.

## THURSDAY

First bold question read – thoughts? Sterility, abuse, control, celibacy, polygamy, rape, homosexuality, single parent homes, birth defects, childhood pregnancy, parents unequipped mentally and emotionally to raise children, dependency, infidelity, dishonesty, paraphilia.

Are all deviations from God’s original ideal sin? Or are they a result of sin?

## DO THE LAWS OF NATURE LAST FOREVER?

21 September 2006

Exclusive from New Scientist Print Edition.

Lee Smolin

In science we aim for a picture of nature as it really is, unencumbered by any philosophical or theological prejudice. Some see the search for scientific truth as a search for an unchanging reality behind the ever-changing spectacle we observe with our senses. The ultimate prize in that search would be to grasp a law of nature - a part of a transcendent reality that governs all change, but itself never changes.

The idea of eternally true laws of nature is a beautiful vision, but is it really an escape from philosophy and theology? For, as philosophers have argued, we can test the predictions of a law of nature and see if they are verified or contradicted, but we can never prove a law must always be true. So if we believe a law of nature is eternally true, we are believing in something that logic and evidence cannot establish.

Of course, laws of nature are very useful, and we have in fact been able to discover good candidates for them. But to believe a law is useful and reliable is not the same thing as to believe it is eternally true. We could just as easily believe there is nothing but an infinite succession of approximate laws. Or that laws are generalisations about nature that are not unchanging, but change so slowly that until now we have imagined them as eternal.

These are disturbing thoughts for a theoretical physicist like myself. I chose to go into science because the search for eternal, transcendent laws of nature seemed a lofty goal. However, the possibility that laws evolve in time is one that recent developments in theoretical and experimental physics have forced me, and others, to consider.

The biggest reason to consider that the laws of nature might evolve is the discovery that the universe itself is evolving. When we believed that the universe was eternal it made more sense to believe that the laws that governed it were also eternal. But the evidence we have now is that the universe - or at least the part of it we observe - has been around for only a few billion years.

We know that the universe has been expanding for about 14 billion years and that as we go back in time it gets hotter and denser. We have good evidence that there was a moment when the cosmos was as hot as the centre of a star. If we use the laws that we know apply to space-time and matter today, we can deduce that a few minutes earlier the universe must have been infinitely dense and hot. Many cosmologists take this moment as the birth of the universe and indeed as the birth of space and time. Before this big bang there was nothing, not even time.

### Why these laws?

So what could it mean to say that a universe only 14 billion years old is governed by laws that are eternally true? What were the laws doing before time and space? How did the universe know, at that moment of beginning, what laws to follow?

“What were the laws of nature doing before time and space?”

Perhaps the solution to this is that the big bang was not the first instant of time. However, this raises a new question, which has been championed by the great theoretical physicist John Wheeler. Even if we believe the universe evolved from something that existed before the big bang, we have no reason to believe the laws of that previous universe were the same as those we

observe in our universe. Might the laws have changed when our universe, or region of the universe, was created?

This question came to the fore in 1973, when physicists first developed a theory of elementary particle physics called the standard model. This theory has successfully accounted for every experiment in particle physics before and since that time, apart from those that involve gravity. It only required a small modification to incorporate the later discovery that neutrinos have mass. As for gravity, all experiments support the general theory of relativity, which Einstein published in 1915. There may be further laws to discover, to do with the unification of gravity with quantum theory and with the other forces of nature. But in a certain sense, we have for the first time in history a set of laws sufficient to explain the result of every experiment that has ever been done.

**“For the first time in history we can explain every experiment”**

As a result, in the past three decades the attention of physicists has shifted from seeking to know the laws of nature to a new question: why these laws? Why do these laws, and not others, hold in our universe?

Confronting this question while working on string theory in the 1980s, a few of us began to wonder whether the laws might have changed at the big bang, just as Wheeler had suggested. It was obvious that we could make a connection to biology. I wondered whether there might be an evolutionary mechanism that would allow us to answer the question of “why these laws?” in the same way that biology answers questions like “why these species?”. Perhaps the mechanism that makes laws evolve also picks out certain laws and makes them more probable than others. I found such a mechanism, modelled on natural selection, which I called cosmological natural selection.

This is possible because string theory is actually a collection of theories: it has a vast number of distinct versions, each of which gives rise to different collections of elementary particles and forces. We can think of the different versions of string theory as analogous to the different phases of water - ice, liquid and steam. When the universe is squeezed down to such tremendous densities and temperatures that the quantum properties of space-time become important, a phase transition can take place - like water turning to steam - leading from one version of the theory to another.

The many different phases of string theory can also be seen as analogous to a variety of species governed by different DNA sequences. They can be imagined as making up a vast space, which I called the “landscape”, to bring out the analogy to a “fitness landscape” in biology that represents all possible ways genes can be arranged.

Cosmological natural selection makes a few predictions that could easily be falsified, and while it is too soon to claim strong evidence for it, those predictions have held up (*New Scientist*, 24 May 1997, p 38). At the very least, it opened my eyes to the possibility that a theory in which the laws changed in time could still make testable predictions.

It turns out that I had been beaten to the punch: some philosophers had confronted these issues over a century ago. In 1891 the philosopher Charles Pierce wrote that it was hardly justifiable to suppose that universal laws of nature have no reason for their special form. “The only possible way of accounting for the laws of nature, and for uniformity in general, is to suppose them results of evolution,” he added.

Pierce went much further than I have done, asserting that the question “Why these laws?” has to be answered by a cosmological scenario analogous to evolution. But was he right?

Let us start with an obvious objection: if laws evolve, what governs how they evolve? Does there not have to be some deeper law that guides the evolution of the laws? For example, when water turns into ice, more general laws continue to hold and govern how this phase transition happens - the laws of atomic physics. So perhaps, even if a law turns out to evolve in time, there is always a deeper, unchanging law behind that evolution.

### **Shapes of things to come**

Another example concerns the geometry of space. We used to think that space always followed the perfectly flat Euclidean geometry that we all learn in high school. This was considered one of the laws of nature, but Einstein's general theory of relativity asserts that this is wrong. The geometry of space can be anything it wants to be: any of an infinite number of curved geometries is possible. So what picks out the geometry we see?

General relativity asserts that the geometry of space evolves in the course of time according to some deeper law. Today's geometry is what it is because it evolved from a different geometry in the past, following that definite law.

However, there is a big problem with this kind of explanation, which has to do with the fact that the laws that govern the evolution of geometry are deterministic. They share this feature with most laws studied in physics, including Newton's laws and quantum mechanics. Consider Newton's law of motion for an object. If we know where the object is now and how it is moving, and we know the laws that govern the forces it encounters, we can predict where it will be and has been for all time, past as well as future. General relativity is the same. If we know the geometry of space at a particular time, and how it is changing, we can predict the whole history of space-time. To apply these deterministic laws, however, we have to give a description of the system at one point in time. This is called the initial condition. If we do not specify an initial condition, the laws cannot describe anything.

This is why Einstein's equations do not fully explain why the geometry of space is what it is. They require an initial condition -the geometry at an earlier time. This brings us back to the dilemma about the big bang. Either the universe had no beginning, in which case the chain of causes goes further into the past, before the big bang; or the big bang was the beginning, and we require some explanation as to why it started and with what geometry.

So we have arrived at a conundrum. It appears that if laws evolve, other laws are required to guide their evolution. But then, the evolution of a law is just like the evolution of any other system under a deterministic law. We cannot explain why something is true in the present without knowing its initial state. Applied to laws, this means we cannot explain what the laws are now if we do not specify what the laws were in the past. So the idea of laws evolving by following a deeper rule does not seem to lead to an explanation of "why these laws?"

To avoid this we need an evolutionary mechanism that will allow us to deduce features of the present without having to know the past in detail. This is where Pierce's statement, which appears to invoke biological evolution, comes into its own.

In biology, many features of living organisms can be explained by natural selection, even if one doesn't know details about the past. As the process is partly random, we cannot predict exactly what mix of species will evolve in a given ecosystem, but we can predict that the species that survive will be fitter than those that don't. This is, I believe, why Pierce insisted that any explanation of "why these laws?" involves evolution. And using this kind of logic, cosmological natural selection makes some predictions without detailed information about previous stages of the universe.



But even this is unsatisfactory: it doesn't address the question of how a law that guides the evolution of matter in time could also change in time. For that, we have to examine the way we think about time.

There are big problems with time, even before we start thinking about the evolution of laws of nature. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the field of quantum gravity, which attempts to pull quantum theory and general relativity together into one consistent framework. This is because the two theories each use a different notion of time. In quantum theory, time is defined by a clock sitting outside the system being modelled. In general relativity, time is measured by a clock that is part of the universe that the theory describes. Many of the successes and failures of different approaches to quantum gravity rest on how they reconcile this conflict between time as an external parameter versus time as a physical property of the universe.

However these questions are eventually resolved, there are still deeper issues with time. These arise in any theory in which the laws are taken as being eternal. To illustrate this, we can take a simple example, such as Newton's description of a system of particles. To formulate the theory we invent a mathematical space, consisting of all the positions that all the particles might have. Each point in the space is a possible configuration of the system of particles, so the whole space is called the configuration space. As the system evolves over time, it traces out a curve in configuration space called a history. The laws of physics then pick out which histories are possible and which are not.

The problem with this description is that time has disappeared. The system is represented not by its state at a moment of time but by a history taking it through all time. This description of reality seems timeless. What has disappeared from it is any sense of the present moment, which divides our experience of the flow of time into past, present and future. This problem became particularly acute when it emerged in Einstein's theory of general relativity. Solving the theory gives a four-dimensional space-time history and no indication of "now".

Some, looking at this picture, have been tempted to say that reality is the whole timeless history and that any sense we have of a present moment is some kind of illusion. Even if we don't believe this, the fact that one could believe it means that there is nothing in this description of nature that corresponds to our common-sense experience of past, present and future. This is called the problem of transience. The sense of the universe unfolding or becoming in time, of "now", has no representation in general relativity. But in truth the problem was always there in Newton's physics and it is there in any theory in which some part of nature is described by a state that evolves deterministically in time, governed by a law that dictates change, but never changes.

### **The illusion of now**

The philosopher Roberto Unger of Harvard University calls this the "poisoned gift of mathematics to physics". Many believe that mathematics represents truth in terms of timeless relationships, based on logic. It allows us to formulate physical laws precisely: this is the gift. By doing so, however, mathematics represents paths in configuration space unfolding in time by logic, and this logic exists outside of time. The poison in the gift is the disappearance of any notion of the present or of becoming.

Physicists and their predecessors have been eliminating time like this since the days of Descartes and Galileo at least. But is it the wrong thing to do? Is there a way to represent change through time in a way that represents our sense of becoming, or of time unfolding?

I don't know the answer, but I suspect this question is connected to that of whether laws can evolve in time. One can only draw the curve representing a history in time by assuming that the



laws which govern how the history evolves never change. Without a fixed, unchanging law, one could not draw the curve.

Here is the question that keeps me awake these days: is there a way to represent the laws of physics mathematically that retains the notions of the present moment and the continual unfolding of time? And would this allow us - or even require us - to formulate laws that also evolve in time?

Again, I don't know the answer, but I know of a few hints. One comes from theoretical biology. The configuration space for an evolutionary theorist is vast, consisting of all the possible sequences of DNA. At present, there is a particular collection representing all the species that exist. Evolution will produce new ones, while others will disappear. The interesting thing is that natural selection operates in such a way that biologists have little use for the entire configuration space. Instead, they need study only a much smaller space, which is those collections of genes that could be reached from the present one by a few evolutionary steps. The theoretical biologist Stuart Kauffman of the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada, calls this the "adjacent possible".

This scheme allows laws to change. Consider the laws that govern sexual selection. They do not make sense for any old biosphere, as they only come into play when there are creatures with two sexes. So in evolutionary theory there is no need for eternal laws, and it makes sense to speak of a law coming into existence at some time to govern possibilities that did not exist before. Furthermore, there is such a vast array of possible mechanisms of natural selection that it would not make any sense to list them all and treat them as timeless. Better to think of laws coming into existence as the new creatures that evolve in each step require.

Of course, one might reply that natural selection itself never changes. But natural selection is a fact of logic, not a contingent law of nature. Every real law in biology depends on some aspect of the creatures that exist at a given time, which means the laws are also time-bound.

It is not impossible to achieve time-bound laws in physics. There are logicians who have proposed alternative systems of logic that incorporate a notion of time unfolding. In these logics, what is true and false is assigned for a particular moment, not for all time. For a given moment some propositions are true, others false, but there remains an infinite list of propositions that are yet to become either true or false. Once a proposition is true or false, it remains so, but at each moment new propositions become decided. These are called intuitionist logics and they underlie a branch of mathematics called topos theory.

Some of my colleagues have studied these logics as a model for physics. Fotini Markopoulou of the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, has shown that aspects of space-time geometry can be described in terms of these logics. Chris Isham of Imperial College London and others propose to reformulate physics completely in terms of them.

It is interesting that some physicists now propose that the universe is some kind of computer, because similar questions are being asked in computer science. In the standard architecture all computers now use, invented by the mathematician John von Neumann, the operating system never changes. It governs the flow of information through a computer just as an eternal law of nature is thought to guide physics. But some visionary computer scientists such as Jaron Lanier wonder whether there could be other kinds of architectures and operating systems that themselves evolve in time.

Looking at biology, it seems there are advantages to what are, essentially, time-bound laws. Evolving laws might make computer systems similarly robust and less likely to do what the laws of natural selection, it seems, never do: crash. The universe, too, seems to function rather well,

operating without glitches and fatal errors. Perhaps that's because natural selection is hard at work in the laws of nature.

From issue 2570 of New Scientist magazine, 21 September 2006, page 30-35

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 4     Paradise Lost

When you think of the events that led to the fall of Adam and Eve what questions do you have?

What happened? Were Adam and Eve both warned?

God warned Adam but what about Eve, some have raised the question she was vulnerable because she was only warned by Adam. Thoughts?

Holy angels often visited the garden, and gave instruction to Adam and Eve concerning their employment and also taught them concerning the rebellion and fall of Satan. The angels warned them of Satan and cautioned them not to separate from each other in their employment, for they might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. The angels also enjoined upon them to follow closely the directions God had given them, for in perfect obedience only were they safe. Then this fallen foe could have no power over them. {EW 147.1}

Was man created before or after the fall of Satan and the angels?

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. {Confrontation 18.2}

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}

Could Adam have overcome Satan in his own God given strength?

“Because man fallen could not overcome Satan with his human strength, Christ came from the royal courts of heaven to help him with His human and divine strength combined. Christ knew that Adam in Eden with his superior advantages might have withstood the temptations of Satan and conquered him. He also knew that it was not possible for man out of Eden, separated from the light and love of God since the fall, to resist the temptations of Satan in his own strength. In order to bring hope to man, and save him from complete ruin, He humbled Himself to take man’s nature, that with His divine power combined with the human He might reach man where he is. He obtained for the fallen sons and daughters of Adam that strength which it is impossible for them to gain for themselves, that in His name they might overcome the temptations of Satan.” {Confrontation 45}

What happened that Eve was deceived? Why did Satan choose the Serpent? Read Sunday top paragraph, would you choose a slithering, creeping serpent?

In order to accomplish his work unperceived, Satan chose to employ as his medium the serpent--a disguise well adapted for his purpose of deception. The serpent was then one of the wisest and most beautiful creatures on the earth. It had wings, and while flying through the air presented an appearance of dazzling brightness, having the color and brilliancy of burnished gold.--PP 53. {TA 52.3}

How did Satan get Eve to consider that the fruit was good and wouldn't cause death?

Eve went from the side of her husband, viewing the beautiful things of nature in God's creation, delighting her senses with the colors and fragrance of the flowers and the beauty of the trees and shrubs. She was thinking of the restriction God had laid upon them in regard to the tree of knowledge. She was pleased with the beauties and bounties which the Lord had furnished for the gratification of every want. All these, said she, God has given us to enjoy. They are all ours; for God has said, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." {Truth about Angels 53.1}

Eve had wandered near the forbidden tree, and her curiosity was aroused to know how death could be concealed in the fruit of this fair tree. She was surprised to hear her queries taken up and repeated by a strange voice. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Eve was not aware that she had revealed her thoughts by conversing to herself aloud, therefore she was greatly astonished to hear her queries repeated by a serpent.--RH Feb. 24, 1874. {TA 53.2 (Truth about Angels)}

With soft and pleasant words, and with musical voice, he [Satan] addressed the wondering Eve. She was startled to hear a serpent speak. He extolled her beauty and exceeding loveliness, which was not displeasing to Eve. {TA 53.3}

Eve was beguiled, flattered, infatuated.--1SP 35, 36. {TA 54.1}

She [Eve] really thought the serpent had a knowledge of her thoughts, and that he must be very wise. She answered him, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." [Gen. 3:2-5.] {TA 54.2}

Here the father of lies made his assertion in direct contradiction to the expressed word of God. Satan assured Eve that she was created immortal, and that there was no possibility of her dying. He told her that God knew that if they ate of the tree of knowledge their understanding would be enlightened, expanded, and ennobled, making them equal with Himself. . . . Eve thought the discourse of the serpent very wise. . . . She looked with longing desire upon the tree laden with fruit which appeared very delicious. The serpent was eating it with apparent delight. {TA 54.3}

Eve had overstated the words of God's command. He had said to Adam and Eve, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." In Eve's controversy with the serpent, she added the clause, "Neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." Here the subtlety of the serpent was seen. This statement of Eve gave him advantage.--RH Feb. 24, 1874. {TA 54.4}

By partaking of this tree, he [Satan] declared they would attain to a more exalted sphere of existence, and enter a broader field of knowledge. He himself had eaten of the forbidden fruit, and as a result had acquired the power of speech. And he insinuated that the Lord jealously desired to withhold it from them, lest they should be exalted to equality with Himself.--PP 54. {TA 55.1}

Eve's curiosity was aroused. Instead of fleeing from the spot, she listened to hear a serpent talk. It did not occur to her mind that it might be that fallen foe, using the serpent as a medium.--1SP 36. {TA 55.2}

What was happening in the universe while this conversation took place at the tree?

With what intense interest the whole universe watched the conflict that was to decide the position of Adam and Eve. How attentively the angels listened to the words of Satan, the originator of sin, as he placed his own ideas above the commands of God, and sought to make of none effect the law of God through his deceptive reasoning! How anxiously they waited to see if the holy pair would be deluded by the tempter, and yield to his arts. . . . {TA 55.3}

Satan represented God as a deceiver, as one who would debar His creatures from the benefit of His highest gift. The angels heard with sorrow and amazement this statement in regard to the character of God, as Satan represented Him as possessing his own miserable attributes; but Eve was not horror-stricken to hear the holy and supreme God thus falsely accused. If she had . . .

remembered all the tokens of His love, if she had fled to her husband, she might have been saved from the subtle temptation of the evil one.--ST May 12, 1890. {TA 55.4}

The tempter plucked the fruit and passed it to Eve. She took it in her hand. Now, said the tempter, you were prohibited from even touching it lest you die. He told her that she would realize no more sense of evil and death in eating than in touching or handling the fruit. Eve was emboldened because she felt not the immediate signs of God's displeasure. She thought the words of the tempter all wise and correct. She ate, and was delighted with the fruit. It seemed delicious to her taste, and she imagined that she realized in herself the wonderful effects of the fruit.--1SP 38. {TA 56.1}

Why was the universe watching?

Satan, the fallen angel, had declared that no man could keep God's law, and he pointed to the disobedience of Adam as proving the declaration true.--ST April 10, 1893. {TA 58.3}

Satan . . . proudly boasted that the world which God had made was his dominion. Having conquered Adam, the monarch of the world, he had gained the race as his subjects, and he should now possess Eden, and make that his headquarters. And he would there establish his throne, and be monarch of the world.--RH Feb. 24, 1874. {TA 58.4}

Was there anything poisonous in the fruit?

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. {TA 56.2}

If the fruit wasn't poisonous then what changed when they ate it?

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}

Why does this result in death?

Life is created to operate on the law of love, distrust in God separates one from the source of love, selfishness replaces love and death is the only outcome.

Who would like to summarize the events that led to the fall?

Read Memory Text – thoughts?

This text certainly refers to the promised redeemer and we will explore this later, but is this enmity limited to what Christ would do in His 33 years here or is it also talking about something God began to do in mankind right then?

Why did God need to put enmity between the serpent and mankind?

What does it mean that the seed will crush its head? How does the seed crush its head? Who is the seed? Christ and how does Christ crush Satan's head?

Read Hebrews 2:14 – it says Christ destroys Satan by dying, how does Christ dying destroy Satan? Is this crushing his head?

Read Romans 16:20 “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.”

What do you think this means? Is it similar to how Christ did it?

The feet are used in the Bible to describe the spreading of the Good News, suggesting that it is the Good News about God that ultimately crushes Satan: “...wearing for shoes on your feet the eagerness to spread the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15)

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces the good news, “All is well.” He brings the good news, announces salvation, and tells Zion that its God rules as king.” (Isaiah 52:7)

Also, Jesus tells us that “you shall do greater things than this” and when the body of Christ is cleansed of selfishness - not only individually, but also the body of Christ - this will reveal that the principle of God's kingdom is stronger than the principle of Satan's kingdom. It will be shown that God can heal his people and restore his image within them. Satan's lies about God's character were defeated at the Cross, but what will happen when Christ comes within his children will apparently provide some additional needed “crushing” to secure the universe for eternity.

How do we crush Satan, by loving others, by experiencing God's love in our hearts and dying to selfishness.

Does it make a difference if you see this primarily as the use of power to physically crush Satan?

## TUESDAY

Read Top paragraph – thoughts? Why were they running and hiding?

Fear is part of the infection of sin, there is no fear in love perfect love casts out fear. As God heals us our fear goes down.

God invites us to come to Him with our burden of guilt and our heart sorrows. Sin fills us with fear of God. When we have sinned we try to hide ourselves from Him. But whatever our sin, God bids us come unto Him through Jesus Christ. It is only by taking our sins to God that we can be freed from them. Cain, under the rebuke of God, acknowledged his guilt in killing Abel, but he fled away from God, as if he could thus escape from his sin. Had he fled to God with his burden of guilt he would have been forgiven. The prodigal son, realizing his guilt and wretchedness, said, “I will arise and go to my father” (Luke 15:18). He confessed his sin and was taken back to his father's heart. {TMK 260.3}

## WEDNESDAY

Top sentence thoughts? Do you like the idea that God was pronouncing judgments? Does this mean God was imposing all of these things upon them as punishment?



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}

The earth is to be made to give forth its strength; but without the blessing of God it could do nothing. In the beginning, God looked upon all that He had made, and pronounced it very good. The curse was brought upon the earth in consequence of sin. Fundamentals of Christian Education 326.

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}

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. Where once was written only the character of God, the knowledge of good, was now written also the character of Satan, the knowledge of evil. From nature, which now revealed the knowledge of good and evil, man was continually to receive warning as to the results of sin. {Ed 26.2}

How was marriage changed after the fall?

- Sterility, Birth defects and miscarriages
- Childhood pregnancy
- Single parent homes
- Parents unequipped mentally or emotionally to raise children

Selfishness rather than selflessness

- Control rather than freedom - - - Dependency
- Domination rather than equality within marriage
- Infidelity rather than faithfulness
- Dishonesty rather than honesty
- Lustful self-indulgence rather than loving self-control
- Perversions (bestiality, pedophilia, necrophilia, paraphelias)
- Homosexuality

## THURSDAY

Second paragraph read – What was the problem with Cain's sacrifice? Was God blood thirsty? Was the death of an animal sufficient to resolve the sin problem? Was there any healing remedy in the death of an animal? Was it another test, do it my way or I won't accept you? What was the difference and why the slaying of animals?

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 5      Destruction and Renewal

Questions from the class regarding the flood?

Read Memory Text –

Did God need the bow to remind Him not to destroy the world with a flood? Then why did He phrase it this way? Who needed to know God would remember? As a parent might you say something like this to your child? Whose benefit would it be for?

And even though God stooped to this level and gave the rainbow and expressed His promise in ways to reassure them did it work?

Was God able to get humanity to a greater sense of love and trust by the use of so much power? Why the tower of Babel? Were they building it because they didn't believe there was a God or they didn't trust Him not to destroy the world again by flood?

Can you think of other examples of where God used His power mightily? Egypt, Carmel, Sodom and Gomorrah and did any of these uses of power get the people restored to unity, love and trust with God?

If the use of power doesn't restore unity then why did God do it? Couldn't Satan make a lot of points throughout the universe with God's handling of things? See, God will kill you if you don't do it His way. He claims you have freedom, but you don't. Things would be fine here on earth if God would just leave us alone, but He doesn't want you to see how much better life is without Him so He keeps causing catastrophes, killing people, cursing people, destroying things. If He would just stay away this earth would be great.

If God knew Satan would misrepresent Him in this way then why did He do it? What was God trying to accomplish? In order for this creation to be saved a remedy must be brought to heal the infection of selfishness, which brings death. In order for that to happen a channel must be preserved through which the remedy can come. At the time of the flood only 8 people were left who were willing to work with God. If God didn't act soon Satan would succeed in closing the avenue through which Christ would come. God didn't prefer to act in this way, but the circumstance required it – why? Because of love – He loved us too much to leave us in our sickness and misery.

Read Sabbath's lesson – thoughts? What things are scientist teaching today that are preparing the world to be asleep when Christ comes? The theory of evolution, there is no God.

*First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. 2 Peter 3:3*

What is the message of this passage?

- At the end of time the idea of God will be ridiculed
- The idea of creation will be rejected
- The idea of Christ coming will be rejected
- That natural forces are responsible for life and cont as always
- That there was no universal flood

- That there will be no day of reckoning

And if one reads into the message, evolution is the process upon which life is based – there is no God.

Has this prophecy come true? Do we live in such an age? Should this reality give us confidence in the Bible and hope for the future?

## MONDAY

Read Romans 4:14-16 and Ephesians 2:5-8

*For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. Romans 4:14-16*

*But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— Ephesians 2:5-8*

What do these passages mean? Does grace mean “unmerited favor”? I am not questioning the idea that we haven't earned God's goodness, my question is that the best definition of grace?

Can you have grace from an ungracious being? Is God gracious only to those who have sinned? Is God a gracious being to all? Is He gracious to unfallen angels? Now it is true they have not “needed” as much of His “graciousness” but does that mean He is any less gracious?

The Greek for grace is *Charis* and the Greek Lexicon states it means:

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.

There is another form of this word in the Greek, *Charisma* – Would you get a different meaning than “unmerited favor” if you read grace as “the charisma of God”? if you understood it to be “the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens...”?

Does it depict a different God to see grace as “unmerited favor” versus grace as God's loving, kind actions, works, efforts, interventions in our behalf to heal and save us?

Middle question and last paragraph read and then read Wednesday second paragraph – thoughts?

*“Noah did everything just as God commanded him.” Genesis 6:22,*

What is faith? Did getting on the ark mean you have faith in something you didn't fully understand? Were they getting on the ark because of faith in the flood or faith in God? Do you think God had given enough evidence of His existence and reliability that their faith in Him was based on evidence or were they supposed to have faith without evidence and understanding?

Remember that Eden stayed on the earth with angel sentinels until the flood.

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}

The word of God, like the character of its Author, presents mysteries that can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. But God has given in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine authority. His own existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. True, He has not removed the possibility of doubt; faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration; those who wish to doubt have opportunity; but those who desire to know the truth find ample ground for faith. {Ed 169.2}

What is our faith to be built upon? Evidence!

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph – “The Deluge...” thoughts? Does the Bible say that the earth was turned back into its condition before creation? Was the atmosphere gone? Was the earth a great abyss?

Does the Bible describe a time when the earth will be back in its pre creation state? When?

*And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. Rev 20:1-3*

What was the flood like, how bad did it get?

Everything was now ready for the closing of the ark, which could not have been done by Noah from within. An angel is seen by the scoffing multitude descending from Heaven, clothed with brightness like the lightning. He closes that massive outer door, and then takes his course upward to Heaven again. Seven days were the family of Noah in the ark before the rain began to descend upon the earth. In this time they were arranging for their long stay while the waters should be upon the earth. And these were days of blasphemous merriment by the unbelieving multitude. They thought because the prophecy of Noah was not fulfilled immediately after he entered the ark, that he was deceived, and that it was impossible that the world could be destroyed by a flood. Previous to this there had been no rain upon the earth. A mist had risen from the waters, which God caused to descend at night like dew, reviving vegetation and causing it to flourish. {1SP 72.2}

Notwithstanding the solemn exhibition they had witnessed of God’s power--of the unnatural occurrence of the beasts’ leaving the forests and fields, and going into the ark, and the angel of God clothed with brightness, and terrible in majesty, descending from Heaven and closing the door; yet they hardened their hearts, and continued to revel and sport over the signal manifestations of divine power. But upon the eighth day the heavens gathered blackness. The muttering thunders, and vivid lightning flashes, began to terrify man and beast. The rain descended from the clouds above them. This was something they had never witnessed, and their hearts began to faint with fear. The beasts were roving about in the wildest terror, and their discordant voices seemed to moan out their own destiny and the fate of

man. The storm increased in violence until water seemed to come from heaven like mighty cataracts. The boundaries of rivers broke away, and the waters rushed to the valleys. The foundations of the great deep also were broken up. Jets of water would burst up from the earth with indescribable force, throwing massive rocks hundreds of feet into the air, and then they would bury themselves deep in the earth. {1SP 73.1}

The people first beheld the destruction, of the works of their hands. Their splendid buildings, their beautifully-arranged gardens and groves, where they had placed their idols, were destroyed by lightning from heaven. Their ruins were scattered everywhere. They had erected altars in groves, and consecrated them to their idols, whereon they offered human sacrifices. These which God detested were torn down in his wrath before them, and they were made to tremble before the power of the living God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, and they were made to know that it was their abominations and horrible, idolatrous sacrifices, which had called for their destruction. {1SP 74.1}

The violence of the storm increased, and there were mingled with the warring of the elements, the wailings of the people who had despised the authority of God. Trees, buildings, rocks, and earth, were hurled in every direction. The terror of man and beast was beyond description. And even Satan himself, who was compelled to be amid the warring elements, feared for his own existence. He had delighted to control so powerful a race, and wished them to live to practice their abominations, and increase their rebellion against the God of Heaven. He uttered imprecations against God, charging him with injustice and cruelty. Many of the people, like Satan, blasphemed God, and if they could have carried out their rebellion, would have torn him from the throne of justice. While many were blaspheming and cursing their Creator, others were frantic with fear, stretching their hands toward the ark, pleading for admittance. But this was impossible. God had closed the door, the only entrance, and shut Noah in, and the ungodly out. He alone could open the door. {1 SP 74.2}

Thoughts? Can you imagine how broken hearted God must have been? How sad. And how sad it will be when the final end of sin and sinners comes.

Was this the death God had warned Adam and Eve about? Was this death eternal?

How advanced were the people before the flood?

There perished in the Flood greater inventions of art and human skill than the world knows of today. The arts destroyed were more than the boasted arts of today (Letter 65, 1898). {1BC 1089.1}

How did man gain his knowledge of how to devise?--From the Lord, by studying the formation and habits of different animals. Every animal is a lesson book, and from the use they make of their bodies and the weapons provided them, men have learned to make apparatus for every kind of work. If men could only know how many arts have been lost to our world, they would not talk so fluently of the dark ages. Could they have seen how God once worked through His human subjects, they would speak with less confidence of the arts of the antediluvian world. More was lost in the Flood, in many ways, than men today know. Looking upon the world, God saw that the intellect He had given man was perverted, that the imagination of his heart was evil and that continually. God had given these men knowledge. He had given them valuable ideas, that they might carry out His plan. But the Lord saw that those whom He designed should possess wisdom, tact, and judgment, were using every quality of the mind to glorify self. By the waters of the Flood, He blotted this long-lived race from the earth, and with them perished the knowledge they had used only for evil. When the earth was repopled, the Lord trusted His wisdom more sparingly to



men, giving them only the ability they would need in carrying out His great plan (Letter 175, 1896). {1BC 1089.2}

Thoughts? What does this mean?

## WEDNESDAY

Middle question “Compare what it...” read, Thoughts?

Who are the ones in our society taking public stands for the 10 Commandments?

August 2003, MONTGOMERY, Alabama (CNN) -- Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore was suspended Friday pending the outcome of an ethics complaint for defying a federal court order to move a Ten Commandments monument from the rotunda of the Alabama Supreme Court building.

Is this what we are supposed to do to stand up for the commandments of God? Are we to fight in the courts in order to have displays in public places?

What kind of God do such activities represent?

How are we to support God’s commandments?

*The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Romans 13:9,10*

*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. John 13:34,35*

*If you love me, you will obey what I command. John 14:15*

*The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Galatians 5:14*

*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. 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. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other. John 15:12-17*

How do we stand up for the Commands of Christ? By loving others more than ourselves! Revelation 12 – those ready to meet Christ are not described as those who worship on a particular day, but those who do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death – love has replaced selfishness in their hearts!

## THURSDAY

Second paragraph read – thoughts? Do you think it was the blood sacrifice that motivated God to not act out to destroy? That if Noah had not offered the sacrifice, or if Christ wasn’t going to come that God would not have been able to restrain His wrath and would have destroyed the world? Of course not.



“Verily, verily, I say unto you,” Christ continued, “He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also.” 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}

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).” {6BC 1074.2}

### FRIDAY

Read and discuss

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 6     The Earth after the Flood

### SABBATH

Second paragraph read – “Putting aside...” thoughts?

Is the problem with sin one of IQ? Is it merely of not understanding the facts correctly? What is the problem with sin? What does it mean they didn’t learn?

Can sin affect the ability to perceive and comprehend correctly? Yes

Can one perceive and comprehend correctly and still choose to sin? Yes

So is it merely about comprehension and correct perceptions?

In our lives today if we were to “learn” the facts will we then be free from sin?

Consider the drug addict/alcoholic/smoker – do any of them come to know the truth about their addiction and yet keep on practicing their addiction? Do they need more education about the dangers of their addiction? What do they need?

Consider the story of the scorpion and the frog... The scorpion asks the frog for a ride across the lake, the frog says no way if I let you on my back you’ll sting me and I’ll die. The scorpion says, if I did that we would both drown and both die, I wouldn’t do that. So the frog gives him and a ride. Half way across the scorpion stings the frog, the frog asks, why now we will both die? The scorpion says, “Its my nature.”

Has sin changed our nature? Is there something that goes beyond knowledge beyond learning beyond education that needs to be changed in us? Can we do this for ourselves?

Does the fact we need our natures changed and education cannot do this for us mean there is no place for education? What is the balance? What did Christ mean when He said “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free?”

So what do we need? A change in nature/character.

In the middle of the second paragraph it states, “You’d think that after a flood, which wiped out the entire earth, people would have gotten the message regarding God’s attitude about sin and rebellion; apparently they didn’t.”

Thoughts? What was the purpose of the flood? To show God’s attitude toward rebellious sinners? If we only have the story of the flood and nothing else would we get the right conception of God’s attitude toward sinners?

Does God hate sin? Does God hate the sinners? What about the sinners who never repent, like Satan? Does God hate those sinners? Why does God hate sin? Because it destroys those He loves. Does a parent hate leukemia? Encephalitis? Illegal drugs?

Is it okay to hate? Is it okay to be angry? Is there anger which is not sinful? How?

On a scrap of paper I read the story of a girl who was lost in the woods, imprisoned by snow. Days and nights passed, and she lost the power to make any effort, and lay motionless. At last some woodmen passed the place. The snow had melted, and they found her unconscious. They gently raised her, laid her on some boards, and carried her to the warmth of their own hearth. They cared for her tenderly, and had the joy of seeing her restored to consciousness. Then they learned who she was, and let her parents know in regard to her. The parents came for her, and when she was strong they took her home. {BEcho, May 30, 1898 par. 5}

It is a wonderful story of a hardy girl; but this is not why I tell it to you. I tell it because I want you to understand the anger of love. Suppose, if you can, that these men had seen the helpless girl, and had passed by on the other side, leaving her to die. Suppose the parents had heard what had been done to the child they loved. How would they have felt toward those men? Thankful, do you think? Would they have been simply indifferent? Would they not rather have been terribly grieved, wildly indignant? Would not the knowledge that their child might have lived, make more bitter their sorrow at her death? Had they chanced to meet these men, would their words to them have been soft, honied words? Would they not have denounced them with righteous indignation, hot as their tears, intense as their love? {BEcho, May 30, 1898 par. 6}

Here, I thought, was a human life, saved by human sympathy and tenderness; but how must the anger of God burn toward those who see souls in peril, ready to die, and yet say nothing, do nothing, to help them. They give all attention to the ninety and nine that are within the fold, while souls in peril are all around them, and no hand is stretched out to save them. If one goes astray, they pass on indifferent. And that soul has all the responsibilities of an immortal life. To lose heaven is to lose everything, and yet how indifferent, how careless never to give him warning, or show him the way of life. {BEcho, May 30, 1898 par. 7}

The sufferings of every man are the sufferings of God's child, and those who pass by their perishing fellow beings without pity or help, provoke God's grievous anger. His righteous thunders gather. His vivid lightnings flash; it is the wrath of the Lamb. Be faithful to your fellowmen, and you will please God. He loves the world; love it too, and you will be accepted by Him. {BEcho, May 30, 1898 par. 8}

Consider you have a beautiful 5 year old little girl and you discover she has been molested by an adult man – what would your attitude be toward that man? What if that man was your son? Now what is your attitude? Who was damaged more severely by the act of molesting another?

## SUNDAY

First paragraph read – thoughts? How radically different do you think the earth might have been after the flood? Think of some ways?

- The water layer above the earth was gone
- All mammalian and avian life gone except what was on the ark
- All vegetation gone and just starting to regrow
- The mountains now protrude from the earth
- Precious gems and metals buried
- Human structures gone
- Earth a vast desolate wasteland
- The temperate climate gone
- Earth mostly water
- Rains, storms now regular occurrences
- Large sections of earth covered in ice

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}

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. {LHU 47.2}

Do you think the earth today truly represents the way God created it?

Imagine the world mostly land, with rivers, lakes, streams, and small seas, with a water layer above the earth causing a greenhouse like effect so there is one temperate climate over the entire planet. No rocks, ragged ridges, muddy dirty ponds or streams. Imagine riverbeds and waterfalls made out of gold, platinum silver, diamonds, rubies, emeralds going on for miles with the water flowing over it and the sun sparkling through it. Imagine different combinations of such gems and minerals and the beauty of the waterways of the early earth.

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph – “Noah’s words...”

What encouragement does this give parents?

## MONDAY

Read top verse and first paragraph –thoughts?

What is this verse talking about? Does it mean God will intervene directly to punish anyone, man or animal, who kills another? Or does it mean God was directing for the development of judicial authorities to establish order on earth to hold in check the “survival of the fittest” principle so the earth would not become a mere brutish animalistic theater where the strong destroy the weak?

What about the last sentence of the last paragraph? What does this mean? What about the 2 Corinthians text? What does it mean?

*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*

Why did God prohibit the eating of blood? What does it mean the life is in the blood?

- Blood carries nutrients and oxygen and removes waste
- Blood carries hormones
- Blood carries diseases
- Blood carries stem cells

## FRIDAY

Question 3 read – thoughts?

Can we change our genes? Just this month Andrew Fire of Stanford and Craig Mello of University of Massachusetts won the Nobel Prize for their discovery of how to “silence” genes. A technique called RNA interference in which the genes you have can be silenced or turned off.

Can we change our genes?

Gene therapies are being developed for various disorders in which healthy genes are introduced into the cells of patients who have defective genes

Diet can alter gene expression – study of genetically identical mice revealed that altering the diet of the mothers affected the gene expression of the pups

Alcohol and drugs can alter gene expression in humans – turning on dormant genes which produce proteins previously not produced which cause increased cravings for more drugs.

Chronic worry can alter gene expression – chronic worry, can cause increased production of stress hormones, over time these stress hormones can cause the methylation of histones attached to DNA in your brain cells. The DNA becomes locked down and can no longer unzip to RNA’s can produce neurotrophic proteins. Without these proteins neurons become unhealthy and wither and die and no new neurons are produced and Major Depression ensues. Intervention with anti-depressants results in acetyl groups being attached to the histones of the DNA and neutralizing the methyl groups and the DNA can unzip again and these vital proteins are produced again and the new neurons get produced again and the depression clears.

Where do new neurons come from? Bone marrow stem cells. What about someone with bone marrow transplant. Autopsy of 4 women who received bone marrow transplant from men showed neurons with XY chromosomes rather than XX.

Recent research on honey bees show that their genes change expression when they change activities.

## THURSDAY

Why did God confuse their languages?

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 7     The Man Abraham

Read Memory Text, thoughts?

What does it mean “he counted it to him for righteousness”?

Would you think of it differently if you used these versions?

*Abram put his trust in the Lord, and because of this the Lord was pleased with him and accepted him. GNT*

*Abram believed the Lord. And the Lord accepted Abram’s faith, and that faith made him right with God. NEW CENTURY VERSION*

What did Abram do? He trusted God. How does one come to trust God? By getting to know Him. Are we told about the various ways that Abram came to know God prior to his trusting God? Does that mean that Abram had no evidence upon which to base his trust?

Now when Abram trusted what happened? Did God, take the heavenly accounting record books and beside Abram’s name write, “righteous” and “declare” him to be righteous? Or, when Abram trusted God did something change in Abram such that Abram became righteous? What changed?

Abram’s view of God, Abram’s attitude toward God, Abram’s belief and confidence in God, Abram’s loyalty and devotion to God, Abram’s character!

What was it that led Adam and Eve in to sin?

“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

So when mankind internalized lies about God the base code of love was overwritten by selfishness in the character and mankind no longer trusted God. In order for God to heal and restore His image within us, what is the first step that must take place? Trust must replace distrust.

What does it mean to be righteous? To be set right, to be right. To be right about what, in what way? About God and be like Him in character!

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}



*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}*

Why was the only way to set and keep men right to reveal the truth about God? What is set right by this truth? Are record books adjusted by this truth? Are individual hearts and minds changed? What caused the disaffection of Adam and Eve? The belief in lies about God, what sets us right? The truth about God!

What does it mean to be considered righteous by God? For you and I to see the truth about God, to reject Satan's lies about God and to trust God completely!

Second paragraph read – Thoughts? What does it mean to be a descendent of Abraham? Does it mean having a genetic link?

*"Abraham is our father," they answered.*

*"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. 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. 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. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 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*

*Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. Rom 4:9-12*

*Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. Galatians 3:6-9*

Who are the descendents of Abraham? All those, who like Abraham have had the lies about God purged from their minds, who have come to trust God, and who experience Godlike character transformation.

## SUNDAY

Bottom question read and discuss – thoughts?

What does it mean to walk with the Lord?

So what about a person who has left the church – can we know whether they are walking with the Lord or not? How about if they are working on Sabbath? Can we know if they are walking with the Lord or not?

What about those who keep the Sabbath carefully, eat only the right diet, believe in the Creator God, pay tithe faithfully, avoid establishments that are of a corrupt nature – can we know these people are walking with the Lord? Didn't the religious leader's who crucified Christ do all of these things?

What does it mean to walk with the Lord?

To practice His methods and principles and to work His works, to follow His guidance and leading in our lives.

If we have a deep, growing experience in heavenly things, we walk with the Lord, as did Enoch. Instead of consenting to the propositions of Satan, there is most earnest prayer for the heavenly anointing, that we may distinguish the right, the heaven born, from the common. {TM 338.2}

*And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God. PHP 1:9-11*

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Galatians 5:22,23*

*"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." John 13:34,35*

*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. 1 John 4:7-12*

What are the two antagonistic principles? What is it that separates us from the world? Church membership? Sabbath? Diet? Tithe? No, self-sacrificing love – without love we are lost!

## MONDAY

Read top question and Genesis 12:1-3:

*The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

Does this give the reason why God called Abraham to go to Canaan? Or is it providing promises of what God would do for Abraham when Abraham goes? Was God's reason merely to make Abraham a name and have many descendents? Or was God's reason to work through Abraham's family to bring forward His plan to reclaim this creation and heal and restore?

Bottom pink section – read, thoughts? Was it foolish for Abraham? From what perspective would Abraham's leaving to go to Canaan be foolish? If there is no God, If God were a cruel and severe dictator? If Abraham was hallucinating? Was it foolish for Abraham to follow the directions of a supreme being whom He trusted?

Why is it some insist on teaching faith is something that doesn't make sense? Does it make sense, is it reasonable, to follow the directions of someone you trust even if you don't know where you are going?

Have you ever been lost and called a trusted friend who was familiar with the area for directions and they told you where to turn, did you follow their directions? Was this foolish?

If you were on a plane and the pilot became incapacitated and you were asked to take over the controls with no flying experience and your trusted father, a pilot on the ground, would talk you through the procedures, would you follow their directions even if you didn't understand what levers were what? Would you be foolish to do so?

Is it foolish to follow the directions of someone you trust? Is it blind to follow the directions of someone you trust?

If you had a stranger come up to you in the mall and ask for the keys to your house and the keys to your car, would it be wise to trust the stranger? Or would it be foolish? If your loving father asked to borrow your car, but told you where he was going was private and personal, would you loan him your car even though you don't know what he will do with it? Is this foolish?

What is the key to trust? Knowing the person – thus John 17:3 says life eternal is knowing God – why?

## WEDNESDAY

Second paragraph read – was this a decision between faith and sight? Where was it written, where was it told not to go to the fertile plain?

Wasn't this more about character of selflessness, willingness to give to another rather than seek for oneself? So the issue is about love vs. selfishness – the two antagonistic powers – not blind faith.

Bottom pink – read – what is the only power in the universe which can purge fear and selfishness from the heart? Love – God is Love, He writes His love into our hearts and we become partakers of the divine nature.

## THURSDAY

Bottom pink – read – in the light of our class today how would you as a class answer this question?

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 8 Faith and Frailty

### SUNDAY

Read bottom paragraph and pink section – thoughts?

Is it wrong to listen to reason? When God asks us in Isaiah 1:18-20 to come and reason with Him is it sinful to actually engage our reasoning powers or is it in this process our sinfulness will be cleansed? When Jesus told His disciples in John 15:15 that He wanted them to understand His purposes what did He mean? When Paul said in Romans 14 that every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind what was he talking about?

Does God want us to use our reason or not? Are we to think or not? Would God prefer to have the obedience of a well trained dog? What kind of obedience does God want?

As parents what kind of obedience do you want from you children? Non-thinking, non-comprehending, slave-like obedience or understanding agreement and mutual cooperation in carrying out your wishes?

Does God want us to think and to understand and to reason? Can we be healed/saved without thinking?

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 must know what is the voice of God, that we may live by every word that proceeds out of his mouth. We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. We must search the Scriptures carefully with a heart open to the reception of light and the evidences of truth. We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. We must know for ourselves what God has said. {RH, March 8, 1887 par. 1}

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 role does reason have? Are we to surrender our reason to another? Are we to stop thinking? Are we to move in directions that undermine reason? Can we come to know God without thinking and reasoning through the issues? Can we become settled into the truth about God without reasoning through the issues?

In the bottom pink section it implies that Abraham's choice to have a child with Sarah's handmaid Hagar was a sinful thing to do, that this was a violation of God's law that led to bitter fruit, thoughts?

How would we apply the point the lesson is trying to make to Jacob? Did he not have children with two wives and two handmaids that also became wives? And did those children not become the twelve tribes of Israel? What do we make of that?

Did God punish Abraham and Sarah for their choice for Abraham to have a child with Hagar? Did His choice have consequences? Does this give us lessons regarding how God deals with us?

Read Genesis 16:11,12

*GE 16:11 The angel of the LORD also said to her:*

*"You are now with child and you will have a son.*

*You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery.*

*GE 16:12 He will be a wild donkey of a man;*

*his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him,*

*and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers."*

Thoughts? Was God predestinating Ishmael? Or was God revealing what He knew Ishmael would be like? Do you think there might have been jealousy and bitterness in Hagar that got communicated to Ishmael? Do you think such communications from parents can impact the child? Do you think this is restricted only to Ishmael or could descendents be affected as well?

Abraham had marked the result of the intermarriage of those who feared God and those who feared Him not, from the days of Cain to his own time. The consequences of his own marriage with Hagar, and of the marriage connections of Ishmael and Lot, were before him. The lack of faith on the part of Abraham and Sarah had resulted in the birth of Ishmael, the mingling of the righteous seed with the ungodly. The father's influence upon his son was counteracted by that of the mother's idolatrous kindred and by Ishmael's connection with heathen wives. . . . {CC 57.3}

## MONDAY

Read third paragraph "a great deal of speculation" thoughts? Why circumcision? It was a sign of faith, it came after faith, it was a sign of a covenant relation with God. Why this sign? Thoughts?

A symbol for circumcision of the heart- what is circumcision of the heart? A cutting away of ties to things of the world.

When you look at someone in society can you tell whether they have been circumcised? When you look at someone in society can you tell whether they have had circumcision of the heart? Is it painful to be circumcised? Is it painful to have our hearts circumcised?

What is the essence of God's character? Love – God is Love – and When God the Father, Son and HS come into unity of love what do they do? Create! And God created mankind in His image, male and female created He them.



When husband and wife come into unity of love and give of themselves they create beings in their image. Do you think circumcision has something to do with this?

What attack would Satan make against the children of Israel repeatedly in the future? Fertility worship – and cult sexual practices – Baal, Ashtoreth – did God know they would face this temptation? Was circumcision a way of symbolizing ones commitment to God and to use oneself only in Godly ways? Would this symbol be another way to help them stay faithful? As they entered pagan shrine to visit with the cult prostitute she might say, “Oh, I see your Jewish.” Might that be another opportunity to change ones mind?

At this time the rite of circumcision was given to Abraham as “a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.” Romans 4:11. It was to be observed by the patriarch and his descendants as a token that they were devoted to the service of God and thus separated from idolaters, and that God accepted them as His peculiar treasure. By this rite they were pledged to fulfill, on their part, the conditions of the covenant made with Abraham. They were not to contract marriages with the heathen; for by so doing they would lose their reverence for God and His holy law; they would be tempted to engage in the sinful practices of other nations, and would be seduced into idolatry. {PP 138.1}

## TUESDAY

Read Genesis 18:16-21 – thoughts?

Notice that Sarah lied to God, what was God’s response? Did God still bless Sarah with a child? What does this say about God? What does this say about our ideas of sin? Did Sarah repent and ask forgiveness? Was God required by holiness to punish her?

If a person is sick with a disease and the doctor is working with that person and the person bleeds onto the doctors clothes, does the doctor stop working with him? If the person has lung cancer and continues to smoke does the doctor stop working with him? If the person is an alcoholic and slips back into drinking does the doctor stop working with him?

Do we see sin (acts of sin) as a symptom of a diseased condition? Do we recognize our motives and methods our very way of thinking has been infected with a destructive principle?

Why did Sarah lie? Because she was afraid, why was she afraid? Because of two things – one she didn’t really know God and two her nature was infected with the principle of selfishness which is based on fear. This fear, this self concern leads us to act out in ways designed to protect self thus she lied. Her lie was part of the infection of selfishness. When we come to know God we trust Him, we experience His love in our lives, we begin to love others and fear is purged and a new heart is recreated within.

Read bottom two paragraphs – thoughts?

Jesus came in human form thousands of years before the incarnation – why was this type of coming as a human not sufficient to be our redeemer? Why could he not permit Himself to be killed by evil men while visiting Abraham and thus pay the penalty for sin? If blood payment was all that was needed? If the shedding of the blood of the perfect Son of God was the solution, why not let it happen then?

Because more was needed. First Christ had to partake of our humanity, meaning He had to take upon Himself humanity that was damaged by the ravages of sin. Thus in Galatians 4 it says He was born of a woman under law, the law of sin and death. Christ took upon Himself humanity that was degraded by 4000 years of sin a humanity which tempted Him toward selfishness. Yet



His Father was God the HS thus His mind/heart was not bent and twisted like ours and within Christ the two antagonistic principles warred and Christ literally in His humanity rewrote the Law of Love into the human species. Thus He grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man.

Christ grew, Christ learned, Christ matured, Christ developed – Christ had to actually from conception forward reinstalled the Law of Love into humanity and develop a perfect character in His humanity.

*During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek. Hebrews 5:7-10*

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}

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}

Why did Christ have to come as a baby and live a life among us? Because what was needed was not a blood payment to an angry and offended God, but the truth about God needed to be revealed in order to restore trust and a remedy must be procured. Christ achieved both and could do so only in humanity!

And now that Christ has come, now that Christ has procured and provided the remedy – what is the purpose of the church?

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 Ho-

ly 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. {The Workers Bulletin September 9, 1902 par. 5}

## WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah – questions or thoughts?

Why was Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed? What was their problem – they were beyond healing! They had destroyed the faculties which respond to truth and had become so settled into the lies about God that their characters were hardened in selfishness and there was nothing God could do to heal them – then why destroy them? To prevent them from obstructing the healing of others who could still be saved and from obstructing/destroying the children of Israel – to keep open the avenue through which the Savior would come.

What was their sin – Read Ezekiel 16:49,50 – what was the problem? Love had been eradicated from their hearts/minds/characters and what happens when love is gone? Selfishness, and how does selfishness manifest? 1 John tells us it has three main avenues of presenting – lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life- in other words sensualism, materialism, and egotism.

How did Lot respond when the men of the town turned out and demanded his visitors so they could have sex with them? He offered his two virgin daughters- thoughts about this? Why do you think he wasn't reprimanded by the angels? Why do you think he did it? The lesson suggests he was affected by the immorality of the city and thus offered up his daughters. Thoughts?

In that culture what place did women hold? Could they own property? Leadership? Could they choose their own spouse? In fact, weren't they property of their father who could sell them to whomever he wished? And assuming he also loved his daughters then when he offered his daughters wasn't he offering his most valued possessions to save his visitors? Not only would his daughters be abused, but their value in marriage would be destroyed. Could lot, even though warped by the culture, still have been acting in love to save others?

How was it that Lot finally left Sodom? What lesson is there in this for us?

Lot was willing to leave but lot had become so attached for a variety of reasons including having children who were staying in Sodom, that Lot didn't have the strength to pull himself out of Sodom so God provided the angels to pull Lot out. Would the angels have pulled Lot out if Lot didn't want to go, against his will? No.

We can find ourselves in something in which we truly want out but for which we don't have the strength to pull ourselves out, if we ask God He will send His angels to pull us out, as long as we are willing.

What about the aspect of Abraham negotiating with God for Sodom – what lessons do we learn from this experience? Why did God keep saying yes to Abraham? Was He concerned Abraham understand there was nothing more God could do for Sodom? That they were beyond healing? That God was not being arbitrary or cruel or impatient, that God was absolutely willing to save and heal?

Do we ever get the idea that God is blood thirsty and Abraham is kinder than God?

What about Lot's wife? Why did she turn back?

The wife of Lot was a selfish, irreligious woman, and her influence was exerted to separate her husband from Abraham. But for her, Lot would not have remained in Sodom, deprived of the counsel of the wise, God-fearing patriarch. . . . {CC 57.4}

The angels of mercy hurried Lot and his wife and daughters by taking hold of their hands. Had Lot hastened as the Lord desired him to, his wife would not have become a pillar of salt. Lot had too much of a lingering spirit. Let us not be like him. The same voice that warned Lot to leave Sodom bids us, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean." Those who obey this warning will find a refuge. Let every man be wide awake for himself, and try to save his family. Let him gird himself for the work. God will reveal from point to point what to do next. {Country Living 6.7}

If Lot himself had manifested no hesitancy to obey the angels' warning, but had earnestly fled toward the mountains, without one word of pleading or remonstrance, his wife also would have made her escape. The influence of his example would have saved her from the sin that sealed her doom. But his hesitancy and delay caused her to lightly regard the divine warning. While her body was upon the plain, her heart clung to Sodom, and she perished with it. She rebelled against God because His judgments involved her possessions and her children in the ruin. Although so greatly favored in being called out from the wicked city, she felt that she was severely dealt with, because the wealth that it had taken years to accumulate must be left to destruction. Instead of thankfully accepting deliverance, she presumptuously looked back to desire the life of those who had rejected the divine warning. Her sin showed her to be unworthy of life, for the preservation of which she felt so little gratitude. {PP 161.2}

## MONDAY

Second paragraph "God tells Abram..." What does it mean to be perfect? Job was described as perfect and righteous in all his ways, does this mean sinless, flawless, faultless, without mistakes? What does it mean to be perfect?

## FRIDAY

Read question 2 and discuss

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 9     The Triumph of Faith

This week's lesson is primarily about the Lord's command for Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac – does the class have any questions about this issue that you want to be sure we explore today?

### SUNDAY

In Genesis 20 Abraham again lies and tells Abimelech that Sarah is his sister. Now he had already gotten into trouble once when he lied to Pharaoh, now he is doing it again. Why did Abraham lie?

Read Genesis 20:11-13:

*Abraham replied, "I said to myself, 'There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not of my mother; and she became my wife. And when God had me wander from my father's household, I said to her, 'This is how you can show your love to me: Everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother." ' "*

Why did Abraham lie? Because he was afraid? Why did Adam and Eve run from God? Because they were afraid. Fear is the feeling which comes out of selfishness, self-concern, survival of the fittest, need to act to save oneself.

God wants to heal us from this defect – this infection of our being in which love has been displaced and selfishness has been written in. What does Abraham's experience teach us about God's plan to heal and restore?

All humans are infected with selfishness and apart from God act in self-interest. God calls all humans to healing/salvation, those who respond are restored to trust, but even though trust in God is restored old habits and defects of character are not immediately healed. Transformation of character occurs in the context of the trust relationship with God as we choose to apply to our lives what God has revealed is best for us.

Did Abraham, the man of faith/trust, have a problem in which his faith and trust were being trumped by his fear?

God created our minds to work in a certain way, the highest faculties we have are the faculties of Reason and Conscience which together comprise our judgment. We also have a Will which is the faculty of choice and we have Feelings or emotions or desires. The Bible says you will know the truth and the truth will set you free- what faculties do truth enter the mind? Our Reason and Conscience. The Bible also says in James 1 that our feelings/desires lead us into temptation. Thus in our experience we all find ourselves in situations in which God is revealing truth to our minds and convicting our consciences of the right course and our judgment comes to a conclusion as to what is best, but our feelings come in and tempt us to go a different direction. Whenever, we let our feelings trump our judgment then damage occurs to our character and our faculties. And we can persist in such a direction so long that the faculties that recognize and respond to truth can become completely destroyed.

Abraham had feelings of fear trump his judgment and this was damaging to Abraham. God wanted to free Abraham from himself, from his weakness of character, from fear and insecurity and selfishness. The only way this could happen is to bring Abraham to places where Abraham could exercise his will to choose what he knew was right in the face of powerful feelings tempting him in the opposite direction.

God had called Abraham to be the father of the faithful, and his life was to stand as an example of faith to succeeding generations. But his faith had not been perfect. He had shown

distrust of God in concealing the fact that Sarah was his wife, and again in his marriage with Hagar. That he might reach the highest standard, God subjected him to another test, the closest which man was ever called to endure. In a vision of the night he was directed to repair to the land of Moriah, and there offer up his son as a burnt offering upon a mountain that should be shown him. {PP 147.2}

Why did God call Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?

### **First for Abraham's character development.**

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. God's work of refining and purifying the soul must go on until his servants are so humbled, so dead to self, that when called into active service, they may have an eye single to the glory of God. Then they will not move rashly from impulse, and imperil the Lord's cause because they are slaves to temptation and passion, because they follow their carnal desires; but they will move from principle and in view of the glory of God. 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. {RH, April 10, 1894 par. 2}

*You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. James 2:20-24*

We must come to know the truth, but knowing in the mind is not enough we must put the truth into action into our lives before we are changed by the truth. If you are sick with pneumonia and the doctor gives you an antibiotic and you believe the antibiotic will help you, and in truth it will, but you never take the antibiotic, does your believing the truth without applying the truth (taking the antibiotic) heal you? Likewise, believing the truth without putting into action in our lives doesn't result in healing and transformation.

Now Abraham twice before lied to save himself, why in this test from God was he asked to sacrifice his son and not himself? Because he finally cared about something more than himself – his son, not just in a self-sacrificing way, not just in love, but Isaac represented Abraham's legacy, Abraham's name, Abraham's promise, Abraham's success – in sacrificing Isaac Abraham was called upon to sacrifice himself. Isaac was what mattered most to Abraham.

### **Second reason God called Abraham to this test:**

Abraham had greatly desired to see the promised Saviour. He offered up the most earnest prayer that before his death he might behold the Messiah. And he saw Christ. A supernatural light was given him, and he acknowledged Christ's divine character. He saw His day, and was glad. He was given a view of the divine sacrifice for sin. Of this sacrifice he had an illustration in his own experience. The command came to him, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, . . . and offer him . . . for a burnt offering." Gen. 22:2. Upon the altar of sacrifice he laid the son of promise, the son in whom his hopes were cen-



tered. Then as he waited beside the altar with knife upraised to obey God, he heard a voice from heaven saying, “Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me.” Gen. 22:12. This terrible ordeal was imposed upon Abraham that he might see the day of Christ, and realize the great love of God for the world, so great that to raise it from its degradation, He gave His only-begotten Son to a most shameful death. {DA 468.4}

Abraham learned of God the greatest lesson ever given to mortal. His prayer that he might see Christ before he should die was answered. He saw Christ; he saw all that mortal can see, and live. By making an entire surrender, he was able to understand the vision of Christ, which had been given him. He was shown that in giving His only-begotten Son to save sinners from eternal ruin, God was making a greater and more wonderful sacrifice than ever man could make. {DA 469.1}

Abraham assured his son that his affection for him was not diminished, and that he would rather give his own life than to deprive him of life. But God had chosen Isaac, and his requirement must be fulfilled to the letter. He told Isaac that God had miraculously given him to his parents, and now he had required him again. He assured his son that God’s promise, that “In Isaac shall thy seed be called,” would be fulfilled; that doubtless God would raise him to life again from the dead. He told Isaac that he had hoped that the Messiah would spring from him. In this he was disappointed, and then, that his darling son must die by his own hand, increased his grief a hundred-fold. {ST, April 1, 1875 par. 14}

Isaac at first heard the purpose of God with amazement amounting to terror. He considered the matter fully. He was the child of a miracle. If God had accepted him as a worthy sacrifice, he would cheerfully submit. Life was dear, life was precious, but his Creator had specified him, Isaac, to be offered up as a sacrifice. He comforted his father, by assuring him that God conferred honor upon him, in accepting him as a sacrifice; that in this requirement he saw not the wrath and displeasure of God, but special tokens that God loved him, in that he required him to be consecrated to himself in sacrifice. {ST, April 1, 1875 par. 15}

He encouraged the almost nerveless hands of his father to bind the cords which confined him to the altar. The last words of endearing love were spoken by father and son, the last affectionate, filial, and parental tears were shed, the last embrace was given, and the father had pressed his beloved son to his aged breast for the last time. His hand is uplifted, grasping firmly the instrument of death, which was to take the life of Isaac, when suddenly his arm is stayed. “And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” {ST, April 1, 1875 par. 16}



### Third reason God called Abraham to this test:

The sacrifice required of Abraham was not alone for his own good, nor solely for the benefit of succeeding generations; but it was also for the instruction of the sinless intelligences of heaven and of other worlds. The field of the controversy between Christ and Satan--the field on which the plan of redemption is wrought out--is the lesson book of the universe. Because Abraham had shown a lack of faith in God's promises, Satan had accused him before the angels and before God of having failed to comply with the conditions of the covenant, and as unworthy of its blessings. God desired to prove the loyalty of His servant before all heaven, to demonstrate that nothing less than perfect obedience can be accepted, and to open more fully before them the plan of salvation. {PP 154.3}

What would it say about God if He did demand the payment of the death of our children? What does the Lord actually require of us?

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?*

*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?*

*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?

## TUESDAY

First paragraph read – Thoughts?

How do we see this experience of Abraham as Messianic? Do we see God executing His Son?

Jesus paid our penalty in our place on his cross, satisfying the retributive demands of divine justice by shedding his blood in sacrifice and so making possible justification for all who trust in him (Rom. 3:25-26). From "THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST: AN EVANGELICAL CELEBRATION" IS COPYRIGHT 1999 BY THE COMMITTEE ON EVANGELICAL UNITY IN THE GOSPEL, P.O. BOX 5551, GLENDALE HEIGHTS, IL 60139-5551

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.

Did God execute His Son? Where does this view come from? From a wrong premise—a wrong diagnosis:

**The wrong diagnosis** when man sinned man broke God’s eternal law and God was then required to impose a penalty upon man for the breaking of His law and the minimal penalty is death.

**The right diagnosis** when man sinned man infected himself with a terminal condition called sin or selfishness or survival of the fittest and without divine intervention death would ensue. Sin is choosing a course that is at variance with the principle upon which life is created to operate and the only consequence is death – unless something is done to restore us to love.

If, after mankind sinned, God were to restrain Himself and not use His power to inflict an external penalty of death would sinners then have eternal life, would they then live forever? Was Satan telling the truth when he said, you will not surely die? Sin doesn't lead to death, oh, of course God could kill you, but if He leaves us alone to do things our way free from all His rules we would leave happily for all eternity, is this true?

On the Cross what did Jesus cry? My God, My God why are you executing me? No what did God do? Let Him go, and in Romans 1:18, 24,26,28 we are given a description of God's wrath is letting go and then in Romans 4:25 Paul uses the exact same Greek to describe what God did you Christ on the cross – He let Him go. God DID NOT execute His Son on the Cross!

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}

## WEDNESDAY

Last paragraph read – discuss 3 levels of obedience:

- Level 1: obedience from fear of punishment
- Level 2: obedience from loving the other and not wanting to hurt them
- Level 3: obedience from understanding agreement and good character

Example of a child told not to smoke...

## THURSDAY

Middle question, why did Abraham advise Eliezer....

What impact does an unbelieving spouse have? Solomon? Lot? Adam?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts? For me what is most striking is God's gracious, patient, loving character working with Abraham to heal and restore!

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 10 The Price of Duplicity

### SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts? Does this text give us assurance of God’s goodness and His interest in our welfare and His initiative in seeking us out to heal and restore?

Have you ever heard some teach that if you go certain places that your guardian angels stay at the door? That if you go somewhere ignorantly God’s angels will still go and protect you but if you go knowingly that the angels wait at the door? Theaters?

Did God want Adam and Eve to go into sin? When they did, did God go with them or leave them on their own? Does the Bible teach that while we were yet sinners Christ came to us and died in order to save us?

Did God work to help the Israelites at the time of Esther? When Haman was working to have the Jews killed was God working to protect them? Where did all of this take place? Was this before or after the decree freeing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple and their state? Did God want His people to stay in Persia or to return to Palestine/Jerusalem? But these people weren’t where God wanted them to be? Did He abandon them?

What does all of this tell us about God? God never abandons us – we abandon Him!

Let’s consider the family of Abraham

- Abraham lied twice about Sarah being his sister
- Read Genesis 26:7 What did Isaac do? Lied about wife being sister and then also refused to follow God’s plan for the birthright
- Rebekah plotted to deceive Isaac
- Jacob deceived Isaac
- Laban and Leah deceive Jacob
- Jacob’s children deceive him when they sell Joseph

Is there a problem in this family? What does the Bible teach about this process?

*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Exodus 20:4-6*

Thoughts? What does it mean that God visits the iniquities upon the children? Is God punishing them?

His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

*“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. John 9:2,3*

Is God using His power to visit iniquities upon 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}

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}

And fathers as well as mothers are involved in this responsibility. Both parents transmit their own characteristics, mental and physical, their dispositions and appetites, to their children. As the result of parental intemperance children often lack physical strength and mental and moral power. Liquor drinkers and tobacco users may, and do, transmit their insatiable craving, their inflamed blood and irritable nerves, to their children. The licentious often bequeath their unholy desires, and even loathsome diseases, as a legacy to their offspring. And as the children have less power to resist temptation than had the parents, the tendency is for each generation to fall lower and lower. To a great degree parents are responsible not only for the violent passions and perverted appetites of their children but for the infirmities of the thousands born deaf, blind, diseased, or idiotic. {PP 561.2}

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.--Lt 105, 1893. (6BC 1101.) {1MCP 145.4}

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. {MH 371.2}

And what does science say? I have told you about research on mice in which genetically identical groups of mice were given exact diets with exception of one group being given supplements with Folic acid, B6 and zinc and then the pups of the diet enriched group had darker coats than the un-enriched group. Now research has shown that the pups with the darker coats and those without the darker coats (the offspring) if they were all fed the same diet without the supplements that the pups from the parents with the darker coat also had darker coats, thus revealing that the gene change of the original mother's diet passes at least two generations.

In September 1999, *Nature* magazine published research that further supports the fact that our actions and choices actually result in physical changes in the brain itself. Conducted by a collaboration of scientists from Yale, Harvard, and Northwestern University, this study revealed that a person's use of cocaine causes a change in the brain in which previously dormant genes are activated and expressed.

This means that certain behaviors can actually cause genes, which are turned off, to turn on and begin exerting their influence on the individual. In the case of cocaine, it activates a gene that causes the production of certain proteins that produce increased cravings for more cocaine. Kelz, Max B., et al. "Expression of the transcription factor  $\Delta$ FosB in the brain controls sensitivity to cocaine." *Nature* 401, 272 - 276 (16 Sep. 1999) DOI: 10.1038/45790.

So with all this information, is it surprising that Abraham's family struggled with the same problems he struggled with?

Does that mean we are predetermined to fall victim to these problems?

Those who put their trust in Christ are not to be enslaved by any hereditary or cultivated habit or tendency. Instead of being held in bondage to the lower nature, they are to rule every appetite and passion. God has not left us to battle with evil in our own finite strength. Whatever may be our inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong, we can overcome through the power that He is ready to impart. . . . {Counsels on Health 440.1}

## SUNDAY

Read second paragraph "Genesis 25:27 contrasts..."

How is Jacob perfect, is he less of a sinner than Esau? Then why is he worthy and Esau is not? Why are some saved and others not?

If you have two people both infected with anthrax, would you expect both to have various symptoms? Would both necessarily have the exact same symptoms? But wouldn't both be sick? Now if you offer both Cipro, the antibiotic that cures Anthrax infection and one has a cavalier attitude and the other has a great desire to be compliant with the treatment, might there be a difference in the outcome? What makes the difference?

We are all sick and dying of sin/selfishness and all display symptoms of the illness, this terminal condition, while all of our symptoms are not identical we all have symptoms. God offers freely the healing remedy and the only difference among us is our attitude toward God and His remedy!

*The LORD said to her,  
"Two nations are in your womb,  
and two peoples from within you will be separated;  
one people will be stronger than the other,  
and the older will serve the younger." Genesis 25:23*

This is a prophecy from God to Rebekah about her children Jacob and Esau. Did God decide who was going to be the one through which the blessings would come and then cause the events to happen in that way? Did God cause Esau not to be interested in following God's way? Did God deny Esau an opportunity and a choice? Or did God know, in His foreknowledge the heart attitude each would develop and God knew Jacob would respond to His call and Esau would not, therefore God could accurately prophecy as He did?

What about Romans

*RO 9:10 Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. 11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand: 12 not by works but by him who calls--she was told, "The older will serve the younger." 13 Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."*

*RO 9:14 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."*

*RO 9:16 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 There-*

*fore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.*

*Ex 8:15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.*

*Ex8:32 But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go.*

*Ex 9:34 When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts.*

*Ex 10:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them*

*Ex 11:10 Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country.*

## TUESDAY

Read third paragraph – “As Isaac smelled...” What was the prophetic vision for the people of Israel? What was God’s plan for Israel? Was it God’s plan for them to rule over the world? If so in what way? Did God call them to vanquish in battle all the other peoples of the world? Or did God call them to love each other so powerfully and then minister to others so lovingly that all the peoples of the world would come to know God through them?

So when we read these promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is it appropriate to read God wanted them to establish an earthly kingdom and rule the world like any other kingdom of the world?

Now Isaac was deceived into blessing Jacob, what do you think this means? Is God bound by our actions? Was it the blessing from Isaac that determined through whom the Savior would come? Was it Isaac who dictated to God who God had to work with? If Isaac had not blessed Jacob and had had given the birthright to Esau, does that mean that God had to work through Esau?

Bottom pink section read - If someone doesn’t use blessings rightly what does God do? What should we do? Examples? Solomon’s wisdom? Samson’s strength? What about position, power, wealth? What about the ability to procreate?

## THURSDAY

Read third paragraph “The dream of the ladder...” What does this paragraph mean? How has Jesus bridged the gap? How does His perfect righteousness reconcile? How does His righteousness justify us before God? What does it mean to be justified? To be set right, what needs to be set right our records or our hearts? God’s attitude or our characters and minds? Christ wins us back to trust and then we are infused with God’s love (Rom 5:5), God is love thus we become partakers of the divine nature, God writes His law of love on our hearts and minds, we are literally recreated in heart, mind, attitude and character to be like God again and thus are set right or justified.

## FRIDAY

Question 2 discuss



## 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)

### **YOU ARE WHAT YOUR MOTHER ATE**

09 August 2003

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Philip Cohen

WHETHER or not some of your genes are active may depend on what food supplements your mother took.

That is the implication of an intriguing study in mice. The coat colour of offspring was changed by simply giving females extra doses of four common nutrients, including folic acid and vitamin B12. The offspring were also less prone to obesity and diabetes than genetically identical mice whose mothers had not been given supplements. The differences were due to heritable changes in the activity of at least one gene in the offspring.

It is not yet clear if the same phenomenon occurs in people. If it does, what women eat during the formation of the egg and early embryo, including supplements, could have an even more profound effect than anyone thought. Changes in gene activity could make their descendants more or less likely to suffer from a range of disorders, including obesity, cancer, diabetes and possibly even autism.

Many people think that there is no downside to food supplements, says the senior researcher, Randy Jirtle of Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina. “But there could be a lifelong downside and we have no clue yet what those effects are.”

His team’s work establishes the tightest link yet between diet and a strange form of inheritance known as epigenetics: characteristics passed on to offspring that cannot be explained by changes in the DNA sequence. Scientists have long been intrigued by possible epigenetic effects. For example, Dutch women who went hungry during the second world war unsurprisingly gave birth to small babies. These children had normal diets most of their lives, yet when they had children of their own, they too were undersized.

While such cases remain controversial, several mechanisms have since been discovered that can explain epigenetic inheritance. For instance, adding tags known as methyl groups to DNA - a chemical change that does not alter the underlying sequence - can switch off a gene. These methylation marks can be passed to future generations, and experiments in mice have shown that various factors can alter them, including certain drugs, viral infections and the way an embryo is handled during IVF.

Jirtle and his colleague Robert Waterland wondered whether even subtle differences in diet could affect methylation. To find out, they used a mouse strain in which the activity of a gene called agouti, which establishes coat colour, is controlled by the degree of methylation. The more the gene is methylated, the less agouti activity there is and the browner the coat becomes.

The team fed female mice either a normal diet or a diet supplemented with choline and betaine as well as folic acid and vitamin B12. Sure enough, the vitamin-enriched mums were more likely to give birth to pups with browner coats, and chemical analysis showed the agouti gene was more highly methylated (Molecular and Cellular Biology, vol 23, p 5293). Because agouti also affects other aspects of metabolism, the brown mice are less prone to obesity and diabetes.

“It’s a very important result,” says Emma Whitelaw of the University of Sydney in Australia, whose team helped prove that epigenetic effects really can determine an offspring’s traits (New Scientist, 13 November 1999, p 16). “It establishes a close link between diet, methylation and gene activity, which is going to lead to some interesting experiments.” But she is not convinced the results have any immediate relevance to humans.

While Jirtle’s group plans to look for similar dietary effects in people, Whitelaw points out that the agouti gene is very unusual. It is not clear if there are equivalents in humans, she says.

But Jirtle’s team already has unpublished mouse data suggesting that early nutrition can also alter the methylation of “imprinted genes”. These are genes where one of the two parental copies must be turned off for normal development. Incorrect methylation of imprinted human genes is known to cause certain diseases and can contribute to the development of cancer. If nutrition affects imprinted genes in people, it might even explain the rise in some disorders. “People ask themselves why autism is going up, why asthma is going up,” says Jirtle. “Is something as subtle as this going to be the cause?”

From issue 2407 of New Scientist magazine, 09 August 2003, page 14

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 11 Jacob Becomes Israel

### SUNDAY

Read second paragraph “Jacob’s marriage...” Thoughts?

What do you think about “God allowed”? What does it mean if God allows something? Does God allow adultery? Does God allow murder? Is there a difference in allowing or permitting and actually preferring or blessing? If God allows something does that mean it is keeping with His preferred methods?

What does God not allow? Did he allow Satan to approach Adam and Eve away from the tree? Did He allow the Assyrians to take Elisha captive? Did He allow Pharaoh’s army to destroy the Hebrews at the Red Sea?

Did He allow the crucifixion of Peter? Isaiah to be sawed in half? Did He allow Stephen to be stoned? Where is the line drawn?

What is it God will not allow to happen? He will not allow love to be destroyed from the universe! He will not allow selfishness to become the governing law!

How much freedom does God ultimately give His intelligent creatures? Total – why is this so important to realize? What does it mean for safety throughout the universe? What must be the condition of all those who will be in heaven? In order for heaven to be a place of eternal safety and security it must be populated by people who will never abuse the absolute freedoms God provides. We must be so settled into the truth... so changed in character... so Christlike in loving others that we would rather give our lives than harm another. And when the entire universe is filled with beings like this, then heaven and earth will be eternally secure.

Read next paragraph “In a society...” Thoughts, was it God who blessed Leah with children?

*God listened to Leah, and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a fifth son. Then Leah said, “God has rewarded me for giving my maidservant to my husband.” So she named him Issachar. Gen 30:17,18*

First, if we take it as it reads, without further Biblical evidence, then God blessed polygamy, for this child was from her giving her handmaiden to Jacob. Do, we believe, it is in keeping with God’s will that if you are unable to have a child that the wife should go find another woman and bring her to her husband for impregnation? If you were to do this would it surprise you if a young health woman were to get pregnant? And then would you correctly say, God has rewarded, God gave you the child?

Secondly, when the Bible says God did something does that necessarily mean God did it? Or might it mean the person in the story thought God did it? Did God use His divine power to impregnate Leah’s handmaid? Did God use His divine power to impregnate Leah? Did God use His divine power to make them fertile? Or did God leave them free to use the powers they had to copulate and bring forth a child?

Consider King Saul:

*Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, 14 and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse. 1 Chron 10:13*

*Saul said to his armor-bearer, “Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and abuse me.”*

*But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it. When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died. 1 Sam 31:4,5 and 1 Chron 10:4,5*

Did the Lord use His power to put Saul to death? But the Bible says “the Lord put him to death” what does it mean? Does the Bible sometimes attribute to God things that occur when God lets natural consequences take their course? Does that mean God caused it? Why does the Bible do this? Because freedom is part of God’s Law, part of God’s way of running the universe and such events could only happen if God were still holding in check the forces of evil. They could only happen if we still had freedom. So, in the case of Leah, was God causing her and her maidservant to get pregnant, or was God not acting to prevent something that happens naturally?

Third, where did this idea come from that children are blessings of God? As the lesson says, “God blessed Leah with several children.” What was the most common form of pagan worship in the area? The form that plagued Israel again and again? Fertility worship – one was thought to be blessed by the gods if one was fertile – is this Biblical or is this pagan?

Why do we have Easter bunnies and Easter eggs? Because of the impact of fertility cults. And many Christians still believe fertility is a sign of blessing from God. This is an area that Satan has twisted again and again, to the point of worshipping fertility in the ancient times, and in Christian times making fertility a sign of God’s blessing.

Well, if children were a sign of God’s favor as the lesson suggests, then would we say that Elijah was not favored of God or Daniel was not favored of God or the three worthies or Jesus? Elijah went to heaven without seeing death and the angel said to Daniel that he was highly favored of God and Jesus was of course God’s beloved in whom He was well pleased.

And then we have numerous people who warred against God who had many children, so is fertility a good barometer to use to determine if one is favored of God? NO!

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? Do you think, with the position of the lesson, that Jacob should not have married Rachel? Did Jacob, in his heart/mind choose to marry Leah? If you were a church official and Jacob’s case was presented to you, and it was conclusive that he was deceived into marrying someone other than who he thought he was marrying, what would you say? Too bad, your stuck from now on – oh, you can hope she commits adultery and then you can divorce her, otherwise enjoy????

Was polygamy the real problem, or was the problem the selfish condition of the hearts and minds and polygamy was a symptom of this condition?

And even when polygamy has occurred what would have been their home life if each person had become truly Christlike in character? Would polygamy of been a problem if every one of them loved the others more than themselves? (I am not advocating polygamy, but pointing out polygamy is not the source of the problem selfishness is. In other words, if you take away polygamy all the problems of envy and jealousy etc. still exist, but if you take away selfishness they don’t).

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph “Jacob, as well as Laban...” And last paragraph “Jacob attributed...”

What did Jacob do?

*Jacob, however, took fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond and plane trees and made white stripes on them by peeling the bark and exposing the white inner wood of the branches. Then he placed the peeled branches in all the watering troughs, so that they would be*

*directly in front of the flocks when they came to drink. When the flocks were in heat and came to drink, they mated in front of the branches. And they bore young that were streaked or speckled or spotted. Genesis 30:37-39*

Thoughts? Does anyone remember the studies we discussed last week about mice and how their coats were changed (gene expression altered) by adding either Vit B12, Folate or zinc? Is it possible there was some nutrient in the bark of the trees that altered gene expression? I am not saying there was, but if there was and we can explain it does that mean it would undermine our faith in God?

Bottom pink – read, thoughts? How does the wording sound to you? “even despite...” Does it imply that we might expect something else? Why would we expect something else? What kind of a God is our God? God is love, and love compels to action – to save, to heal, to reach out, to restore. If we see God as He is revealed in Christ would we word it this way? Or would we word it? And because of Jacobs mistakes, and sickness of heart and desperate need of healing God kept reaching out to Him, working for Him, longing to heal Him, bringing opportunities for repentance etc.

But if we see God as legally required to inflict a penalty, then we might say, wow, God is still willing to work with me despite my mistakes, what a surprise.

#### THURSDAY

Jacob wrestles with Christ – In the teachers quarterly on page 129 the question is asked why does Christ tell Jacob to let Him go? Why does the God who is always calling us to be close to Him, calling us back into unity with Him tell Jacob to let Him go? And offers this answer:

Perhaps God tells Jacob to let Him go because as sinful, fallen beings, we have no right to hold onto a holy God. According to the law, whose penalty for breaking it is death, sinners deserve to be shut out of the presence of a pure and holy God. In all of our sinfulness, we are not worthy of the mercy of God or His presence. “Let me go” perhaps represents Jesus in His role as Judge declaring the justness of the law that says we deserve death. Our efforts cannot free us from this guilt; Jacob wrestled all night with God but could not prevail anymore than we can prevail with God in our own righteousness to earn what God alone freely gives us: unmerited favor, or grace.”

Thus, Jesus the Judge serves also as our Mediator, giving a forgiveness that is not deserved – never can be earned, a forgiveness that foreshadows His work at the Cross. Right before this, God touches Jacob with His finger. This is significant, because we are told that the finger of God wrote the law on the tablets of stone. It is the finger of God that now touches the thigh of Jacob and cripples him. Before a holy law that demands justice for our sins, we are all cripples, unable to stand in our own righteousness...

Thoughts? Here we have another example of how we can interpret events through the lens of a legal justice system. Let us try to reexamine them through the lens of God’s plan to heal and restore and see if it makes a difference.

Is our problem as sinners that we are in legal trouble or that we are sick and dying with sin? Do we need mere legal pardon or do we need recreation, regeneration, healing, renewal?

With that in mind why was Jacob’s name changed?

*And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. Genesis 32:28 KJV*



So did Jacob prevail with God? Yes! In what way? Did he prevail physically? Did he have more might than God?

Did he prevail by wearing God down and getting God to do something God didn't want to do – bless him?

So why do you think that Christ told him to stop clinging to Him? Well why was Jacob clinging to Him? In the beginning because he thought it was a robber, but after his hip was dislocated and he realized it was God, he still clung to him, why?

Fear, fear of Esau, fear of the future, fear of his inadequacy, fear of rejection, fear of abandonment, throughout Jacob's life what had the fear led him to do? Try and scheme and connive and fix everything on his own. And even now he tries to overpower God physically, fighting and fighting not to surrender, not to give in, but then his hip is dislocated. He is not only in pain, but he can no longer stand on his own two feet. He finally realizes, he cannot stand spiritually on his own. He needs a change, renewal, recreation, regeneration. Jacob needed to let go of self! He clung to Christ as his source of a new life, new heart, new character. He needed to cling until he had such a change that he could walk with God in his heart!

Imagine a toddler clinging to the leg of his father because he is afraid of something – and the father has dealt with all the issues and now tells the boy to let go? Why? Because the boy can never grow, experience freedom from his fear etc. as long as he holds onto the father's leg! But when the boy has matured and is no longer dominated by fear, he lets go of the father's leg. Jacob, in his wrestling that night with God overcame his own fear and insecurity and surrendered his future into God's hands. He overcame self! He wrestled all night not with an angel but with his ability to trust the angel and stop trying to fix everything himself!

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}

Esau had despised the blessings of the covenant. He had valued temporal above spiritual good, and he had received that which he desired. It was by his own deliberate choice that he was separated from the people of God. Jacob had chosen the inheritance of faith. He had endeavored to obtain it by craft, treachery, and falsehood; but God had permitted his sin to work out its correction. Yet through all the bitter experience of his later years, Jacob had never swerved from his purpose or renounced his choice. He had learned that in resorting to human skill and craft to secure the blessing, he had been warring against God. From that night of wrestling beside the Jabbok, **Jacob had come forth a different man. Self-confidence had been uprooted.** Henceforth the early cunning was no longer seen. In place of craft and deception, his life was marked by simplicity and truth. **He had learned the lesson of simple reliance upon the Almighty Arm,** and amid trial and affliction he bowed in humble submission to the will of God. **The baser elements of character were consumed in the furnace fire,** the true gold was refined, until the faith of Abraham and Isaac appeared undimmed in Jacob. {PP 208.2}

Read last paragraph on Thursday lesson, "Jacob, when it..."

Thoughts? Is it our past sins that “guarantee our destruction”? What will determine our destruction or our salvation? Our past or the condition of our hearts? When people come to Christ does He erase their past?

*Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. Isaiah 44:21,22 KJV*

What does this mean? From where does God blot out sin? Does He blot it out of record books or out of character, out of hearts and minds? Where does sin occur, in record books or in hearts and minds?

God is in the business of healing hearts and minds, of blotting out sinfulness, selfishness from our characters so we are transformed within, He is not erasing the facts of history.

Consider, you have cancer and the go to the doctor and are examined and the records document the devastation of how the cancer has ravaged your body. But the doctor has a remedy, a treatment you take, and the cancer goes into remission. Do the records get erased? Or does the cancerous cells get eliminated and remit back to their precancerous condition? Without the shedding of blood there is no remission – without what Christ did we couldn’t be changed back to our presinful condition, but the records documenting this transformation and healing never get erased!

## WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph – thoughts? What are the healing principles that are to be applied when a broken relationship has occurred?

- First, do no harm – in other words don’t add to the harm already done. If you have committed adultery and it is a private matter, but you feel guilty. You don’t get up during a church testimonial and confess you sin openly to the church, this would add harm.
- Forgive in your heart, regardless of the offender’s attitude
- Repent in your heart regardless of the victim’s attitude
- Trust God with your future
- When it is appropriate, seek reconciliation with the other party

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

Does time heal wounds? Or does God heal wounds? If time heals does that mean if we wait long enough everyone will be healed and all will be eternally saved?

Why does it sometimes take time for God to heal? Because God is slow or because we are resistant to His healing plan?

Teacher’s comments on Wednesday states:

Through Jesus Christ, our Intermediary, we are able to see the true nature and character of the Father.

Jesus Christ is one with the Father. He speaks for the Father. He acts on His Father’s behalf. He reaches out to each of His broken children here on earth in the name of His Father. Through Him, we have the ability and the means to communicate with our Father’ from Christ we learn of our Father’s great love for each of us.

As our Advocate, Christ strives with His Father on our behalf. p. 133

Thoughts? Does Jesus strive with the Father in our behalf? Does the Father need someone to strive with Him in order for the Father to be on our side? Is this one of those areas in which we have in 180 degrees backward?

### TUESDAY

Read first paragraph “As a result...” thoughts? Do we know that Rachel wasn’t converted to the true God? Do we know why she stole these gods? Was it because she worshipped them and valued them? Or was it because she knew her father did and it would upset her father? Are we told?

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 12 From Prison Cell to Palace

### MONDAY

Turn to Genesis 38 and let's read this chapter, go around the room and everyone read a verse:

Thoughts?

Did God put the two son's of Judah to death? Remember our discussion regarding Saul last week? 1 Chronicles 10:13,14? In the SDA Bible commentary on all of these passages it makes no comment either way.

In answering the question, did the Lord kill them by using His divine power we have three options – yes, no and maybe/I don't know.

Do we have Scripture from God which directed the brother to marry his brother's widow and bring forth children for her? Was this a commandment from God or a custom of the nations? Why was this a custom?

- They worshipped fertility
- Women had no standing and thus could not inherit or own property and the family line was not reckoned through women

Were either of these reasons Godly?

**Levirate marriage** is the practice of a woman marrying one of her husband's brothers after her husband's death, if there were no children, in order to continue the line of the dead husband. Levirate marriage has been practiced by societies with a strong [clan](#) structure in which [exogamous](#) marriage outside the clan was forbidden. Groups that have practiced levirate marriage include the [Punjabis](#) and [Jats](#), [Israelites](#), the [Xiongnu](#), the [Mongols](#), and the [Tibetans](#). (For the view of levirate marriage in [Judaism](#), see [Yibbum](#).) In some cultures, there is a feeling that the widow "owes" her in-laws a child in return for a bride price.

The practice was discontinued by the Western Jewish community in the Middle ages, a decision which was extended to most of the Jewish world in the early 1950s. This practice of marriage has also been practiced by many central and southern African peoples and is, to a certain degree, still in practice. In countries like South Africa, the obligation to do levirate marriage is on the decline due to the increased influence of [Western's women's rights](#).

The term *levirate* is a derivative of the [Latin](#) word *levir*, meaning 'husband's brother.'

Does God punish people for not following human traditions and customs?

If the brother was already married was he still to marry her? Yes, this is one of the reasons the practice fell out of favor and is no longer practiced by Jews today because it would perpetuate polygamy. So, do God's requirements require polygamy?

Then what do we do about Deuteronomy?

*DT 25:5 If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. 6 The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.*

*DT 25:7 However, if a man does not want to marry his brother's wife, she shall go to the elders at the town gate and say, "My husband's brother refuses to carry on his brother's name in Israel. He will not fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to me." 8 Then the elders of*

*his town shall summon him and talk to him. If he persists in saying, “I do not want to marry her,” 9 his brother’s widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, “This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother’s family line.” 10 That man’s line shall be known in Israel as The Family of the Unsandaled.*

Was this law written by God’s finger on Sinai? Was this considered part of the Mosaic law? Were there things in the Mosaic law that God didn’t want them to do?

*MT 19:3 Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”*

*MT 19:4 “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 19:7 “Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?”*

*MT 19:8 Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. 9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.”*

Were there things in the Mosaic law that were not what God wanted for his people? Then why were they there? Because of the hardness of the hearts of the people, because of their condition, because of where they were mentally, spiritually, because of the darkness of their minds, would the Levirate marriage be a case like this?

Notice the Mosaic law gave the brother a way out of fulfilling this duty. God met them where they were and began to move them toward where he wanted them to be. Instead of absolutely you must marry, he didn’t abolish the practice but made a way of escape so a person could avoid it.

Also, with the eye for an eye and tooth for tooth – God met them where they were and moved them in a healthier direction. They wanted to kill for every offense, just like many in the Middle East today. NPR reported on a boy who was playing and was throwing stones and hit a man’s cow in the eye and blinded the cow’s eye and the man shot and killed the boy. Moses law would have said, no you can’t kill him you can only take his eye thus moving away from such blood thirstiness as fast as they could go.

Then do you think God would put someone to death for not practicing this custom He didn’t even support?

Why would the Bible say it like this? Is it trying to tell us by declaration how God is or is it trying to show us how the people thought about God and reveal over time even in their darkness of mind how God continued to work with them?

One of the cornerstone principles of God’s government is Freedom, Liberty and none of this could happen if God didn’t provide genuine freedom, thus it is because God’s law of Liberty still governs the universe that such things can happen – and in this sense one might say God is responsible as God refuses to take away freedom and make us robots.

Bottom paragraph read “After being discovered...” – thoughts?

What did Judah admit guilt over? Did he admit guilt over visiting a prostitute? Or did he admit guilt over not following this ungodly tradition? So what does this mean? What is God concerned with? Human tradition or healing His character in man? Restoring selflessness, removing selfishness – with this in mind let's reexamine the story.

Onan spilled seed on the ground – and this was described as detestable to the Lord and described as the Lord putting him to death. Does this mean that God does not like this form of birth control? What was the sin?

If Onan would have done as custom dictated and impregnated his sister in law and she had a son, the son would have received the birthright from Judah that Er would have received and all his property, but if there was no son, then all that was Er's would have gone to Onan. Thus was the sin he committed one of spilling seed or one of being selfish? Was his sin one of self-exaltation and an unwillingness to put his brother and brother's family first?

Consider the difference between Lucifer and Christ and Lucifer sought to exalt himself, Christ did not think equality with God was something to be grasped but was willing to lay all aside for others.

Judah, in not following tradition and giving his youngest son was he acting in a selfless way for the honor, restoration, care of Tamar or was he acting selfishly trying to protect his youngest son – not for the son's sake but for Judah's sake? Who was Judah's posterity to be reckoned through now that his two older son's were dead? His youngest!

But Judah's experience with Tamar aroused in Judah the conviction of his own selfishness and sin and resulted in repentance on the part of Judah.

Read bottom pink section – thoughts? Can we know the motive of the person's heart? Can we know whether what we have heard is true? Can we always interpret accurately what we see? Do we have all the factors in a situation at our disposal?

## TUESDAY

Now we turn to the story of Joseph – any questions or thoughts from the class?

Read bottom dark questions “Here's Joseph, unjustly...” and the last paragraph – thoughts?

Do bad things happen to good people? Why is this important to remember? What about those ministries which preach that if you are healthy and wealthy you are blessed of God and if you are unhealthy or poor you are not blessed? Or if you say a certain prayer every day for 30 days you will have increased goods and influence? Or if you can't have children there must be some sin in your life?

How do we understand why bad things happen to good people?

because we live in a war zone – the devil goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Casualties will be experienced.

What are the weapons in this war?

Because trials can lead to growth, and overcoming defects of character – many are a result of our choices and we learn from them – therapy is painful-

Do you think Joseph would have matured as he did without the trials he went through?

- James 1:2-4
- 1Peter 1:6,7



- Psalms 66:10
- Revelation 3:19

To reveal the two antagonist principles at war

Joseph – the two principles are revealed as a witness for God- Job

### WEDNESDAY

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts – was it wrong for Joseph to try and secure his freedom? Should he have said, well I trust God I will wait on the Lord?

It reminds me of the Christian who lived in Florida when the hurricane was coming, an evacuation order was given but he said, “I’m a Christian I believe in God He will protect me.”

Then police came with warnings

The waters rise and man in a boat comes

The waters rise a man in a helicopter comes

After he dies he presents himself to God complaining for God letting him die and God said, “I sent you warnings, I sent you a boat and a helicopter and you ignored them all. What else was I supposed to do?”

### THURSDAY

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? What do you think it means that after the message came and God revealed the interpretation that Joseph DID NOT say, well it is God’s will, eat, feast and be merry for the next 7 years for then we will die?

Teacher’s comments has this EGW quote:

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. --”Patriarchs and Prophets,” pp. 222, 223.

Thoughts? Is our destiny determined by our character or does our character not matter because in the judgment Christ’s character stands in place of ours?

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. CC 371.3

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. {GH, March 1, 1901 par. 4}

We are preparing to meet Him who, escorted by a retinue of holy angels, is to appear in the clouds of heaven to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality. When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our character, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy, will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects, and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us. . . {CH 43.4}

We are now in God's workshop. Many of us are rough stones from the quarry. But as we lay hold upon the truth of God, its influence affects us. It elevates us and removes from us every imperfection and sin, of whatever nature. Thus we are prepared to see the King in His beauty and finally to unite with the pure and heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory. It is here that this work is to be accomplished for us, here that our bodies and spirits are to be fitted for immortality. {CH 44.1}

## FRIDAY

Question 1 read and discuss

## 2006 Q4 Lesson 13 The End of the Beginning

### SABBATH

Read the entire Sabbath section – 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}

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}

He desires the youth to cultivate every power of their being, and to bring every faculty into active exercise. . . . Let them look to Christ as the pattern after which they are to be fashioned. The holy ambition that He revealed in His life they are to cherish--an ambition to make the world better for their having lived in it. This is the work to which they are called. {CC 371.5}

Thoughts?

The lesson also said, "That 'something' of course, is the Lord working out His divine plan in human history."

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 is that divine plan? What is God's purpose? What was God's original purpose for the world? Did that purpose change once man fell into sin?

God's original purpose in the creation of the earth is fulfilled as it is made the eternal abode of the redeemed. "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever." The time has come to which holy men have looked with longing since the flaming sword barred the first pair from Eden--the time for "the redemption of the purchased possession." The earth

originally given to man as his kingdom, betrayed by him into the hands of Satan, and so long held by the mighty foe, has been brought back by the great plan of redemption. {AH 540.1}

God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. That purpose will be fulfilled when, renewed by the power of God and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal home of the redeemed. {AH 540.3}

Thoughts about this? How does this purpose fit with the quotation from Education regarding the grand central theme and the rise of the great controversy? When was this planet created before or after the controversy started? And what did it start over? God Himself, His trustworthiness, His methods, His principles! And what would have been revealed if Adam and Eve would have stayed faithful and fulfilled God's original purpose? The truth about God Himself would have been revealed!

Mankind was created as the repository of God's Law of Love, of God's own character and endowed with the privileges of procreation – to act like God acts to live like God lives to join together and bring into existence new beings and then teach and raise those beings and to govern a world, diverse and beautiful all under the divine Law of Love! And what would have been revealed? God's true character!

And how do we see this purpose being worked out in the story of Joseph?

## SUNDAY

Read third paragraph "As we read..." Thoughts?

Did God cause all these events to transpire? How do you like the idea that God arranged this? Is there a difference from arrange and cause? Is there a difference from arrange and predetermine? Is there a difference between arrange and make it happen just that way?

Definition of Arrange:

- 1:** to put into a proper order or into a correct or suitable sequence, relationship, or adjustment <arrange flowers in a vase> <arrange cards alphabetically>
- 2:** to make preparations for : [PLAN](#) <arranged a reception for the visitor>
- 3 a :** to adapt (a musical composition) by scoring for voices or instruments other than those for which originally written **b:** [ORCHESTRATE](#)
- 4 :** to bring about an agreement or understanding concerning : [SETTLE](#) <arrange an exchange of war prisoners>  
*intransitive verb*
- 1:** to bring about an agreement or understanding <arranged to have a table at the restaurant>
- 2:** to make preparations : [PLAN](#) <arranged for a vacation with his family>

If we take the definition that to put in suitable sequence as in arrange flowers in a vase – does the florist, who arranges the flowers make the flowers? In this case then, did God make Joseph's brother's sell him? Did God make Potipher's wife tempt Joseph? Did God make Joseph say no? Did God make Potipher put Joseph in prison? But did God give the butcher and baker a dream? And Joseph the ability to interpret it? Did God give Pharaoh a dream? And Joseph the ability to interpret it?

Did God give Joseph dreams early on which predicted his brother's bowing down to him? Did the dreams antagonize Joseph's brother's and contribute to their selling him into slavery? Did

God force Joseph to tell his brothers? Did God want the brother's to sell Joseph so the dream could be fulfilled? Did God know what the brothers would do and gave Joseph a dream showing an outcome based on God's foreknowledge and divine "arranging" of the various "flowers" that are available?

It states the famine was clearly of the Lord working out His will, was it? Or was the famine something God foresaw and God arranged, through Joseph to deal with?

"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? Did God cause the famine or did God intervene to prepare a way of escape from the famine?

What is God's purpose? What is God's will? What is God working toward?

*And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 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*

*"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. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 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 1:16-20*

*"My prayer is not for them alone. 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. John 17:20-23*

What is God working to accomplish? How do you see Him working to accomplish this goal through the history of the world? How do you seeing Him working to accomplish this unity here in Genesis?

Is God allowing the consequences of Satan's methods to be revealed? Is He allowing people to reap what they sew? Is He intervening with grace to keep open a channel for healing and redemption? Does He always leave us free to follow Him or reject Him?

Did Satan know a Redeemer was promised? Was Satan working to destroy the avenue/channel through which the Redeemer would come? Could a famine in which all Abraham's children died been an attempt to accomplish this goal?

## MONDAY

Read Genesis 42:24-28

*He turned away from them and began to weep, but then turned back and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes.*

*Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man's silver back in his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey. After this was done for them, they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left.*

*At the place where they stopped for the night one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey, and he saw his silver in the mouth of his sack. "My silver has been returned," he said to his brothers. "Here it is in my sack."*

*Their hearts sank and they turned to each other trembling and said, "What is this that God has done to us?"*

The lesson asks, what does it signify about their faith and understanding of God?

Did God do this to them? Did God give instructions for Joseph to do this to them? Why were they blaming God? Is this a common thread through OT thinking that God gets blamed? Do we do this today?

Do you have trouble with the idea that when they attribute this to God that it is actually not God doing it or should we, because it is in the Bible and the Bible is inspired, conclude, "well it must have been God doing it"?

Are there other times like this?

Joseph is testing them – in Joseph's case it is because Joseph cannot read hearts and minds and wants to ascertain the character of his brothers. But God can read hearts and minds, He actually knows our characters, yet God still tests us why?

*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 20:20*

*He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. Deuteronomy 8:15-17*

*Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test? And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. 2 Corinthians 13:5-7*

*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. James 1:12*

Thoughts? Testing has two primary purposes – both revealed in these texts:



When a person is sick and goes to the doctor, what does the doctor do? Run a bunch of “tests”. Why? To expose the problem, to uncover the defect. Does the doctor do this in order to humiliate, embarrass, ridicule, punish, harass or criticize the patient? Or does the doctor do this in order to help uncover the problem and ultimately heal the patient? The first reason tests come is in order to help us know how sick we are and expose the areas in our lives in which the infection of sin is raging!

When a person tests their “mettle” what does that mean? When a person has practiced, and studied, and prepared for anything – piano, Olympic competition, biology class, drivers education, auto mechanics, pilots instruction – does there ever come a time when they are to put their training, education, practice to the test? Why? In order for them to fail or in order for them to achieve? To solidify into their character, into their personhood what they have been working toward? Tests come as a means of helping us overcome defects of character. When a person, who has struggled with addictions, gets into rehab, detoxed, goes to 12 step meetings, avoids places where their substance is used, eventually, in order to be truly free they will one day be faced again with the opportunity to use and will be tested – will they choose to say no, turn away, exercise their power of choice to reach out for help, or will they surrender to the temptation? God allows tests to come as a means of freeing us from defects of character!

Thoughts?

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. {My Life Today 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}

Consider Malachi 3 – a refiners fire and launderer’s soap.

## TUESDAY

Read top paragraph – “Joseph still...” Thoughts?

Do you think the trials and testing had worked to bring a change of character in Judah? Do you think, Judah having lost two sons of his own was more empathetic to his father and thus more willing to lay down his life rather than see his father hurt?

But what did they all do after Jacob died? After 17 years of living under Joseph's protection in Egypt, when Jacob died what did they do? They again asked for forgiveness and for him not to harm them? What does this tell us? That the infection of selfishness was still being worked out, their concern was with what was going to happen to them. They were not ready to lay self down for another.

### WEDNESDAY

Read bottom pink and discuss – where does character come from? Are we born with character or does character develop based on our choices?

Think of this. Here we have no homes, or very poor ones. Christ says to us, "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 unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." We believe these words. We are looking forward to the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. {GH, March 1, 1901 par. 3}

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. {GH, March 1, 1901 par. 4}

We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. This is not a fable to us; it is a reality. We have no doubt, neither have we had a doubt for years, that the doctrines we hold today are present truth, and that we are nearing the judgment. We are preparing to meet Him who, escorted by a retinue of holy angels, is to appear in the clouds of heaven to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality. When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our character, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy, will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects, and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us. . . . {CH 43.4}

We are now in God's workshop. Many of us are rough stones from the quarry. But as we lay hold upon the truth of God, its influence affects us. It elevates us and removes from us every imperfection and sin, of whatever nature. Thus we are prepared to see the King in His beauty and finally to unite with the pure and heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory. It is here that this work is to be accomplished for us, here that our bodies and spirits are to be fitted for immortality. {CH 44.1}

### FRIDAY

Read and discuss all 3 questions

## 2007 Q1 Lesson 1      The Rise and Fall of the House of Solomon

### SUNDAY

First paragraph – read – thoughts? What is the difference between intelligence and wisdom? Can you have intelligence without wisdom? Can you have wisdom without intelligence?

#### Intelligence

a: the ability to learn or understand or to deal with new or trying situations: REASON; *also*: the skilled use of reason

b: the ability to apply knowledge to manipulate one's environment or to think abstractly as measured by objective criteria (as tests).

#### Wisdom

a: accumulated philosophic or scientific learning: KNOWLEDGE;

b: ability to discern inner qualities and relationships: INSIGHT c: good sense : JUDGMENT

Do you see a difference between intelligence and wisdom?

What do you think EGW meant by:

**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.... **The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures.** {RH, March 8, 1887 par. 1}

What does Isaiah 1:18 mean?

*"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.*

Read next paragraph "According to the Bible..."

What are the two types of wisdom?

What is the basis of the wisdom of the world? Survival of the fittest, what is good for self, how to promote, advance self. What is the basis of the wisdom of God? Selflessness, love, others first, death to self.

Does anyone want to share examples of how these two conflict?

Read fourth paragraph – "If however..." Thoughts? What does "after" mean? Temporally, after in time or philosophically, after our understanding has understood God's true nature? In either case how do we then explain Lucifer? Was Lucifer's "wisdom" which is the "wisdom of the world" based on the fear of the Lord?

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}

Does the true knowledge of God guarantee a good outcome? But can you have a good outcome without the true knowledge of God?

Read bottom green section? Thoughts? Is this example an example of knowledge without wisdom? Or is this an example of ignorance, denial, refusal to accept knowledge? He doesn't acknowledge the truth of his own condition?

Can you think of an example of knowledge without wisdom?

## MONDAY

1 Kings 3:16-28 is an account of Solomon's request for wisdom, God's granting it and the story of the two prostitutes, one whose baby had died and how she exchanged her dead baby for the other prostitute's living baby and Solomon's judgment on the matter.

What did Solomon know that enabled him to make this judgment? What "wisdom" did he possess?

The truth about God Himself, His character of self-sacrificing love AND the truth about the nature and character of sin, self-first, survival of the fittest, Solomon understood the two antagonistic principles. Therefore, he could make this judgment knowing that love would sacrifice self and give up the child but selfishness would sacrifice the other and see the child killed. Solomon understood the true issues in the Controversy between Christ and Satan and how they enter every phase of human existence.

Last paragraph read – thoughts? Why is obedience so important? Why is humble attitude not enough? Why is "accepting the blood" not enough? Why is "believing the truth" not enough? What is the importance of obedience?

Obedience is the process of incorporating into our character the victory/remedy already achieved by Christ.

Imagine being infected with Ebola, and you are dying, and someone comes, allows themselves to be infected, and their immune system defeats the infection, and a remedy is now made available and offered freely to you. What good will it do you to believe the remedy exists if you don't take it? What good will it do you if you believe the remedy exists, pick up a prescription from the doctor and then don't take it? If you take the remedy does your work in taking the remedy cure you? Have you healed yourself? Or does the remedy do something in you that you cannot do for yourself?

So the question in Christianity is – do you believe God has a real Remedy which can actually heal and transform you or do you believe that God merely pardons you legally but leaves you without a cure?

Is all obedience of equal value? Why or why not?

If someone obeys the Lord but has not been convinced in their own mind, but are doing it because they are supposed to – and it is the right thing to do, will they experience healing?

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}

Thoughts? - Can God get the change of character in us without our understanding cooperation?

What are the 3 levels of obedience?

1. That of a slave or well trained dog – do it out of fear
2. That of love without understanding – I don't know why but I want to please
3. That of an understanding friend, because it makes sense and agree.

Which do you think God wants from us? Why? Because what needs to be restored is not behavior but love and love cannot be programmed nor done by rote.

## TUESDAY

Solomon's Temple – in 2 Chronicles 6:7 we read:

*“My father David had it in his heart to build a temple for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel.*

What do you think it means for the “Name of the Lord”? What is the “name of the Lord”?

Is it “Yahweh”? Is it “I am that I am”? Is it “Joshua, Yeshua, Jesus, Rose of Sharon, Lilley of the Valley, Bright and Morning Star?” Do you think in heaven, before the earth was created that the angels were speaking Hebrew? What are the chances that God's “name” really is something in Hebrew?

Christie has a friend whose given name is Thelma Elizabeth. As a child everyone called her Thelma, but as an adult she preferred to go by her middle name Elizabeth. Today, almost everyone calls her Elizabeth and if someone calls her Thelma she doesn't particularly like it. But there is one close friend who has known her since childhood who continues to call her Thelma and this doesn't bother Elizabeth at all, why? Do you think God really gets bothered by what label we attach to Him when we address Him? Or is He more concerned with the love in our hearts for Him regardless of what “name” we use to address Him?

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}

Now if a person worships a being as characterized by Satan, with Satan's attributes but they call that being “Yahweh” are they worshipping the true God?

What if a person worships a being that has all the attributes of God as revealed by Jesus but they have no name to call Him by will that make a difference?

So what does it mean to build a house for the “Name of the Lord”? A place where the truth about God Himself will be revealed!

Where was that truth supposed to be revealed on this planet originally? Where was God supposed to dwell originally? What House was built by God for His dwelling? Where was God’s Name supposed to have been most powerfully and fully written and revealed? Mankind! We were originally designed to be the dwelling place for God where He would dwell by His Spirit!

Then what do you think the purpose of this Temple Built by Solomon was for? It was based on the Tent of Meeting built by Moses and what was its purpose? But to show God’s plan to restore us to His dwelling place! God’s plan to restore us to oneness with Him! And who came to accomplish this rebuilding, recreation, regeneration, healing, restoration? Christ!

*I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone “like a son of man,” dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. Rev 1:12-16*

*Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” The Jews replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” But the temple he had spoken of was his body. Jn 2:19-21*

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*

What is God’s will for Christ to do? What had sin done to the Temple of God? It had nearly destroyed the image of God in man. Christ came to restore in man God’s image, to write the law of love back into the heart and mind of man.

*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.*

*HEB 8:11 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.*



When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. "God created man in His own image" (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image--the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase. Vast was the scope offered for their exercise, glorious the field opened to their research. The mysteries of the visible universe--the "wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)--invited man's study. Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was his high privilege. Had he remained loyal to God, all this would have been his forever. Throughout eternal ages he would have continued to gain new treasures of knowledge, to discover fresh springs of happiness, and to obtain clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the wisdom, the power, and the love of God. More and more fully would he have fulfilled the object of his creation, more and more fully have reflected the Creator's glory. {Ed 15.1}

But by disobedience this was forfeited. Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated. Man's physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed. He had become subject to death. Yet the race was not left without hope. By infinite love and mercy, the plan of salvation had been devised, and a life of probation was granted. To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized--this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life. {Ed 15.2}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, "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." Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being-- the body, the mind, as well as the soul--the image of God is to be restored. {Ed 16.1}

*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 Cor 3:16,17*

Then what does it mean to pray in the "Name of Christ"

**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}

Read paragraph "Perhaps the most important..." Thoughts?

When you think of forgiveness what do you think of? Was there/is there a time when God is ever unforgiving? That God stops being forgiving? That God refuses to forgive? Is there ever a time when people/beings stop wanting to be forgiven? Is God's forgiving attitude, heart and pardon dependent upon our confession and repentance? Or is our healing, recreation and restoration dependent upon our confession and repentance?

When Christ was on the Cross – did He forgive them who put Him there? Did Christ have the power to forgive sins? Is Christ God? Were they then forgiven by God? Were they now His

friends? Or because they refused to accept the forgiveness freely offered and open their hearts to God for healing they remained His enemies?

What about the idea of punishing Israel for their sins? Thoughts about this? Do parents ever discipline? Why? Does God discipline? But what happens when discipline fails? When the child rebels and as an adult turns his back on the family and goes into wild living? What does the parent do then? Let them go – is this punishment? Consider the first chapter of Romans.

### WEDNESDAY

Solomon's fall – what led to Solomon's fall? Dependence on self and failure to continue to rely on God – thus he made judgments to make alliances according to human standards and married foreign women. These women then exerted their influence to lead his mind away from the paths of health.

*Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." 1 Cor 15:33*

### THURSDAY

Last paragraph read – thoughts? How can we become immune? How does the universe become immune? Isn't that what Christ came to do immunize the world and the universe so that we can be healed and sin will never arise again?

When someone has been so settled into the truth both intellectually and spiritually that they cannot be moved would they then be beyond the follies of sin? How can we experience this?

### FRIDAY

Read questions 2,3 and discuss

## 2007 Q1 Lesson 2     Nothing New Under the Sun

### SABBATH

Read the third paragraph, “Of course, in one sense...” Thoughts?

What implication does the paragraph make regarding depression and the use of antidepressants? That depression is a result of some failure in one’s relationship with God? Is this the implication?

Last summer at a large Christian meeting I heard a famous tele-evangelist talk about the importance of recognizing who we are in Christ, that we didn’t evolve out of slime, that we are God’s children and when we recognize this, “Away with depression.”

Is depression merely a problem with not having enough faith? Is it possible for someone to have a close friendship with God, heart is right with God and still have depression?

Is it possible for someone to have a close relationship with God and strong faith in God and have cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease and many other illnesses?

Our brains are physical organs which can have physical problems even though we have a saving relationship with God. The challenge is that it is true that our thoughts, actions, choices, behaviors can affect gene expression, protein production, sleep patterns, nutrients, electrical flow of the neural circuitry, neurogenesis, glucose metabolism. Thus it is true that unresolved guilt, “sinful” living can result in a depression, but it is equally true that someone with a right relationship with God can have depression from multiple other reasons unrelated to a spiritual one.

- When someone has Major Depression there is:
  - Impaired brain metabolism
  - Impaired neural signaling
  - Impaired neurogenesis
  - Neuronal loss
  - Impaired electrical activity
  - Impaired protein production
  - Altered gene expression
  - Impaired pre-frontal cortex activity
- Non modifiable risk factors for depression:
  - Genetics – the genes you have (expression can be modified)
  - Gender
  - Age (adolescence and elderly)
  - History of previous depression
  - Family history of depression
  - History of trauma (both physical and emotional)
- Modifiable risk factors for depression (examples given below are not all inclusive):
  - Medical illness
  - Heart Dz, CA, AIDS, DM, Terminal illnesses
  - Nutritional factors

- Omega 3 Fatty acids deficiency
- Folate deficiency
- Vitamin B 6 deficiency
- Vitamin B 12 deficiency
- Homocysteine elevations
- Tryptophan deficiency
- Vitamin C deficiency
- Infections
- HIV, Tertiary syphilis, prions, borna virus
- Toxins
- Mercury, arsenic, lead, bismuth, industrial solvents/chemicals
- Hormonal irregularities
- Thyroid, estrogen/progesterone
- Unremitting stress
- Real or imagined
- Brain injury/damage
- Chronic pain states
- Brain disease
- PD, AD, ALS, Pick's, Lewy body
- Unhealthy relationships
- Social isolation
- Dependency
- Abusive relationships
- Loss of autonomy/freedom
- Sleep disorder
- Limited physical activity
- Alcohol and drugs
- Pregnancy
- Northern hemisphere
- Loss (complicated grief)
- Radiation toxicity
- Medications
- Beta blockers
- Reserpine
- Benzos
- Barbiturates
- Anticonvulsants
- Calcium channel blockers
- Estrogens/Norplant
- Statins

- Interferon
- Accutane
- Narcotics
- Fluroquinolones
- Spiritual factors
- Unresolved guilt
- No meaning purpose in life
- False conceptions of God
- Unhealthy forms of worship

“So why else are millions and millions of dollars spent on antidepressants?”

## SUNDAY

Read Ecclesiastes chapter 1

Thoughts?

Read last paragraph – do you agree this is a bitter, cynical, pessimistic man? Or could he be a man of wisdom and insight?

Could Solomon really be expounding the wisdom of God here?

What does the phrase “under the sun” or “under heaven” likely mean? And when Solomon uses this phrase then states everything under the sun is meaningless or vanity or useless what is he saying?

Is he not telling us that if we try to understand what is happening on this planet without the Great Controversy between good and evil in mind we will fail to find answers, will become discouraged and find nothing makes sense, when it is all kept “under the sun” but when we open our minds to include the realities beyond the sun, the Great Controversy then everything comes into focus and we can make sense of this world and what is happening is not meaningless.

So rather than Solomon being a pessimistic old man, he is sharing with us the wisdom that only from God’s perspective is there hope, life and health!

Let’s look for some evidence:

*Ecc 2:4-11: I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well--the delights of the heart of man. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.*

*I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;  
I refused my heart no pleasure.  
My heart took delight in all my work,  
and this was the reward for all my labor.  
Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done  
and what I had toiled to achieve,*

*everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;  
nothing was gained under the sun.*

What is he saying he found meaningless? Everything this world has to offer? Is this pessimistic or is this true? What did Christ say?

What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Matthew 16:26

In Ecclesiastes 7:2 Solomon says:

*It is better to go to a home where there is mourning than to one where there is a party,  
because the living should always remind themselves that death is waiting for us all.*

Thoughts? Is he just being pessimistic or is he being wise?

Has anyone ever lost a loved one to death? Or been diagnosed with cancer? In those circumstances what thoughts come to mind when you think about the daily rounds/routines of life that we get caught up into?

At a cancer support group one lady told how she used to get so bent out of shape every day getting her children ready for school, to be sure their outfits matched, the shoes and socks matched etc. and if one of the children had something that didn't match she used to get upset and yell at the kids to go change. But once she was diagnosed with breast cancer all that changed. She told of a change in perspective in which those things were truly meaningless, trivial, vanity, worthless and she instead began to value the truly meaningful things in life – namely the people she loved.

Is it possible that Solomon may be coming to the same conclusion?

I remember after my father died looking around at all the things I had thought were important and realizing – nothing really matters except the people you love. That we cannot take anything with us to heaven except our character and those who we have brought to know Jesus. Could Solomon be saying working for the things of this world is a waste of time because it is all going to come to an end and burn up one day, and the only thing that matters is our eternal destiny?

Now the lesson, seems to be making the argument that we must take Ecclesiastes carefully because it is a bitter, cynical, pessimistic man writing – but this is the same argument given by those who believe in the immortality of the soul in rejecting Ecclesiastes 9:5,6:

*For the living know that they will die,  
but the dead know nothing;  
they have no further reward,  
and even the memory of them is forgotten.*

*Their love, their hate  
and their jealousy have long since vanished;  
never again will they have a part  
in anything that happens under the sun.*

Are you comfortable with this reasoning? Why can we know Eccl 9:5,6 are not merely the thoughts of a depressed, cynical, pessimistic old man? The rest of scripture supports what he says!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?



What struck me was the contrast Solomon is making between the created and the Creator – we are vapors – but God is eternal – the Great I Am. That Solomon is not being pessimistic but helping us realize our true relationship with God – only in connection to the vine is there life, only by connecting to the Eternal One is there eternal life.

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Can you think of some modern examples? Elvis? What things might we get caught up in along this line? Working for cars, houses, degrees, portfolios, awards, trophies, competitions, recognition?

When the Lord returns what is the only thing we can take?

In the teacher's comments there is the following question: "What do I need to know from God's Word?"

How would you answer that question?

What do we need to know? God Himself – John 17:3, and every doctrine is only important if it is connected to helping us know God better. If a doctrine is disconnected from knowing God it does us no good, and if a doctrine misrepresents God it actually does us harm

## TUESDAY

Tuesday's lesson is about Solomon learning of God from nature – but the lesson cautions that people can learn the wrong lesson from nature. Can we learn of God from nature?

*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*

If this is true why do people not learn the truth about God from nature more easily? Why do we need to study nature with God's written word in our hearts and minds?

*For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. Romans 8:22 KJV*

All nature has been infected and is altered by sin and thus nature now reveals not only the truth about God but also the principles of Satan – what are those two principles? Love vs. survival of the fittest!

## WEDNESDAY

Read bottom green section – thoughts? What was the solution? How did Jesus solve the problem? What was the problem Jesus needed to solve?

## THURSDAY

We could go back a review again the Temple for the Name of God and God's original Temple built without human hands, and God's purpose for building this Temple. And then the purpose for the sanctuary/temple built by human hands – all with purpose – the purpose of God to restore and heal His creation!

## 2007 Q1 Lesson 3     All That My Eyes Desired

### SABBATH

Read Sabbath's Lesson – thoughts?

How do you help someone who has become discouraged with their life? How do you help someone who has betrayed trusts and is now ashamed and guilt ridden? A man who has cheated on his wife, a business man who has cheated his clients, a child who has stolen from parents? How do you help someone who has made ugly mistakes and is discouraged?

What would you say to such a person?

How does the phrase – “Jesus stooped lower, becoming ‘sin for us’” help? What does such a phrase mean?

What does it mean Jesus became sin for us? What did Jesus do? Did our misdeed, our mistake, our lying, cheating, murdering, hatefulness our betrayal of trust our acts of wickedness get removed from our mind, our memory, our history, our experience and get transferred into the mind, character, experience of Jesus? In other words, did our “sins” get placed upon Christ at the cross? No! Acts, behaviors, historical events did not get placed upon Christ at the cross – then what does it mean He became sin for us?

What is the problem with sin? Is it that we are in legal trouble with the great and awesome King of the Universe who must use His power to inflict the just penalty of death? Or is it that we are infected with a condition that is terminal and without the intervention, intercession of this great and powerful King of the Universe we would die?

And when we realize we are infected with a terminal condition, does it surprise anyone that such a condition has a variety of symptoms? When people are infected with HIV or syphilis not everyone manifests the same symptoms, while they are dying from the same disease, they can actually manifest a wide variety of symptoms. Now if someone is infected with one of these diseases and they have the symptom of fever and we treat the fever have we cured them? If they have cough and we give cough suppressant have we cured them? If they have nausea and we give an anti-nausea drug have we cured them?

If we have symptoms of the infection of sin, and someone lies and we “treat the lying” by someone paying the penalty for lying have we cured the sinner? Is someone infected with sinfulness has the symptom of adultery and we “treat the adultery” by having someone “pay the penalty” for their misdeed, have we cured the sinner? No! Treating symptoms of a disease does not cure the disease.

What does God want to do? Treat symptoms or cure, heal, restore His creation? Then what does it mean “he became sin for us”? He took upon Himself the diseased state itself, He took upon Himself humanity born of a woman under law – the law of sin and death, and in His person He restored God's law of love into this creation and purged the infection of selfishness from this species. He literally overcame the very infection that brings death!

He became the avenue through which God's kingdom, God's methods, God's principles are restored in this creation. He founded a beachhead that cannot be shut down and in fact it is expanding and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it!

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 par. 6}

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}

So what do you say to someone who has made ugly mistakes and is ashamed, guilt ridden? That their mistakes were/are symptoms of a disease, not the disease itself, and Christ has overcome the disease and offers His remedy free and clear.

What is that Remedy? How do we take it? How do we internalize it? The Remedy is Truth & Love! God is Truth & Love, God pours Himself into our hearts and we take the focus off ourselves and instead begin giving whatever God has given us to others. We begin practicing the principles of truth and love in our daily actions.

### **So two steps:**

The truth revealed by God which we “reason” out with Him and become settled into so that we cannot be moved – we first must become convinced of the truth about God and His trustworthiness, His methods, principles etc. This restores trust. And we develop a mind attitude of love for truth, an openness for more truth, always hungering after and following the truth.

But, step two, as we trust God and truth is revealed, as we comprehend, reason it out and become convinced it is true, we must choose to then apply it to our lives, to walk in that direction, to do what we know is right. Now, our performance is not the issue, the “perfection” in which we carry out the task is not what makes the difference, no it is the perfection of our hearts desire to do it in accordance with God’s will, it is the perfection of our hearts intent to live it out that matters.

It is this process that actually results in God’s character being rewritten into the character, mind, heart, neural network of each believer.

Does this mean all shortcomings and mistakes are over? If after we begin on the path of life, taking God’s remedy, wanting with all our heart to do what is right, but we fall short and make mistakes does that mean we go back to the very beginning of the processes and start all over again, that we haven’t grown? No it doesn’t mean we haven’t grown; no we don’t go back to the very beginning; no, it means that old habits die hard. The following is from my own personal paraphrase of Roman 7:4 – 8:4.

*Romans 7:4 Therefore, your selfish fear ridden heart died when you accepted the truth revealed by Christ’s death, and you have received a new heart, from him who was raised from the dead, in order that you might grow in character to be like Jesus and live to honor God. <sup>5</sup> For when we were controlled by the infection of fear and selfishness, which resulted from distrust, the destructive passions revealed by the law were ravaging our bodies, so that we were dying and spreading death wherever we went. <sup>6</sup> But now, by dying to distrust, fear and selfishness that once bound us, the law no longer diagnoses us as infected and dying. In fact the law now confirms we have a new heart, created within by the Spirit not by observing rules, and we are now healthy and loving like Jesus.*

*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." <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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 distrust 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. <sup>19</sup> For the old habits and conditioned responses are not the good I want to do; no, they are remnants of my selfish unconverted mind. <sup>20</sup> 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.*

*<sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> For in my mind I rejoice in God's methods and principles; <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> What a damaged and corrupt man that I am! Who will deliver and heal me from a brain and body*

*so diseased and deformed? <sup>25</sup> 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 8:1 Therefore, those who have been restored to trust through Christ Jesus are no longer destined to die, <sup>2</sup> because through Christ Jesus the law of love has cleansed and healed me from the law of selfishness and death. <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> 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?

## SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to compare Solomon's attitude toward Wisdom in Ecclesiastes with his attitude toward Wisdom in Proverbs, thoughts?

Wisdom, capital "W" in Proverbs is the same capital "W" as the Word in John chapter one, but wisdom in Ecclesiastes is not. In other words, Wisdom in Proverbs is a Person – Jesus Christ, but wisdom in Ecclesiastes is ability, a way of thinking. Does it make a difference in meaning to see Wisdom as a Person rather than as a way of thinking or as knowledge or an ability?

Have you ever had the experience of having something in your life that is meaningful only because it is connected to a significant person – and if that person was no longer involved then whatever it is, it loses its meaning?

Solomon walked away from God, slowly, but surely, he began to look at self, exalt self, promote self, indulge self, and he forgot about God and then found himself with all his possessions – all alone, without God – and suddenly realized – it means nothing. God is the one who brought the meaning.

How do we do this very thing in Christianity? By teaching doctrines, even truthful ones, disconnected from God. Every doctrine is only meaningful as it is connected to God, but when we go out present the truth about the Sabbath as a fact provable from the Bible, but don't connect it to the beauty of God's character of love and His principles of freedom – then we can keep the day while we crucify its Creator. When we present the truth on the nature of man apart from the truth about God it becomes meaningless and many Christians are stuck in systems of religion that bring no meaning because they have all the "doctrines" but find themselves alone, disconnected from their Creator.

What about when people do try to connect their doctrines to God, but do so in a way that it all remains "under the sun"? In other words, they keep the focus on us and sin and the problems on this planet? Then what? Then often they fail to see the real issues in the war, over God's character and instead buy into Satan's twist and view God as a severe being whose justice requires payment before He will be gracious and forgiving.



## MONDAY

## The Pleasure Principle

Why is it we are able to experience pleasure? Did God create us to experience pleasure? How has this capacity for pleasure been perverted by sin? What was God's original design for our experience of pleasure? How did He design it to work? That pleasure accompanies healthy giving, acting, living. That we experience reward and pleasure in helping others, giving for the benefit of others, loving others. But Satan has infected us with his principle of selfishness and now we seek to gratify self, to use others to get pleasure for self rather than seeking to bring pleasure to another.

Read first dark section "Put yourself in the mind...." Thoughts? If there really is no God, and there really is nothing beyond this world, and there really is no moral law, and survival of the fittest is really the way the universe runs – then why do people, who claim there is no God and claim that survival of the fittest is the true law of nature, then why do they protest when a Hitler or Stalin arises? Or why do they protest rape, or murder etc. Isn't it just the strongest surviving? Why do they want laws to stop it?

Bottom paragraph read – thoughts?

We were created by God to grow, to learn, to experience new things, to advance – thus we have curiosity, we get bored with the same thing over and over, we like new things – new experiences etc. In God's order, we will spend all eternity growing in knowledge and experience with God. God is infinite and we will always be learning something new and fascinating and intriguing and stimulating. But on this planet this same desire for something new has been perverted – and if it isn't gratified in healthy ways then a destructive process occurs.

There is a law of diminishing returns, which means it takes more next time to get the same "high" as you got this time. Thus, there is this ever progressive degradation, decline, erosion as the music gets more perverse, TV and movies get more violent, bloody, lewd, perverted, horrible. Because the same level doesn't "shock" the brain and give the release of dopamine which brings that momentary sense of euphoria or pleasure, because we are able to anticipate, and have already experienced the "shock" of some unhealthy experience in order to get a new high one needs to go beyond our "expectations" and thus this persistent march downward into the pits of hell.

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph –thoughts? What is our purpose on this earth currently? Why is humanities current purpose? To reconnect with God, experience healing of character and then spread the remedy/truth to help others reconnect with God for their healing.

## WEDNESDAY

Read top Bible verse – thoughts?

What is the fate of the fool? Death, why do all face the same fate? Because all are infected with the same terminal condition. What is the only solution? Restored trust in God, which results in His Spirit pouring His love into the heart recreating us to be like Jesus.

Bottom blue – read – thoughts? Server analogy.



## THURSDAY

Read second paragraph – “Solomon does have...” What is the only legacy worth having? Graham Maxwell summed it up so beautifully:

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. 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. They covet as the highest of all commendations the words of God about Job: “He has said of me what is right. {Maxwell, Graham, *Servants or Friends*, Redlands: Pineknoll, 1992, pp. 186, 187}

## FRIDAY

Question 1 read and discuss.

## 2007 Q1 Lesson 4 Of Being and Time

### SABBATH

Read the TS Eliot Quote and the first paragraph – thoughts?

It is true that we measure our life in years – many of us celebrate birthdays, and when someone reaches 100 years of age we all take note.

When you think of the concept of eternal life what comes to mind? How did Jesus define eternal life? John 17:3, Life eternal is “knowing God.” Why do you think Jesus didn’t say “Life eternal is living forever and ever and never stop living?” What does it mean that eternal life is primarily about intimacy with God?

Life is based on??? The circle of love, which emanates from God’s very character, to know Him is to be united with Him again, to be one with Him and have His methods/principles written again in the heart, to be connected to the source of all life – thus eternal life is unity with God and then passage of time becomes less relevant.

### SUNDAY

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and then read the last paragraph “In numerous places...” Thoughts?

When Ecclesiastes talks about time is it talking about chronology, the date, the passage of time or is it talking about circumstances? Does it make a difference to see it in these ways?

What about Bible prophecies regarding time – are they merely about the passage of time, chronology or are they about circumstances? When the fullness of time had come Christ came, was that to fulfill the prophecy of Daniel or was the prophecy of Daniel given because God in His foreknowledge knew when the “time was right” when the circumstances would be right for Christ to come?

Have you ever heard some people say that everyone has a time to die and if it is not your time you won’t die and if it is there is nothing you can do about it? So, don’t worry about healthy living, don’t worry about dangerous activities because your time to die is already set? Thoughts? What about Hezekiah? Did his “time to die” get changed? What were the results?

Ecclesiastes 3:8 says there is a time for war – any thoughts? How are we supposed to wage war? 2Cor 10:3-5. 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. Matthew 10:34*

What is the sword of the Spirit? How are we to wage war?

Is it time for war?

Bottom green section – thoughts? Why would someone do this? I had a patient who had been struggling with a variety of issues and her friends kept telling her all she needed to do was surrender her life to Jesus. She looked at me, knowing I was a Christian, and said, “But Dr. Jennings, I just can’t do it.” I said, “Of course you can’t.” She was shocked, expecting me to say what all the other Christians she had known were telling her. I asked her if she were at the mall and a stranger came up and asked for the keys to her house and the keys to her car saying, “It’s okay you can trust me” would you give them to him? She said, “No way.” I then asked her, “If you can’t give the keys of your car and your house to a stranger, how do you expect to give the

keys of your life to a stranger?" Thus life eternal is knowing God. We must take time to get to know Him and then once we know Him we can turn our lives over to Him.

Someone read Ecclesiastes 3:10

*"I have seen the burden God has laid on men."*

What does this mean? Christ said:

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30*

What burden has God laid on men? Are we burdened with sin? Has God laid this on us? Who has? Satan and Adam. What is God laying on us? A healing remedy!

## WEDNESDAY

Today's lesson is about Judgment

Go back and read the memory verse on Sabbath's lesson,

In the second paragraph on Sabbath the lesson asks, "When will all the evil and iniquity in the world be judged by God?"

Thoughts?

*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*

*John 5:22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.*

*You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. Jn 8:15*

*MT 12:33 "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."*

*REV 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. 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."*

And just to show I am not diverging from the foundations of our church:

By the life and the death of Christ, the thoughts of men also are brought to view. From the manger to the cross, the life of Jesus was a call to self-surrender, and to fellowship in suffering. It unveiled the purposes of men. Jesus came with the truth of heaven, and all who were listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit were drawn to Him. The worshipers of self belonged to Satan's kingdom. **In their attitude toward Christ, all would show on which side they stood. And thus everyone passes judgment on himself.** {DA 57.3}

The Roman soldiers that surrounded Christ were not all hardened; some were looking earnestly into His face for one evidence that He was a criminal or dangerous character. From time to time they would turn and cast a look of contempt upon Barabbas. It needed no deep insight to read him through and through. Again they would turn to the One upon trial. They looked at the divine sufferer with feelings of deep pity. The silent submission of Christ stamped upon their minds the scene, never to be effaced until they either acknowledged Him as the Christ, or **by rejecting Him decided their own destiny.** {DA 735.5}

Thoughts?

I had a patient tell me recently that he was terrified of facing the record of his life. That he has asked God to forgive him, he has repented, but he knows that one day he will have to stand before the judgment seat of God and all those records of his mistakes will be brought up again and he will never be able to be rid of them. What would you say?

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 1 Cor 13:4,5*

*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. 2 Corinthians 5:17-19*

Does God keep records to judge us by? Does God keep records? If not to judge us by then why? Who was originally accused? God! If a doctor is accused of malpractice what comes into evidence? The records – to judge the patient or the doctor? God is accused of arbitrariness, some Christians even teach that God is arbitrary, that God predestines some for salvation and some for damnation. The records will show that God offered His Remedy to everyone freely and all those who are lost are lost only because of their non-compliance with God's treatment plan.

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts?

If you accept this version, who punished the iniquities of the world at the cross? Some say God executed His Son on the cross in order to be just and punish the iniquity of the world. Do we have any evidence God acted to harm or punish His Son at the cross? NO! Do we have evidence that God DID NOT act to punish or harm His Son at the cross? Yes!

Christ Himself, said, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Paul says in Romans 4:25 that Christ was given up by the Father or let go. In other words the Father did not execute His Son, but allowed His Son to complete His mission, of voluntarily surrendering His life in love, not using His power to intervene. Why was this important?

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}

## TUESDAY

Third paragraph “We can’t fully...” read – thoughts?

While it is true, finite beings can never fully understand the infinite, does that mean we can’t understand God, His character, His methods, what He is doing, what He is planning? Does it mean we should say, “God’s ways are so much higher than my ways, I don’t even try to understand I just have faith”?

What about Amos 3:7?

*Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.*

What about 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.*

Does God want us to understand Him and what He is doing to the best of our ability? Why? What does God want from us? Our trust and love and can we trust and love God if we don’t think through the issues, examine the evidence and come to our own conclusion?

Then what did Christ mean in the Matthew 6:34 text? Did He mean we are not suppose to understand God, what He is planning and what He is doing? Or did He mean we are not supposed to be so self-referenced, so self-focused? Did He mean when we come to know and understand God our fear about what is going to happen to us goes away and we no longer worry about where we will get our next meal etc. because we trust God with our lives and the infection of selfishness and fear has been replaced by love. Then we intelligently, understanding what God is trying to accomplish cooperate with Him to complete His mission?

Aren’t we to seek first the kingdom of God with all its righteousness and everything we need will be provided? And what is the kingdom of God? The kingdom of Love, Truth and Freedom!

## THURSDAY

Men and beasts are both made of the dirt of the earth and when we die our bodies return to the earth – Solomon is commenting on this and saying that there is no difference between men and animals. Is he right?

What is the difference? There is no difference in regard to this physical body, but there is a difference in regard to our minds and characters. Our identities which are preserved with God 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}

## MONDAY

Bottom green section read, thoughts?

Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time. {COL 342.1}

The value of time is beyond computation. Christ regarded every moment as precious, and it is thus that we should regard it. Life is too short to be trifled away. We have but a few days of probation in which to prepare for eternity. We have no time to waste, no time to devote to selfish pleasure, no time for the indulgence of sin. It is now that we are to form characters for the future, immortal life. It is now that we are to prepare for the searching judgment. {COL 342.2}

The human family have scarcely begun to live when they begin to die, and the world's incessant labor ends in nothingness unless a true knowledge in regard to eternal life is gained. The man who appreciates time as his working day will fit himself for a mansion and for a life that is immortal. It is well that he was born. {COL 342.3}

We are admonished to redeem the time. But time squandered can never be recovered. We cannot call back even one moment. The only way in which we can redeem our time is by making the most of that which remains, by being co-workers with God in His great plan of redemption. {COL 342.4}

In him who does this, a transformation of character takes place. He becomes a son of God, a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. He is fitted to be the companion of the angels. {COL 342.5}

Thoughts?

Time is a commodity and no matter how rich or poor we each have the same hours in every day and how we spend our time says every bit as much about us as how we spend our money.

How can we as a class spend our time more effectively? How can we as a class help each other come to know God more fully and then share these healing truths with others?

## FRIDAY

Read second and third EGW quote and discuss each and question 4.



## 2007 Q1 Lesson 5      More Life Under the Sun

This week focuses on Ecclesiastes chapter 4. There is much to discuss from this chapter, but today let's begin with Thursday's lesson.

### THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? We were designed for community, but Satan is constantly trying to destroy our community. How does Satan try to divide? What methods does he use? Race, sex, age, social status, country of origin, skin color, language, body size, health, religious beliefs, music – what about within the church? How does Satan cause division within the church? What is the underlying motive of the heart that opens the door for Satan to be able to divide along these various lines? Fear and selfishness.

With these thought in mind what do we understand atonement to be? What did Christ come to accomplish? Unity – oneness, community, to destroy the divisions!

*I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name--the name you gave me--so that they may be one as we are one... "My prayer is not for them alone. 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. John 17:11, 20-23.*

Is Jesus speaking of atonement?

*And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 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. Ephesians 1:9,10.*

What does God want? To restore unity, oneness. In the upper room the Spirit came when? When they were in "one accord." What must we be in one accord over? Must we be in one accord over every point of doctrine? The purpose of the Sabbath, why baptism is important, how best to spend the mission offering, whether to buy a new organ for the church? Can we have differences on such issues?

What must we be in one accord over? God – His character, His methods, His principles, His way of conducting business, His way of running the universe and hopefully His mission/plan for this world.

What are God's methods, principles and ways of governing? Truth, spoken in love leaving others free. What truth primarily is the truth we are to present? The truth about God Himself!

How can we present this truth? Do we present it in teaching and preaching only? How can we as a class present this truth more effectively in this community?

We have a need, we have received requests for CDs and other materials but we don't have the man-power necessary to do the work necessary to send these materials out. We have some members of our own class who would like to have CDs, and can't make them. If anyone is interested in volunteering to be part of our team to help pack, label etc. such materials see Christie after SS and let her know you would be willing to help. There is opportunity to start a monthly newsletter, if anyone is interested in being involved with this, let Christie know.

## WEDNESDAY

Read the center paragraph “Whatever the immediate...” Then read

Question 1 in Friday’s lesson -

As a class, what can we do to foster community in our class? We would like to include more members in service, we have need of more people to help spread the truth, we need people to help greet or touch base with class members who can’t make it to class. We have been blessed with Dean who has volunteered to improve the quality of our recordings, if you haven’t noticed our recordings are markedly improved. Lori has volunteered to help Marco with our website. But we would like to have at least quarterly potlucks and socials – if anyone is interested in helping organize these events for our class talk with Christie after class today. If God has put a burden on your heart to minister in some way let us know. We want to take the truth about God’s character of love beyond theory into the way we live, into experiencing this love in community.

How can we as a class do this? Lynda had a suggestion that we as a class sponsor some children to school – Lynda is in the sanctuary SS today but will tell us more next week.

Now that we have talked about God and His desire for unity, what about the tower of Babel? And what about Christ’s statement:

*Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth.  
I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 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—  
a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ Matthew 10:34-36.*

So is it possible to be following Christ fully, allowing His love to be reproduced in your heart and actually find that conflict, division and disunity arise between you and people you are close to? Does this necessarily mean that you are not following God’s will? How can you tell the difference?

Read bottom paragraph Thursday’s lesson – thoughts? Do you agree with the assessment of the quarterly on the reason why people want nothing to do with organized religion? Are there other reasons? What about they don’t see Christ and His character of love in organized religions? What do you say if people tell you church is full of hypocrites that’s why they don’t go?

Ask them when they go to the hospital do they expect to find the sickest people or the healthiest people in the world? A church is a hospital for the spiritually sick. The question we have to ask, is not are there some really sick people in the church, but has the church been taken over by the sick. Is the hospital being run by the sick so that when you are admitted to the local hospital they give you a pack of cigarettes, a six pack of beer, inject you with toxins etc. If the church is being run by those who promote sickness, then find another church where healing is taking place.

What are some activities that promote spiritual sickness? Activities, methods or doctrines that have as the outcome the turning off of the power of reason, promotion of ideas that truth and evidence are not important, that feelings and impressions are more important than the Word of God or supersede the Word of God.

The teacher’s quarterly asks the following question: “When can work done in helping professions be done for the wrong motives?” First, what qualifies as helping professions? Medical, dental, nursing, health care, pastoral, missions, food services, education, habitat for humanity, others?

Okay, then when can it be done for the wrong motives?

What would you say to a friend who loves God and the truth about God as revealed in Jesus and has done incredible amounts of work for God's cause. Who has given up a paid job to work full time without salary to spread the gospel. Yet there are times when they will flaunt this self sacrifice in the face of those who still have jobs, implying others are less dedicated? Periodically they proclaim as virtues all they have given up and sacrificed and call others selfish and allege that had others been in their position they would never have sacrificed all they have. What thoughts do you have about this? If this was your friend how would you approach them, what would you say to them?

Is it possible to be involved in others-centered ministries but have no joy or love in your heart? What makes the difference? EGW states:

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}

The quarterly in the Teacher's Comments asks this question: "Why is having a strong, positive concept of who we are in Christ imperative to our living a life more others-centered and less self-centered?"

How does it change our perspective to see who we are in Christ? Does Christ call everyone to do the same job? Does Christ expect everyone to minister in the same way? Why is it important not to proscribe how another person is to serve in Christ's cause?

*JN 21:20 Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") 21 When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"*

*JN 21:22 Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."*

I was having this discussion with Brad Cole, one of the GNT speakers and he emailed the following:

**Assumption: God is a vengeful tyrant who cannot really see me as I am or his wrath would break out against me.**

To this person, service to others is really a way to appease such an angry God. It is effortful and does not spring from love. Does giving 4 Bible studies a week because I am scared to death of God really describe true service? Also, witness the Pharisees on the other end of the spectrum. Reading their Bibles every day, long prayers, missionary work, faithful church attendance.... etc. Lots of work and effort, but is this really service? They were selfishly serving themselves even as they preached the word of God.

Assumption: God is love. God is just like Jesus. God wants to be your friend. God is always doing the most loving thing.....for everybody and at all times....there is no reason to be afraid of God.....God does not condemn.

To this person, to return this love of God to others in the form of service is the only natural and healthy response. It is a joy and springs from a great love for God and others. This is true other-centered service. It's goal is the expression of God's love through us and to both our friends and enemies.

So what seems to make the ultimate difference? Our picture of God!

## TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts? First without God's grace, God's intervention in our lives each of us would be consumed with envy. This is part of the infection of sin and thus we have all had to struggle with this aspect of the infection.

Remember the disciples at the beginning of Christ's ministry – arguing over who would be greatest and on their way to the last supper three and a half years later arguing over who would be greatest. Still infected with jealousy and envy.

How does God heal us from envy?

The will of God is the law of heaven. As long as that law was the rule of life, all the family of God were holy and happy. But when the divine law was disobeyed, then envy, jealousy, and strife were introduced, and a part of the inhabitants of heaven fell. As long as God's law is revered in our earthly homes, the family will be happy. {CG 79.4}

What is the law of heaven? What is God's law? The law of love! And how does this protect from envy? When we love another more than ourselves we rejoice in their joy, in their good fortune, in their blessings, but when we love ourselves most, then when we see someone else blessed we experience envy, jealousy.

Home is to be the center of the purest and most elevated affection. Peace, harmony, affection, and happiness should be perseveringly cherished every day, until these precious things abide in the hearts of those who compose the family. The plant of love must be carefully nourished, else it will die. Every good principle must be cherished if we would have it thrive in the soul. That which Satan plants in the heart --envy, jealousy, evil surmising, evil speaking, impatience, prejudice, selfishness, covetousness, and vanity-- must be uprooted. If these evil things are allowed to remain in the soul, they will bear fruit by which many shall be defiled. Oh, how many cultivate the poisonous plants that kill out the precious fruits of love and defile the soul! {AH 195.4}

Let's consider the list of things to be uprooted. How do we uproot them? Does it sound like we have a role to play in this process? What role? The power of choice? How do our choices affect what happens in our hearts?

## MONDAY

Read two dark sections at the top and the next two paragraphs – thoughts?

Is human life worth the bother? Why or why not?

What are your thoughts about suicide? Do our beliefs make a difference now? If you believe that once saved always saved, and when you die you are immediately with God, then what happens if you are saved and commit suicide? You go to heaven and be with God, so why not? And in fact

suicide rates are higher in religious groups who hold such views than amongst people who believe suicide is a mortal sin.

## SUNDAY

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? Can God command us in the right direction? What does God want from His intelligent creatures? Love – can love be commanded?

Teacher's comments page 59 states: "The preacher begins this portion of his presentation by focusing on the equally miserable plights of those who abuse other and those who are themselves abused. These two groups of people cannot be considered in community in any positive sense of the word. When relationships get to this impasse, where one segment of society is drastically oppressed by another, both segments lose. Neither can be happy. And yet, this is the logical conclusion when people do not stay in God-fearing, self-respecting community."

Thoughts?

Have you ever thought that the oppressor the abuser is often more damaged, more miserable, more unhappy than the abused? I have patients who have been molested as children and they have incredible amounts of anger and rage toward the abuser – yet when I ask them if God let them switch lives with their abuser none want that option, all would rather be abused than be an abuser – why? Something different gets damaged in us when we get abused

Teacher's comments page 59 asks: What usually creates in someone the tendency to be an abuser? To allow oneself to be abused? What type of abuse or oppression are prevalent today? In society? In the church? At home?"

## FRIDAY

Question 2 read and discuss

## 2007 Q1 Lesson 6 Rich Man, Poor Man

### SUNDAY

Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 – thoughts?

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Does God care how we approach Him? Does God care how we talk to Him? Why? Why does God care about these things?

Does God care whether we keep our vows to Him? Why? Why does He care? Does He get mad? Does He get His feelings hurt? Does He feel incensed or irritated or put out by our shortcomings? Why does He care?

What happens in us if we make a vow and don't keep it? If you promise someone you will do something for them and then you don't, what happens inside of you? If it was a mere oversight, an accident, even something beyond your control how do you feel? What if you purposely broke your vow? If a person breaks their marriage vow, what happens to that person even if they are never found out? Does something in them get damaged?

Does this give us insight into why God cares if we make vows and don't keep them? Is it because God gets mad and will make us pay or God's anger is over the damage we do to ourselves and He hates to see His children destroy themselves? Is this why it is better to not make a vow than to make one and not keep it?

What about how we speak to God? If we are angry at God should we tell Him or not tell Him? I have patients who have had tragic things happen, a child killed, a parent killed etc. and many of them have anger at God, but they don't tell Him because they are "not allowed." Did anyone see the movie Forrest Gump? Remember LT Dan? He lost both legs and was angry, angry at God and for much of his life he was drinking and living destructively, but then during the hurricane on the shrimp boat he had it out with God. And what happened? Peace and health.

If you have a child who is angry at you for something would you want your child to keep it in and never talk to you or come to you and talk it out? Why? So you can work it out. This is what God wants with us. He knows we have much anger and confusion and that it is almost always based on some misunderstanding and He says, "Please come to me and tell me, talk to me and we can work it out and I can heal you."

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? Why had we "better do it?"

Will God get mad at us if we don't? What does it mean if we say we are going to do something and really mean it but then don't? Remember Peter? Did he tell Jesus that even if everyone else abandoned Him Peter wouldn't? Was Peter lying or did he sincerely mean it? What was the problem? Peter had a defect of character/nature he didn't even know and needed to be healed. Do we have the same problem?

At the end of Sunday's lesson it asks "How does Matthew 18:21-23, Romans 2:4 and 1John 2:1 help us understand the hope we can have despite failures?"

Matthew 18 says forgive 7×70, Romans 2:4—the kindness of God leads us to repentance, and 1John 2:1—if we sin, we have and advocate with the Father –



Thoughts about these texts? What do they mean and what hope do they bring?

First, is our problem when we sin one of whether God is willing to forgive? Whether God will have a forgiving attitude or extend forgiveness or does God, given who He is, extend forgiveness to everyone? So is the Matthew text telling us, don't worry about getting God to forgive, if you have worried about whether God would forgive you have worried for nothing, that is a given. What you need is to receive that forgiveness, His kindness which will bring a change in heart (repentance) and this transformation of heart brought by God's Spirit is what heals you.

What about the 1 John text, what does it mean we have an advocate with the Father? Does it mean we have someone who pleads to the Father in our behalf? Does the Father need Christ to plead to Him in order for the Father to be forgiving and gracious?

John 16:26, Jesus said He would NOT pray the Father for us because the Father Himself loves us. Romans 8 says that God is for us and Jesus is "also"—in addition to the Father—interceding for us. Jesus said that He and the Father are one and if we have seen Him we have seen the Father. So do we need someone to plead the Father for us? No, who needs to be pled with for us to be healed? Who is God trying to persuade to get you to be healed and restored? You! And who is His advocate to accomplish this? Who is God's messenger? God's Ambassador? God's representative on earth? Jesus and He pleads with you and me!

Read Ecclesiastes 5:6 – thoughts? How does our mouth lead us into sin?

Closely connected with Christ's warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against idle and evil words. The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; but the expression reacts on the thoughts. They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan's instigation. Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are. It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character, in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." {DA 323.1}

She is describing a process that is neurological as well as characterological. And the only way to reverse this process is by the positive application of the truth. If we have said something rashly, that is wrong, the remedy is to examine what we have said in the light of the truth and to actually apply the truth. This works a change in the character AND the brain so that in the future the mind is healthier, there is more self control and there is better discernment and less likely chance of it happening again.

Such a process is painful yet healing. In laymen's terms sometimes it is called "eating humble pie." But it is really healing of one's own brain/mind that is taking place. Sometimes people will acknowledge the way they expressed themselves was inappropriate but not what they said thus leaving the distorted idea, belief or perspective rooted in their mind.

## MONDAY

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? Is it just those with money, or is this a human experience that we have a tendency to wield power over others and money gives one a greater ability to do this?

Why is it wrong to do this?

In last week's lesson on Sunday it said, "Power can be a subtle thing. Used correctly it can be a great blessing, for with power one can guide, even command, others in the right direction." Thoughts about this statement?

Who has all the power in the universe? God. Why didn't God simply use His power to command Lucifer and the angels in heaven in the right direction?

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}

Can God command people to be saved? What is it God wants from people? Love, Can love be commanded? Then why the 10 commandments? Or are they the 10 suggestions?

Were the 10 Commandments given as the Remedy for sin? No! What were they given for?

- as a promise of what we will look like when God heals us
- as a diagnostic instrument to expose how sick we are
- as a hedge of protection to keep us safe in our ignorance

As a parent have you ever had a child get out of control and had "to lay down the law." Why did you do it? Because you prefer it that way, or because the child needed it to protect them while they were maturing?

## TUESDAY

Read entire day – thoughts? What about 2 Thes 3:10: "For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."?"

I had a patient I was consulted to see in the ICU. He was long time alcoholic with liver failure, esophageal varices, severe electrolyte abnormalities, anemia and he would have died if not in the ICU with extensive round the clock treatments. I was consulted regarding his alcoholism and asked to get him into rehab. But he told me straight out, "I know alcohol is killing me. I know it is destroying my liver, causing my bleeding and one day I will die from it. But you have to die from something and I like the way it makes me feel and I am going to keep on drinking until I die." He was jobless, penniless and homeless, he refused rehab, but would take any money you would give him. What do you do for someone like this?

What about the bottom paragraph about coming face to face with an angry God? Does God get angry? Yes, why?

On a scrap of paper I read the story of a girl who was lost in the woods, imprisoned by snow. Days and nights passed, and she lost the power to make any effort, and lay motionless. At last some woodmen passed the place. The snow had melted, and they found her unconscious. They gently raised her, laid her on some boards, and carried her to the warmth of their own hearth. They cared for her tenderly, and had the joy of seeing her

restored to consciousness. Then they learned who she was, and let her parents know in regard to her. The parents came for her, and when she was strong they took her home. {BEcho, May 30, 1898 par. 5}

It is a wonderful story of a hardy girl; but this is not why I tell it to you. I tell it because I want you to understand the anger of love. Suppose, if you can, that these men had seen the helpless girl, and had passed by on the other side, leaving her to die. Suppose the parents had heard what had been done to the child they loved. How would they have felt toward those men? Thankful, do you think? Would they have been simply indifferent? Would they not rather have been terribly grieved, wildly indignant? Would not the knowledge that their child might have lived, make more bitter their sorrow at her death? Had they chanced to meet these men, would their words to them have been soft, honied words? Would they not have denounced them with righteous indignation, hot as their tears, intense as their love? {BEcho, May 30, 1898 par. 6}

Here, I thought, was a human life, saved by human sympathy and tenderness; but how must the anger of God burn toward those who see souls in peril, ready to die, and yet say nothing, do nothing, to help them. They give all attention to the ninety and nine that are within the fold, while souls in peril are all around them, and no hand is stretched out to save them. If one goes astray, they pass on indifferent. And that soul has all the responsibilities of an immortal life. To lose heaven is to lose everything, and yet how indifferent, how careless never to give him warning, or show him the way of life. {BEcho, May 30, 1898 par. 7}

The sufferings of every man are the sufferings of God's child, and those who pass by their perishing fellow beings without pity or help, provoke God's grievous anger. His righteous thunders gather. His vivid lightnings flash; it is the wrath of the Lamb. Be faithful to your fellowmen, and you will please God. He loves the world; love it too, and you will be accepted by Him. {BEcho, May 30, 1898 par. 8}

Ty Gibson gave the analogy of imagining how you would feel if you discovered a man was molesting your 6-year-old precious little girl? Would you experience an emotion of anger? But then add one piece to the scenario – the man who was abusing your little girl is your older son, then how do you feel? This is God's situation. He doesn't have some nameless faceless monster out there who harms one of his loved ones. No, all are His children. How must He feel?

In the teacher's comments on page 71, it states, "God is God, and Lord of all creation. Our role here on earth is to worship Him, work at whatever He has put before us to do, and remember that we are simply the part of His creation that He asked to manage His affairs here on earth. We brought nothing into this world, we take nothing out, and we are not personally to be lauded for anything we do while here."

Thoughts? What attitude is being conveyed? Does it sound like a God who wants us to be His friends or a God who says, do what I say when I say it and don't ask any questions? Is this an accurate way to describe God?

What did Jesus say? 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 does Jesus call us? And why?

What does God invite us to do in Isaiah 1:18? Come and reason with Him. Does that sound like just do what you are told?

What about Abraham when God told him He was going to destroy Sodom? Did Abraham simply say okay?

Is there a difference between friendly service and a serving friend? What? Which does God want?

What did the angel say about Daniel? “You are highly esteemed” What did God say about Job? “He is perfect and righteous in all his ways and there is no one on the earth like him.”

Does that sound like praise? Coming from whom? Should we desire praise from God? Would it surprise anyone if God in heaven looks down on His faithful children and says, “That’s my boy! That’s my girl! And I am proud of him, I am proud of her!”?

In Revelation it says, “Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come” what does this mean?

How do we give glory to God? By being healed in the inner man and reflecting God’s character in our lives!

“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).

“Through trial and persecution the *glory--the character--*of God is revealed in His chosen ones.” (AA 576).

How do we bring God glory? By living His character!

## THURSDAY

Read Ecclesiastes 5:15,16 – thoughts?

Is it true?

What about John 11:25,26:

*Jesus said to her, “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?”*

Or

*John 17:3 Life eternal is knowing God?*

Do we come into the world knowing God? Can we depart this world knowing God? Then do we necessarily depart as we came into the world?

## WEDNESDAY

Never enough – speaking on money but highlighting a principle, read the middle paragraph “Any desire...” Thoughts?

There is a law of diminishing returns that the same amount of drugs, alcohol, sex, gambling, violence, rock music, grossness will not result in the same “shock” to the system and it takes more next time to get the same “jolt.” We adapt and become accustomed to things. Thus people

who play violent video games actually cause changes in their neural circuitry so that they are less responsive to violence in the real world. They dull the part of the brain that is sickened by such violence and the part of the brain the exercises self – control and inflame the part of the brain that craves such experiences.

Is it only the wealthy that concern themselves with money, or is it often the case that the poor are more focused on money than those with means?

## 2007 Q1 Lesson 7      Striving After the Wind

### SUNDAY

Read middle two paragraphs “The point?...” Thoughts?

What do we get caught up into in this world that distracts us from the eternal realities? Video games, TV, Movies, Music, Money, Politics, Environment – what about building projects? How can we be in the world and not of it? How do we occupy until Christ comes but not lose sight of the eternal realities? What is the ultimate motive or reason we are engaged in any given activity?

What is the purpose of our life? What are we trying to accomplish with our actions and endeavors?

What do we believe is going to happen to this world in the future?

*Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. 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. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. 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. Matthew 24:4-14*

Do we expect the condition of the world to get better or worse with time? What happens to people? Their characters, motives and attitudes? The love of many will grow cold – do we see this happening?

And when love grows cold what grows hot or what grows stronger? Selfishness – and what does this look like on a global scale?

Jesus gave two other predictions about the condition of things before He returns – As it was in the days of Noah – and how was it? Violence all the time. How is it today?

And as it was in the days of Sodom – and what was it like in the days of Sodom?

*Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Ezekiel 16:49, 50*

Are people arrogant, overfed, unconcerned and ignore the poor and needy? Are they haughty and do detestable things?

Then there is only one element missing that Christ said would occur before He returns – what is it? “*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.*”

What is the gospel of the kingdom? Would it be the good news of God’s kingdom and what is that good news? Is it that we can have eternal life with God? Would it be good news that we could live with God if God were the kind of being Satan says He is? So what is the ultimate Good News? It is the truth about God which is to lighten the world for Christ’s coming!



“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

And how is God’s character of love revealed? Is it revealed only in preaching and teaching? How can we as a class reveal God’s character of love in action?

The dark section ¾ of a page down asks us to read several Bible texts. Let’s read Psalms 115:1-7, thoughts? Why is idolatry wrong? Read verse 8 – what does verse 8 tell us? Why is idolatry is so wrong? Because we become like whatever we admire and worship!

But we, in modern Western world are in no danger of idolatry are we? What about American Idol? What about movie star worship? What about the worship of power or money? Are these things idols?

But we Christians, who believe in the Bible we are safe from idolatry aren’t we?

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}

*Christ 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. 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!’” Matthew 7:21-23*

Is it important whether we know the truth about God? What can we do to take this truth to the world to lighten the world for Christ’s return?

Bottom green section read – thoughts? Painful things can remind us that this world is not the final end and help prevent complacency. Painful events can also be stimuli to help us grow and overcome limiting factors in our lives.

## MONDAY

Is about the dissatisfaction that comes from the accumulation of earthly things – that there is more pleasure in the anticipation of acquiring something than in possessing it. Thoughts?

Where does genuine peace and contentment come from? God, of course, but is it something He just infuses in us or does it come from our response to God? Do we have some part to play in experiencing it? What? What role does trust have? Does it come from our acceptance of the truth about God from our finding our place, our purpose, our station in God’s order?

## TUESDAY

Top section read- thoughts? Any thoughts on why God designed the family to function like it does? Was the design purposeful? Could it have something to do with the Great Controversy? Could it have something to do with the principle of love? What would a family look like in a world without sin?

What emergency measures did God put in place to help families after sin entered our beings? A certain subjugation of wife to husband – was it God’s original ideal? Is God trying to restore us to His ideal? So what would you expect to see in a marriage relationship as God’s healing takes place in husband and wife? Greater and greater equality within the marriage and the need for someone to “rule over” another in the marriage to dissipate.

Why was it necessary for God to intervene and make this emergency measure? What was the method of action/motive that God wrote into the heart and mind of Adam and Eve? Selfless love. What method replaced love when they sinned? Selfishness – and what does selfishness do to a relationship? Destroys it. What would happen to families in a world dominated by selfishness without some emergency measure? Disintegration, thus God intervened to increase the desire in women for relationships to counterbalance the selfish instinct enough to allow opportunity for healing and the restoration of God’s ideal.

Read second paragraph from FRIDAY’s lesson – thoughts – does she say good parenting is a guarantee?

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What does it mean to lay up treasure in heaven?

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matt. 6:20, 21. {OHC 195.1}

Here is portrayed the value of eternal riches, in contrast with the treasures of earth. If the purpose and aim of your life is to lay up treasure in heaven, you will be lifted above the base, sordid, demoralizing influence of an inordinate desire to obtain wealth in this life. Laying up treasure in heaven will give nobility to the character; it will strengthen benevolence, encourage mercy; cultivate sympathy, brotherly kindness, and charity. It will unite the soul of man with Christ, by links that can never be broken. You may lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven by being rich in good works--rich in imperishable and spiritual things. {OHC 195.2}

The instruction is to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” It is for our own interest that we secure heavenly riches. God is not benefited by our benevolence. The cattle upon a thousand hills are His. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.” Ps. 24:1. But in using the gifts that He has entrusted to our care for the salvation of souls, we transfer our wealth to the treasury of heaven. When we are seeking the glory of God, and hasting unto the day of God, we are collaborators with Christ, and our joy is not a base and fleeting emotion; but it is the joy of our Lord. We are elevated above the corroding, perplexing cares of this frail, fickle world. {OHC 195.3}

What kind of treasure are we laying up in heaven? Do we get larger mansions? More purified gold on the sidewalk in front of our house? More gems and precious stones in our crowns?

What happens to us when we do these type of things? Our abilities to love are increased, our capacity for caring, for connecting for ministering for sharing all increase. And in God's universe what is most valuable? Character! Christlike character of love!

"Every sin, every unrighteous action, every transgression of the law of God, tells with a thousandfold more force upon the actor than the sufferer. Every time one of the glorious faculties with which God has enriched man is abused or misused, that faculty loses forever a portion of its vigor and will never be as it was before the abuse it suffered. Every abuse inflicted upon our moral nature in this life is felt not only for time but for eternity. Though God may forgive the sinner, yet eternity will not make up that voluntary loss sustained in this life. {TDG 350.1}

To go forth into the next, the future life, deprived of half the power which might be carried there is a terrible thought. The days of probation lost here in acquiring a fitness for heaven, is a loss which will never be recovered. The capacities of enjoyment will be less in the future life for the misdemeanors and abuse of moral powers in this life. However high we might attain in the future life, we might soar higher and still higher, if we had made the most of our God-given privileges and golden opportunities to improve our faculties here in this probationary existence. . . . {TDG 350.2}

We are all under one or the other of two great captains. One, the Creator of man and of the world, is the greatest of all. All owe Him the allegiance of their whole being, the devotion of their entire affection. If the mind is given to His control, and if God has the molding and developing of the powers of the mind, new moral power will be received daily from the Source of all wisdom and all strength. Moral blessings and divine beauties will reward the efforts of everyone whose mind is heaven bent. We may grasp revelations--heavenly beauties--that lie beyond the short vision of the worldling, that outshine the imagination of the greatest mind and the most learned philosopher who has not connected himself with infinite power. . . . {TDG 350.3}

Remember Daniel, Shadrack, Meshack and Abendego? They were 10 times wiser than the rest? Because of diet merely or because of a mind connected to God?

## SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

Go to WEDNESDAY and read third paragraph "Life does go..." Thoughts? Is this world, the way it currently runs, where you would want to spend eternity? Would you like the universe to run like this world does?

Is Solomon right that death is better than this world? Without Christ? Absolutely. Does this give us some insight as to why the wicked will die in the end? Not because God punishes them with death, but because God loves them so much He refuses to keep them alive in pain, suffering and torment.

## THURSDAY

Why is it that the material and sensual things of this world never satisfy?

## 2007 Q1 Lesson 8      God Made Man Upright? What Happened?

Thoughts about the lesson title? What happened to man? They sinned, but what was the first “sin” that defiled them?

*“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, Jan 5, 1886 par. 8).*

How could the belief in a lie change the condition of someone’s character? If you believe that there is no God will it affect your character? If you believe there is a God but the god you believe in is exacting, cruel, severe, abusive, manipulative would that change your character? Do we act on our beliefs? Do we organize our lives and process information and interpret data on the beliefs we hold?

Beliefs form parameters upon which we make decisions and thus the formation of our character.

But we have the power, through the use of our reason, the examination of evidence and with the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit to examine our beliefs and change them – and with the change in beliefs, also change our choices and thus experience healing of character.

Can anyone give me an example of where this has happened?

Would it make a difference in character if you believed that sin is a legal problem for which a death penalty needed to be paid, and Christ has paid that penalty for all sins past and future and therefore as long as you accept the payment Christ has made you are saved, it really doesn’t matter what you do? Would such a belief make a difference in your character?

Would a belief that says, “When the Father looks at me He doesn’t see me or my character He sees the character of His Son, therefore my character development isn’t what matters” make a difference in what happens to your character?

Can you think of other beliefs that can damage character? Women aren’t equal to men? My nationality or race is superior to others? God cursed those people?

So we see that believing lies cause devastation to character – once Adam and Eve believe the lies about God their characters were changed – in what way? How were their characters changed?

If they had been trusting God, but now believed God was untrustworthy what would happen? Would they still trust Him? Would they still love Him? So what would replace love and trust? Fear and selfishness a.k.a. survival of the fittest. And how does this change in character manifest itself? Exploiting others, blaming, externalizing, sensualism, greed, pride all about looking out for self and seeking to get rather than trusting yourself to God and seeking to give.

What is the inevitable outcome if this condition is unopposed, unintervened with? Death!

Thus Christ came to remedy this situation – to literally restore humanity back into unity, oneness and harmony with the Father. To reveal the truth about God which restores trust and to also restore in this creation God’s law of love by overcoming the infection of selfishness. This is what Christ accomplished on our behalf!

*Read Ecclesiastes 7:20*

*“There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.”*

What does this mean? Is there any human other than Christ who hasn’t sinned? Then what do we do when we find out the pastor smoked marijuana in college? What do we do when we find out the deacon had an affair 15 years ago? What do we do when we find out the elder embezzled

money from his employer 10 years ago? Do we expect people in leadership to be sinless? To have histories that are not marked by shortcomings and mistakes?

Then what do we expect? Is it reasonable to expect growth? Maturing, healing of their character as they walk with God? How will you react when you find out some sin of your pastor? Will you be gracious, steady and supportive or become critical and accusatory? Will you lose your confidence in God and the church?

## SUNDAY

Read Ecclesiastes 7:1 and then two paragraphs in middle beginning “This part is obvious...”

Thoughts? First are reputation and character the same thing? Is it our responsibility to develop and pursue good reputation? Or is it our responsibility to develop good character? Can someone have good character and still have a bad reputation – at least with some?

In heaven what did Lucifer do but attack God’s reputation? On earth what did some of the leadership think of Christ’s reputation? Now if we define reputation as only the truth that one reveals about oneself as one lives then we are responsible for our reputation, but if we allow that our reputation can be damaged by lies of others, by misunderstanding and by how our actions are interpreted by others, then we are not responsible for our reputations.

In Friday’s lesson read Question 3 – thoughts? – contrast the desire for a good reputation with the influence of peer pressure and caring what others think.

I was doing a presentation in Florida two weeks ago and afterwards one lady told me her 19-year-old son said he was going to join the Catholic church. When she asked why he said, “I live in a culture with no rules, no boundaries, where everything goes and I need some boundaries and the Catholic church has a rule for everything.” Thoughts?

## TUESDAY

We started this lesson with the question what happened to man after he was made upright, now we explore further the process that sin does to man.

Read *Ecc 7:7 “Extortion turns a wise man into a fool, and a bribe corrupts the heart.”*

Thoughts? What does sin do to the sinner? Does this give us a clue as to why God hates sin? Does God hate sin because it breaks His rules, or did He establish the written rules because of sin?

Every act of transgression, every neglect or rejection of the grace of Christ, is reacting upon yourself; it is hardening the heart, depraving the will, benumbing the understanding, and not only making you less inclined to yield, but less capable of yielding, to the tender pleading of God’s Holy Spirit. {SC 33.2}

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. There is an absence of pure religion, of heart holiness. The converting power of God has not wrought in transforming the character. The soul is weak, and for want of moral force to overcome, is polluted and debased. {PK 233.1}

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. {ISM 235.2}

This also helps us understand the insidiousness of sin – when someone sins against you a seed is planted in your heart that will tempt you to retaliate against them to see vengeance, to act is selfishness and thus the sinfulness they acted upon spreads to others.

Thus Christ's teaching to forgive, to pray for those who abuse you, to give your cloak, to walk an extra mile. In other words, if someone does you wrong don't allow your heart to become infected with the same illness that led them to mistreat you.

I have a patient who was sexually abused by a close relative and this patient is filled with rage, anger, hostility and desire for vengeance. It is causing the heart to harden and the spouse is being pushed away, abandoned, rejected and treated cruelly – the very ugliness and selfishness of character that led to the abuse is now growing in the heart of the victim so that the victim is now treating the spouse cruelly.

## THURSDAY

2/3 of the way down it asks us to read verse 26, let's read 26 and 28

*Read Ecclesiastes 7:26 I find more bitter than death the woman who is a snare,  
whose heart is a trap and whose hands are chains.*

*The man who pleases God will escape her,  
but the sinner she will ensnare.*

*And verse 28: while I was still searching but not finding—*

*I found one upright man among a thousand, but not one upright woman among them all.*

Thoughts? First do you think Solomon was lamenting the poor decisions he made to get involved with 1000 women? Do you think he is acknowledging that his wives' influence corrupted him?

In verse 26, what kind of a woman is this and what does it mean for a wise man to escape her? Would this mean 'escape being married'? Would it include 'escaping a marriage'?

Consider this counsel from EGW to brother Craig regarding his wife:

At the same time she feels at liberty to give way to her feelings like a spoiled child, taking offense at nothing, and indulging in outbursts of passion until life is a burden to him.... She thinks that everyone must do as her mother and others have done--indulge her and consult her wishes; and she is determined to bring them to it. Should her husband yield to her, he would lose his manhood... However earnestly her husband may endeavor to pursue a straightforward course to serve God, she will be his evil angel, seeking to lead him away from righteousness. In her own estimation she is the idol he must worship; in fact, she is Satan's agent, seeking to occupy the place where God should be. She has followed the impulses of her own unconsecrated heart until Satan has almost complete control of her....

She has well learned the secret of acting for effect, of creating a sensation to call attention to her small self. I have seen but few persons as successful in making self the center of attraction when there was so little sweet, noble, genuine attractiveness in the character.

But unless she changes her course, this acting for effect, this desperate maneuvering to force the attention of her husband and gain his sympathy, will finally be repeated once too many times, and God will give her fully into the hands of Satan. Unless there is a change, a



time will come soon when this lower nature in the wife, controlled by a will as strong as steel, will bring down the strong will of the husband to her own low level. His will would then be merged in that of the impulsive, inconsistent, insane wife. He would no longer be a man, for the satanic mold upon the character of the wife would be upon him also.... But the folly of the mother and other relatives must not become the folly of the husband. Should he follow in their footsteps, his life and hers also would be wrecked. Better would it be had they never been born. As it is, she is a fit subject for the insane asylum; for God has shown me that she throws herself wholly into the hands of Satan, soul, body and spirit, and his power through her is deadening the fine sensibilities of right and integrity in her husband...

The Lord has a work for Brother Craig to do, but if he is overcome by these outbursts on the part of his wife, he is a lost man, and she is not saved by the sacrifice.

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. MR vol 16 p 301-315.

Thoughts? What is the greatest of all the commandments? Love the Lord your God with all your heart mind soul and strength. What is the second? Love your neighbor as self – where does a spouse fall? God or closest neighbor? Who is our duty and fidelity to first? God or spouse? Then we have a responsibility to present ourselves to God in the best condition for the greatest usefulness possible and separate from anything that would destroy our fitness for Him. How much better would things be if Adam would have done this?

Now God hates divorce because divorce only occurs when love breaks down, divorce only occurs when selfishness is ruling, but what God hates more than divorce is the destruction and eternal loss of His children!

Middle paragraph quotes the Bible “There is none righteous, no not one.” Meaning, there is none holy, none healthy, none in harmony with God, none who are untouched by the infection of selfishness, none free from the devastation of sin in their hearts and minds – all of us are terminal and but for the grace of God would die.

## WEDNESDAY

Last paragraph read “Things didn’t turn out...” thoughts?

“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.” MacDonald, George, *Discovering the Character of God*, Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989, p. 29.

Have you heard power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely? Christ disproved this statement and proved that even though He has all power He is not corrupted by it. Thus in Revelation we see the angels saying, “Worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb who was slain.” He is worthy to have all the power because he has demonstrated He is safe with all the power.

## 2007 Q1 Lesson 9 Seeing Through a Glass Darkly

Thoughts about the lesson title? What does it mean and what examples can you give where we currently see through a glass darkly?

### SABBATH

Read memory text and then third paragraph “Look, for instance...”

There is a recent article in our own SDA publication called Ministry Magazine, which targets pastors, entitled “Sinners in the Hands of God” by Woodrow W. Whidden, Ph.D. a professor of historical and systematic theology at our theological seminary in the Philippines. His article argues for God to use His power to inflict an external penalty upon the wicked proportionate to their sins called “retributive justice” in which God inflicts varying degrees of suffering before He executes them. Two quotes from the article:

For millennia God’s mercy has manifestly tempered His justice. But a day will come when there will finally be justice no longer tempered with the restraints of loving mercy.” Ministry, February 2007 p. 8.

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?” Ministry February 2007 p. 9.

Do you agree with this position? What would you say in response to this?

What is theologically questionable? What errors are made? What is failed to be understood? What evidence do you have?

- Fails to understand the nature and character of sin
- Fails to understand the nature and character of God i.e. God’s law of love and liberty
- Fails to understand the true nature of the GC, the allegations against God, God’s ability to forgive & the requirements of the law
- Fails to understand the nature of the two fires described in the Bible
- Fails to understand the differences between Christ’s death and the fate of the wicked
- Fails to understand the purpose of the Cross
- Fails to understand who killed Christ
- Fails to understand the nature and character of sin

*The wages of sin is death Romans 6:23*

*Sin when it is full grown brings forth death James 1:15*

Every act of transgression, every neglect or rejection of the grace of Christ, is reacting upon yourself; it is hardening the heart, depraving the will, benumbing the understanding, and not only making you less inclined to yield, but less capable of yielding, to the tender pleading of God’s Holy Spirit. {SC 33.2}

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. There is an absence of pure religion, of heart holiness. The converting power of God has not wrought in transforming

the character. The soul is weak, and for want of moral force to overcome, is polluted and debased. {PK 233.1}

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. {ISM 235.2}

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}

Fails to understand the nature and character of God, i.e. God's law of love and liberty

Love cannot exist without freedom, does God say, "love me or I'll torture and kill you?"

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}

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}

Fails to understand the true nature of the GC, the allegations against God, God's ability to forgive & the requirements of 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.* {DA 761.4}

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}

"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...** PP 41

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

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.** {GC 495.3}

*And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Luke 2:52*

*Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek. Heb 5:8-10*

**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}

Satan had put forth the strongest efforts against Christ from the time when he appeared as a babe in Bethlehem. He had sought in every possible manner to prevent him from **developing** an unblemished childhood, a true manhood, a holy ministry, and a perfect sacrifice in yielding up his life, without a murmur, for the sins of men. {The Perfect Truth, February 18, 1886 par. 2}

Fails to understand the nature of the two fires described in the Bible

*The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless:  
“Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire?  
Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?”*

*He who walks righteously and speaks what is right,  
who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes,  
who stops his ears against plots of murder  
and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil. Isaiah 33:14,15*

Burning bush, Moses at Sinai, Temple Dedication

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? 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}

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. 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}

Fails to understand the differences between Christ's death and the fate of the wicked:

- Christ died longing to see His Father's face, the wicked die trying to hide from the Father.
- Christ died when the Father's presence was withdrawn, the wicked die when the Father is fully revealed.
- Christ, could have lived in the fullness of God's glory (transfiguration), the wicked are consumed by the fullness of God's glory.
- Christ died trusting His Father, the wicked die distrusting the Father.
- Christ died with love and forgiveness in His heart, the wicked die with selfishness and hatred in their hearts.
- Christ died less than 72 hours, the wicked die eternally.
- Christ died with the sense of His Father's favor restored, the wicked die without the sense of the Father's favor

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}

- Christ died victorious over selfishness having purged it with love, the wicked die overcome with selfishness having all love purged from their hearts.
- Fails to understand the purpose of the Cross



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}

To the heart of Christ it was a bitter task to press His way against the fears, disappointment, and unbelief of His beloved disciples. It was hard to lead them forward to the anguish and despair that awaited them at Jerusalem. And Satan was at hand to press his temptations upon the Son of man. Why should He now go to Jerusalem, to certain death? All around Him were souls hungering for the bread of life. On every hand were suffering ones waiting for His word of healing. The work to be wrought by the gospel of His grace was but just begun. And He was full of the vigor of manhood's prime. Why not go forward to the vast fields of the world with the words of His grace, the touch of His healing power? Why not take to Himself the joy of giving light and gladness to those darkened and sorrowing millions? Why leave the harvest gathering to His disciples, so weak in faith, so dull of understanding, so slow to act? Why face death now, and leave the work in its infancy? The foe who in the wilderness had confronted Christ assailed Him now with fierce and subtle temptations. **Had Jesus yielded for a moment, had He changed His course in the least particular to save Himself**, Satan's agencies would have triumphed, and the world would have been lost. {DA 486.1}

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}

"The spirit of liberality is the spirit of heaven. Christ's self-sacrificing love is revealed upon the cross. That man might be saved, He gave all that He had and then gave Himself. The cross of Christ appeals to the benevolence of every follower of the blessed Saviour. The principle there illustrated is to give, give. This, carried out in actual benevolence and good works, is the true fruit of the Christian life. The principle of worldlings is to get, get, and thus they expect to secure happiness; but carried out in all its bearings, the fruit is misery and death. The light of the gospel shining from the cross of Christ rebukes selfishness and encourages liberality and benevolence." {9T 254.2}

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}

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. 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. {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. 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. The highest gift of heaven, even the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, was able to redeem the lost. {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}

- Fails to understand who killed Christ

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}

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.” Rev. 12:10. {DA 761.1}

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}

## SUNDAY

Read second paragraph “One source...” thoughts?

Bottom paragraph makes it clear we are to keep the laws of the government unless they “are in violation of God’s commandments, laws that directly contradict the basic principles of how God has told us we should live.” Thoughts? Who decides?

Is slavery against the basic principles God has told us to live? Is subjugation of women against the basic principles of how God has told us to live? Yes! Then how are we to oppose this laws if they exist? What method did Christ and the apostles use? First they didn’t in their personal lives do the things the local law permitted.

Did they try to influence government officials, elections, legislators, judges or changes the laws of the state? How did they work? By converting people to the truth!

What about today? If there is a law which we oppose what method should be use in opposing it?

## MONDAY

In the middle paragraph it states, “Thus we are to obey the king’s commandment, just as long as it doesn’t conflict with the King’s commandment.” But who is to decide? What about on whether to bear arms in the military? Who decides?

Romans 14 every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind.

## TUESDAY

First paragraph read, thoughts? How do we handle events or circumstances we don’t understand? Is there a framework which will allow us to understand enough to be at peace?

Analogy of a child getting vaccines, does the child understand? Might the child misunderstand, “Mommy I thought you loved me? Why are you doing this to me?” Are we sometimes like that when difficult or painful events happen in our lives? “God I thought you loved me? Why are you doing this to me?”

Second paragraph read- thoughts? Thoughts about the prescription in that paragraph?

## WEDNESDAY

First paragraph –

Does anyone ever get away with sin? Or does sin react upon the sinner damaging the sinner bringing its own consequences?

Last paragraph – read – thoughts? Are we to trust is something we can’t understand? Are we to trust without understanding? What about John 15:15 when Jesus invites us to understand?

## FRIDAY

Second paragraph – does this mean some may have greater comprehension of God than others? Will our belief about our ability to comprehend God impact our ability to comprehend? In other words, if you believe God is beyond comprehension will you try to understand in the same way as someone who believes God wants us to comprehend all we can?

## 2007 Q1 Lesson 10    Whatever Your Hand Finds to Do

### SUNDAY

Read Bible text at top – thoughts?

No one knows whether love or hate awaits him, is this true? Under the sun or in the end? Ultimately, can we have confidence that love awaits us?

But now, in this world, do we know the future events of our own lives? Do we know what will happen to us or our loved ones? When you think about this unknown reality, this inability to know the future, what does it mean to you?

I have patients who worry constantly about the future; they imagine financial ruin, relational rejection, failure at work, never finding a life partner – they look into the future and project their worst fears onto a future they cannot know and thus cause themselves misery. Recognizing they don't know the future can be one factor in decreasing their worry. I will sometimes ask them if they can tell the future then to give me the winning lottery numbers – of course they can't and I point out neither can they tell regarding their worries for the future.

Another way some of my patients act as if they know the future is when they conclude how their spouse will act before their spouse actually does. They don't give their spouse a chance to speak for themselves but automatically conclude how their spouse will react and already feel hurt or rejected etc. before the spouse actually does anything. This often happens in cases where marital therapy is ongoing and both have determined to improve and change and are working, a barrier can be the tendency to predict the future behavior of the spouse rather than recognizing you can't.

Another way this happens is when you have someone in your life which causes you great distress, a person who is antagonistic to you and interactions are consistently distressful no matter what you attempt to do. Or a job environment that is stressful and a person may be home off on a Sunday but they begin to reach into the future and predict the events of the next day, anticipating them and bringing the anticipated stress, that hasn't yet happened, into their current place and time. So many possibilities could happen, a car could break down, a heart attack, a religious conversion, a person gets fired, arrested, moves away, etc. etc.

We can't predict the future, and one the sayings my mother taught me as a child was, "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it."

Do your thoughts about the future trouble you? Any you want to share?

Read first paragraph Sunday's lesson "Verse 1 of chapter 9..."

Thoughts? Can we understand God's ways? If we cannot understand God's ways, then what did Jesus mean in John 15:15? Does God want us to understand His ways? Who doesn't want us to understand? What are the barriers to our understanding?

Lies – like God's ways are not our ways and His ways are so much above ours that it is impossible for us to understand. Or we don't need to understand because we have faith. Lies about God Himself.

Traditions and rituals and clichés that bring familiarity and thus a sense of security but no real transformation.

By faith we should look to the hereafter and grasp the pledge of God of a growth of intellect, the human faculties uniting with the divine, and every power of the soul being brought into direct contact with the Source of light. We may rejoice that all that has

perplexed us in the providences of God will then be made plain; things hard to be understood will find an explanation; and where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken purposes, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. Says the apostle Paul: “Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” {5T 706.1}

Peter exhorts his brethren to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. **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. {5T 706.2}

The fact that there is **no controversy or agitation** among God’s people should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition and worship they know not what. {5T 707.1}

The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity she will have to do in a terrible crisis under most discouraging, forbidding circumstances. The warnings that worldly conformity has silenced or withheld must be given under the fiercest opposition from enemies of the faith. And at that time the **superficial, conservative class, whose influence has steadily retarded the progress of the work**, will renounce the faith and take their stand with its avowed enemies, toward whom their sympathies have long been tending. These apostates will then manifest the most bitter enmity, doing all in their power to oppress and malign their former brethren and to excite indignation against them. This day is just before us. The members of the church will individually be tested and proved. They will be placed in circumstances where they will be forced to bear witness for the truth. Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps separately and alone. The experience which would have helped them in this emergency they have neglected to obtain, and their souls are burdened with remorse for wasted opportunities and neglected privileges. {5T 463.2}

What does it mean the Lord looks after those who are faithful to Him? In what way? Does it mean we are promised wealth and health? Or does it mean we are promised His Spirit, presence, love, friendship and eternal life?

Read last paragraph “To say, however...” Thoughts? When we are in unity with God can we face suffering and persecution without fear and with peace? Any examples? Stephen? The apostles? What enables us to do this? The HS but what changes does the HS work in us?

What is the source of our fear? Selfishness; and what casts our fear? Love, so the HS brings the love (Romans 5:5) and character of God Himself and changes us from beings focused on self and selfishness to beings who are selfless and whose joy is in blessing others. Such a transformation cannot be done except by the power of the HS working in our minds and hearts.

And when we love others more than ourselves we are no longer afraid of what happens to us, but what is happening to others, thus Stephen’s prayer as he was being stoned. And Moses and Paul.

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph “At the same time...” Thoughts?

Do the words death, dying, dead having more than one meaning? What meanings do they have? In the setting of the Great Controversy do they have more than one meaning? What?

When God told Adam and Eve in the Garden that if they eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge they will surely die – what did the word die mean there?

- When the Jesus, finally, had to say plainly to the disciples “Lazarus is dead” what did the word dead mean there?
- Do these two deaths mean the same thing?
- What is the difference? Why is it important to recognize this difference?

Have you thought why did it take angels so long to realize Satan was a fraud and a murderer why did it take the cross for him to be fully exposed?

*Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” John 12:31,32*

Notice first that Christ is saying “now is the time” as if the prince of the world hadn’t been driven out yet, driven out from where? Where did the prince of the world want to reside? Where did he want to set up his throne? In the hearts and minds of the intelligent beings throughout the universe and Christ’s death would drive him out, thus verse 32 when Christ is lifted up He will draw ALL, not all men, the word men is supplied by the translators. He draws all the intelligences in the universe!

*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*

*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}*

So why did it take until the Cross for the angels to see this?

Did God ever use His power to put people to death in the OT, Sodom, 185,000 Assyrians, First-born of Egypt, Pharaoh’s army in the sea, the platoons of soldiers who came to arrest Elijah, Ananias and Sapphira?

Did Satan ever use his power to put people to death or influence others to put people to death? Job’s children? Cain and Abel, Jesus...

To the angels, was there any apparent difference? Could Satan turn to the angels and say, prior to the cross, “See, I told you, God is a manipulator and power monger, and every time I am about to get the world into a position to show you how great my way of governing will be, He steps in and kills those who prefer my ways. I told you, if you don’t do it His way He will kill you. When will you realize He can’t be trusted, and join us?”



Did God risk being misunderstood in order to save and restore? Then why did He do it? Why did God use His power to kill so many humans?

First, we are talking about two types of death – does it make a difference to put someone to sleep, (anesthesia), and then wake them up, or if we perfect the technology, cryogenic sleep and thaw them later versus killing them?

From God's perspective, are the first and second deaths the same? Is the first death really death or merely a sleep, like under anesthesia or cryogenic storage and all will be awakened? Won't all come out of the grave, including the wicked right where they left off to finish their lives as they freely choose?

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 293.2}

Secondly, in order for God to defeat Satan Christ had to come and Satan knew this from the warning given in the Garden that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head. So Satan's goal was to destroy any channel through which the Savior could come. God acted to preserve a channel for the Savior to come.



## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph and then the dark section right beneath it – thoughts?

Does it matter where your focus is? If one is self-focused and life is all about self then there is no purpose or meaning we all die, but what if one had a focus beyond self that their life serves a greater good?

Jesus died for the “joy set before Him” What was that joy? Denzel Washington starred in a movie called John Q in which his son needed a heart transplant and his insurance wouldn’t pay so his son couldn’t get on the transplant list, so John Q went to a hospital kidnapped a heart transplant team and told them he was going to shoot himself and he wanted his heart to be given to his son. In the end he didn’t shoot himself because a auto accident victim’s heart became available, but the point depicted is that love will cause us to see our lives and even our deaths as having meaning.

## WEDNESDAY

Read Ecclesiastes 9:5,6 – thoughts? Is it true just as it reads? Is it true that when a man dies the memory of him is gone?

Second paragraph read – thoughts?

## THURSDAY

Time and Chance – that things happen beyond our control and good things happen to bad people and bad things happen to good people and this is confusing and we can’t make sense of it – thoughts?

What is our purpose here on earth? Why are we as humans here currently? As an individual what is your purpose?

To know God, experience healing of heart and mind and lead others to God for this same healing – that is it. This life is a probationary life, an artificial life in the sense that God is constantly interceding to keep us alive in our fallen state to give us opportunity to experience healing.

**2007 Q1 Lesson 11      Dead Flies and Snake Charmers:  
More Life Under the Sun**

Notes are not available

## 2007 Q1 Lesson 12 The Way of the Wind

### SABBATH

Memory Text read – thoughts?

Is the memory text true? Do we know any of this? Can we know any of this? Should we accept this text as it reads and not try to understand? Are we “allowed” by God to understand? What are we permitted to understand? Are there limits that God says – “I won’t let you understand this”? Does God want to keep us in ignorance about Him and how He does things?

Do we know a lot about how fertilization occurs? Can we do things to manipulate reproduction?

An article in New Scientist describes how we can make children with three parents by removing the nucleus from an ovum of one woman, insert the nucleus of another and then fertilize the egg with a sperm. The majority of DNA would come from the nucleus but the mitochondria would have the DNA of the original egg. (references at end of notes)

Another article reports on blending of rabbit and human cells to create hybrid stem cells. They report fusing adult human cells with denucleated rabbit eggs to create human/rabbit stem cells.

A third article documents how researchers were able to create a mouse from two females with no male DNA donated at all.

Do we know some of these things? Can we know more? Then what does the text in Ecclesiastes mean? Does it mean, that we can’t know and can’t grow in our knowledge about God and His methods/principles etc, or that no matter how much we learn, no matter how much we know we are finite and there is always more to learn and more we don’t know?

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

What do you think about this theory? Do you like it? Why or why not? No freedom and if no freedom then no love and thus a direct attack on God’s character and methods for running the universe. Any thoughts like this in Christianity today?

Are there some who believe this today? Hyper Calvinism which teaches we are all predetermined and have no freewill. And Universalists which teach all will be saved – what is the problem with these two theories?

How do these theories conflict with God’s character?

Can love occur in an atmosphere without freedom? Is there freedom without choice? Such theories are subtle attacks on the foundation of God’s kingdom, which is the rule of love.

Last paragraph – thoughts? Is there ever a time when we don’t have a choice? Have you ever heard people say, “I didn’t have a choice”?

I have patients who are in abusive relationships and won’t extricate themselves because they say they don’t have a choice. They gave up their right to choose to leave when they got married and the only way they can get that choice back is if the partner has an affair. Is this true? Is marriage the loss of freedom?

### SUNDAY

Read last two paragraphs – thoughts?

Read bottom question – thoughts?

What does it mean to share with those less fortunate? Does it mean merely giving money, clothes, food etc. to those in poverty? Who are the most unfortunate ones the poor who know God and love and trust Him or the wealthy who don't know God and live in fear and turmoil?

What do you have to share with people? The truth about God Himself which brings healing to mind and heart.

Has your attitude to give to the needy been affected by con artists who pretend to be needy? Or drug addicts who beg for money for drugs?

How can you tell? How do you know that your action of giving money won't cause more harm than good? How much money did Christ give away during His ministry? Were there no needy people?

What about Paul's statement in 2 Thes 3:10, if you don't work you don't eat? How do we balance this with those who don't have food?

## MONDAY

Read second question in lesson "What are some things..." thoughts?

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts?

What about the choices of others? Are the choices of others beyond our control? Do the choices of others sometimes frustrate or trouble us? A child who chooses drugs, to leave the church, the "wrong" partner?

Are these choices beyond the power of God? Can God control our choices in harmony with His character?

Are there some things God cannot do and still be the God we know Him to be? Does this discourage us or encourage us?

## TUESDAY

Read First paragraph – thought?

Can we understand the way of the Spirit?

*Zechariah 4:6 "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the LORD Almighty."*

The Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and Love – how do these work?

God is described as a consuming fire – what does God consume? When the Spirit came at Pentecost what was seen? Tongues of fire – and what does Love consume? Selfishness and they were all in one accord – and what does truth consume? Lies and the lies about God had been purged.

Malachi states:

*MAL 4:1 "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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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.*

What does it mean? Consider coming out of a cave at noon on a bright day after days in the dark, what is that like? What if you come out at 4 a.m. and watch the dawn?

Christ is arising now with truth and love and we can love it and embrace it and have it purge us of lies and selfishness and be transformed to meet Him OR we can deny the truth and cling to selfishness and keep our minds in denial and darkness and then when He comes in glory our minds will be consumed with guilt, shame, torment and we will die.

Last paragraph read – thoughts?

Does “God’s ways are not our ways” mean we therefore cannot know God’s ways and shouldn’t bother to try? OR that God’s methods of selfless love are alien to our natural hearts of selfishness and we cannot understand Him without renewal and regeneration by the Spirit?

## WEDNESDAY

Bottom paragraph – read – thoughts

I have patients who are consumed with grief and reminisce on painful pasts trying to make sense but never seeming to – does it help to recognize that the entire world groans under the pain and weight of sin?

Would the concepts described in this paragraph help someone thinking of suicide?

## THURSDAY

Read Eccl 11:9 and first paragraph – thoughts?

Last paragraph read and thoughts?

What about sin has pleasure for a season? How can we protect against getting swept away by sins pleasures? The Larger View – look beyond the “season” and to the long term outcomes/consequences.

A young person tempted with the pleasures of sex – look beyond the moment and think about STDs, pregnancy, character change, guilt, shame, betrayal of trust.

A person tempted with drugs, tobacco, alcohol look beyond the moment and consider DUI, jail, damaged brain, financial ruin, relationship stresses, character damage, guilt, shame etc.

Can you think of others?

What about the idea of answering to God in the judgment?

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Just as God is about to send a blessing your way, Satan often sends in temptations or counterfeits to distract you so you won’t be prepared to receive God’s blessing. This can happen both individually and corporately.

In OT as God was preparing Israel to be a blessing to the world Satan sent in the distraction of fertility cults and diverted them from their path.

In early centuries after Christ, when persecution of the church didn’t work Satan sent in the counterfeit system of mixing church and state together.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as this movement was called to take the truth about God to the world several counterfeit movements sprung up to distract – spiritualism, JW, LDS.

Second paragraph read – thoughts?

What makes us vulnerable to be molded like putty? Fear and selfishness, worry about what others think, fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of abandonment, desire for approval, love, acceptance. A narrow view, belief in lies that others are to do your thinking for you, that others are more intelligent or more capable of knowing the truth so you don't think for yourself.

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}

## IVF CREATES FETUSES WITH THREE PARENTS

A WOMAN has become pregnant through a procedure that combines a controversial IVF method with one of the techniques used for cloning. But the fetuses that resulted, although they did not survive to term, were certainly not clones. In fact, they had three genetic parents.

The procedure involves transferring a fertilised nucleus from the mother's egg to an egg from another woman. Any child born this way would inherit the vast majority of its genes from its mother and father, like a normal baby, but the handful of genes found outside the nucleus, in the cell structures called mitochondria, would come from another woman.

The US team that developed the method say it could be used as a form of genetic therapy, to allow women who have genetic defects in their mitochondria to have normal children. It could also help the small proportion of women who are infertile because of faults in their eggs. "It's nothing to do with human cloning," says team leader Jamie Grifo of the New York University School of Medicine. "It is in no way an attempt to create a genetic copy of an adult."

Babies with three parents have already being born in the US ([\*New Scientist\*, 12 May 2001, p 7](#)). They were created by injecting cytoplasm (along with the mitochondria) from one egg into another. The use of this method now requires FDA approval.



The latest work was done by John Zhang's team at the Sun Yat-sen University of Medical Science in Guangzhou, China, with the help of Grifo's team. They took eggs from a 30-year-old woman for whom IVF had failed, because her embryos stopped developing after two days. Other eggs were obtained from donors. The eggs were fertilised by intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI). *New Scientist* vol 180 issue 2417 - 18 October 2003, page 12

Rabbit-human stem cell claims provoke controversy and doubt

EVEN as the ink is drying on her latest paper, Hui Zhen Sheng's work is provoking wildly different responses. It has been hailed as an important advance, questioned for its scientific rigour and sensationalised as a bizarre mixing of human and animal.

Sheng's team at Shanghai Second Medical University claims to have created human embryonic stem cells by fusing adult human cells with rabbit eggs stripped of their nuclei - a form of cloning. What's more, her team claims, the resulting cells can form a variety of human tissues, including muscle and nerve cells.

The goal is to create a new source of embryonic stem cells (ESCs) for research and ultimately medical applications. At the moment, ESCs can only be derived by destroying human embryos, which some regard as unacceptable. But most researchers think ESCs' potential for treating diseases as diverse as diabetes and Alzheimer's outweighs such concerns. And generating embryos by cloning cells from a patient would allow doctors to obtain genetically identical ESCs that would not trigger rejection.

The attraction of interspecies cloning is that it overcomes the great shortage of human eggs. And few experts think that embryos cloned from such disparate species will be viable, so no potential human life is being destroyed. Attempts to use interspecies cloning to rescue endangered species, for example, have failed to produce viable embryos except where the two species are closely related, such as a bid to clone wild oxen called gaurs using cow eggs. And even with such a close match, the sole gaur produced died two days after birth, says Robert Lanza of Advanced Cell Technology of Massachusetts, which carried out the experiments.

So with disparate species such as rabbits and humans, it seems certain that no "rabbit-human hybrid" could develop. As for tabloid visions of floppy-eared humans, the embryos contain only a tiny fraction of rabbit DNA, in some of the mitochondria that supply cells with chemical power.

Lanza's team has not been able to derive ESCs from human-cow and human-rabbit embryos: the embryos usually die after a few divisions, long before ESCs can be harvested, he says. So Sheng seems to have made a big advance.

Rumours of her success have been circulating for two years. Her work has now finally been published in *Cell Research* (vol 13, p 251), a peer-reviewed journal of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. It describes how her team inserted donor cells from the foreskins of a five-year-old boy and two men, and from a woman's face, into rabbit eggs. From the resulting embryos, the team harvested cells with the ability to transform into a variety of tissue types. *New Scientist* vol 179 issue 2409 - 23 August 2003, page 14

### **Dawn of a new kind of parenthood**

BIRDS do it. Bees do it. Even aquatic fleas do it. Yes, they have sex. But in these creatures, females can also produce offspring without any male contribution. Until the birth of Kaguya the mouse was announced in *Nature* this week, this was deemed an impossible feat in mammals. Now we know that it can be done.

Kaguya is the “daughter” of two female mice. No sperm nor any male cell was involved in her creation. Female cells alone were used. Just as the birth of Dolly the sheep in 1997 shattered the dogma that an adult cell could never give rise to a new individual, so Kaguya’s birth demolishes the notion that the genomes of two mammals of the same sex cannot be combined to create healthy offspring.

Dolly’s birth led to the creation of cloned human embryos and even attempts by maverick scientists to create cloned babies. So could babies be created from the eggs of two women, in the same way as Kaguya? Could two men have children too?

Speculation about same-sex couples having babies last hit the headlines nearly three years ago ([\*New Scientist\*, 14 July 2001, p 3](#)). At that time two teams reported that it was possible to get normal cells to spit out one of their two sets of chromosomes, a process called haploidisation, leaving them with just one set, like eggs and sperm cells. This might yet allow artificial sperm or eggs to be derived from any individual.

But the speculation missed the point. If producing cells with one set of chromosomes is all that is needed to allow same-sex couples to have children, then simply combining the eggs from two women, or the sperm from two men, should produce normal babies. In fact, decades of experiments show this simply does not work in mammals. Embryos with two female-derived sets of chromosomes, or two male ones, usually grow only for a short time, and never result in the birth of healthy offspring.

Some of these experiments were inspired by the phenomenon of virgin births, or parthenogenesis, in which an egg develops into a new individual without being fertilised. Many animals and plants, from insects such as aphids to birds such as turkeys, resort to this alternative to sexual reproduction. Some lizards reproduce exclusively by parthenogenesis.

In mammals, parthenogenesis occasionally happens when an egg is accidentally (or deliberately) activated as if it had been fertilised. The egg then retains an extra set of chromosomes - in the form of the polar body, which is normally expelled after fertilisation - and begins to divide as if it were an embryo. But such parthenotes, as they are known, either die or turn into cancers called teratomas, which can have features such as teeth and hair.

The reason why combining two eggs or creating parthenogenic embryos does not result in viable offspring is thought to be the result of a mechanism known as imprinting. During sperm formation, certain key genes are permanently switched off by chemical modification of the DNA encoding them. When eggs form, a different set of key genes is switched off. Around 30 genes are imprinted in mammals.

This means that if two sets of chromosomes with female imprinting are combined, both copies of a few genes necessary for embryonic development will be switched off, while both copies of other genes will be switched on, resulting in the overproduction of some proteins. If two male-imprinted sets of chromosomes are combined, there is a similar mismatch.

While researchers have proposed ways of overcoming the imprinting barrier ([\*New Scientist\*, 19 December 1998, p 36](#)), no one had ever come close to achieving it. But now Tomohiro Kono’s team at Tokyo University of Agriculture in Japan has managed what was once thought impossible.

The team’s trick was to bypass the need for a male-imprinted set of chromosomes by manipulating the genome of a female egg to make it behave more like a male-imprinted sperm genome. This was no simple task, though. The making of Kaguya involved numerous steps.

The team started with mice genetically modified so they lack a gene called *H19* that is imprinted, or shut down, in sperm. When *H19* is switched on, it suppresses the expression of the gene for the growth factor IGF-2, which is crucial to embryo growth. The *H19* mutation, which promotes IGF-2 expression, gives the egg's chromosomes a key characteristic of a male-imprinted genome.

The second key step was obtaining immature eggs from the modified mice. Normal cells have one set of female-imprinted chromosomes and one set of male-imprinted chromosomes. It is thought that during the formation of eggs all imprints are erased before the female imprints are established. Kono harvested immature eggs in the hope that their chromosomes would not yet have acquired female imprints, although the team did not do any studies to prove this was the case.

After a series of complex intermediate steps, the researchers fused eggs containing the modified, immature nucleus with normal, mature eggs. The fused eggs were chemically activated to mimic fertilisation, and the growing embryos were implanted in the wombs of mice. The end result of the experiments was the birth of Kaguya, named after a character in a Japanese fairytale. The only other healthy pup was sacrificed at birth. Kaguya has since given birth to offspring of her own, fathered in the conventional way.

So is there any chance of women producing babies in a similar way? “To do this kind of experimentation in humans would be outrageous,” says fertility specialist Gianpiero Palermo of Cornell University in New York, who leads one of the teams studying haploidisation.

For starters, the method requires even more eggs than cloning, and normal human eggs are in very short supply. Immature eggs would also have to be taken directly from the ovary.

Next, genetically modifying a woman to knock out the *H19* gene in her eggs would be ethically unacceptable, even if it were feasible. There might be other ways to switch on the IGF-2 gene in the egg, though, possibly by temporarily adding the gene to an egg.

This would be highly risky, warns Azim Surani of the University of Cambridge, who has done many of the pioneering studies on parthenogenesis, and whose team coined the term imprinting. The level of expression of IGF-2 needs to be just right, he points out: too little prevents growth but too much leads to abnormalities.

Kono's results suggest the risk of abnormalities could be very high. From the hundreds of eggs implanted, only 28 pups resulted. Of these 18 were stillborn and eight had abnormalities ([see Table](#)).

Men are certainly not about to become redundant as a result of Kono's work, Surani stresses. “It shows the opposite. It shows males are relevant,” he says. “To really get to a situation where the procedure would work as well as fertilisation with sperm, you would have to mutate a lot more genes,” he says.

Nevertheless, experts agree that overcoming the imprinting barrier is a huge achievement. What has surprised them is that manipulating *H19*, and thus IGF-2, seems to be enough to restore relatively normal expression of other imprinted genes, and of many other genes as well. “It's amazing that altering the expression of just two imprinted genes can have a ripple effect on the rest of the genome,” David Loebel and Patrick Tam of the University of Sydney, Australia, write in a commentary in *Nature* (vol 428, p 809 and p 860).

Even if the technique is never used to create babies directly, it will have a big impact on human studies, Palermo adds. For example, future experiments in animals will reveal which other genes have to be altered or manipulated to ensure normal development. This could help optimise fertility treatments, some of which are thought to interfere with imprinting. “It confirms that

manipulating the nucleus and cytoplasm is only part of the work, and that what is important is manipulating genes,” says Palermo.

In addition, the work might hint at ways to make animal cloning more efficient. Many of the failures in cloned animals are thought to come from imprinting defects. Fixing these problems might be simpler than we thought, although Surani points out the situation in cloning, where an adult cell is transferred to an egg, is very different.

But like cloning, the “homoparental” technique might find practical uses too. In 1957 biologist Richard Beatty of the University of Edinburgh, UK, suggested that breeding farm animals would be more efficient without males. He proposed creating lines of parthenogenic cows, pigs and sheep.

Kono’s method would allow two females to be “mated”, which could be useful in dairy farming. And by taking two eggs from the same cow, a kind of clone could be created, as occurs in natural parthenogenesis. Nearly half a century on, Beatty’s vision of cutting out the bull may finally be feasible. *New Scientist* vol 182 issue 2444 - 24 April 2004, page 8.

## 2007 Q1 Lesson 13 The Conclusion of the Matter

### SABBATH

Read Memory Text – thoughts?

How would you describe the conclusion of the whole matter? What is the “matter” we are concluding? Is it the Great Controversy? What would your summation be? What do you think about Solomon’s?

Turn to WEDNESDAY’s Lesson read middle paragraph “Solomon ends by telling...”

What relationship do you see between Solomon’s summation and the message of the first angel of Revelation 14?

What does it mean to Fear God? To be awed with admiration and respect – how is it we become awed with admiration and respect? By the truth of who He is, and how do we know that? By the revelation of His character as revealed in Christ –

Can we “Fear God” in the healthy, genuine way if we believe lies about Him? Or do the lies cause us to be afraid of God and thus not trust Him?

What does it mean to give glory to God and how is this related to keeping the commandments?

Did those who put Christ on the cross observe the right day of the week? Tithe the right amount? Sacrifice the right animals? Eat the right foods? Did they give glory to God?

How do we glorify God?

“Through trial and persecution the glory--the character--of God is revealed in His chosen ones.” Acts of the Apostles 576

So to fear God is to understand the truth about His character and be awed by it, resulting in restored trust which results in the indwelling of the HS and the transformation of character in the face of trials- which glorifies God.

What does it mean “this is the whole duty of man.”

This is our purpose—this is the reason for our creation. God created humanity in the context of a war about God’s character – mankind was created for the purpose of showcasing, demonstrating, revealing the character of God.

When Adam failed to complete the purpose of His creation, Christ came and finished what Adam failed to do, and now we get the privilege of not only revealing God’s character in our lives, but because we are sinners, this also demonstrates God’s methods heal, restore, and transform while simultaneously revealing God’s gracious and forgiving character. Through Christ we can still fulfill our purpose!

How does the Sabbath fit into our duty? Those who put Christ on the Cross observed the right day but didn’t fulfill their duty- so what role does the Sabbath have?

- The Sabbath was also created in the context of the war about God and is evidence of how God runs His universe – with truth spoken in love while leaving us free!

Reread the memory text – does it matter what picture of God one has? Are there some, will there be some, who “fear God” but the “god” they fear is the counterfeit? How will that be manifest?

Do we become like the God we admire and worship? If we believe God is required to use His power to inflict penalties upon the wicked, then what will we do when an angel of light comes purporting to be God and using the methods of coercion?

Read the first and second paragraph of Sabbath's lesson – thoughts? Does it make any difference what “God” you believe in? Are there certain ideas about God that are commonly taught that make no sense? Do all conceptions of God make life more sensible? What ideas are taught about God that actually don't make sense?

- God is love but if you don't love Him He will punish and kill you
- God predetermines who will be saved and lost
- God must be appeased
- God/Jesus took your loved one to be with Him
- Natural disasters are God punishing people

In the second paragraph the lesson states, “Jesus, who beat death and with that victory offers us what we can't get anywhere else.” What does it mean that Jesus beat death?

Does it mean that Jesus was executed by His Father as an innocent victim to pay the penalty of sin, but because He was innocent then He “beat” the executioner and the executioner (i.e. God) now owes Him and has to let off the chopping block anyone who Jesus says?

Or does it mean that Jesus cured our terminal condition by restoring God's Law of Love into the species known as Human?

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}

*Read Ecclesiastes 12:14 “For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.”*

Thoughts about this text? What does it mean?

*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 14:16,17*

*“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*

*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. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. John 16:13-15*

*But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: John 16:7,8*

What is the Spirit described as being and doing? The Spirit of truth, which reveals the truth about God, which convicts of sin and the world cannot accept – which means what about the world?



*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. 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. 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, 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. For this reason God gave them over to powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. 1 Thes 2:7-12*

Notice that they are destroyed for not believing the truth and Satan works by works of deception. And when we reject the truth our minds become darkened and we become delusional.

What happens when the such a person, who has rejected truth and has become delusional is confronted with the truth? They are destroyed by the truth.

Now all of us are sinners, all of us have had lies in our minds that we have believed. All of us have struggled with coming to terms with the truth – therefore, how does Christ handle it, how does He bring us the truth without destroying us?

*MAL 4:1 “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.*

Remember the analogy of being in a cave, in total darkness for days and coming out suddenly into the full sunlight – but what happens when we come out at 4 a.m. and sit while the sun rises?

Christ is currently rising – at the end of time with healing in the beams of truth that are coming out from Him – remember the HS is the Spirit of truth and takes what He receives from Christ and enlightens our minds with it.

*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.*

Notice when Christ comes to His temple – He comes as a refiner’s fire to purify – the Levites who are the priesthood of believers, He is purifying you and me now with the truth so that when He appears we will be like Him!

*AC 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

Just so you know I am not diverging from the foundation of our church – listen to EGW:

To sin, wherever found, “our God is a consuming fire.” Heb. 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 107.4}

What is a book made out of? What is a house made out of? What is sin made out of? What kind of fire consumes sin but doesn’t consume material substance? What consumes lies? Truth!

In first John 3:8 and 16 the Bible says God is love – thus the HS is not only the Spirit of truth, but also the Spirit of Love. What consumes selfishness? Love.

Thus the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Love and Truth and we can have this Spirit consume lies and selfishness in us now, or later.

We can never avoid truth we can only delay our dealing with truth.

Again from EGW:

In the GC the last chapter entitled “The Controversy Ended” she describes what she believes will happen after the 1000 years have ended and the wicked are raised from the dead. Satan begins to deceive them into thinking they can actually take the city. As they begin to march on the city, Jesus commands the gates of the city be closed – note that prior the city has been here with open gates.

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}

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}

As soon as the books of record are opened, and the eye of Jesus looks upon the wicked, they are conscious of every sin which they have ever committed. They see just where their feet diverged from the path of purity and holiness, just how far pride and rebellion have carried them in the violation of the law of God. The seductive temptations which they encouraged by indulgence in sin, the blessings perverted, the messengers of God despised, the warnings rejected, the waves of mercy beaten back by the stubborn, unrepentant heart--all appear as if written in letters of fire...

She goes on to describe how they all watch the scenes of Christ’s life and crucifixion and then states:

The awful spectacle appears just as it was. Satan, his angels, and his subjects have no power to turn from the picture of their own work. Each actor recalls the part which he performed... They vainly seek to hide from the divine majesty of His countenance, outshining the glory of the sun...{GC 667.2}{GC 666.2}

Thoughts? Do you see the grand beauty in God and His methods? That God seeks to avoid causing pain and suffering on His children, that He is patiently waiting for each of us to receive the truth which wins to trust and the Spirit is poured out and our hearts are transformed so that when He comes we love to be in His presence.

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. {GC88 542.3}

## SUNDAY

Remember your creator – what does it mean to remember your creator?

Read second paragraph – “Solomon’s use of the word...” Thoughts? Is being Creator sufficient reason to be God and worthy of 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.” MacDonald, George, *Discovering the Character of God*, Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989, p. 29.

Is power alone sufficient to make God God? What about the fact He creates?

If we as humans create AI – would that make us gods? What is the difference?

God is not merely powerful, though He is all powerful, God is not merely Creator, though He created all things – God is the actual source of all matter, time, energy, space, gravity, substance – all things have their origin in Him and derive their existence from Him – but what makes Him worthy is even though all this is true, that He has all power, He would rather let us kill Him than force us to do things His way!

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

Better health, character, brain, development, less pain, less regrets...

In teacher’s comments on page 151 it states: “‘Much study wearies the body’ (Eccles 12:12, NIV), is a tacit admission that most of us don’t need more information; we just need to do what we already know.”

Thoughts about this? Is it saying we don’t need more information? What did Jesus say would set us free? What is Satan’s strategy to confuse with lies? Do we need to know God more and more and more? Is knowing God a form of information?

Is there a problem with someone implementing what they already know if they hold to a distorted picture of God? Taliban? Suicide bombers? Jonestown? Branch Davidians?

EGW states:

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}

Is this a possible meaning to the words of Solomon? What does this mean?

## MONDAY

Is about aging and loss of abilities with age – any thoughts about this?

Why do we age? Was it God's design that we age? What does aging teach us?

In this earth the body decays with time, but the character can grow more and more perfect in Christlikeness with time. When Christ comes we get new bodies but we don't get new characters, we take our characters with us.

## TUESDAY

Read middle paragraph, "The 'goad' mentioned here..." – thoughts?

Is the point that truth has its source in God and to the degree that someone is speaking the truth they received that truth from God? Would that be true for EGW as well?

Read last paragraph and then green section – thoughts?

Science? Philosophy? Psychiatry and psychology?

## THURSDAY

Read last two paragraphs – thoughts?

## FRIDAY

Read second paragraph – thoughts?

## 2007 Q2 Lesson 1      The Voice from Heaven

Read first paragraph of the introduction to the quarterly – any thoughts? Does it matter what version we use? Do the specific words matter or is it the thoughts conveyed that matter? Does God inspire a prophet by dictating text or by revealing truth, concepts ideas and leaves the prophet free to write the concept in the language he knows?

Read the second paragraph of the introduction “It’s not just...” Thoughts? It says it is not just the revelation of God but emphasizes the impact on people’s lives-

Has there ever been people who believe in the Bible who become evil, severe, abusive, coercive will burn people at the stake etc.? Here the Bible changed their lives but in a destructive way – why? What is the key? The kind of God one believes is revealed in the Bible. Can lives be changed for good as long as we hold to lies about God?

Is the Bible the only book that brings hope to millions of people? Koran? Book of Mormon – do these books bring hope? But what is the true source of our hope? The truth about God Himself and only the Bible, rightly understood, reveals the genuine truth about God.

Does that mean the HS cannot reach someone with the truth about Him in other settings?

*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*

*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. 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. (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, 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*

God is working to bring the truth about Himself to all peoples, and while the Bible is the clearest revelation we have, God is not restricted to the Bible. He can reveal Himself to people who haven’t been blessed with a Bible.

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Read memory text – how does God speak to us? Why did His Son come?

Read second paragraph – “Of course...” Thoughts?

What does it mean “If our value wasn’t infinite in the sight of God, such an infinite price would not have been paid for our redemption”?

First, did it cost God to heal and restore mankind? Yes, why? Because, it was the only means whereby the truth which restores trust could be revealed and the infection of selfishness purged and God’s Law of Love written again into the species known as human. No other means or method of accomplishing this existed.

What about the idea that man was of infinite value – if that is true wouldn’t that mean there is nothing of greater value? Can you have something greater than infinity?

Consider this EGW statement:

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}

Was their something of even greater value than mankind? What?

## SUNDAY

Read first two paragraphs in Sunday's lesson – thoughts? Why could Adam and Eve no longer talk to God face to face? Why could Moses not look on God's face and live?

Why were Adam and Eve afraid of God? Had God changed? Was God out to get them? Was God their enemy? Was God required by justice to inflict punishment upon them? Where did the fear come from?

From believing lies – lies believed about God broke love and trust and result in the establishment of fear and selfishness...

In Genesis 3:9 God comes to the garden and calls out "Adam where are you?" Why did God do this? Read bottom pink section – thoughts or comments?

What does it say about God that He approaches us like this?

## MONDAY

In the middle of the lesson it describes two attitudes we can have toward prophets we can believe them or reject them and then the lesson states, "Either we believe in what God says to us (often through His prophets) or we don't. In the end our attitude toward the prophets merely reflects our attitude toward Him." Thoughts? Do you agree?

Is it possible for someone to have a bad experience with a prophet yet a good experience with God? Is it possible for the writings of a prophet to be misused and abused such that a person comes to develop negative feelings, ideas, beliefs about the prophet whose writings were twisted and therefore reject the prophet while loving God?

Are we to accept whatever a genuine prophet of God says or are we to think about it, examine it with our God given reason and only when we are convinced by evidence that appeals to reason apply it to our lives?

Is everything a genuine prophet says applicable to all people in all times? Did Paul say that a woman should not teach men? Are there examples in Scripture where women did teach men? Then is this inspired direction universal in its application or local to that situation?

Are all prophets true prophets? Can a prophet prophesy lies at one point and truth at another? Balaam? The old prophet? What does this mean?



Are we ever supposed to surrender our thinking to another – even a prophet? Or are we always to retain our own judgment, weigh the evidence and come to our own conclusion?

Bottom portion of Monday's lesson it asks, "How do we know...." Thoughts?

What were they deceived into believing? Were they deceived into believing that there is no God and we evolved? Were they deceived into worshipping on the wrong day? Were they deceived into believing there was no need to tithe? Were they deceived into believing that the Temple of God was not important and there was no need to follow His instructions regarding its upkeep? What were they deceived into believing? Lies about God Himself and what did those lies cause them to do regarding everything else they believed?

They practice Satan's methods in carrying out God's instructions! How is this, will this be, manifest today?

Read bottom pink – thoughts?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Did we ask for it? Did we need it? What does this say about God – While we were yet sinners Christ died for us! God was reaching out to save us before we even realized we needed Him!

Read second paragraph – thoughts – what lessons should we learn from the life of Christ, about the character of God, that we as Christians seem slow to learn?

- God will or will not judge?
- God will or will not condemn?
- God will or will not inflict external punishment?
- God will or will not become angry at sinners?
- God will or will not freely forgive, without appeasement?
- Others?

Read bottom paragraph – very well stated!

Bottom pink – anyone care to share?

## WEDNESDAY

In what ways does God reveal Himself? What ways have you seen God's true character? His word, EGW, preachers, teachers, parents, spouse, children, nature, movies.

Bottom pink section – what does the Lord command us? To love, can love be commanded? Then what is going on? Micah 6:8

The Lord is telling us that the universe runs on the Law of Love, the Law of giving, beneficence and this is the base code, the operating code for all life to exist and if we want to live we must be brought back into harmony with this universal principle or life will cease. He is telling us about the reality of the universe but He always leaves us free to accept or reject the truth He presents.

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Does this mean we are to read the Bible like a code book, the Bible says it I believe it that settles it, or is the Bible designed to get us to think, contemplate, understand and appreciate God for ourselves?

Last paragraph – excellent – all Bible truths must be studied from the perspective of what they say about God how the truth about God’s character of love is revealed.

#### FRIDAY

Read question 1 – thoughts? Will God ever give up? Romans 1:24,26,28 – why? What would cause God to give up? Where there is no longer any possibility of healing and recovery.

Read question 4 and discuss.

## 2007 Q2 Lesson 2 The Final Word

What do you think about the lesson title? What meanings might it have?

Final authority? The Bible says it that settles it! The last message from God?

### SABBATH

Read Memory text – then read first paragraph from Monday’s lesson – thoughts?

I have brought the Bible I received from the military during Desert Storm. You notice it is camouflaged. This Bible is the GNT and it says the same thing in 2 Tim 3:16 as our memory text.

So now that we have established that all Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, how about we take my Bible and study from Tobit, Maccabees, Sarich, Judith and other apocryphal books? Are you comfortable with that?

Doesn’t this Bible make the same claim of being inspired as your version without the apocryphal books? Then shouldn’t we have confidence in the apocryphal books as well? Why or why not?

What is a better reading of the text in Timothy? “All scripture inspired of God is useful for....” NOT “All scripture is inspired” because there are many scriptures that are not inspired of God, but if a scripture is inspired of God then it is useful.

Key thought Sabbath – thoughts? What makes the Bible authoritative? Does God want to win the war by declaring His sovereignty and having everyone believe? Does God want us to believe because He said it? “God said, I believe it, that settles it?”

When anyone speaks, what gives their words authority? Is it office? The President speaks it is authoritative? When Bill Clinton said he did not have relations with that woman – was he speaking with authority? He was president? What about when the Pope speaks ex-cathedra does that mean whatever he says has authority?

What gives anyone’s words authority? The truth – to the degree someone is speaking truth they speak with authority.

*When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law. Matthew 7:28,29*

What gave Jesus words authority?

All who heard the Saviour “were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power.” “He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” Luke 4:32; Matt. 7:29. The teaching of the scribes and elders was cold and formal, like a lesson learned by rote. To them the word of God possessed no vital power. Their own ideas and traditions were substituted for its teaching. In the accustomed round of service they professed to explain the law, but no inspiration from God stirred their own hearts or the hearts of their hearers. {DA 253.3}

Jesus had nothing to do with the various subjects of dissension among the Jews. It was His work to present the truth. His words shed a flood of light upon the teachings of patriarchs and prophets, and the Scriptures came to men as a new revelation. Never before had His hearers perceived such a depth of meaning in the word of God. {DA 253.4}

Jesus met the people on their own ground, as one who was acquainted with their perplexities. He made truth beautiful by presenting it in the most direct and simple way. His language was pure, refined, and clear as a running stream. His voice was as music to those

who had listened to the monotonous tones of the rabbis. But while His teaching was simple, He spoke as one having authority. This characteristic set His teaching in contrast with that of all others. The rabbis spoke with doubt and hesitancy, as if the Scriptures might be interpreted to mean one thing or exactly the opposite. The hearers were daily involved in greater uncertainty. But Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority. Whatever His subject, it was presented with power, as if His words could not be controverted. {DA 253.5}

What do you notice about this description of the way Jesus taught that gave His teaching authority? Does it sound like He was merely giving proclamations? That He was dictating to everyone what they should believe? Was He making declarations? Or was He taking the scriptures and explaining the meaning in language they could understand that appealed to their reason in familiar settings so the people themselves could comprehend the basis for the truth being presented?

Also, His teaching was accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit – why? How is the Holy Spirit described in the Bible? As the Spirit of truth and love, Paul tells us we are to present the truth in love and leave others free- Eph 4.

If we speak the truth in love, explaining the reasons, the meaning, allowing people to think for themselves will we speak with authority and power?

Read first paragraph – Sabbath’s lesson – thoughts?

Is the Bible the final word? Many Christians have taken this same approach to the 10 Commandments, it is the final Word on God’s law because it was written with the finger of God Himself? Is the Bible or the 10 Commandments the final word?

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}

If this EGW statement is true – if it authoritative then we should be able to explain it and understand its meaning and its meaning should be truth based, fact based and reasonable – thoughts about this?

Does this mean things were added and added by God in layer upon layer? Why? Because we needed it – is it because God preferred it this way? If these things were added doesn’t that mean they weren’t in existence before they were added?

What was the law of God given to Adam after his fall? The law of love – “as given to Adam” how was the law of love given to Adam after the fall? In symbol – in the symbol of the sacrifice of animals – can someone explain how this symbol is involved in restoring God’s love into the heart and mind of mankind?

Sinners would confess their sins on the head of a sacrificial animal, which would symbolize the animal becoming sin even though it knew no sin – had the lamb committed an act of sin? No, it doesn’t know about sin – it hasn’t experienced sinning – but the lamb will be treated as if it was full of sinfulness – and as soon as it is symbolically sinful, what happens – the throat is cut. What does this mean?

Remember the two antagonistic principles – the law of love vs. selfishness. The law of love is the principle upon which life is based, the other centered giving – the circle of beneficence. What happens to the circulation when the lamb is “made sinful?” It is cut, and life ends. Thus teaching that it is in harmony with God’s methods of love that life is based. It is in breaking this law that causes death.

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}

The law, as given to Adam, also revealed something else – a Redeemer, a Savior, that One who was sinless, but yet who could be touched by the pain of sin, who could be made to feel the destructive power of sin would come as the way and means of healing and restoring us to unity with God.

But what happened? Did man keep the law of God in mind as given to Adam and preserved by Noah? Or did mankind lose the significance and come to think something different, come to draw wrong conclusions from this law? What conclusions did they come to draw?

That God is severe, unforgiving and cruel and He requires a payment to appease Him. This started very early as Cain sought to appease God with the fruits of his labor rather than engaging his mind to understand the lessons being taught. Why did God not accept Cain’s offering, not because God is “exacting and severe” but because Cain’s heart and mind could not be cleansed from the lies about God with such an offering, it would have perpetuating Cain’s misunderstanding that God needed appeasement and we offering Him our best to get Him off our back. But the sacrifice of Abel, revealed that Abel understood that God doesn’t require appeasement or payment, but that sin separates from the source of life and the only result is ruin and death.

What about the ordinance of circumcision – it was added next and given to Abraham – why? What is the law hear being taught? The law of love – what are the two antagonistic principles – love others vs. seek to promote self. Do each of us struggle with this? How deep does this struggle go? To the inmost deepest parts of a person, is it painful to be circumcised? Is it painful to have the heart cut away from the principles of the world? Can you tell by looking at someone on the street whether they are circumcised? Can you tell by looking at someone on the street whether their hearts have been cleansed? Did people circumcise themselves? And it typically happened when they were infants, which means what? We are to have our hearts cut away from the world when we are new babes in Christ – were their some who were circumcised as adults and it was harder on them, and are there some who are in the church for years before they have their hearts circumcised – and is it harder on them?

What about the 10 Commandments—why were they added? What law do they represent?

The law of love. But love cannot be commanded, what does this mean? How can commands be loving?

*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. 1 Tim 1:8–11*

Who was the law intended for? Why was it not intended for the righteous? Does that mean the righteous are free from law?

If you love others more than self, meaning you would rather die than kill another person, do you need a rule, law, to tell you not to murder?

And what about the other ordinances given to Moses? What were they about?

They were about demonstrating the law of love in everyday life and moving a people into a more loving direction. If someone put out your eye, you couldn't kill him, you could only put out his eye. If you wanted to divorce your wife you had to give her a writ – you must preserve her dignity and reputation. These are moving the people in a practical daily way in the direction of love and away from selfishness.

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – then in the middles the lesson states, “What does the NT say concerning the inspiration of the OT”? Thoughts?

Is it reasonable to believe the OT is inspired because the NT says it is? What does the book of Mormon say about itself? It is inspired, in fact it was transcribed from gold tablets brought by an angel, Moroni, from God Himself. So we should have even more confidence in such a book right?

What is the problem?

But it is important, once we recognize who Jesus is, how He treated the OT scriptures. Did Jesus recognize the OT scriptures as inspired and authoritative?

Read the last paragraph “Scattered over the long...” Are prophets commanded to write or are they invited to write? Does it make a difference?

The next morning in her sister's home she met Hazen Foss, who told Ellen his story: {1BIO 66.1}

Some time before the first vision was given to Ellen in December, the Lord had given just such a vision to Hazen. He had been instructed that he was to tell others what God had revealed to him. However, he felt he had been deceived in the disappointment of 1844. He knew, too, that ridicule and scorn would come to anyone who claimed to have a vision from God, so he refused to obey the promptings of God's Spirit. Again the Lord came near to him in vision; he was instructed that if he refused to bear the message Heaven would have him give to the people, the Lord would reveal it to someone else, placing His Spirit on the weakest of the weak. {1BIO 66.2}

But Hazen still felt that he could not bear the burden and the reproach of standing before the people to present a vision from God. He told the Lord that he would not do it. Then very strange feelings came over him, and “a voice said, ‘you have grieved away the Spirit of the Lord.’”--Letter 37, 1890. This frightened Hazen. Horrified at his own stubbornness and rebellion, he told the Lord that he would now relate the vision. He called a meeting of the Adventists for the purpose. When the people came together, he recounted his experience. Then he tried to tell what was shown to him, but he could not call it to mind. Even with the most concentrated effort he could not recall a word of it. He cried out in distress, {1BIO 66.3}

“It is gone from me; I can say nothing, and the Spirit of the Lord has left me.” {1BIO 66.4}



Those who were present described the meeting as the most terrible meeting they ever were in. {1BIO 66.5}

As Hazen talked with Ellen that February morning in Poland, he told her that although he had not gone into the chapel where she had spoken the evening before, he had stood outside the door and heard every word that she had said. He declared that what the Lord had shown to her had first been shown to him. But, said he: {1BIO 66.6}

I was proud; I was unreconciled to the disappointment. I murmured against God, and wished myself dead. Then I felt a strange feeling come over me. I shall be henceforth as one dead to spiritual things. . . . I believe the visions are taken from me, and given to you. {1BIO 67.1}

“Do not refuse to obey God, for it will be at the peril of your soul. I am a lost man. You are chosen of God; be faithful in doing your work, and the crown I might have had, you will receive.”-- {1BIO 67.2}

This unusual experience made an indelible impression upon Ellen’s mind. The biddings of God’s Spirit were not to be trifled with. {1BIO 67.3}

Thoughts?

Read bottom pink – thoughts? Wouldn’t it matter whose, “clear Bible teaching”?

## TUESDAY

Bottom paragraph read – thoughts? What is the purpose of Scripture? To reveal God to us, to reveal Christ – where did Moses write about Christ?

Genesis – Christ is creator, the sanctuary service is all about Christ and His plan to heal and restore; what about the plagues and the slaying of the first born – who did that? And Korah, Dathan and Abiram? Who killed them? Jesus?

When people read the first five books of the Bible, do people sometimes think this is all about the Father and fail to see it is about Jesus?

## WEDNESDAY

Second paragraph “The New Testament authors...” read – thoughts?

What does it mean? What are the most powerful portions of scripture the claims or the stories? Why?

Bottom pink read – thoughts? Could it be Christianity itself, as it misrepresents the scriptures?

It is beyond the power of the human mind to estimate the evil which has been wrought by the heresy of eternal torment. The religion of the Bible, full of love and goodness, and abounding in compassion, is darkened by superstition and clothed with terror. When we consider in what false colors Satan has painted the character of God, can we wonder that our merciful Creator is feared, dreaded, and even hated? The appalling views of God which have spread over the world from the teachings of the pulpit have made thousands, yes, millions, of skeptics and infidels. {GC88 536.2}

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – is it reliable to self reference? Or is this circular reasoning? What makes the Bible reliable is not that it says it is reliable, but the evidence it reveals.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

What do you think it means the “Divine mind is diffused”?

Diffuse: “to pour out and permit or cause to spread freely.”

What does this mean? That God reveals Himself vastly and we must read widely and the more widely we read the more and more of the truth about God we can know. It is dangerous to read a little here and a little there, the Bible must be read entirely as a whole.

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}

Read question 3 – how do you handle the fact the Bible is difficult to understand?

## 2007 Q2 Lesson 3 Bible Prophecy Fulfilled

Read memory text – thought?

Does it please God for the wicked to be lost?

*For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live! Ezekiel 18:32*

How do we reconcile the idea that God will do whatever He pleases, with the idea He is not pleased with anyone dying and the doctrine that God will execute the wicked in the end – or the wicked will die in the end?

Simple – God does not use His power to kill them. He does do what pleases Him, He doesn't kill them, yet they die by their own choice and this displeases God, but they don't die at His hand.

What about prophecy – what is its purpose? Is there more than one purpose?

Is there a purpose in prophecy to tell us about future events so we won't be surprised? Is there a purpose in establishing our confidence in God when certain events happen as we see He knew ahead of time it would happen? Other purposes? To set times and dates?

Read second paragraph – thoughts – examples of God's ability to know the future- flood, prophecies of Daniel, Judas.

God did not ordain that sin should exist, but foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. DA 22

The work of Christ on earth was hastening to a close. Before Him, in vivid outline, lay the scenes whither His feet were tending. Even before He took humanity upon Him, He saw the whole length of the path He must travel in order to save that which was lost. Every pang that rent His heart, every insult that was heaped upon His head, every privation that He was called to endure, was open to His view before He laid aside His crown and royal robe, and stepped down from the throne, to clothe His divinity with humanity. The path from the manger to Calvary was all before His eyes. He knew the anguish that would come upon Him. He knew it all, and yet He said, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:7, 8. {DA 410.1}

The purpose and plan of grace existed from all eternity. 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}

Why is it important to recognize God knows the future? What implications are there for realizing God knew sin would enter the universe?

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Who would God like to have the gift of prophecy? If prophecy is seeing things the way God sees them, sees His purposes, His methods and the future outspread – who do you think God would like to know this? And who would God like to have speaking and representing Him?

*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. 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: “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.” Revelation 7:1-3*

Who are the servants spoken of here? Could this be people with the gift of prophecy?

*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*

When is the 7<sup>th</sup> angel about to sound his trumpet? Is it at the same time as the sealing of God’s people right before the coming of Christ? And who are the servants? The prophets? And who are sealed? The servants? Are the 144,000 who get sealed also blessed with seeing things as God sees them with prophetic vision?

Well what is the mystery of God that will be accomplished at this time?

*the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. 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*

What is the mystery? Christ in you – which means what? Recreation of Christlike character, unity with God, oneness in mind with God – would this include our understanding of the GC and what God is doing?

*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. (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, 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.) This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. Romans 2:13-16*

What is taking place here? The hearts and minds of certain people have the law/character of God restored within – when does this take place? In the time of the judgment which is when? Now – when people are preparing to meet God!

*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. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. 1 John 3:2,3*

What is this verse saying? That when Christ appears we will have already been changed to be like Him in character, heart and mind.

*And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 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*

What is the mystery? To bring us all into unity? Atonement! The day of atonement which is the time of judgment which is the time of recreation of Christlike character – and back to our Revelation text – this is the mystery that is to be accomplished as He seals His servants. The question is, Will those servants also be prophets?

Second paragraph “Jesus’ warning...” How can someone be a false prophet? They can knowingly and willfully lie and mislead, they can be duped and think they are on God’s side when they are not, they can be inspired by the false spirit, they can make a human mistake? Are prophets infallible?

Can a prophet receive a vision and not know what it means? Did Daniel know what his visions meant? Can a prophet, after having a vision, interpret the vision without God’s insight and thus the vision be from God but the interpretation be their honest best understanding at the time?

Is everything written by someone with the gift of prophecy a direct revelation from the Lord?

Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy. Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are. Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this. 1 Corinthians 7:25-28

What about EGW? Is everything she wrote directly revealed to her by God or is some of it her own wisdom? Is she infallible? What does this mean for us when we read the Bible or the writings of any human?

## MONDAY

Read Bible passage at the top – thoughts?

What does it mean to believe his prophets? Does it mean we are supposed to believe because a prophet said it, or that we should think about what the prophet has said and desire to understand the truth of it and apply it to our lives?

What about the story of the young and old prophet? 1 Kings 13:11-25

Does it make a difference to do something you are told to do because you are told to do it versus to understand what the person who told you is trying to accomplish and intelligently cooperate with them to help them?

What is the consistent message through all scripture given by the prophets? The truth about God Himself and our sickly state in need of His healing!

And how does God bring us to healing, i.e. salvation? John 8:32 – revealing truth in ways we understand, Isaiah 1:18 – by reasoning with us to get us to understand the truth and Romans 14:5, Ephesians 4:15 by presenting truth in love and leaving us free.

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? What about the idea today that the US will take away individual liberties? Have you ever shared that with someone who thought you were daft?

## WEDNESDAY

The Messiah in prophecy – are there Bible prophecy that predicted the coming of Jesus – name some?

Why did the Jews miss it the way they did?

What kind of god were they looking for? Might, power to inflict punishment on the Romans and use force to set the Jews free- what kind of god are Christians looking for to come back? One who will use might and power to inflict punishment on the wicked and use force to set us free?

Any dangers here?

What is the mark of the beast system noted for? Coercion, no one can buy or sell save him who has the mark of the beast – but God’s government is the government of freedom, truth and love – no coercive elements in God’s government!

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

Do you hear salvation by faith and salvation by trust the same or differently?

## THURSDAY

When you think of the second coming what prophecies come to mind? Discuss the list on the bottom of Thursday’s lesson – any missing?

As it was in the day’s of Sodom – and how was it? Ezekiel 16:49 and as it was in the days of Noah and how was it? Violence all the time.

And what else?

Have we taken the gospel to the world as a witness to all nations – what is the gospel? The Good News about what? What did the war in heaven start over? What will be the message to lighten the world for Christ’s coming? The truth about His character of love!

## FRIDAY

Questions 2 and 3 read and discuss.



## 2007 Q2 Lesson 4 The Bible is Reliable

How many believe the Bible is reliable? Why?

What does it mean to be reliable? Does that mean it is inerrant? Does it mean it is infallible?

Are there any passages from the Bible which trouble you?

*DT 14:22 Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. 23 Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always. 24 But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the LORD your God and cannot carry your tithe (because the place where the LORD will choose to put his Name is so far away), 25 then exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the LORD your God will choose. 26 Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice.*

Is the Scripture reliable here? Should we follow this instruction and use our tithe to buy fermented wine and celebrate in church each week?

How do you handle the examples of mistakes or conflicts in the Bible?

When two people witness the same event and write down their recollection and report of what they witnessed, will their report match in every detail? If it does what does that indicate? They fabricated the stories – why?

People observe events from different vantage points and because of this will emphasize different aspects or even describe different experiences. The old analogy of the blind men and the elephant – but from my life experience I remember seeing a funny glow or light on a particular wall in our home and asking Christie to look at it and what did she think it was – she said she didn't know what I was talking about and for a few seconds we went back and forth trying to convince the other then I went over and picked Christie up so she could see from my perspective and then she could see it. When I stooped to her level I could no longer see it.

When we find the gospel writers describing events and varying on some details this only adds to the credibility and reliability of the Bible.

What is the Bible infallible about? The truth about God that it reveals WHEN RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD.

What are essential principles of Bible study in order to get the right picture of God in addition to studying with the enlightenment of the HS? Taking all 66 books together – not leaving anything out. No matter how difficult a certain passage we must include it in our understanding and then all the passages must be blended together into a cohesive whole. AND what does the Bible actually say, what does it mean – what is the context in which it was said.

I had someone recently ask me if the Bible was reliable for treating patients with mental illness – any thoughts?

Read the key thought – thoughts?

What is another word for trust – faith – and what is the question rightly suggesting our trust and faith are based on? Evidence!

What evidence has the Bible given us that increases our trust/faith in God?

- Answers questions of origins
- Reveals the true character of God
- Reveals the origins of pain, suffering and death
- Reveals God remedy and healing solution

Read memory text – thoughts?

What does it mean to be sanctified? How does truth sanctify? What is it that infects and destroys our minds? Lies and lies about what? How can a lie change us? Any examples?

Then how does the truth heal?

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}

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What is the plan of salvation? I heard on Easter Sunday on a Christian radio station that Christ came to earth to be “punished for our sins, for your sins and my sins” and if we accept Him and the price He paid we can be saved.

Read second paragraph “Many have been his...” thoughts? Is higher criticism the only method to undermine confidence in the scriptures? What is another method – maybe even more effective and common than higher criticism?

How about when we tell people that the Bible teaches things that are non-sense – when we misrepresent God with teachings we claim come from the Bible? When we use the Bible as a reason to abuse others, northern Ireland and the protestant and catholic conflicts, Christians who shoot abortions doctors, Christians who attack homosexuals, or want to legislate their values upon everyone- if they claim all this comes from the Bible, will the Bible be valued or devalued by those who have never read it?

Just as Satan’s strategy has been to misrepresent God so people won’t trust Him, so too, has Satan sought to misrepresent the teachings of the Bible so people won’t trust it and the truths revealed there.

Read last two paragraphs – thoughts? First, is it sensible to believe some document because the document itself tells us it is reliable? No! What about the idea that we have reasons to believe the Bible but in the end we don’t go by the reasons we go by faith?

## MONDAY

Go around the room and read one paragraph each through the day- everyone familiar with these historical facts?

## TUESDAY

How did the Bible as we know it come to be? The lesson tells how the Bible is accurate because of the manuscripts we have found and also because of the outside sources that quote it. Read last paragraph, thoughts?

I was in Philadelphia two weeks ago, and someone mentioned the Da Vinci Code and the idea that Mary Magdala was not a prostitute but was one of Jesus disciples and wrote one of the gospels along with several other of Christ's disciples but that the church wanted to denigrate women so they chose to misrepresent Mary as a prostitute and leave out the other gospels so that women would be controlled and dominated by men. Thoughts?

Does it make Christ better or worse for Mary to have been a prostitute? Better, why? What did Christ reveal in His treatment of Mary? His grace, goodness, and that sinful acts are not the focus of God but the condition of the heart and Christ came to heal and restore us all. Also, that God does not stand toward the sinner as the one who condemns.

The Da Vinci Code is a subtle attack because on the surface it looks like a good thing in that it suggests Jesus valued women more than the church and the church attacked women to repress them. But in actuality it undermines God's grace in that it would move Christ away from associating with the "worst" of sinners and teaches that Christ was not as gracious and loving and forgiving as He really was!

## WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY

The resurrection – can the Bible be trusted on its report regarding the resurrection? Why?

Do we have understanding from science that makes the idea of a resurrection less and less difficult to understand?

If we understand it, does that make it less important? Would it undermine our confidence in God?

## FRIDAY

Question 2 read and discuss

**2007 Q2 Lesson 5      When the Rocks Cry Out**

Notes are not available

## 2007 Q2 Lesson 6 The Bible and Science

When you hear the idea of Bible and science what comes to mind?

Read key thought? Any thoughts? What factors lead to the Bible and science being seen in opposition?

In the March 31 2007 issue of New Scientist, they interviewed Matthew Chapman who is the great-great-grandson of Charles Darwin. Mr. Chapman came to the US and sat through the court trials in Dover PA regarding intelligent design. He was interviewed on his thoughts and in one of his responses he said:

“As a Brit, but even more as a rationalist, where reason would dictate one thing and faith another, I find American attitudes completely strange. That said, I find it more peculiar that people still believe in astrology than that they still believe in creationism.” And later, “The most disturbing element was how the intelligent design crowd, many of whom I liked, would intellectually and morally contort themselves to cling to ideas one felt even they did not quite believe. The scientists among them seemed to have taken hold of small shards of the scientific whole that no one fully understands yet, and created a shield against reality.”

What do you think about the assertion that reason dictates one thing and faith another? Is faith, like what the little boy said, “believing what you know ain’t so”?

What is the scientific method? What principles are used in science? Should we use different principles with our faith? How do we use scientific methods in our religion?

What is the war between Christ and Satan over? What weapons are used? Where is the battle’s primary battleground?

It is a war of ideas fought in the mind- and who has the truth? And what methods work best to discover the truth? The scientific methods!

What would EGW say about this approach?

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}

Does this sound scientific? How would you apply this in your Christian experience?

What are the keys to this statement? A mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previous established opinions or habits. Do you think the so called rationalists and scientists who espouse evolutionary theory do this? Have you ever heard them say, well we need to leave open the possibility of creation – we have discovered a fossil, but we don’t know with certainty what it means – we only have theories?

### SUNDAY

In Sunday’s lesson they suggest there is a new term in science called anthropic coincidence to describe all the variety of factors that are needed to come together in order for human life to exist and the odds of that happening accidentally being very remote. Does this sound an awful lot like intelligent design?

In the teacher's quarterly it states that both the Bible and science agree that there are billions of stars – and asks what else do the Bible and science agree upon?

### WEDNESDAY

Read Proverbs 17:22 and top section – any other texts come to mind? Any questions or thoughts from the class about this topic?

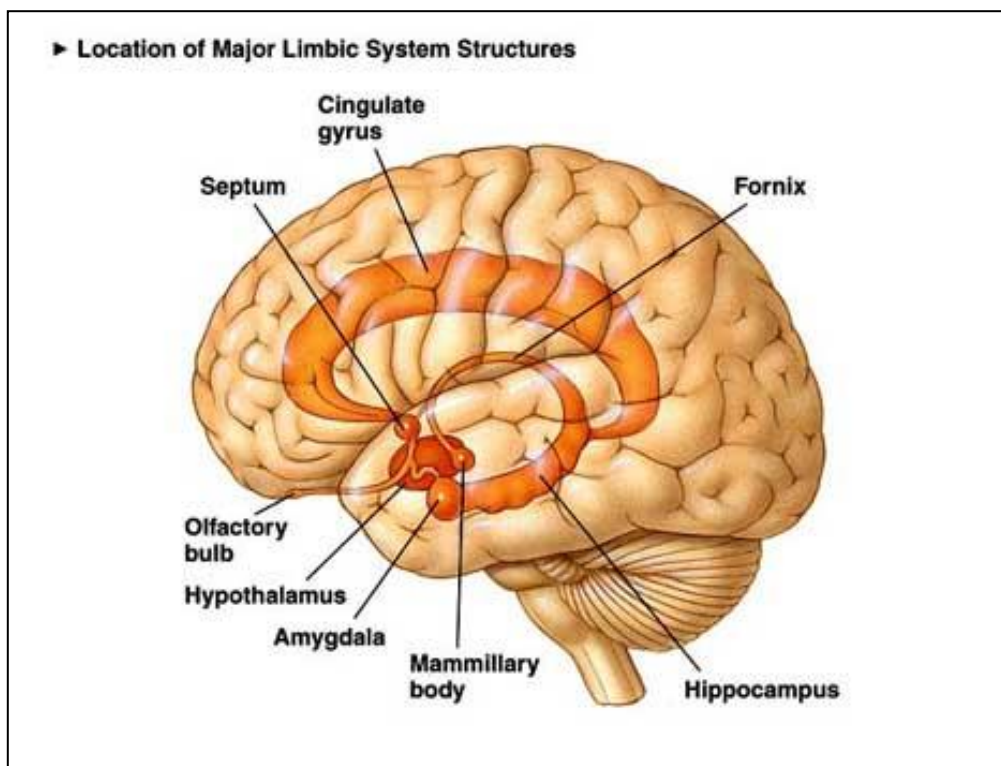
*PR 17:22 A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*

*PR 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.*

*PR 3:8 This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.*

*PR 14:30 A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.*

*PR 15:30 A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.*



Review with class the neurobiology of depression and the impact of our thinking on the body.

### MONDAY

Read middle paragraph begins “Ptolemy...” Thoughts?

Read bottom pink – thoughts? Is science, when rightly understood, ever in conflict with the Bible? Then do we have to worry about putting too much stock in science? Is the problem with science our understanding of science?

Read second EGW quote from Friday – thoughts?

In Teachers' Quarterly on page 73 it states, “Some believe that scientific inquiry should be informed by the Word of God, and that when our observations conflict with the Bible, we should discard them. Is this compatible with the idea of science as an unbiased search for truth?”



When the Bible and science conflict do we need to discard the Bible or science or neither? Or instead reexamine our understanding of both the science and the Bible? Might it be that sometimes our understanding of the Bible is incorrect?

Can you think of any areas where the Bible and science appear to disagree?

Age of the earth – thoughts?

TQ 73 asks, “SDA’s view the Sabbath as a memorial to Creation and partially attribute the pervasiveness of evolutionary theory to the disregard of the seventh-day Sabbath. Do you think this is true?”

Did those who put Christ on the cross dispute the Sabbath? Did they teach evolution? Did their remembering of the Sabbath and a Creator God help them make the right choice for their life? What else is needed? The truth about the character of our creator God! And how does the Sabbath tell us this?

The Sabbath was created in the context of a war over God’s character, He just finishes displaying incredible power to create new intelligent life, but rather than force every knee in the universe to bow, God said, “You have heard the allegations, you have seen the evidence, now universe, take 24 hours aside and think for yourself, no pressure, no coercion, I rest my case.” What does it say about God that in the context of an assault on His authority to rule, rather than use force He created a day specifically for freedom to think! The fact the Sabbath exists is a weekly evidence of the true character of God – love and freedom!

TQ 73 states, “Many creationists attribute the immorality, amorality, and despair of modern life to the acceptance of evolutionary teachings that reduce humankind to the level of animals. Is this true?”

If this is so then why does Norway, with greater than 95% of its population believing in evolution and rejecting God, have the lowest crime and one of the best standards of living in the world? Why does the US with high belief in God have such problems with violence and immorality? Why does Afghanistan and Iraq, with nearly 100% of people who believe in God have such abuses of human rights? Why did we see such atrocities in Rwanda between Christians and even many SDAs?

## THURSDAY

Science and the flood – any thoughts?

Bottom question – read and discuss –

The word of God, like the character of its Author, presents mysteries that can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. But God has given in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine authority. His own existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. True, He has not removed the possibility of doubt; faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration; those who wish to doubt have opportunity; but those who desire to know the truth find ample ground for faith. {Ed 169.2}

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? How do you prove God’s word to be true? By experience and actually taking and applying its principles –

The Law of Liberty – the Law of Love, the circle of giving and beneficence etc.

## 2007 Q2 Lesson 7 The Word in Our Lives

Any thoughts about the picture? The headless Bibleman?

### SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts? Does this text refer to the Words that proceed from the mouth of God, i.e. God speaks and it exists? The Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us? The Bible? Or all three?

Read last paragraph “What is it about...” Thoughts? Does the study of the Bible always change lives for the better? Christ said, “you search the scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life, but these are they that teach of me.” and He said, “You search the world to find a convert and when you do you make him twice the son of hell as he was before.” Do you think their converts were taught to study the Bible?

How can study of the Bible actually make someone worse? How can we study the Bible and experience Godly transformation? The Pharisees were studying to find some secret to benefit themselves – eternal life. But Christ’s followers study to learn of God, to find God!

### SUNDAY

In the fourth paragraph it states, “Scripture pours out a flood of light on us, pushing back spiritual darkness and revealing to the world the truth about a loving, powerful God who seeks to transform the lives of all who come to Him in faith.” Thoughts?

Does God seek to transform only the lives of those who come to Him in faith? Or while we were yet sinners Christ died for us? Is God seeking to transform the lives of those who are His worst enemies? How does God seek to bring about this change? What are God’s methods for healing and transforming us?

*John 8:32 you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.*

How does the truth set free? Free from what?

*Ephesians 4 we present the truth in love*

*Romans 14 Every person is to be fully persuaded in their own mind*

*Isaiah 1:18 come let us reason together*

What are God’s methods – present the truth in love and leave us free? Why is this method so important?

What does God want for us and from us? He wants us to experience the full joy of living like He lives, the full joy of living lives of pure love! Can love exist without freedom? Can love be generated by force, coercion, intimidation or might?

Let’s keep these principles in mind as we look at the rest of the lesson which asks us to apply God’s Word to our lives.

### TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, thoughts? Does God’s Word give us principles to live by? YES! Do principles give us rules to apply exactly the same in every circumstance or are we suppose to apply the principle differently depending on the circumstance?

Does God's Word teach us the principle of loving others? Yes, would this principle be the basis of Christ's statement to turn the other cheek if someone strikes you? What if your 5 year old hits his parent in anger, does the loving parent turn the other cheek and let the child go on hitting the parent whenever he wanted? Is love the motivator in both places? Do actions change depending on the situation?

Does the Bible give us explicit directions in how to behave and what choice to make in every circumstance?

## WEDNESDAY

As we discuss some of the issues in Wednesday's lesson, let's keep in mind God's principles of presenting the truth in love and leaving other's free.

"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 411.2}

Read second example "A young woman..." Thoughts?

So, should we be able to objectively examine both sides of this issue?

Can someone give me a Bible verse that explicitly and directly states that abortion is wrong?

"Thou shall not murder" Does this apply? Would one individual killing another individual with a sword violate this? What about Samuel hacking up king Agag? Did Samuel violate the commandment not to murder? What about the children of Israel killing every man woman, child and baby as they conquered numerous cities? Does this mean there are some circumstances in which killing another human is not a violation of the commandment? What about stoning someone for violations of the law?

Does the commandment necessarily apply to abortion?

*Exodus 21:22-25 "If some men are fighting and hurt a pregnant woman so that she loses her child, but she is not injured in any other way, the one who hurt her is to be fined whatever amount the woman's husband demands, subject to the approval of the judges. But if the woman herself is injured, the punishment shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise." GNT*

*Exodus 21:22-25 "When there's a fight and in the fight a pregnant woman is hit so that she miscarries but is not otherwise hurt, the one responsible has to pay whatever the husband demands in compensation. But if there is further damage, then you must give life for life—eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise." The Message*

*Exodus 21:22-25 "When people who are fighting injure a pregnant woman so that there is a miscarriage, and yet no further harm follows, the one responsible shall be fined what the woman's husband demands, paying as much as the judges determine. If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." NRSV*

Thoughts? Other versions say give birth prematurely, or baby come out or lose her fruit. Do you think some of the people translating these Bible versions are trying to deceive? Or do you think there is an honest difference of opinion among these very dedicated Christian scholars?

Do you think the Bible gives a command explicitly clear on this issue?

So how do we answer the question “What saith the Word of God?”

Read fourth example, “A person you are witnessing...” Thoughts? The question is not what you would do but what does the Bible say?

*“And the pig, though it has a split hoof completely divided, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.” Leviticus 11:7,8*

*“The pig is also unclean; although it has a split hoof, it does not chew the cud. You are not to eat their meat or touch their carcasses.” Dt 14:8*

*ISA 66:15 See, the LORD is coming with fire, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.*

*ISA 66:16 For with fire and with his sword the LORD will execute judgment upon all men, and many will be those slain by the LORD.*

*ISA 66:17 “Those who consecrate and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following the one in the midst of those who eat the flesh of pigs and rats and other abominable things--they will meet their end together,” declares the LORD.*

Is the Bible clear we are not to eat pork?

*MT 15:10 Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. 11 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.’”*

*MK 7:14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a man can make him ‘unclean’ by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him ‘unclean.’”*

*MK 7:17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 18 “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him ‘unclean’? 19 For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods “clean.”)*

*MK 7:20 He went on: “What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’ 21 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.’”*

Does eating pork make someone a child molester? Does eating pork make someone an embezzler? Does eating pork make someone hate God? Does eating pork make someone a liar? Does eating pork undermine one’s physical health? In all circumstances?

Remember Uruguay Soccer team whose airplane crashed in the Andes mountains October 12, 1972? They were stranded on a glacier at over 12,000 feet for 72 days. What did they eat? Why did they eat it? Did eating what they ate condemn them to eternal loss and ruin? Was it sin for them to eat what they did?

In regard to eating the pork what is the principle involved? Keeping the Spirit Temple healthy to be more in tune with God and more useful in His cause. In regard to what is happening when you are invited to someone’s house, what is the principle? Loving others as God loves you, you are witnessing to others about God; Showing them the love of God in action – could it mean that in one circumstance you might be willing to sacrifice yourself to reach someone else and eat the pork?

When God came down from heaven to meet with Abraham what did Abraham do? Fix him meat – what did God do? Eat it – do you think meat was on God’s heavenly diet?

But, if you believed it was sinful and disobedient to God to eat the pork, how could you handle this situation?

Read last example – thoughts? Does God’s word give a clear direction in such circumstances?

#### THURSDAY

Read the last two paragraphs – thoughts? How should the Bible impact on governmental policy making? Is it the role of the government to study the Bible and determine what God wants and pass laws according to the Bible?

Or is the role of the government to provide an atmosphere where individuals are free to pursue God according to their own conscience, without infringing on the right of others to do the same?

#### FRIDAY

Question 1 – read and discuss, what is the central focus of Bible study supposed to be? Is the Bible a code book for us to follow or a love letter written to reveal God to us?

## 2007 Q2 Lesson 8 Revelation of Hope

What is hope?

- to cherish a desire with anticipation *intransitive verb*
- to desire with expectation of obtainment *transitive verb*
- to expect with confidence *transitive verb*

Which of these apply to the Christian hope?

What do we hope for?

What is the basis of our hope?

How does the Bible enhance our hope?

Does hope imply in a certain sense a lack of confidence or certainty?

If a loving parent tells a child that the parent will cook them their favorite supper tonight, does the child “hope” they will have that meal when they get home from school? Or does the child hope if they don’t know?

Does hope go away with knowledge, understanding, and faith? Or does our hope transition from an intransitive hope to a transitive hope?

We long for the day of His appearing with confidence of obtainment, with certainty, this is the hope of a believer. But the hope of a non-believer is to simply hope there is something better, not really expecting something better.

For me then expect connotes more confidence than hope, does anyone have a better word to express hope that has confidence?

I expect Jesus to come – I have confidence it will happen

I hope Jesus will come in my lifetime – I am uncertain about that

### SUNDAY

Read memory text at top – what passages from Scripture bring you hope?

Do the Scriptures bring hope to everyone that reads them? If they don’t why might the Scriptures not bring hope?

Read first paragraph and bottom pink– thoughts? What do you think it means “die the death we should die”? How is this true? How is this not true?

- |                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Death of Christ            | Death of Wicked                |
| • Separation from Father     | Revelation of Father           |
| • Longing for Father’s face  | Hiding from Father’s face      |
| • Trusting Father            | Distrusting Father             |
| • Knowing Father’s Character | Not knowing Father’s character |
| • Sense of Father’s favor    | No sense of Father’s favor     |
| • Love overcame selfishness  | Consumed by selfishness        |
| • Dead less than 72 hours    | Die eternally                  |
| • Died victoriously          | Die loser                      |



What does it mean “bore in Himself the penalty for our sins”? What is the penalty for sin? Is it externally imposed or is it inherent? How did Christ bear it?

Was Christ’s suffering and death for us only?

Through the plan of salvation, a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {ST, December 22, 1914 par. 4}

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}

*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. Colossians 1:19,20*

What difference does it make to realize that the unfallen angels and worlds needed the cross of Christ? Does it give you greater confidence in your hope?

## MONDAY

Title of today’s lesson – Hope of Forgiveness – thoughts about this title?

Do we hope with anxiety and uncertainty whether we will be forgiven? Or do we have confidence we are forgiven?

Story of man who had MI and heart stopped several times and each time was defibbed and re-started. Each time he awoke he thought, “I hope there isn’t some sin that I have forgotten to confess that I haven’t gotten forgiveness for that will keep me out of heaven.”

Read bottom paragraph – what does it mean that through Jesus we have forgiveness? Does it mean that if Jesus didn’t die that the Father would be unforgiving?

If you don’t claim His promises of forgiveness yourself is God then unforgiving?

What does it mean He removes our sins as far as east is from west? From history? From memory? From record books in heaven? OR from the character of His people?

In the TQ on page 93 it states, “Review what God has done throughout history to provide hope and assurance. Contrast this with the results of human efforts. What keeps us from choosing what God offers? Since our situation is beyond human repair, what do you think it will take for us to learn to rely on the hope God offers?”

Thoughts about this quote? What keeps us from choosing God? Lies about God that impair our ability to trust Him. Can anyone think of any that troubled you sometime in your life?

What will it take? The truth about God which restores trust!

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Do we only have hope that God will never cast us away or can we have more than hope? Does God ever cast us away?

*But your iniquities have separated you from your God;  
your sins have hidden his face from you,  
so that he will not hear. Isaiah 59:2*

Is there a difference between casting away and letting sadly letting go?

*My people are determined to turn from me.  
Even if they call to the Most High,  
he will by no means exalt them.*

*How can I give you up, Ephraim?  
How can I hand you over, Israel?  
How can I treat you like Admah?  
How can I make you like Zeboiim?*

*My heart is changed within me;  
all my compassion is aroused.  
I will not carry out my fierce anger,  
nor will I turn and devastate Ephraim.  
For I am God, and not man—  
the Holy One among you.  
I will not come in wrath. Hosea 11:7-9*

What does this mean? The children of Israel were turning away from God, rejecting God, hardening their hearts against God. And God, rather than simply ignoring the problem intervened in a variety of ways, prophets, miracles, signs, and then threatenings – but when all these interventions failed to get through to the people and they were “determined to turn” away from God, God makes it clear His true character – that of compassion and that He will not actually act in angry and wrathful ways.

Why doesn't God have to? Because the penalty to sin is inherent.

Who is Jesus, as our Mediator “defending” us against? Where is Jesus mediating?

Is the Great High Priest ministering in His Temple? Yes, where is His Temple? What does the NT say? We are the Temple of the Spirit – Christ is working in our hearts and minds, interceding in us to cleanse us and restore love in our hearts and minds so that we can be in unity with Him and His Father!

Read second paragraph – thoughts?

In order to treat a problem it must be properly diagnosed so an effective remedy or treatment can be applied. What is the problem with sin? Why is sin bad? How would you diagnose it and then what do you see as God's remedy?

## WEDNESDAY

Read memory text – thoughts? Is this a promise from God? A guarantee that if righteous you'll never go hungry? Or is it the honest reflections of the writer of the text?

Have the righteous ever gone hungry? Have the righteous ever suffered? Then what does this text mean?

In a spiritual sense – do the righteous ever get forsaken or ever have to beg for spiritual bread?

Christ is the bread of life, the manna that came down from heaven, did we have to beg for Him or did He come to us while we were yet sinners? Is this a better application?

Why or why not?

What can happen to those who take these texts literally rather than seeing the spiritual application? After WWII many Jews gave up a belief in God because they claimed texts like this yet millions were killed in the gas chambers, if they would have seen this as pertaining to God's eternal kingdom of love which manifests through Christ would they have been able to handle it better?

In TQ page 97 it states, "In John 10:10 Jesus says, 'I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly.' How does accepting God's forgiveness make abundant, hopeful life possible?"

Thoughts? Is accepting forgiveness from God all that is necessary to experience God's abundant life? What else is necessary? Understanding and applying the truth – what truth? The truth about God and His kingdom of love, of getting into harmony with His original design for mankind and living in harmony with the principles life was based upon.

## THURSDAY

First paragraph read – thoughts, consider the analogy of a computer and a server and how the data on the computer is backed up on the server so even if the computer is destroyed all the information is safe. Our unique identities are backed up on the heavenly server (record books) so if we die we are preserved with Christ:

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}

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

Are we living Christlike lives only for the reward or the threat of punishment? If there was no reward can you think of a better way to live?

## FRIDAY

Question 1 read and discuss

## 2007 Q2 Lesson 9      The Bible and Health

Read Sabbath's lesson – thoughts?

Why is it a moral matter to care for the body? Why is it incumbent upon Christians to take care of their bodies?

Isn't it true that no matter how vigorous the health principles you practice that with time the body wears out and the organs fail and death comes? Then what difference does it make? Didn't Jesus say don't be afraid of him who can destroy the body but he who can destroy the body and soul? So, doesn't this mean we shouldn't worry about habits that destroy the body?

NO! Why is it important? Because the body and the mind are linked. You cannot affect the body without affecting the mind and vice versa. As we undermine the physical health we weaken the mental health and make it harder to achieve the enlightenment of mind that we might otherwise have received. Additionally, indulgence of appetites have impact on more than body, they affect character and thus victory over appetites have not just physical benefit but spiritual benefit as the higher faculties are strengthened and the base passions are weakened.

### SUNDAY

*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 compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent service. Darby*

*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 call upon you, therefore, brethren, through the compassions of God, to present your bodies a sacrifice—living, sanctified, acceptable to God—your intelligent service; Young's Literal Translation*

Thoughts about this passage? First notice that the be spiritual is to be intellectual and reasonable – God wants us to do that which is understandable, reasonable, intelligent because we have been convinced it is right to do. Why is it reasonable and intelligent to present our bodies as living sacrifices to God? What does this mean?

What is the law upon which all life in the universe is designed to operate? Love – can the class give me some examples of how this law is the foundation of life? With this in mind, what does it mean to surrender ourselves as living sacrifices to God? Would it mean to be conduits of His love, to receive His love, abilities, wisdom, gifts etc and freely give all we receive to benefit others? Is this something reasonable and intelligent to do? Why?

Below are reviews of a book: **Altruism and Health**, Perspectives from Empirical Research, Edited by Stephen G. Post

### Description

We're all quite familiar with the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge, who was miserable in his selfishness, but later became happy when he began helping others. Ebenezer's story is compelling, but is it true that helping others is good for the giver? Although numerous studies have demonstrated that people experience health benefits when treated kindly and compassionately, do those who provide love to others also experience health benefits? In other words, is it at least as good to give as to receive? Does virtue actually have its own rewards?

To answer these questions, *Altruism and Health* brings research in biology, psychiatry, psychology, gerontology, epidemiology, and public health. Much of this research shows that unselfish individuals will find life to be more meaningful, will usually be happier than their selfish counterparts, and will often experience better mental health. Some of this research also finds that unselfish individuals have reduced mortality rates and better physical

## Reviews

“Do people who act generously and have kindly emotions reap benefits to themselves? Does this happen even though gaining returns does not motivate their altruistic feelings and behaviors? The path breaking essays in this book answer these questions, with appropriate qualifications, in the affirmative. Better psychological and physical health and a longer life are the main fruits that accrue to the altruistic person. This is true for youth, adults, and the elderly, as well as for those who are already ill. This book inaugurates a new science of giving. It uncovers the realities behind the ancient truth that it is more blessed to give than receive. It is a marvelous resource for health care providers, educators, social scientists, and the inquiring general reader.”--Don Browning, Alexander Campbell Professor of Religious Ethics and the Social Sciences, University of Chicago, Emeritus

“It is hard to imagine a phenotype of greater importance to the future of humanity than that of the dynamic interplay, within various populations, of altruism and narcissism. Stephen Post should be congratulated for bringing together experts on that subject from an amazing diversity of disciplines--from the neuroendocrinology of species of voles to the care of HIV/AIDS patients. The overall picture that emerges is that it is not merely better to give than to receive from a moral point of view; it may also be a better strategy for the maintenance of health and well being for the altruistic giver and, given certain ecologies, may perhaps enhance the reproductive fitness of a population.” --George M. Martin, Professor of Pathology Emeritus, Director Emeritus, Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center, University of Washington

“This collection sheds important light on the relationship between altruistic love and physical and emotional healing. *Altruism and Health* is a welcome and original addition to the literature. It is clearly written and accessible to both serious students of the effects of altruism, love, and healing, and to the general public. It will be welcomed by not only the general reader, but also by ministers, counselors, and other professional healers. It is certain to become a valuable reference work. I highly recommend it.” --Samuel P. Oliner, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, Humboldt State University, and Director, Altruistic Personality and Prosocial Behavior Institute

“Socrates claimed famously that one never loses by doing the right thing. Stephen Post and his contributors claim, a little less boldly, that at least the generous will, probably, stay healthy--and, improving on Socrates, they support this claim with careful empirical science, impressive for its comprehensive detail. Here ethics and religion join science and enjoin us to be more caring and healthy. A seminal work, with an urgent message.”--Holmes Rolston, III, University Distinguished Professor and Professor of Philosophy, Colorado State University.

Romans 14:7 and Ephesians 5:29 have to do with relationships –that no one lives in isolation and that in marriage we are unified and no one hates his own body – how are relationships and marriage related to health?

What reason is given in the Bible for the creation of Eve? It is not good for man to be alone I will make a helpmeet for him. What does this mean? Could Adam experience the fullness of Godlike

love without someone for him to serve and give to? Eve was not created with the primary purpose of Adam having someone who would do what Adam wanted, but as a being for Adam to serve, for Adam to give of himself for in order for Adam to experience the fullness of godly love!

Is there a promise in the Bible for long life based on a relationship command? 5<sup>th</sup> commandment? What does this mean? Does it mean God will use His power to miraculously give long life to those who honor their parents but God will use His power to cut short the life of those who dishonor their parents? Or is it a reality of the way God designed us to function as relational beings?

Our first relationships, the prime relationship, the template relationships upon which other relationships are built are the relationships we have with our parents. Now if those relationships are dysfunctional, if we have hostility, anger, resentment, bitterness etc. in our hearts toward our parents, if we exploit and demean our parents, what kind of relationships will we likely have with others? And if we go through life, not only with the unresolved tensions of our parental relationships eating at us, but also continuing to have conflict and stress in new relationships – what will happen? A cascade of continual stress hormones within the body and unhealthy lifestyle choices that will wear out the life force and we will die early. Conversely, when love flows freely, when we are at peace with self and others then the stress hormones are not firing all the time and we have better health and live longer.

The two passages in the lesson from Corinthians are about being the Temple of the HS, what do you think this means? How are we supposed to be the temple? What does it mean for the HS to dwell in us? Is this just individually or corporately or both? How does the Spirit's presence change us and affect us as individuals and as a group? Does this have health benefits?

## MONDAY

Read top section – thoughts? This is absolutely right – the plan of salvation is the plan of healing and restoration.

Read second paragraph “Healing and restoration...” Thoughts? Salvation “may” include healing and restoration or DOES include healing and restoration? Can we be saved without being healed? And if we are healed, as God designs aren't we then saved?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

What are the 9 natural remedies? And why are they important, how do they benefit us and how can we apply them?

1. Exercise
2. Fresh air
3. Sunshine
4. Rest
5. Water
6. Abstemiousness (self-control or temperance)
7. Nutritious Food
8. Trust in God
9. Beneficence



## 1. How does Exercise benefit us?

Improved cardiovascular health, lowers bad cholesterol, raises good cholesterol, better glucose metabolism and reduced risk of DM, reduced body fat, better blood pressure, stronger muscles and bones, stronger heart muscle. In the brain, better capillary blood flow so better oxygenation, increased endorphins, enkephalins, increased neurotrophic factors. Improved ability to think clearly, better ability to organize thoughts. All of which leads to clearer mind so better ability to understand God, His character and methods and put His plan into action

## 2. Fresh air

Brings oxygen which the body and brain need to function, removes CO<sub>2</sub> which is toxic if too high. Fresh air is not filled with pollutants and germs which can damage the body and undermine the functioning of the brain. This would exclude air filled with tobacco or marijuana smoke etc.

## 3. Sunshine

Vitamin D conversion, UV radiation antibacterial properties, activates immune response and reduces cancer risk as well as improve immune response to protect against infection and help repair damaged skin, reduces seasonal depression through various brain hormones.

### SUN-SEEKING IMMUNE CELLS RISE UP TO FIGHT SKIN CANCER

03 February 2007

A BLAST of sunshine doesn't just ward off depression. It could also help fight skin cancer and other skin diseases by attracting immune cells to the skin surface.

Skin produces the inactive form of vitamin D<sub>3</sub> in response to sun exposure. Now Eugene Butcher of Stanford University in California and his colleagues have shown that immune cells in the skin known as dendritic cells convert the inactive vitamin D<sub>3</sub> into its active form.

The active form then causes T-cells - immune cells that destroy damaged and infected cells, and regulate other immune cells - to change the receptors on their surfaces to enable them to migrate to the upper layers of the skin. Here they can help repair sun-induced damage and fight off pathogens (*Nature Immunology*, DOI: 10.1038/ni1433).

"Sunshine is good for you, as long as it's not too much," says team member Hekla Sigmundsdottir. She says the finding may help explain the success of vitamin D<sub>3</sub> skin creams for conditions like psoriasis: the creams attract T-cells to the skin, where they can fight inflammation.

The finding also adds to a growing body of evidence that dendritic cells, which live in tissues exposed to the external environment, such as those in the skin and nose, act as traffic controllers for the immune system, interpreting local conditions and directing T-cells to where they are needed.

From issue 2589 of New Scientist magazine, 03 February 2007, page 16

## 4. Rest

This refers to what kind of rest? Sleep AND Sabbath rest – rest for the body in sleep and rest for the mind and soul in God.

Lack of sleep results in increased risk of accidents, impaired cognition, higher stress hormones, impaired memory efficiency, and impaired ability to think clearly in emotionally laden situations. It raises risk of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke.

Lack of Sabbath rest results in increased anxiety, worry, tension, emotional and mental exhaustion with subsequent cascade of physiological damage and increased risk of death. Does some-

one have to rest on the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath to get this benefit? No and Yes, any day in which someone takes off and lets go of worldly interests, rests mind and body will give benefit to health, but what does someone miss without the true appreciation of the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath? The evidence of what the Sabbath reveals about God and thus they miss greater insight, intimacy and understanding about God. And the more intimacy we have with God the greater our trust and the less our fear.

## **LACK OF SLEEP MAY IMPACT UPON MORAL JUDGMENT**

12:32 01 March 2007

NewScientist.com news service

Phil McKenna

Lack of sleep can affect people's moral judgement, a new study shows. The findings could have implications for people in positions of responsibility, whose decisions often have life or death consequences, such as overworked medical professionals and sleep-deprived soldiers.

William Killgore and colleagues at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Silver Spring, Maryland, US, set up an experiment with 26 healthy adults, all of whom were active-duty military personnel.

The participants were presented with a variety of hypothetical dilemmas, first when well rested and later, after staying awake for 53 hours. Situations included complex moral quandaries such as having to choose whether or not to let one person die in order to save the lives of several others. Less weighty dilemmas without a moral component were also included, such as "is it OK to substitute ingredients in a chocolate brownies recipe?"

While participants did not become less "moral" when sleep deprived, they did require two seconds longer on average to answer complex moral questions, Killgore says. However, questions without a moral component did not take longer to answer after participants were kept awake.

### **Asleep at the wheel**

The findings, along with previous brain-imaging studies, suggest that sleep deprivation has a particularly debilitating effect on decision-making processes that depend heavily on emotion. "When people go for more than 24 hours without sleep there are dramatic decreases in brain activity in the prefrontal cortex [the area of the brain involved in processing emotions and decision-making]," says Killgore. "It basically goes to sleep."

Sleep deprived participants also showed slight shifts in what they deemed appropriate actions compared to when they were well-rested. The changes were more pronounced in individuals who scored lower in "emotional intelligence" tests. Killgore believes that those with a lower emotional capacity to begin with may have less resistance to the effects of sleep deprivation.

Judy Illes at the Center for Biomedical Ethics at Stanford University, California, US, says the study's implications are profound. "Moral judgements are perhaps the most complex decisions that people have to make, decisions that are laden with personal, social, religious, and cultural values," she says.

"We don't want tired irritable soldiers making bad decisions that endanger themselves or others that are not a threat to them. Nor do we want health care providers who are unable to make quick medical decisions on behalf of their patients."

Both Illes and Killgore are quick to note that further research, including brain imaging, should be conducted as laboratory results do not always translate to real world situations.

Journal reference: *Sleep* (v 30, p345)

## WHILE YOU SLUMBER, YOUR BRAIN PUTS THE WORLD IN ORDER

22 February 2007

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Ever wondered why sleeping on a problem works? It seems that as well as strengthening our memories, sleep also helps us to extract themes and rules from the masses of information we soak up during the day.

Bob Stickgold from Harvard Medical School and his colleagues found that people were better able to recall lists of related words after a night's sleep than after the same time spent awake during the day. They also found it easier to recollect themes that the words had in common - forgetting around 25 per cent more themes after a waking rest. "We're not just stabilising memories during sleep," says Stickgold. "We're extracting the meaning."

In another experiment, people were shown cards with symbols followed by reports of various weather outcomes - so for example, diamond shapes might be followed by rain 70 per cent of the time. Twelve hours after training, people felt able to guess the weather from the symbols, though they struggled to voice their "rules". After sleeping, their predictions were 10 per cent better.

Sleep helps us extract rules from our experiences, says Stickgold. It's like knowing the difference between dogs and cats, he says, even if it is hard to explain. He presented the results last week at a meeting organised by The Science Network at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California.

From issue 2592 of New Scientist magazine, 22 February 2007, page 17

### 5. Water

Water internal and external. Regular bathing prevents infections, skin breakdown, improves circulation to the skin, improved immune response, lymph flow.

Drinking water keeps the organs hydrated, flushes waste products, prevents GI and renal problems and keeps the brain cells healthier.

### 6. Abstemiousness

Is a principle of avoiding all things harmful and using judiciously those things which are good

### 7. Nutritional Foods

- Omega 3 fatty acids
- Wild cold water fish, flax seeds, black walnuts
- Almonds, pecans, walnuts (Vitamin E and omega 3)
- Pomegranate juice (strong antioxidant, may remove amyloid protein from the brain and protect against Alzheimer's)
- Green leafy vegetables (B Vitamins)
- Fruits (antioxidants, vitamins)
- Grains
- Folate
- Avocado
- Orange juice
- Spinach

- Black beans
- Soy beans
- Asparagus

B vitamins (not B12)

- Beans (not soy)
- Cantaloupe
- Sweet potato
- Broccoli

B 12 – if vegan, take a supplement, otherwise dairy, eggs, meat

## 8. Trust in God

Trust in God, opens the heart to experience the indwelling of the HS, which brings love, removes fear, enlightens the mind, brings peace, overcomes our existential anxieties. This trust in God calms limbic system which reduces activation of the hypothalamic pituitary axis and therefore we avoid increase in glucocorticoids and monoamines (stress hormones), which cause increased blood pressure, heart rate, activation of sympathetic nervous system, activation of macrophages and cytokines which are toxic to insulin receptors in the body and glucocorticoid receptors in the brain, resulting in increased diabetes, weight gain, depression, memory problems, heart disease, stroke, elevated cholesterol and generally shortened life. So, trust in God results in greater emotional peace with greater physical health.

## 9. Beneficence/Altruism

We were created to be conduits of God's love. We are to receive love, truth, abilities etc. from God and freely give to others. As we give we receive. This is the very base code and principle for life itself. Harmony with this principle is the basis of true health and happiness.

## TUESDAY

Read middle paragraph "Through the miraculous..." thoughts?

Read bottom pink – thoughts? What do you think it means to "Pray for more faith to believe in those promises."?

Where does faith come from? Is our faith in the promises or the one who made the promises? And how do we get more faith in Him?

## WEDNESDAY

Bottom pink section read – thoughts?

How is diet related to character?

Does it matter what we eat? How do we deal with Christ's words in Mark 7?

*MK 7:14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.' "*

*MK 7:17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 18 "Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? 19 For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.")*

*MK 7:20 He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' 21 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.'"*

Does this mean Christ was saying everything is okay to eat? What does it mean okay? Is Christ saying everything is good to eat? Healthy to eat? Why not have a poison ivy salad? Does the Bible prohibit it? Why not eat it then? So what is Christ dealing with here? Why not eat Foxglove salad? Why not eat mushrooms? Hemlock?

Will eating any physical food change your character? What is Christ most concerned with? Character! But what will change your character?

When we allow our reason to be turned off, when we reject truth, when we don't think for ourselves and when we let powerful feelings make our decisions for us. The children of Israel were being fed Manna, they craved the flesh pots of Egypt, was their problem in eating meat or having no self control and not using their good judgment to choose that which was best for them?

Likewise today, the issue is one of being intelligent i.e. spiritual, using our judgment to reasonably choose that which is best and recover and maintain self control rather than letting appetites control.

## THURSDAY

Healthy relationships –

Healthy relationships require healthy people, the most powerful thing you can do is first ensure you are the healthiest most Christlike person you can be in all your actions and decisions in the way you act and relate to others.

Healthy relationships reduce stress and lengthen life.

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph –thoughts

Question one – read – thoughts? What have we traditionally left out of our health evangelism? God's plan to heal and restore the mind! The only purpose of physical health evangelism is to keep the brain and mind healthy to reconnect with God!

## 2007 Q2 Lesson 10 The Bible and Happiness

Read key thought – thoughts? What is happiness?

**a:** a state of well-being and contentment : **b:** a pleasurable or satisfying experience.

Do both of these apply to the Christian experience?

Should we ever be “content” in a world of sin? Do you think God is currently content? If you have a child on drugs can you feel truly content? Or does your love for that child cause your heart to ache for their healing and restoration?

Can you experience contentment in your own personal relationship with God, your own condition before God while at the same time being discontent with the condition of the world and those you love?

Is it important to make this distinction? Extremely, many of my patients fail to distinguish their individual personal sense of well being, contentment and peace with God from their love and concern for others. Thus when others they care for are not doing well their peace is gone. Jesus of course had contentment with Himself in relationship with God, but was not content with the condition of men’s hearts and He longed for their salvation.

### SUNDAY

Read memory text at the top and then the first set of bolded questions – thoughts?

What is included in the abundant life? It is common to preach in some circles that if you trust God and have real faith you will have great abundance of health, wealth and influence- is Jesus promising us greater of these things here and now? How do you know? Job, the blind man, Jesus prediction of how His followers would be treated...

Why is it important to know this reality? What happens if you believe it means temporal blessings and then financial loss occurs, health fails, loved ones die?

What then is the abundant life Jesus is speaking of? An abundance of love? An abundance of meaning and purpose? Is life more abundant when you are involved with something of significance? World changing? When your life really makes a difference?

Read first paragraph “At the foundation...” thoughts?

What is eternal life? What does this paragraph imply? Living for all time???? What does Jesus say eternal life is? John 17:3 knowing God, what difference does it make to see eternal life not as measured by time but as intimacy with God?

What about the second portion of the paragraph – if there was no eternal life (i.e. living for eternity) would whatever else Jesus does for us be in vain?

Have you ever loved, genuinely, deeply, and lost that person – maybe they died? Would you prefer you had never met that person and therefore never lost them? Or even though the pain of losing them was great you would still want them in your life because your life was enriched by them?

Isn’t our lives better knowing Jesus and having Him in our lives even if there were no eternal life (i.e. living forever)? If we don’t live eternally, would knowing God intimately be in vain for whatever years we have?

Is the only reason to get to know God for us to get something from Him i.e. eternal life. If you don’t give me eternal life God then spending time with you is in vain?



Did Jesus, on this earth, know God intimately? And was Jesus willing to give up His life forever? Do you think Jesus then thought His relationship with God was in vain?

## MONDAY

Read third paragraph “Study after study...” thoughts?

Can religion in one’s life increase levels of happiness? Does all religious experience do this? Can religion sometimes undermine happiness?

What makes the difference?

Can it depend on how we come to see and know God?

## RELIGION AND HAPPINESS

by Michael E. Nielsen, PhD

Many people expect religion to bring them happiness. Does this actually seem to be the case? Are religious people happier than nonreligious people? And if so, why might this be?

Researchers have been intrigued by such questions. Most studies have simply asked people how happy they are, although studies also may use scales that try to measure happiness more subtly than that. In general, researchers who have a large sample of people in their study tend to limit their measurement of happiness to just one or two questions, and researchers who have fewer numbers of people use several items or scales to measure happiness.

What do they find? In a nutshell, they find that people who are involved in religion also report greater levels of happiness than do those who are not religious. For example, one study involved over 160,000 people in Europe. Among weekly churchgoers, 85% reported being “very satisfied” with life, but this number reduced to 77% among those who never went to church (Inglehart, 1990). This kind of pattern is typical -- religious involvement is associated with modest increases in happiness.

Of course, church attendance is a simple way of measuring religiousness. When researchers have examined how religious experiences relate to happiness, they find the same sort of pattern. Religious experiences, particularly when they happened during prayer, has been the most powerful predictor of happiness in some studies. (For more information, see Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle, 1997). This relationship seems to be stronger among older people.

Why might this pattern hold? Psychologists tend to focus on three kinds of explanations:

**1. Social Support.** Religious involvement is a way of gaining social support. People in general are happier when they are around others who are supportive. Religious groups tend to offer this. This explanation is supported by the fact that the overall pattern of religious people being happier is more pronounced among people who are single, elderly, or in poor health. Related to this is the idea that religion helps people feel closer to God, who might also be viewed as personally supportive.

**2. Firm Beliefs.** Happiness and life satisfaction increase when we have a sense of where we are going and what is important in life. Of course, many people find this in religion. This might also be related to the rise of ‘strict’ or conservative churches, which offer more certitude than do more liberal churches.

**3. Religion Itself.** Religious experiences can be very positive. They offer a person a feeling of being in contact with God (also known as “transcendence”) and contact with others.

These are usually positive things and, of course, if someone is more involved in positive things, they will tend to feel happier than someone who is less-involved in those things.

These are three common ways of accounting for the link between religion and happiness. Unfortunately, most research in this area is correlational, meaning that we cannot claim that religion causes happiness. It could just as easily be the case that happy people also tend to be more religious, or some other factor may account for changes in both religiousness and happiness.

One important exception to this trend, however, is found in one of the most famous studies in the psychology of religion. In the days before research boards reviewed research proposals before the studies were conducted, Pahnke devised an experiment to induce people to have a religious experience. On a Good Friday, when they were to meditate in a chapel for 2.5 hours, twenty theology students were given either psilocybin or a placebo. The students who were given the psilocybin reported intense religious experiences, as you might imagine. Their levels of happiness also were significantly greater than the control group reported. But what is especially interesting is that these effects remained 6 months after the experiment, as the psilocybin group reported more “persistent and positive changes” in their attitudes to life than did the placebo group.

It appears, then, that intense religious experiences may lead to long-lasting increases in a person’s happiness. Of course, the experiences in Pahnke’s experiment were truly different from the kinds that the typical person encounters in their everyday life. Just how easily we might generalize from one type of experience to the other is a tricky and complex question. The more mundane, everyday experiences people have in their churches, synagogues or mosques are qualitatively different from the intense kinds of experiences that Pahnke’s study investigated.

All of this leads to the interesting question of whether there are occasions where religion is associated with less happiness. It appears that this may actually be the case. Remember, important differences may emerge when we measure variables in different ways. **One dimension of religiousness is known as mysticism, which is the term used to convey a sense of timelessness and a loss of sense of self. A study by Argyle and Hills (2000) found a modest negative correlation between mysticism and happiness, meaning that people who had mystical experiences also tended to report lower levels of happiness.** One possibility is that a mystical experience may result in a sense of being disconnected from others. The social support that occurs when involved in religious worship with other people is not part of the mystical experience, and this might be at least part of the reason for the negative correlation Argyle and Hills found. Certainly, this needs additional study.

**Another way that religion may be associated with decreases in happiness is when religion is involved in religious conflicts.** When family members or friends experience conflict over religion, the wounds can be deep and long-lasting. In such cases, religion’s effect on happiness is mixed. On the one hand, it causes conflict and dissension with loved ones, while on the other hand, it may generate a sense of certainty and yield associations with other like-minded people. This characterized many of the conflicts in research that I conducted a few years ago (Nielsen, 1998).

Whenever considering studies such as these, it is important to keep in mind that they report trends in groups of people; there are individual exceptions to these trends. Clearly, there is much remaining to be uncovered in this area of research. More studies using different methods will help us to understand when and how religion affects happiness.

In TQ page 117 it states:

“We are not our own, but God’s. We belong to God by creation (Gen 1:26,27) and by redemption (1 Cor. 6:19,20). A sense of God’s ownership of us is perhaps the first step we need to take to be stripped of any self-delusion that we can find our own happiness.” Thoughts?

How do you contrast this idea with Jesus statement in John 15:15? Does God consider us His slaves? Are we slaves or are we free beings?

Is it true that God is our Creator and Redeemer? Yes, does this mean He created us and redeemed us in order to own us? In order for us to be His property? Or is it God’s ideal that, even though He did create us and redeem us He intends for us to be free sentient beings?

*Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:34-36*

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Luke 4:18,19*

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Gal 5:1*

*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. Gal 5:13*

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Gal 5:22,23*

Thoughts? Are we free or are we slaves? Are we property or are we beings created by God who God Himself surrendered “ownership” of and set us truly free to be self governing and self directing?

Where does true happiness come from?

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. God desires from all his creatures the service of love,—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of his character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all he grants freedom of will, that they may render him voluntary service. {GC88 493.2}

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

What does it mean for “God to join together”? Does it mean it is God who decides who will marry who? Does it mean that all marriages were arranged by God? Does it mean all marriages are blessed by God? If a coven of Satan worshippers have a wedding and ask Satan to bless their marriage has God joined them together.

God has placed the husband at the head of the family, and until Sister D shall learn her place and duties as a wife, it will be best for him not to be connected with her in any way. The wife is to respect and obey, but if she utterly refuses to keep the marriage vow, she will be more and more the sport of Satan’s temptations; and if her husband consents to keep her by his side, to wear out his life, he will become discouraged and unfitted for the Lord’s ser-

vice. He is under no obligations to keep one by his side who will only torture his soul. I was shown that he has already been losing his manhood, and has been influenced and molded by his wife. Their marriage was a snare of Satan. {TSB 77.2}

Does it sound like God joined these two together?

Is it possible to get into a marriage that God cannot bless? How? Why?

If you are about smoke a cigarette and first pray over it and ask God to bless it to your body, will God bless you with greater health?

If you ask God to bless you with healthy teeth but refuse to brush and floss and drink lots of coca cola will God use His power to bless you with healthy teeth? Why?

Can someone enter into a “marriage” in such a way that they preclude God from being the one joining them together and therefore preclude God’s blessing?

How does God join a couple together?

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}

If the will of God is fulfilled, the husband and wife will respect each other and cultivate love and confidence. Anything that would mar the peace and unity of the family should be firmly repressed, and kindness and love should be cherished. He who manifests the spirit of tenderness, forbearance, and love will find that the same spirit will be reflected upon him. Where the Spirit of God reigns, there will be no talk of unsuitability in the marriage relation. If Christ indeed is formed within, the hope of glory, there will be union and love in the home. Christ abiding in the heart of the wife will be at agreement with Christ abiding in the heart of the husband. They will be striving together for the mansions Christ has gone to prepare for those who love Him. AH 120

So what is our role in marriage and what is God’s? What can we do to find a compatible life partner?

First, experience conversion of heart and unity with God, get oneself right with God and healthy in heart and mind first. Then approach finding a life partner with your Reason/Judgment evaluating the other person’s qualifications to be your life partner rather than seeking to get others to like or love you.

## WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph “A crucial aspect...” thoughts?

What are the responsibilities of the various family members? Are parents responsible for the outcome of their children’s lives? OR for their conduct in parenting?

What about the Proverb in the middle of the paragraph – if a child goes astray does that mean the parent didn’t raise the child correctly? What about Lucifer? Did God fail to parent him correctly?

No, the version is translated incorrectly!

Train up the child according to the tenor of his way, and when he is old he will not depart from it.  
Darby

Does it make more sense to realize this version?

What about the section on wives submit to your husband's what does this mean?

#### THURSDAY

First paragraph read – can we experience happiness in a painful and unhappy world? How?

Can a doctor, who has a remedy that genuinely cures, experience happiness in a hospital full of sickness, suffering and disease – how?

Do we have a Remedy to share with a sick and suffering world? What is that Remedy? And how does this help us to remain resilient in the face of personal tragedy, pain and loss?

#### FRIDAY

second paragraph read and discuss

## 2007 Q2 Lesson 11 Daily Wisdom

### SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts? What does it mean to be wise for salvation through faith in Jesus?

What is “salvation”? its English root is “salvo” from which we get salve or salvage, which means to heal or recover or restore. The Greek for save is *sodso* which means to heal.

Could we read it as “wise for healing”?

What does “faith in Jesus” mean? Does faith also mean trust? Does it mean something different to trust Jesus?

If you were sick and in pain and suffering and went to the doctor would you need to trust him? Why? If you didn’t you wouldn’t follow his instructions.

So basically it is saying the scriptures are able to make you understand/comprehend God’s plan to heal and restore you if you trust in Jesus and follow His instructions!

Read first paragraph-

What principles have you gained from God’s Word that help in your daily life?

- Liberty – Saul vs. Paul do we experience that change? The willingness to grant others the freedom to see it differently and still love them?
- Love – do we care about others? Are we willing to give? To serve?
- From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks – what truth is being conveyed? How do we apply it?

How do we apply God’s principles in interacting with those we disagree with?

How about if someone tells you about another they say is in an adulterous relationship?

How do you apply God’s principles in dealing with them?

A homosexual relationship?

If someone shares with you that an acquaintance has a child out of wedlock how do you apply God’s principles?

Those who have eyes let them see and ears let them hear vs. seeing though they do not see, hearing though they do not hear

Those who are seeing and hearing without seeing and hearing go “whoa, I can’t believe it, I’ve got to call my mother and tell her.” But those who have eyes to see and ears to hear go, “Thanks for revealing to me that you are the kind of person who spreads malicious gossip about another, while I have no evidence regarding what you are saying, you are right now giving me evidence that you cannot be trusted with information, so I will be sure to be careful with what I share with you.”

Any other examples of God’s principles and how we apply them?

### SUNDAY

Read third paragraph “In the Bible...” Thoughts? Any examples of where the Bible gives wisdom on moral decision making?

Faithfulness in marriage, loving others, caring for less fortunate, valuing mercy



Are there any examples where people try to use the Bible in a “moral way” but actually become immoral in doing so?

What about when people use the Bible in an attempt to coerce people to behave the way they think is best? Inquisition? What about today with those who want to pass legislation on moral matters? Does the Bible give clear guidance on exactly where that line is to be drawn?

Read last paragraph “It’s one thing...” thoughts? Is there something missing in this? Do we have to go beyond what the Bible says and ask, “what does it mean?”

What does it mean to obey? Is there a difference in doing what you are told because you are told to do it and understanding why and doing it because it makes sense and you want to do it? Which does God want from us?

What happens if someone obeys but doesn’t know why over time? They obey only because they are told to but never come to understand?

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 par. 11}

## MONDAY

Read middle dark section “In an earlier lesson...” Thoughts?

Is it good Christian policy to post the 10 Commandments in public buildings?

What is the purpose of the 10? Are they the source of our healing and remedy or were they given as a promise and diagnostic instrument?

*The law was added so that the trespass might increase. Romans 5:20*

The 10 are like and MRI of the heart/mind character – they expose the problem:

*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. 1 Tim 1:9-11*

*We know that the MRI is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the MRI is made not for healthy people but for those who are sick and diseased, the suffering, the ill, and all those who are dying, and all activities that are contrary to the principles of healthy living that conform to the model of health that the blessed God has entrusted to me. – My paraphrase*

Are the 10 commandments to diagnose our sinfulness? Then why do we emphasize trying to obey? Should we instead emphasize accepting an accurate diagnosis? We are sick and sinful and the commandments cannot cure us – can they?

Who can? Christ – once we are diagnosed we need to go the Great Physician for healing. And how do the 10 commandment start? I am the Lord who brought you out of bondage you will not...

Imagine an old TB hospital, where people are quarantined until they either die or are well and can leave. And on the wall there is a list of what the healthy will look like, and it states in order to leave “You shall not cough, you shall not have fever, you shall not spit up blood, you shall not have chills...” and as you look at that list you begin to work very hard to obey them all. Whenever the doctor comes around you work not to cough, not to shake, you suck ice chips so your temperature will appear lower all in an effort to have the doctor think you are healthier than you really are. Does this sound like a wise and good plan?

What about if you realize how sick you are, you look at the list and realize how far away you are from it and you cry out to the doctor – please save/heal me. And then you hear the doctor say, if you trust me and let me apply my remedy I promise “you will not cough, you will not have fever, you will not spit up blood, you will not have chills. For I am the one who sets you free.”

The 10 Commandments are there to diagnose us and also as a promise of how we will look when Christ completes His healing plan and the law is again written in our hearts and minds!

## TUESDAY

What is the purpose of work?

- It keeps us occupied and thus out of trouble – idle hands are the devils workshop
- It provides income, sustains our livelihood
- It provides a sense of meaning and purpose

Is that all?

It is an opportunity to immerse ourselves into God’s circle of love – to receive from God talents, wisdom, ability and then invest them in service to others to use our abilities, time energies resources to help others, thus growing closer to God and experiencing more of His joy and love.

Those who don’t work (when able) or don’t appreciate their work as opportunities to give, cheat themselves out of blessings God has designed for us to experience.

Work does not necessarily mean gainful employment, but the investment of oneself in activities and pursuits that result in constructive outcomes and benefit others.

## WEDNESDAY

The Bible and Wealth – what is the Biblical position on wealth?

Are those that are wealthy blessed by God? Are those who are not wealthy therefore not blessed by God? Is wealth a good barometer of whether we are blessed of God?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

Do gold, silver, platinum, diamonds, rubies, US dollars have any value with God? What is the currency of heaven? Love, goodness, righteousness, beneficence, truth

How do we store up such currency in heaven? By giving what we have received to benefit others and bring more and more back into harmony with God and His principles.

## THURSDAY

Read third and fourth paragraphs “According to Robert...” thoughts? What would have happened if world leaders would have been like this? They would have been killed and persecuted. Didn’t Christ say that if we are like Him the world would hate us?

How can we apply Christ's principles in our lives as leaders?

Remembering that we are responsible for our actions, choices, conduct, not what others think of us or whether others like us. We must be open to hear others input perspectives and ideas but always retain our own conclusions and decision making.

Keep God, His mission, loving Him and others first and defend against flattery and self exaltation.

Question 2 read and discuss

Do we need more wisdom in making decisions that just what the Bible says not to do? Why? Those convinced against their will are of the same opinion still. If the only reason we have for doing something is that someone in charge told us then we in our hearts remain unconvinced and will look for opportunity to do what we think is best.

But if we have been shown evidence, given reasons, thought it through for ourselves and come to our own conclusion then we are settled and cannot be moved into unhealthy channels.

What wisdom does the Bible give on picking a spouse?

Finding a job?

Moving?

Major in college?

Read question 1 and discuss

Read first paragraph and discuss.

## 2007 Q2 Lesson 12 Growing Through the Word

Read memory text – thoughts?

What does it mean to be an infant and what does it mean to grow up?

Is there a difference between growing physically and growing spiritually? Are there similarities? What are the differences and what are the similarities?

Is it possible to grow physically without growing spiritually? - yes

Is it possible to grow spiritually without growing physically? – no – What does it mean to grow spiritually? To mature in character, to have love established as the base of operation and selfishness removed, to have our motives change, to become Christlike – can this happen without changes in the brain? Without growth of healthy neural pathways?

One of the founders of our church stated:

Physical inaction lessens not only mental but moral power. The brain nerves that connect with the whole system are the medium through which heaven communicates with man and affects the inmost life. Whatever hinders the circulation of the electric current in the nervous system, thus weakening the vital powers and lessening mental susceptibility, makes it more difficult to arouse the moral nature. {Ed 209.2}

Thoughts? This was written more than 100 years ago and science has proven that physical activity improves mental functioning. Not only that, there are proteins called neurotrophic factors which cause neurons to stay healthy, grow out their connections to other neurons more quickly and have new neurons form. One of these factors is called Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF). It comes from a precursor protein called Pro-BDNF. An enzyme is required to cleave Pro-BDNF into BDNF. If this enzyme is not there Pro-BDNF doesn't get cleaved and Pro-BDNF causes the neuron to die. BDNF causes the neuron to stay healthy and grow stronger, Pro-BDNF causes the neuron to die – the key is the enzyme which cleaves Pro-BDNF to BDNF. What determines whether the enzyme is present? Electrical activity in the neuron – if the neuron is firing then it produces the enzyme, if it is not then the enzyme is not produced.

Therefore the choices we make determine which neurons fire and thus which grow stronger and which are slowly degraded, so science is showing how true this statement really is.

So we cannot grow into maturity of thinking or mental functioning without a corresponding growth in neural circuitry – that is simply just how we were designed to operate.

### SUNDAY

The lesson suggests we read Hebrews 5:12-14

*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! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

Thoughts? Notice the immature are not acquainted with righteousness and the mature have developed some ability – what is it? The ability to discern the right from the wrong, the healthy from the unhealthy, to true from the false – and how have they gotten this skill? By practice, i.e. by exercising their reasoning powers to think through issues for themselves and come to their

own conclusions – the immature would be people who refuse to think, refuse to ask questions, prefer to be told what to do, prefer to simply follow rules because the ruler said so.

Read verse 6:1,2 – the continuation of Paul’s thought

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, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

Does this add any further insight on what it means to be an infant? Infants focus on what? “repentance from acts that lead to death, faith in God” how to be baptized, religious ceremonies etc.

“Hey, I have confessed my sins and have faith in God, I don’t need to ask any questions. God’s ways aren’t my ways, I just have faith.”

Does this help? Where is the focus? On self – what I did wrong, how do I get baptized, what happens to me in the judgment and resurrection; and concern that others are doing things just right – focus on the rules and law.

What might the mature focus on? The truth about God, His character, methods and principles and how to help others experience transformation of character so they again are at one with God in heart, mind and motive. They have come to understand the reasons behind the rules and have been fully persuaded in their minds about God and His methods and principles.

Last paragraph “It’s clear from...” –thoughts? Let’s train our faculties with practice right here to discern the true from the false –

How many like this paragraph? Is it true or false? Let’s take it apart, is the first phrase true “It is clear through the Word that we are saved by faith...”

*“We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”*  
*Acts 15:11*

*It is by grace you have been saved. Eph 2:5*

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. Eph 2:8,9*

So are we saved by faith or by grace through faith? Is this just semantics or does it make a difference? What difference?

Grace is “God’s work” all the activities God is doing for our healing. Faith is “trust”. So faith is necessary in order for God’s grace to benefit us, why? Because love cannot be forced, God cannot work in our hearts and minds to transform us unless we trust Him, but will our trust in God heal us? No, God heals us, but we must trust Him.

What about the next phrase “though our acceptance with God is based on the righteousness of Jesus credited to us by grace through faith alone...”

First what does this phrase mean? Is grace in this phrase used to mean God’s work to heal, recreate and restore us into actual Christlike people or is it used to mean “unmerited favor” that God bestows because Christ died for us? In other words our acceptance with God is not because we are now healed and in harmony with God but because Jesus died and has “credited” to our accounts His perfect righteousness so the Father accepts us as if we are as perfect as Jesus even though we are not.

Does this make any sense to anyone? Is this not some elaborate shell game, con job, hoax? What is the truth? God accepts us because we have been won back to trust – the lies that separate us

from Him have been removed and we open the mind/heart to Him and healing, recreation is the inevitable result. We are actually recreated to be like Jesus in heart mind and character – this is why we are accepted by God!

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}

**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}

## MONDAY

Read Hebrews 4:2 and then the second paragraph “What makes the..”

*For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Heb 4:2*

Thoughts? What is the lesson? What is the point? Do miracles establish faith? In Christ’s day did He perform many miracles? Did the religious leaders get faith? When the serpent talked in the garden was that a miracle? Should it have established faith in what the serpent said?

*Zechariah 4:6 – “not by might nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord.”*

How does the Spirit work? Through love and truth!

Faith is trust – and how is trust established? If you want to get someone to trust you will you get it my merely displaying overwhelming power?

“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.” MacDonald, George, *Discovering the Character of God*, Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989, p. 29.



Read third paragraph “So often people think...” Thoughts?

Let’s exercise our faculties again to train them to discern the right from the wrong – what are signs and evidence? Are they the same thing?

What about the idea that “faith isn’t an intellectual matter” it is a “heart matter”? On what basis do you determine to open your heart to someone? On what basis you do you “trust” someone? Is there a difference between faith and trust?

A patient told me that her friends were constantly telling her she needed to turn her life over to God, but she said she couldn’t do it. I said, “of course you can’t.” This surprised her, as she expected me to tell her what everyone else had. So I asked her if she would give the keys of her car or house to a stranger in the mall and she said, “no way.” Then I asked, “If you won’t give the keys of your house and car to a stranger how do you expect to give the keys of your life to a stranger?” Can we turn our lives over to someone we don’t know? And when we get to know someone will there be evidence upon which to base our trust?

John 17:3 says life eternal is knowing God, has God provided evidence of His existence, trustworthiness and reliability?

How much truth and evidence supports Satan in his attack against God? None, how much truth supports God as innocent of all charges? 100% so who wants you to believe you can have faith without evidence? The one who doesn’t have any!

What is the root principle to spiritualism? All forms? The pursuit of knowledge without the use of reason or investigation of the evidence.

The word of God, like the character of its Author, presents mysteries that can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. But God has given in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine authority. His own existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. True, He has not removed the possibility of doubt; faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration; those who wish to doubt have opportunity; but those who desire to know the truth find ample ground for faith. Ed 169.

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What is this love that God commands us to practice? Can someone describe it or give me Biblical references or examples?

Can love be commanded? What do you think it means that God used such language?

Do people sometimes want to be told what to do? What is the right and the wrong? Is being told the same as coming to understand why it is right and wrong for yourself?

So what does it mean when God commands us to love? Is He threatening? Is He dominating? Controlling? Or is He like a loving parent who says to a child, “A new command I give you – breath, get your head out of the water and breath”? Isn’t love the basis of life? And what if we were all underwater, drowning, but God had intervened and given us all underwater respirators connected to His oxygen tank, in other words He by His grace is artificially holding drowning/death at bay and giving us an opportunity to get our heads above water. Is God merely saying, love, give, live, breath – this is the way to live!

TQ page 143 states, “New birth owes nothing to the will or the power of the human being. We are born again simply by accepting what God has made possible through Christ and letting the Holy Spirit transform the old self into a new creation.” – thoughts?

Is it possible to “accept” God or anything without a “choice” which requires the exercise of the will? Are we mere passive puppets or putty in the hands of God or do we have a role to play?

*Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Phlp 2:12,13*

*For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, Romans 8:13*

Can we cure ourselves/save ourselves? NO! Can God save any individual without the cooperation/participation of that individual?

Can God save the race/species without the help of anyone else? Yes – He has already done that in Christ!

TQ 143 “We are a new creation because self is no longer our master, but Christ. We are a new creation because we now reject old ways of thought, action, and relationship and accept God’s will and way...”

Thoughts? First – “we now reject old ways” do we all agree with this? Who is rejecting old ways? But I thought we don’t have any role to play?

What does it mean that “self” is no longer the master? That we as individuals, with our own power of choice, identity and individuality are no longer making the choices for ourselves? Or does it mean that “selfishness” is no longer our master and we, with hearts renewed in love by the Spirit exercise our free wills and individuality to live Godly lives?

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Gal 5:22,23*

Who is in control? Does God want to control us? If you surrender your will to God saying, “take control” will He? No, why? Because love can only exist in freedom and if God took control He would destroy our ability to love.

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}

## WEDNESDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts? Should we have the attitude, “The Bible said it, I believe it, that settles it”?

Is it enough to say, “The Bible says it, so do it”? Or must we first say, what does it mean and does it apply to me?

Are there things in the Bible that don’t apply to us?

What is genuine obedience, the obedience God wants from us? Is it to do what He says because He says so? Is that what God wants?

Parents, do you want as the ultimate obedience from your children for them to simply do what you say, like a well trained dog?

Does God want the obedience of a well trained dog? Or does He want understanding, freely given cooperation?

Read first sentence of last paragraph – what does it mean? Does it mean that it is Jesus’ individuality, Jesus’ mind, Jesus’ will, Jesus that is actually doing the thinking and deciding or does it mean that we receive the attitude, love, motives, methods, desires and character of Jesus which infuses our unique individuality so that we freely choose to act like Jesus acts, live like Jesus lives?

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}

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – was Jesus speaking of baptism by water here? What is happening in the context – Jesus says, unless a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God – was Jesus saying, unless a man is immersed in water he cannot see the kingdom of God? Or was he saying unless a man is renewed in his mind/heart?

Nicodemus replies, how can a man enter his mother’s womb and be born again – so where did Nicodemus take the conversation – to a river or a womb? And Jesus immediate response is:

*“I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.” John 3:5,6.*

So is Jesus speaking of Baptism primarily here or is he answering Nicodemus and saying you must first be born into the world i.e. water birth, the flesh birth, and then reborn by the Spirit?

Were Enoch and Elijah baptized? Did they see the kingdom of heaven? Were they both born of the water/flesh and reborn? Yes!

Second part of the paragraph – no question the role of the Spirit is essential, and the Spirit absolutely reminds us of what we have studied, but is that all the Spirit does? Does the Spirit ever enlighten with new thoughts, ideas, perspectives, insights that we hadn’t previously known or thought of or been taught?

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What about the idea that life is not sustained by a direct miracle? Would we say that God created life to operate in harmony with certain principles and if those principles are followed life will sustain itself i.e. God isn’t constantly performing miracles to keep life going, but God designed life to live in harmony with certain principles and it will if those principles are followed?

## **2007 Q2 Lesson 13    The Word of God Endures**

Notes are not available.

## 2007 Q3 Lesson 1 Adam and Eve: The Intended Ideal

What was God's original ideal for marriage?

Read memory text – thoughts? What does it mean to become “one flesh”?

### SUNDAY

Read Genesis 1:27 at the top and then the first two paragraphs – thoughts? What does it mean to be created in the image of God? How does male and female impact our understanding of God?

Are you uncomfortable with God as a female? As male? Do we miss something if we see God as only male? If so what? Do we miss something in our own marriage experience? In our own identity?

*DT 32:11 like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young,  
that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions.*

*ISA 49:15 “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!”*

*ISA 49:16 See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.*

*ISA 66:12 For this is what the LORD says:*

*“I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream;  
you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees.*

*ISA 66:13 As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you;  
and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.”*

*HOS 13:8 Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open.  
Like a lion I will devour them; a wild animal will tear them apart.*

*MT 23:37 “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.*

What do you think of these female images of God?

What does it mean we were created in the image of God?

The true object of education is to **restore the image of God in the soul**. In the beginning, God created man in **his own likeness**. He endowed him with noble qualities. His mind was well-balanced, and all the powers of his being were harmonious. But the fall and its effects have perverted these gifts. **Sin has marred and well-nigh obliterated the image of God in man**. It was to restore this that the plan of salvation was devised, and a life of probation was granted to man. To bring him back to the perfection in which he was first created, is the great object of life,—the object that underlies every other. It is the work of parents and teachers, in the education of the youth, to co-operate with the divine purpose; and in so doing they are “laborers together with God.” [1 Cor. 3:9.] {CE 63.3}

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 confin-

ing 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}

**Such an education provides more than mental discipline; it provides more than physical training. It strengthens the character, so that truth and uprightness are not sacrificed to selfish desire or worldly ambition. It fortifies the mind against evil.** Instead of some master passion becoming a power to destroy, every motive and desire are brought into conformity to the great principles of right. **As the perfection of His character is dwelt upon, the mind is renewed, and the soul is re-created in the image of God.** Ed 17.

When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. . . . It was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image--the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. FLB 30.

Thoughts? What does it mean to be created in the image of God? How can we cooperate with God for His restored image within? Can we be restored if we don't think? If we don't reason? If we don't comprehend God and His methods? Can we be restored if we hold to lies about God?

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts?

Read bottom green question – thoughts? How does the death of Jesus help us understand God's love? Does it make a difference if you see Jesus dying to appease the Father vs Jesus dying to win us to trust, expose the liar and heal this creation?

If you had a brother who was dying of heart failure, and your father who was a surgeon, demanded that someone must die in order for your father to be willing to do surgery and save your brother – what would you think of your father? But what if the only way to save your brother was a heart transplant, and the only way to get that was for someone to die, and what if your father was willing to give his heart, his life to your brother then what would you think of your father?

## MONDAY

Top question read – thoughts? What was the primary purpose of Eve – to complete Adam, i.e. Mankind – Mankind was not complete as a single unit – why? Because Godlike love cannot be experienced without someone to love, someone to give to, someone to serve who can receive your love, process it, and return it freely. Eve was given to Adam for Adam to serve and give of himself to uplift and ennoble her.

First paragraphs points out that God had Adam name the animals before he created Eve, why? Did it do this to prevent an argument over what to name them? Or was it to awaken in Adam a greater sense of appreciation, value and love for Eve when she was brought to him?

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? What about Adam's reciprocal? She was to receive all the love Adam could give, internalize it, grow in and from it, process it and return it to Adam with her own unique color, flavor, touch and the circle of love completes. She was to help Adam grow in his ability to love!

## TUESDAY

Read *Genesis 2:24* “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”



Thoughts? What is the meaning of this text? Is it important? What happens when this doesn't transpire in families? Does it mean we ignore our parents? How do we find balance? Is there wisdom here, not just for the new marriage partners, but for their parents as well?

### WEDNESDAY

Two are better than one – suggests that together we are stronger, safe, more capable, successful and powerful than separate – thoughts?

How are we better off united than divided? Physically, science has shown that married couples in harmony have better physical health than those not in healthy marriages.

What about dealing with life's problems? Is it easier with someone to empathize? Is it easier knowing someone loves you and cares about you? Is it easier to face the world knowing you have a friend at home?

Does a couple who values each other's ideas and opinions benefit in some way over couples in which only one spouse's ideas are permitted to be heard? What benefits?

Was Eve alone in the garden or was Adam with her?

But what is the danger of being together? Would Adam have been as vulnerable to deception by anyone other than Eve? Can a relationship be a powerful tool for deception?

What is the lesson?

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}

Should we let relationships form our characters and beliefs for us?

### THURSDAY

The Curse on the Relationship – what do you think it means “Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.” Do you think God was proscribing a punishment on women? Do you think God was stating His will and ideal for relationships? What was going on?

Why did God say this? What was now the condition of mankind? What was the natural state of their hearts? What motivated sinful man to action? Selfishness/survival of the fittest and how well do relationships work when both people are self-centered? Fighting for control? Always trying to get and not seeking to give? Does that sound like love?

Does God like to see men dominating women? Is God happy when women are forced to be silent in church? When women are denied leadership positions?

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? Does the Bible state wives should submit to their husbands? Or does the Bible state that women are to submit to Christlike treatment from their husbands? If a woman is married to a man and the man wants to have her pose in pornographic magazines in order to make money, should she say, “The Bible says I should submit to my husband”? Are wives to submit their individuality, identity ability to think and reason to their husbands? Or are wives to submit to loving treatment from their husbands?

**2007 Q3 Lesson 2      Abraham and Sarah: Faith Tested and Tried**

Notes are not available.

### 2007 Q3 Lesson 3 Isaac and Rebekah: Rearing Rivals

Thoughts about the title? Do you think that children are inherently rivals? That they are genetically programmed to be rivals?

In the case of Jacob and Esau do you think there was something in their culture or rearing that resonated with the infection of selfishness that cultivated the rivalry? What?

Where does rivalry originate? In selfishness? A desire to promote self to get ahead, and where did this desire originate? In Lucifer who became jealous of Christ and began to promote himself and “compete” with Christ – what did Lucifer compete with Christ over or about or for? For the affection, attention, admiration, loyalty, love, devotion, worship of the intelligent beings in the universe.

What do siblings compete over, primarily? The love, affection, approval, admiration of the parents? Where does such a rivalry come from? Do parents have to teach their children to compete for attention?

Once Adam and Eve infected themselves with sin all humans, being their offspring, are born infected with selfishness. Thus babies are born into the world egocentric or self-centered. And what is the emotion that drives this self-centered approach? Fear – fear of not being loved, not being valued, not being cared for, not getting one’s just rewards etc.

How do we respond to this fear? By competing, bettering ourselves in an attempt to surpass others, defeat others, destroy others?

How do we as parents, teachers, church members, society foster selfishness in our children? What about grading on a curve? What about competitive sports? What about games like monopoly? Or even Bible games in which there is a winner and loser? Activities that focus on rewarding self-promotion and devaluing altruism?

What about how we bestow praise or criticism? Can such be done in ways that fosters competition? Do parents sometimes have favorites? Why might this be? Is it possible a parent who is a mathematician has one child who loves mathematics and therefore they just have more in common – would that mean such a parent would love his other children less? But could that natural affinity be interpreted as preference? How might the other children feel?

How can parents guard against actions which lend to a child feeling less valuable than another or that the parent loves the other child more?

What is the only power that can overcome the infection of fear and selfishness? Love, and what practical steps can we take to instill love and assist God in eradicating selfishness in ourselves, our children and families?

What problems do you see in how Isaac and Rebekah handled things, what did they do well and what could they have done better?

#### SUNDAY

The arrangement – what do you think about arranged marriages? Good idea or bad idea? Arranged marriages have less divorce rates than non arranged marriages – any thoughts about that?

Read EGW quote from Friday and consider her words in context of arranged marriage – any thoughts?

How many people would have been willing for their parents to select their marriage partner? Why or why not? What would have been the motive for resisting this? Fear? Fear of getting stuck

with someone you didn't like? In other words, distrust of your parents' ability to select a truly compatible partner?

As a parent, how comfortable would you be in selecting a mate for your child? What would be the basis of your decision? Would you not do everything in your power to select someone who would bring genuine happiness to your child? What methods would you use in this selection process? How are the methods you would use different from the methods your child might use? Can we teach our children to use our methods or follow our example in decision making – examining the evidence of a person's qualifications to be a marriage partner rather than just how a person makes one feel?

Read question one – thoughts? Would it be important to you that your child marry someone of the same religion? Is there more than being a member of the same church? What else? Having the same picture of God?

What is the problem or risk when we marry someone with different beliefs about God? We actually practice in our lives the principles we believe God practices, by beholding we become changed, and this can lead to great arguments, tension and conflict in a marriage and person's can feel torn between loyalty to spouse and loyalty to God.

Read bottom blue-green section – thoughts? What does it mean to leave everything in God's hands? Should you pray every day for healthy teeth and then leave it in God's hands or should you help out the process? Should you pray for good grades on your exams and leave it in God's hands on how you do or would study and preparation have an impact? Would it be a lack of faith to pray and prepare?

What about when searching for a marriage partner – should we leave it completely in God's hands? Does God want us to pray and then wait for Him to tell us what to do? Parents, how would you feel about children, who as they grew up, every day called you on the phone and said, "what do you want me to do today, you tell me and I'll do it. What clothes should I wear, what should I have for breakfast, should I go to work today or not?" Would you want your children to act like this? Do you think God is working to get everyone of us to come to the point we stop thinking for ourselves, stop choosing for ourselves and merely sit in "faith" and wait for Him to tell us what to do?

What is the last fruit of the Spirit? Self control! Self governance, when the HS has His way we are healed and set free to govern ourselves back in harmony with God and His methods!

How did Abraham leave it in God's hands? Did Abraham pray and then sit back and wait? Or did Abraham take action? Did Abraham make plans and implement those plans? Or did he wait for someone to knock on the door and say "I had a dream that I am to marry your son"?

In Teacher's Quarterly page 31 it states, "In Isaac's day the cure for infertility was a concubine. Isaac goes to the Lord instead of another woman. How does this show the power of prayer?"

Thoughts? Today, if someone is infertile and they go to an infertility clinic is this showing a lack of faith? Should such couples pray and just wait? Is it against God's will to go to infertility specialists? What about donor eggs or sperm?

What are the implications? Is the ability to have a child somehow different than any other physical ability or capacity we have? Is there something mystical or magical or supernatural in reproduction? Is our fertility under our governance or when copulation and fertilization occur is this God acting to create new life? Is infertility a curse from God a result of personal sin or just another physical ailment or defect of our fallen human bodies? Can and does God sometimes heal

physical illness? Is curing infertility different? Does God currently heal all physical illness? If physical illness is not healed does that mean a person didn't have faith? If fertility is not healed does that mean a person didn't have faith?

If someone is sick should we pray for their health and healing? Absolutely, should we avoid going to the doctor and taking medications and applying what science has revealed brings health? Is there any difference when it comes to fertility?

## MONDAY

Read middle dark section "At the birth..."

*GE 25:23 The LORD said to her,  
"Two nations are in your womb,  
and two peoples from within you will be separated;  
one people will be stronger than the other,  
and the older will serve the younger."*

What does this mean? Does this mean God was going to cause this to happen or that God knew the future and merely predicted what He knew was going to happen? Did God love Jacob and not love Esau? Or did Jacob love God and Esau didn't love God? Was God unwilling to work with and through Esau or was Esau unwilling to work with God?

Read bottom green section – thoughts? What is it that Christ offers us? Friendship with Him, healing, restoration, recreation of heart and mind. And how do we sell it? By exchanging the truth about God for a lie (Romans 1).

In TQ page 33 it states:

"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it." Ps 127:1. With that in mind, let us raise two questions: What contributes to a happy marriage? What causes unhappy homes?

Thoughts? Would happy homes need people who have the truth about God working in their hearts and minds? God's methods and principles? Would the principles of truth, love and freedom lived and applied bring happy homes whereas selfishness, deceit and control would do what?

Does this necessarily mean that all Christian homes are happy or all agnostic homes are unhappy? Why or why not?

## TUESDAY

Read last paragraph "The Lord has just..." thoughts? Where does faith come from? Evidence? Have you ever wondered why God hasn't sent an angel to your bed to speak with you like Daniel? Imagine that tonight as you are praying an angel appears to you with a message that you are to sell your home and move to China as a missionary? What would you do?

How would you know that the angel was one of God's angels or one of Satan's? Didn't an angel appear to Christ claiming to be from God? Didn't Paul warn of angel's of light coming with a false gospel?

Isn't Satan going to one day appear again as an angel of light and with a message, should we believe every angel with a message?

## THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts? Was the problem that these women were foreigner's or that these women didn't love God and His methods? What about Rahab and Ruth –was there a problem bringing them in? Why not?

Is it a guarantee that marrying someone of the same faith will result in a good marriage? Fidelity to the Lord? When Adam and Eve got married were they of the same faith? Did that mean Eve never led Adam astray?

Marrying someone of the same faith and even someone who loves the Lord isn't a guarantee that your spouse will stay loyal – but marrying someone who doesn't love the Lord is a guarantee of conflict, tension and turmoil and opening yourself up to constant spiritual attack.

## FRIDAY

Questions 1,2 and 3 read and discuss.



**2007 Q3 Lesson 4      Jacob and Rachel: Labor of Love****SUNDAY**

Marrying within the faith – thoughts? Why is it important?

Read last paragraph and bottom green section – thoughts?

What about the women? Did women always have any say in who they were “yoked” to? Where is the example of a father searching for a righteous man for his daughter to marry?

*2CO 6:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 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.”*

*2CO 6:17 “Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”*

*2CO 6:18 “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”*

The lesson reminds us of the “sons of God” marrying the “daughters of men” and we can think of examples like this, Samson and Delilah, Ahab and Jezebel, Solomon and the 700 wives, are there any examples of righteous wives being led astray by wicked husbands? Or righteous women leading wicked men to God?

Uncle Simon led niece Mary into prostitution, Mordecai led Esther into try outs for Queen. Did Esther convert the king? Zipporah interceded with Moses to circumcise the kids.

Is the fact there are no stories of righteous wives being led astray by wicked husbands merely an artifact of culture and that women didn’t count? Is it to document the deceptiveness and wickedness of women – which some have argued through the ages? Or might it reveal the weakness of men and the importance of maintaining one’s individuality even within the marriage, the importance of keeping God first in all things and the vulnerability to exploitation and betrayal which occurs inside the bonds of trust? Even in heaven this vulnerability was exploited:

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. ... {PP 36.3}

Taking advantage of the loving, loyal trust reposed in him by the holy beings under his command, he had so artfully instilled into their minds his own distrust and discontent that his agency was not discerned. ... {PP 38.2}

What is the process here described? The angels trusted Lucifer and thus were vulnerable to his deceptions and accepted his ideas and distortions as true without first examining the evidences in the case for themselves.

In marriage in which trust exists, does that make one more vulnerable? How does one protect oneself while maintaining trust?

Should spouses, while trusting and loving each other, stop thinking for themselves and say, “I trust my spouse, so whatever he/she says must be okay”?

Is this a principle to keep in mind whether we are yoked to an unbeliever or a believer? Why? Can a believer make an honest mistake with no intent to harm or deceive yet still be wrong?

## THURSDAY

Read top question – thoughts?

*Gen 29:30 “Jacob lay with Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.”*

Thoughts? Was the problem in this verse that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah? Or was the problem the deception practiced by Laban, Leah and Rachel?

Put yourself in Leah’s shoes, you know Jacob is in love with your sister, so much he has just worked seven years to marry her. He has never made any pretensions toward loving or desiring you, but you and your father scheme to trick Jacob into marrying you, do you really reasonably expect him to love you? To wake up in the morning with happiness and joy at the discovery?

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Are they implying that Jacob should not have married Rachel, that after the deception he should have merely walked away and said, “It must have been God’s will.”

Read Genesis 29:31,32

*“When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, “It is because the LORD has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now.”*

Did God open Leah’s womb?

Read Genesis 30:1-5

*GE 30:1 When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I’ll die!” 2 Jacob became angry with her and said, “Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?” 3 Then she said, “Here is Bilhah, my maidservant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and that through her I too can build a family.” 4 So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife. Jacob slept with her, 5 and she became pregnant and bore him a son. 6 Then Rachel said, “God has vindicated me; he has listened to my plea and given me a son.” Because of this she named him Dan.*

Didn’t the lesson last week criticize the idea of using a concubine to have a child if you were infertile? But here we find a Bible text saying God vindicated this action by bringing forth a son. Did God open Leah’s womb? Did God open Bilhah’s womb? Did God vindicate Rachel?

Should we use this example for fertility problems today? If you were having problems and your wife brought home a 23-year-old woman and you slept with her, would you be surprised if she got pregnant? Would you and your wife then say, God had vindicated you?

Rachel was barren for many years. Was God punishing her and Jacob for Jacob’s favoritism? In this family, Sarah had fertility problems, Rebekah had fertility problems, and now Rachel has fertility problems – is it possible there is something in this family that is contributing? What about inbreeding? They keep marrying relatives and then have fertility problems?

Third paragraph – read, thoughts? Do you think the favoritism he showed the boys was simply because they were Rachel's or because they loved Jacob, trusted Jacob and were obedient whereas the other boys were not?

Do you think Jacob ever forgave Leah? Do you think he resented her?

In the TQ on page 43 it states, "Jacob married Rachel after seven years of labor. What responsibility do we have to be able to provide for a family before starting one?" Thoughts?

Was this merely a cultural need during Bible times or is this important today? If you live in a society in which the state will provide a welfare system to care for your family if you don't then is it important to wait until you can care for a family yourself first? Why? What happens to us if we are capable but don't care for our families?

Are people who donate sperm or egg responsible for caring for the offspring that arise from that genetic material?

## TUESDAY

Read only paragraph – thoughts? Do you think there were physical, medical reasons why Rachel was barren? Do you think that if she would have trusted God and simply said, it's okay, if God chooses not to heal my physical abilities to reproduce I will be happy loving my husband, then she might have lived a long life with Jacob? But without this attitude if she didn't have children what would their marriage have likely become?

What prevented Rachel from having a healthier attitude toward this situation? Narrow vision – seeing the here and now not the eternal, false beliefs from her culture that one's worth was in ability to bear children, that children are a gift from God and not having them means one is not blessed by God, misunderstanding of God and selfishness.

Leah named her first child "See my son" (Rueben) and Rachel names her maidservant's second child "I have won" Think about calling the kids for dinner – SEE MY SON, I HAVE WON, do you think there might have been some tension?

## WEDNESDAY

Read top section "Review what we've read..."

*2CO 7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

Thoughts? What does it mean to purify ourselves? Are we to save ourselves? Is it a system of works?

If someone is sick and dying with smallpox and there is another person who is immune because they had previously had cowpox and thus their blood has antibodies. And these antibodies are taken from the one person and offered freely to the one dying. Will belief in the effectiveness of the antibodies heal and save? If you were 100% certain, with no doubt whatsoever, would your faith, confidence and belief result in healing without taking the antibodies?

Christ has won the victory – He has overcome the infection that brings death, He stands ready to infuse us with His love, His character, which will heal. We may be 100% convinced of this, but we still must choose to apply the remedy Christ has won to our lives.

When the sick persons take the antibodies do they heal themselves? No, did they do anything to add to the treatment? Did they make it more effective? No, they merely applied what was produced by another and freely given.

Read bottom green section – thoughts? We are sick, sin sick, born infected with selfishness and struggle with the symptoms produced by this condition. God is the great physician working to heal and restore. If you had a sick child and that child had all kinds of symptoms would you stop working to heal and restore? Our sins are symptoms of the sickness in our heart. God doesn't stop working with us if we "sin" but if we persist in sin and don't seek Him for His remedy, healing, deliverance then over time we become more and more damaged and less and less capable of responding to God's gracious entreaties and calls to healing.

TQ page 51 states, "In spite of his sin and deception, Jacob was chosen by God as the inheritor of His covenant with Abraham. What lessons can you gather from this that are applicable to your life?"

- That God was bound by Isaac's actions to honor Jacob?
- That God made a pronouncement before their birth and had to follow through in order to keep His word
- That Jacob, despite struggling with sin, always remained willing to work with God, always kept his heart open to God, thus the lesson is that God never gives up on us, we have to give up on Him.

#### FRIDAY

Question 5 read - does being married a long time mean the marriage was a happy one? Any thoughts on principles that result in happy marriages?

**2007 Q3 Lesson 5      Moses and Zipporah: Relating with Relations****SABBATH**

Read first paragraph – any thoughts? Think about the Hebrews, who were they then? A group of former slaves who themselves were despised and looked down on – do you think they might have had a little compassion on someone of another culture or race?

Why do you think they didn't? Do we have problems like this today?

What lessons can we learn from this? Was this a metaphor for our bondage in sin and the issues in the GC? Do we ever find deliverance from sin and after coming to Christ, joining the church then look down on those still outside the church? Or worse, look down on those who are different in the church?

**SUNDAY**

The lesson asks “Why did Moses flee?” Any thoughts?

Moses murdered an overseer – in the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan what are the two antagonistic motives? Love and survival of the fittest – which method was Moses practicing when he murdered the overseer?

What emotion did he experience? Fear – so he ran.

But at Sinai when God threatened to kill the people and start over with Moses, how did Moses respond? He was no longer afraid, love had replaced fear and Moses was a new man.

Why do you think God threatened to kill the people at Sinai? Did God not know what was going to happen when He brought the people out of Egypt? Was God now upset and impatient? Or, was there something more going on in the universe? Was there a controversy in the minds of unfallen beings? Did God basically say to the universe – hey, remember just 40 years ago, Moses was willing to kill others, now look he will give his life to save others – My methods of healing work.

**MONDAY**

Read first paragraph – was Jethro a descendent of Abraham? Was he a friend of God? Was he a priest of God? What does this mean? How could there be priests (Melchizedek) who were not Jews or part of the sanctuary system? What does this mean? What is the message?

It tells us that God works with all the people of the world to bring them to salvation and that He is not a bigot or racist, as all humans are His children. Does it tell us that being a genetic member of one group offers no advantage over any other genetic group?

What does it say about God that He is reaching out to everyone, not just one ethnic group?

Then what about the purpose of the Jewish nation? And what about Paul's statement that being a Jew had advantages in every way?

The purpose of the Jewish nation was to be God's assistants, His actors on the cosmic stage to enact a mini-drama depicting the GC and the plan of salvation and ultimately to prepare a group of people who would be the avenue through which the Messiah would come.

The advantages have to do with receiving the oracles of God, the truth, the teaching tools, the sanctuary, feast days, Ten Commandments etc., all designed to lead us back to God, enlighten the mind, expel the lies and bring us back into a trust relationship with God. Many non-Jews experienced this advantage – Zipporah, Ruth, Rahab, Caleb, and others non genetic descendents of

Abraham, yet able to experience the blessings – why? Because the blessings were for the mind/heart and character, and these blessings are free to everyone!

## TUESDAY

Read Exodus 4:19-26 – thoughts? Do you think God tried to kill Moses? The Bible says He did, but if God were intent on killing Moses do you think He would have succeeded?

I have some patients who tell me they have tried to kill themselves more than 100 times – do you think if they really wanted to die they could have succeeded? The fact that they never succeed tells us that they really aren't intent on killing themselves.

Do you think that if God really wanted to kill Moses that He would have failed? Did God have any trouble with the firstborn of Egypt?

So since Moses didn't die, what do we make of this language 'God tried to kill Moses'? Who wrote this? Moses! do you think this was how Moses felt? Do you think that the angel of the Lord appeared in a threatening manner? Does that necessarily mean He wanted to kill Moses?

Why would God do this? What was so important about circumcision of Moses' son? Do you think there was ever another Jewish parent who didn't circumcise their son? Do you think every time a Jewish father fails to circumcise his son the angel of the Lord appears and threatens to kill him?

Then why Moses? Who did Moses represent? Moses was a forerunner of Christ and then who would Moses' son represent? Would it be Israel, God's firstborn? Who is it that circumcises the heart? The HS! at whose direction? Christ's! Was God saying, I can't have you representing me as my forerunner if you won't represent me correctly?

What was Moses about to embark upon? Confrontation with the forces of evil – would He need the protection of God? Would he need the protection of one member of the Godhead to protect him from another member of the Godhead? No! do you think God was merely demonstrating to Moses how truly helpless Moses was and how much Moses needed God's protection and therefore he needed to trust and follow God in all things?

In the last days, whose protection will we need? And who will God be protecting us from? Another member of the Godhead? No! from evil forces; and do we need to follow His directions?

## WEDNESDAY

Read Numbers 12:1,2

*Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And the LORD heard this.*

What is another term for Cushite? Ethiopian? Some scholars say that this would be Sudan today. Are we seeing racial tension and division? Could we take God's reaction as endorsing interracial marriages? Or at least as being against those who would condemn and attack others?

How comfortable are you with interracial marriages? And if you are not comfortable what does that mean? How many races did God create? One, the human race – where did the other races come from? From genetic drift over time and distance, slight and minimal changes in gene expression. (See New Scientist Article at end of notes).

Read EGW comment from Friday -



Moses represented Christ—any significance that Moses was monogamous in a polygamous world? Any significance to the interracial marriage to a non-Jew?

Read bottom paragraph – what do you think “innocent pretext” means? I didn’t quite understand that? Do you think that fear of losing power is the real reason behind racism today?

## THURSDAY

Read top sentence – thoughts? Is it important when evaluating a candidate to be your life partner to evaluate the family? Why?

Bottom paragraph read – thoughts? Might Moses have been trying to speak to real qualities that Hobab possessed and allow him to feel valued?

Bottom green read – thoughts? What happens if you do the right thing for the wrong reasons? Any examples?

What about the wrong thing for the right reasons? Which is more important doing the right thing or having the right motives?

A doctor who intends with all their heart to heal their patient but prescribes a medication which causes an allergic reaction and the patient dies, or a doctor who reads the chart and discovers a patient has a terrible allergy to a medication and so he writes for that medication intending to kill the patient, but he actually read the medication wrong and wrote for a medication that actually helped the patient.

Which of the two doctors is in a better spiritual position and why?

What does this tell us about our actions and decisions? What does this tell us about Sabbath keeping and Isaiah’s admonition that the Sabbath is to be a delight?

## FRIDAY

Questions 1 – Are there prejudice between Christian, Jew and Islam? Does this cause problems today? Do many good Christian people see issues like this playing into the end time scenarios?

How many different groups does the Bible say will be on the earth when Christ comes again? Wheat and tares, righteous and wicked, saved and lost – only two groups – what do the two groups look like?

The saved have the character of Christ – Revelation 12 “These are they who do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” The saved will give their lives to save others –

What about the lost? They will take up arms and fight to kill others, can you see Christians and Jews fighting with tanks/planes/missiles/bombs etc. against each other all believing they are fighting on God’s side and all of them are on Satan’s side?

Question 2 – read and discuss

**SKIN COLOUR: CRACKING THE GENETIC CODE**

10 March 2007

NewScientist.com news service

Jessica Marshall

SANDRA LAING has brown skin and curly black hair. Her appearance is typical of the coloured people of South Africa, descendants of European settlers, Malay slaves and local peoples such as the Khoikhoi. What's unusual is that Laing's parents were "white" Afrikaaners, as were her grandparents and great-grandparents. That she turned out to resemble a more distant ancestor should have been a mere curiosity - except that Laing had the misfortune to be born in apartheid South Africa back in 1955.

People like Laing, whose story is being turned into a film, illustrate the complexity of the genes that determine our skin, hair and eye colour. Her case, like those of twins where one has light skin and the other dark, has attracted much media attention. But they come as no surprise to geneticists.

"When you look at people of different pigmentation who have had children, it's quite clear there are discrete categories. One parent is fair, one is dark, but the children are not all in the middle," says Greg Barsh, a pigmentation geneticist at Stanford University School of Medicine in Palo Alto, California. "What that indicates is that while there are not one or two genes, there are not 10 or 20. There are probably 5 to 10 genes." We are now rapidly uncovering these genes - and the findings are throwing up some surprises about how skin colours evolved.

For many of those involved in the work, simply understanding the basis of colour differences is worthwhile in itself. "So much world history is ascribed to 'These people look different from me'," says Barsh. "I see providing answers as something that will remove some of the mystique and prejudice."

Meanwhile, law enforcement agencies hope for more practical benefits: they want to be able to generate a description of a person from a DNA sample found at a crime scene. Perhaps the most intriguing prospect is that as we work out exactly what determines our colour, we may be able to develop ways to tweak it that are far more effective than anything that exists today.

The key to our colour is a dark pigment called melanin. The more melanin there is in skin cells, hair or the iris of the eye, the darker they are. It sounds simple, but there's more to it. For starters, melanin is not a single substance - its basic building blocks join to form various complicated chains. Rather than floating free within cells, these molecules are made inside little granules called melanosomes, whose size, number and distribution in the cells can vary. What's more, the melanosomes are not even made in the skin cells and hair they end up in; instead, specialised cells called melanocytes produce the melanosomes and dole them out to other cells via tentacle-like extrusions. How dark a person looks depends on variations in each step in the triggering, making, packing and distribution of melanin.

Sometimes one of these steps breaks down completely, causing abnormalities such as albinism. Studies of pigmentation disorders in animals and people have led to the discovery of more than 120 associated genes. Yet only a few gene variants have been found that contribute to the differences in normal human skin colour, and one of the most important was stumbled across only recently.

**“He had stumbled on a key gene for skin colour”**

Keith Cheng, a cancer researcher at Pennsylvania State University in Hershey, was working with golden zebrafish, a strain whose stripes are paler than the typical black. This mutant was first found in an Oregon pet shop in the 1970s. Curious about its lighter colour, Cheng's team took a closer look and found that its skin cells have fewer, smaller and less dense melanosomes - just like those of lighter-skinned people.

As part of his work, Cheng needed to identify the mutation responsible for the fish's golden colour. It turned out to involve a gene now called *SLC24A5*, which codes for an ion-exchange protein that probably sits in the membrane of melanosomes.

Cheng's colleague Mark Shriver then suggested looking for variations in the human version, *SLC24A5*, in sequences collected as part of the International HapMap, a project to chart genetic variation in humans. The team found two variants, one of which was present in everybody of European descent.

To prove these variants affect skin colour, the researchers looked at which were present in people of mixed African and European descent. They found that those with one copy of the “golden variant” tend to have much paler skin. If both copies of the gene have the golden mutation, the skin is lighter still. They concluded that the golden variant is responsible for between 25 and 38 per cent of the difference in skin colour between Africans and Europeans. Cheng had stumbled upon one of the key genes determining skin colour (*Science*, vol 310, p 1782).

“One of the questions I get asked is, ‘Does this mutation alone make you white?’” Cheng says. “The answer is no.” That is, you can have light skin without the golden variant: Japanese and Chinese people have the same form of this gene as the Yoruba of Nigeria. You can also have dark skin with the golden variant: up to three-quarters of Sri Lankans have the golden mutation, recent studies have shown.

Clearly there is far more to skin colour than *SLC24A5*. A variation in a gene called *MATP* (also known as *SLC45A2*, which probably makes another melanosomal transport protein, also contributes to the light skin of Europeans. And variations in the gene for tyrosinase, the enzyme that produces the building blocks of melanin, may also play a role, according to a genetic survey published in December by a team including Shriver (*Molecular Biology and Evolution*, DOI: 10.1093/molbev/msl203).

To the researchers' surprise, their findings show that the light skins of east Asians and Europeans evolved separately: the dark forms of *SLC24A5* and *MATP* are the ancestral forms, and only after modern humans migrated out of Africa did *SLC24A5* mutate in one individual, giving rise to the golden variant. The *MATP* variant appeared in a separate individual, either earlier or later. Both variants spread rapidly among the ancestors of modern Europeans.

“We expect there will be other genes that will fit the bill for east Asians,” says lead author Heather Norton of the University of Arizona in Tucson. While the study identified variants in two pigment genes that are common in Asian populations, it is still unclear if these variants affect skin colour.

It could turn out that every distinct human population has unique skin-colour gene variants, but there are also some that we all share. In two genes that influence skin colour, Norton found variants that were common to all the groups her team looked at, suggesting these arose before modern humans dispersed.

So why did different populations evolve different skin tones? The leading theory, proposed by Nina Jablonski, also at Penn State, is that our colour reflects a balance between conflicting needs. Not only can sunlight damage our skin, it also breaks down folic acid (also known as folate), an essential B vitamin. On the other hand, we need ultraviolet light to make vitamin D.

Jablonski and colleagues have shown that skin colour around the planet correlates more closely with winter UV levels than with summer levels (*New Scientist*, 12 October 2002, p 34). This suggests that our skin colour has evolved to optimise folic acid and vitamin D levels during winter, with tanning allowing us to adapt to higher UV levels in summer.

If the folic acid hypothesis is correct, the diet of our ancestors was as important as UV levels in influencing colour. It has been suggested that early European farmers ate little vitamin D, making very light skin an advantage, whereas peoples like the Inuit got so much vitamin D from their fish-rich diet that they have retained relatively dark skin despite living in the far north.

There are other possibilities. Mutations that make skin lighter could simply have persisted in regions where this feature is not a disadvantage. However, the fact that the same variants spread among almost all Europeans shows there was strong selection for them. And while sexual selection could have played a role in this most visible of characteristics, the latest evidence fits well with Jablonski's ideas. "Natural selection should leave a stronger signature, and that's what we see," says Shriver.

Indeed, while most researchers had assumed that light skin evolved only once, Jablonski predicted that similar skin colours evolved separately in different populations as modern humans dispersed into regions with different UV levels. "I am now eager to see genetic evidence that darkly pigmented skin evolved more than once: for instance, in the ancestors of modern equatorial Africans, southern Indians and Sri Lankans, and indigenous Austronesians," she says.

Despite the rapid progress, there is much left to discover. "There are some major parts of the world where we don't know what to expect," Shriver says. Only a few groups in Africa have been studied, for instance, despite the large variation in skin pigmentation across the continent.

What we do know, though, could soon be put to use. Murray Brilliant of the University of Arizona College of Medicine in Tucson has shown that variations in just six genes accounted for 50 to 80 per cent of the differences in eye, skin and hair colour among 800 individuals he studied. Those genes included *SLC24A5* and *MATP*. The work was funded by the US National Institute of Justice, which is interested in building up a picture of suspects when DNA samples draw a blank against police databases.

In fact, a cruder form of DNA testing is already being used for this purpose. DNAPrint Genomics of Sarasota, Florida, sells police forces a test that reveals people's ancestral origins, thus giving some idea of what a suspect might look like. The company says its test has been used in around 150 cases in the US and UK. Looking directly at the gene variants that affect appearance will be more accurate, however, and DNAPrint has already developed such a test for predicting eye colour. Brilliant's work could lead to tests for skin and hair colour as well.

For others, the goal is to change skin colour by manipulating melanin levels. There is a huge market for products that claim to do this. "People generally do it for cosmetic purposes alone," Cheng says. Others wish to treat dark or light patches, from age spots to more serious pigmentation disorders.

Most existing products leave a lot to be desired. Take skin lighteners. Hydroquinone, long the key ingredient in many of these creams, was thought to work by inhibiting tyrosinase, the enzyme

that helps make melanin. Now it seems that it works by killing melanocytes and may be carcinogenic, leading many countries to ban it.

What's more, most products are not very effective. "It's very difficult to distinguish treated skin versus untreated skin," says Genji Imokawa of the Tokyo University of Technology in Japan, who worked on skin products for 35 years at Kao Corporation. You can measure the difference, he says, but it's not easy to see just by looking. The exception is monobenzylether of hydroquinone, which completely and permanently depigments the skin, apparently by destroying melanocytes. It's drastic, but can give people with severe pigmentation disorders an even skin tone.

Darkening the skin is also tricky. Most attempts to boost melanin levels have focused on synthetic versions of MSH, the hormone that causes tanning after sun exposure (*New Scientist*, 7 May 2005, p 40). The trouble is, such products may do least for those who need them most - fair-skinned people who tan poorly have mutations in the receptor for MSH, called MC1R. Hence the interest in forskolin, a compound recently found to activate a later step in the tanning pathway. It darkens the skin of mice even if they have mutations in the *MC1R* gene (*Nature*, vol 443, p 340).

While efforts to develop conventional drugs continue, genetic discoveries could lead to a whole new approach based on RNA interference - using small bits of RNA to switch off specific genes. The trick will be getting these "siRNAs" into the melanocytes. "The skin is a formidable barrier," says David Fisher of Harvard University. But if it can be done, RNA interference could open the way to the creation of lotions that gradually produce dramatic changes in skin colour and would only need to be applied once a week or less.

Already, cosmetics company Avon has filed a patent for lightening skin by using siRNAs to switch off the tyrosinase gene (patent number WO2005060536). The patent says the method has been tested on isolated mouse melanocytes and outlines ways of delivering siRNAs to melanocytes in situ. Avon would not discuss details with *New Scientist* but says that the research is continuing.

If this kind of approach proves successful, our skin colour might one day become almost as easy to change as hair colour is today, freeing us from the constraints of our genes.

It would, after all, make a lot of sense to adjust our skin colour to suit the local climate. And being able to choose our colour would make life far harder for those who still insist on judging people on the basis of a handful of gene variants.

From issue 2594 of *New Scientist* magazine, 10 March 2007, page 34-37

### **The eyes have it**

The textbooks are wrong. Eye colour is often described as a single-gene trait, with brown eyes dominating over blue, but there is more to it than that.

Brown irises have more melanin and absorb most of the light that hits them. When there's less melanin, it can scatter light, creating a blue colour. Green and hazel eyes are usually a mixture of blue and brown.

The main gene involved, called *OCA2*, appears to affect melanin production by altering the pH of cells in the iris, but it is now clear that other, as yet unidentified genes also play a role. For instance, Richard Sturm of the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, has shown that variations in the *OCA2* gene can explain only 74 per cent of the differences in human eye colour. So blue-eyed parents can have a brown-eyed child - there's no need to blame the postman.

Eye colour is alterable - the latest glaucoma drugs have the unexpected side effect of darkening the iris, especially in those with hazel eyes. The drugs can also lengthen and darken eyelashes, sparking hopes that similar drugs could help reverse baldness.

### **Keeping grey at bay**

Hair colour depends on the pigment-producing melanocytes in the base of hair follicles, which dole out melanin to the cells whose corpses make up each hair strand. As you would expect, blonde hair contains less melanin than light brown or black hair.

Red hair is due to various mutations in a gene called *MC1R*. Their effect is to block production of black-brown melanin - the most common form. Redheads produce only a red-yellow type.

The particular gene variants that make our hair black, brown or blonde remain elusive, but we do at least have a better handle on a most vexing aspect of hair colour - its tendency to go away. David Fisher's team at Harvard Medical School has recently shown that melanocyte stem cells near the top of the hair follicle disappear just before a hair turns white. This means the mature melanocytes at the base of the follicle are not replaced when the hair falls out and a new one begins to form (*Science*, vol 307, p 720).

Greyness could be reversible. In fact, an existing cancer drug seems to occasionally restore pigmentation, and more reliable, safer methods are on the horizon. For instance, AntiCancer of San Diego, California, has developed ways of delivering drugs or genes to hair follicles in fatty sacs. The payload could include genes that restore melanin production, says company president Robert Hoffman. The problem is getting high enough gene expression in all the cells, he says, to avoid producing streaky, partially pigmented hair.

Once we fully understand the genetics, it might be possible to use siRNAs (see below) to alter the colour of growing hairs. The effects of a single treatment could last for weeks, making dark roots a thing of the past for those who prefer it blonde. The first siRNA hair treatment likely to go on sale, though, will neither change nor preserve colour. Sirna Therapeutics of San Francisco is developing an siRNA method for long-lasting hair removal.



**2007 Q3 Lesson 6      Samson and His Women: The Folly of Passion**

Let's do a basic review of the history of Samson's life:

- Parents visited by an angel and told child will be special and given special instructions for mother and child's rearing.
- Child blessed with exceptional strength
- Grows up and tells parents to get Philistine woman for his wife
- At wedding she betrays him
- He leaves and she is given to another
- He rules Israel for 20 years
- He meets Delilah and begins relationship outside marriage
- She betrays him three times and then he still tells his secret
- His strength is lost and he is captured
- He kills himself while killing many Philistines

Parents went and did what Samson told them to do... what do you parents think about that?

*What do you make of "But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me. She's the right one for me." (His parents did not know that this was from the LORD, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.) Judges 14:3,4*

Is this another case of the Bible attributing to God—what He doesn't prevent?

When God stops intervening to hold destructive consequences at bay, the Bible then attributes this to God actually doing it.

*"The LORD was angry at Israel again, and he made David think it would be a good idea to count the people in Israel and Judah." (2 Sam 24:1 CEV).*

*"Satan wanted to bring trouble on the people of Israel, so he made David decide to take a census" (1 Chronicles 21:1 GN).*

Which version do you think is more accurate?

*"By the living LORD," David continued, "I know that the LORD himself will kill Saul, either when his time comes to die a natural death or when he dies in battle." (1 Sam 26:10 GN)*

*"So the LORD killed him..." (1 Chronicles 10:14 GN).*

But what actually happened? Saul committed suicide.

*"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).*

But what actually happened? The Babylonians came and burned down the city.

*"And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses. Now the LORD said to Moses, 'Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him.'" (Exodus 9:34,35; 10:1 NKJV)*

What do you think about this?

*“But on the way the people lost their patience and spoke against God and Moses. They complained, ‘Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this desert, where there is no food or water? We can’t stand any more of this miserable food!’ Then the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people, and many Israelites were bitten and died. The people came to Moses and said, ‘We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Now pray to the LORD to take these snakes away.’ So Moses prayed for the people.” (Numbers 21:4-7 GN)*

*Do you think God used His power to send in poisonous snakes or that God withdrew His protection? What is the natural state of things in a desert? Did they experience those natural consequences prior to this? (“the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions.” Dt 8:15).*

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}

So do we find evidence in the Bible that sometimes what is attributed to God is actually God ceasing intercession and allowing natural consequences to come? God allowing people the freedom to make their own choice? What about in the case of Samson marrying a Philistine?

- Who gave Samson his strength? Did God control His use of it?
- What does it say about God?
- What does it say about God that He chose someone like Samson to start with?
- Would you have preferred God would have chosen someone else to give the power to? Or do you like the fact that God is willing to work with and bless those of us with serious weaknesses?
- Do you think Samson was powerful? Does power tempt toward arrogance? Does power corrupt?
- Did Christ have power? How did Christ use His power? What does that say?

How would you describe Samson's relationship with Delilah? Dysfunctional?

This is a great example of dependency, the most powerful and destructive counterfeit to love. The Bible says that Samson loved Delilah, but were his actions loving toward Delilah? What was Samson more interested in, getting his own needs met or do what was best for Delilah?

When she betrayed him and lied etc. was he interested in her flawed and damaged character and how lying was destroying her soul? Was he interested in bringing her into a saving relationship with God? Or was he more interested in getting her to be attracted to him?

And when she kept betraying him, did he take that evidence in a loving way or a selfish way?

*JDG 16:15 Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." 16 With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death.*

Do you think Samson actually had become so discouraged he wanted to die? How do we explain this? This sounds like many of my patients in dependent relationships when their significant other threatens to leave they become suicidal – I don't want to live without them. I would rather die than live without them. Is this love?

And so he tells her his secret and what happened? Notice, he didn't even know his strength was gone:

*JDG 16:20 Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the LORD had left him.*

What significance is there to this passage? Sin damages the mind and over the course of time we lose the ability to perceive our own condition and we become weaker and weaker and don't even realize it.

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. {ISM 235.2}

When Delilah was caught betraying him how did she handle it? She accused him of not loving her, of betraying her. This is projection, blaming someone else for one's own defects.

How does this happen today? Husband is controlling, commanding wife like a slave to serve him, make food, clean, do laundry, who she can talk to etc. If the wife should question him about his treatment, he accuses her of not loving him. Is he right? No and yes: No because he is the one failing to love his wife, and treating her like property (and his accusations are projections of his own failings), but Yes in that the wife, by colluding with his mistreatment is not acting in the best interest of the husband. His conscience is seared and character damaged by treating his wife in such a way; and in love, she has the responsibility to bring Godly principles to bear in her response to him and not merely respond in fear of rejection.

Do you think God did the right thing in abandoning Samson? Why?

Because He loved Samson and wanted Samson to be saved:

What a change to him who had been the judge and champion of Israel!--now weak, blind, imprisoned, degraded to the most menial service! Little by little he had violated the conditions of his sacred calling. God had borne long with him; but when he had so yielded himself to the power of sin as to betray his secret, the Lord departed from him. There was no virtue in his long hair merely, but it was a token of his loyalty to God; and when the symbol was sacrificed in the indulgence of passion, the blessings of which it was a token were also forfeited. {PP 566.2}

In suffering and humiliation, a sport for the Philistines, Samson learned more of his own weakness than he had ever known before; and his afflictions led him to repentance. As his hair grew, his power gradually returned; but his enemies, regarding him as a fettered and helpless prisoner, felt no apprehensions. {PP 566.3}

Are there lessons in this story that we can apply to our lives?

Do we sometimes, in love, need to “let go” of someone and “restrain” ourselves from intervening to protect someone from reaping consequences?

## SUNDAY

Where do we find Samson in Hebrews – why? Not because of his deeds before his disgrace, but because of his repentance and restoration. What does this say about God? Have you ever let God down? What does the story of Samson tell you? Did God “leave” Samson because He didn’t love Samson or because He did? Have you ever had a child who was addicted to bad behavior or substances and you have patiently continued your support for years, but finally you cut the tie? Is cutting the tie because you don’t love them or your last hope that the consequences of their choices might bring them to their senses?

What about the 20 years – what happened then? (Judges 15:20).

Read second paragraph – true or false? Does that include those called by God to be prophets? Should we ever let anyone else do our thinking for us?

We should not take the testimony of any man as to what the Scriptures teach, but should study the words of God for 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 relation of the subjects of the Bible, comparing scripture with scripture and spiritual things with spiritual. {SC 89.3}

## WEDNESDAY

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

James 1:14 tells us we are dragged away and tempted by our desires or feelings, but John 8:32 tells us that we are set free by the truth – how do we apply these truths to our lives?

Healthy living comes by using our judgment to determine the truth and exercising our will to follow the truth despite what we feel in the moment. Whenever, in any situation, we allow our feelings to overrule our judgment and make a decision to follow our feelings instead of our judgment we damage ourselves – every time.

Think of the 10 decisions you regret most in life, how many came from a reasonable review of the evidence with a clear conscience and how many came based on feelings?

THURSDAY

Bottom paragraph read – thoughts? Do you think God’s purpose was wrought in Samson’s life or that God could work a purpose in spite of Samson’s life?

FRIDAY

Question 1 read and discuss

**2007 Q3 Lesson 7      Boaz and Ruth: Firm Foundations**

Notes are not available.



**2007 Q3 Lesson 8 Elkanah and Hannah: Fulfilling a Vow**

Questions or thoughts from the class from this lesson?

What do you think about the fact Hannah was barren?

Last week at ASI, Doug Batchelor had the SS on Samson and his women, and he pointed out that in the Bible, there are 7 examples of *barren* women and miracle births, and they are all types of Christ:

- Sarah—Isaac – Mount Moriah to be sacrificed
- Rebekah—Jacob – who became Israel, twelve sons, Jesus twelve apostles
- Rachel—Joseph – who sold into slavery, became ruler to save people
- Monoah's wife—Samson – blessed with strength to deliver Israel from bondage and rule over them
- Hannah—Samuel – who became High Priest
- Shunammite woman—child died and resurrected
- Elizabeth—John the Baptist – who greatest of prophets

Overview:

Hannah was barren and teased by Elkanah's second wife; Elkanah showed preference for Hannah, but Hannah was broken-hearted and prayed to God for a child and vowed to dedicate the child to God. She was blessed with Samuel who she took and left with Eli at the Sanctuary at a very young age.

What do you think of Hannah's bargain with God? What about the idea of vows in general? Once you make a vow, are you obligated to keep it? Or even after the vow is made, do you still have the right/freedom to break the vow? What about vows to God?

What about Herod's vow to Salome? Should Herod have kept his vow or broken it?

What about Jephtha's vow? Should he have kept it or broken it?

**MONDAY**

Read second paragraph – thoughts? States this action was prompted by a lack of faith, what attitude might faith have had in this situation? Have faith that God will give them a child or faith that God knows what is best and it might not be best to have a child? Do you think their distrust was in God's ability or God's willingness, i.e. God's will? This would mean not distrusting God's ability but distrusting God's goodness, His character, believing that He really doesn't have our best at heart – how do we struggle with this?

Read third paragraph "As we all should know..."

Thoughts? What does it mean "even our worst deeds have been atoned for"? In medicine, if our diagnosis is wrong, then our treatment is often wrong. In this sentence, what does it sound like the diagnosis of the sin problem is? Doing bad things? Bad deeds? Which is a *bad* thing, because a penalty has to be applied and with that diagnosis we have the remedy – Jesus died to atone for our bad deeds. What do you think about this?

Did Jesus die to pay a penalty for bad deeds or to heal, restore and recreate this creation in righteousness? Was the problem with sin that an external penalty was demanded?

Do we need Jesus to do something to change God's attitude toward us, to get God to forgive us? Do our deeds need to be atoned for?

No question that through Jesus and because of Jesus we have redemption and forgiveness – no question about it. But was it God working through Jesus to bring us His forgiveness or was it Jesus working to either get God to be forgiving or to give God legal precedent to be able to forgive? i.e. without Jesus God would have either been unwilling or unable to forgive us? (John 3:16; Romans 8).

Is our problem one of God being offended and angry and needing to be appeased so He will be willing to forgive? Do we have any problem with God? Only our misunderstanding of Him, only the lies that have obscured our view of Him. But do we need to be healed, transformed, recreated? Do our acts of sin need to be “atoned” or do we need to be at-one again with God? What is it that prevents us from being at one with God? Sinfulness in us, and which of us chose to be sinful? None of us, we were born infected with a terminal condition which separates us from God – then what was Christ's mission? To restore us back to unity with God, to heal this creation, to destroy the lies that separate and rewrite God's character back into this creation!

## TUESDAY

Hannah's vow – she promised to send her son to the Lord's service – how difficult would that have been to carry out? How difficult would it be for mothers here in class to send your child, under the age of 4 to be raised by a man whose own sons behaved as Eli's did?

What enabled Hannah to do this? Remembering that her child was a special child born of God's answer to her prayer and that God had a purpose for the child's life.

Are there any lessons that can be learned from Hannah's prayer and God's response? Does God always give us what we want? If someone prays and doesn't get the answer they want does that mean that there is some sin in their life? Not, necessarily, it might mean that God sees beyond human vision and if we could see how God sees we wouldn't be asking for what we are asking for.

Let's talk about Eli and his son's for a minute, read 1 Samuel 2:22-25

*1Sam 2:22 Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 23 So he said to them, “Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. 24 No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the LORD's people. 25 If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?” His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death.*

What does this mean? Does this mean the reason the sons of Eli didn't listen is because God didn't want them to listen so He prevented it because God wanted to kill them?

Read 1Samuel 2:27-33

*1Sam 2:27 Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Did I not clearly reveal myself to your father's house when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? 28 I chose your father out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence. I also gave your father's house all the offerings made with fire by the Israelites. 29 Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?’*

*1Sam 2:30 "Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and your father's house would minister before me forever.' But now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained. 31 The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your family line 32 and you will see distress in my dwelling. Although good will be done to Israel, in your family line there will never be an old man. 33 Every one of you that I do not cut off from my altar will be spared only to blind your eyes with tears and to grieve your heart, and all your descendants will die in the prime of life.*

What do you take away from this passage? What principle is critical to understand here that many Christians have failed to understand? Had God made promises to Eli and his family? What does God say about His promise in this passage? Why doesn't God keep His promise? Does this have any bearing to the promises He made to the children of Israel? To us?

What kind of father was Eli? Did he discipline his sons?

The Lord comes to Samuel three times and then on the fourth Samuel says, speak for your servant is listening and the Lord told Samuel that Eli's sons and family were going to be wiped out – the next day Samuel tells Eli and Eli responds with:

Read 1 Samuel 3:17,18

*1Sam 3:17 "What was it he said to you?" Eli asked. "Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you." 18 So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, "He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes."*

What do you think about this response? Do you think it sounds like Eli finally is doing as God would have him do? That God preferred this response? When Abraham heard God was going to destroy Sodom did he respond like Eli? When Moses heard God was going to destroy Israel did he respond like Eli? When David heard that his son was going to die did he respond like Eli? How are these three men described? Friends of God, men after God's own heart. When we get the word from God and it is actually from God does it necessarily mean we should simply say, "He is the Lord let Him do what He thinks is best." Is that what God wants from us?

## THURSDAY

TQ page 99 states, "Review the spiritual condition of Israel at that time... There were two primary categories of people in those days of spiritual dearth – the immoral and the demoralized. But then there was a third group, relatively small – the consecrated."

Is this talking about the entire world population or the nation of Israel? What was the purpose of the nation of Israel? To be witnesses to the truth to bring the world back to God for the advent of the Messiah! What is the purpose of the SDA movement? Do these very same questions apply to us?

Satan tells lies about God in order to get one of two responses from people, either to deny God exists at all or to believe such horrible things about God that people cower in fear and terror of God, are afraid and work to avoid being with Him or have someone to protect us from Him. Consider the world today and its different philosophies and see where people fall –

- Agnostics and atheists
- Buddhists – no God

- Hindu – reincarnation to purify self through suffering until one with cosmos i.e. no God
- Catholics – Jesus and saint to protect from God’s wrath
- Islam – wrathful and punishing God
- Protestants – Jesus to assuage God’s wrath and protect us and God will torment wicked in hell
- Pagans – stern god who requires appeasement

What religions of the world are telling the truth about God – that He is never failing love as revealed in Jesus, that He is our Friend? Where is the group revealing this reality in their lives? What about Adventism – what were we called up for? To reveal the truth about God in our lives! To be witnesses to the world that God is not like what Satan has misrepresented Him to be. How are we doing?

## FRIDAY

Read EGW comment – thoughts? Notice the key and balance here:

Key – “But it is only when she seeks, in her own life, to follow the teachings of Christ that the mother can hope to form the character of her children after the divine pattern.”

The mother is responsible for her character—not the character of her children; she can only “hope” to form the child’s character correctly when she is forming her own correctly. Also, the balance of the other influences beside the parental influences.

Read questions 1, 2, 3 and discuss

**2007 Q3 Lesson 9     The Jobs: Living with Losses**

Thoughts or questions from the class?

**SUNDAY**

Read second paragraph “It’s interesting...” Thoughts?

Why does a loving God allow so much suffering? Can genuine love exist in an atmosphere without freedom? Does genuine freedom risk disagreement? Does this give insight as to why there is pain and suffering currently?

Why will there be no pain and suffering in the end? Because everyone will be fully convinced in their own minds of the truth about God, His methods and principles, and will be so settled into this truth they cannot be moved. In other words, all the peoples of eternity will be restored fully into Godliness that every being there would freely give his or her life for every other being there.

Does that mean there won’t be any disagreements about anything? Could one still disagree on where to put the hibiscus plant in the garden?

Can anyone think of other reasons for pain and suffering?

- We live in a war zone between good and evil and innocent casualties happen
- God will discipline those who loves, so suffering sometimes could be discipline
- Sometimes as a consequence of our own choices – touch a hot stove and suffer pain

What do we learn from the story of Job regarding pain and suffering? Is this story primarily about how the righteous suffer? Or is this story primarily about God? How?

Where does the scene start – after describing Job, we turn to heaven and Satan comes to heaven for this council. Why do you think Satan was there? What was going on here?

It says, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.” KJV, NKJV, Darby, ASV, ESV, NASB, YLT. (the word translated as “son” is “ben” as in “ben hur” son of hur.

Notice it says that Adam was the son of God, in Luke 3:37, 38 finishing the genealogy of Christ it states:

*the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch,  
the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel,  
the son of Kenan, the son of Enosh,  
the son of Seth, the son of Adam,  
the son of God.*

Do you think this counsel was a counsel of the representative heads of all the worlds? Formed of the first created beings on each of the planets where God has created life? And Adam’s place in this counsel Satan claimed as his?

God says, “Satan where have you come from?” Satan says, “From earth where else. Don’t you know it’s my kingdom?” God says, “Not so fast, have you considered my servant Job, he is perfect and righteous in all his ways. He doesn’t recognize your rulership. He is loyal to me.” Satan responds, “He only pretends, he isn’t on your side because you pay well...”

What is the allegation? Job only values God for what God can do for him not for who God is, not for God’s character methods and principles – thoughts about this?

Many people fall into this same trap, falsely believing their value is in what they can do not in who they are. I see these frequently in my office when someone has had an injury and can no longer work and they begin to believe they are a burden to their families, they begin to think that their family would be better off without them, they begin to think as Satan alleges, your family only values you for what you do for them not for who you are.

Do you value God for what He can do for you or for who He is?

And then what happens? Does God strike out against Job? No! God removes the restraint He has placed on Satan and gave Satan more freedom over Job's life – and what happened? Destruction, pain, suffering and death – now did God force Satan to behave in this way or was Satan free to treat Job any way he wanted?

What do we learn? That Satan is the destroyer, the bringer of pain, suffering and death not God – but what did the people think? What did the servant report? “The fire from God fell”, and Job, “The Lord gave and the Lord takes away”, and the three friends blamed God –

What do we learn? God has been lied about, God has been misrepresented, we have misunderstood and misinterpret events attributing them to God.

Why would God allow such a thing? Can angels read hearts and minds? Can other created beings read the inmost secrets of the heart? If they could none would have been deceived by Lucifer in the first place. So when God declares Job righteous and Satan says no – Satan is saying God is wrong – if Satan gets Job to curse God he looks to all those Sons of God and says, “See I told you, He was wrong about Job and He is wrong about me, you can't trust what God says.”

Do we still struggle with this issue today? How do we see these same issues at play in our modern world?

Health Wellness gospel – if you have faith you will be healthy and wealthy and if you are poor and sick you are out with God. That God is the one who brings punishment for sin and God punished New Orleans with Katrina for its wickedness etc.

## MONDAY

We are supposed to be talking about Bible couples this quarter – what do we know from the Bible about Job and his wife?

Does the Bible give us much information about Mrs. Job? Do we even know her name?

What do you think about what she said to Job? Do you think she was discouraged? Do you think she was grieving?

The lesson title is called The Jobs: Living with Loss – has anyone in here struggled with loss – would anyone like to share what helped them in times of loss?

Read bottom paragraph “In Job 1:1...” and bottom green section - Thoughts?

What kind of gospel does it sound like she believed? The health wellness gospel – bad events must mean you have done something wrong?

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph and question immediately following, thoughts?

What impact do you think Mrs. Job's words had on Job if any? Can words discourage as well as encourage?



How do we deal with people when they say negative things to us?

Examine the truth and facts, remembering “from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” which means what? That people reveal what is in them, what they believe and think, their character by what they say and do. They don’t necessary reveal reality.

But not only do words reveal what is in the heart, our words react upon us and change us:

The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; but the expression reacts on the thoughts. They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan's instigation. Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are. It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character, in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” {DA 323.1}

Thoughts? Does this mean we shouldn’t ask questions – God said it, I believe it, that’s all there is to it? Don’t question divine light? Or does it mean to question but with a heart attitude of one who really wants to understand, not question to try to cause doubt and confusion.

## THURSDAY

Read bottom paragraph “Even though Job...” – thoughts?

Notice it correctly says Evil doesn’t come from God – do we ever attribute evil to God? How?

Do we ever suggest God is the source of death? i.e. God will execute the sinner? That God will burn people in hell? Did they in the book of Job attribute the losses to God? Do we do that in our lives?

But where does death come from? The law of sin and death, which is selfishness, survival of the fittest, the opposite of the law of love.

In TC page 109 speaking about Mrs. Job it says, “But in the account as presented in the book of Job her role was disappointingly unexemplary and stands as a clangorous warning that anger toward God for any reason whatsoever is wholly unwarranted.” – thoughts?

Do you know people who are angry at God or have been angry at God, what should they do? Should they not talk to God about their anger? Or should they pretend they are not angry or feel guilty for feeling anger because it is wholly unwarranted?

I have had patients who have been angry at God but never dealt with it because they were told they it is sin to be angry at God so they pretend to themselves they are not.

If you had a child who was angry at you would you want them to talk to you about it? Why? Do you think God wants us to talk to Him?

I had a patient whose mother died when she was 5 years old, and she told me that during the funeral, she was sitting on the front row and the pastor looked right at her and said, “Sweetheart, Jesus took your mommy to be with Him.”

She said this made her angry and she was still angry at God all these years later – why was she angry at God?

Because she had believed a lie, if one has believed lies about God and then has anger – would that anger be warranted? It actually wouldn’t be directed at the reality of God, but at the misconstrued construct of God the person holds, but what would be the only way to work that out?

So, it is true, when one understands all things correctly there is never a reason to be angry at God, but is there a place for anger along the way as we are working through the misunderstandings? And when we experience anger at God, do we know enough about Him now that we will recognize this anger as a sign that we are misunderstanding something?

#### FRIDAY

Questions 2 and 3 read and discuss.

**2007 Q3 Lesson 10    David and Bathsheba: Adultery and After**

Notes are not available

**2007 Q3 Lesson 11    Ahab and Jezebel: Abuse of Authority****SABBATH**

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Are there some marriages “made in hell”? In other words, are there some marriages not blessed by God? Some marriages where God has not joined two people together? Would there be any spiritual problem with divorcing in a case like this? Or would the spiritual problem be in staying married?

Once he had made the mistake of marrying Jezebel, would Ahab have made a better spiritual choice to divorce her rather than staying married to her, even if she never had sexual relations with another man?

Ahab is described as weak-willed – what makes someone weak-willed? What are the factors that lead someone to not stand up for themselves or the truth? Fear – fear of rejection, fear of pain and suffering, fear of ridicule – consider Herod when Salome requested the head of John the Baptist – was he weak-willed? Why? Fear of what others might think. What about Pilate when he was convinced that Jesus was innocent, was he weak-willed? Why? Fear of losing his power or position.

Our responsibility is to do what is right regardless of feelings of fear and insecurity – what can enable us to do this?

The greater our confidence in God, which is based on the more intimately we know Him, then the greater our ability to stand firm for what is right, reasonable and healthy.

Jezebel is described as power hungry – what drives someone to be power hungry? Fear and selfishness, fear of not getting what they deserve, fear of being taken advantage of, selfish entitlement believing self is better or more deserving than others –

Is God power hungry – what did Jesus reveal? – Philippians 2:5-11

*Your attitude should be the same as that of 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,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.  
What is God's power, the power upon which His government rests?*

*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*

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}

Did Ahab and Jezebel wield this type of power?

What about today? Are Christians in danger of using Satan's coercive methods rather than the power of truth, love and freedom?

How can we protect ourselves from abusing authority in Christ's name?

## SUNDAY

Read last paragraph – thoughts?

Is it hard to understand from our perspective? What was their root problem?

Romans 1:18-28 – the truth about God was rejected and their minds became darkened, foolish, depraved – would we say this fits the description of Ahab and Jezebel?

What about in Christ's day – were the religious leaders practicing idolatry like Ahab and Jezebel? No, but were they misrepresenting the truth about God, had they accepted lies about God and did they teach those lies? And were they leading people away from God just as surely as Ahab and Jezebel? Did they crucify God when He dwelt among them?

Christ said about them,

*“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. Matt 23:15*

Was this any better than Ahab and Jezebel? Or worse, for it gave the appearance of godliness and made it harder to see the error?

What about today – do we find religious people who reject the truth about God and instead accept Satan's allegations of God? What about in our church? Do people in our church reject the truth about God and promote distortions about God leading people away from God? Any examples?

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 ever hear teaching that suggest that God must use His power to inflict pain and suffering on His children – this is Satan's argument, God's government does not rest on the use of power and might but on truth, love and freedom.

Every false religious system of the world has a god who uses power in coercive ways – God does not, and thus Christian teachings that put God in the role of executioner, that suggest God is the

source of suffering and death, that God must use His power to inflict harm on the wicked are doing the same work as Ahab and Jezebel – leading people away from the knowledge of God.

### February 2007 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 lightening, or a lethal injection?"

But what does EGW say about this?

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. 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.** 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. 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. Isa. 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}

What was the error of Job's friends? Believing that Job was being punished by God, believing God was the one inflicting punishment upon Job. What was the error of the Jews in Christ's day, believing that God punished Christ? And what is the error of the majority of Christians today including many in our own church? That God punished Christ, that God, who is the source of all love, goodness and life is the source of pain suffering and death.

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}

Why is this important? As we read in Romans 1 – the mind cannot be healed as long as we hold to lies about God, when we reject the truth about God and accept false versions of God it damages the mind and character.

TQ – page 127 "Jezebel's bio reads like a rap sheet for extortion, genocide, murder, idolatry, blackmail. Her forceful personality dominated her husband. What happens in a marriage when one spouse dominates the other?"

Three predictable consequences occur –

1. love is damaged and eventually destroyed



2. a desire to rebel is instilled
3. if freedom not restored, the submissive partner loses individuality

Additionally, in such relationships the dominate party loses interest in the submissive party because the submissive party becomes a shadow of the dominate one, stops having original thoughts, ideas, beliefs, is no longer spontaneous and or interesting but is merely a reflector of the domineering partner's thoughts.

## MONDAY

Read third paragraph "Already so filled..." thoughts?

Do such things happen in our church? Do people wield power in the church for personal gain or personal reasons? How?

A wealthy family told the pastor they would donate a large amount of money to the school in exchange for two seats on the school board – how should a pastor respond?

A businessman calls church leaders and suggest that if certain individuals are included in upcoming programs then their funding will be pulled – the concerns are not theological but personal – how should church leaders respond? How do you think they would respond? How did Christ respond to the powerful and rich in His day when they suggested He was including the wrong people in His ministry?

What types of power do people have and how can it be abused?

- money – bribes, threaten to pull funding,
- might – physical violence – especially in families, beast system will use physical might to coerce
- knowledge- others weaknesses/sins, scientific knowledge
- position – teacher/pupil, doctor/patient, pastor/ parishioner
- situation – Here rumors, and don't redirect the person but act on the rumor
- competence – a doctor can abuse his authority as expert witness, a nutritionist can assert competence regarding neuropsychiatric issues
- personality – power of persuasion

How did Jesus use power? What kind of power did He use?

How did Jesus respond to those in "power" when they tried to intimidate Him into doing things their way? When they tried to influence who should be included in His ministerial team? Is there a lesson for us?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

Just as coming to into the light from darkness takes time to adjust to the light – whether it is physical light or the light of truth, the mind takes time to adjust and be able to handle it. Can anyone testify that it takes time to comprehend new truth and get the mind operating on new wisdom? Likewise, when one is in the light it takes time to adjust to the darkness, in other words, people generally don't become reprobate in an instant but by a series of slow compromises they slowly sear their consciences, damage the reason and blind themselves.

## TUESDAY

Jezebel and Elijah – do you think it was easy for Elijah to stand up to the king and queen? If you were Elijah do you think you might have had some anxiety?

What lesson is there for us? When we are doing God's will do we need to base our decisions on the size of forces lined up against us?

Should we compromise our ministry in order to garner support from the rich and powerful?

## WEDNESDAY

Read all three paragraphs – thoughts?

Read bottom green section – are there people in society today using religion for political reasons? What political reasons is religion being used for? How can you identify it? What is the Christlike response?

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Was God wrathful in this situation? What is God's wrath? Romans 1:18-28 – God's wrath is "letting go" and allowing people to reap the consequences of their choices.

Did God let go in this situation or did God intervene to expose the impotence of Baal and win the people back to Him? Then this was not an example of God's wrath and to label it as such misrepresents God and darkens our minds about God.

## FRIDAY

Question 3 read and discuss – what impression of the kind of God we serve would a visitor get?

Read summary – did He save them from ruin? Why not?

**2007 Q3 Lesson 12 Hosea and Gomer: Forgiving the Unfaithful****SUNDAY**

Read first paragraph – thoughts? How did the people commit adultery with God? By giving their hearts and minds to other gods, would this be true for our marriage relationships? In other words, can adultery be committed with the heart and mind and not the body?

Read last paragraph – What do you think of this method of teaching? Is this how God used the entire nation of Israel – as an object lesson to teach the plan of salvation? Does it make a difference to understanding when we see it in this light? How so?

**FRIDAY**

Read second paragraph “Jesus is our...” Thoughts?

What does this paragraph mean?

Is Jesus in heaven pleading to the Father? Is Jesus in a dark smoke filled building? What does this mean?

*“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 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. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. John 16:12-15*

Who is it that wants to tell the disciples something? Why doesn't He tell them? After Christ's resurrection where is Christ? In heaven – does He still want to tell the disciples truth – enlighten their minds? But Christ is no longer on earth to talk with them so the Holy Spirit brings truth to God's children on earth. But who is the Holy Spirit listening to? And who is He communicating to? And where is the HS getting His message? And what is it about? The truth about God! and what does the truth about God do? Remove lies which removes doubt and restores faith! Christ is in heaven and pleading to you and me via the HS i.e. He is working in the Most Holy Place of the Spirit Temple to remove the lies about God and restore trust and love which removes fear and selfishness a.k.a. sinfulness from our characters!

**TUESDAY**

Read third paragraph – “The real issue...” and question immediately following - thoughts?

How do we practice spiritual adultery? Money? Power? What about false pictures of God? what about a political religion?

*“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. 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 evil-doers!’” Matt 7:21-23*

What is the will of the Father? That we love one another! That we understand, appreciate and value God's methods principles and character and willingly practice them in our lives.

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph “The first son...” then Read Hosea 2:4,5 – thoughts? Do you think this is an accurate lesson for how God feels about us, or how God treats us? Do you think this should be a proof text on how we should treat people in this condition? i.e. not love them?

Do you think the people of Hosea’s time were learning much out of what Hosea was doing? What about the names of his children? Jezreel means God scatters, do you think it meant much to them at that time? Do you think they heard it like this when his mother called him, “God scatters come to dinner”?

Or do you think they heard “Jezreel come to dinner”?

Today, do you know someone named Bill – and when his mother calls him to you hear, “invoice come to dinner”?

Or someone named Pat do you hear “light tapping or light touch”?

I didn’t live back then, but do you think people actually thought about the meaning of the names of people or just associated the name with the person?

Read third paragraph “It may seem...” Thoughts?

Do Christians do this today? Do we attribute our blessings to false gods?

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}

When we worship a being who will torture His creatures in hell are we worshipping the true God? How about one who would execute His Son? Any other ideas which distort the truth about God?

TQ page 141 “There is a story about a husband who finds his wife’s suicide note that asks the question. Can you forgive me? The story unfolds to reveal that she had an affair with her brother-in-law and chose death rather than the humiliation and shame of having her husband find out about it. For her, seeking forgiveness was not an option.

“Many of us have skeletons in our closets, things we work very hard at keeping away from family, friends, and the church. But with ours, there is no hiding from God. However, this should bring us comfort, not fear. God’s intimate knowledge of everything we do should make it easier to approach His throne of grace.”

Thoughts?

Why do we try to hide our mistakes from family friends and church? Is it always our shame or even fear, or even our knowledge of how people will treat us?

If everyone would treat us like Jesus, would we still be as afraid?

Do we sometimes try to hide our mistakes, not for fear of what will happen to us, but because we are concerned others aren’t mature enough to handle it? i.e. the knowledge may harm someone else?

Sin is insidious, when we find out about someone else's sin, could we be tempted to be resentful, angry, bitter, jealous or condemning, critical, unloving? Could our heart actually be hardened by the knowledge of someone else's sin? How do we prevent this? By loving forgiveness & longing for their healing.

What practices are those which we typically look down on others for? Drugs, alcohol and sex?

What are most offensive in God's eyes?

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 un-fallen 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

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}

Thoughts? Would this include those who gossip about others in the church? Those who spread rumors?

Last paragraph and green section read both – thoughts?

How does sin blind?

First – what was the first sin? To believe what? Lies about God and what does that do? Blinds why?

*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, 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. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. 2 Thes 2:9-12*

What does this text mean? Does God use His power to make people delusional? Then what is going on? If people reject the truth on any subject – what is the only thing left to believe? Lies – thus they become delusional.

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 about the EGW quote?

Secondly, when we sin we are convicted of guilt – we respond by either repentance and restoration which results in healing or by denial and blaming others – it wasn’t me it was that woman you gave me – which works to blind the mind.

### WEDNESDAY

Bearing fruit of unfaithfulness –

Why does God hate sin? What does sin do to the sinner? To others?

David and Bathsheba?

A person told me of her daughter being abused by the son-in-law and how she had all kinds of anger and resentment toward him. The sin of the man had planted a seed of anger and resentment in the mother-in-law’s heart, that if she doesn’t forgive him will grow into hatred and bitterness resulting in her becoming as hard hearted as the man who was abusing her daughter.

If someone has wronged us – why is it important we forgive? What if we don’t?

### THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts? How has God attempted to win us?

Why has God not used might and power to force everyone into line?

Why has God not threatened to take away His blessings?

Love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom – and what kind of a God would God be if He used these methods?

In TQ p 139 it states, “Hosea redeems Gomer for 15 pieces of silver, plus one and one-half homers of barley. It’s enough for Hosea to buy back her life. How does Jesus’ blood make our worth incalculable and buy us back from sin?” Thoughts?

What does it mean to “buy us back from sin?”



## 2007 Q3 Lesson 13    Fulfillment Beyond Failure

Notes are not available.

## 2007 Q4 Lesson 1      The Shepherd's Crucible

I received the following email this week:

In researching for this week's SS lesson, Hosea and Gomer, I came across the "Come and Reason Class." In the audio, you stated that nowhere in EGW writings does she say that Jesus pleads "with the Father." I did a little research and found several places where she did. I do understand the point you are trying to make about God's character and I believe in a God who is a loving and merciful Father.

Below are some of the EGW quotes I found. I didn't research extensively, because I do agree with the point you are making, just concerned about the way you made it.

EGW Quotes:

**Early Writings – End of the 2300 Days** – "Those who were bowed before the throne would offer up their prayers and look to Jesus; then He would look to His Father, and appear to be pleading with Him."

**Early Writings – Supplement 1882** – He then made known to the angelic choir that a way of escape had been made for lost man; that He had been pleading with His Father, and had obtained permission to give His own life as a ransom for the race, to bear their sins, and take the sentence of death upon Himself . . .

**Early Writings – Spiritual Gifts, Volume One** – "He told them He had been pleading with his Father, and had offered to give His life a ransom, . . ."

**Lift Him Up – Chap 1 pg 23** – "He told them that He had been pleading with His Father, and had offered to give His life a ransom . . ."

Selected Messages Book 3 – "Jesus is in the heavenly courts pleading with the Father in our behalf."

### My response:

Thank you for your email and for such careful listening and reading. I am so glad there are people like you who don't just take everything said but check things out thoroughly. I guess what I should have said is that nowhere does EGW "mean" the Son is pleading with the Father rather than "say" He is pleading with the Father.

But let's look at the citation you sent to see if they actually contradict the point I was making in class. The first instance cited merely says that He "appeared" to be pleading not He was pleading.

The next three citations are actually describing the same event in three different places and the context is not Jesus in heaven pleading to the Father regarding forgiving our sins, but is a dialogue between the Father and the Son regarding who was going to come and save the race and put an end to sin. You have to choose how you hear this description. Do you hear it as "please Dad, I know you don't want to save those dirty sinners, but I love them! please let me go and save them." Or do you hear it as "No, Dad you can't go, please let me go instead." In other words, to you understand in this conversation that both the Father and the Son were in agreement to save the race, the question was who was going to go and EGW was describing the dialogue between the Father and Son demonstrating it was not an easy thing for God to let His Son go – some misinterpret and think that means God didn't want to save the race, not so, it was that the Father wanted to come Himself. If you have a child who would you rather sacrifice your child or yourself. So these three quotes do not negate what I said.

Finally, the last quote EGW is speaking in symbolic language, which we know is not to be taken literally how do we know? First, because her writings cannot contradict Scripture and Jesus said in John 16:26 that He would *not* pray the Father for us because the Father Himself loves us. There is no need for the Son to actually pray the Father for us. And secondly, because EGW would not contradict herself, she said elsewhere:

"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." ST Jan 13, 1909

Notice the point – Satan alleged God was selfish, if Christ had to actually plead to the Father in order to get the Father to love us, forgive us, pardon us etc etc. then Satan would be right. But she says here that God provided this sacrifice because He loved us and no need for Christ to plead for it.

So the point I was trying to make is that Jesus does not plead to the Father in our behalf to get the Father to forgive, or be loving or to have our sins pardoned etc. Therefore, I don't believe the EGW quotes you shared have contradicted the point I was making.

Thanks again for the reminder to be careful in how I express myself and the opportunity to clarify.

Blessings,

Tim

In the introduction to this quarter someone read the fourth paragraph which begins, “Thus, our Creator, the One...”

Thoughts? What does this mean? How did He bear our griefs and carry our sorrows? It says, “all of them” does that mean all of our individual griefs and sorrows were laid upon Christ?

If He actually experienced these for us, then why do we have to experience them? Isn't that like double jeopardy – double suffering? Did He experience the sorrows and griefs for the wicked and the righteous or just the righteous?

Or does it mean something else? This is the NIV rendering:

*ISA 53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities  
and carried our sorrows,  
yet we considered him stricken by God,  
smitten by him, and afflicted.*

Might it mean He took upon Himself our sickly state? That He took upon Himself the weight of suffering and grief that comes from sinfulness? That He took our condition upon Himself?

Is it true we only experience our own griefs and sorrows? Or do we experience the griefs and sorrows of others? Has your heart ever been grieved and filled with sorrow because of another's suffering? If we do would it be similar to the way Christ bore ours?

*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.  
Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Col 3:13*

*We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.  
Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”  
Romans 15:1-3*

How do you understand it? Here is how one of the founders of our church put it:

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}

Thoughts? So how was Christ our Sin Bearer? He took our sick and sinful condition (subject to like passions as we are, tempted in every way like we are yet without sin) and bore it to the Cross curing in His own being this species – this human race, this creation. He rewrote in His own personhood the law of love back into this species and purged the infection which brings death. But He also bore with the sinfulness of humankind in our treatment of Him.

## SABBATH

Let's recite the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm together –

Thoughts about the Psalm – does our understanding of the meaning depend on the context in which we read the Psalm? Is this Psalm best understood in the context of 1000 BC when David wrote it? Or is there another context? If we read it with the context of 1000 BC what conclusions might we draw?

- The Lord is our shepherd – what does that make us? What does a shepherd do?
- Do we need to worry about food or does the shepherd lead into green pastures?
- The valley of the shadow of death – how would we understand that in the context of 1000 BC?
- Anointing head with oil?
- Cup running over?
- Dwelling in the house of the Lord?
- What about the context of the Great Controversy over the character and government of God?
- Walking through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil... any differences – is it primarily about our physical safety or is it about dying to self? Read first two paragraphs in Sabbath's Lesson
- Preparing a table before mine enemies – thoughts in this GC context? (see notes on Wednesday)
- Restoring my soul? He restores us back to His original ideal, in character and mind now and body at the second coming. Thus here and now as we are healed to be like him in character we take our place as the repositories of His character of love – revealing His name to the world and onlooking universe.
- Anointing head with oil?
- Cup running over?
- Dwelling in the house of the Lord forever?

Which way of seeing the Psalm—which context—is most helpful in answering questions like, how a Jew going to the gas chamber might claim this psalm or how a Christian going to the stake might claim this psalm?

The TQ states the shortest way between two points is a straight line and then asks if the path described in Psalms 23 sounds like a straight line? Why not?

Could it be because we are bent, twisted, broken, and we are the ones being straightened and in this process we need to go through the valley of the shadow of death? And notice, it is the valley of the *shadow of death*, not the valley of *death*—does that make a difference? Could that mean it is the appearance of death but in actuality is the path of life. In other words, the path in which we must die to self, so it feels like death but results in eternal life? Would this be why the Great Shepherd would lead us into such a valley? If this is the purpose, then do we need to fear such a valley?

Would such a valley be the paths of righteousness that the Psalmist is describing?

## SUNDAY

Jesus as a shepherd – what do you think of metaphor? What lessons can we learn from this metaphor?

- How does a shepherd lead? By driving or calling and leading?

- Will a shepherd put himself in harms way to protect the sheep?
- Will a shepherd stay in the harsh weather with the sheep?
- Will a shepherd seek the lost sheep?
- Will a shepherd carry a hurt sheep?
- Does the shepherd metaphor always work well in today's society?
- Can you think of other metaphors that might work well?

## **GOD IS FOR REAL, MAN**

*God is for Real, Man*, by Carl F. Burke, Chaplain of Erie County Jail, Buffalo, New York; Association Press, New York; ©1966 by National Board of Young Men's Christian Association.

### **How This Book Came to Be**

"Mister, what's God like?" That's the question that started this book. It was asked several years ago on a trail leading to the campfire circle at Camp Vick, the Western New York Baptist Camp. The answer to the seemingly simple question came without the slightest hesitation, and with the authority of a theological education, plus several years' experience as a pastor, and above all with the confidence that was expected of an "adult leader." "God," was the answer, "is like a father."

The reply from the boy came slowly and devastated the adult leader, his experience, his theological education, and the confidence that is expected of an "adult leader." "Hah," the boy said with much venom, "if he's like my father I sure would hate him." The rest of the trip to the fire circle was made in silence. The "adult leader" was never the same again."

Try this one. An eight-year-old girl, abandoned on the streets of a large city, asks, "If God loves me like you say he does, why did he let Mommy and Daddy go away on me?" If you try to answer this remember that you are speaking to an eight-year-old who has never experienced parental love—a girl who has known little of family relationships except that she is not really a child—she is an intrusion.

Or what about a boy whose parents are "winos" or "junkies," or a combination of both? He asks about honoring your father and mother. There is of course, a Christian answer to this. The problem is, how do you verbalize it? How do you talk of the love of a father to a boy whose concept of a father is that of a "drunken bum" who often wakes lying in his own vomit and who fails to provide for his children? How does one honor him? Or when the same thing applies to a mother and some of "her men," where do honor and respect come in? Honor, respect, love: for many of the children who have shared in the writing of this book, these are merely words that have no meaning in demonstrable concepts.

[The author, in his ministry to inner city children, chose to tell stories from the Bible, then invited them to re-write the accounts in their own language and setting.]

The version of the Twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is Like My Probation Officer...", was done by one boy and myself. The young lad was the victim of what psychologists call a "rejection syndrome." He was quite convinced that no one in the world had the slightest interest in him, and he expressed a longing for someone to whom he could turn. We were seeking for something that would have meaning to him. About the only one he could think of who had shown interest in him was the Probation Officer, for whom he had great admiration. Thus by our working together, this boy was able to express his feeling and establish a relationship with a person, which he could then translate into a relationship with our Lord.

## The Lord is Like My Probation Officer... Psalm 23

The Lord is like my Probation Officer,  
He will help me,  
He tries to help me make it every day.  
He makes me play it cool  
And feel good inside of me.  
He shows me the right path  
So I'll have a good record,  
And he'll have one too.  
Because I trust him,  
And that ain't easy,  
I don't worry too much about  
What's going to happen.  
Just knowing he cares about  
Me helps me.  
He makes sure I have my food  
And that Mom fixes it.  
He helps her stay sober  
And that makes me feel good  
All over.  
He's a good man, I think,  
And he is kind;  
And these things will stay  
With me.  
And when I'm kind and good  
Then I know the Lord  
Is with me like the Probation Officer.

*God is for Real, Man*, by Carl F. Burke, Chaplain of Erie County Jail, Buffalo, New York; Association Press, New York; ©1966 by National Board of Young Men's Christian Association.

Thoughts? Can you think of any metaphors that are meaningful to you?

### MONDAY

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Anyone want to share how God's leading has prepared them for His service?

Many years ago, I had graduated from Southern with an AD in nursing and was working at a local hospital. After about 8 months I was terminated – no real reason. I had never been fired from a job in my life, and this hurt my ego, I was angry. I didn't understand why this happened. But I do what we all do, I got another job at another hospital. Very shortly thereafter, I met a person who became a good friend. She was taking premed classes at UTC and suggested that I should go premed and we could take classes together – and that is what I did. I had always wanted to be a doctor, but the Lord knew I needed this extra little encouragement to get me to go down that path. If I hadn't been fired from that job, I wouldn't have met this friend and may never have gone on to med school or become a psychiatrist. I look back on that event with a new perspective and it has helped me handle new trials when they come along.



## TUESDAY

TQ page 11 states: “The introduction to this quarter’s lessons mentions the word theodicy, a combination of the Greek words for God and justice. Theodicy is a philosophical discipline that searches for an answer to the problem of evil. Its fundamental question is “If God is good, why is there evil?” In other words, why do bad things happen to good people?”

“Most non-Christian religions have no problem with theodicy because their gods just are reflections of the human beings who serve them. No one expects these gods to do much good. These religions tend to focus on appeasing the gods, with the hope of keeping their bad tempers and violent natures in check.”

Thoughts about this? Has any of this pagan thinking entered into Christian circles? How? What can we do about it?

## WEDNESDAY

Top paragraph read – thoughts?

Read psalms 23:5 at the top of the page – how does this apply to dealing with enemies?

What do the three items, table, oil, cup running over have to do with dealing with enemies?

What table might this be? Could it be the table of God’s grace filled with spiritual truth and nourishment?

*John 6:35–51 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. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe...”*

*At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”*

*“Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. 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.”*

Then Jesus goes on to say unless you eat His flesh and drink His blood you have no part with him – what does this mean? And could this apply to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm?

So the table is the table of truth presented by Christ, His life, character, methods, principles that we ingest into our minds and are restored to trust –

What about the anointing of the head with oil? The oil represents the Holy Spirit which of course helped us understand the truth presented by Christ and then once we are won to trust are filled with the Spirit who heals, regenerates, transforms and rebuilds Christlike character within –

And the cup that runs over?

To the woman at the well, Christ said, *“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” John 4:13,14*

Could this be the overflow of the cup David is referring to in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm? The overflow of God's love to others?

How can we experience this when dealing with people who are our enemies?

Does it help to remember the nature and character of sin? What does sin do to the sinner? It damages and destroys the sinner. We don't have to be mad or angry at the sinner, they are destroying themselves and the more clearly we see God and His character in contrast to sin we will have more and more pity and compassion on those who are our enemies.

## THURSDAY

Read middle paragraph – “Some translations...” and the dark section immediately following – thoughts? Do you like the idea of God's love pursuing you? Does this tell us something about the nature and character of God?

Bottom pink – read – thoughts? Can anyone share some “evidence” revealing God's goodness?

## FRIDAY

Question 1 – thoughts – what reasons might you share for why bad things happen to good people?

1. discipline?
2. we are at war and an enemy is attacking
3. a consequence of our own conduct
4. a consequence of freedom and someone else's choices
5. a witness to the universe i.e. book of Job
6. Love requires freedom and if God were to control every being's decisions love could not exist.

## 2007 Q4 Lesson 2     The Crucibles that Come

### SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs – is a crucible a bad thing, a good thing, a necessary thing?

Do we need to have crucibles in our lives? Why?

*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.*

*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 3:18*

If you had a broken leg and went to PT, when you put weight on that leg for the first time, began to stretch the muscles and tendons, would there be pain involved? If you had the attitude “I will be glad to do the PT as soon as there is no pain,” would you ever walk again? Now, is the physical therapist who is overseeing your therapy your friend or your enemy?

We are infected in our minds, and the process of healing can be painful. Does God sometimes bring us into situations that can feel bad but are actually good for us?

### SUNDAY

Read top memory verse – thoughts? Are we surprised by trials and difficulties in this world? Why or why not?

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? Can we tell whether something is good or bad simply by how it feels?

Questions from TQ page 19:

- To what extent can the trials and difficulties we face be blamed on Satan? Do our trials have a supernatural source? Why or why not?
- Would there be any suffering if there was no sin? So in one sense isn't all suffering a result of Satan or traced back to Satan? Does that mean though, that Satan directly, by his own personhood causes all suffering or trials or difficulties? Does he cause some?
- What about the source of trials – supernatural? Never, always sometimes – examples?
- Book of Job, the sufferings and trials of Job were from a supernatural source –
- Who sinned that this man was born blind... neither Christ said, no supernatural source.
- Some difficulties result from sin, some from unwise choices. Does God punish us by these difficulties or merely let us reap the results?
- When someone smokes, does God afflict them with lung disease? If you don't brush your teeth, does God punish you with cancer?

Then what about the stories of the OT, where God did punish? How do we understand those stories? What is the ultimate goal from God's perspective? To get us to live an extra seven years

longer or to heal us for eternity? To save just the human race or to eliminate sin and secure the entire universe?

Colossians 1:18-20

Why is it often necessary for us to suffer adverse results in order to be brought back into God's will?

Is pain a bad thing? If one doesn't brush their teeth what happens? Cavities and what do cavities feel like? Pain – and what will the pain lead one to do? Hopefully go to the dentist for healing and learn how to care for your teeth, but what if there was no pain?

If you touch a hot stove what do you feel? Pain and what will the pain lead you to do?

Leprosy is such a devastating disease and an accurate metaphor of sin because leprosy destroys one's sensitivity to pain and therefore we persist in destructive behaviors destroying ourselves and not even knowing it.

TQ page 21 states, "Peter's statement in the memory verse 'do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering' (1Pet 4:12) may have been more understandable to first-century Christians than to us. Faced with a panoply of pagan religions, all legally recognized and popular, they probably were not too surprised that their illegal and unpopular faith engendered trials and tribulations." – thoughts? What about today?

In our society, do we have a panoply of "pagan" religions and competing idols which make the Christian faith full of trials? TV, internet, video games, drugs, porn, multiple other religions – what about in countries around the world? Are there countries where converting to Christianity is illegal and punishable by death? Yes, many Islamic countries will execute someone who converts to Christianity.

What do we learn about those who would kill someone because they changed their religious beliefs? And if they believe God would be pleased with this what kind of a god have they constructed?

## MONDAY

Read top memory verse – thoughts? The lesson, in the last paragraph, states the Satan is a defeated foe, how is Satan defeated and if he is defeated why is he still causing so much trouble?

*Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. John 12:31-33*

Who is the prince of this world Jesus is referring to? Satan, and what will cause the prince of this world to be driven out? The death of Jesus – was Jesus successful in His mission to drive the devil out, in other words did Jesus win at the cross? Then does that mean the devil is no longer here on the earth, that he has been driven out? No, then where was the devil being driven out from if not from the earth? From the hearts and minds of intelligences throughout the entire universe and the hearts and minds of men!

Where did Satan want to sit enthroned? The mount of assembly Isa 14:13 as the one most loved, adored and worshipped. Where has the devil set up his shop?

*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 op-*

*pose 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. 2 Thes 2:3,4*

What is God's temple? Did this man of sin go into the heavenly realms and throw God off His throne and set himself up there? Or is this referring to the Spirit Temple, that he set himself up in the hearts and minds of people? That he has gotten people to believe lies about God, to believe Satan's version of reality? So where does Christ's death cast him out of? The heart and mind of the believer? How?

*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—Hebrews 2:14*

*This is life eternal that they might know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. John 17:3*

Jesus, by His death revealed the truth about God, Satan, the nature of sin etc. that destroys the lies which hold us captive and thus cast Satan out of our minds and hearts!

How then is Satan a roaring lion seeking someone to devour? What does a roaring lion do? Insight fear, intimidate – as soon as Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid because they were afraid – fear is part of the infection of sin. Perfect love casts out fear. Satan uses strategies that insight our fear –

- Lies believed break circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
- Acts of sin result in damage to mind, character and body - terminally
- A roaring lion insights fear and fear leads to greater selfishness and the violations of the law of love

Example – consider a couple who is just married and the husband suggests that maybe it was a mistake to get married – the wife responds with the emotion of... fear and insecurity. If the fear governs her actions, she will do what? Begin to control, monitor, complain about not having enough time, restrict, hover, smother for fear of losing him and how will the husband react? To pull back and disengage, which will increase fear which will result in more smothering, controlling behaviors a viscous cycle.

A chemistry teacher and two 17 y/o high school students were arrested and jailed because the chemistry teacher was behind in her auto payments and afraid of going bankrupt, the students were failing chemistry and afraid of not graduating and so the chemistry teacher hired the students to arson her car for a passing grade so she could claim the insurance money – why? Fear.

The devil is roaring lion – a toothless, clawless lion with a loud roar trying to insight fear because fear leads to selfishness and thus self-destructive behaviors. The devil's weapons are lies he gets us to believe that breaks the bonds of love and trust in God.

How else does the devil try to insight fear? Lies about God are high on the list...

- Believing two things that are mutually exclusive
- Letting others do your thinking for you
- Accepting symbolism as fact
- Reading the Bible and stopping with "My Bible says" and not asking but what does it mean
- Failing to incorporate all the inspired writings into a harmonious whole

- Accepting church authority rather than thinking for yourself
- Accepting feelings rather than evidence and truth

## TUESDAY

Read memory verse and then first paragraph – any thoughts? Well said here.

Read fourth paragraph – is God's wrath, as described in this paragraph, the letting go for people to reap what they have chosen, a different thing than the wrath that the wicked will suffer in the end? Or is it an accurate reflection/revelation of exactly how God will treat the wicked in the end?

## WEDNESDAY

Crucibles of purification –

Have you heard of “testing” of being tested by God? Does God test His people? What does it mean for God to test His people?

When you think of testing what comes to mind? Examinations in school? Other thoughts? In the hospital we do testing on patients all the time for what purpose? To diagnose and from the diagnoses we provide treatments and then we retest, why do we retest?

Does God need to do “tests” for Him to diagnose? Do we need to be tested to help us accept the diagnosis, for us to be brought into cooperation for treatment? Will we take God's remedy if we aren't convinced we are sick?

God will bring you over the ground again and again until with humble heart and subdued mind you bear the test that He inflicts and are wholly sanctified to His service and work. 4T 214

Thoughts about this statement? Why would God do this? Is our salvation up to us, up to us studying, preparing and then going into examination and being tested and praying we pass? Or is salvation “healing” and Christ has procured the remedy, but it is one that requires our freewill acceptance in order for it to be effective in our lives? As we take this remedy – the remedy of truth and love – we must choose to apply it to our lives and we receive divine power to follow through with the choice. Why does God bring us over the ground again and again? So transformation can be solidified in character.

TQ page 25 – “What does it mean to have a ‘simplified view of the Christian life?’”

## THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

Paul complained about a thorn in his flesh – many speculate about what this was – but I think it was poor vision – and why poor vision and why was this from the Lord – Damascus Road – what happened to Paul? Blindness from the brightness of God, and this was a powerful metaphor. Those in darkness of lies about God are blind to the truth and cannot understand or comprehend it. Paul, had been blindly warring against God while thinking he was on God's side. This impaired vision reminded him daily of his previous pride and self-righteousness and kept him humble before God.

## FRIDAY

Read EGW paragraph at the top – thoughts?



## GOOD NEWS TOUR UPDATE

This week, the GNT ads for the November GNT in Portland were pulled from all the malls in Portland because of reports of complaints about the ads. This generated some media buzz. The local NBC affiliate ran a piece on the issue and took an online vote 65% keep the ads up 35% take the ads down. Other websites have started to weigh in. The following is from <http://mypetjawa.mu.nu/archives/189660.php>

I guess the point is to show just how *forgiving* and *loving* Jesus is. *He's so loving the he'll even wash Osama bin Laden's feet!*

Sorry, I aint *that* kind of Christian. My Jesus would use nunchucks on Osama bin Laden. Or maybe rip his still beating heart out, *Temple of Doom* style.

This is the South Park Jesus. The one who boxed Satan and only won because the Satan threw the fight. The one who says to Chef when he asks Jesus for forgiveness for betting on Satan, "Aw, heck, do I have a choice?"

The posters were promoting a Christian evangelical tour of some sort from this group and hung at an Oregon mall. Needless to say, people were a little put off.

### Oregon News:

"No one is Judas in the picture, but the meaning is that Jesus would stoop to wash the feet of his enemies. The meaning is that in that painting of powerful world leaders -- and one powerful terrorist -- the one with all the power is ultimately Jesus."

The purpose of the conference is to discuss the character of God, according to Cole.

"People opposed to this picture feel that God isn't that kind. We believe that he is," Cole said.

In the Bible's Gospel of John, Jesus washes his disciples' feet prior to Judas's betrayal and urges the disciples to wash one another's feet going forward.

So, what's the point? Jesus will forgive bin Laden? What?

No, I don't think God is that kind. Not at all. Bin Laden is a mass-murderer. I don't believe in cheap repentance. In a God willing to forgive where no forgiveness is begged.

I don't necessarily believe in Dante's version of hell, or of the hell taught from most pulpits. But bin Laden makes me *want* to. If there is such a place, bin Laden deserves to be in it.

H/T: Allahakchew

By Dr. Rusty "John Doe" Shackleford at October 5, 2007 02:45 PM

## 2007 Q4 Lesson 3     The Birdcage

### SABBATH

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Are we so distractible, so unable to focus, so confused, have so many conflicting ideas in our minds that it is necessary for God to isolate us at some point in our lives to teach us the truth about Him, His methods and principles?

- After Damascus Road, Paul went and spent 3 years in the desert learning from God.
- Moses spent 40 years in the desert learning from God.
- Do we ever need to disengage in order to grow?

### SUNDAY

Exodus 14—after the children of Israel leave Egypt God leads them to the sea, an apparent place of no escape with Pharaoh's army bearing down – And then the Lesson asks, "Why did God bring the Israelites to a place where He knew they would be terrified?"

To show their helplessness, to stimulate them to turn to God, to bring them through and experience that was designed to strengthen their faith or confidence in God?

What is God's goal for them and for us? To free us from sinfulness, which is manifested in fear and selfishness. He wants to restore in us His love. Does He sometimes put us in situations in which we are challenged by feelings of fear in order to choose to follow Him and thus learn to overcome our fears in trust of Him?

If they would have known God better would they have been as terrified? If they knew God better would they also have known their own selves better? And what might that have resulted in?

Revelation 12 – these are they who do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death – what does this text mean?

### MONDAY

Read first paragraph "we might..."

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. {COL 333.1}

Read second & third paragraph – "There was..."

Remember a few lessons back we discussed how the children of Israel are actors on a great stage acting out a drama, revealing truth in symbolism—what GC truths are being revealed in this story?

Is the earth a desert devoid of God's water of life? Is Christ the rock from which the water comes? At Marah in particular the water was bitter – does this symbolize the bitterness of what the world has to offer?

Moses throws a branch into the water and the waters become pure – what might this signify?

*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. 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*

Who is the Branch? Jesus – and in Bible symbolism waters represent – people? Could this be also teaching that Christ will come amongst the people and He will purify the people?

“When they came to Marah, . . . the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee.” Though invisible to human eyes, God was the leader of the Israelites, their mighty Healer. He it was who put into the tree the properties which sweetened the waters. Thus He desired to show them that by His power He could cure the evils of the human heart. {MM 120.2}

What do you think about the Zech text regarding the Branch will come and build His temple? Haven't we taught there is a temple in heaven and Moses built one as a copy of the original in heaven? Then if the temple was already built in heaven what does this text mean? Or is it possible the true temple Christ was coming to build?

First, was Moses told to copy a sanctuary in heaven or a pattern God would show him?

*“Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you. Exodus 25:8,9*

This doesn't say Moses saw a tabernacle in heaven but a pattern of a tabernacle shown him on the mount. Was Moses given a pattern of what Christ was coming to build? What Christ was coming to accomplish? Was the old temple pointing forward to Christ? Do we have any Bible texts that might tell us what temple Christ was coming to build?

*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? 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:*

*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.*

*HEB 8:1 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.*

*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.*

“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 wrought 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).

What do we make of all these texts and EGW quotes regarding the temple? First there is a real physical place in heaven where God resides and the heavenly host come to worship before Him, so we are not suggesting there is not physical reality to heaven. What the texts and EGW quotes do seem to be suggesting is that God’s focus is not on cleansing inert substances in heaven or building grand cathedrals made out of heavenly inert substances, but God’s focus is on cleansing the hearts and minds of His intelligent creatures and building a collective unity of hearts and minds centered on love for God and each other.

Bottom of Monday in pink read – thoughts? Is asking if the Lord is among us like asking is the Lord on our side? Do people ever ask this? Isn’t the better question are we on God’s side?

In TQ page 31 it asks, “If we encounter unexpected, seemingly insurmountable difficulties, does it mean that we’re on the wrong path?”

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. DA 225

With that thought in mind turn to

## TUESDAY

Read memory verse at top, and then first paragraph

Thoughts? Who led Jesus to the desert? And for what purpose? Why did Jesus need to go through this experience? What was Jesus accomplishing? He was restoring God’s law of love into the human species, He was recreated this species character back into God’s original ideal, and thus He had to confront the devil and defeat Him. Was He cleansing the Spirit Temple?

*Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him Hebrews 5:8,9*

Notice, he learned obedience and “once made perfect” became the source of eternal salvation.

What is this “made perfect” business? It was the perfecting of character in His humanity!

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}

In human nature Christ developed a perfect character. “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved 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 tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.” Heb 2:16-18, ST Jan 16, 1896.

Does this help us understand God's testing? The tree in the garden? It is only by confronting a temptation, and choosing to overcome, through God's grace, that the character is transformed. In the brain there are actual changes in the neural circuitry when this happens.

Last paragraph read – thoughts? Is it saying that if Christ didn't pay a penalty the Father would cast us off?

Do we sometimes find ourselves in difficulties because of a wrong decision on our part? I found this quote interesting and thought I would share it with you:

Sometimes various ways and purposes, different modes of operation in connection with the work of God, are about evenly balanced in the mind; but it is at this very point that the nicest discrimination is necessary. And if anything is accomplished to the purpose it must be done at the golden moment. The slightest inclination of the weight in the balance should be seen and should determine the matter at once. Long delays tire the angels. It is even more excusable to make a wrong decision sometimes than to be continually in a wavering position, to be hesitating, sometimes inclined in one direction, then in another. More perplexity and wretchedness result from thus hesitating and doubting than from sometimes moving too hastily. {3T 497.3}

What is the point? It is sometimes better to make a wrong decision than no decision. If we make a wrong decision generally circumstances and facts will reveal we are on the wrong road and we can correct our course, but if we never choose then we never progress. But remember this is "sometimes".

## WEDNESDAY

Reviews Peter's encouragement to the early Christians not to be discouraged when facing various trials, is there a certain way of looking at events that can help? Does the GC view of things help in difficult times?

Does it make a difference to see others who are persecuting as being infected with the virus of sin, selfishness, and not yet experiencing the healing love of Christ? Does it make a difference to realize that this sick world will come to an end and all will be made new?

## THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs and discuss –

## FRIDAY

Read Questions 1 and 3 and discuss.



## 2007 Q4 Lesson 4 Seeing the Goldsmith's Face

Thoughts about the title?

Who is the Goldsmith? God/Jesus, what does it mean to see His face –

Why did God say to Moses when Moses asked to see God's face, "no one can see me and live."?  
Exodus 33:20

Why do the wicked run and hide and ask to be hidden from the "face" of Him who sits on the throne? Rev 6:16 Is there something wrong with His face?

Why are the redeemed able to look on God's face? Rev 22:4, what is the difference between the redeemed in Revelation and Moses on the mountain?

Read 1John 3:2 – 6

*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. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

*Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.*

Thoughts? How does this text relate to seeing God's face? Is there any indication of what enables the righteous in the end to see God's face? For we shall be like Him – like Him in what way? In character—how does this happen?

What is the connection between sin being lawlessness and His appearance to take away our "sins"? The Greek here is *hamartia* and should be rendered "sin"—to take away our *sin*, not *sins*—does that make a difference? How? Why?

Notice that we are to become like Jesus, being in harmony with Him, His character, methods and principles, puts into harmony with the law – what law? The law of love – what is that? How does it work?

- How does Jesus take away our sin? Take it away from where?
- What was the problem? How did sin begin?
- Lies believed result in broken love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness result in sinful behaviors
- Sinful behaviors result in death
- Truth revealed removes lies and restores trust
- Trust restored opens heart to receive God's love (Indwelling Spirit)
- Love received transforms and results in love to others
- Love to others results in healthy behavior and life eternal.

### SABBATH

Read memory verse – Does this memory verse support what we just discussed? Any questions?

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

How does this story impact your concept of the judgment? Is God looking to see Jesus in us? Does this mean actual transformation of who we are so that we are actually like Him in character or is this some legal action in which we are accounted like Him and God “sees” us like Him even though we aren’t?

Does this mean God is the one who stokes the fires or puts us in the fires? How do we understand this concept in light of pain and suffering not coming from God?

If you were a physical trainer and wanted to get someone stronger – would you put them through exercises? Would this “exercise” increase in difficulty over time? Why? Would such actions be considered unloving?

Does God bring us into situations designed to allow us to exercise our faculties to grow and expand in Christlikeness, designed to give us the opportunity for overcoming defects in character? Does that mean all painful experiences are from God?

## SUNDAY

In His Image- what does it mean to be created in God’s image?

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}

First question, “In what ways do we see this defacing of God’s image in humanity?”

1. physical disease and deformity and degradation
2. degradation of mental faculties – faulty reason, intelligence, impaired imagination, creativity...
3. degradation of character – selfish rather than loving
4. dulled sensibilities such that the ugly is seen as beautiful and the vile as virtuous and pain becomes pleasure
5. the mind turned upside down so that passions control actions become brute beasts

How does this happen?

1. violations of laws of health result in more physical illness, genetic deformity and physical depravity (although some illness not due to volitional violations of health principles)
2. violations of law of worship – by beholding we become changed, sensibilities dulled, reason warped, conscience bruised, passions inflamed. i.e. TV watching, pornography etc.
3. violations of law of liberty – individuality destroyed
4. violations of law of love – hardens heart, warps reason, damages conscience, as people avoid their own guilt
5. Allow mind to operate out of balance with feeling controlling judgment –

What is God’s plan to restore His image within?

The first sentence of the second paragraph, “It’s obvious: We all have been corrupted by sin.” This is true and what is your reaction to this fact?

When did anyone in this room choose to be a sinner? If an HIV infected woman and an HIV infected man had a child and the child was born HIV infected, what did the child do to deserve this? Nothing – we have done nothing as individuals to deserve being born in sin – we have not chosen to be born in sin – therefore we don’t need to feel guilty for being born in sin.

But, does the HIV infected baby have all the burden of the disease to deal with? Do we, even though we didn’t choose it, have all the burdens of sin to deal with?

With this in mind read third paragraph – “But there’s another...” – thoughts?

How is the honor of God and Christ connected to this? Who created this creation? And whose image was this creation made in? Why? Was there a significant reason to make us in God’s image and give mankind dominion and reproductive ability? The GC over God Himself – mankind was part of that answer, created to reveal the truth about God.

When mankind sinned, do you think Lucifer alleged the defect in man was a design flaw? That the Designer made some error in creation? How does God’s saving of this species connect to His honor?

It reveals no design defect, but more than that – it reveals that God’s methods, principles, law of love etc. when applied to sinful beings actually heals, transforms, restores regenerates. That a being warped by sinfulness can be healed and restored! What does that say about God?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

Could your answer also tell you about the kind of God one serves? If Osama bin Laden were to answer the question which group do you think he believes would be cheering for him?

## MONDAY

Faith Amid the Refining Fire – and then the lesson uses the example of Job – do you think Job is a good example of someone who is being refined or is something else going on?

In Job 1 and 2 God has already judged Job to be “perfect and righteous in all his ways there is no one on the earth like him.” Does that sound like someone who needs refining?

## TUESDAY

Read first and second paragraph – then read Friday second paragraph – thoughts?

Is the oil in the parable the HS or character or are they somehow connected? Can we experience Christlike character without the Holy Spirit indwelling our minds? Can the Holy Spirit genuinely dwell in someone’s mind/heart without a subsequent resultant transformation of Christlike character? So does the oil represent both? But in this context, as something that cannot be shared, it more accurately represents character.

Is character something that is developed or we are born with or we receive as a gift from God?

“God gives the talents, the powers of the mind: we form the character.” COL 331

Read first paragraph from Friday’s lesson -

But then how do you make sense of 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}

Does this add balance?

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. {GH, March 1, 1901 par. 4}

So what is the balance between our role and God's? We must trust Him – and in trust choose to follow what He says, choose to apply to our lives what we know is in harmony with His will. His role is to enlighten the mind with truth, convict the heart, ennoble the faculties, purify the conscience, regenerated the motives, strengthen the will, fill the heart with love and remove selfishness. He heals, we trust and follow – but trust is established by the truth and evidence and He provided this as the basis for our trust – thus He has done it all! All except choose to trust and follow which we must do.

## WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph – “Daniel is told...” thoughts? What do the righteous understand? Could it be this last day generation understands the entire GC, the issues that began the war in heaven, the nature and character of both Satan and sin, the original purpose for the creation of this world and man, what happened when man sinned, the nature and character of God and the purpose of Christ and His mission – they understand God?

John 15:15- they understand God's business? Could this be it?

Is this what God is waiting for? For a generation of people to rise up as His friends to understand Him and His business and proclaim it in the power of truth, love and freedom as a witness to all nations and then the end will come?

## THURSDAY

Read second paragraph – “when Paul...” What does it mean to experience the “whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” To live in loving service? To not love life so much we would shrink from death?

The lesson asks, “In today's text what does Paul say must happen before the fullness of Christ may be revealed in our Christian community?” What can our class do to reveal the fullness of Christ in our community?

## FRIDAY

Question 3 read and discuss –

What does it mean to be saved? Healed, the Greek *sozo* means to heal. If you went to the ER with a snake bite and said “please save me” what are you asking for? Healing.

Does the Bible say we are “saved by faith”? or saved by “grace through faith.” Does this make a difference? Big difference, what is grace? See Ephesians 2:8. The Greek for grace is *charis* and can mean good will, favour, loving kindness – in other words we are healed by God’s good will, loving kindness and favour – the Creator, in love, recreates those who trust Him!

Thus we are healed as we trust God through His working in our hearts and minds to restore His character within. With this understanding there is no confusion between our work to cooperate with God and follow His prescription for our lives and His working in us to heal and restore.

**2007 Q4 Lesson 5      Extreme Heat**

Notes are not available.



## 2007 Q4 Lesson 6 Struggling with All Energy

### SABBATH

What do you think of the title? What do we struggle with? To struggle with does that mean against or on the same team against a common foe? As sinful humans, what do we struggle against?

- Do we struggle against principalities and powers of darkness? What is that struggle about? Is it a physical struggle or a mental struggle? Is it over the truth about God and His character and methods? And in that struggle what weapons do we use?
- Do we struggle against our own inclinations to evil? Our own unhealthy desires? And what weapons do we have in this fight?
- Do we ever struggle against other people? Political forces? Family members? What weapons do we use?
- Do we struggle against physical illness?
- Do we struggle against God? How? If we find ourselves struggling against God are we ever going the right way?

Are there other types of struggles? In all our struggles who is there struggling with us for our victory? God, do we ever “feel” like God is not on our side? What difference does it make if we draw such a conclusion? How can we avoid such a conclusion?

Read first two paragraphs Sabbath's lesson – thoughts?

What is forgiveness? What would prevent someone from forgiving another in this situation? What would enable someone to forgive?

If the person who forgave was the governor or president, does that mean that the person would/should be pardoned and set free? Why or why not?

If we forgive someone does that mean what they did was okay? If we forgive someone does that act change the perpetrator or the one offended? If the governor forgave the man who murdered his daughter and wanted to set him free from prison what would be the only way this could be done “safely?”

The only way to “safely” allow someone back into society is if the man is no longer a murderer in heart – if he had been transformed or changed – Does this apply to our experience with God?

Does God forgive us? Does His forgiveness equal salvation? Why or why not?

What impact does this have on how we forgive others?

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? I have patients constantly in my office telling me they pray all the time to God to change their lives but their lives never change. Why might this be? What about the smoker who prays not to smoke but keeps on buying them. And when asked why do you keep on buying them, well if I didn't I couldn't smoke.

Read third paragraph “While the Holy Spirit...” Thoughts?

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our salvation and what is our role?

Your energies are required to co-operate with God. Without this, if it were possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influences of the Spirit of God, it would

not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. The stronghold of Satan would not be broken. There must be the willing and the doing on the part of the receiver. There must be an action, represented as coming out from the world and being separate. There must be a doing of the words of Christ. The soul must be emptied of self, that Christ may pour his Spirit into the vacuum. Christ must be chosen as the heavenly guest. The will must be placed on the side of God's will. Then there is a new heart, and new, holy resolves. It is Jesus enthroned in the soul that makes every action easy in his service.-- S. of T., 1891, No. 8. {Healthful Living 304.5}

Thoughts? What is the balance between our work and God's?

Are there theologies that undermines this balance? What? In the model outlined by EGW above there is an actual regenerating, transforming process involved, in some models the issue is one of getting debts paid, punishments borne by someone else, wrath appeased but not hearts transformed.

In the paragraph from the quarterly it states, "If God did compel us in even the slightest way, we would lose our free will, and Satan would accuse God of manipulating our minds and hearts and thus be able to accuse God of cheating in the great controversy." Thoughts?

It is so true that compelling power would take away our free will and thereby destroy love, no question about it. But what about the other reason, is this why God doesn't do it, so He can't be accused of cheating? Has God been doing what He does so that Satan can't accuse Him? If God were the kind of being who based His decisions on fear of allegations, could He not have merely wiped out Lucifer and then the memory of him from the universe?

Why does God act the way He does? Not to keep Satan from making the allegations – (are we saying that if Satan didn't make the allegations then would God control us – so the only reason we have freedom is because Satan is there to keep God honest? Is Satan like the free press ready to pounce on the abuse of governmental power so God has to remain "honest" to keep Satan from making allegations?) No the reason God does what He does, is because God IS love – it is His nature and character to be that way. God would never force us because to do so would destroy love. And the fact is Satan has already made this allegation against God anyway.

TQ 67 asks, "When can we rely on our feelings to make decisions? What criteria do we have to judge the reliability of our emotions and desires?" – thoughts?

Never, feelings are never the be the BASIS of our decisions, but that doesn't mean we ignore our feelings. Our feelings are information and are to be understood via our reasoning and conscience in light of truth and evidence and then a decision is made, based on the truth and evidence not feelings.

## MONDAY

Read Colossians 1:28,29

*COL 1:28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.*

Thoughts about this text? What do you think it means "perfect in Christ"?

Do you think it means – legally counted or recognized as sinless by the Father when we claim the blood payment and victory that Christ has achieved in our behalf?

Or do you think it means, “mature” “being in like mind as Christ having been won back to unity and trust in God by the truth Christ brought and thus opened the heart and been restored in the inner man to live in God’s ways, practicing His methods where we love others more than self.”?

Which do you think is meant here? Transformation and regeneration to be in actual unity and oneness with Christ and God or legal pardon so we are accounted as “sinless” or “perfect” by the Father because of what Christ has done?

Read last paragraph – “This is important...” thoughts? How has the idea of wanting more with less affected Christianity? More of God’s miracle working power with less involvement from us? What about the idea “all I need to do is accept the blood payment of Jesus on my behalf and then I am saved” idea?

JFK said, “ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country,” should we be saying “ask not what God can do for you but what you can do for God?” Jesus said He did not come to be served but to serve and that the least will be the greatest and the servant the master. Why? Because it is the process of giving of ourselves to benefit other that we experience transformation.

TQ 69 states, “This week’s lesson deals with four key words: struggle, the will, perseverance, and energy. All these words sound very much like works of merit rather than links in the unfolding of the grace of God in a person’s life. It is very important to make the distinction in the presentation of the lesson.”

What is the balance between our work and God’s work? Why is this so hotly debated? Has Christ worked out a remedy to our terminal condition? Can any human work out a remedy other than the one Christ achieved? Does Christ victory in procuring this remedy heal you or me without our participation and willing cooperation with the Heavenly Physician? So, is it true that we cannot “work” out own remedy and heal/save ourselves? Is it also true that Christ’s victory does not heal or save anyone without their cooperative effort?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – any thoughts about this? Any Bible texts?

*James 1:13-15, we are tempted by our own evil feelings or desires –*

Has anyone ever experienced the reality that their feelings can lie? That their feelings can lead them astray?

What weapons do we have to combat those feelings?

Do we ignore our feelings or do we examine them in light of truth and evidence and make decisions based on the evidence in spite of the feelings?

Is it possible to have feelings that are accurate and actually truthful, yet still unhealthy to follow? Any examples?

How about a mother whose baby cries at night and the mother feels very tired and sleepy and doesn’t feel like getting out of bed? Are her feelings of fatigue and sleepiness lying to her? No, are they sinful feelings? No, but is it healthy to allow her feelings to determine her actions?

When we choose to follow God’s will for our lives what typically happens, at some point, to our feelings?

*1PE 4:1 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.*

What does this text mean? NIV says “body” KJV states “flesh” is it that we are tempted by our “carnal” or “fleshly” nature and that when we choose to say no to that we suffer in our “flesh”, not necessarily physical body, but in our earthly desires, for awhile, until victory and then we are free?

Consider a smoker who is quitting, when he chooses not to smoke is there a period of “suffering in the flesh” that finally results in victory and no longer living “for evil human desire”?

## WEDNESDAY

Radical commitment –

When you think of Jesus do you think He was radical? If so how so? Any examples?

Our GNT picture is raising quite a debate as people contemplate the idea of Jesus washing the feet of world leaders and even Osama Ben Laden, some find this way to radical – what about you?

What about loving one’s enemies, doing good to those who use you, praying for those who abuse you?

Are these radical teachings?

TQ 73 states, “Free will implies the need for the judgment because there always will be those who choose the wrong side.” – thoughts?

What is the judgment? Why is there a need? Does a judgment mean time where God sits in heaven and “judges” or “determines” our destiny? Or is it a time when we judge God?

What evidence for these ideas? If God were the one deciding our destinies in a “judgment” then are we actually free or is it up to Him?

## THURSDAY

The need for perseverance – why is this important?

## FRIDAY

Read second paragraph – thoughts?

Read questions 2,3,4 and discuss

**2007 Q4 Lesson 7      Indestructible Hope**

Notes are not available.

## 2007 Q4 Lesson 8 Seeing the Invisible

### SABBATH

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

In the KJV it reads “Faith is the substance of things hoped for...”

In this text, the word *substance* is a Latin-based word derived from the Greek word *hypostasis*. Let’s do a little word sleuthing and discover what these words mean in English. *Hypostasis* has two parts, the first part is *hypo*, meaning *low* or *under* as in *hypoglycemic* (low blood sugar) or *hypotension* (low blood pressure) or *hypodermic* injection (under the dermis/skin). The second part, *stasis*, means *standing* or *standstill*. *Hypostasis* was translated into Latin as *substance*; the first part, *sub*, means *under* as in *subway* or *subterranean* or *submarine*, and the latter part, *stance*, means *standing*. With this insight, then, we could offer this modern English translation of the passage: “Faith is our *understanding* of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The more understanding you have, the more faith you have. {Could It Be This Simple? p. 81}

Thoughts?

Any examples? What about gravity? Can you see gravity? Do you have understanding of gravity? Does your understanding of it enhance or undermine your faith?

What about radiation? Can you see radiation? Do you have some understanding about radiation? Does your understanding undermine or establish your faith?

What about magnetic fields can you see magnetic fields? Do you have some understanding of them? Does your understanding increase or decrease your faith?

Think of these examples – let’s travel back in time 1500–2500 years and you had some magnets could you conceive of a way to use your magnets so that people would think you had supernatural powers? Why would the people think you had supernatural powers? Because they didn’t understand about magnets!

What about radiation – could you use radiation in a way to make people think you were supernatural, why? Because they didn’t understand – if they understood they would not be deceived.

Does God want us to understand Him? His character, principles, methods, to know Him intimately? Is this to be based on evidence? What evidence? Romans 1:20—life of Jesus, etc.

Read second paragraph – What does it mean to “see Jesus and God?” Where do we look? Nature? Bible? Life of Jesus? Are these things evidence? If you see God in nature and the life of Christ and come to trust God is that trust based on claims or evidence?

### SUNDAY

Read fourth paragraph “In verse 32...” – thoughts?

How could we think that God could send Jesus to die for us and then turn mean and stingy? How could we think this?

Because some have taken the truth that God cannot act counter to His character or law to mean God was required to execute His Son on the cross –

As evidence that some think God is actually the source of death –



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. The atonement was necessary because man stood under the righteous wrath of God. Herein lies the heart of the gospel of forgiveness of sin and the mystery of the cross of Christ: Christ’s perfect righteousness adequately satisfied divine justice, and God is willing to accept Christ’s self-sacrifice in place of man’s death.” 27 Fundamental Beliefs 111

“Christ’s self-sacrifice is *pleasing* to God because this sacrifice 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.” Ibid.

February 2007, Woodrow Whidden, contributor to 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?”

What does inspiration tell us?

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23*

*When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:13-15*

And one of the founders of our church, just to show my position is not divergent from our founders:

Satan had caused the Jews to rebel against God by refusing to receive His Son, and by staining their hands with His most precious blood. No matter how powerful the evidence now produced that Jesus was the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, they had murdered Him, and would not receive any evidence in His favor. EW 208

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}

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. {ISM 235.2}

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. {7ABC 464.2}

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. 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. 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. 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. Isa. 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}

Not only was this error repeated by the Jews it is being repeated by Christian's today, Isaiah prophesied about this:

*Surely he took up our infirmities  
and carried our sorrows,  
yet we considered him stricken by God,  
smitten by him, and afflicted. Isaiah 53:4*

In the bottom pink section, it states, "Spend some time meditating on the truth that God has given Jesus to die in your place..." What does it mean that Jesus died in your place?

Why do I go through all of this? You know that the GNT was last week. I discovered that rumors are flying all over the west coast in our church about the GNT and our team. People are circulating rumors that we are Moral Influence Theorists – which we are not!

I myself am being alleged to be a MIT – this I assertively deny!

## MONDAY

Read *John 14:13,14* "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

What does it mean to ask in Jesus name? Does it mean to put a tag line on the end of your prayers?

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}

Is this how you think of praying in Jesus name?

If we are praying in Jesus name what will we be asking for? Things that are working to glorify the Father – and what does it mean to glorify the Father? To reveal the truth about Him!

What about when we are praying and it seems like there is no response? Thoughts?

In Daniel chapter 10 we find some interesting insights:

*Dan 10:12 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....*

*Dan 10:20 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. 1 And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.)*

Notice a couple of things, first as soon as Daniel began to pray the angel was dispatched to fight on Daniel's behalf – but the angel met resistance – from whom? "The prince of Persia" Who is the prince of Persia? It is not the king of Persia for he is specifically mentioned separately and later the angel says he was there to support and protect Darius who is the king of Persia. So who is the prince of Persia? One of Satan's angels?

How is Satan described in the Bible? The prince of this world – so Satan is the prince of this world and he has underling angels assigned to different regions and two are mentioned here the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece.

When we pray angels from God are dispatched to counter the influence of these Satanic agencies.

And then what about all those people who pray "in Jesus name" yet who will be lost in the end, why? 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. 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 evil-doers!'" Matt 7:21-23*

Could it be they are praying with the words "in Jesus' name" coming from their lips, but their idea of God and Jesus are different from the truth?

Again one of the founders of our church to show my views do not diverge from our founders:

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}

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Were we in legal trouble with God? Yes and No –

No, in that our problem was not that God was now required inflict an external just penalty upon us – that is a distortion a falsehood –

But Yes, in that we were no longer in harmony with the law of love, the eternal law that emanates from God's character, the law upon which life is based to operate. So we were in trouble – but not with God, we were dying and God was our only hope of healing and restoration.

The problem was God could not simply declare us to be holy and righteous – even though He wants us to be holy and righteous. He had to actually restore holiness and righteousness in us and this is what Christ came to do.

Does the law of God require death? Many say it does, can someone show me a text?

*Psalms 19:7 The law of the Lord is perfect reviving the soul. What does the law of the Lord do? It revives, regenerates, restores, heals, recreates – thus the new covenant “I will write my laws on your hearts and minds.” In restoring the law of love in us we are healed, regenerated restored, recreated.*

This is what Christ came to do. In the being Jesus Christ, the law of love was perfectly restored and the law of sin and death defeated.

What is the power that is available to us today? Paul speaks about the good news being the power of God unto salvation – what is the good news? The truth about God and His character of love and the victory achieved by Christ!

## WEDNESDAY

Why do people worry if they trust God? Is having an emotion of stress, anxiety or nervousness sin? No, look at Gethsemane was Jesus stressed, anxious and likely even nervous? He was certainly distressed and distraught and experienced emotions so powerful he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood and was tempted to avoid the cross, but yet was without sin. So powerful emotions are not sin.

Why? Because sin is lawlessness – living outside the laws upon which life is designed to operate, living outside of the law of love and liberty. Did Christ ever stop loving? Ever act selfishly? No!

While powerful emotions are not sin, they can tempt us to sin, James chapter 1 tells us this. They can tempt us to choose to act in ways that are outside of God's law of love.

So why do people worry if they trust God? Might they still have constructs about God that undermine trust? Might they still be battling with old habits, fearful habits of thinking and reacting? Might they be battling with self?

Last paragraph states “But does God still care enough to intervene when a divorce is looming or we feel totally useless? The Bible says that He cares enough to transform any situation.” Does God care enough? Does that mean any situation, such as a pending divorce will be transformed by God?

The Bible says God wants all men to be saved 1Tim 2:4, will they be? Why not?

Are there some things God cannot do?

- God cannot lie Heb 6:18
- God cannot be tempted by evil James 1:13
- God cannot love and program us like robots at the same time for love requires freedom – Zech 4:6.

So can God transform any situation?

In bottom pink it asks “is there anything too hard for God?” How about the hearts of some men and women and Satan?

#### THURSDAY

Is God faithful when He cannot be seen? Is He faithful when we are not? Is He still there when we disobey?

Have you ever heard if you go where you know God doesn't want you to be God will not go with you? If you go in the theater the angels will stay outside?

When Jonah got the word to go to Nineveh – did he go where God wanted? Did God abandon Jonah?

In Esther's day where were the children of Israel, who were living in Persia, supposed to be? In Palestine, but where were they? Did God abandon them?

When mankind fell into sin, did God abandon us?

Don't teach that God abandons us or leaves us if we sin; teach the truth that sin damages and destroys the sinner, and if persisted in, will one day result in our hearts and minds being so hardened we will no longer be capable of recognizing or responding to truth.

## 2007 Q4 Lesson 9 A Life of Praise

### SABBATH

Read first three paragraphs – thoughts?

Any examples of praise in face of pain? What enables us to praise in the face of pain? Does our perspective on what is happening make a difference?

Have you ever heard of the man who said, “I used to complain of not having shoes until I met a man with no feet”?

Does perspective make a difference?

Does God need our praise and adulation? Does He need us to adore Him and admire Him and tell Him how awesome He is? If we don't do this does He get His feelings hurt or get angry? Will He strike out against if we don't admire Him?

What does it mean to praise? What is praise?

Dictionary definition

- verb – to express favorable judgment or to glorify
- noun – an expression of approval – commendation

Is praising God merely a matter of singing songs? Of shouting hosannas? Of having praise celebrations? What does it mean to praise God?

As a parent what is the highest form of praise from your child? Would it be that your child grows up to be like Christ in character? Could your child do more to give praise than this?

Isn't it said that imitation is the highest form of praise? Do we praise God the most by living Godly lives?

To praise God in fullness and sincerity of heart is as much a **duty** as is prayer. We are to **show** to the world and to all the heavenly intelligences that we **appreciate** the wonderful love of God for fallen humanity and that we are expecting larger and yet larger blessings from His infinite fullness. Far more than we do, we need to **speak** of the precious chapters in our experience. After a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, our joy in the Lord and our efficiency in His service would be greatly increased by **recounting** His goodness and His wonderful works in behalf of His children. {COL 299.3}

These **exercises** drive back the power of Satan. They **expel** the spirit of murmuring and complaint, and the tempter loses ground. They cultivate those attributes of character which will fit the dwellers on earth for the heavenly mansions. {COL 300}

Such a testimony will have an influence upon others. No more effective means can be employed for winning souls to Christ. {COL 300}

We are to praise God by **tangible service**, by doing all in our power to advance the glory of His name. God imparts His gifts to us that we also may **give**, and **thus make known His character to the world**. {COL 300}

Any examples of what this kind of praise might look like? Giving to others to benefit them – if God has shared with you knowledge and you share that knowledge with others to build them up in Christ are you not praising God? If you speak words of encouragement to others to heal, to build up are you praising God? If you give of your time, resources energies to promote the truth about God, to bring others into loving trust with Him are you praising God?



Is this type of praise more powerful, more meaningful and more acceptable to God than merely singing songs and shouting hosannas?

Does God praise us?

*Mat 25:21–23 the parable of the talents those who invested wisely received from the master “well done thou good and faithful servant.” Who is the master? Jesus? Is He giving praise?*

Job chapter one, God says of Job, he is perfect and righteous in all his ways and there is no one on the earth like him. Is that praise?

*2 Kings 3:10-14 The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for--both riches and honor--so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.”*

*Daniel 9:26, 10:11, 19 three times describes Daniel as “highly esteemed” would that be praise?*

If you heard God say about you or to you, “Well done” or “you are highly esteemed” how would that impact you?

What does it say about God that He speaks of sinful humans like this? What about how He spoke of David – what does it say about God? Did God have a bad memory? Did He not know? Was Solomon more aware of David’s life history than God? What does it mean?

How should we speak of others? Is God giving us an example of how we should speak about others, even when we know about some sin in their lives? If you spread rumors or gossip about another person, are you praising God?

Have you ever committed sin? Sin you are ashamed of? Have you, like David, repented and been reconciled to God? Have you experienced a change in heart? Then God will speak of you like David, a friend who does all He asks! And in heaven, everyone who is fitted for heaven will be just like God in character and will only speak well of you.

## SUNDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “First, if we are...” thoughts?

What about Jesus in Gethsemane? How do you see Him rejoicing there?

*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. Hebrews 12:2*

Thoughts about this text? Why does it say He went through the cross? For the joy set before Him. Is joy related to rejoicing? Could it be possible Christ was in some way rejoicing during His mistreatment and crucifixion?

Parents, if your children were being held by al-kaida terrorists and the terrorists were torturing them and had announced they were going to cut their heads off broadcast live via the internet – and you could exchange yourself for them, would you? And would the knowledge that your children were safe give you joy in the midst of your torture and execution?

Is this why Christ was rejoicing because He recognized the purpose of what He was accomplishing?

*Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself.” He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. John 12:31-33*

What is Christ telling us in this text? Did He know He was going to be crucified? Did He realize His death would drive out the prince of this world – who is the prince of this world? Satan, has Satan been driven off of planet earth? Then what was Christ speaking of when He said, Now is the time, now the prince of this world will be driven out? Driven out from where? The hearts and minds of all intelligences who come to value the truth that Christ’s death would provide.

## MONDAY

Read top section, first three paragraphs – thoughts?

Did God bring Israel to an actual corner – to a place with no way out? If you paint yourself into a corner that has a secret door you can open and escape are you really in a corner?

Do we ever find ourselves in situations that appear to us as if we are in a corner? Does that mean there is no way out?

There are many whose hearts are aching under a load of care because they seek to reach the world’s standard. They have chosen its service, accepted its perplexities, adopted its customs. Thus their character is marred, and their life made a weariness. In order to gratify ambition and worldly desires, they wound the conscience, and bring upon themselves an additional burden of remorse. The continual worry is wearing out the life forces. Our Lord desires them to lay aside this yoke of bondage. He invites them to accept His yoke; He says, “My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” He bids them seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and His promise is that all things needful to them for this life shall be added. Worry is blind, and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. 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 and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet. {DA 330.1}

Thoughts? What is the world’s standard? Self-promotion, self-gratification, self-advancement, selfishness – when someone seeks the world’s standard how will they treat others?

They will exploit, take advantage, use others for personal pleasure or gain – and when that happens, what is the consequence? The conscience is damaged, the mind warped, and increased insecurity and fear is experienced – there is no peace in selfishness.

What is God’s standard? Selfless love – when we do what is right, healthy, giving, beneficent and loving for others, fear is removed and we have peace with God and with ourselves.

I know a lady who always worried about what others thought of her, constantly in fear, constantly anxious. The worst moments were whenever attention was called to her and others looked at her. Her daughter was getting married and as the day approached she became increasingly more upset, you see, she would have to walk down the isle and everyone would be looking at her. I asked her, to rethink her priorities, whose day was this? Hers or her daughter’s? I challenged her to take the focus off self and put it on the daughter and think about the joy in the daughter’s heart that day. She told me it made all the difference and she had no anxiety at all.

Anyone want to share where God has delivered them from something they thought they were trapped in?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Does this mean it must be practiced like music lessons until we can do it by rote without thinking? Or until we can *perform* the praise correctly?

Or is it practice how we think, how we process information, how we see the world, what principles we practice (i.e. live by), practicing seeing the world as Jesus does, seeing others like He does, practice loving like Jesus does? Choosing to do that which we know is right and healthy, putting into practice what we know is good?

Number 1 in the lesson states praise is practiced as we look around us – as you look around is there something you see that brings your heart and mind to praise?

Number 2 states praise is practiced when we remember what we have seen and then suggests rituals and symbols to help us remember what we have seen. Thought about this – can this be beneficial? Are there any dangers? See Isaiah chapter 1.

Number 3 states praise is practiced when we talk about it, that praise is meant to come out of our mouths – thoughts? No doubt this is true, would you be comfortable with saying praise must come out of our hearts?

What about 4 – praise is practiced when we choose to actually do what we know is right because we know it and value the right in our own heart?

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}

## WEDNESDAY

Read top two paragraphs – thoughts? What do you think brought the jailer to conviction? Do you find it amazing that not only did Paul and Silas not leave but no other prisoner left either?

While Paul had come to know Christ and His love, do you think he still regretted how He had persecuted others in the past? Do you think his knowledge of being a persecutor gave him insights into reaching the jailer?

Would Paul have been wrong for leaving the prison? When Peter was in prison what happened? An angel came and freed him, should Peter have stayed?

## THURSDAY

The story of Jehoshaphat, a vast army was descending on Judah and the king called out the choir to praise God – what lessons can we learn from this story?

## 2007 Q4 Lesson 10 Meekness in the Crucible

### SABBATH

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What might be the key to being able to endure injury with patience and without resentment? Is meekness a quality of its own or a fruit of another?

Is it hard to endure injury with patience and without resentment if the person injuring you, you love more than yourself?

Two weeks ago 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).

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? Would you have any patience and no resentment?

Kent publicly forgave his son and publicly asked the prosecutor to not seek the death penalty. But the prosecutor sought the death penalty and this year Bart was found guilty and sentenced to death.

Kent told his story, and then went on to tell how through this experience he has supported his son, visited his son in prison and forgiven his son and through this his son said, "If you can still love me and forgive me for all I have done, then I believe God can also." And he gave his life to Christ in prison. Kent states that while he has lost his wife and younger son on this earth and will soon lose Bart, he has peace knowing that through all of this Bart will now be with them in heaven and their family will be together for eternity.

Would this be an example of meekness?

What enabled Kent to act in this way? Love – love for his son. The only way we can be genuinely meek is when we come to love others more than ourselves. And this love can only come from being won back to trust in God and opening the heart to the Holy Spirit.

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – what do you think about the idea of God using us?

Why does God use us? Is it exploitive or for our good? Is it part of our own healing and regenerating that is taking place when God "uses" us?

So with all who bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ: self-love, self-interest, must perish; the life must be cast into the furrow of the world's need. But the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation. The husbandman preserves his grain by casting it away. So the life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man. {Ed 110.3}

What happens to us when we following God's leading/will for our lives?

It depends – it depends on our attitude in following God's direction:

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 par. 11}

Studies on exercise and cholesterol show that people who are forced to exercise in exercising they don't enjoy actually have worsening of their cholesterol levels – Why? Because being forced to go against one's own desire and endure and activity one doesn't enjoy causes the brain to activate its stress management system increasing the stress hormones which causes worsening in cholesterol.

They have done brain scans on people having them play a piano and while playing tracking which neural circuits are firing and then have them imagine playing the piano without actually moving any fingers and the exact same neural circuits fire.

We cannot be healed, transformed, regenerated in character against our will, we must intelligently cooperate. Thus Paul says in Roman's 14, that every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind.

So what happens when we follow God's will? It depends on whether we are in agreement with Him and are following Him freely or we are simply submitting but really don't want to. If we are in agreement we are healed, transformed and grow to be like Him, if we merely submit we actually get worse and slowly become a rebel.

This is why God cannot win the war by threat, force, physical power, intimidation, but only by truth, love and freedom – Zech 4:6.

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Did God need to be pled with by Moses? Does God know the future? Does He know the end from the beginning? Did He know what Moses was going to do before Moses did it? And did God know how He was going to respond? In other words, God never intended on killing the Israelites – then what was going on?

Can angels read hearts and minds? No, if they could none would have been deceived by Lucifer. How were things looking for God's plan of salvation at this particular time? Was it possible God needed to show the onlooking universe that His methods work? That someone, who could murder another human being (Moses age 40), if he spends time with God, getting to know God, following God's methods and principles will be regenerated and rather than killing others, will be like God and willing to give his life that others might live!

Does God need to be pled with, by us or Jesus, in order to be gracious, forgiving and merciful?

John 16:26 - Jesus says He will not pray His Father for us because the Father Himself loves us!

## TUESDAY

Loving those who hurt us –

This week there has been an online discussion regarding how do we treat our enemies – how do we treat those who would do harm and a specific example was brought up:

If you are at home and a person enters your home bent on raping and killing your family, how do you apply Jesus like love, meekness and “turning the other cheek” in this situation – thoughts?

The following is from this week's blog:

In a recent discussion, I've been following on what should one do when confronted with a horrific situation such as an intruder invading your home with intent to harm or murder your family, the discussion went back and forth between pacifism and justifiable use of violence. Some pointed out Jesus' example of accepting abuse and never retaliating and wondered if this should be our example in such situations. Others argued that in such circumstances violence is appropriate and justifiable.

But there seems to have been several important factors overlooked in the discussion. First, the question is not about how does one act when your own life is being threatened, but how one acts when someone else's life is being threatened. Secondly, love does what is best for others - love heals, restores, regenerates, protects, builds up and love "compels" to action. And finally we must remember that sin actually damages, destroys, tears down – not just the victims of sin but the sinner himself is damaged by his sin.

Therefore, when Christ was on earth, He suffered but not as a model of how to handle all circumstances of violence and abuse - God acted in different ways many times in other circumstances (Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, Pharaoh's army, 185,000 Assyrians etc). God acted in love, by force, in many circumstances to protect others. Christ, on the other hand, as a human, had a specific mission and His mission could not be completed in any other way than what He did. With all this in mind we can recognize that, in this world of sin, sometimes the most loving course of action is the course of force.

Example, a psychotic patient who is violent and if not intervened with will kill other patients and staff - medical professionals will use force to restrain this person to protect others, but not just to protect other but to protect the psychotic patient as well. Now, there may be no agenda to kill the individual, the heart desire may be totally on healing and restoring because the psychotic one is your son, but you will still use force, if necessary, to restrain, even if it risks injury. This is protective for others but ALSO for the one being restrained. This is how love acts.

Consider the mother with post-partum psychosis who kills her children. While it is obvious that it is in the best interest of the children for someone to use force and stop mother from killing them, would it not also be in the mother's best interest for someone to stop her, even forcibly? And, if you were such a mother wouldn't you even prefer someone shoot and kill you, if that was the only way, to prevent you from killing your children? Sometimes the loving course, in this sick world of sin, is the course of restraining force. Does God use His power to restrain the four winds of strife? To set limits on the powers of darkness? While it is true God cannot win His war with evil by the use of force (Zech 4:6), He does, in emergency circumstances use restraining force in love.

Finally, sin damages the faculties that recognize and respond to truth and some people persist so long in sinful living that they are beyond reach (not for us to decide who those people are, but they are out there). On such unhealable individuals the methods of Jesus have no impact. Therefore, until God brings a full end to sin, He has ordained earthly governments to use force to maintain order and restrain violent abusers (prison). This is protective for innocent citizens but is ALSO protective for the criminal as it prevents the criminal from further damaging himself.

The issue is not one of specific behavior in a specific circumstance, but rather one of heart motive - are you acting out of love to heal, build up, protect, restore others, including the assailant, or are you acting out of fear and selfishness merely looking out for self or seek vengeance upon another?



## WEDNESDAY

Read middle paragraph – “It is terrible to watch...” Thoughts?

How is this a dangerous attitude? How is this attitude manifested in the church?

A elementary school teacher in one of our church schools was married to a man who continually physically abused her. She had attempted to get counseling with the pastor but the husband was pious and arrogant and justified his behavior. So after years of this mistreatment she left and filed for divorce. He, in turn went to the conference officials and complained that she divorced without Biblical grounds and the conference committee investigated and ultimately terminated her from employment in order to be just or put things right. – Thoughts?

Read next paragraph “It is not easy to live...” thoughts?

Is the Father in control of all unjust situations? If God were in charge of what happens then would Lucifer have rebelled? Would Adam have sinned? Would humans have crucified Christ?

What bad theology can come from such ideas? Well if God is in charge of everything that happens, then it was God’s will that a child gets abused, it is God’s will that a mother or father or child be killed, it was God’s will that Adam and Eve sin, it was God who was in charge of killing Christ at the cross and it will be God killing the wicked in the end, thus people wrongly conclude that God is the source of death - but call it justice.

What kind of an ugly God is this? Is God in charge of everything that happens? Is it His will it happen the way it does?

It is not the will of God that men and women should die prematurely, leaving their work unfinished. He would have us live out the full measure of our days, with every organ free to do its allotted work. Many complain of the providences of God when disease and death remove members of the household; but it is unjust to charge God with what is but the sure result of their own transgression of natural laws. {Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene 90.1}

Religion has meant altogether too little to the professed followers of Christ; for it is not the will of God that any one should remain ignorant when wisdom and knowledge have been placed within reach. {Fundamentals of Christian Education 217.1}

It is not the will of God that any shall perish, but that all shall have everlasting life. {Testimonies to ministers and gospel workers 394} – see 1 Timothy 2:4.

## THURSDAY

Read bottom paragraph “without cause...” thoughts? How should we act when people in our own church, our own bretheren attack us, misrepresent us, spread rumors about us? Have you ever experienced this?

I have, and the only course I know to follow is to press forward presenting the truth in love and leaving others free.

**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

1 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.

2 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 fathers wishes. He lost more here than anyone.

3 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!

4 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.....

5 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.

6 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.

7 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.

8 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.

9 someone else - Feb 28, 05:17 PM

you are wrong.

10 TexasRose - Feb 28, 05:41 PM

Bart is NOTa child...

11 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. Its funny how people like this animal only ask for forgiveness when they get caught. I too, think the father should be investigated further, its hard to believe this boy did the things he did prior to this and went completely undetected, or unchecked. Lets not forget Jim Bakkers misguided deeds for money.

## 2007 Q4 Lesson 11    Waiting in the Crucible

### SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts? Was this encouraging to read? Does it sound predetermined? Does it sound hard wired?

Are some children/people naturally more impatient than others? Are some more impulsive, aggressive, assertive are others naturally more laid back, lackadaisical, easy going? Can this be biological? Can this be environmental? Can this be impacted and modified and changed regardless of biological predisposition? These two paragraphs leave so much out – nutritional factors, environmental factors, social factors, biological factors all of which are modifiable.

The brain consists of billions of neurons (brain cells) that are arranged in complex networks. The individual brain cells communicate to each other by releasing chemical signals called neurotransmitters. After the cell sending the signal releases its neurotransmitter, it quickly activates reuptake pumps (like vacuum cleaners) to suck up the neurotransmitter for repackaging and reuse. In some areas of the brain where reuptake pumps are sparser, some of the released neurotransmitters remain in the fluid outside the cells. The brain has enzymes designed to remove the leftover neurotransmitters to prevent an overload or buildup.

The prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain immediately behind the forehead, is the place where we do our thinking and reasoning. The prefrontal cortex has fewer reuptake pumps, so more neurotransmitters remain outside the cells after stimulation. One particular neurotransmitter is important for sharp thinking and good memory. This neurotransmitter is called dopamine. The enzyme that breaks down dopamine is called Catechol-O-methyltransferase (COMT). The gene that produces COMT is located on chromosome 22. Dr. Egan and associates have discovered that a random mutation for the gene that makes COMT on chromosome 22 has entered the human gene pool. Therefore, two genetic forms of the gene can be found: one form with the amino acid valine (Val) at position 108 on the gene; the other with the amino acid methionine (Met) at position 108.

Because each person has two sets of chromosomes (one from his mother and one from his father), three possible genetic combinations exist: Met/Met, Met/Val, Val/Val. Interestingly, the COMT with a Met gene is heat sensitive and shows lower activity at body temperature. Therefore, persons with either the Met/Met or Met/Val combination have lower activity of COMT, and subsequently higher levels of dopamine in their prefrontal cortex than those with the Val/Val combination. Memory testing has revealed that persons with the Val/Val combination perform worse on short-term memory tests than those with the Met gene. And those with the Met/Met combination perform better than those with the Met/Val combination. This study has demonstrated that a single gene mutation can directly affect brain chemistry with subsequent alteration in memory function. *Could It Be This Simple?* page 36.

ADHD – a dysfunction of prefrontal cortex – with increased impulsivity, children with untreated ADHD have impaired attention, focus, organization, tend to be impulsive, act out, miss information, score worse on exams, feel intimidated, have lower self esteem, don't extend themselves, don't expect as much out of themselves etc. and thus often don't turn out as adjusted or confident.

This paragraph is not describing patience in the Biblical sense but a medical disorder of impaired functioning of the PFC, that gets misperceived as a moral issue and the child gets ostracized, punished and shamed by his social network thus resulting in lower self-esteem, confidence and success, rather than proper treatment which results in overcoming and success.



## SUNDAY

Read second paragraph “waiting is painful...” thoughts? What makes waiting painful? The unknown? Fear? Is it more difficult, more painful waiting for something positive or negative to happen? Why? When one is waiting for something negative to happen, what often occurs? Fears increase, the imagination begins to run wild and we create fantasy worlds that actually don’t exist to dwell upon, which only worsens or fears and anxieties increasing the negative fantasies.

Read last paragraph – thoughts? When we trust God can we be certain what ever happens it will always be what is best for us? Or may we sometimes trust God and things happen to us that are best for God’s cause or best for another, but not necessarily best for us? Stephen’s stoning, was that good for Stephen? Was it “best” for Stephen? Job’s experience, God had already pronounced that Job was perfect and righteous in all his ways, was this experience good for Job – or did it serve a greater good than just Job? If we trust God won’t we come to look beyond ourselves, beyond how things affect us and won’t we come to, like Christ sacrifice ourselves for others?

*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*

*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of heir testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Revelation 12:11*

Does it make a difference to see issues in the setting of the GC? Could being focused only on how we are affected lead to misunderstandings and cause problems? Such as?

## MONDAY

In God’s time – have you ever had to wait on something? Is it easy to wait? When I was working on my book I struggled with patience in getting it published and while I am sure part of that was just personal fulfillment a large part was my belief that my book could help people. I was impatient to have a tool I could put in the hands of people that could help them. Is this type of impatience wrong? Is there a type of impatience that is healthy?

*For troubles without number surround me;  
my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.*

*They are more than the hairs of my head,  
and my heart fails within me.*

*Be pleased, O LORD, to save me;  
O LORD, come quickly to help me. Psalms 40:12, 13*

Is it wrong to be impatient for God’s presence, healing and deliverance from sin?

*He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. Revelation 22:20*

Is it wrong to, while we wait patiently, to long for the Lord to come quickly? Is such an attitude an oxymoron?

As Seventh-day Adventists what are we waiting for? Should we be waiting? Are we waiting for Christ to come or is Christ waiting on us?

*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. 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.*

*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.*

*Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. 2 Peter 3:8-12*

Can we speed the coming of the Lord? Do you want to speed the coming of the Lord? Would this type of “impatience” be wrong? Would it be better to sit back and say, “the Lord will come in His good time I will just sit patiently and wait?”

How can we speed the coming of the Lord? Two fold, apply to our own lives God’s remedy so that we personally are ready to meet Him and secondly, as effectively as possible spread the Good News about Him that is to lighten the world for His coming.

“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

Do you want to do this? We have an opportunity coming up in 08 here in Chattanooga, for this class to sponsor the GNT, to spread this final message of mercy, to hasten the day of his coming.

How are we to wait?

Petra has a song called ***More Power To Ya***

You say you have been feeling weaker, weaker by the day  
You say you can’t make the joy of your salvation stay.

But good things come to them that wait not to those  
who hesitate so hurry up and wait upon the Lord

More power to ya, when your standing on His word,  
when you trust Him with your whole heart in the message you have heard.

More power to ya, when we’re all in one accord,  
they that wait upon the Lord they shall renew their strength.

What does it mean for us, as we wait for the Lord, to wait?

First paragraph Monday’s lesson reminds us that the Bible teaches that Jesus came to die at exactly the right time, but the Bible doesn’t tell us why it was the right time. Any thoughts on why it was the right time when He came? Does the GC perspective help? Does the reality that angels are longing to look into these things and are watching help?

Was there ever a time in earth’s history prior in which God’s people were to all outward appearances following His blueprint? And, what is learned by Jesus coming to a group who were apparently following His guidelines and instructions? That external conformity to a set of rules does not heal the problem of sin, that one can obey all the right rules and still be God’s enemy.

Is waiting a difficult problem for an immortal being? Does time matter when one lives eternally? Does waiting lose its significance if there is never an end? Conversely, does the idea of running out of time heighten our sense of urgency and thus our temptation toward impatience?

Do athletes play differently as the clock is winding down? If there were no clock and the game went on eternally might the athletes play differently? Are we currently, on this planet being fitted for heaven? Might that preparation also have some part of it that impacts how we deal with time?

## TUESDAY

David as an object lesson. David was promised the throne and anointed by the king, yet David had to wait many years to actually become king. Along the way he was persecuted by Saul and had opportunity to kill Saul, but would take action against him.

What lessons are there for patience and waiting on God in this story? A danger that exists when God reveals to us His plan for our lives, is that if Satan cannot get us to reject God, to reject God's plan for our lives, then Satan says, okay go forward in what God has called you to do, but do so by my methods – Satan will tempt us to act in selfish ways to achieve what God has promised. He will tempt us to take what would be given to us if we would wait.

Last week I told you about Kent Whitaker, and how his son Bart arranged to have the family killed so he could inherit the family money. He attempted to take, via Satan's methods, what would have been his, freely given, had he been willing to wait.

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

It states God had been vindicated – had He? How had God been vindicated? From this experience what did the people now know about God? That He is powerful. And from that knowledge did the children of Israel maintain forever loyalty and faithfulness to God?

But when Lucifer started His war against God what were His allegations against God? Did Lucifer ever allege God did not have power? So was the demonstration of power ever part of vindicating God? No, thus Zech 4:6 not by might nor by power but by the way the Spirit works says the Lord.

Did Elijah Himself actually understand this at that time? No, thus he ran and when God found Him what did Elijah need to learn? Turn to 1 Kings 19:8-13

*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. 9 There he went into a cave and spent the night.*

*And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"*

*1KI 19:10 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."*

*1KI 19:11 The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."*

Now, if you were Elijah, you had just come from the Mt. Carmel experience and the Lord said go out and stand in the presence of the Lord for the Lord is about to pass by, what might you be expecting? Notice what lesson Elijah had to learn:

*Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD*

*was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.*

What lesson did Elijah learn? And after learning this lesson he was now ready for translation. What lesson do we need to learn about God? What kind of God are we worshipping, serving and looking for? While God is all powerful, to be sure, is it His power we must come to know, love and revere or His selfless character of love?

#### THURSDAY

Delight in the Lord, what does it mean to you to delight in the Lord? The lesson suggests to dwell in perfect trust, thoughts? What about also in perfect love? That we love God, His methods, principles, character, we find Him altogether lovely and beautiful and long to be like Him in every way. We lose site of ourselves and give ourselves to Him as living sacrifices rejoicing in the privilege of being useful to Him?

## 2007 Q4 Lesson 12 Dying Like a Seed

Read memory text- thoughts about this? Dying like a seed – how does a seed die? Does a seed die in the sense of becoming lifeless? Or does it die in the sense of becoming something else?

When we as Christians are called to die, does that mean we are to become lifeless or to become something else? Do we die as individuals or do we die to the way, methods, principles, attitudes of our former selves and live new lives, with our own individuality, but with new character, methods and principles?

What does it feel like to go from one life to the other? Dying??? Could this be what the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm is really talking about, the valley of the “shadow” of death, not the valley of death – that God is restoring our souls, leading us in the paths of righteousness, anointing our heads with oil and when we are in that valley of the shadow of death, that valley when we feel like it would be better to give up and die – we are not to fear because that is the transition point between the old and the new?

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? When we find ourselves in such a situation how do we overcome? By faith, which is what? Reliance on the evidence previously given and understood and choosing to go forward despite how bad it feels, example: A person undergoing physical therapy may feel bad, it may really hurt, but what causes them to push on? Faith – an intelligent understanding of what PT is about, confidence or faith in the therapist, which enables one to choose to push forward despite the momentary pain and discomfort.

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Did Christ lose His rights? Or did Christ exert His right to sacrifice Himself and give Himself voluntarily to redeem us? Was Christ crucified against His will or in harmony with it? Because of what Christ has done do we have the right to give ourselves to God for His glory and give our means and self for the benefit of others?

What enabled Jesus to sacrifice Himself? Love – if we experience God's love does it become easier to give ourselves for others?

In the middle of the lesson it asks, “If rights and equality are good and should be protected, how would you explain the logic of sometimes needing to give them up?” – thoughts?

Can you actually give up your rights or is it your right to do so and thereby whatever you freely give is actually exercising your right?

What about a deacon who dominates and controls his wife citing Bible passages of wife's need to submit to her husband. The husband threatens her with criticism, withholds love and affirmation, threatens rejection and verbalizes accusations of spiritual condemnation. He dictates her behavior, tells her who she can associate with and commands she submit to his will to serve him. What would Godly love do in such a situation? Humbly surrender? Is love interested in self or the other? What happens to the character of the husband if he goes on treating his wife like this? If the

wife loves her husband what is her responsibility? To give in or stand up in love? In fact, if she gives in out of fear of rejection, fear of abuse is her giving in an act of love or act of fear? And fear is part of the infection of sin, so love doesn't necessarily submit. Love seeks to redeem, protect and build up.

But love will sacrifice self to help others if the situation calls for it – remember the Amish school shooting when two sisters stood up offering themselves to be shot in order to save the others?

## MONDAY

Bottom paragraph – read thoughts? What enables someone to surrender their self to God? What things are necessary? In the section above the lesson suggests, based on Romans 12:1,2: a true understanding of God's mercy. – thoughts?

What is a true understanding of God's mercy? The paragraph we just read spoke of Christ's experience on the cross, how do you understand that experience?

In the December NAD Review on page 40 Angel Rodriguez discusses the atonement and he rightly points out that the Moral Influence Theory MIT only explains part of the plan of salvation and what Christ accomplished. But what do you think about what he says is the central aspect of the atonement that the MIT leaves out:

"It [MIT] denies a central aspect of the atonement: One of the fundamental problems of the moral influence view 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."

Thoughts? Did God kill Christ? Could this idea that God killed Christ, the innocent in order to be just, be the final distortion about God to be removed from Christian thought to complete the Reformation? Is this the final misunderstanding to be corrected to enable us to take the final message of mercy to the world, the truth about God's character of love?

What evidence is there that God killed Christ? The evidence of the gospel writers is that evil men beat, abused and crucified Christ. Christ's own testimony is that His Father let Him go and stopped protecting Him. EGW states that evil men confederated with evil angels to murder Christ.

Satan had caused the Jews to rebel against God by refusing to receive His Son, and by staining their hands with His most precious blood. No matter how powerful the evidence now produced that Jesus was the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, **they had murdered Him**, and would not receive any evidence in His favor. EW 208

**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}

**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}

Why is this important? What enables us to submit to God? What enables us to give our lives to Him?

There are two types of submission – submission based on fear and submission based on love and truth, having been won over and convinced in one's own mind.

What kind of submission does God want and why? Examine the two types, what happens when someone submits based on fear? One of two things, either rebellion or destruction of individuality, does God want either of these for us?

What kind of submission comes from believing God killed His Son? If God killed His innocent Son, what will God do to those who refuse to accept Him? So what kind of submission does this lead to? Fear based submission resulting either in rebels or those who surrender their individuality and lose the ability to think for themselves, those whose minds become darkened. These are demonstrated by the religious leaders in Christ's day – look at how they had lost the ability to appreciate truth or were such rebels they didn't care what the truth was.

But the Bible states God wants everyone to be fully persuaded in their own minds. The truth of God's word is that He did not kill His Son, that He surrendered His Son and Christ surrendered Himself.

What kind of submission comes when you are convinced someone is not only right, but they love you so much they would give their life for you?

We have the privilege of taking this incredible truth about God to the world, the truth which will set people free so they no longer will submit to God from fear but because they are won to Him in love and truth and thus will become real friends of God.

In TQ page 141 we read, "A young single man once said, "I'm a little afraid to ask God to help me find the right woman to marry. I'm afraid that God will pick someone I won't like. Knowing what God values, He will expect me to live the rest of my life with a religious, but probably unattractive, wife!"

"Many are concerned about submitting to God. It is difficult, especially for self-actualized, goal-oriented people, to believe that submission to God's will is safe. It seems better to make our own choices..."

This was me – I was raised with a god who killed his own son and if you didn't accept him and do right, he would kill you in the end. I was told by my teachers in academy that I should ask God to guide in my selection of a wife, but I thought exactly like this. Why? Because I didn't trust God. I had been presented with a god who was arbitrary and who cared more about himself than his creatures. I couldn't trust a god like that to really choose what is best for me.

But, fortunately, I found the truth about God. I came to know He wants better things for me than I can even imagine. I came to see that He is not the source of pain, suffering and death, that He is not the executioner of His Son and thus won't be my executioner either. I came to realize that sin destroys and pays its own wage, and unimpeded sin will kill and God is the great healer, great physician working to heal and restore. And thus, once I learned the truth about God I made a better choice - I trusted God in leading me to find the right woman to be my life partner and wow, did He do incredibly more that I could have ever asked or imagine!!!

But I was only able to submit to Him when I was convinced I could trust Him.

## TUESDAY

How do you know when the voice of God is speaking to you? Can you tell by the way it feels? Are you supposed to evaluate what the voice says to see if it is in harmony with previous revelation from God in Scripture? Are you allowed to think and ask questions or are we simply to acknowledge and obey?

If someone comes to you and tells you that God has given them a message or told them to take a certain action and you are asked to support them, what would you do?

What evidence would you have that God had indeed spoken to them? How do we know when God is speaking?

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}

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? If you accept this statement as true will you be more likely or less likely to think for yourself in the future? Will you want to reason and weigh the evidence or would you prefer some command from God, a Bible verse, a thus saith the Lord, a rule from God you can apply without thinking?

Was the heart of the problem the belief that she was wise enough to decide for herself? Did God want her to decide for herself? If He didn't want Adam and Eve to decide for themselves then why did He give them the choice in the first place? Could their characters grow and mature into beings settled into God's side of the issue if they never reasoned out the issues and made the choice for themselves?

What is the real heart of the matter?

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 Jan 5, 1886.

The problem wasn't that Eve thought things through, the problems was that she didn't think them through enough, didn't take enough evidence into her thinking, didn't go to God herself and say, "I've just heard some troubling ideas, that you are keeping goodness from us, that you are selfish and can't be trusted, but I have never seen anything like this from you so I wanted to talk to you about it."

God is desperate for us to think. He begs us to reason with Him and in so doing our characters will be changed. He longs for us to grow up from children or slaves who do only what they are told to mature Christians who actually understand their master's business.

All the evidence is on God's side, if we would examine it, think about it in light of God's word with the HS enlightening our minds we would be won back to God and healed in character.

## THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts? What is the supernatural help from God? How does this supernatural help teach us a better way?

I have patients who pray every day for supernatural deliverance from their emotional pain. If God were to miraculously activate brain regions which would cause them to feel less pain would that solve the problem or teach them how to handle things better the next time?

The lesson suggests three substitutes we may use instead of God:

1. Using human logic or past experience when we need fresh divine revelation. – thoughts? What does it mean “human logic”? Would that mean a mind governed by the principles of the world, fear and selfishness, whereas a mind which has been reborn to love, truth and freedom and in harmony with God would be capable of using logic? In other words, does logic get warped if our values and principles and perspectives are warped, but does logic work if our minds are in harmony with God's? Are we expected to do this?
2. Blocking problems from our minds when we need divine solutions. – thoughts? Do we ever block problems from our mind with Bible texts and religiosity?
3. Escaping reality and avoiding God when we need communion with God for divine power. – thoughts?

Bottom section asks us to look at Zechariah 4:1-14 taking particular note of verse six. What Temple is the primarily talking about? See Zech 6:12. Notice, that the Temple is going to be built by the Branch and that it cannot be done by power and might but by the way the Spirit works – what Temple?

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

What leads us to do this? We must first acknowledge our diagnosis as terminal in sin, we must recognize a cure is available and we must trust the one who has the cure – we must come to the truth and knowledge of God.

## 2007 Q4 Lesson 13 Christ in the Crucible

Read first paragraph Sabbath's lesson – thoughts?

Was God surprised by the entrance of sin? Did God go into creation with a sense of uncertainty, “Son, we could create these intelligent beings free but if we do we risk rebellion, are you willing to risk it?” And does the Son say, “Well Father, I think it's worth the risk, let's give it a chance and see”? Is God's knowing what will happen the same as causing what will happen?

If God knew this would happen, then why did He create intelligent free beings? Is it that this is the only path that leads to a universe of genuine real freedom and love? What does it say about God, that in the beginning, He knew that to give us genuine freedom, that it would cost Him His Son, yet He and Christ chose to do it anyway? How important must freedom be to God? How loving must He be?

### SUNDAY

Luke 2:7, 22-24 tells us Jesus was born and wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger and then on day 8 was circumcised according to the law. – thoughts?

Jesus was poor in earthly terms – what does this say about the health wellness gospel? What about the reverse, poor are cursed of God?

Jesus was circumcised – what does this tell us? He took humanity upon Himself, not just the humanity of Adam before the fall, but our condition, our position, our terminal condition. He took a humanity that was weakened by 4000 years of degradation.

Matthew 2:1-18 tells us the story of Herod's attempt to kill the baby Jesus – Thoughts?

Why did God not let Herod kill Jesus? If the problem with sin is that we are in trouble with God and in order for justice to be served God's innocent Son needed to come to the earth, as a human without sin and die as our substitute to make a payment of blood in order for justice to be served – then why not let Herod kill Him as an infant? Would not the blood of the perfect Son of God have been shed? Or would it, as we read last week, work for our salvation only if God kills the innocent?

If Jesus would have been killed as an infant what would not have occurred? The two things necessary for Christ to actually complete His mission and defeat sin and Satan, save the race and secure the universe – what were those two things?

Finish the work that Adam failed to complete – reveal the truth about God (John 17) but He had more to reveal and accomplish than Adam, because of Adam's failure, Christ had more to reveal by His life and death. He had to reveal the nature and character of sin, reveal He Himself was safe with all power, reveal His Father's character and how God deals with sinners and expose Satan for the liar and fraud He is. This is the revelatory side of His mission, but this wasn't all:

Christ had to actually restore God's law of love back into the human species as the perfect operating system and this He accomplished throughout His entire life and culminated in His victorious death.

*Hebrews 5:8, 9 - Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*

And how difficult this must have been for Him – read the bottom paragraph – at every turn He was suffering, yet at every turn He chose to love and give of Himself. He never acted in self interested.

Satan had put forth the strongest efforts against Christ from the time when he appeared as a babe in Bethlehem. He had sought in every possible manner to prevent him from developing an unblemished childhood, a true manhood, a holy ministry, and a perfect sacrifice in yielding up his life, without a murmur, for the sins of men. But Satan had been unable to discourage him, or to drive him from the work which he had come on earth to do. The storm of Satan's wrath beat upon him from the desert to Calvary; 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 blood-stained path before him. All the efforts of this mighty foe to oppress and overwhelm him, only brought out in a purer light the spotless character of Christ. {The Present Truth February 18, 1886 par. 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.” Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Said the Saviour: “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” And God declared by the prophet: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.” {5T 737.1}

No man, without divine aid, can attain to this knowledge of God. The apostle says that “the world by wisdom knew not God.” Christ “was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.” Jesus declared to His disciples: “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” In that last prayer for His followers, before entering the shadows of Gethsemane, the Saviour lifted His eyes to heaven, and in pity for the ignorance of fallen men He said: “O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee.” “I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world.” {5T 737.2}

**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}

At times Satan’s contest for the control of the human family appeared to be crowned with success. During the ages preceding the first advent of Christ the world seemed almost wholly under the sway of the prince of darkness, and he ruled with a terrible power as though through the sin of our first parents the kingdoms of the world had become his by right. Even the covenant people, whom God had chosen to preserve in the world the knowledge of Himself, had so **far departed from Him that they had lost all true conception of His character.** {5T 738.3}

**Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion.** The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world’s Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life. {5T 738.4}

When Philip came to Jesus with the request, “Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us,” the Saviour answered him: “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?” **Christ declares Himself to be sent into the world as a representative of the Father. In His nobility of character, in His mercy and tender pity, in His love and goodness, He stands before us as the embodiment of divine perfection, the image of the invisible God.** {5T 739.1}

**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} (The Worker’s Bulletin)

**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 un-fallen 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}

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}

Why did Christ have to come and die? To deliver us, to heal us, to save us, to recreate us to win us back to trust so we would accept the perfect character of love developed by Him and be reconciled back into oneness with God.

## MONDAY

Read top dark section – was Christ's death for the "sins of the whole world" only?

*Col 1:19,20 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.*

Through the plan of salvation, a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {ST, December 22, 1914 par. 4}

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}

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 mani-

fested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. DA 19, 20

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 arch-apostate 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}

Read Matthew 23:37

*“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.”*

How did Jesus handle rejection? Did He become self-focused, “Why are they treating me this way Father...?” Or did His heart break for them because He recognized what they were doing to themselves?

When you experience rejection – how do you handle it? What can we learn from Christ?

## TUESDAY

Read bottom two paragraphs – thoughts?

What was separating Him from His Father? Was the Father doing this to Him? Was the Father inflicting something upon Him? Did Christ have divine power to stop it if He wanted?

What does this tell us about God and Christ and their use of power? They will never, never use their abilities and power for selfish purposes!!!

What is Divine Justice? Is it the infliction of a penalty upon an innocent person so a guilty person can go free? NO!

Before we can determine what is just, we must first determine the governing law that is the basis for justice to be applied. What is the law of God? What is the law of the universe?

*Matthew 22:37-40 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.”*

*Romans 13:10 Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

*1John 4:16 God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.*

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}

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. God desires from all his creatures the service of love,-- homage that springs from an intelligent

appreciation of his character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all he grants freedom of will, that they may render him voluntary service. {GC88 493.2}

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 arch-deceiver 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. {PK 311.1}

What is the law that we have to gauge justice by? The law of love, and what does this law look like?

*1 Cor 13:4-8 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, 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.*

Understanding the law of love as described here, how would you now describe God's justice?

How does love act? What does love do? When someone you love mistreats you how does love respond – look to Jesus – how did He act when He was mistreated – Father forgive them- is this justice?

If a wife wants to leave her husband and the husband is a loving human being, and after all attempts to win her back she still insists on leaving, what is the only loving action he can take? What is the only just action he can take? And when the husband is God – the source of all life – what happens when He lets go? We die, the wages of sin is death- is this just or unjust?

Does God have to inflict a penalty on the wicked in order to be just? Or does justice require each person receive exactly what they themselves have chosen?

### WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? I thought the quarterly rightly pointed out that crucifying the innocent Jesus was “unfair”, isn't it interesting that it is unfair for the innocent Jesus to be crucified by evil men, but when some claim God killed His innocent Son, they call it justice? Is it just for God to kill the innocent?

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 rev-

elation 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 Cor. 5:19. {DA 762.1}

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? Questions about this passage?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Does God have something in Him, called His wrath, that is deeper, darker and more painful than any evil in any human heart?

What is God's wrath? Read Romans 1:18-28 and notice God's wrath is giving people up to reap what they have freely chosen! And what did God do to His Son? He gave Him up and in Romans 4:25, Paul uses the exact same Greek he did in chapter 1:24,26,28 in describing God giving up Christ for our salvation.

And notice in this passage the wrath of God comes because they reject the knowledge of God—what did the war in heaven start over? Satan told lies about God and in Eden he told lies about God and what is life eternal "knowing God" what is the new covenant having God's character reproduced within such that no one has to say to their neighbor "know the Lord" for all will know me. And spiritual warfare is warring against everything that is against the knowledge of God.

## THURSDAY

Read middle paragraph – "First, Christ, our Lord..." – thoughts? Any questions about this? Any questions about the Bible references here?

Look up Isaiah 53:4

*Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.*

Do you think this applies to the crucifixion? Or could this be a prophecy that He would take up our sorrows and sickness to heal them and we would misunderstand and consider God punished and afflicted Him?

Look up Matthew 8:16,17

*When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."*

What text in Isaiah is this refereeing to – check your references in your Bible – Isaiah 53:4. What do you think this means? Did Matthew get confused? Or do we believe Matthew was inspired by the Holy Spirit and got it right?

If Matthew got it right, the right application of this verse – what does it tell us about Christ taking up our infirmities and carrying our sorrows? What is it not? It is not the idea of Christ being punished by God in our stead! It is Christ being the conduit of God's love to bring healing and restoration. Yet we would misconstrue, misunderstand and accuse God of killing His Son.

## FRIDAY

Read top paragraph – thoughts?

Why must the transgressors of the law if left to themselves perish? Notice the language – “if left to themselves”. As soon as Adam and Eve sinned, God began interceding with the destructiveness of sin – if God would have left Adam and Eve to themselves, what would have happened? They would have died. And, is inflicting an external penalty of death on someone the same as leaving them to themselves?

Why is man helpless? Helpless to do what? Cure our condition, restore love into the mind/heart, overcome fear and selfishness.

What does it mean to become a propitiation? To propitiate something means to make it compatible. So what do you think the meaning of the sentence is, He will appease God and make God compatible to man or He will heal mankind back into compatibility with God?

## 2008 Q1 Lesson 1     An Overview of Discipleship

What is discipleship? When you think of being a disciple what comes to mind?

1. **a:** One who embraces and assists in spreading the teachings of another.  
**b:** An active adherent, as of a movement or philosophy.
2. One of the original followers of Jesus.
3. A member of the Disciples of Christ.

Whose disciples are we to be? Apollo? Peter? Paul? EGW? Graham? ATS? Billy Graham? Joel Olsteen? No, Jesus!

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?

How can you tell a true disciple of Christ? Can you tell by their profession? By the food they eat? By what they drink? How they dress?

How can we tell? By the methods they use in the way they live their lives?

Another cause of dissension had arisen. At a feast it was customary for a servant to wash the feet of the guests, and on this occasion preparation had been made for the service. The pitcher, the basin, and the towel were there, in readiness for the feet washing; but no servant was present, and it was the disciples' part to perform it. But each of the disciples, yielding to wounded pride, determined not to act the part of a servant. All manifested a stoical unconcern, seeming unconscious that there was anything for them to do. By their silence they refused to humble themselves. {DA 644.2}

How was Christ to bring these poor souls where Satan would not gain over them a decided victory? How could He show that a mere profession of discipleship did not make them disciples, or insure them a place in His kingdom? How could He show that it is loving service, true humility, which constitutes real greatness? How was He to kindle love in their hearts, and enable them to comprehend what He longed to tell them? {DA 644.3}

The disciples made no move toward serving one another. Jesus waited for a time to see what they would do. Then He, the divine Teacher, rose from the table. Laying aside the outer garment that would have impeded His movements, He took a towel, and girded Himself. With surprised interest the disciples looked on, and in silence waited to see what was to follow. "After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." This action opened the eyes of the disciples. Bitter shame and humiliation filled their hearts. They understood the unspoken rebuke, and saw themselves in altogether a new light. {DA 644.4}

What method do we see in this story revealed by the disciples? What method revealed by Christ?

In this last meeting with His disciples, the great desire which Christ expressed for them was that they might love one another as He had loved them. Again and again He spoke of this. "These things I command you," He said repeatedly, "that ye love one another." His very first injunction when alone with them in the upper chamber was, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." To the disciples this commandment was new; for they had not loved one another as Christ had loved them. He saw that new ideas and impulses must control them; that new principles must be practiced by them; through His life and death they were to receive a new conception of love. The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-



denying, self-sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another. {DA 677.2}

This love is the evidence of their discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," said Jesus, "if ye have love one to another." When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. {DA 678.1}

How can we reveal this love in our lives? In our families? In our community? In our class?

## SABBATH

Read entire day – thoughts?

What causes people to turn back from their Christian commitment?

### 1. disillusionment

- Belief that one's security is bound up in one's choices; so as long as we choose to do right then we will be okay
- Health/wellness gospel
- God is required to kill, God took mommy, God doesn't protect the innocent, and many other lies about God

### 2. fear

- Fear of loss
- Fear of humiliation
- Fear of rejection
- Fear of what others will think
- Fear of physical torture

### 3. cost of discipleship

- Family rejection, spouse leaves
- Lose job
- A child dies

### 4. deception

- A false religion pulls one away – David Koresh

### 5. never genuinely committed initially

- Judas

## SUNDAY

Read second paragraph "On the personal level..." thoughts?

How is Christ generally represented in the world by Christianity? What examples can you give that misrepresent Christ and what examples that genuinely represent Him?

### Misrepresent

- Christians who attack abortion clinics
- Christians who attach/picket homosexuals
- Christians who seek to coerce others to conform by law
- Christians who discriminate
- Christians who abuse their spouse or children
- Christians who use Christ's name for political purposes
- Christians who preach as a way to personally get rich
- Preachers who present a distorted concept of God

### Genuinely Reveal

- Marian and Barbie Fisher – offered their lives for others
- Charities which seek to relieve hunger, poverty, disease
- Individuals who give of themselves to help others without recognition
- Community of unity, trust and love

### MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What is the primary subject matter we are to be learning from Christ? The Truth About God!

Can someone share with the class the truth about God you have learned from Christ? What difference has that made in your life?

If you are still struggling with learning the truth about God as revealed in Christ, if the old ideas about God from childhood, from tradition are still in your mind, don't be discouraged – look at Phillip – after three and half years with Christ he said to Jesus,

*“Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” 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’? 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. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. John 14:8-11*

Read the dark middle section “Discipleship involves...” Thoughts?

What does it mean to follow God's commands? To be one of God's disciples? What does God command us to do?

Explore three levels of obedience –

1. Obey out of fear of punishment
2. Obey out of love for the person and not wanting to hurt them
3. Obey out of intelligent agreement

What level does God want from us?

- John 15:15 – Jesus calls us into intelligent friendship

- John 16:26 – Jesus said he would not pray the Father for us because the Father himself loves us.

If we are obedient to Christ, will we believe this?

If we follow Jesus as his disciple, will we teach this?

Can you be Jesus' disciple if you teach things that oppose what He taught?

What are your thoughts regarding putting family second to Jesus, including your spouse? If a spouse were acting in such a way they were destroying their partner's fitness for God and His kingdom and would not change, would the partner have a God given responsibility to leave?

Read bottom green section – is there anyone more dangerous in the world than someone on a mission for God who doesn't actually know the truth about God as revealed by Jesus?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph "In most instances..." thoughts? Who has Christ called to be His disciples?

*But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself." John 12:32*

*This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time. 1 Timothy 2:3-6*

Read last paragraph – "Even the response..." thoughts? Does this mean God determines who is saved and who is lost? Or does this mean that none would have any hope if God wasn't working for our salvation, that we wouldn't even have a knowledge or desire for anything better except God gives us that knowledge and desire, some choose to follow and live others choose to rebel and die?

## WEDNESDAY

Read first four paragraphs – thoughts? What about Judas was he a follower of Christ? Was he considered a disciple? Was he sent out with the others and able to perform miracles? Why did he follow? Did he follow willingly or was he coerced or pressured to follow?

Is it possible to follow Christ willingly and still not be a true disciple? Is it possible to follow Christ willingly for the wrong reasons or motives? What happens if you do?

What motivates people to follow Christ?

- Fear – of eternal damnation? What kind of disciple does this make?
- Status or position in society? What kind of disciple does this make?
- Love for someone who raised you to be a Christian? What kind of disciple does this make?
- Love for God with an intelligent appreciation of His character and methods – what kind of disciple does this make?

Which do you want to be? How can you become that kind of disciple?

## THURSDAY

Last paragraph – thoughts? First is the sentiment an absolute truth? When Lucifer was in heaven in God's presence did he become more and more like God? When Judas spent three and half years with Jesus did he become more like Jesus?

Is it possible to see God, spend time with him and still not want to become like Him? Does it matter how events are interpreted?

Judas interpreted Christ's actions as weak, short-sited and unsophisticated, thus he saw the same evidence that the other disciples saw but rather than being transformed by it he was hardened because of his own interpretation of what he heard and saw.

A man brings his wife roses, she can respond with, "Oh, Sweetheart, I love you." Or by saying, "Okay, what have you done?"

God has provided the evidence and He Himself has come to explain it, but we are still all free to interpret it for ourselves are we not?

With this in mind, after spending three and half years with Jesus, what was the "vision" of the future all of the disciples had? Jesus sitting on David's throne, over throwing Roman power and establishing an earthly kingdom and each of them were vying for the prime minister's job. Had they become like Him? Had they failed to interpret all they had seen properly?

Why? Because of preconceived ideas, prejudices, biases and traditions, what about today? What biases and traditions impair our ability to see with Christlike vision?

### FRIDAY

Read questions 1 and 4 and discuss

## 2008 Q1 Lesson 2      Discipleship Then and Now

(Lesson taught by Lynda Smith)

### OVERVIEW

What does discipleship to Jesus mean?

- A person who has accepted Jesus Christ as Savior
- Committed himself/herself to a growing relationship with God
- Using the HS to integrate the character of Jesus into every area of life
- Committed to being responsible members of their church thru active mission
- Motivated by God's Spirit

What is God's Spirit?

The methods that we use to show the following character traits:

- Unselfishness
- Love one another
- Tenderness
- Compassion
- Healing
- Lifting others up
- Giving

What is Satan's spirit?

- Selfishness
- Telling lies
- Taking
- Ambition for self
- Tearing others down
- Self-exaltation

This week we are studying about choosing discipleship both in Jesus time and today. In the tradition of teachers or professors back in Jesus' day, the teacher chose his disciples. Jesus choose 11 of his disciples, and Judas was asked to be included as he saw the fame and glory that could be his.

Sunday's lesson reminds us of the Greeks seeking discipleship. John 12:20

Their tradition was the opposite of the Jews. The students initiated the relationship and often paid to sit at the feet of their teacher.

The Greeks were interested in the truth about the mission of Jesus and Jesus gave them an audience. Did Jesus call the Greeks? Or did they seek Him out themselves? How do we know that He has called us? Has everyone been called? Does God only call those that are predestined to be His disciples? Or does God treat all of us equally? Rom 8: 29-30 (He calls us)

- Acts 10:34,35 (God treats all the same)
- Jer 29:13 (you will find Me because you seek Me with all your heart)
- Matt 28:19,20 (teach everyone to be disciples)

Are we seeking the truth about God every day?

## MONDAY

Almost a year and a half after the start of His ministry when Jesus needed to leave Judea because His life was being threatened, He moved to Galilee and began His formal ministry. Soon after arriving in Galilee, He called a group of disciples. (Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16) Some of them had been following Him in the previous year and a half—at least at times?

Before jumping up and following an itinerant preacher/teacher, what kind of evidence would you want to have?

- Methods
- Beliefs
- Mission Statement
- Salary
- Health plan, retirement
- How would I support my family, would I see my family?

Can you think of a person—a teacher, pastor, or friend—in your past who has had an enormous influence on your life and your beliefs? What was it about that person that influenced you?

Were you able to change your ways, your beliefs and follow that person's beliefs?

Several people I determined not to be like....

Someone I wanted to be like.....but they disappointed me later in life

Keep our ideals on Jesus.

## TUESDAY

John the Baptist was the one to lead the way for acceptance of Jesus. He knew his mission. He had many strong believers or disciples. "If he announced himself as the Messiah, and raised a revolt against Rome, priests and people would have flocked to his standard. Every consideration that appeals to the ambition of the world's conquerors Satan had stood ready to urge upon John the Baptist." DA 178.1

But he refused the splendid bribe. The attention he had, he directed to Another.

Just think of the temptation John had to direct attention to himself.

He did the opposite of what Lucifer did in heaven. Lucifer directed attention towards himself and told lies about Christ. John the Baptist knew he was only a voice—a cry in the wilderness

John knew his mission. He was called to be a reformer.

"Those who are true to their calling as messengers for God will not seek honor for themselves. Love for self will be swallowed up for love for Christ. No rivalry will mar the precious cause of the gospel." DA 179.5

He withdrew his influence even though his disciples were jealous, dissatisfied, and complained. "The same dangers still exist. God calls a man to do a certain work; and when he has carried it as far as he is qualified to take it, the Lord brings in others, to carry it still farther. But like John's disciples, many feel that the success of the work depends on the first laborer. Attention is fixed upon the human instead of the divine, jealousy comes in, and the work of God is marred. The one thus unduly honored is tempted to cherish self-confidence. He does not realize his dependence on God. The people are taught to rely on man for guidance, and thus they fall into error, are led away from God." DA 182.2



## WEDNESDAY

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?

Did the designated 12 disciples and the others who followed Jesus follow because he asked them to? Or did they follow Jesus because they were so attracted to Him that they could not imagine doing anything else? Is such a relationship feasible in our day?

What kind of relationship would God like to have with those of us who are living at the end of time?

## THURSDAY

Contemporary Discipleship

What would a disciple of Jesus be doing today?

Would God be looking for different qualities, different skills?

What keeps you from being a disciple?

- Selfishness, power, money, love for another?

Are there different reasons to become a disciple of Jesus?

- Fear
- Love for God
- Love for another
- Love of a reward
- Love of power or recognition

Would we be willing to be a disciple if we saw or experienced miracles?

What kind of evidence would it take to convince you to leave everything and follow Jesus?

- Miracles—what kind of person would this be?
- Available power—what kind of person would this be?
- Truth over powering lies—what kind of person would this be?
- Heavenly retirement benefits—what kind of person would this be?

Is God asking us to leave everything behind?

## FRIDAY

Is our educational system not designed to produce “disciples”? Does it take a lot of preparation?

What do signs and wonders prove? What do they prove? Why should we be cautious about modern day miracles?

## 2008 Q1 Lesson 3     Called to Discipleship by Jesus

Read memory text – thoughts?

From Wikipedia:

To believe without reason:

- Believing impulsively, or believing based upon social traditions or personal hopes
- In either case, faith is based upon the interpretation of the intangible (feelings, emotions, etc.) instead of the physically tangible and is primarily associated with religion in modern times.

According to the Bible,

- “Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Heb 11:1, NIV).

Thoughts about these definitions?

Does God want us to believe without evidence?

If God wanted His intelligent creatures to believe without evidence then why didn’t He simply declare Lucifer a liar, demand everyone to make a choice on whom to believe, on whom to have faith and end the controversy?

What does God want? He wants the loyalty that stems from intelligent agreement with Him, can we obtain intelligent agreement without thoughtful review of the evidence?

*Isaiah 1:18 – come let us reason together...*

What is the central issue in the Great Controversy? The trustworthiness of God Himself –

If your spouse had been lied to and currently didn’t trust you because she/he believed a lie – but you were totally innocent, what would you want?

Would you want an approach that says, don’t consider any evidence, don’t consider my character revealed to you over time, don’t investigate the allegations, just believe either me or the accuser?

Or if all the evidence is on your side would you want your spouse to think, to investigate, to pursue evidence and truth?

How much evidence and truth supports Satan? How much supports God? All truth supports God, thus Satan develops strategies he infiltrates into Christianity that actually obstruct our ability to come into the truth – one of those strategies is this distortion of faith – faith is believing without evidence.

God has gone to great lengths, including the life and death of His Son to provide us the evidence. Jesus said, His work was to reveal the Father and He didn’t simply declare the truth about God He gave evidence of that truth! Satan doesn’t want us to really think about and consider the meaning of that evidence.

Having said all this, what evidence do we have that supports this position?

*John 1:35-39 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”*

*John 1:44-46 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.*

*Matthew 11:2-5 When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?” Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.*

Luke 24:13-27 – disciples on the road to Emmaus –

*He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

## SUNDAY

John cited the text in Isaiah for his mission:

*ISA 40:3 A voice of one calling:  
“In the desert prepare the way for the LORD;  
make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.*

*ISA 40:4 Every valley shall be raised up,  
every mountain and hill made low;  
the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.*

*ISA 40:5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,  
and all mankind together will see it.  
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”*

In ancient times before a ruler came to a place, they had a road crew go before and make the road level, fill in the pot holes, knock down the mountains and make a smooth road for the ruler –

Anciently, when a king journeyed through the less frequented parts of his dominion, a company of men was sent ahead of the royal chariot to level the steep places and to fill up the hollows, that the king might travel in safety and without hindrance. This custom is employed by the prophet to illustrate the work of the gospel. “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low.” When the Spirit of God, with its marvelous awakening power, touches the soul, it abases human pride. Worldly pleasure and position and power are seen to be worthless. “Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God” are cast down; every thought is brought into captivity “to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Cor. 10:5. Then humility and self-sacrificing love, so little valued among men, are exalted as alone of worth. This is the work of the gospel, of which John’s message was a part. {DA 135.1}

How does this apply to John and the first advent?

How does this apply to God’s last day people and the second advent?

What is the wilderness? Could it be the wilderness of this world which is hungering after a knowledge of God?

What is the voice? Could it be the voice of God's last day remnant people proclaiming the truth about His character as revealed by Christ?

How did the founders of the SDA church view this text and our mission as a people?

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. 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, 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" (Isa. 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 your voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 5:1). {1SM 410.1}

What message are we to be proclaiming? Could it be the truth about God which wins us to trust and opens the heart for God's healing and restoration in righteousness?

When we call others to follow Jesus what are we calling them for? What are we calling them to?

What would you say if someone asked you, what does it mean to follow Jesus?

Green question at bottom states, "If you were to tell someone about Jesus what would you say?" – What do we have to say about Jesus that would witness truthfully about Him?

Jesus said, "As the Father sent me, so send I you." What did the Father send Jesus to witness about, to testify about?

*They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. 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. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." Jn 8:27-29*

*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. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." John 12:49,50*

*I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do... have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. John 17:4,6*

*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. Revelation 12:17*

What was the testimony of Jesus? The truth about the Father! Could it be that the last day message, the last day people, the people who the dragon becomes enraged at are those who have both God's law of love and the truth about God's character as revealed by Jesus? Is this the final message of mercy to go to the world?

The founders of our church thought so:

“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 this how we typically interpret “the testimony of Jesus”?

*At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do it! 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.” Revelation 19:10*

Here is Revelation 19:10 from the GNT

*I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “Don’t do it! I am a servant together with you and with your fellow-believers, all those who hold to the truth that Jesus revealed. Worship God!” For the truth that Jesus revealed is what inspires the prophets.*

What about this translation? It is the truth about God as revealed by Jesus that inspires the prophets!

How can we do a better job of taking the truth about God to the world?

## MONDAY

Read top dark section – “In Matthew...” thoughts?

Does this mean that they had never heard of Jesus, had no idea who He was, a stranger walked up and said follow me and they did?

Or had they already heard the testimony of John, heard the call to repentance, heard about Jesus’ ministry and when He called were ready to go?

Read bottom paragraph – what do you think about the sentence, “The Lord demands the whole heart.”

Would it sound different or mean something different if we worded it “The Lord requires the whole heart” Or, “It is a necessity to give the Lord the whole heart”? Do these statements sound different?

How could the “demand” statement be misunderstood? Could it inadvertently cause one to think of God as “demanding, exacting and severe?” If one thinks of God in this way, what is the problem? Fear rather than trust and the formation of constructs designed to protect us from Him.

But what, if we recognize it is a requirement, a necessity in order for our healing, our transformation, that it is the only way God can heal and restore us, and God leaves us free to make up our own mind? Does this decrease fear in God and increase our willingness to surrender all to Him?

## TUESDAY

Read last paragraph “Despite our fallen natures...”

What does this mean? What do you think the lesson authors mean?

What is the blood symbolic of?

*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. 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. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 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 6:53-57*

The life is in the blood, whoever partakes of the life of Christ- His character, His methods, His principles, His law of love – those who partake of the truth about God He revealed have the lies about God removed, are won back to trust, open the heart and experience the infilling of the HS who actually transfuses Christ’s character into our hearts and minds. We become partakers of the divine nature!

Now, when we have been recreated in heart, mind, character to be like Jesus is there any problem being His disciple or abiding in God’s presence?

### WEDNESDAY

What does it mean to you that Jesus called Levi Matthew, a tax collector, a person on the fringe of society, an apparent worldling to be one of His disciples?

Is there anyone who is too “wicked” to be called by God? Is there anyone whose history is too checkered to be redeemed by God?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

### THURSDAY

Second paragraph – “Though, as we saw....” Thoughts? Why did they have such grave misconceptions about Christ’s ministry right up to the end? Was it because Christ was unwilling to share the truth with them? Or was it because their own biases, preconceived ideas, prejudices prevented them from accepting and appreciating the truth He told them?

Are we, as Christians, in danger of this happening to us? Could we be rejecting the truth about God as revealed in Christ?

I believe the final truth to be recovered to complete the reformation is the truth about God Himself, that God is just like Jesus in character. I think God is waiting for a people to actually put this truth into their understanding of doctrine and teach a unified understanding of the Great Controversy which began in heaven over God’s trustworthiness and which will conclude over God’s trustworthiness.

The reformation for almost 500 years has been recovering truths lost, salvation by grace through faith, the priesthood of believers, baptism by immersion, man’s mortality, Sabbath – but the last truth is the truth about God Himself, that He never needed His Son to do something to get Him to be on our side. That God is just as loving and trustworthy as His Son.

The final message of mercy is the truth about God’s character of love!

### FRIDAY

Question 2 – read and discuss



## 2008 Q1 Lesson 4      Lessons from Would-be Disciples

### SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

Is this saying that we only get one shot with Jesus and if we don't go then we have missed out? Is it saying that if we have started with Jesus and stumble we are lost and can't return?

What evidence? Did the disciples start with Jesus and stumble over who was going to be the greatest? And three years later, were they stumbling over who was going to be the greatest? And Peter, did he start with Jesus, put his hand to the plow, but deny Christ three times with curses? Did Jesus continue to strive for Peter? Did Peter come back and work effectively for Christ?

Then this text cannot mean we have one chance with Christ and that is it. It cannot mean that if we start with Christ and turn back that we cannot come back to Christ. Then what does it mean?

He is saying, if you are working for Christ, for God's kingdom you cannot do effective work if you are looking away from God, if you are looking to others, if you are looking at the past. Using the plowing metaphor, one cannot plough a fit row if one is looking backward while plowing. Today we might say, one cannot drive safely, effectively, fitly if one is looking in the rear view mirror all the time.

This is the GNT of Luke 9:62,

*Jesus said to him, "Anyone who starts to plough and then keeps looking back is of no use to the Kingdom of God."*

One of the founders of our church wrote the following:

"And He said to another, Follow Me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow Thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." {3T 500.1}

No earthly ties, no earthly considerations, should weigh one moment in the scale against duty to the cause and work of God. Jesus severed His connection from everything to save a lost world, and He requires of us a full and entire consecration. There are sacrifices to be made for the interests of God's cause. The sacrifice of feeling is the most keen that is required of us; yet after all it is a small sacrifice... {3T 500.2}

Thoughts? Why the feelings? How do the feelings being sacrificed connect to Jesus statement of looking back?

When you sacrifice something for anyone, but in your heart you really didn't want to give it up, how will you feel? Will your feelings pull at you? Will your feelings tempt you? And if you allow that to occur, if you embellish such feelings, will the heart be committed to Christ or will the heart be holding on to the world? And if the heart is not open, freely open and committed to Christ can He heal us?

James 1:13 states our feelings lead us into temptation, we frequently become attached, emotionally attached to things and people in this world, some of which are unhealthy. God seeks to remove all unhealthy ties and connections from our lives, but it will not always feel good when this happens. Our feelings can tempt us to turn away from the path of health, the path of life, the path of goodness – what some call the path of duty.

Read bottom two paragraphs “Probably, though...” Thoughts?

What do you think it means decisions of the heart? When the Bible refers to the heart what is it referring to? The pump in the chest or the mind?

*Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Proverbs 4:23*

*Circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Rom 2:29*

What are these texts talking about? Our feelings of attachment? What do you think the Bible means when it says the heart? Is the origin of our feelings in some organ other than our brain? Is the origin of our motives, passions, longings, desires, attachments in some organ other than our brain?

Recently some researchers are suggesting that the heart is actually the pump in the chest. They are examining the magnetic field generated by the heart, which is stronger than the one generated by the brain. They cite the fact the heart has nerve cells, which are used for pacing the heart and some are making hypothesis that the pump in the chest is a second brain, a place where we can sense and know things. Thoughts?

I believe these ideas are wrong – the heart is not capable of cognition, it receives input from the brain and sends input to the brain just as every organ of the body does, it is the brain that perceives and experiences not the heart.

## SUNDAY

Read Matthew 8:19,20

*Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”*

Why did Jesus respond this way? Jesus was trying let him know what kind of kingdom Jesus was promoting – was there confusion over this? Did His own disciples have confusion over this?

What kind of kingdom was Christ promoting? A kingdom of love, truth and freedom. Is such kingdom clearly revealed in the world today?

At the end of time there will be two groups – those who value Christ’s kingdom, the remnant and those who value Satan’s kingdom, the beast system. How can we tell them apart? How can we be sure to be a member of Christ’s kingdom?

Read Mark 10:29,30 then bottom green section:

*“I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.*

Thoughts? What are the 100-fold advantages Christ promises? Would they not be in keeping with His kingdom? What is God’s kingdom? A kingdom of truth and love! How do we get these advantages?

How does truth make your life better here and now?

- If you are a lover of truth, a person who values God’s kingdom and therefore pursues all truth and wants all truth to be applied effectively to your life – how does that impact you?
- Would you live a healthier lifestyle? Would that have benefits?

- Would it make a difference in how you deal with people and relationships?
- Inappropriate guilt is always the result of believing some lie – would never experiencing inappropriate guilt be a benefit?
- What is the value of a clear conscience and internal tranquility?

How does love make your life better here and now?

- When we act in self-interest what is the consequence? Damage to reason and conscience with increased fear and insecurity – is there benefit to our lives here and now when we live in love
- Increased fear and insecurity result in activation of stress hormones with subsequent damage to body and brain, not to mention the unhealthy substances people use to calm themselves.
- Psalms 19:7 *the law of the Lord is perfect reviving the soul*, Does experiencing the new covenant (Heb 8:10) *law of love written on the heart and reviving the soul* have value or benefit here and now?

So are the rewards God promises arbitrary rewards handed out by the ruler of the universe or are they the natural consequences of coming back into unity and oneness with Him?

Is God like the judge at the fair, going around and handing out ribbons or does God offer Himself and union with Him and when we come into unity with Him we naturally reap all the benefits?

Likewise, those who reject God—does God hand out punishment or do they naturally reap it?

*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. 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. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. John 6:53-56*

## MONDAY

Read Matthew 8:21,22

*Another disciple said to him, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” But Jesus told him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”*

Thoughts? What does this mean? The lesson suggests that the man’s father wasn’t dead and what the “disciple” was saying was let me return home until my father dies and once he dies and is buried then I can liquidate his estate, tie up loose ends and then be free to follow you.

If this is the position of the “disciple” what is the problem?

How might we fall into the same trap?

Is there danger on the other side? Is there danger in avoiding family responsibilities in order to do church service? Where is the balance?

## TUESDAY

Read Mark 10:17-23

*As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do*

*not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.” “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.” Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”*

Why did Jesus say no one is good except God, was He saying that He Himself was not good? He was challenging the beliefs of the young man, why are you calling me good – do you recognize me for who I am? Notice the young man didn’t say, “But Master, you are God on earth. You and the Father are One. You are every bit as good as the Father.” Thus revealing that the young man didn’t really know Jesus.

Read middle question “Why would Jesus...” and then bottom paragraph – thoughts?

The lesson suggests money became an idol for him, meaning he loved his money more than God – but why do you think that was? Why was the money so important to one who was seeking so intently on doing what God wanted? Do you think the young man was a total fraud, not having any desire for God at all and just pretending in order to get ahead, or was there some part of the man that was genuinely searching and seeking to follow God? If he was seeking the truth, then why did money hold such a powerful position in his life?

What was the common theology of the day? If you’re healthy and wealthy then you are blessed of God, if you’re poor and sick you are cursed of God. So what would it mean for this man to give up his wealth? To give up the evidence of his acceptance and good standing with God, so what is the root problem?

The same root problem the disciples had – not knowing God, not appreciating His kingdom, methods and principles. So the root problem was accepting a system which twisted the concepts of God such that the man valued the wrong things and didn’t actually value God at all.

How are we in danger of doing the same today? What about valuing our membership in an organization? Our healthy diet, our faithful tithe or worshipping on the right day? Do we ever cling to these as evidences of our acceptance with God? Is it possible to do all the right things but still have such a twisted view of God we are His enemies?

## WEDNESDAY

Read John 3:1-21 – thoughts?

What is the kingdom of God? The kingdom of truth, love and freedom

- What does it mean to be able to see the kingdom of God?
- Does this help us understand what being born again means?

What does it mean “just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert so the Son of Man must be lifted up that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life?”

- Does this have something to do with becoming a disciple?

Why does it say those who don’t believe in Jesus stand condemned already? Condemned by who? Does it mean if we don’t accept Jesus God condemns us? If we are condemned already does that mean that the Father has condemned us or does it mean our condition was already terminal?

## THURSDAY

Read Luke 4:16-30 – thoughts?

Why did they get so upset? How might we see this in our day? Have you known of people getting upset if you challenge their theology, people willing to run you out of town? How about SDA's who get upset if you suggest people don't have to join this church to be saved? Or when you suggest God doesn't have to torture and kill the wicked because sin pays its wage and the wage is death – anyone get upset about that?

Read question two Friday – thoughts?

Read bottom green – thoughts?

Read question 1 Friday – thoughts?

What about how Christians treat homosexuality and abortion—is there danger of a herd mentality?

Read first paragraph Friday – thoughts? What truths are worthy of acceptance? What truths must we bring to the forefront? What principles are we to make known and live by? The truth about God, His character as revealed by Christ, the principles of love and liberty!

## FRIDAY

Question 3 – thoughts? How can we mitigate these excuses? What truths can we present that can help? In your experience what approaches are more likely to bring you to commit to Christ and what are more likely to push you away?

Question 4 read and discuss.

**2008 Q1 Lesson 5      Gender and Discipleship**

Notes are not available.



## 2008 Q1 Lesson 6 Ethnicity and Discipleship

Read memory verse and first paragraph – thoughts? Any application for our society? How about visiting a home where they are serving meat? Or pork or some other food you don't typically eat? Is there a place to balance the health of the body with the opportunity to witness?

If you found yourself in a position where you thought a person would be offended and doors closed if you didn't eat their food, would you be willing to sacrifice yourself to reach them? Or would your own good health or good standing before God be more important than reaching another person for God?

### MONDAY

The God-Fearers – speaks of the non-Jews who had faith and were in right relationship with God. Examples: Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, the Centurion, the Canaanite woman, but these never joined the Jewish nation and never practiced the Jewish rituals.

What might this tell us about the need for OT sacrifices and the OT rituals? Why was all that stuff given if we have examples of people coming to saving relationship with God outside of this system while this system was still in effect?

Because this system was never a means of salvation, it was merely an acted out model to tell the story of salvation, to reveal God's plan of salvation. The Jewish people were God's actors in a "play", the acting troupe and therefore for them they had to abide by the "Director's" script very rigorously or else be kicked off the production. But the rest of the people of the world were to watch the production and learn lessons. Others could join the acting troupe and if they did they were expected to follow the script (Rahab, Ruth), but the script's importance was only one of education and demonstration. Once Christ came and revealed the truth about God Himself and obtained what was necessary for salvation, once the reality of Christ's life and death were seen the acting program became obsolete.

Unfortunately, many have misunderstood the purpose of these OT instructions and think that somehow there was saving merit in the rituals and sadly some today still pursue observing these rituals as if they had some benefit to salvation.

And other look back on these rituals as if they were the great light and form their Christianity based off these rituals rather than using the Great Light – Jesus and His life to understand the meaning of the rituals.

Read last paragraph Monday – thoughts? Is it surprising that Christians back in Christ's day didn't understand the gospel and struggled with prejudice? What about during the Dark Ages? What about the founding of our nation with its great principles of all men being created equal, but we still practiced slavery? What about the Christians of Nazi Germany? What about the Christians of the Southern US during the last century? The KKK so called Christians?

Has anyone here experienced discrimination, bigotry, inequity based on ethnicity, culture, gender?

Do we struggle with biases toward Muslims today? What makes us vulnerable to this? Tribalism and serving a tribal god – a god who is on our side to help us fight our enemies, our hearts are united with kingdoms of this world rather than with the kingdom of God!

What areas do we struggle with in our society which impairs our ability to live as Jesus would have us? What areas can we improve in today to be more like Christ in how we treat those from different race or culture?

How can people take the name of Christ and act in such ways? Because they have accepted a false Christ a false God a false system of salvation, they have accepted Satan's lies about God and when we do, the mind becomes darkened. Romans 1

## TUESDAY

Canaanite woman comes to Christ – thoughts about this exchange?

How did Jesus treat women? How did Jesus treat strangers and non-Jews?

## WEDNESDAY

Read the paragraph “In this story...” thoughts?

Do we in this class believe in Christ our Substitute? Absolutely, don't ever suggest that we don't believe Christ is our Substitute – but we have to ask for what? The error comes when some suggest He took our place on death row and His Father executed Him in our stead. This is a lie, straight out falsehood, heresy and paganism. And when we stand up to the truth that the Father did not kill His Son, some misunderstand and then say, “you don't believe in the substitutionary nature of the atonement”.

But we do, Christ took upon Himself our infirmity, our iniquity, our sinfulness, our condition, our predicament, our disability, our liability in order to 1) reveal the truth about God to clear up all the lies darkening minds here and throughout the universe but 2) to cure, fix, remedy, restore, purge, cleanse, recreate, set right humanity – and the only way to achieve this was through His perfect life and voluntary death!

Read bottom Green section –

Bottom green says the Eunuch rejoiced over discovering that Jesus “died for his sins.”

When you hear this, what does it mean to you?

Would we be wrong to say Jesus died for our salvation? For our healing? For our redemption? For our restoration? For our reconciliation to God?

What about if we said, He died because of our sin, our sinfulness, our unrighteousness? Would that be different than “for” our sins? The Greek word translated “for” can be translated “because of” do we hear it differently if we read it this way? Does the way of saying it, “He died for our sins” make it sound more like paying a legal debt we owed?

What about forgiveness through the death of Jesus? Was Christ's death necessary for God to extend forgiveness? Was God free to forgive us without Christ dying? Yes, but what is the problem? The problem is that our troubles weren't with God being unforgiving, our problem was that we were terminal and His forgiveness without a remedy doesn't save.

Imagine having disobeyed your parent and drank some poison as a child and you are now in renal failure and dying. When you look up to see your father standing at your hospital bed what attitude do you think he would have? Would he need your brother to die for you in order for him to forgive you for your disobedience? Would he forgive you outright? You would certainly be relieved to find out he isn't mad and still loves you without change – but you would still be dying. Now, how about if in addition to your father forgiving you, your brother donated one of his kidneys which saves you – is there more joy?

Christ had to come to procure a remedy which actually, literally heals this creation. God's forgiveness wasn't the problem our sick condition was. Now it is true we couldn't be saved if God

was unforgiving, but we don't have to worry about God being unforgiving, God was not the problem, sin is the problem.

## THURSDAY

Paul and Barnabas taught at Antioch for 1 year and the lesson asks what does that tell us about the importance of teaching in discipleship?

Have you noticed that sometimes you have to think things through more than once before the issues becomes clear? And then once it does become clear you have to review again and again or it may get confused with old ideas?

Have you found that the hardest truths to learn are the ones which are replacing previously held falsehoods?

Is there benefit in sharing together, studying together? Is there danger in this? Is it as effective to go to class and hear the teacher without personal preparation, without personal study?

## FRIDAY

Read #2 thoughts?

Is it possible our problem is that we have presented doctrines disconnected from their true setting – the truth about God, and when disconnected from their true setting they fail to have the power to transform lives, for doctrines cannot heal and transform only the indwelling HS can do this as He takes Christ's character and reproduces it in us. But what then becomes the central focus? The truth about God, His character, methods and principles, and the doctrines are important as they connect to Him!

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Several thoughtful things in this paragraph, first Christ is the member of the Godhead through which creation was accomplished. Any member could have done it but Christ was the specific member who created:

Colossians 1:16 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.

Why was it necessary that Christ be the member who creates?

Where did sin arise? In heaven, with whom? Lucifer, and he was? A covering cherub – a created being. We all know that Lucifer's attack was on the trustworthiness of God, calling God's character into question, but what pretense did he use? What allegation did Satan make? That God isn't fair, but what could he possibly allege this about?

By alleging Lucifer and Christ were equals and that God was arbitrary in preferring Christ to Lucifer. Well how could Lucifer do this? What physical form did the Creator we now call Jesus, the pre-existent one, the Divine God, take prior to becoming incarnate on this planet?

*Exodus 3:1-4 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. 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. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up." 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.”*

*Acts 7:30-32 “After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord’s voice: ‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.’ Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.*

*Daniel, 12:1 “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise.*

*Jude 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”*

*Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.*

*1 Thes 4:16 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.*

Who is the war between? Who fights Satan on our behalf? Who is our great prince? Whose voice is it that raises the dead? It is Michael

Christ – who is the archangel.

This was the view held by our founders:

The words of the angel, “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God,” show that he holds a position of high honor in the heavenly courts. When he came with a message to Daniel, he said, “There is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael [Christ] your Prince.” Dan. 10:21.

Moses passed through death, but Michael came down and gave him life before his body had seen corruption. Satan tried to hold the body, claiming it as his; but Michael resurrected Moses and took him to heaven. Satan railed bitterly against God, denouncing Him as unjust in permitting his prey to be taken from him; but Christ did not rebuke His adversary, though it was through his temptation that the servant of God had fallen. He meekly referred him to His Father, saying, “The Lord rebuke thee.” {EW 164.2}

Does the fact Lucifer alleged equality with Christ give significance to understanding why Christ was the one who created this planet and Christ was the one to come and redeem this planet?

Just to show that how our founders saw it:

Lucifer was envious and jealous of Jesus Christ. Yet when all the angels bowed to Jesus to acknowledge His supremacy and high authority and rightful rule, he bowed with them; but his heart was filled with envy and hatred. . . . Why should Christ thus be honored before himself? {FLB 67.3}

Lucifer might have remained in favor with God, beloved and honored by all the angelic host, exercising his noble powers to bless others and to glorify his Maker. But, says the prophet, “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” [EZE. 28:12-15, 17.] Little by little, Lucifer came to indulge a desire for self-exaltation. “Thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God.” “Thou hast said: . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the con-

gregation.” “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.” [EZE. 28:6; ISA. 14:13, 14.] Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of his creatures, it was Lucifer’s endeavor to win their service and homage to himself. And, **coveting the honor which the infinite Father had bestowed upon his Son, this prince of angels aspired to power which it was the prerogative of Christ alone to wield.** {GC88 494.1}

Pride in his own glory nourished the desire for supremacy. 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 counsels 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?”** {GC88 495.1}

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.

So what reasons might Christ have been the direct Creator rather than the Father or the Spirit? Might his be to demonstrate there is a difference between Lucifer and Michael, that Lucifer is a created being whereas Michael is the Creator?

In this paragraph we also find the truth that Christ created all humanity – when did Christ do that? Is He still actively creating new people or did He create the human race in Adam and within the parameters of the Divine Law and Divine will mankind is able to reproduce himself without God acting to create new life?

What does this mean? God created one creation, we are all originally designed to be one, as the Father, Son and HS are One this creation was created to reveal the truth about God, His character of love and the Oneness of God and His intention for creation.

Satan is a divider, he causes separation, division, disharmony, disunity – splits, factions. Thus rather than seeing one unified creation operating on love, in the world we see the race split into multiple camps, prejudice, bias, bigotry, racism, ethnic cleansing.

But what do we do about the tower of Babel story? Who confounded the language causing divisions? If God is One and Christ prayed that all may be one, and Paul says that all will be brought together as one under one head Jesus Christ, then why did God cause the division of languages?

To slow the spread of wickedness, as an emergency stop-gap measure to prevent wickedness from spreading so quickly, allowing time for the Savior to come.

Was the death of Christ for the human race only?

*Colossians 1:18-20 "And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 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."*

God not only needed to heal this creation by Christ's mission, He had to halt the rebellion from spreading throughout the rest of the universe, to secure the loyal beings in their perfection. Without the cross of Christ, the perfect beings in the heavens were not secure, angelic perfection had failed in heaven. Thus this planet, created by God to reveal the truth to defeat Satan, targeted by Satan and co-opted by him to misrepresent God became the line in the sand, the battlefield, the place where the fight for the survival of the entire universe was fought.

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Why is it important to recognize that the Greek word for healing is the word for saved? What happens when we miss this? Christ came to heal and save and secure. It is important to recognize the totality of the problem so we can appreciate the solution.

What is the problem? Lies believed break the circle of love and trust and result in fear and selfishness, which results in acts of sin with result in death unless remedied.

Because of Adam, the human species is out of harmony with the law of love—the law of life—and is destined to die, save the interventions of God. Now, what is needed? Some say what is needed is that God's law be appeased a payment in blood made to the law so that God can be just in saving us. But this misdiagnosis the problem and provides a false solution, this idea is promulgating Satan's position:

Every sin must meet its punishment urged Satan... DA 762

But what does the law require? Righteousness, a perfect character,

If your child had terminal leukemia in order to "save" your child what must happen? What does the "laws of health" require? The Law requires the cancer go into remission, that the cancer cells remit. Once the cancer remits death has been defeated!

Christ came to put sin into remission, to return the creation back to its original ideal, to purge the destructive principle from the species and what is it that the Law requires? Some say the law requires death – not so,

*Psalms 17:3 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.*

God's law heals, restores, regenerates, when we open the heart and God writes His law within we don't die we are recreated in His image!



**2008 Q1 Lesson 7      Preparation for Discipleship**

Notes are not available.

## 2008 Q1 Lesson 8     Experiencing Discipleship

Read Memory Text – thoughts?

What does it mean to deny self and take up the cross?

Jesus now explained to His disciples that His own life of self-abnegation was an example of what theirs should be. Calling about Him, with the disciples, the people who had been lingering near, He said, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” The cross was associated with the power of Rome. It was the instrument of the most cruel and humiliating form of death. The lowest criminals were required to bear the cross to the place of execution; and often as it was about to be laid upon their shoulders, they resisted with desperate violence, until they were overpowered, and the instrument of torture was bound upon them. But Jesus bade His followers take up the cross and bear it after Him. To the disciples His words, though dimly comprehended, pointed to their submission to the most bitter humiliation,—submission even unto death for the sake of Christ. No more complete self-surrender could the Saviour’s words have pictured. But all this He had accepted for them. Jesus did not count heaven a place to be desired while we were lost. He left the heavenly courts for a life of reproach and insult, and a death of shame. He who was rich in heaven’s priceless treasure, became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich. We are to follow in the path He trod. {DA 416.3}

What Bible texts support this position?

*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. Revelation 12:11*

*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. 1 John 3:16*

Any others?

Thoughts about this? What does it mean to submit? Why is it necessary we choose to submit to humiliation and even death?

What is our problem? What is it that God is trying to resolve in the plan of salvation? What was Christ mission? What did Christ come to accomplish and how does that translate to you and me?

Our problem? Love and trust was broken by lies and replaced with fear and selfishness (survival of the fittest) in the mind and heart of mankind. Our natural, inherited response, action, motives are self-centered, this methodology leads only to pain, misery and death.

God’s universe runs on the law of love, the law of giving, the law of beneficence and it is only perfect harmony with this law that results in health, happiness and eternal life.

Christ came to win us to trust God and to restore in this race God’s law of love, God’s methods and principles. He did this by His own life experience and now He freely offers to download into us His character if we trust Him. But this means we must choose to open the heart to Him, trust Him and then choose not to act on the temptations to save self, when those temptations come. This is what it means to take up the cross daily and follow Christ.

Read first paragraph, thoughts? What does it mean to know God and Christ?

John 17:3 *life eternal is knowing God*, Jesus prayed we would come into unity with Him and the Father, the New Covenant is the process of having God's law (methods and principles reproduced in us) and no one will need to tell others to "*know the Lord for all will know me.*" Heb 8:10.

So what is knowing God? Coming into such intimacy His character is actually recreated within us and our thoughts, motives and will are unified with His.

What is it that Christ offers us? His perfect 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}

## SUNDAY

Read *John 6:43-58* "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. 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."

Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

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. 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. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 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. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever."

What does this mean? What lessons do we learn? Does this mean cannibalism? What does the blood represent?

*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. Therefore I say to the Israelites, "None of you may eat blood, nor may an alien living among you eat blood."*

*"Any Israelite or any alien living among you who hunts any animal or bird that may be eaten must drain out the blood and cover it with earth, because the life of every creature is its blood. That is why I have said to the Israelites, "You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood; anyone who eats it must be cut off." Lev 17:11-14*

*But be sure you do not eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat. DT 12:23*

The blood represents life, in this case, Christ's blood represents His life, then does it mean we are to internalize the life of 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

*"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:32*

What does it mean to eat the flesh and drink the blood? It means to internalize the truth about God as revealed in Christ, to be won back to trust and to value His methods, principles and motives. It means to take into the heart Christ, to desire in the heart to be like Jesus and choose to use one's energy to pursue Christlikeness.

What does this mean for how we understand the OT sanctuary system?

In the Old System what represented the blood of Christ? The blood of the sacrificial animal. And where did Christ say His blood was to be applied? In us! And where in the Old System was the blood applied? Throughout the system, brazen altar, golden altar, before the veil and in the MH place – what lessons do we draw from this? Does this mean the Old System was designed to teach God's plan of restoring Christ's life, Christ's character, God's law of love back into the Spirit Temple, back into the heart and mind of mankind?

## MONDAY

*Read Matthew 18:1-4: At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."*

What does it mean to become like a little child and how do we balance this statement of Jesus with Paul's statement in 1Cor 13:11

*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.*

What is the context of Paul's statement, what is the focus of 1 Corinthians 13? It is love. Is God-like perfect selfless love natural to a child? Are we born, in this sinful world, able to love in this way? Or are children naturally self-focused? Also, are children naturally able to overcome their fears to save self or are they easily frightened – except for the presence of their parents. So, Jesus says come to trust your heavenly Father like children trust their parents and Paul says, when this happens our fear and selfishness is replaced with love and we are no longer childish in our dealings with others but grow up to become intelligent, self-sacrificing loving Christians, giving ourselves for others.

Psalms 23 – we fear no evil – why? Because God is with us, why would this cause us not to fear? Because we know and trust Him. Think about a child in a dangerous place with their parent, if the

parent is not afraid, if they trust that parent does it reduce their fear? Troublesome times are coming on the world: will we be tempted with fear? How will we overcome such temptation?

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph “Jesus never calls....” Thoughts?

Do you agree God gives us reasons and evidence to trust Him? Absolutely! What do you think about the kind of evidence revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration? Is this the best kind of evidence? Is it the most reliable evidence upon which to base our faith? Why or why not? Would you like to have an experience like this?

Can Lucifer counterfeit this type of evidence? Can Satan appear as an angel of light and have a fiery show with some of his underlings along with him?

If you had an angel appear at your bed tonight like Daniel of old, and the angel told you to move to a new city or marry a certain person, what would you do? How would you know whether that angel was from God or an evil angel masquerading as an angel of light? Didn’t an angel in heaven lie and then that angel lied to Adam and Eve? Didn’t that same angel present himself to Christ on earth and claim to be from heaven and try to deceive Christ? Did that angel do miraculous things like take Christ to the Temple, show Him the cities of the earth? Did Christ allow the “evidence” of miracles to persuade Him?

Why is this important as we prepare to meet Jesus? Which takes us to Wednesday’s lesson...

## WEDNESDAY

Read Matthew 24:4-14

*Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. 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. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.*

*“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. 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 think it means when the gospel of the kingdom goes to the entire world? What is the kingdom? The kingdom of love? God’s kingdom of love? And what is that good news of that kingdom? The truth about God Himself, that God is exactly like Jesus revealed Him to be. How has this gospel been hidden?

The Christian church has accepted a pagan view that God requires appeasement, that God requires someone to assuage His wrath, that God inflicts the punishment for sin upon the wicked and His Son took the sinner’s place and thus God executed His Son. Such ideas misrepresent the truth about God as revealed in Christ. The truth, our condition was terminal, we were out of harmony with the law that life was based upon and without Divine intervention we would die. God the Father, Son and HS were all actively involved in healing and redeeming us. The truth is the truth about God Himself, which wins to trust, purges fear, opens the heart to love and eradicates selfishness!

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

#### THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

On what basis did Christ want people to recognize Him as the Christ?

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. ST Jan 20, 1890

#### FRIDAY

Question 3 read and discuss

Question 4 read and discuss



**2008 Q1 Lesson 9      Following the Master: Discipleship in Action**

Notes are not available.

## 2008 Q1 Lesson 10 Discipleship Under Pressure

### SABBATH

Read Memory text and first two paragraphs – thoughts?

What is suggested in the lesson that is a major factor in wearing us down as we deal with the stresses of life? Perspective and expectation, the lesson suggests a pessimistic perspective with expectation of bad outcomes wears us down. If this is your perspective in any endeavor, will that endeavor wear you down more quickly?

Yes, we know from neurobiology that when we have negative thought patterns, worries, irrational fears, pessimistic thinking we activate the stress center in the brain, Amygdala, which activates the hypothalamic pituitary axis causing increased amounts of stress hormones (glucocorticoids, adrenalin) as well as activating immune response with increased inflammatory factors resulting in damage throughout the body and exhaustion and depression.

How can we help prevent this type of thinking? Keeping a larger view, allow for possibilities beyond our immediate understanding – i.e. trust in God!

If you contracted the flu would you consider yourself blessed or lucky?

Jan 30, 2008 New Scientist reported on the 1918 flu pandemic that killed tens of millions of people worldwide. They noted that approximately 6 months prior to the major outbreak, a less virulent outbreak occurred in Scandinavia and those who contracted the flu in the summer were one tenth as likely to die if they caught the killer flu in the fall. And the cities where the less virulent flu struck had 40 times less deaths than those cities where it didn't strike. In other words, the less virulent form conferred protection. But what might you have been thinking if you had gotten the less virulent form, not knowing the future? Might you have thought why me? I eat right, exercise, do all the right things, why did I have to get sick? What if you got the flu 3 days before your wedding and had to postpone, might one be tempted to question God? Why me? Might one be tempted to be discouraged? But what if you knew this was conferring protection that will save your life when the deadly flu hits in 6 months?

How does this apply to our Christian journey?

### THURSDAY

It quotes Matthew 26:56 “then all the disciples forsook him and fled.” Do you think this had anything to do with perspective and expectation? Did this have anything to do with the view they were taking of events?

Read first two paragraphs – first, other than living at the time of the Apostles, what do you think would be the most privileged time to live? How about that generation which sees Jesus coming again – the translation generation?

Do you think being a sinful human explains all the difficulty the disciples had or was there more? Were their preconceived ideas, biases, expectations a barrier in addition to their fallen humanity?

Read middle dark section and bottom two paragraphs – are we as Christians ignoring Jesus warnings for us? What did the disciples ignore? What are we ignoring?

Matthew 24 – wars, famine, pestilence, persecution, false prophets, false christs, false gospels, a great tribulation such as has never been seen – but does much of the Christian world teach a secret escape? Why were the disciples unprepared? Because they expected events to transpire dif-

ferently that Christ had repeatedly told them, and what might happen to those Christians who are expecting a secret rapture when terrible times break upon the earth?

How many of us want Jesus to come in our lifetime? Jesus said that these troubles of wars, pestilence, famine etc. were the “beginning of the labor pains.” When a woman goes into labor is the pain the worst at the beginning or right before delivery? What do we expect to happen before Jesus comes?

Do we want Him to come? What are we praying for? Are we praying Lord protect us, hold back the pain, hold back the troublesome times. Are we like a pregnant woman who says, Lord I long to see my baby, but don’t let any pain come upon me?

Revelation 12 describes those who are ready to meet Jesus when He comes as those who do not shrink from death. In Revelation 7 the angel comes from God telling the 4 angels who are holding the four winds to hold, hold, hold, until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads, until we are healed, transformed, settled into the truth about God such nothing can move us. Do you think when that happens our prayers will change from protect us, keep us safe, hold back trouble, to bring it on Lord, let go and see us through to the end?

## SUNDAY

First paragraph states, “Religious faith can be a very powerful tool, either for good or for evil. The same kind of drive that motivates someone to ‘lose his life’ (Matt 16:25) for Christ’s sake can, in other circumstances, drive others to blow themselves up in the name of God.”

Thoughts? What do you think about this statement? Do you believe the “same kind of drive” that motivates a follower of Christ motivates a follower of Satan? What is it that motivates a follower of Christ to give his life? Love for others, what is it that motivates a follower of Satan to strap bombs on himself or herself and blow themselves up killing others? Hatred, anger, bitterness, resentment, but certainly not love for others.

What about the idea of faith, we could say that both groups do have faith, but is their faith the same kind of faith, what is the difference between Godly faith/saving faith and destructive faith?

Godly faith is an enlightened and intelligent faith, a faith that is based upon truth, respects individuality, that encourages reason, thinking exploration and evidence. Destructive faith damages the mind, discourages thinking, discourages the investigation of evidence and truth. Destructive faith requires one not to think, destructive faith is blind faith, an unenlightened faith.

Notice, destructive faith “requires” one not to think and investigate evidence, Godly faith promotes thinking and investigation of evidence and truth. But, sometimes people who are following God haven’t yet developed a mature enlightened faith and God still recognizes them as His children, but this should not be mistaken as evidence of what God wants.

Example: Rahab had an unenlightened faith and in her unenlightenment she lied, the three worthies had an enlightened faith and in their enlightenment they stood for the truth. Now God honored both because of the place they were in development i.e. Rahab had heard very little about God, but we shouldn’t use such examples of unenlightened faith as the ideal of what God wants, rather we should pursue the highest level of development and understanding and evidence and truth upon which to base our faith.

The disciples had faith, prior to the resurrection was their faith enlightened or unenlightened or partially enlightened? They understood that Jesus was the Messiah, but did they understand the nature of His kingdom?

The bottom paragraph in Sunday's lesson tells us the Bible doesn't teach the pursuit of political power as a means of carrying forward God's kingdom. What are God's methods?

The lesson points out that religion can be abused by political powers to control people and do horrible things. What are the core elements that must be taught in order for religion to be abused in this way?

- Lies about God – a God construct that coerces, is stern, requires appeasement and inflicts punishment
- Faith without evidence, faith without thinking, faith without reason
- Focus on behavior rather than character resulting in ideas that reformation can be legislated and others can be forced to conform
- Undermining the law of liberty, failing to promote genuine freedom of conscience

## MONDAY

When Mary came and anointed Jesus feet with the expensive oil, Judas stirred up discontent amongst the disciples – what was the basis of his complaint? Where did Judas get the idea that money should not be wasted on extravagance? Had Jesus taught such principles? Had Jesus taught better to give than receive, better to sacrifice for others, giving to the less fortunate? So what was the problem when Judas supported Christ's ministry in this way?

Judas was looking out for himself, he really wasn't interested in the good of others but wanted the money in the bag he controlled so he could pilfer it. Conversely, Mary loved Jesus and had been listening to Him and realized He was going to His death and she took everything she had to get this perfume in order to anoint Him and honor Him before His death.

What lessons from this story apply today? What about when someone criticizes another person's behavior? What about when someone spreads rumors about another? Is it dangerous for us to be judging others?

The lesson asks what does this tell us about the importance of motive in actions? Who can read the motives? Are things always as they appear? When a serpent speaks?

Where did Mary get so much money? How would we feel if a known drug lord donated \$1,000,000 toward the school building fund?

Bottom green read – thoughts? Is it enough to choose not to act on unhealthy motives and thoughts? No, this is what Saul of Tarsus thought, he thought the righteous were those who wanted to do bad things but had will power enough to choose not to. But Jesus taught in Matthew five that it is not enough to avoid the bad behavior we must also avoid doing it in our minds and hearts. And 2 Cor 10:3-5 states we must bring every thought into captivity to Jesus, why?

Because when we do it in our imagination the same neural circuits fire as if we do it in real life, thus our minds, neural networks and character cannot be transformed as long as we continue to choose evil in our hearts.

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph "A number of problems...."

First the lesson author has made a mistake, the disciples were not referring to Mt Carmel, the disciples were referring to 2 Kings 1:10-12 when Elijah called fire to consume the platoons of men.

Thoughts? Was it just misdirected zeal or was there more? Was there misunderstanding of God, His character, methods, principles and motives, misunderstanding the nature and character of sin and Satan?

What did Jesus say to them when they asked about calling fire down from heaven and destroying these people? “You don’t know what spirit you are of” Meaning? They thought they were acting for God, but Jesus said they had the other spirit, the enemy’s attitude. How many Christians today hold the same attitude looking for God to one-day rain fire down on the rejecters of His mercy?

The disciples knew that it was the purpose of Christ to bless the Samaritans by His presence; and the coldness, jealousy, and disrespect shown to their Master filled them with surprise and indignation. James and John especially were aroused. That He whom they so highly revered should be thus treated, seemed to them a wrong too great to be passed over without immediate punishment. In their zeal they said, “Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?” referring to the destruction of the Samaritan captains and their companies sent out to take the prophet Elijah. They were surprised to see that Jesus was pained by their words, and still more surprised as His rebuke fell upon their ears: “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” Luke 9:54-56. {AA 540.2}

It is no part of Christ’s mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, who seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederated with evil angels sometimes bring suffering upon their fellow men in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. {AA 541.1}

Why the fire in Elijah’s day – was it God’s ideal? Or was it the only thing the people would respond to?

Read last paragraph “Even worse...” thoughts? What is the punishment for sin? According to the Bible what is sin’s punishment? Death, for how long? Eternal, did Jesus die eternally? Then if you hold the view that He took our punishment and the punishment is eternal death with no resurrection, did Jesus die such a death?

Maybe a better question, where does the punishment of sin come from? Does the punishment for sin come from God or from sin itself? In Genesis did God say He would have to kill them or they would die?

*Romans 6:23, the wages of sin is death*

*James 1:13 sin when full grown brings forth death*

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. {ISM 235.2}

Now, some good friends of mine have said, but Tim can’t you seen in the Bible and the writings of EGW where language is used that leads people to draw the other conclusion, that God’s justice

requires him to inflict an external punishment upon the wicked. Let's examine that and you will find it only leads to that conclusion for those who don't actually move past what is said and examine what actually happened.

*"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).

But what actually happened?

Because of their refusal to follow God, His methods, principles, God set them free, He stopped interceding in their behalf, He removed His protective hand at their insistence and the Babylonians came and the Babylonians, not God, destroyed the city.

Then why would God speak like this?

*The Israelites are stubborn,  
like a stubborn mule.  
How then can the LORD feed them  
like lambs in a meadow? Hosea 4:16*

Imagine being at a national park with steep canyon walls and your 10-year-old son, who is known to be stubborn, unruly and doesn't easily do what you say. He is playing Frisbee and running toward the cliff – might you shout for him to stop, and if the child kept going, might you threaten the child – "If you don't stop..." And you don't have time to work your way up, with the cliff looming you don't say, "I will put you in time out for 5 minutes, I will ground you for a week" You say, "If you don't stop I will beat your backside raw." And if the child doesn't stop, what actually happens?

- Do you beat the child?
- Do you get out your gun and shoot your child before your child hits the bottom of the ravine, in order to punish your child? No, what happens?
- Violations of the Law result in death, you don't have to do anything except cry.

*Ephraim, Ephraim, How can I give you up, how can I let you go. Hosea 11:8  
"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I have longed to..."*

*"Oh my son, how I have longed to protect you, to keep you safe, but you were stubborn like a mule and wouldn't listen..."*

Look at how this is in EGW's writings:

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. [WOW, that sounds like God is punishing, but keep reading] 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}



Notice that He experience the hiding of His Father's face, and His heart broke, this caused His life to be crushed out. Notice the penalty is the penalty of sin, not the penalty of God. In the same section let's keep reading:

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}

Wow, another paragraph that sounds like God will inflict punishment upon the wicked. But let's keep reading...

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}

Can you get love from people by threatening to kill and torture them if they don't love you? So notice we have to balance the previous statements with this that God does not force the will of any, no pleasure in slavish obedience, but what kind of obedience do we get if we say, if you don't obey I will torture and kill? So those who want to use this statement to prove God inflicts punishment haven't comprehended what they have read. Let's keep going:

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}

What does God actually do? Does He have to inflict something upon them or does their own condition determine their destiny? In fact, God has been working to hold at bay the day of reaping to give time to be healed. Thoughts?

### WEDNESDAY

Top paragraph – read – thoughts? Was Peter willing to die for Christ? When the soldiers came to take Jesus what did Peter do? Pull out his sword to attack, why? Did he think he would win against an entire guard, or was it possible he was willing to give his life? Jesus said, put away the sword those who live by the sword die by the sword, was Peter willing to die? What happened when Jesus did this? Did it blow Peter's mind?

Did Peter have a true conception of God's kingdom? So when he was willing to die, was he willing to die like Jesus?

How about in our lives what lessons can we learn from this?

### FRIDAY

Read questions 1 and discuss – Did David use his initiative to pursuing the building of the temple and once when told couldn't build did he still go about planning and preparing? Did this originate with David's desire to do something for God or did God program David to do this? Does every thought we have originate with God or does every good motive originate with God and then our individuality is free to manifest that God born motive with our own freedom and creativity?

Question 3 read and discuss

## ADDENDUM

### 1918 Flu Pandemic Had a Trial Run

30 January 2008

NewScientist.com news service

The flu pandemic that struck in the autumn of 1918 killed tens of millions worldwide. But it now seems that it had a widespread, and much milder, trial run.

Scandinavian health statistics record an unseasonable outbreak of flu in the summer of 1918. People who caught it were only a tenth as likely to die as those stricken in the autumn, but those who did catch it were mainly young adults - a hallmark of the autumn outbreak and a strong indication that the summer virus was closely related to it (*The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, DOI: 10.1086/524065).

Previous studies have shown that the autumn virus spread relatively slowly. It had been hoped that this was a general feature of pandemics, because it would mean that “social distancing” measures such as closing schools could prevent deaths.

However, the Scandinavian figures suggest that the autumn virus spread slowly because the summer virus had already immunised many people. The team also found that the summer virus spread too fast for social distancing to work, but that the immunity it caused may have saved lives. Not every city got the summer flu and those that did may have had up to 40 times fewer deaths in the autumn.

If a pandemic behaved the same way now, this suggests we shouldn’t try to avoid the first wave. Watching out for it could also give us time to make vaccine before the bad wave hits.

## 2008 Q1 Lesson 11 More Lessons in Discipleship

### SUNDAY

Read Mark 4:36-41:

*Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"*

*MK 4:39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.*

*MK 4:40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"*

*MK 4:41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"*

Thoughts? Read last paragraph, "Notice the element..."

What is the key to not being afraid? Is the recognition of the fact that God has power the key? Is seeing miracles the key?

Read MONDAY third paragraph "Though one account..." Are miracles a good barometer? How many think Satan could walk on water? Is controlling the weather a good barometer? Is there Biblical evidence Satan can control the weather?

*JOB 1:12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."*

*Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD....*

*JOB 1:16 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" ...*

*JOB 1:18 While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 19 when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"*

Who do you think brought that storm upon the disciples? Was it God? Was it Jesus or was it likely Satan trying to destroy Christ?

Notice how the servant reported to Job, "the fire of God fell" was it the fire of God? Did God do this? Do people today make the same mistakes when "natural disasters" occur?

What about the final plagues, will God use His power to inflict them or do they occur when God withdraws His protection?

Revelation 7:1-3:

*REV 7:1 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 doing? Holding back the winds of strife, the forces of evil, satanic agencies, thus their power to harm the earth is by letting go their hold – just like God let Satan loose in the book of Job.

EGW supports this view:

The restraining Spirit of God is even now being withdrawn from the world. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, fire and flood, disasters by sea and land, follow each other in quick succession. Science seeks to explain all these. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there shall be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.—Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 408.

Four mighty angels are still holding the four winds of the earth. Terrible destruction is forbidden to come in full. The accidents by land and by sea; the loss of life, steadily increasing, by storm, by tempest, by railroad disaster, by conflagration; the terrible floods, the earthquakes, and the winds will be the stirring up of the nations to one deadly combat, while the angels hold the four winds, forbidding the terrible power of Satan to be exercised in its fury until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. {ML 308.2}

Why does God have His angels let loose the winds of strife, the Satanic agencies?

“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

Are miracles a good way to establish our faith? Why? Because miracles can be counterfeited, but what about knowing God, knowing His character, knowing the One who has the power? When we know God’s character as the primary most important thing to know does that preclude miracles?

How many Christians today have misconceptions about God and expect the final plagues to be at His direct hand to punish people for their sin? Then which God are they preparing to meet?

What is the power of God?

*Romans 1:16,17 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. 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.”*

What is the power? The gospel, which is? The good news, about what? About God’s character His righteousness –

Thus in Zechariah 4:6 we read:

*“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.*

Does the experience of the disciples have lessons for us as we prepare for the end of time? What lessons?

Where were the disciples focusing? On themselves, where was Jesus focusing? On glorifying God!

What perspective did the disciples have of events? Narrow, on just the immediate what they could see. What perspective did Christ have? Eternal and universal, the Great Controversy perspective. Can we have such a perspective as we go forward?

Were the disciples unduly impressed with power and might? Miracles and wonder?

Had the disciples, at that point, surrendered their lives into God’s plan? What about us as the time comes to an end?

Read bottom green in Sunday’s lesson – thoughts? Is there ever a time when God does not care? NO!

## TUESDAY

Excellent paragraph, read bottom paragraph “What a contrast...” thoughts?

Do we as SDA’s have difficulty with this problem? How, with what?

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. {Counsels to Writers and Editors 37.1}

Notice her openness, we have many lessons to learn and unlearn, only God is infallible, we are to develop an attitude of openness to the truth rather than rigidity and clinging to tradition or comfortable ideas long held.

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}

Notice again her attitude, not dogmatic, but open to investigation and even stating that all our SDA expositions are not without an error and we lose nothing by close investigation. But what about some in our church? Are there some who manifest an attitude of closed mindedness to new truth?

The rebuke of the Lord will be upon those who would be guardians of the doctrine, who would bar the way that greater light shall not come to the people. A great work is to be done, and God sees that our leading men have need of greater light, that they may unite harmoniously, with the messengers whom He shall send to accomplish the work that He designs they should. The Lord has raised up messengers and endued them with His Spirit, and has said, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” {CW 38.1}



Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. 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. {CW 38.3}

The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people, should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves, to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition, and worship they know not what. {CW 39.1}

## WEDNESDAY

Read Mark 9:30-32

*MK 9:30 They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, 31 because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." 32 But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.*

Why were they afraid? – They were afraid their ideas, their dreams, their wishes, aspirations and hoped for earthly power would be dashed by the truth – they were avoiding the truth because it would go against what they wanted to happen.

Do we do this? In dating relationships all the time people ignore the truth for fear it will mean the relationship won't last. Do we do it in other areas? What about Biblical truth? Do we avoid it lest we have to give up previously held ideas, what if we have spent years teaching another view, would it be hard to give up?

Read last two paragraphs – thoughts?

Did the disciples understand Christ's mission and the purpose of the cross? Was Christ's life and ultimately His death and resurrection the most important events in universal history? Are these events the key to winning the war with Satan? Then do you think Satan might focus his energies on misrepresenting Christ, His mission and the purpose of His death?

We saw the disciples misunderstood the mission of Christ, have we misunderstood? How?

I have heard from some that when I suggest that it is taught in mainstream Christianity that Christ died to appease God or satisfy His wrath or that God killed His Son that some have said that they never hear this in other churches. So, I will quote from Christianity Today excerpts from a paper called A Call to Evangelical Unity June 14, 1999 (But first I want to make it clear this paper has many very good things to say, many very powerful truths are expressed, but I think the one truth yet to be recovered to complete the reformation has not been recovered and thus woven in is a distortion about the cross and why Christ had to die):

Jesus paid our penalty in our place on his cross, satisfying the retributive demands of divine justice by shedding his blood in sacrifice and so making possible justification for all who trust in

him (Rom. 3:25-26). The Bible describes this mighty substitutionary transaction as the achieving of ransom, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation, and conquest of evil powers (Matt. 20:28; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 3:23-25; John 12:31; Col. 2:15)....

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.

We deny that any view of the Atonement that rejects the substitutionary satisfaction of divine justice, accomplished vicariously for believers, is compatible with the teaching of the Gospel.

Thoughts? If we view this to be true, then can we ever really be free from fear? If we believe God is retributive, vengeful and severe and is only merciful because His Son propitiated Him by paying Him off with His blood, what kind of God are we describing? Can you trust such a one?

This leads us right into

## THURSDAY

read first paragraph – thoughts?

Why would someone want to believe there is no God? Because God has been represented to them as someone not worthy of believing in.

Read first set of questions “Look at the above...” Thoughts?

Next set of questions “Now that you have...” thoughts?

## FRIDAY

Read questions 1-4 and discuss

## 2008 Q1 Lesson 12 Mission and Commission

### SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

Let's read Revelation 14:6-12:

*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. 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 14:8 A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”*

*REV 14:9 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.*

What is the eternal gospel? The good news that has always been true and will always be true? Is the eternal good news that that was true in eternity past and future that Jesus died for sinners? What about that God is not like Satan alleges, that God is truly love, grace and goodness? Is not the eternal good news about God Himself?

The time of His judgment has come – does this mean the time for Him to sit in judgment of us or the time where the world makes its final judgment of Him? Do we side with Him or the beast – it is time for us to decide?

Why has Babylon fallen? Is it not because they have accepted the lies about God? The lies which darken the mind, the lies which prevent reconciliation?

The lies which allow them to believe that God would be pleased with legislated religion, forced obedience, coerced compliance? These lies about God are actually Satan’s character being placed upon God.

The lesson suggests that the good news is justification by faith, that this is the essence and message of the three angels’ messages, how is justification by faith alone in God different from main-line Christianity? When EGW used this terminology was she speaking of legal justification? And if so how is this different from every other Christian denomination?

Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, and I have answered, “It is the third angel’s message in verity.” The prophet declares, “And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.” Brightness, glory, and power are to be connected with the third angel’s message, and conviction will follow wherever it is preached in demonstration of the Spirit. How will any of our brethren know when this light shall come to the people of God? As yet, we certainly have not seen the light that answers to this description. God has light for his people, and all who will accept it will see the sinfulness of remaining in a lukewarm condition; they will heed the counsel of the True Wit-

ness when he says, “Be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” {RH, April 1, 1890 par. 8}

Has the church preached a legal justification for years? One of our church founders, EGW said, in 1890 that the light of this message has not been preached, but the message of legal pardon, legal justification had been preached by mainline Christians since Luther. Could it mean our traditional legal, forensic, penal substitution idea of what justification means is not the message of the three angels? That the true message is the truth about God Himself in the setting of the GC?

What does it mean to be justified? To be set right with God, to have what was out of harmony, out of line put back in harmony, put back in line. What was out of harmony when mankind sinned? Our hearts, minds, characters and Christ came to heal us thus restoring us to unity with 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}

Is this the good news, the gospel we are taking to the world? Is this the third angel’s message in verity?

What is the wine of God’s wrath? We know God’s wrath is letting people go from Romans 1 and multiple places in the OT, but what about the wine of God’s wrath?

The harlot is said to get the nations drunk on the wine of her wrath, what is that? What is the wine of the harlot? The lies she tells which seduce men. The lies which intoxicate the mind, the lies which darken the heart against God, the lies which result in spiritual adultery.

And what is spiritual adultery? Who is the bride of Christ? The church and how does the church become a harlot? By uniting itself with another, and who does the church unite itself with to become the harlot, to become the great whore? The state, a church state union, when the church turns her allegiance from Christ and His methods of love, truth and freedom and pursues a course of state coercion to enforce doctrine then the church is married to the state and rejected Christ.

What is the wine that gets the church and state intoxicated together in this relationship?  
Lies about God!

Then what is the wine of God’s wrath? Letting people reap what they have sewn, letting people have their own choice, letting people come face to face with truth:

*Luke 5:37 And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. 38 No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. 39 And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, 'The old is better.'* “

What is the new wine? The truth about God as revealed by Jesus, the wineskins are the hearts and minds of people and what happens when the truth comes into unrenewed hearts? They burst, they die, they can't take it! They run and beg for the rocks and trees to hide them from the truth.

## SUNDAY

Read Matthew 25:31-46

*MT 25:31 “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.*

*MT 25:34 “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.’*

*MT 25:37 “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?’*

*MT 25:40 “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 25:41 “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.’*

*MT 25:44 “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?’*

*MT 25:45 “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.’*

*MT 25:46 “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”*

What is the main point Jesus is making, the main demarcating feature between the saved and the lost? Love versus selfishness, giving versus taking, beneficence versus arrogance, service for other versus promotion of self.

Read second paragraph “Thus Christ on...” –thoughts? What determines their destiny? Their character? Does this mean we are saved by our works?

No, this is another place where the legal metaphor miscommunicates and confuses. Imagine someone sick with a terminal disease, cancer spread through their body, in its late stages – will any “work” on the part of the person heal them? If for instance, people who are healthy eat well,

will the cancer patient by eating a full meal everyday make the cancer go away? If healthy people participate in physical activities, would the cancer patient by playing basketball, baseball, running, biking etc. make the cancer go away? What happens to a person's ability to eat well and participate in physical activities when cancer progresses? What happens to their ability to FUNCTION normally? It is impaired.

Now, if a person with cancer receives a cure, a remedy which puts the cancer into remission, how might we recognize the person is well? Might their function change? Might they start eating regularly again, might they start engaging in more physical activity again? Do such behaviors heal them? Do such behaviors occur when they are healed?

How was mankind original designed to function? In love to others, and what did sin do to our functioning? Turned us fearful and selfish, is there any work we can do to change ourselves? No, but when Christ heals us will our functioning change? Absolutely!

## MONDAY

Read Matthew 28:18-20:

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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."*

What does it mean to baptize? Immerse? And what does the "name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" mean? Their character – so what does this commission mean? We are to go forward into the world immersing people into the truth about the character of God, the same character shared by Father Son and Holy Spirit and revealed fully in Christ! And 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*

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph "Let us look..." Thoughts? What does it mean if we don't believe in Jesus we are damned?

Read John 3:14-19:

*Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*

*JN 3:16 "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. 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.*



We are in a terminal state, if God does nothing we will die. But God sent His Son, not to condemn the world but to save it, to heal it. Christ has procured the remedy to sin, but our current condition is already terminal, we must partake of the remedy or else we will die.

### WEDNESDAY

Read middle paragraph “We see an important...” Thoughts? Is it enough to know what the Bible says? Is it enough to verify that scriptures were quoted? Didn’t Lucifer quote Scripture to Jesus in the wilderness? We must not only know what the Scriptures say but what they mean and how they fit together in a grand whole.

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

One of the dangers in modern Christianity is splitting the Scriptures up into different dispensations or forming doctrines on some passages while ignoring others. Our understanding must be inclusive of all the evidence and leave nothing out.

### THURSDAY

Read second paragraph “Here again...” thoughts? What does it mean to have remission of sins? Where does God want sin to remit from? Is it not our hearts and minds? Then would remission of sins be having our hearts and minds remit from being God’s enemies into being His friends?

### FRIDAY

Read first paragraph “Let the subject...” Why is this true? Because we cannot heal ourselves, then what leads to this confusion? A legal viewpoint of the plan of salvation!

## 2008 Q1 Lesson 13 Patterns of Discipleship

### SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

Is the Bible telling us that we should be doing these things literally today? What is the relevance of these words for our time in earth's history?

How many of you have done these things?

I believe these actions literally happened in Christ's day, but is it possible the literal healing, cleansing, raising and casting out are also metaphorical lessons, object lessons for a bigger issue?

For instance, do we believe that the children of Israel literally crossed through the Red Sea? But is this also a metaphor for baptism?

*"They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." 1Cor 10:2*

Do we believe the world was literally destroyed by a flood and only 8 were saved on the ark? Is this also a metaphor for baptism, dying to the old life and living a new life in Christ?

*God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, 21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. 1 Peter 3:20,21*

Do we find many examples of literal events having a larger lesson in the setting of the Great Controversy? The children of Israel in the bondage of slavery, we in the bondage of sin, a savior Moses comes to deliver, Christ comes to deliver, they are fed manna from heaven, Christ is the bread of heaven we are to feed on. Do we find literal events often have a lesson in the setting of the GC?

The disciples on the sea in the storm fighting to save themselves but being overcome and only when they turn to Christ does the storm calm and they find peace and salvation. Does this represent our struggle with the storms of life, the storm of sin and no matter how hard we struggle on our own we will be overwhelmed but when we turn to Christ He calms the storm and we find peace and salvation?

Then what about this instruction in Matthew 10:8, while in their day it had literal application, is it only a literal application or is there a deeper meaning?

Is it God's primary goal to heal our earthly physical bodies from our current diseases so we live to an old age and die at 100? Is it God's goal to heal leprosy so we die of an old age on this earth? Is it God's goal to raise the dead so they live again mortal lives of sin on this earth?

What is God's goal? To heal us for eternity, if we reexamine the commission is there an eternal commission involved here? Are we to bring the message of salvation so people will be saved for eternity? The Greek for saved is the same as heal, salvation comes from root salve and means to heal. We are to take the message of eternal healing to the world and that message is the truth about God as revealed by Jesus.

What about cleansing the lepers? Leprosy was a metaphor for sin, "unclean, unclean" our hearts, minds and characters are unclean with sinfulness, with selfishness we are to take the truth about God which results in hearts, minds and characters be healed from sinfulness to the world!

What about raising the dead? Doesn't the Bible teach we are all dead in our trespasses and sins? That those who don't know Christ are already dead? That it is only by coming back into unity with Christ we have life? Thus are we to raise the dead by introducing them to Christ so they live new lives in Him? In other words, the entire world is filled with the walking dead and it is by bringing people to Christ we raise the dead.

What about casting out devils? Are we not to proclaim the truth about God which casts out of the hearts and minds the lies of Satan? Remember Jesus said to the Pharisees, "you are of your father the devil." We cast out demons by proclaiming the truth which casts out lies about God and wins people back to trust.

How many of us are working with God to do these very things?

Read second paragraph – thoughts?

What is the most important, the most essential element to be a disciple of Christ? Would it not be revealing the same truths about God that Jesus did? Would it not be holding to the testimony of Jesus?

*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.  
Revelation 12:17*

What is the testimony of Jesus that we are to hold to?

## SUNDAY

read second paragraph "Besides compassion..." Jesus said "if you have seen me you have seen the father." What is Jesus testimony regarding forgiving of sinners? Is this a revelation of the Father?

Is the Father just as forgiving as the Son? Do we accept this testimony? Are there ideas spread about which deny this testimony? What have you heard?

Read last paragraph Sunday "Our God is..." thoughts?

Is saving us and forgiving us synonymous? Can someone be saved without being forgiven? No, but can someone be forgiven without being saved? Yes, what does this mean? What does this truth uncover? That the issues in salvation are not legal, it is not about getting forgiven, it is about healing/saving, regeneration, recreation, restoration, reconciliation!

Christ came to unite us back with the Father by making Himself known, which wins us to trust and then we open the heart to God and the Holy Spirit takes what Christ has achieved and reproduces it in us thus saving us/healing us!

Do we believe the testimony of Jesus? What did Jesus say to the woman caught in adultery? Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more... Do we hear the Father say these words?

What was Jesus testimony about atonement?

*JN 17:20 "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 is Jesus describing? At-one-ment, unity, being at one, do we believe Jesus testimony about atonement or have we replaced it with another idea? What?

What was Jesus' testimony in treating enemies? How did He treat His enemies? He protected their reputation and freely forgave them, do we believe His testimony that this is exactly what the Father does? How do we believe the Father will treat Satan, the fallen angels and unrepentant men in the very end? Do we hold to the testimony of Jesus or not?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Where do we draw the lines? What about with ordination of women? Do we discriminate in the church today?

Where does such division come? From fear and selfishness, what is a Christlike attitude? He did not think equality with God was something to be grasped but humbled Himself....

Read second paragraph “Jesus neither...” thoughts? Who would this outcast group of people be in our society? And how do we treat them?

## TUESDAY

Read bottom two paragraphs “From its beginning...” thoughts?

Do we as Christians struggle with prejudices? Biases? Bigotries?

Where do such biases enter our minds? As a child I remember being biased against the Soviet Union and Russians, why? Where did such bias come from? From my society, my earthly government. Are we vulnerable today to influences from government, society, environment, family, friends, culture? Do we struggle with bias toward Muslims today?

What can protect us from such bias? The larger view, realizing as the lesson says we are all one family, all descendants of Adam, all infected with the same sick condition, all terminal and all in need of the very same remedy.

The lesson correctly points out in the end there are only two types of people the saved and the lost, but what is it that is the distinguishing features of the saved and the lost?

## WEDNESDAY

We focus on the purpose of the church, the first paragraph calls our attention to the church's work in evangelism, ministry to outcasts, the needy and making disciples - What are the reasons the church is called to this mission? What reasons have you heard? To bring people to salvation? i.e. to bring people to join the church, to get baptized, to say the sinner's prayer? Do we have health seminars, stop smoking classes, Samaritan centers, hospitals, food centers as a manipulation to get people to join our group? Or is there another reason? What is our reason for participating in these things?

What reason does a parent sacrifice to put food on the table, go without to have a Christmas for their child, work extra jobs to buy their child's medicine, donate a kidney to save their child?

One of the founders of our church saw the mission of the church like this:

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 sow-

ing 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} (The Worker's Bulletin)

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}

Thoughts – how can our class move forward in this mission of working with God to restore His love in our hearts?

## THURSDAY

The Prayer factor- what is prayer? What examples of prayer can we cite from the Bible?

Jesus' prayer, David in the Psalms, Solomon's prayer for wisdom, the tax collector –

But what about Abraham when he talked with God about sparing Sodom or Moses when He went into God's presence and spoke face to face as a man with a friend? Or what about the disciples talking with Jesus on the road, at the table or in the garden, would these be examples of prayer?

Here is one description in the book Faith I Live By:

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

What do you think about this description?

What about praying in the name of Jesus? What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus? Jesus told his disciples in John 16 that they had not asked anything yet in His name, but when they did their joy would be complete – what does it mean to ask in Jesus name?

In the Bible what does the name represent? Character, so to pray in Jesus name, would it mean to pray with a character like Christ's, wanting what Christ would want, valuing what Christ would value, desiring what Christ would desire? And what did Christ desire? To glorify the Father, is that to be our prayer?

Here are two descriptions:

But to pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works. {SC 100.2}

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

Thoughts? How do we do this?

### FRIDAY

How can we as a class be more effective disciples for Christ?



## 2008 Q2 Lesson 1 Who was Jesus?

What answers have you heard to this question?

Jesus was:

1. A prophet?
2. A good man?

These two answers are commonly put out by people on earth, why is this non-sense?

CS Lewis states (part of this quote is in Friday's lesson):

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic -- on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg -- or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. – *Mere Christianity*, pages 40-41.

Why can we really not conclude Jesus was a prophet or a “great moral teacher” only?

What about a created being an angel, a man, a created Son of God or offspring of God?

Why is this question so important? Does your understanding of the issues in the GC taint how one sees this question? Does it make a difference and if so how?

If Christ is a created being what do we learn about our Creator from the life of Christ? We learn He is willing to sacrifice His creatures to protect Himself, that He demands payment and appeasement, blood sacrifice.

If Christ were a created being we would learn something wonderful about Christ, but not so wonderful about God. But Jesus said, that He and the Father are one, that He spoke only what the Father gave Him to speak, Hebrews states He was the exact representation of the Father, Isaiah says the child that was born was “everlasting Father.”

Why is it so important that Jesus be fully God? What were the issues in the war? Attacks on God's trustworthiness, but what wedge do you think Lucifer used to implicate God? Well before we answer this let's step back and lay some groundwork, the groundwork of who Jesus was and is:

*John 1:1-3,14 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. 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.*

*Isa 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.*

*Col 1:15-17 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 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.*

*John 14:9-11 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*

*Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.*

*John 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*

Does the Bible teach Jesus is fully God? Yes, Jesus is fully divine, pre-existent, eternal, Creator—but what does the Bible teach us in regard to the form Jesus took in the universe prior to His incarnation here?

*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. 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. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up." 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." "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 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.*

*Acts 7:30 "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord's voice: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.*

*Genesis 16:7-13 The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?"*

*"I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered.*

*Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." The angel added, "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count."*

*The angel of the LORD also said to her:*

*"You are now with child and you will have a son.*

*You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery....*

*She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me."*

Who was the angel of the Lord? Was it God Himself?

*Genesis 22: 16-18 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take*

*possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."*

*But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Jude 9*

*Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 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.*

*1Thes 4:16 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.*

*Revelation 1:17,18 "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.*

Who is the angel of the Lord? The Lord Himself!

What difference does it make to realize that Jesus, who is fully divine, fully God, manifested Himself in the form of an angel prior to coming as a human?

How did the war start in heaven? Over what issue? How did Lucifer create a pretext to allege God to be untrustworthy and arbitrary?

Do you think Lucifer alleged equality with the Father or claimed equality with the Son, the one who was manifesting Himself as an angel? And then alleged God the Father was unfair to show preference over Lucifer in taking Christ into counsels and not Lucifer? Are there other texts in the Bible that give us clues to this question?

*ISA 14:12 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!*

Who is this verse talking about?

Read 2 Peter 1:19

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.

Who is this verse talking about? Do you notice the term morning star, from the Greek phosphorus, which means bright light, translated into Latin – Lucifer – the bright and morning star.

What does all of this mean? God is not a power monger, He is humble, gentle, gracious and stoops to meet His creation on their level. The Bible tells us *God lives in unapproachable light* (1Tim6:16), angels cannot fully enter into infinity. So God humbles Himself to meet them where they are, but also God elevates His creation and imbues them with the highest exaltation and gifts possible to bring them to the highest pinnacles of attainment and development. Therefore Lucifer was created as the sum of perfection and Christ met Him on His level appearing as a covering Cherub.

One of the founders of our church saw it similarly:

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}

Does this give insight as to why Christ was the member of the Godhead through which all was created? Why Christ was the member the Godhead who came to redeem?

Why is it so important that Jesus be fully God? What were the issues in the war? Attacks on God's trustworthiness, but what wedge do you think Lucifer used to implicate God? How could this be cleared up by anyone other than God Himself?

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

It was to give in His own life an illustration of unselfishness that Jesus came in the form of humanity. Ed 154

## SABBATH

Read second paragraph: "It is what might be..."

Thoughts? Have you ever thought how hard it was for them to believe Jesus was the Messiah? How would you feel if someone who was born in Ooltewah or Summit and grew up with you

went to the local school, you saw in church each week, worked with his dad as a local carpenter stood up one day at age 30 and said he was the messiah? Would it be hard to accept?

What would one need to accept such a claim? Evidence? What kind? Miracles only? Fulfillment of Scripture – what was it that convinced the disciples on the Road to Emmaus? The evidence of scripture. What convinced the other disciples? Christ’s teaching, the evidence of His character!

## SUNDAY / MONDAY

Read Matthew 16:13,14

*MT 16:13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”*

*MT 16:14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”*

Have you considered that some thought He was John the Baptist? What does this mean? The lesson suggests this might be due to the fact there was no mass media, no TV, radio, that people didn’t travel much. And this probably did cause rumors to spread and misinformation to occur.

But, to me this demonstrates another factor –

Read Mark 11:27-33

*MK 11:27 They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him. 28 “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you authority to do this?”*

*MK 11:29 Jesus replied, “I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 30 John’s baptism--was it from heaven, or from men? Tell me!”*

*MK 11:31 They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ 32 But if we say, ‘From men’ . . . .” (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.)*

*MK 11:33 So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”*

*Jesus said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”*

What light does this passage shed on the issue? Who did John the Baptist say Jesus was? Did they know who John the Baptist said Jesus was? Then if they knew John the Baptist said Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, why would some people be saying Jesus was John the Baptist?

Misinformation, defamation, distortion, lying, misrepresentation, do you think that some were purposely circulating misinformation to confuse? Would Satan do such things?

What about Elijah or Jeremiah? These rumors could also have been misinformation, but Elijah is a little more interesting for a couple of reasons. First, Elijah never died but went to heaven and a prophecy existed that Elijah would return before the Messiah to herald His arrival, which of course was fulfilled in John the Baptist. So the Elijah idea seems more likely to be one of mistaken identity, failing to comprehend all the evidence.

## TUESDAY / WEDNESDAY

*“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18, NIV).*

In Wednesday’s lesson it asks:

Why is the message of the Cross so important for us today, as well?

Why is the cross foolishness to those perishing? Is antibiotics foolishness to those with pneumonia? Then why is the cross foolishness to those perishing?

Why are they perishing?

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

They perish because they didn’t love the truth, what truth? They don’t accept the truth about their condition, they don’t accept the truth about God, they don’t accept the truth about sin, they don’t accept the truth about God’s plan to heal and restore.

So those who are perishing don’t love truth thus they don’t recognize a need so the cross becomes foolishness because of their ignorance. Like a witch doctor thinking antibiotics are foolishness because they have their chicken bones to cast.

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph “Who Jesus was...” Thoughts?

If Jesus is not who we have believed Him to be – then what have we lost? If we have lived a life in which we love others more than ourselves, in which we are not afraid for the future, in which we have developed healthy mature character, in which we are loyal, faithful, kind, patient, gentle, true etc. are we worse off for it, have we lost something if Jesus isn’t who He says He is? I am just pointing out, that the benefits of knowing Christ don’t start in the hereafter, they start now!

What is the point of “we are dealing with the faith of untold numbers over the centuries”? Are there millions who have had faith in Buddha over the centuries etc.? Is faith not something to be proved?

## FRIDAY

Read questions 1, 2, 3 and discuss



## 2008 Q2 Lesson 2     The Mystery of His Deity

### SABBATH

Read memory text - as a review from last week's lesson, what is the significance of this passage? Why was Jesus the member of the Godhead through whom creation was completed?

Read first paragraph "Leaving the historical..." – thoughts?

Do we believe this to be true? Do we believe that our unaided sin-filled, selfish, human minds, cannot, without God's aide, comprehend Him, His character or spiritual truths?

What is the implication of this? Would it not be that to the degree someone is speaking the truth about God they are doing so only because the Holy Spirit enlightened their mind with such truth?

Doesn't this eliminate arguments over whether so and so has the gift of prophecy or not, shouldn't the question be instead, did so and so speak the truth about God, the truth in harmony with scripture?

Read last paragraph "To believe in Jesus..." thoughts? Are you comforted or troubled to realize Jesus was different from you and me?

### SUNDAY

Let's start from the bottom and work up in this lesson. Today's lesson is about the pre-existence of Christ and the bottom pink section asks, "What other aspects of our beliefs, contrary to accepted norms, customs, and ways of thinking, do we have to take on raw, naked faith and nothing else?"

Do you accept the premise that we are to believe on raw naked faith and nothing else?

If you told your five-year-old child they are to have faith in God, raw, naked, and nothing else. Then you leave your child at the play ground and a stranger comes up and says to your child, "I am a prophet from God and He sent me to get you for a special mission. Come with me." Should your child go on raw naked faith?

If a stranger comes up to you in the mall and asks for the keys to your house and car, would you give them to him on raw naked faith?

If your spouse, who has been loving, faithful, caring, loyal your entire marriage tells you they have a present for you in the closet – would you believe them? On the basis of the present? Do you have any evidence of the present? Do you have evidence of the trustworthiness of your spouse?

Has God given us evidence of His existence and trustworthiness? Yes, then when He tells us things that we don't have evidence for, mansions in heaven, eternal life, streets of gold etc. is our belief in the reality of these things raw and naked without evidence or is it based on the evidence of God's trustworthiness?

So what evidence do we have for the existence and trustworthiness of God?

*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.*

The nature of God is love, can we see God's character of love in nature? Where? What does this reveal to us? That the law of life is the law of love and that this law is not the law of survival of

the fittest in fact the law of survival of the fittest in the infection of selfishness destroying God's creation.

*Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.*

The life of Christ reveals the truth about God's character of love in contrast to selfishness, which wins us back to trust.

The pre-existence of Christ – meaning His existence before being born of a woman – why is this important?

If He did not exist prior to coming in human form then He is merely part of this creation, in other words He would have been unable to save us – why?

Because He would not have been able to reveal the truth about God to win us to trust, but also, He would not have been able to restore the Law of Love back into this creation, back into this species. By His unique life He merged divinity with humanity and purged the sickness from humanity by overcoming with His perfect character of love!

Step one – we must be drawn back to God in trust, the love of God must win us to Him so we will open the heart for healing,

*Romans 2:4 God's kindness leads you toward repentance*

One of the founders of our church states:

The greatest gift that God could bestow upon men was bestowed in the gift of his beloved Son. The apostle says, "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?" There was nothing held in reserve. No second probation will ever be provided. If the unspeakable gift of God does not lead man to repentance, there is nothing that ever will move his heart. There is no power held in reserve to act upon his mind, and arouse his sensibilities. **The whole character of God was revealed in his Son**, the whole range of the possibilities of heaven is displayed for the acceptance of man in the Son of the Infinite One. The way for man's return to God and heaven has no barriers. The matchless depths of the Saviour's love have been demonstrated; and if this manifestation of God's love for the children of men does not prevail to draw men to himself, there is nothing that ever will. {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 6}

The truth about God's character of love as revealed in His Son wins us back to trust – but is that enough? Or was more needed? What was needed?

What does the law of God require?

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

Eze 36:26,27 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. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

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.

What is needed besides trust in God? A recreation of heart and mind, God's character reproduced within, the law of love perfectly restored in us. Notice the progression of EGW's description:

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 Cor. 5:19. {DA 762.1}

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}

## MONDAY

Did Jesus know He was pre-existent? What evidence?

*John 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*

*John 8:23 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."*

*John 6:51 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."*

*John 17:5-8,24 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. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me... "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world."*

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph – “The expression...” Thoughts?

Could it mean one unique, one of a kind, only one? Yes, and Jesus was God’s only Son in heaven in His pre-existent state, but when He voluntarily chose to become incarnate He became a new unique being in all history.

Adam was formed out of the dust of the ground and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a perfect sinless human, and Eve was created perfect and sinless from side.

All other humans, except Jesus, are born of a sinful mother and father.

Jesus however, was born of a sinful mother, Gal 4:4, but His Father was God. He was born with a humanity capable of experiencing temptation in every way like us Hebrews 4:15 yet without sin, and we are tempted by our own feelings or desires James 1:13. Jesus therefore was a unique being capable of being tempted, even by His assumed humanity, yet at every turn His mind, fully in harmony with the circle of love over came all temptations with love. Thus in Christ God’s character of love was perfectly restored into this creation. And because of Christ we can receive from Him the download of His character and methods via the work of the Holy Spirit.

## WEDNESDAY

The Deity of Christ – why is Christ so important in establishing the worthiness of the deity?

“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.”  
MacDonald, George, *Discovering the Character of God*, Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989, p. 29.

*Zech 4:6 Not by might nor by power but by the Spirit says the Lord*

Was this important just for mankind or for the universe as well?

*Colossians 1:16-20 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. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 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.*

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph “The New Testament...” thoughts? Does Jesus claim to be the final Judge?

*John 5:27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.*

*John 8:15, 16 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.*

*John 12:47,48 “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. 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.*

Do we believe Jesus? Why is not necessary for Jesus to judge? Because our very condition is self-determining, we either have been won back to trust and transformed in heart such that we rejoice at His return or we have refused the truth, hardened the heart and run and hide begging the rocks and trees to hide us when He returns. Our own condition determines our destiny.

Read bottom paragraph – do we believe this is true? What does it mean to realize that the Father is exactly like Jesus? How has this changed your life?

### FRIDAY

Read 2 and discuss.

**2008 Q2 Lesson 3     The reality of His Humanity**

Notes are not available.



## 2008 Q2 Lesson 4 The Wisdom of His Teaching

Before we get started this week, I wanted to share an email with the class that came from a listener in London, England:

Dear Dr Jennings / Russell and the rest of the Come and Reason class,

I would like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for making me see Jesus as He really is, and not through my human, sinful, spiteful eyes.

I became a Seventh Day Adventist about 10 years ago; I was hurting from the loss of my father when I was three years old and always felt that something was 'missing'; at the same time, I was zealous. Shortly after joining the church, I joined a bible class that taught judgement and damnation; I began seeing God as severe and exacting. I never knew that God was so loving and so kind, that He would die to reconcile us with the Father. Who would go to the uttermost to save me and fellow men; little wonder, I was miserable and decided to leave the church as the standards were too 'high'. God, in His love and tender mercies, led me to your Sabbath School class and by God's grace, will continue to grow; what I like about my life now is the things that used to jump on my last nerve, no longer do – I wanted to affirm your class and continue to wish God's continued guidance, blessings, grace and love on you all.

Christian love and fellowship,

A sister in England

Thoughts from the class about this lesson?

### SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

What gave Christ's teaching authority? Was it the tone of His voice? Or was it the compelling power of truth that made sense, that was reasonable, that was simply explained and easy to understand?

How do you suppose the teachers of the law taught?

Jesus said to them that they search the world to find a convert and when they did they made them twice the son of hell as he was before – why would that be the case? What kind of things were they teaching that would have caused this?

What kind of God were they looking for to come? A God like Jesus or one in the mould and character of Satan, one who would use power and might to throw off the Romans? One who required blood to flow to appease his wrath? One who was severe and exacting and vengeful? One who would "punish" sin and sinners in order to be "just"?

Did Jesus say that He was an exact representation of the Father? Do we believe it? Do we find Jesus anywhere punishing sinners? Do we find Him anywhere being unforgiving? Do we see the Father in this? Didn't Jesus say He did not come to condemn the world but to save it? Do we realize these are the words of the Father?

Why do we have such false ideas about God in our head? Where do they get there? From well meaning parents, teachers and preachers who themselves have these distortions in their heads.

A few weeks ago I mentioned how as a child I heard these distortions about God in children's story – some said they never heard such things. Since our last meeting together I happened to be reading a book by Eric B. Hare – the most famous SDA children's story teller ever. Let me share with you a story from his book Curse Proof page 51, 52.

What is the take-home message of this story? That God doesn't like us, except for the fact His Son loves us, so for His Son's sake He will let us come to heaven.

But what did Jesus say?

*John 16:26 "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, no the Father himself loves you."*

This idea that God isn't tender toward us, that God doesn't like us, that God needs Jesus to do something to get Him on our side is a lie. We need to purge it from our minds.

In Romans 1:18-31 Paul tells us as long as we reject the truth about God our minds become darkened, depraved and foolish, we cannot be healed as long as we hold to lies about God.

Read second paragraph "There is a danger..." thoughts?

What do you think the qualitative element of Christ's teachings was that distinguishes them from all other teaching? And can we have that element in our teaching? Was it not the truth about the Father, His character, methods, principles? The truth about how God created the universe, upon what principles?

## SUNDAY

The Sermon on the Mount in the bottom of the lesson—it highlights specific points from the sermon to explore – notice number 5 and 6. Retaliation and love for enemies –

What did Christ teach about retaliation and love for enemies? Did He teach we should love our enemies? Did Christ demonstrate this love when He was here? Was His life a reflection of the Father?

Then what about the idea that Christ and the Father must punish sin and unrepentant sinners? Will God inflict punishment upon sinners? This was preached here in Collegedale two weeks ago.

Maybe we should look at some inspiration to find out whether God will inflict punishment or whether it is sin that inflicts punishment itself and God has been working to hold in check the destructiveness of sin?

Thoughts before we examine the evidence?

What is the problem with the idea that God has to inflict external penalties upon sin and sinners?

It basically says there is nothing wrong with sin other than it offends the One in charge and if the One in charge would restrain Himself, get a grip, hold Himself in check then we could live forever in our sin because there is nothing wrong with sin there is something wrong with God

It fails to understand the nature of sin fails to realize sin actually damages and destroys the sinner

This is because it fails to understand the reality of God's law and God's character. That the law of God is a natural not imposed law and therefore has natural not imposed consequences. The law of love is the law of life and violations result in death unless interventions occur to restore one to harmony with the law of love

The idea that God must inflict punishment misrepresents God as someone who punishes and thus undermines trust, holds minds in captivity of Satan and prevents people from experience healing and freedom and salvation that God offers.

Let's look at evidence:

*Romans 6:23 the wages of sin is death*

*James 1:15 sin when full grown brings forth death*

Now these texts are descriptors texts, not direct evidence in themselves, (aside from the fact we believe the Bible is inspired and trustworthy). But these texts only make statements, they don't demonstrate the process occurring.

If I say, "Ice left in the sun on a 100 degree F day will melt." This is a declaration, a description, while true, it is not in itself evidence.

If no one had ever seen ice and therefore never seen ice melt my statement would not be evidence. But seeing ice melt in the 100 degree F heat that is evidence.

So God actually gives us evidence to help us understand this process.

*"There is no faithfulness, no kindness, no knowledge of God in your land...**My people are being destroyed because they don't know me.** It is all your fault, you priests, for you yourselves refuse to know me... They have exchanged the glory of God for the disgrace of idols." (Hosea 4:1,6,7 NLT)*

*"He was hated and rejected; his life was filled with sorrow and terrible suffering. No one wanted to look at him. We despised him and said, 'He is a nobody!' He suffered and endured great pain for us, **but we thought his suffering was punishment from God.** He was wounded and crushed because of our sins; by taking our punishment, he made us completely well." (Isaiah 53:1-5 CEV)*

*"**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)*

*"They **angered** him with their heathen places of worship, and with their idols they made him **furious.** God was **angry** when he saw it, so he **rejected** his people completely. He **abandoned** his tent in Shiloh, the home where he had lived among us. He **allowed** our enemies to capture the Covenant Box, the symbol of his power and glory." (Psalm 78:58-61 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." (Ez 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)*

Then other evidence, described by Paul, but Paul's description includes the evidence Romans 1:18-31

The best evidence, Jesus who came to cure the sin condition, who was made to be sin though He knew no sin, what happened to Him on the Cross? *"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me."*

One of the founders of this church 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 charac-*

ter, 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

“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 762

God is love, His law is love, life is based to operate on the law of love, violations of this law result in death, except for the gracious interventions of God working to heal and restore us back to harmony with His law of love.

Imagine a child who was told by his physician father to never play with the scalpels. The father even said, “in the day you play with the scalpels you will surely die.” The child disobeys and cuts himself severely and is bleeding to death. The circulation has been cut – (analogous to the circle of love being cut). If something isn’t done the child will bleed to death.

The father realizes what has happened and comes to heal the child, but the child not only disobeyed but now believes lies about the father, believes the father must kill him for his disobedience so as the father approaches the child with a needle to numb and sutures to heal, the child believes the father is coming with a lethal injection to kill him so he runs away.

As long as the child believes the lies he will not let the father heal him and thus the child will bleed to death. This is our situation. We are sick, dying, terminal and God wants to heal us, but as long as we believe the lie that He will kill us we won’t let Him heal us.

God doesn’t have to kill the sinners in the end, He only has to stop holding at bay the consequences of sin.

## MONDAY

Read top paragraph – absolutely true, do we believe what Jesus revealed about God? Do we have thing straight about God today or are we still struggling with lies about God?

How has what Jesus revealed been misinterpreted and abused?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Who do we Christians teach will do the greatest torturing of all? Hitler gassed the Jews before he burned them, Christians teach God burns them alive – some teach God burns them forever and ever torturing them for all eternity – Hitler didn’t do that. Some teach God performs a miracle to keep them alive in the flames suffering as long as they deserve. Are Christians actually teaching Hitler was more merciful than God?

Did Jesus reveal a God who would do such a thing?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What does this mean? Does it mean God is not forgiving? Or might it mean that God forgives but if we don’t forgive we close our hearts to God’s forgiveness, we refuse God’s healing and recreation of our hearts?

Jesus told them to pray, “Father, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” Do we believe God forgives? Or do we teach Jesus paid our debt by His blood for our sin? Can you forgive a debt and collect a debt? If someone owes you \$1000 and you collect it from them, do you then turn to them and say “now that I have been paid in full, I forgive you your debt”?

Why do we teach this idea that Jesus paid our debt of sin to the Father but the Father forgives us our debts?

Now, Jesus did pay a high price to save, to heal, to reconcile, but He did not pay a legal debt to the Father. If your child was dying of renal failure and you donated a kidney to save your child, could we say you paid a high price? Does that mean you paid a legal debt to the hospital administration to get them to heal your child?

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? Who condemned Judas?

*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 12:36,37*

What does this mean? That our very condition determines our destiny. We are all born infected with a terminal condition the Bible calls sin. Christ came and procured a remedy that is freely offered to all. Those who accept the remedy have a new heart and right spirit, are changed, renewed, recreated and healed and thus are acquitted, but those who reject the remedy remain terminal and thus their own words, own condition condemns them.

In the case of Judas who executed Judas? He killed himself!

## WEDNESDAY

In the TQ on page 49 is referring to Jesus explanation of the law in which He said “you have heard it said, but I say unto you...” talking about murder and adultery, the lesson states, “Sin moves from the act to thought...”

What does this mean? What is Jesus teaching about sin? It is not a behavioral problem but a heart mind problem and the behaviors are symptoms of a sick heart and mind.

Why is this important? Because if we think sin is a behavioral problem, i.e. doing bad things, then what kind of solution do we seek? Solutions that take care of our bad acts, we seek:

- Someone to pay the penalty of our sins
- Our record books erased of our bad acts
- Our legal debt to be paid that we have incurred from doing bad things.
- A lawyer to defend us from the judge

But the truth that Jesus taught is that sins are symptoms of a heart condition and the solution is to heal the heart/mind of mankind. To be recreated, regenerated, renewed.

Consider the analogy of having pneumonia.

## THURSDAY

Grace. What is grace?

Often referred to as “unmerited favor”—something we don’t earn or deserve. When Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in grace with God and man – did Jesus not deserve that?

Grace – Charis – Charisma – the work of God, God acting, God intervening, God’s intercessions, Grace comes from God and it is the work of God to heal, restore, regenerate, recreate.

## 2008 Q2 Lesson 5      The Wonder of His Works

### SABBATH

This week's lesson is about miracles, the miracles of Jesus. How are we to understand the miracles of Jesus?

When God performs a miracle, is He violating the laws He created the universe to run upon, or is He working in harmony with the law but in ways we can't comprehend?

If we gain understanding into the laws of nature and are able to actually understand how a miracle occurred (i.e. Christ walking on water) would that make it less miraculous? Do we crave the mystical and magical and if so what does that say about us?

Recently a biotech company has developed an experimental treatment for cervical cancer. They have taken the bacterium *listeria monocytogenes* and infected women with cervical cancer. But they have altered the bacterium so it is not infectious and will instead secrete fragments of HPV E7 which is a molecule on the surface of cervical cancer cells. The *listeria* bacterium is able to enter a special immune cell called an Antigen Presenting Cell (APC). The APC then presents to the rest of the immune system the "foreign invader" the immune system is to attack. In this case the APC is tricked into presenting the molecule from the cancer cells to the immune system and the immune system attacks the cancer cell.

If we went back in time just 100 years and did this to a woman with cervical cancer and cured her cancer, would not everyone think this was a miracle? Is it? Do God's miracles all have just as sound rational explanations that are simply currently beyond our understanding?

Let's list the various categories or types of miracles:

- Healing (lepers, lame, blind, deaf, issue of blood)
- Resurrections
- Nature – walk on water, calm storm, cursing a fig tree
- Metamorphosis – water to wine
- Multiplication – feeding the 5000, 4000
- Invisibility or vanishing - Disappearing from crowds
- Flashing of Divinity- night of arrest
- Casting out demons

What are the common threads running through all these miracles? Use of might and power.

What kind of evidence is this? What do we learn about God from the miracles? All the use of might and power was always for another's good, always to uplift, always to heal, always to protect others.

What about when He disappeared from the crowds who were wanting to stone Him?

When Jesus referred to the blessings given to the Gentiles, the fierce national pride of His hearers was aroused, and His words were drowned in a tumult of voices. These people had prided themselves on keeping the law; but now that their prejudices were offended, they were ready to commit murder. The assembly broke up, and laying hands upon Jesus, they thrust Him from the synagogue, and out of the city. All seemed eager for His destruction. They hurried Him to the brow of a precipice, intending to cast Him down headlong. Shouts and maledictions filled the air. Some were casting stones at Him, when suddenly He disappeared from among them. The heavenly messengers who had been by His side in the syna-



gogue were with Him in the midst of that maddened throng. They shut Him in from His enemies, and conducted Him to a place of safety. {DA 240.1}

So angels protected Lot, and led him out safely from the midst of Sodom. So they protected Elisha in the little mountain city. When the encircling hills were filled with the horses and chariots of the king of Syria, and the great host of his armed men, Elisha beheld the nearer hill slopes covered with the armies of God,—horses and chariots of fire round about the servant of the Lord. {DA 240.2}

So, in all ages, angels have been near to Christ's faithful followers. The vast confederacy of evil is arrayed against all who would overcome; but Christ would have us look to the things which are not seen, to the armies of heaven encamped about all who love God, to deliver them. From what dangers, seen and unseen, we have been preserved through the interposition of the angels, we shall never know, until in the light of eternity we see the providences of God. Then we shall know that the whole family of heaven was interested in the family here below, and that messengers from the throne of God attended our steps from day to day. {DA 240.3}

So while this disappearing was a miracle – it was not one Christ performed for Himself, but one the angels commissioned by His Father performed at the Father's direction. So, nowhere do we find Christ using power to protect self, but always He used His power to uplift others.

What does this tell us about God, Christ, and God's use of power?

Notice also, that all of Christ's miracles were over the forces of nature and/or restore individuality and freedom of choice. Christ never used His power to coerce a will into repentance, to reprogram someone's thinking, to force allegiance. A loving God can exercise power over nature, inanimate objects, but not over free moral agents.

Why was Christ able to have this power? Was it because He was divine and using His own inherent divinity? Christ said "of my own self I can do nothing." Was it His own power to exercise? Or was He relying on His Father?

Adam was created by God and given dominion over the earth, when he sinned Satan claimed that dominion and thus is known as the ruler of this world or the ruler of the air. Notice, Satan has been able to perform miracles, serpent speaking, storms that destroy (Job 1). But Christ dispute's Satan's claim and comes as the second Adam – could He be exercising the authority of dominion that God originally invested in Adam?

The Bible says that whole towns were healed when Christ went through. Does that mean each person who was healed had accepted Christ as their Savior? What about the 10 lepers? Did all of them come back and thank Him?

But in Nazareth only a few miracles of healing were performed, why?

And all the people Jesus healed of disease, what eventually happened to them all? They died and rest in the grave. Then what was the point of the healings?

Was Jesus performing miracles primarily to relieve physical suffering? Or was there a larger purpose? If it was only to relieve physical suffering, then what good did it do they all died? But if it had a larger purpose, to relieve suffering to be sure, but more than that to reveal the truth about God, dispel the lies of Satan and open the way for eternal healing!

Did Jesus ever orchestrate or engineer an opportunity to perform a miracle? What about Lazarus? Why did Jesus wait three days before going?

The disciples marveled at Christ's words when He said, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad . . . that I was not there." Did the Saviour by His own choice avoid the home of His suffering friends? Apparently Mary and Martha and the dying Lazarus were left alone. But they were not alone. Christ beheld the whole scene, and after the death of Lazarus the bereaved sisters were upheld by His grace. Jesus witnessed the sorrow of their rent hearts, as their brother wrestled with his strong foe, death. He felt every pang of anguish, as He said to His disciples, "Lazarus is dead." But Christ had not only the loved ones at Bethany to think of; He had the training of His disciples to consider. They were to be His representatives to the world, that the Father's blessing might embrace all. For their sake He permitted Lazarus to die. Had He restored him from illness to health, the miracle that is the most positive evidence of His divine character, would not have been performed. {DA 528.1}

Had Christ been in the sickroom, Lazarus would not have died; for Satan would have had no power over him. Death could not have aimed his dart at Lazarus in the presence of the Life-giver. Therefore Christ remained away. He suffered the enemy to exercise his power, that He might drive him back, a conquered foe. He permitted Lazarus to pass under the dominion of death; and the suffering sisters saw their brother laid in the grave. Christ knew that as they looked on the dead face of their brother their faith in their Redeemer would be severely tried. But He knew that because of the struggle through which they were now passing their faith would shine forth with far greater power. He suffered every pang of sorrow that they endured. He loved them no less because He tarried; but He knew that for them, for Lazarus, for Himself, and for His disciples, a victory was to be gained. {DA 528.2}

How are we to regard miracles today? If someone performs a miracle what are we to draw from it? Does a miracle prove someone is from God? Does a miracle prove what they are saying is from God? Is truth determined by miracles?

Are miracles one of Satan's weapons to divert from the truth? How so?

So what was Jesus doing during His life? What was the purpose of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus?

- to reveal the truth
- the truth about God
- the truth about Himself
- the truth about Satan
- the truth about the nature and character of sin
- the truth about the people
- the truth about God's law
- the truth about God's use of power
- to cure this species

What about for judgment? Was the revelation of Christ's use of power to heal and restore part of the judgment?

A group of Pharisees had gathered near, and the sight of them brought to the mind of Jesus the contrast ever manifest in the effect of His words and works. He said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." Christ had come to open the blind eyes, to give light to them that sit in darkness. He had declared Himself to be the light of the world, and the miracle just per-

formed was in attestation of His mission. 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}

Read memory Text – thoughts?

Harassed by who? Helpless over what? Harassed by Satan? Helpless over their own hereditary and cultivated tendencies toward evil? Helpless to cure themselves, heal themselves, restore themselves in righteousness?

What other texts from the Bible describe this state of humanity?

*Isaiah 60:2 See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.*

If you are in darkness what is it you need? Light! What kind of darkness was humanity in? Darkness about what? About the truth about God!

*John 1:4- 9 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*

What light did Jesus shed on the world? “If you have seen me you have seen the Father.”

How does this light benefit you?

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Do we agree that when Jesus comes into contact with sin that Jesus cleanses from sin? Or do we believe that Jesus is defiled by sin?

If we agree that when Jesus or the metaphor “blood of Jesus” comes into contact with sin that the sin is cleansed, that the purity of Jesus wins out, then why do we teach that in the OT sanctuary service when the blood of the sacrificial lamb was taken into the sanctuary it contaminated the sanctuary? That it transferred sin to the sanctuary?

Nowhere in scripture do you find the blood of the sacrificial animal contaminating but everything the blood of the sacrificial animal touches becomes holy.

*Leviticus 6:24-30 The LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron and his sons: ‘These are the regulations for the sin offering: The sin offering is to be slaughtered before the LORD in the place the burnt offering is slaughtered; it is most holy. The priest who offers it shall eat it; it is to be eaten in a holy place, in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting. Whatever touches any of the flesh will become holy, and if any of the blood is spattered on a garment, you must wash it in a holy place. The clay pot the meat is cooked in must be broken; but if it is cooked in a bronze pot, the pot is to be scoured and rinsed with water. Any male in a priest’s family may eat it; it is most holy. But any sin offering whose blood is brought into the Tent of Meeting to make atonement in the Holy Place must not be eaten; it must be burned.*

*Hebrews 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.*

What does the Bible say happens to things that come into contact with the blood of the sacrificial animal? They are cleansed, they are made holy.

How do we make sense of this in light of Daniel 8:14? Unto 2300 days and then the sanctuary will be cleansed?

What sanctuary? What options do we have?

- the earthly tent built at the direction of Moses, replaced by Solomon's and Herod's temple
- Something of an inanimate nature in heaven where Christ currently resides
- The Spirit temple constructed of our hearts and minds

Which is most consistent with all the scripture?

When Jesus said "unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood," where was He wanting the blood applied? To which temple?

When He said "destroy this temple and in three days I will restore it," which was He referring to?

In Hebrews 8, the new covenant—where is the Law of God placed? In the heart and mind, which represent which temple?

When Lucifer rebelled in heaven, where did he want to be enthroned in an empty building by himself or in the hearts and minds of intelligent beings as the one most loved and adored?

*2 Thes 2:1-4 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.*

What temple is this referring to? Did this lawless "man" go into heaven and push Christ off His throne and sit down in some temple in heaven? Or did this man of sin dethrone Christ out of the Spirit Temple by all of the lies and distortions taught about God?

So then, is the 2300-year prophecy talking about the Spirit Temple? Your heart and mind and mine? That a "man of sin" would arise and infect the minds of humanity with distortions about God and Christ and it would be 2300 years before enough truth would be recovered to cleanse our minds from all the lies told and bring us back into unity – at-one-ment with God through Jesus Christ?

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph – "To grasp..." What is amazing to me is that in order to heal a blind man Christ not only had to create or heal the eyes, but the optic nerves, the occipital cortex, the neural pathways that process information and provide a data base to interpret what was being seen, especially for the man who was born blind from birth.

The way the brain works is that during the first 8 years of life neurons that are not used are deleted by the brain, thus a man born blind would have significantly atrophied occipital lobes. Not only that he wouldn't have an image data base to comprehend what he was seeing, unless a data base was uploaded. So, Christ healed all of this.

But notice in making these changes in the man's brain it did not change his character, autonomy, individuality or free will.

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

Why do we not do more miracles? Is it because we are still too selfish and that God's miracles are only worked through people who are selfless and won't seek to promote self or be tempted to think themselves better than others?

## TUESDAY

Read bottom pink section – did Christ have personal gain?

Does that mean He didn't have an agenda? Does that mean He didn't want His mission to be well known? Didn't He tell the disciples to go to all nations telling about His kingdom? But was Jesus wanting the focus to be on Himself or was He promoting the glory of the Father?

## WEDNESDAY

The title is sign of a new day and the lesson cites all the miracles of healing Jesus did, what new day did this signify? Didn't all the people Christ healed die and go to sleep in the graves? Then what new day was this signifying? Were the miracles of healing designed to do more than merely relieve suffering but did they have some eternal purpose? If so what?

Were they designed to signify Christ's mission to heal the race from sin? Were they designed to signify the cleansing from sin freely offered by God?

Read last paragraph – "The idea..." notice the Isaiah quotation, how does Matthew apply the Isaiah prophecy about taking our infirmities upon Him? That Jesus healed our diseases? Is this insight into the mission of Christ? He took our condition, our sickness, our terminal state not to pay a legal debt but to cure it?

Bottom pink read – how could they be so blind? Preconceived ideas, do we struggle with certain preconceived ideas that blind us to greater truth? How have you experienced this?

## THURSDAY

What is harder for God to do, raise a physical body from the dead or recreate someone in Christ-likeness of character?

This was to her the beginning of a new life, a life of purity and peace, devoted to the service of God. In the uplifting of this fallen soul, Jesus performed a greater miracle than in healing the most grievous physical disease; He cured the spiritual malady which is unto death everlasting. This penitent woman became one of His most steadfast followers. With self-sacrificing love and devotion she repaid His forgiving mercy. {DA 462.2}

Why is death conquered by Christ? What brings death? Severing of the law of life, the law of love, sin/selfishness brings death, but Christ overcame selfishness with love thus Christ vanquished death and restored life into the human race.

## FRIDAY

Read 1 and 2 and discuss

**2008 Q2 Lesson 6      The Challenge of his Sayings**

Notes are not available



## 2008 Q2 Lesson 7      The Puzzle of His Conduct

Thoughts about the title? Is there anything in Jesus' conduct that puzzles you? Something you have a question about? Something you would like to discuss this morning?

If Jesus' conduct is puzzling why would that be? Would it be some inherent problem in what Jesus did or some problem in our awareness, insight, discernment, values, methods, principles?

In other words, if we could see things from God's perspective would it be so puzzling?

What about the angels, did the angels find the incarnation and mission of Christ puzzling? Do you think they puzzled over the same things we do?

*IPE 1:10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.*

What things were the angels longing to look into? Was it not God's plan to save mankind? God's plan to bring an end to sin? God's plan to restore the universe into unity again?

Here are a couple of quotes from one of the founders of our church, powerfully stating and revealing the perspective upon which our church was founded:

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}

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

Besides the text quoted from Peter above any other Bible texts which would support this position?

*1 Corinthians 4:9 For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men.*

Job chapter one when Satan presents himself before God.

## SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

Doesn't everyone eat and drink? Why were they accusing him of being a glutton and drunkard? Do you think he was gorging himself or becoming intoxicating, stumbling around? Of course not! Then why would they accuse Him of this? Because the Pharisees had man made rules that to be truly right with God you had to regularly fast. Many would fast one or two days each week in order to show how right they were with God. Jesus behavior condemned their self-righteousness so they said, "See someone who doesn't fast like us can't be from God, He's a glutton and drunk."

Also, who did Jesus associate with? And how do you think it would make the "leadership" feel for Jesus not to recognize them? For Jesus not to pay them attention? Would those whose hearts are filled with pride and self-centeredness find Jesus conduct hard to take?

Who would Jesus be associating with today?

Why did Jesus associate with such people? — They were open to Him.

Jesus said "*I did not come into the world to condemn it but to heal it*" Do we find that Jesus demonstrated this in His life and associations? Does this reveal more of His mission?

Jesus said He did not come to call the righteous but the sinners

Read second paragraph "One of our problems..." thoughts? How do we attempt to make Jesus in our own image? Examples?

- We make Him too human, someone without any divine abilities which He could access
  - Someone who is on our side in war, conflict, disagreement?
  - Caucasian? African? Do we see Him as Middle Eastern?
- In the beginning, how many races were there – in Eden? In the end when all things are made new will we be one race again or will we keep our ethnic diversity?

## SUNDAY

Read Luke 2:41-51

*LK 2:41 Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. 43 After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."*

*LK 2:49 “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

*LK 2:51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.*

Read next three paragraphs beginning “The incident...”

Did this incident ever give you the impression Jesus was being irresponsible?

In the last paragraph it states “Nor is there any indication that He ever apologized for the terrible inconvenience He had caused His anxious parents.” Thoughts? Did Jesus have anything to apologize for? Had He caused them anxiety? Had He been negligent? Had He been thoughtless? Does the question asked by the quarterly imply such was the case and there was a place for Him to apologize?

The quarterly ought to apologize to Jesus for putting such a distortion of His character into print!

What about the assertion of the quarterly that this is one of those events that shows the limits of using Jesus’ conduct as a model in every case? Does it really? Or is it that the lesson has made Christ to be too much like us, in our own image?

Who was Jesus? Was He not still King of the universe? What were His responsibilities, mission and duties in coming to this earth? What were the responsibilities of His parents?

When the president of the US travels he has secret service travel with him, what is their responsibility? Do you think that Joseph and Mary had the responsibility to look after Jesus and rather than Jesus being negligent they were negligent in their responsibilities to Him?

Here is one perspective from the Desire of Ages:

Rapt in the contemplation of these scenes, He did not remain beside His parents. He sought to be alone. When the paschal services were ended, He still lingered in the temple courts; and when the worshipers departed from Jerusalem, He was left behind... {DA 78.2}

Meanwhile Joseph and Mary were in great perplexity and distress. In the departure from Jerusalem they had lost sight of Jesus, and they knew not that He had tarried behind. The country was then densely populated, and the caravans from Galilee were very large. There was much confusion as they left the city. **On the way the pleasure of traveling with friends and acquaintances absorbed their attention, and they did not notice His absence till night came on.** Then as they halted for rest, they missed the helpful hand of their child. Supposing Him to be with their company, they had felt no anxiety. Young as He was, they had trusted Him implicitly, expecting that when needed, He would be ready to assist them, anticipating their wants as He had always done. But now their fears were roused. They searched for Him throughout their company, but in vain. Shuddering they remembered how Herod had tried to destroy Him in His infancy. Dark forebodings filled their hearts. They bitterly reproached themselves... {DA 80.4}

In the school of the rabbis they found Jesus. Rejoiced as they were, they could not forget their grief and anxiety. When He was with them again, the mother said, in words that implied reproof, “Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.” {DA 81.2}

“How is it that ye sought Me?” answered Jesus. “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” And as they seemed not to understand His words, He pointed upward. On His face was a light at which they wondered. Divinity was flashing through humanity. On

finding Him in the temple, they had listened to what was passing between Him and the rabbi, and they were astonished at His questions and answers. His words started a train of thought that would never be forgotten. {DA 81.3}

And His question to them had a lesson. “Wist ye not,” He said, “that I must be about My Father’s business?” Jesus was engaged in the work that He had come into the world to do; but **Joseph and Mary had neglected theirs**. God had shown them high honor in committing to them His Son. Holy angels had directed the course of Joseph in order to preserve the life of Jesus. But for an entire day they had lost sight of Him whom they should not have forgotten for a moment. And when their anxiety was relieved, they had not censured themselves, but had cast the blame upon Him. {DA 81.4}

It was natural for the parents of Jesus to look upon Him as their own child. He was daily with them, His life in many respects was like that of other children, and it was difficult for them to realize that He was the Son of God. They were in danger of failing to appreciate the blessing granted them in the presence of the world’s Redeemer. The grief of their separation from Him, and the gentle reproof which His words conveyed, were designed to impress them with the sacredness of their trust. {DA 81.5}

Thoughts? So what about the limitation in using this event as an example for our conduct? Jesus was going about doing what God would have Him do, completely, perfectly, would you not want this for your child?

The lesson authors on page 83 in the TQ ask, “Should He [Jesus] not have felt bad that He caused His parents so much pain?” thoughts?

Many of my patients are afraid to do what they know is right, reasonable and healthy because of fear that someone else might get their feelings hurt. And usually the person who would get their feelings hurt is the one in the wrong.

In my book I use the analogy of the 16 y/o girl who is afraid to hurt the feelings of the boy who is making inappropriate physical advances – would she be in the wrong for saying no if he got his feelings hurt? Was Jesus in the wrong because His parents felt bad?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph. Do we know the tone of Jesus voice? Does tone make a difference?

In the movie “My Cousin Vinny,” a young man was accused of murdering two people. The Sheriff said, “You murdered those two people.” The young man responded with incredulity and a questioning tone and said “I murdered those two people?” When asked on the stand by the prosecutor what were the exact words of the defendant when you confronted him about murdering the two victims. The sheriff pulled out his notebook and read in a flat, matter of fact tone, “I **murdered** those two people.” Does tone make a difference?

What tone do you think Jesus had? What look do you think He had on His face?

What do you think about what Jesus said? What is the meaning of this passage?

Read bottom two paragraphs – thoughts?

Again, do you think the lesson needs to apologize to Jesus for such implications?

What are the implications in how the lesson attempts to apply the actions of Jesus? That Jesus was miffed because He didn’t get His personal appetite satisfied and in anger retaliated against a tree, is that how you see it?

What was the significance of cursing the tree? Fig trees put out fruit before leaves, so when a person sees a fig tree in full foliage, the fig tree is basically advertising it is full of fruit. When Jesus went to the tree to get some fruit He found it barren and cursed it. Why? The tree/vine was a well known metaphor of the Jewish nation. The Jewish nation/leaders advertised themselves as being full of spiritual fruit, having the bread of life, but they were barren of fruit and thus destined to die. Christ used this opportunity as an object lesson to teach His disciples the folly of mere professions of holiness.

What about the idea that Christ “cursed” the tree and thus inflicted death upon it and therefore God will inflict death upon the wicked?

From where does all living things obtain life? God, and what is the curse of God? Granting someone their free choice to be severed or cut off from God and what happens when one is cut off from the source of life? Death, Jesus was demonstrating that without connection to Him, the true Vine, no life is possible.

What about the suggestion of turning over pews in church if the preacher asks for money? What is the problem with this analogy?

## TUESDAY

Read dark section beginning “Why do you think...” then read next paragraph and bottom pink section – thoughts?

Why do you think Jesus asked the name of the demon? Some suggest it was to increase confidence of the disciples as they see the power of Jesus over an entire legion- I wonder whether it was because Jesus knew everyone of the fallen angels and was asking, as we might, which one are you?

*In Luke 8:26-39 we have account of the same event and the demons asked not to be thrown into the abyss or the deep, what do you think this means?*

*In Mark 5:1-20 the demons ask not to be thrown out of the area – does that give us a clue? The demons were asking not to be sent away into isolation with their own selves.*

The lesson suggests Jesus directed the demons to destroy the pigs. Did Jesus direct the demons to destroy the pigs? What does this mean? Were the demons free to influence the pigs as they wanted or was Jesus forcing the demons to run the pigs over the cliff? Does this reveal something about the source of pain, suffering, destruction and death?

The lesson implies Jesus was indifferent to the finances of the owner of the pigs and fig tree – what do you think?

As Jesus looks into your life right now, what is Jesus’ number one goal for your life? Is it not healing of heart/mind/character so that you will live forever? Is it not your salvation? Would His concern not be the same for the owners of the pigs? Then was Jesus being indifferent to the owners or actually concerned for their eternal interests?

Here is the way one of the founders of our church saw it:

*It was in mercy to the owners of the swine that this loss had been permitted to come upon them. They were absorbed in earthly things, and cared not for the great interests of spiritual life. Jesus desired to break the spell of selfish indifference, that they might accept His grace. But regret and indignation for their temporal loss blinded their eyes to the Saviour’s mercy. {DA 338.4}*



## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Does this give us any insights on how we can tell who is actually one of God’s children, who is actually on God’s side? Is it by which day of the week they go to church? Is it by how they were baptized? Is it by eating the right foods or wearing the right apparel?

What is it that determines who side someone is on? Their heart devotion with subsequent character development, for we become like the one we worship and admire.

Read last paragraph “One of the...” and then pink at bottom – thoughts?

Is God silent or are we deaf? Is God silent or are we so full of our own crying, self-pity, heart-ache, hurting, pain, suffering that we can’t hear what God is saying to us?

When Jesus came to the tomb of Lazarus Mary and Martha were so grief stricken they couldn’t hear or see that Jesus was going to raise their brother even when he was telling them this was what he was going to do.

But, does anyone have any questions on why things in this world unfold the way they do? Why bad things happen to good people?

## THURSDAY

Read second paragraph “If we apply...” thoughts?

In TQ 87 it states, “Consider an imaginary situation in your church. For some time rumors have been floating that an elder has been behaving inappropriately with members of the opposite sex. There has also been talk of two deacons misappropriating some church funds. You feel concerned about it. Will you be justified in exposing this during a divine worship service and demanding action? If not, why not?”

Do we act publicly on rumor? Do we publicly expose individual private sins?

The lesson authors are attempting to utilize Christ’s actions in cleansing the Temple as a model for this situation. What is the problem with their attempted application of the cleansing of the Temple in this situation?

Christ intervened to bring to a halt public sin in action, and not just public sin in action, but public misrepresentation of God in action, misrepresentations that obstructed the ability of the people to come to God. If you were in church and the preacher was making out on stage with someone other than his wife and encouraging others to do the same would you then make a public statement about it?

## FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, “Christ’s method...” Notice He wasn’t there to command them how to live or tell them what to do as a dictator, but to win them to willingly, voluntarily follow Him.

Read and discuss questions 1, 2, 4.



## 2008 Q2 Lesson 8      The Intensity of His Walk

### SABBATH

Read Memory verse – how did Jesus walk?

*1JN 3:16 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 4:7- 12Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

Thoughts? How do you understand God's love? And what does it mean "an atoning sacrifice for our sins?" How do you understand those words? The necessary sacrifice to cure our sinfulness and reconcile us to God?

Read last two paragraphs – thoughts?

What prepares someone to handle such abuse? Why does a soldier get out of a foxhole under fire? What is the motivation for a soldier when shells are exploding and bullets are flying to get out in the open? Love, in the military it is called cohesion and morale, but it is the brotherly love he has for his friends and comrades. The only power in the universe that can free our hearts from fear is love.

*John 3:16 For God So loved the world...*

*1 John 4:18 Perfect love casts out all fear*

The battle we all struggle with is the battle between fear/selfishness and love.

When the economy gets tough, finances get tight, the house payments aren't being made, what feelings do we experience? Fear – and what do these feelings tempt us to do? Some people follow the feelings and act selfishly – cheat on taxes, steal, sell drugs to make money etc. all based on "looking out for self." But at times like these what is really going on is the opportunity to overcome the infection we were all born with. An opportunity to go to God and say, "I don't want to live in fear anymore, I don't want to be dominated by fear, I don't want to act selfishly any more." And then in trust, trusting God with the outcome you choose to do that which is healthy, right, loving in spite of temptations to act in self interest.

I had a patient who worried constantly about what others thought of her, hated to go to social gatherings for fear of what others might think of her, hated most of all to be in front for any reason and avoided it at all costs. Then her daughter got engaged and as the wedding day approached she became more and more anxious, stressed, worried because as the mother of the bride she would be walked down in front of everyone, the center of attention. What is the problem and what solution would you suggest?

The problem is fear based self focused approach to life, the solution is love which casts out fear. I asked her, "Whose day is this?" "Who are you focusing on?" I suggested she think instead about her daughter, what it will mean for her to have her mother there, how happy she will be that day etc. She came back after the wedding and states it worked, she wasn't afraid at all because she

was thinking about her daughter and how much she wanted to do anything to make this day special for her daughter.

## SUNDAY

Read Luke 2:39-52 – thoughts?

Read second paragraph “Incredibly, these passages...”

What was Jesus doing during this time in regard to His mission in coming to earth? What was His mission?

To save mankind and secure the universe – what was needed to accomplish this?

Expose Satan, reveal the truth about God, Christ, the nature and character of sin, that obedience for the wrong reason turns one into a rebel, that there was no manufacturer’s defect in mankind and to actually rebuild, restore, heal, fix mankind.

What was happening during the first 30 years of His life that is involved in this process?

He grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man – what does this mean? Was it divinity that was growing? No, it was His humanity – what does this tell us?

Why did He have to come and do it like this? Can we conclude that God did it this way because it was necessary? Why? Remember He came in the form of a human to speak with Abraham and Abraham even cooked Him some food and He ate it. Why would it not have been sufficient for Christ to come as He did to Abraham, appear at age 30, do His miracles, live His perfect life, get arrested beaten and crucified?

If that would have happened the perfect sinless Son of God would have died, shed His blood, but salvation for mankind would not have been secured, why?

What is the problem? What is the basis of life? The Law of love, Adam and Eve infected themselves with the law of sin and death AKA as selfishness or survival of the fittest. This condition itself is incompatible with life - only God’s intercessions with the destructiveness of sin permitted life to continue on this planet. All humans descended from Adam are infected with this condition (Ps 51, Romans 3). This is why Paul says in Romans that death reigned from Adam to Moses even though no one broke a command like Adam. These children of Adam were not guilty for being born in this state, but they were still dying, still terminal.

So what did Christ come to do? To deal with sin, to fix the terminal condition, to heal humanity while simultaneously revealing the truth to win to trust.

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}

*Rom 13:10 “Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”*

The law is the law of love, and the law of love requires what? That we are perfectly loving in character in everyway – why does the law of love require this? Why does the law of respiration require you breath? What does the law of hydration require you drink? Why does the law of nutrition require you eat? It is the way life was designed to operate!

So, could mankind, once out of harmony with the law recreate it in himself?

So, why did Jesus come?

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}

Are there Bible texts to support this? What about the texts in 1 John and Romans already read? What about Hebrews 5:8,9

*“Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”*

He “learned obedience” and “once made perfect” how do these fit with He grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man and what He was here on earth to accomplish?

Christ was here to live perfectly, to overcome sinfulness, to destroy selfishness with love in the human being and the only way was to do it, was to develop perfect character as a human being and Jesus, God in human flesh did just that!

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph – “But the explicit...” thoughts?

Why did the Holy Spirit lead Jesus to the wilderness to be tempted? What was His mission? To overcome and defeat the devil and the devil methods, principles, ideas, motives and thus Christ went into the wilderness in His humanity and was tempted to doubt God and to act selfishly and each time the temptation came He trusted God and acted in love! Thus Jesus by His moment to moment experience and decisions was actually restoring God’s perfect design into humanity! He lived out God’s law of love in His human life experience!

Christ had to overcome not just Satan but the ideas of Satan, what Satan had planted, Satan’s methods, motives, principles. This is what Christ did, He not only defeated Satan directly in face to face confrontation but He actually, in His life experience, destroyed all the lies Satan told with the truth He revealed, overcame selfishness with love, and restored perfectly into humanity God’s character of love!

Read bottom two paragraphs – thoughts? Questions?

## TUESDAY

First sentence states, “Jesus lived for prayer.” What is prayer? Are there different types of prayer?

- Ritual prayers done by rote
- Prayer beads
- Phylacteries
- Prayer spinners

What do you think about such prayers? What are their purpose? Why do people pray such prayers? To appease, as penance, payment, to influence???

Are all prayers to the same God? Does it make a difference to whom one prays?

What is prayer when it is directed to the true God? Is it not conversation with God as with a friend? What different types of prayers are there to the true God? What different types of conversations do you have with friends?

- Thanks
- Requests
- Empathy
- Encouragement
- Venting
- Complaining
- Protesting
- Crying
- Laughing
- Interceding

In other words, when one is in relationship with God doesn't one share their entire life with God communicating with Him? Does it then surprise us that Jesus prayed a lot?

What then is the purpose of prayer? I have patients pray for better lung function but won't quit smoking, what is the purpose of such prayer? Many people pray for "magical" solutions, for God to intervene and stop the consequences of their own choices, for God to violate His own laws and allow sin to continue without damage to the sinner. "Lord give me a happy marriage" while a husband beats his wife. "Lord bless me with good health" while I eat big mac's fries, candy and snack cakes every day.

Will God ever use His power to do things He doesn't want us to do if we ask Him to? The children of Israel and the quail – what did God want them to be eating? Manna, who brought the quail? Who picked the first two kings of Israel? God did, but who did God want them to have as their king? Him! Then why would God do this?

How do we understand intercessory prayer? Do we need to pray to God to get Him to care or be loving? Never, but will God force His way into someone's life against their will? Or does God genuinely respect the individuality and freedom of others? How does this impact how we understand prayer?

## WEDNESDAY

Read John 12:20-36

Then read last paragraph – thoughts?

What was his mission? To reveal the truth to restore us to trust and to overcome the law of sin and death with the law of life, the law of love!

Read bottom pink – thoughts? Jesus had to lose all He had, His position in heaven, His perfect life on earth in order to heal all who trust Him, we have to lose all we have and what do we have? Sickness, disease, suffering, pain, imperfection, guilt, shame in order to be perfectly healed!

TQ page 97 quotes Ben Franklin “There is a difference between imitating a good man and counterfeiting him.” What do you think this means? How does it apply to WWJD?

Jesus is all about heart transformation, genuine renewal to love others more than self, counterfeiters are about behavior conformation, obedience, and adherence to human rules and standards – examples?

- Inquisition
- Pharisees in Christ’s day
- Taliban

What do these three have in common?

What about us?

### THURSDAY

Read again memory text and then the dark section at top starting with “Realizing, as we have...” Thoughts?

What specific actions of Christ’s should we not emulate exactly? Going homeless? Never marrying and being celibate, should everyone in the world emulate this? Others?

But what about apply the principles He lived by? This is the difficulty with WWJD, WWJD is often too much like “rules thinking” rather than principled living. We are to live in love and love does different things depending on the situation.

As a parent do you sometimes hug, sometimes play and sometimes spank depending on the situation? Can all of those different actions be done in love?

### FRIDAY

Read first paragraph and discuss

Read second paragraph and discuss

## 2008 Q2 Lesson 9      The Tenderness of His Love

### SABBATH

Read the first two paragraphs “Matthew 9:35 tells how...” Thoughts?

I have patients that if I read these paragraphs to them would get angry, “If this is true then why didn’t Jesus give us food when we were hungry? Why didn’t He stop my step father from abusing me? Why didn’t He stop my friend from getting killed in a car accident?”

What would you say to someone like this?

### SUNDAY

The woman caught in adultery – is everyone familiar with the details of this story?

Some Christian authors suggest the woman caught was the same woman who anointed Jesus’ feet prior to His crucifixion and that this woman is the sister of Martha and Lazarus and the niece of Simon the leper. Further, some suggest the details are that Simon, the girl’s uncle, is the one who sexually exploited her as a young girl and this led her to become a prostitute. In that society how might a young girl feel after being sexually exploited by her uncle? So she goes into a life of prostitution.

With this background we have several elements to explore, how Christ treated Mary, how Christ treated the men who accused her and how Christ treated Simon.

Here is one Christian author’s perspective on the events:

Simon the host had been influenced by the criticism of Judas upon Mary’s gift, and he was surprised at the conduct of Jesus. His Pharisaic pride was offended. He knew that many of his guests were looking upon Christ with distrust and displeasure. Simon said in his heart, “This Man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner.” {DA 566.1}

By curing Simon of leprosy, Christ had saved him from a living death. But now Simon questioned whether the Saviour were a prophet. Because Christ allowed this woman to approach Him, because He did not indignantly spurn her as one whose sins were too great to be forgiven, because He did not show that He realized she had fallen, Simon was tempted to think that He was not a prophet. Jesus knows nothing of this woman who is so free in her demonstrations, he thought, or He would not allow her to touch Him. {DA 566.2}

But it was Simon’s ignorance of God and of Christ that led him to think as he did. He did not realize that God’s Son must act in God’s way, with compassion, tenderness, and mercy. Simon’s way was to take no notice of Mary’s penitent service. Her act of kissing Christ’s feet and anointing them with ointment was exasperating to his hardheartedness. He thought that if Christ were a prophet, He would recognize sinners and rebuke them. {DA 566.3}

To this unspoken thought the Saviour answered: “Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. . . . There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell Me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.” {DA 566.4}

As did Nathan with David, Christ concealed His home thrust under the veil of a parable. He threw upon His host the burden of pronouncing sentence upon himself. Simon had led into



sin the woman he now despised. She had been deeply wronged by him. By the two debtors of the parable, Simon and the woman were represented. Jesus did not design to teach that different degrees of obligation should be felt by the two persons, for each owed a debt of gratitude that never could be repaid. But Simon felt himself more righteous than Mary, and Jesus desired him to see how great his guilt really was. He would show him that his sin was greater than hers, as much greater as a debt of five hundred pence exceeds a debt of fifty pence. {DA 566.5}

Simon now began to see himself in a new light. He saw how Mary was regarded by One who was more than a prophet. He saw that with keen prophetic eye Christ read her heart of love and devotion. Shame seized upon him, and he realized that he was in the presence of One superior to himself. {DA 567.1}

Christ might have extinguished every spark of hope in Mary's soul, but He did not. The Heart-searcher read the motives that led to her actions, and He also saw the spirit that prompted Simon's words. "Seest thou this woman?" He said to him; she is a sinner; "I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." {ST, May 9, 1900 par. 14}

Those present, thinking of Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead by Christ, and who was at this time a guest in his uncle's house, began to question, saying, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" But Christ continued, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." {ST, May 9, 1900 par. 15}

How did Christ treat Mary, the woman caught in adultery?

"Neither do I condemn you." He treated her with respect, love, and restored her dignity, why? Because we cannot fulfill God's purpose for our lives if we live in guilt, shame and self-loathing. Do you see when Christ treats her such that this is the Father speaking, "if you have seen me you have seen the Father?"

How did Christ treat the men who brought her before him? He knew their secret sins and knew they were trying to trap Him, yet He protected their reputations. What does it say about God that He will protect the reputations of His enemies?

How did He treat Simon? What would you do today if you knew one of the church elders molested his niece leading her into a life of prostitution and after the pastor reaches out to her and brings her to Christ and baptizes her into the church he questions the worthiness of the pastor, has hardness in his heart and looks down on this woman as being unworthy to be in the church? If you knew what he had done how would you handle it?

What does it say about God that He would seek to protect the reputation of Simon? What does it say about God that He didn't publicly expose Simon? Is there a lesson for us?

What does it say that Jesus didn't ask everyone to pray for Simon? Or go behind Simon's back to the church board or the conference committee to express His concern for Simon?

In all these situations how would we be tempted to act? Would we be tempted to choose sides? Would we see all of the parties involved as suffering from the same terminal condition and in need of the same remedy? Would we seek to heal them all?

Imagine an AIDS ward where everyone there is dying, but some are dying of PCP, others cytomegalovirus, others from Kaposi's sarcoma, others from meningitis and they have broken into groups criticizing and attacking those with different manifestations of the disease?

Imagine you were Mary, involved in prostitution – how would you feel if you turned around and saw your parents there? Parents how would you feel if your daughter was molested as a child and ended up in such a situation? Would you hate her? Would you want to punish her? Or would your heart go out to her wanting to heal her? Does this give us some insight into how the unhealed wicked will feel when they come face to face with God in the end and what God's attitude toward them will be?

## FRIDAY

Read question three – thoughts?

What is the problem with this question? What is the false premise, the incorrect assumption? The false assumption is that if we don't hold people accountable then they get away with sin. Why is this a false assumption and where does such an idea come from? This idea comes from the false belief that God's laws are imposed and required imposed penalties be enforced. But the laws of God are natural laws and violations bring their own penalties.

Imagine, how well would you sleep tonight if you molested a child today? And if you could sleep well how damaged a person would you be?

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. {ISM 235.2}

Sin damages the sinner, no one gets away with it. It is a falsehood that we have to hold people accountable, we are to work to bring people to Christ for repentance and healing!

What about correcting others? What is the balance?

"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}

To hate and reprove sin, and at the same time to manifest pity and tenderness for the sinner, is a difficult attainment. The more earnest our own efforts to attain to holiness of heart and life, the more acute will be our perception of sin, and the more decided our disapproval of any deviation from right. We must guard against undue severity toward the wrong-doer. But while we should seek to encourage him in every effort to correct his errors, we must be careful not to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. While there is need of Christlike patience and love toward the erring, there is constant danger of manifesting so great toleration for his error that he will consider himself undeserving of reproof, and will reject it as uncalled-for and unjust. {Sketches from the Life of Paul 321.2}

How do you understand this? As a parent do you ever become tolerant and accepting of drug addiction? Why not? Because you know it only does one thing and one thing only – destroy those you love. Do you ever hate your child caught up in such an addiction? This is the balance, hate the sin which infects us all, but love each other.

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What about the sentiment at the end that the children died because of Christ? This is a falsehood, a lie, a distortion and many of my patients struggle with this type of confused thinking. Did God or Christ make and decisions to kill those babies? Did God or Christ give any instructions to kill those babies? No! Did God and Christ take action to heal mankind and destroy sin? Yes! What would have happened if God and Christ said, “Oh, my, if I go to earth as a human baby then many babies will die, I just couldn’t live with that so I will stay here in heaven instead”?

How do people do this? A man is in an unhealthy relationship in which his girlfriend is controlling, manipulative, constantly goes into rages if she doesn’t get her way. He realizes it is unhealthy and wants to end it, but she has told him if he does she will kill herself. He says, “I just couldn’t live with that, if she kills herself it will be my fault” and therefore stays. Is this healthy thinking? Is it true that if she kills herself it is his fault?

Read last paragraph “Those children...” how would you feel if as a child you sat on Jesus lap and He put His hands on your head and you heard Him bless you? Would it make a difference in your life today? How and why?

Why did Jesus give such a stern warning on how we treat children?

*Mark 9:42 “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.”*

Explore neurobiology of brain development, traumatic impact on neurodevelopment and psychological impacts of increased fear, insecurity and inability to trust on long term relationships and adaptation.

## TUESDAY

Luke 10:38-42 is the account of Martha requesting Mary to help in the kitchen and Jesus gently reminding Martha that Mary had chosen the better option – how do you understand Jesus answer in light of:

*“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. 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, 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.’” Matthew 25:34-36*

And other texts that speak about servant love—isn’t such activity exactly what Jesus wants for us?

Where was Martha’s focus on service or self? Was she focused on uplifting others, providing for others what was in their best interest? So being aware that Mary needed to be at Jesus feet she gladly did the work to provide Mary the opportunity? Perhaps Martha was concerned with what others would think of her as a hostess? Was Jesus suggesting that Mary was pursuing the most important thing, to be like Jesus genuinely loving others more than self?

Love is giving, but there is giving in order to give and giving in order to get what is the difference?

## WEDNESDAY

Loving our enemies – why is this so hard to do? What are the barriers that keep us from doing this?

What has helped you love those who have done you wrong?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? What did they not know? Did they not know who Jesus was? Did they not know what they were doing to themselves?

Did some of them see Jesus put the ear back on Malchius? Did some of them get knocked down by the brilliance of a heavenly angel just hours before?

How damaged must their minds be to be able to ignore all this evidence, do we get insights into what sin does to the mind? Do we get insights into why some are lost?

#### THURSDAY

Read paragraph “If God shared...” thoughts? What is the implication buried subtly in this paragraph? That God has limited patience and that God sets time limits on us? Does God have limited patience or did the children of Israel have limited usefulness? In other words, did God stop His willingness to work with them or did they stop their willingness to work with Him? Notice how the lesson suggests that God is the one who lost patience and set limits.

What about the passage in Revelation 22:11

*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.”*

Does this mean God is saying, “time’s up, here I come ready or not”? Does God run out of patience? Or does this passage refer to the time when all people will have been so settled either into the truth about God or the lies of Satan that no one is movable anymore? All are eternally settled by their own choices in one of the two camps?

Does it make a difference in how we see it?

**2008 Q2 Lesson 10 The Meaning of His Death**

Notes are not available.

## 2008 Q2 Lesson 11 The Power of His Resurrection

### SABBATH

Read the entire day – thoughts?

Why was the tomb empty? What gave God/Jesus the right to leave the tomb?

What answers have you heard to this in the past? Jesus was sinless? But didn't He become sin who knew no sin? So if He became sin and the legal penalty for sin is eternal death and Jesus took our place so we don't have to die eternally, how can He come out of the grave? Wouldn't that mean as soon as the grave is empty that the payment, eternal death, hasn't been made?

Have you heard Jesus died the second death? What is the second death?

*Revelation 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.*

*Revelation 21:8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."*

Did Jesus die in the lake of fire? Is there a resurrection from the second death? Did Jesus rise again? Does the first death destroy a person's individuality, their identity? No, What about the second death?

Matthew 10:28 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.

The Greek word for soul is *psyche* which we still derive the term psyche from which means mind, the study of psychiatry or psychology is the study of the mind. So, the second death is the death which destroys both body and psyche, mind. Did Jesus have His psyche destroyed? Then did He die the second death?

No, Jesus did not die the second death He conquered the second death:

*2 Tim 1:9,10 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.*

How was Jesus able to leave the tomb and not violate justice?

Let's talk about justice for a bit, is it just for an innocent person to be punished for the crimes of the guilty? Would we do such a thing? Does God act in this way?

*EZE 18:17 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.*

*EZE 18:19 "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.*



What does this mean? Does this have any bearing on our discussion of what God's justice is like? Will God punish the innocent and spare the guilty? Did God inflict punishment upon His Son? How could the Son leave the tomb and still be the source of salvation?

Is it just for someone on death row to be put under anesthesia for three days and then released, is that the same thing as dying? Did Jesus die eternally?

Did God ever require a death payment in order for mankind to be saved? Where does the Bible teach anywhere that God required a death payment?

What is required in order for man to be saved? That the condition which brings death be vanquished, that the sickness be cured, that the infection be purged, that sin be destroyed!

What is the basis of all life? The law of love! Life is created to operate in harmony with this principle, what happens if this principle is violated? Death, why? What happens if you stop breathing, drinking, eating?

So how was Christ able to leave the tomb? He overcame the cause of death, He cured the condition, He fixed the problem, He restored perfectly into humanity God's law of love. He arose because He conquered death, He conquered selfishness with love, He conquered Satan's lies with truth, He conquered sinfulness with holiness. Christ arose because the cause of death He defeated! And now He offers His life, not as a payment to God, but as a Remedy to you and me.

We can connect to the Vine and receive from Him, via the Holy Spirit His perfect life, His character, His Law of Love reproduced in us and then it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me!

The power of the resurrection is the power of Love over selfishness, the power of truth over lies, the power of God's methods over Satan's methods, the power of life over death!

## SUNDAY

When Jesus rose from the dead many people who died loyal to God also rose – what impact do you think that would have? Consider today what would happen if graves at the local cemetery opened and many of our loved ones arose and began going throughout the city proclaiming the risen Savior?

Can angels appear in the form of men? What about the angels that went to rescue Lot? Weren't they in the form of men?

*Hebrews 13:2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.*

Can Satan's angels also do this? If they can would you be surprised that they influence for evil? One author thinks they can,

"If Thou be the Son of God," they said, "come down from the cross." "Let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the chosen of God." In the wilderness of temptation Satan had declared, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down" from the pinnacle of the temple. Matt. 4:3, 6. **And Satan with his angels, in human form, was present at the cross.** The archfiend and his hosts were co-operating with the priests and rulers. The teachers of the people had stimulated the ignorant mob to pronounce judgment against One upon whom many of them had never looked, until urged to bear testimony against Him. Priests, rulers, Pharisees, and the hardened rabble were confederated together in a satanic frenzy. Religious rulers united with Satan and his angels. They were doing his bidding. {DA 746.4}

What do you think would happen if Satan's angels were to appear as men who have died making it look like those men were resurrected? Do you think people could be deceived?

If this is possible what can we do to protect ourselves from deception?

## MONDAY

In the TQ page 129 it states,

"Of all the doctrines and teachings of Christianity, the idea of the resurrection of the dead has to be one of the most intense and faith-demanding teachings. The dead, rising? Some after having been gone for thousands of years? How could that be? How can anyone really believe this?"

The answer, however, is simple—we believe it because the Word of God promises it. We believe it because Jesus promised it. We believe it because without it we would have no hope whatsoever. Indeed, without it, our faith would be meaningless. Without it, Christ's first coming would have been a waste of time, and who among us believes that?"

Thoughts? How could we believe in a resurrection? What do you think about the reasons cited? What reasons do you have?

What about "we believe it because without it we would have no hope whatsoever"? Is this a good reason to believe something, to generate hope?

Do some Muslims believe that if they die in a terrorist attack they will go to paradise to be rewarded? Does that belief give them hope? Is that a good reason to believe it?

What about the idea that God said it therefore I believe it? How does God want us to form our faith or beliefs in Him? What is the relationship between believing God and evaluating the evidence?

God has provided us evidence of His trustworthiness and reliability, therefore when we trust Him in regards to something we don't fully understand that doesn't mean our trust is not based on evidence. God has also given us the Biblical eye witness accounts of the evidence of His resurrection.

More than this God has given us reasons to understand why the resurrection takes place and why life exists beyond the grave, because the law of life, love, is restored. We also have models that can understand how this can happen with our computer technology, if we have backed up our hard-drive on a server and destroy the computer, we can resurrect it by getting new hardware and downloading the previous data to it.

*1TH 4:13 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.*

At the resurrection God resurrects the body and downloads our identities which have been kept safe on the heavenly server. Thus the Bible is true when it teaches the dead don't know anything, yet the spirit returns to God and God will bring with Him those who have died and together we

all join Jesus in the air. Christ brings the data sets, the heavenly records, the individualities of the righteous back with Him raises new bodies and downloads their identities into the new bodies, we are caught up together with them to meet Christ in the air.

One of the founders of our church saw it this way:

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}

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph “How could such...” what do you think about the logic of this paragraph? Does it make sense that since they believed it so strongly that they were willing to give their lives for it then it must be true? What about Jim Jones, David Koresh and many other cults – did they believe so strongly in something they were willing to give their lives for it? Did it make it true?

Conversely, if there are Christians who under threat of death and torture recant and deny Christ does that make the gospel false?

What about using such arguments to promote the veracity of the gospel? Does it make our position stronger or weaker?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts? What is the power of the resurrection? Does this passage on the parable of the Vine shed any light?

*“I am the Vine, ye are the branches,” Christ said to His disciples. Though He was about to be removed from them, their spiritual union with Him was to be unchanged. The connection of the branch with the vine, He said, represents the relation you are to sustain to Me. The scion is engrafted into the living vine, and fiber by fiber, vein by vein, it grows into the vine stock. The life of the vine becomes the life of the branch. 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}*

*This union with Christ, once formed, must be maintained. Christ said, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.” This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. The branch becomes a part of the living vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the root to the branches is unobstructed and constant. Separated from the vine, the branch cannot live. No more, said Jesus, can you live apart from Me. The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation. {DA 676.1}*

“Abide in Me, and I in you.” Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. The channel of communication must be open continually between man and his God. As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character. {DA 676.2}

The root sends its nourishment through the branch to the outermost twig. So Christ communicates the current of spiritual strength to every believer. So long as the soul is united to Christ, there is no danger that it will wither or decay. {DA 676.3}

What is the power of Christ’s resurrection? The Remedy to sin, His perfect character of love that, when we are connected to Him, gets reproduced in us by the Holy Spirit. Christ is the source, we are the recipients – other metaphors for this regenerating, recreating process which demonstrate receiving Christ’s work in our hearts?

The OT Sanctuary service the High Priest (represents Jesus) trimmed the lamps on the lamp stand every morning and evening – what does this symbolize? Jesus working in the heart to clear away the old, and renew us to burn brightly for Him!

*ZEC 3:1 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?”*

*ZEC 3:3 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.”*

*ZEC 3:5 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.*

Who is the Angel of the Lord? Christ (Exodus 3:2,5)

What do the filthy garments represent? Our sinful character

What do the rich garments represent? Perfect character

Where is the character obtained? Who obtained it? Who developed it? Christ!

## WEDNESDAY

Read bottom paragraph, “The conviction that Jesus...” What good news do you have to take to the world?

What was the tongues of fire? The fire of what? The Holy Spirit which is the fire of truth and love which equipped them to be effective in combating Satan and his methods of selfishness and fear.

TQ page 133 asks “What if Christ had died for your sins but not risen to life?” thoughts? If it were a penal substitution wouldn’t we feel relieved that our penalty was paid?

But would we understand the truth and would we have a remedy?

## THURSDAY

Read second paragraph “For us, there is no danger...” thoughts?

What does the resurrection mean to you? How has this helped you in times of crisis? When you have had a loved one die has the resurrection brought comfort? Has it ever brought fear or distress?

Will everyone be glad there is a resurrection?

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What does this say about why the wicked die in the end?

Read question 1 and discuss

Read question 2 and discuss

## 2008 Q2 Lesson 12 The Efficacy of His Priestly Ministry

Notes are not available.



## 2008 Q2 Lesson 13 His Return as King and Friend

Thoughts about the title, about the expectation of Christ's return and any questions about the entire issue of Christ's return?

### SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts? What does it mean “not to deal with sin”? What does it mean to “deal with sin”? Why is He not coming back to deal with sin?

Read second paragraph “Though unpleasant...” Thoughts? What anxiety provoking nightmares have you heard? Does our church present any of its own?

Read last sentence – thoughts? Why are people afraid of the second coming?

- They are not ready?
- Lies about God?

What is the final message of mercy to go to the world? Is it not the truth about God's character of love? Is the final message of mercy just about how much Jesus loves us or is it presenting the Godhead back in unity, doing away with the disparity hangover from the reformation and realizing the Father is just like Jesus?

Doesn't Jesus come sitting at the right hand of the Father?

*“But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Matthew 26:64*

Does it make a difference? Is it possible God is waiting for us to come into the truth about Him, the unity of the Godhead before He can come and get us?

Let's read the end of Jesus prayer to His Father right before His crucifixion:

*JN 17:20 “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.*

*JN 17:24 “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*

*JN 17:25 “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”*

What do you hear in these words?

Christ is praying that we will all be one, unified just as Christ and the Father are unified, would this require we come to know the truth about God, that He is just like Jesus?

Jesus wants us to see His glory, what is His glory? Character and is this character the same as the Father's? And notice how He ends by reminding us the world doesn't know the Father but Christ has revealed Him – is it possible Christ is waiting for us to come back into the truth about the Father?

Can we come into unity with Christ and the Father, knowing their character if we believe God is vengeful, must inflict destruction and suffering on His creatures?

## SUNDAY

Read second paragraph – thoughts?

What is the work Christ has been doing since 1844? Where is this work taking place?

One of the founders of our church, who espoused the importance of 1844 wrote in the book the GC:

“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.” (GC, p. 426).

Read Malachi 3:1-3:

*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. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness,*

What is being cleansed in this passage, which is the same event as Daniel 8:14? The Levites, who are? The Priesthood of believers.

Can God cleanse the “record books” of the recorded sins of the people, without cleansing the people? So, then in which Temple is Christ working?

*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.*

*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.*

What Temple is God working to cleanse?

The Bible teaches that heaven is God’s throne and earth His footstool – what does this mean? Is there insight in this regarding the heavenly sanctuary?

In the OT sanctuary what does the covenant box represent?

- Shikinah represents God
- Angels represents sinless heavenly beings
- Lid represents Christ

Box represents what? The converted, healed heart, minds of the believers on earth

What was in it?

Manna, 10 Commandments, and Aaron's Rod

- In the NT, what did Jesus say was the manna and where was it to go? He was the bread of heaven and we are to eat His flesh and drink His blood. In other words, the manna is to be in us!
- Where is the law in the OT system? In the box, where is it in the NT? In the heart and mind (Heb 8:10).

Notice the order:

- We partake of the bread of heaven, the truth of Christ and are won to trust,
- God writes His law on our hearts and minds, and then we who were dead in our trespasses and sins come to life and bring forth fruit of righteousness.

So the lid, which represents Christ connects everything, brings everything back into oneness, unity, atonement.

*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."*

*Col 1:16-20 "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. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 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."*

Why 1844?

*2TH 2:1 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."*

Any insights from this passage? What temple does this man of sin set himself up in? In heaven or in the minds of people on earth? Then which temple is Christ working to cleanse?

God in His foreknowledge knew that after Christ came and won the victory on earth Satan would counter attack and cause a period of darkness and confusion and it would be 2300 years from the time the decree to rebuild the Temple until enough truth had been recovered to finish the work of cleansing the spirit temple from the lies Satan has told.

Revelation 7:1-3 tells us God has His angels holding back the four winds until something transpires, what? Until His people are "sealed" in their foreheads. He is waiting until we get ourselves so settled into the truth about Him, that like Job, nothing will shake us out of it and then He will come.

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Is Jesus coming the dark side or is it the events that precede His coming? What events precede His coming and why do they take place?

Why will the wicked run and hide from Christ and beg for rocks to fall on them? What causes this? Is God angry at them? Is He wrathful? Does He have a two face where He is smiling at the righteous and snarling at the wicked?

Or is it that the very condition of the wicked causes them anguish and pain of mind in the presence of truth and love?

Paul tells us that if we treat our enemies with kindness we “heap burning coals on their heads.” How much more intense will that be when the wicked are in the presence of God’s love and goodness?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Why will the wicked suffer? Why will this be terrifying for them? Would it be criminal to misrepresent God and the reasons for their anguish?

Remember the story of Moses coming down from the mountain and how the children of Israel shrank away and begged to be hidden from Moses’ face – was Moses their enemy? Was the radiance causing physical pain and suffering? Did it harm Moses? Are there lessons here for our understanding about what happens in the end?

One Christian writer thinks so:

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}

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What about the Father is He not our Friend also? Is it important to include this in our presentations?

## WEDNESDAY

Read number 1. thoughts? Why are these traumatic and devastating events increasing? Do we have lessons from the book of Job? God has been interceding with sin and the powers of darkness to protect us since Adam sinned, in the end as more and more people close their hearts and minds to the HS, the HS is withdrawn from the earth and God’s restraining hand is removed, (Rev 7:1-3) and Satan has more control over the earth bringing calamity and devastation.

Read 2. thoughts? Are we facing conflict in the church? About what? Why is the conflict occurring?

Read 3. Thoughts? What should we not be naïve and gullible about? False Messiah's? What about who is causing the calamities? What about a being of light coming to rescue? What about solidification of church state powers? Will God restrict liberties in order to save life?

Read 4. Thoughts? What gospel? What is the final message of mercy? The good news about God, that He is exactly like Jesus. Does this mean we have to be able to present all doctrines in a way that reveal the loving character of God? Are there any that you have had a hard time reconciling with the loving character of God as revealed by Jesus?

Read 5. Thoughts, why is it important

Read 6. Thoughts? What are those signs? Have the signs already happened? Will they happen again? GC talks about the Dark day of 1780 being a sign – do you agree? Several questions – is it a sign for the entire world? Is it a sign for people living when the end events occur? Was it a sign useful to start the last day movements and occurred in the area of the world where people were open to God's last day message? Will there be a more global sign to alert people in the end?

### INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLE:

#### May 19, 1780: Darkness at Noon Enshrouds New England

By Randy Alfred 05.19.08 | 12:00 AM

**1780:** In the midst of the Revolutionary War, darkness descends on New England at mid-day. Many people think Judgment Day is at hand. It will be remembered as New England's Dark Day.

Diaries of the preceding days mention smoky air and a red sun at morning and evening. Around noon this day, an early darkness fell: Birds sang their evening songs, farm animals returned to their roosts and barns, and humans were bewildered.

Some went to church, many sought the solace of the tavern, and more than a few nearer the edges of the darkened area commented on the strange beauty of the preternatural half-light. One person noted that clean silver had the color of brass.

It was darkest in northeastern Massachusetts, southern New Hampshire and southwestern Maine, but it got dusky through most of New England and as far away as New York. At Morristown, New Jersey, Gen. George Washington noted it in his diary.

In the darkest area, people had to take their midday meals by candlelight. A Massachusetts resident noted, "In some places, the darkness was so great that persons could not see to read common print in the open air." In New Hampshire, wrote one person, "A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eyes was equally invisible with the blackest velvet."

At Hartford, Col. Abraham Davenport opposed adjourning the Connecticut legislature, thus: "The day of judgment is either approaching, or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause of an adjournment; if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty."

When it was time for night to fall, the full moon failed to bring light. Even areas that had seen a pale sun in the day could see no moon at all. No moon, no stars: It was the darkest night anyone had seen. Some people could not sleep and waited through the long hours to see if the sun would ever rise again. They witnessed its return the morning of May 20. Many observed the anniversary a year later as a day of fasting and prayer.

Professor Samuel Williams of Harvard gathered reports from throughout the affected areas to seek an explanation. A town farther north had reported "a black scum like ashes" on rainwater collected in tubs. A Boston observer noted the air smelled like a "malt-house or

coal-kiln.” Williams noted that rain in Cambridge fell “thick and dark and sooty” and tasted and smelled like the “black ash of burnt leaves.”

As if from a forest fire to the north? Without railroad or telegraph, people would not know: No news could come sooner than delivered on horseback, assuming the wildfire was even near any European settlements in the vast wilderness.

But we know today that the darkness had moved southwest at about 25 mph. And we know that forest fires in Canada in 1881, 1950 and 2002 each cast a pall of smoke over the north-eastern United States.

A definitive answer came in 2007. In the *International Journal of Wildland Fire*, Erin R. McMurry of the University of Missouri forestry department and co-authors combined written accounts with fire-scar evidence from Algonquin Provincial Park in eastern Ontario to document a massive wildfire in the spring of 1780 as the “likely source of the infamous Dark Day of 1780.”

Read 8. Does Christ not know? While He didn’t know while a human on earth and denying Himself access to divine abilities, would it not be possible for Him and the Holy Spirit to know now?

#### THURSDAY

How do we explain the delay in Jesus coming? What is He waiting for?

For people to get ready? For the 144,000 to get sealed? For the gospel to be preached to the world? Do we have any role in this? Can we hasten the day of the Lord? What can we do?

#### FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 3 and 4.



## 2008 Q3 Lesson 1 For Such a Time as This: The Apostle Paul

Introduction to the new Study Guide read the first four paragraphs – thoughts?

Why do millions reject God? Could it have to do with the God they have been presented? Is it possible that not believing in god is actually healthier than believing in god, depending on the god presented?

I have patients who state they don't believe in God and I ask them, "Tell me about the god you don't believe in." And after they finish describing this cruel, tyrannical, abusive, coercive, power mongering God I say, "Good for you I don't believe in him either." In fact, they have not described God, they have described Satan. To reject such a god is better than to believe in god if that is the god you believe in.

Paragraph five states, "As Christians, we are God's agents to bring these people hope, to show that there is a God who loves and cares for them, to show that although life has many outrageous horrors, it is not ultimately an outrageous horror but that God will finally make all things right." How? By doing what? Making an outrageous horror?

### SABBATH

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Why was it a "shocker"? What lay at the root of the idea that the Jews were especially chosen for salvation? Narcissism, which is self-centeredness, which results in forming a god who is also elitist, arbitrary and selective. Thus at the root was the worship of a god who actually valued some people more than others on the basis of genetics rather than character.

Do people still struggle with this today? What Biblical evidence can we give to demonstrate this is not true, that God is "not a respecter of persons" that God shows no favoritism, that all mankind are sinners and need the same salvation and that God wants all men to come to salvation?

How many intelligent sentient species did God create on planet earth? One!

Was the Jewish nation called by God? For what? Jewish nation called for exclusive salvation? Or were they called to fulfill a role, a function?

They were called as an acting troupe to act out in a micro drama the plan of salvation. God was the director and they were the actors. Now, in order to be saved, even in OT times, people were not required to be part of the acting troupe and thus they were not required to participate in the rituals of the Jewish economy. Examples Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, two individuals who were saved and as far as the Biblical record is concerned never participated in the Jewish rituals. Why?

Because the actors put on the drama to teach others the reality and those who learned the reality of who God is and came back to trust in God were saved.

Even in the OT God made it clear through the prophets that the rituals in the sanctuary services were not what He wanted:

*PS 51:16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.*

*PS 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

*MIC 6:6 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?*

*MIC 6:7 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?*

*MIC 6:8 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.*

Chapter 1 of Isaiah –

The Children of Israel were God’s specially chosen people to evangelize the world, to teach the plan of salvation in a theatrical drama. But that drama became reality in the life of Jesus and now the act, the play, the drama is no longer needed.

What today is the responsibility of the Christian church? What are we to be revealing to the world to prepare it for Christ’s return? How can we be more effective in this revelation?

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “He took the good news about Jesus to the world.”

*RO 1:16 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. 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.”*

How is the gospel the power of God? And what does it mean “a righteousness from God is revealed”?

*Read GAL 1:6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 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!*

Thoughts about this? How can you tell the difference between the true gospel and false gospels?

Many patient’s of mind struggle with the question “how can I tell what to believe”? What would you say?

Should we be able to establish our beliefs on truths that are evidence based, testable, reliable and predictable? How does the gospel demonstrate this?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph –

How did Paul change after the Damascus Road experience?

What do you think was the core change Paul experienced internally that resulted in the changed behavior externally?

Was it His concept of God that changed, which resulted in a change of his own values, methods and principles?

Read fourth paragraph “Though Paul saw himself...” Do you see yourself as a special envoy for God? Do you see yourself as an ambassador for the government of God? Do you see yourself as a herald of the kingdom of light? Do you see yourself as the emissary of the kingdom of love?

If not how do we become such? What difference would it make in your life to realize that as soon as you accepted the name Christian you became an ambassador for the government of Christ?

## TUESDAY

Read fourth paragraph “It is a comfort...” Thoughts? Do we have the idea that God only anoints perfect people to His ministry? If God only anointed the perfect who would be anointed?

Examples from the Bible of the imperfect being called and anointed by God?

- Noah was a wine bibber
- Moses was a murderer
- Abraham was a polygamist
- Jacob was a deceiver
- David was an adulterer and murderer
- Solomon was a mega polygamist and practiced idolatry
- Peter was an impulsive, power seeker who used foul language

How many of these men would we allow as elder, deacon, pastor, teacher? Do we have wrong ideas as to what it means to be qualified to serve in God’s cause?

What qualifies someone to serve in God’s cause?

The lesson said that Paul “needed the daily grace and forgiveness of Jesus” what does this mean? How does it apply to our lives?

The lesson asks us to read

*Romans 7:24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*

What does this text mean?

Here are 10 verses from my paraphrase of Romans 7:14-24

*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. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> For the old habits and conditioned responses are not the good I want to do; no, they are remnants*

*of my selfish unconverted mind. <sup>20</sup> 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.*

*<sup>7:21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> For in my mind I rejoice in God's methods and principles; <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> What a damaged and corrupt man I am! Who will deliver and heal me from a brain and body so diseased and deformed? <sup>25</sup> 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? is it important to realize that while God is working to heal us we are still vulnerable to making mistakes?

I have patients who want to live healthy lives. I will teach them methods of healthier communication, coping, living and they will comprehend and intend on applying this to their lives. But I have to prepare them for one of Satan's traps.

I point out they have a habit pattern in how they brush their teeth. If I told them to go through the opposite way every time from this point forward and they agreed could they do it without mistake? No, why? Because of ingrained habit. Does that mean they are stupid, incapable of change, rebellious, unruly, wicked or does it mean that habits take time to change? This is what Paul is describing in Romans 7.

But the devil comes behind and as soon as the old habit causes us to act in the old way, without even thinking, the devil is there to say, "See you are hopeless, you are a loser, the grace of Christ just doesn't work in your life. Why bother..."

We must recognize these lies and realize, it takes time to change habits and be gracious to ourselves as we grow with God.

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Why was this so important to Paul? Why is it important to us?

If this is the most important aspect of God's salvation plan, do you think Satan will also make it the central focus of His attack in order to confuse and mislead? How has that happened?

The Lesson asks us to read several texts and discuss:

*Romans 5:10 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!*

Thoughts? How did Christ's death reconcile us to God? What was the problem sin caused that the plan of salvation was designed to fix?

*GAL 2:15 "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' 16 know that a man is not justified by observing 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 observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified"*

Thoughts? What does it mean to be justified? Set right? What was wrong that needed setting right? Two things:

What we believed about God – we needed our minds set right about God’s character, methods principles. We were in darkness, gross darkness covered the people.

But we needed more than setting us right about the truth of God’s character and trustworthiness. We also needed healing, recreation, regeneration. Our characters, our minds needed to be set right, or rightified, or justified. And Christ accomplished this for us as well.

Hebrews 8:10 the law is put on our hearts and minds

Zech 3 the filthy garments are removed and the rich garment is placed upon us

Revelation 3:18 we are to obtain from Christ the white raiment and gold tried in fire, which represents character.

EGW states, “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.” COL 311

What does it mean to have this robe put upon 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 312

*1 Tim 2:5,6 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men--the testimony given in its proper time.*

Thoughts? How do you understand mediation? Does this mean Christ pleading to His Father or is this as we discussed Christ as an ambassador of His Father to us? One who mediates God’s truth, love and healing to us?

What about the idea of ransom? What does a ransom do? Sets free from captivity. What holds us captive? Lies about God and sinfulness of character. Did Christ provide us a “ransom” that sets us free from this? What? The truth which sets us free from lies and wins us to trust and a perfect character which sets us free from sinfulness.

*1 Peter 1:18,19 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

Thoughts on this text? What does it mean?

## THURSDAY

Read second paragraph – “Living a godly...” thoughts?

What is salvation? Healing, and when someone is healed do the symptoms resolve? So is it expected when we cooperate with God for healing of heart and mind that there is a natural remission of the symptoms?

Read next paragraph “Paul writes...”

We might then say, “we don’t stop coughing in order to get well, we stop coughing when we are well.”

Read dark section near bottom “Paul wrote that he...”

Thoughts? What is the truth about death? How has the idea of death caused confusion over the truth about God?

Some believe that God created Adam and Eve with some aspect of their being that was immortal, what evidence demonstrates this is not true?

Where do we struggle with confusion about death? When we take examples of God putting people in the grave in the OT and then state God “kills” and use it as an example of what God will do to the wicked in the end.

Jesus, God in the flesh never called going into the grave death. He called it a sleep. Jesus specifically distinguished the two issues when He said “Don’t be afraid of him who can kill the body but the one who can kill body and soul (psyche)”

Has God, on many occasions used His power to put human beings in the grave? He has killed the body, but has God ever, anywhere in history, yet, killed the body and soul (psyche)? Or is everyone going to be resurrected?

When God told Adam and Eve in the day you eat you will die, was He speaking of sleep in grave (body death) or eternal destruction (death of body and soul)? So, has God, according to Jesus definition of death, killed anyone?

Is it important to make this distinction? Those who fail to make this distinction then present God as one who is the source of death rather than sin as the source of death.

## **FRIDAY**

Question 1 read and discuss



**2008 Q3 Lesson 2      "All Things to All Men": Paul Preaches to the World**

Notes are not available.

## 2008 Q3 Lesson 3      John the Baptist: Preparing the Way for Jesus

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph “John is one...” – thoughts?

Read first paragraph in MONDAY’s lesson – thoughts? Can we answer these questions?

John was called for a special mission before birth? Can you think of other examples from Scripture?

*ISA 44:28 who says of Cyrus, He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.”*

*ISA 45:1 “This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:*

*ISA 45:13 I will raise up Cyrus in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the LORD Almighty.”*

God called Cyrus as the king who would set captive Israel free 150 years before Cyrus was born? What does this mean?

*RO 9:10 Not only that, but Rebekah’s children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. 11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: 12 not by works but by him who calls--she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” 13 Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”*

Here we have God calling Jacob to be the leader of God’s people and not Esau, what does this mean? Do these stories tell that God predetermines the course of someone’s life? Did these individuals have any choice in the matter? When God prophesied what would happen did He then enter their minds and make the choices for them? Were they preprogrammed to do this? Were they really human or were they robots?

What do these texts tell us about God? Does God call some to Him and others He doesn’t call? Is God calling all humans back to Him for salvation? 1 Tim 2:4 God wants “all men” to come to salvation.

Do these texts tell us about God’s foreknowledge? As soon as sin entered what did God begin doing? Did God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit instantly put in action all the agencies of heaven to save, redeem and heal mankind? Does God have the ability to know the future? Then do these texts tell us that God is pouring His Spirit out upon all mankind, calling all mankind, wanting all of us to be agents in His cause, but all don’t respond and looking into the future He knows who will respond and who won’t and these texts reveal a few cases where people have responded to God’s call?

Are people required to respond? Do we have any examples of people called by God who didn’t respond as He wanted?

King Saul, Jonah, the rich young ruler, the religious leaders when Christ was on earth.

What seems to be the key to whether someone is used by God or not? Their willingness to be used!

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

What are the ideals and values and goals of the world? What are Gods?

Worldly – fame, fortune, power, position, success, self-exaltation and promotions:

Examples –

- valedictorian, blue ribbons, gold medals, first place, winning sports events, national champions, job promotions, titles....
- Disciples vying for first place, Jews pride in the Temple, seeking the head of the table, wanting Christ to take David's throne and kill the Romans, Joseph's brothers selling him...

Godly – selfless love, kindness, patience, goodness, gentleness, wisdom, care for others,

Examples –

- serving others, volunteering, giving of self, time, money to benefit others, letting others go first, seeking to excel in order to glorify God
- Jesus washes feet, Joseph forgives brothers, David refuses to raise hand against Saul, Paul gives of himself for God's cause...

Worldly values want worldly success, Godly values make development of Godlike character number one.

Often parents get confused on this and instill in their children worldly success as number one, first in the class, win at all costs, self promotion rather than remembering character development is the most important goal in God's kingdom.

## TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

What is the last two verses of the Old Testament say?

*MAL 4:5 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 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."*

What do they mean?

Somehow before the great and dreadful day of the Lord Elijah will come –

Is there a war going on on planet earth? A cosmic war? What kind of war is this?

2 Cor 10:3-5 tells us that this war is a war for the mind

Revelation 12:7 *there was war in heaven*, the Greek is *polemos* and is the word we get politics or political from, what kind of war is this?

Is this war a war of physical might, power and force or is it a battle for hearts and minds?

When this war draws to a conclusion what will be the focus then? Will it change from a war for the mind to suddenly become a war of physical might and power?

*Revelation 16:12-16 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of*

*demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." 16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.*

What kind of battle do you think this will be? Is this a battle of earthly forces with human weapons, or is this a battle for the mind, a battle with those divine weapons Paul spoke about? Is this the conclusion of the great polemos that began in heaven?

Does this have something to do with Elijah?

Armageddon has been interpreted multiple ways but two interpretations seem to be more consistent with the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan. The Greek for Armageddon is a combination of two Hebrew words that have two applications one we find in Isaiah 14:13:

*"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.*

The other way to understand the word Armageddon, is as the Greek form of a couple of Hebrew words that mean 'Mountain of Meggido.' Meggido was a city on a small elevation at the edge of the Plain of Jezreel. Looming over the place where the city of Megiddo was, however, is a range of mountains called Carmel" (Jon Pauline, *John's Apocalyptic Matrix*, p. 13).

Putting both together what do you see?

What about the other symbolism in the Revelation text?

**Euphrates** =The river that ran through Babylon, diverted by Cyrus so he could enter the city and conquer (Isa. 44:28; 45:1). In Revelation what does Babylon represent? The forces apposed to God, the false systems of religion? What do waters represent? People (Rev 17:1,15).

**Kings of the East** =The kingly priesthood of all believers who take the gospel to all the world (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 7:1-3; Dan. 11:44-45; Ez. 43:2).

**Three unclean spirits are the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet** = composed of Spiritism (paganism), Catholicism and False Protestantism (Rev. 12-13; 2 Cor. 11:4).

*2TH 2:1 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 temple is this? Is this a building in heaven? Did the man of sin enter heaven and throw Christ off His throne or is this part of this great war for the mind in which the man of sin sets himself up in the spirit temple? How would he do it? With lies, about what? About God!

Back to Elijah and the Elijah message:

What was the issue in Elijah's day? Was it down to the God one believed in? Was it down to which God one held? Choose you this day whom you will serve if the Lord is God serve Him, if Baal is god serve him. Is this not the message?

In John the Baptist's day, what was his message? Who is God, which God do you value and which God are you prepared to receive. John was calling them to receive the true God here in human form, but they rejected this call.

In the great battle right before us is it going to come down to which God do you serve, which God do you value?

Ty Gibson has written:

“Armageddon will not be a military battle in the middle east over the possession of land, but rather a spiritual battle in human minds between true and false pictures of God. It will be a worship war, not a martial war. God's people will completely vanquish all untrue images of God's character. Armageddon is the end-time parallel to the battle of Elijah against the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. The issue in Elijah's showdown was the true identity of God. His God was placed in contrast to the popularized picture of God being promoted by the false prophets. The question urged by Elijah was, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” *Choose the lie that bears God's name or choose to believe the truth about God.* Just as Elijah's war was against the worship of a false image of God, so “Armageddon” is a battle to rescue hearts from false pictures of God by magnifying His true image revealed in the self-sacrificing incarnation, life and death of Jesus Christ.”

Read last paragraph – thoughts? What is the judgment message to be taken to the world? Is it that God is in heaven passing judgments on us, or the time is come when God is to be judged? That “the hour of HIS judgment has come”?

### WEDNESDAY

Read first three paragraphs – thoughts? What do we need to change? How does our outlook need to change? What about the larger Christian community, is there a need for an out look change – what they/we are looking out for? How so?

Read fifth paragraph “Baptism was closely associated...” Thoughts? Jesus said in Mat 28:19,20:

*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.”*

What does this mean? What are we to do? What is baptism? Was Jesus teaching we are to go and dunk people in water while saying “in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost”?

The Greek word for baptize is “*baptizo*” What happened in the translation? The Greek word *baptizo* means to immerse, but when the translators translated the Bible they realized the king had been sprinkled so rather than translate immerse, they made a new word baptize. But it means to immerse.

What to you think it means when Jesus said “*go and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father...*”

In Jewish culture what does “name” mean? Character, we are to go throughout the world, immersing the minds, hearts and characters of people into the character of God.

Read bottom green section – thoughts? What are the dangers of such a statement? How can such language lead to misunderstanding? Are there underlying assumptions imbedded within the questions?

What does it mean to believe in Jesus? Could it mean that we have been won over to believe that God is exactly as Jesus revealed Him to be? We believe that God is love, selfless love, that we have rejected the lies of Satan about God? Could it mean this? If we believe that God is like Jesus revealed Him to be, then can we still believe that Jesus died to pay a legal penalty to His Father to satisfy divine wrath and justice, or would such a belief actually contradict the truth about God as revealed by Jesus?

What about the idea He did for our “sins”? Did He die for our bad acts or did He die because of sinfulness, because our condition was terminal and His death was the means of curing, fixing, healing the problem?

What about this idea of having His righteousness “credited” it to us? What does this mean? Does it mean that our problem is not in our selfish, sinful hearts and minds, but in our account book in heaven and we need some “credit” applied to our heavenly account in order for God to be able to forgive us or cancel our sins, or pardon us?

Or is it that God actually applies to our hearts and minds the very nature of Christ, “we become partakers of the divine nature” and are transformed to be like Christ by the work of the HS?

#### THURSDAY

Read bottom two paragraphs “An essential part...” thoughts?

What traditions do we struggle with in our church that obstructs God’s work in our individual lives and God’s work in the church?

Only men can be in leadership? Is this a tradition? Only men who have graduated from seminary or with a degree in theology can hold leadership positions in the church or can be pastors, conference presidents and ordained? What about the Apostles, how many of them were trained in theology? Was there a tax collector, physician, fishermen? Is this a tradition of restricting ministers to those trained in the schools something that could be modified?

Was John’s message merely a message against sin, speaking against sin in all its form, stating sin is bad and don’t do it? Or was John’s message more than this? Was John’s message a call for repentance, in other words not merely sin is bad, but there is a better way, there is a remedy, there is a cure?

Imagine someone going around and stating sickness is bad, illness is bad and hurts so don’t get sick, but they don’t provide any more than that, would such a message be helpful? Or is the helpful part of the message the part about how to avoid getting sick and if sick how to partake of the remedy?



## 2008 Q3 Lesson 4     The Son of God Among Us

### SABBATH

Read key thought – thoughts?

Who do you say Christ is?

- Son of God
- Pre-existent
- Fully divine
- Equal with the Father
- Possessor of life original, unborrowed, underived
- Creator
- Who became fully human and the destroyer of sin and death

Read second paragraph “A man who...” Do you agree with the conclusions of C.S Lewis regarding Christ? Why?

Christ said,

*JN 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...<sup>40</sup> For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”...<sup>44</sup> “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.<sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.<sup>46</sup> No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.<sup>47</sup> I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.<sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life.<sup>49</sup> Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died.<sup>50</sup> But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die.<sup>51</sup> 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.”*

*JN 8:23 But he continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.<sup>24</sup> I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.”*

*JN 8:58 “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”*

*JN 11:25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;<sup>26</sup> and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”*

*JN 14:1 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.*

*JN 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

*JN 14:9 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'? <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;*

What conclusion would we be forced to draw about Jesus if we deny He is the Son of God? Do you see the problem with some people who claim Jesus was a prophet but not the Son of God?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? What do you think about the attitude expressed? How do you deal with someone who asks how do we know the Bible can be trusted? Is it not a fair question?

## SUNDAY

The lesson asks: “If someone were to ask you, Who was Jesus? what would you say, and why?” Then the lesson states:

Read second paragraph “Your answer...” Thoughts?

How do you hear this paragraph? Is there any truth in this paragraph? Is it expressed in ways that make the gospel most clear? How can we express the truth of what Jesus came to do and make it more clear?

How might you change the phrase “died for our sins”?

- Died because of sin?
- Died to cure sin?
- Died as the solution to the sin problem?
- Died as a remedy to sin?

What about the idea that revealing the truth about God’s character “really doesn’t matter if Jesus did not come and die as a Substitute for us...”?

How do you understand Jesus as our Substitute?

Jesus was the Substitute for Adam to finish the work Adam failed to complete – reveal the truth about God. But because of Adam’s sin Jesus had to do more than Adam He had to fix the damage Adam’s sin caused. Jesus had to heal the sin problem, He had to cure sinfulness. In this regard Jesus became our Substitute in taking our terminal condition upon Himself and curing it.

Could we reverse the logic of the quarterly and say, “Jesus as our Substitute is fine, but in the end it really doesn’t matter if He did not come and reveal the truth about the Father”?

Yes, why? Because in order to save mankind, in order to secure the universe, in order to defeat Satan, in order to rid the universe of sin Christ had to accomplish two objectives:

1. Christ had to reveal the truth about God, sin, Satan, man’s unhealed condition, the cause of death etc.; without this revelation mankind could not be saved and the universe could not be secured. Why?
  - What did the war in heaven start over?
  - Satan is the Father of what? Lies
  - Who were Satan’s lies about?
  - And what do lies do?
  - 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

- Acts of sin result in damage and death
  - Once lies were believed and trust was broken what is necessary in order to destroy the lies? Truth, about what?
2. Christ had to defeat Satan's principles in humanity, Christ had to take the terminal condition upon Himself and cure it. Christ had to write God's law of love back into the human species. Christ had to develop a human character in perfect harmony with God's law of love. Why?
- What is the basis of life?
  - The law of love
  - The Law of the Lord is perfect reviving the soul. Psalms 19:7

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}

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. God desires from all his creatures the service of love,-- homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of his character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all he grants freedom of will, that they may render him voluntary service. {GC88 493.2}

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 19.2}

- Why does death occur?
- What was necessary for mankind to live?
- Selfishness must be replaced by love
- Christ a unique being in all universal history –
- His humanity was not formed from the dust as Adam or taken from the rib of a perfect human as Eve
- His humanity was not obtained from sinful mother AND father as you and me
- He was unique, born of a woman under law Galatians 4:4 but His Father was God. In Jesus the two antagonistic principles warred it out.
- He was "tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin." Heb 4:15

- We are “each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.” James 1:14
- Christ, as our substitute, took our sick condition upon Himself and cured it. He overcame, He purified, He defeated the very elements of Satan’s government.
- In the wilderness and Gethsemane Christ experienced powerful feelings tempting Him to act in self-interest, but at every turn Christ instead of acting to “save self” chose to “give self” and thus destroyed him who holds the power of death that is the devil. Hebrews 2:14.
- 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. 2 Tim 1:9,10

Read last sentence in Sunday’s lesson, “Because without...” Thoughts? Why? Jesus overcame the very elements that bring death and restored the law of life back into the human species and now becomes the source of life for all who trust Him.

Christ overcame alone, when, in Gethsemane, He became sin who knew no sin, He was “abandoned” by God, in other words He was left to face the full weight of human despair, fear, guilt, self-seeking temptation, agony, loneliness without the comfort of holy angels or His Father or the Holy Spirit. Christ overcame alone, with His human mind in our behalf and redeemed Adam’s failure. He demonstrated the truth about God’s character, defeated the principles of selfishness, restored God’s law of love into humanity and elevated the human species back to God’s original high calling for this race!

## MONDAY

Read first sentence, “What made Jesus unique in human history?” Thoughts?

How would you describe Jesus as a unique being?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Why was this so amazing? Does the idea that this is amazing actually expose the paradigm someone has as they consider what Jesus did?

From the paradigm of many religious people what is God looking for? People behaving well, people keeping the rules, obedient people which means following the instructions, while God is offended by those who break the rules, don’t follow the instructions, the disobedient.

But from God’s paradigm what was Christ looking for? People who were willing to trust Him, people who were willing to be healed by Him, healed in heart and mind. People who longed for a change of heart, mind and character which they themselves could not produce. And God is offended by those who purport to be His followers but whose hearts are closed to healing by His Spirit.

With this paradigm in view is it amazing who Jesus chose to interact with?

Last week Rene and Stanley told me of their recent trip to San Francisco. They took the subway from the airport right to downtown and when they came up from the subway they realized some big event was going on. As they exited onto the street they realized they were in the middle of a gay pride parade. Now the interesting thing was just 3 feet away from where they were standing was a man on a box with a megaphone shouting God’s curses and condemnation and eternal damnation upon the gays, while simultaneously the gay and lesbians walking by hearing these ugly words responded with “we love you.”

Which of these people do you think would have been open to spend time with Jesus? Which would have heard Jesus counsel as you do it unto one of the least of these you have done it unto me?

### WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph “Though we...” thoughts? What idea is being put forth from this paragraph? Is it suggesting there were times in which Jesus was something other than loving? Do you think Jesus ever spoke an unloving word? Then how do we understand the times when He spoke very strong and direct words, “you brood of vipers...”?

Many times in sessions with patients and families I find it necessary to speak strong words, in love, in an attempt to break through years of denial and self deceit in order to bring healing.

One couple came to see me, they were in their late twenties and had two children under the age of five. The husband was a kind, gentle, patient Christian man who attended church regularly and was quite devoted to God. The wife struggled with many issues, recently she had taken to going out to bars on a weekly basis and picking up men and having relations with them. Her husband was heart broken, but he didn’t want to divorce her; he wanted to save his marriage. After multiple sessions and attempts to explore the issues within the marriage and the wife’s issues, I finally looked the wife in the eye and said, “you are the most selfish person I have ever met.” She stopped, stunned, paused for a few seconds, then laughed and said, “You’re right! I am, but I don’t want to be.” And from there, a change occurred. She rededicated herself to Christ, was re-baptized, stopped going to bars and began to fulfill her responsibilities as wife and mother.

Sometimes, in love, it is necessary to speak clear, strong and plain language in an attempt to break through denial, distortion and self-deception.

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Do you think in the church there is hypocrisy? Do you think there are people pretending? Are there people pretending to be happy when they are sad? Pretending to be healthy when sick, content when lonely, courageous when fearful, knowledgeable when confused? Are there people pretending to be righteous when wicked?

Why do people do this? What is the motivation? Fear? Fear of rejection, fear of what others think, fear of not be accepted, of humiliation, condemnation?

Does this occur because of a lack of love? Lack of love on the part of the person who is more concerned with self than with God and others, but also lack of love in the church that people would get hurt, attacked, put down, demeaned if others knew our weakness, struggles and sins.

We need to bring the love of Christ to bear, the imputation of righteousness –

When Adam sinned how did God approach him in the garden?

When the woman was caught in adultery, how did Christ treat her? What did He say? He asked Adam, “who told you...” and the woman “Where are your accusers?” What is implied by the questions? “I am not the one who is accusing you.”

Christ said He did not come into the world to condemn the world but to save it. Christ doesn’t condemn, we condemn. We condemn ourselves in our own minds, think of ourselves as too ugly, too sinful, too twisted, too bad, too evil for God or others to love so we begin to create facades to hide behind and judge God and others with aspects of our own self-condemnation.

We need to love others, to see all of us are in the same boat, suffering from the same sickness, struggling for the same healing and impute to others goodness, see them as the people they will be when healed by Christ!

## THURSDAY

Read Romans 5:8 top of lesson – what does this mean to you?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

Then why do some say that God gets angry and wrathful at those who reject Him? Is the lesson saying we are called to a higher level of maturity than God? Or is the idea of God getting angry and wrathful at the people who reject Him if flawed?

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Jesus turned away from the leaders of the church in His day to find others who would receive the message and take it forward. Would Jesus do this in the church today? Would Jesus turn away from the professional clergy to the lay people, the fishermen, tax collectors, doctors to take the message forward?

Do we as the laity need to stop waiting for the professional clergy to take the message forward, to stop waiting for the professional clergy to tell us what the gospel is and instead receive the good news of salvation directly from Jesus and take it forward ourselves?

Read question 3 – thoughts? Did the Pharisees actually possess the present truth? What does “present truth” mean? What is present truth today? Are we taking forward the present truth or are we taking forward truths from the past that were for a different time and generation?



## 2008 Q3 Lesson 5 Matthew 10: Jesus and His Disciples

Did you have any questions about Matthew 10? Were there any verses which you wanted to explore? Here are some I thought we might explore:

*MT 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. 7 As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.*

*MT 10:14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. 15 I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. 16 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.*

*MT 10:32 “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. 33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.*

*MT 10:34 “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-- MT 10:36 a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ MT 10:37 “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.*

How do we understand Matt 10:5-8?

*MT 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. 7 As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.*

Why would Jesus tell His disciples to go only to Israel and not the other people of the world? Does God care more about children of Abraham than other people in the world? Do children of Abraham have a special pass into heaven? Why the instruction?

**The bias of the people:** This was early in the ministry and if the disciples initially went to the Gentiles they would have lost most of the Jewish audience, whereas the Gentiles would not have been closed to hearing later.

**The bias of the disciples:** The disciples still had much prejudice against the Gentiles and weren’t prepared to be effective witnesses to the Gentiles. They needed more work and conversion before they could be trusted to work for the Gentiles. Thus this first missionary journey was also for the development of the disciples.

**To enlist God’s helpers:** Strategically the Jewish nation had been privileged with the lessons of God, misunderstood to be sure, but the Bible had been taught. Therefore, if they could be converted, awakened, enlisted into Christ’s cause the work of reaching the Gentiles would be much more effective as the Jews would welcome Christ as the world’s redeemer.

What about the “kingdom of heaven is near” What is the kingdom of heaven? Is it not God’s way of rulership, God’s governing method, God’s way of being king, which is the rule of love! “freely you have received freely give.” The law of love.

How do you understand:

*MT 10:14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. 15 I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. 16 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.*

Why shake the dust off your feet? Was Christ telling His disciples to insult the people who rejected them? Was He telling them to show disdain or disgust for people who rejected them?

Was He telling them that if people reject you, call you names, insult you, criticize you, mock you, belittle you, demean, defame or in any other way attempt to discourage you don’t take any of their attitude, comments, ideas, dirt with you. When you leave that place leave their negativity, their selfishness, hardness, cruelty, meanness, filthiness of character with them.

When Christ washed the disciples we read:

*JN 13:8 “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.”  
Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”*

*JN 13:9 “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”*

*JN 13:10 Jesus answered, “A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.*

What do you think this exchange means? Was it just about dirt on the feet or was there more being communicated? Was Jesus symbolically washing away sinfulness, selfishness, evil? Does this have any bearing on what He told His disciples to do in the passage above?

What about the idea it will be better for Sodom and Gomorrah? What does that mean?

*RO 2:5 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.*

The hardening of Pharaoh’s heart and EGW’s statement that some suffer longer in the flames than others according to their sins have to do with this text? How are they all connected? Is there a common thread that underlies them all?

How do we pile up wrath for the day of wrath? When we sin what is the normal internal feeling/reaction after we have sinned? Conviction of guilt, shame, self-disgust, self-loathing, fear, insecurity etc. – what options do we have to resolve this situation? Repentance and reconciliation with God as the only healthy way or denial, distortion and externalization. We can twist our minds to hide ourselves from the truth of our own selves. The more sin we commit without repentance the more we are damaged in mind and character and the more we have to pile lie upon lie, distortion upon distortion in order to hide from it.

What happens when someone comes face to face with absolute pure truth from which they cannot be hide? This is how we pile up wrath for the day of wrath and why some suffer longer in the flames, for the flames are the flames of God’s life giving glory, the flames of truth and love!

How was Pharaoh's heart hardened? God presented truth to him and he chose to reject it hardening his own heart. What will it be like for Pharaoh when he comes face to face with ultimate truth in the end and the full realization of what he did to himself, his family and his country?

What was the sin of Sodom?

*EZE 16:49 " `Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. 50 They were haughty and did detestable things before me.*

What was Sodom's sin? Failure to be loving, to be giving, to be hospitable, to care for others, they were selfish to the max. Then why is it going to be worse for those who reject the disciples than for Sodom?

What was the message brought to Sodom by the angels? The city is going to be destroyed repent of self-indulgence. What was the message brought by the disciples? The truth about Christ! Who had more light presented? Who rejected more light? Who then will have more agony at the realization of what they passed by and rejected?

Do we see why it will be worse for those who reject the truth about God than for Sodom? Do we understand why some suffer more than others in the final destruction of the wicked?

Thoughts about:

*MT 10:32 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. 33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.*

What does this mean? Can Jesus lie? Can He state someone is healthy and healed when they are not? Can He acknowledge someone as His friend when in fact they are His enemy? Can He stand before God and the universe and declare someone to be Christlike in heart when they have refused Christ into the heart? Can we be healed in mind, heart and character if we reject the truth that Jesus has brought? So how can Jesus say, this fellow is like me in character, this fellow has my character reproduced within, this person has been healed in the inner man if we reject Jesus?

Thoughts about:

*MT 10:34 "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-- MT 10:36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' MT 10:37 "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.*

In what condition are we born into the world? Are we born with hearts and minds in harmony with God's character of love or hearts and minds filled with fear and selfishness? Does God want to cut us away from such a life to a new life free of fear, free of selfishness, free of insecurity, free of heartache and pain?

## SUNDAY

What is the kingdom of heaven?

Read bottom green section; thoughts?

## MONDAY

Third question down states, “What special powers did the disciples have? How can we, without those powers, still minister and witness to the world?”

Did the disciples themselves have special powers? Or was the power the power of the Holy Spirit? When Christ said,

*Matthew 10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.*

What did Christ give them? Were they the ones healing? Were they the ones driving out evil spirits? Or were they agents, being used by the Holy Spirit and it was God accomplishing these works through them? So, what did Christ give them? Confidence? Assurance? His promise? His Holy Spirit?

Are we promised the Holy Spirit? Can we do any effectual work in God’s cause without the Holy Spirit?

... Just as soon as we begin to work in the lines of true reform, the Holy Spirit will lead us and guide us if we are willing to be guided. It is a delicate matter to deal with human minds, and no one should engage in this work without the aid of the Holy Spirit. All must place themselves under the influence of this Spirit. When they place themselves under the direction of the Spirit, they will accommodate themselves to Bible lines. When the word of God take possession of the minds of teachers, then they are fitted to deal with the education of others. {General Conference Bulletin, April 24, 1901 par. 24}

## TUESDAY

Read third paragraph “In our mission...” thoughts?

How are we to take culture into consideration today? Are there some cultures in which they find a need for a God who is powerful and vengeful and therefore they cling to the idea that God will inflict punishment upon the wicked in the end?

How can we approach them?

## WEDNESDAY

Today’s lesson explores the importance of dealing with physical illness, suffering and human need. Why did Jesus and the disciples spend so much time healing physical illness?

- it is the best way to represent the plan of salvation, which is the plan of healing
- sickness negatively affects the functioning of the mind/brain and thus impairs our ability to have healed minds and characters.

If you had just fallen and broken your leg and were in severe pain, how would you respond if I said, “Why don’t we study Matthew chapter 10”? Would you need to have some physical relief, some physical healing before your mind could benefit from spiritual healing?

How does this relate to healthful living?

What was the purpose of the Jubilee? Was it merely for earthly equality or was there a reason which was designed to help spiritual growth and teach eternal lessons?

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Much of Jesus’...” thoughts?

Why is there opposition to the truth?

What happens to those who have rejected the truth when the truth is presented? It causes suffering of psyche, conviction of guilt, embarrassment, wounding of pride, shame, humiliation etc.

The truth may threaten position, power, wealth, status, relationships etc.

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Why do people do this? They see in others what is actually in themselves. When Jesus said,

*“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Matthew 7:1,2*

What did He mean? Does it mean God keeps track of how you judge others and will use His power to make sure to impose this back on you?

No, it means that when we judge others we reveal what is actually in our own heart and the reason we are judged in the same way is because that is the way we actually are. When Satan judges God as being selfish Satan is actually revealing that Satan is the selfish one and thus Satan is judged, by his own condition, character etc. to be selfish.

Question 2 read – thoughts? Is our church the kingdom of heaven? Or do the wheat and tares grow up together?

Question 3 read – thoughts? What are we to be evangelizing people to? Did the Jews in Christ's day evangelize? And what did Christ say about it? They converted people and made them twice the sons of hell as before, are we in such danger?

**2008 Q3 Lesson 6      The Compassionate Savior**

Notes are not available.



## 2008 Q3 Lesson 7     The Apostle John

### SABBATH

Read the entire day starting with “A church tradition...”

What do you think about the idea of love being commanded?

*“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.” John 13:34,35*

*And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 1 John 3:11*

What do these texts mean? Can love be commanded? Can God get love from His creatures by exercising His authority and ordering it? Can He get love by use of His omnipotent power and commanding it?

*‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty. Zech 4:6*

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}

Is there a contradiction here between the DA and Jesus’ words? How do we understand Jesus’ words a new command to love and DA “love cannot be commanded”?

The Greek translated command or commandment is *entole* and is also translated precept – does it make a difference if we read Jesus words as precept rather than command?

Precept means: “a command or principle intended especially as a general rule of action” Webster’s Dictionary

Does it make a difference if Jesus was saying a new principle I give you “love one another”? Which do you think is the accurate translation Jesus commanding them by His authority to tow the line and love each other or Jesus informing them of the principle of love His kingdom is built upon?

Why is loving one another enough? What did Paul say was the fulfillment of the law? What did Jesus say all the law hangs upon? Why?

What about 1 John 2:1?

*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*

The word translated “one who speaks in our defense” is *paraclete* and means a helper who is parallel, or is along side. It is the word Jesus used for the Holy Spirit and is translated “comforter”. So with that in mind what is the most likely meaning here?

*1 John 2:1 My precious children, I am writing you so that you will realize the power of God's love to free you from selfishness and therefore experience God's healing and no longer live selfishly. But, if during the healing process, relapses into selfishness occur don't be discouraged, Jesus Christ stands at the helm of all power, right next to God, and is pouring his love into our hearts to complete his restoring and healing work. TRJ paraphrase*

## SUNDAY

A Special Calling – who does Jesus call? What makes the call “special”? Does God’s calling of an individual have anything to do with the individual, their willingness or their mindset? God can equip people with abilities, talents, skills – can you think of any?

- OT – metal working ability, working with fabrics etc for those working on the Temple
- OT – Samson – strength, Elijah endurance, Solomon Wisdom
- NT – gifts of languages, wisdom

But can God give people willingness or does the person have to choose to be willing? Is it possible that our usefulness in God’s cause is limited by our own selves not by God?

Does that mean God would use every person for what that person wants to be used for? For instance, if someone wanted to be a great musician but they have no natural talent, if that person presented themselves to God for this purpose does that mean God has to gift them with musical ability or use them in the way they want?

Does God have a divinely chosen vocation for each person? Or, does God generally leave people free to choose their own vocation because most the time God’s purpose for our lives supersedes vocation? What is God’s purpose for our lives?

Does God ever choose a vocation for someone?

Read third paragraph “No question, those...” Thoughts?

What about if there were no Satan or demonic forces? Or another way to ask it, is our problem only with Satan and demonic forces? Do we have our own carnal natures, human evil with which to contend?

## MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Mark 10:35-45

*MK 10:35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”*

*MK 10:36 “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.*

*MK 10:37 They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”*

*MK 10:38 “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”*

*MK 10:39 “We can,” they answered.*

*Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, 40 but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”*

*MK 10:41 When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. 42 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Thoughts? What did James and John think they were asking for? What were they in actuality asking for? Why? What is God's glory? His character! When they asked to sit right and left of His glory they were asking to sit right and left of ultimate self sacrificing love.

What do you think of greatness in God's kingdom? What do you make of the term ransom for many?

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Though not able..." thoughts? Why is it important that Jesus came in human flesh?

Read Hebrews 2:14-18

*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-- 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. 17 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.*

What does this mean? How have you heard it in the past?

First let's talk about sharing in our flesh and blood? Why did He have to come as a baby rather than come in the human form the He had when He visited Abraham in Genesis?

If Christ's purpose was to experience temptation and overcome and then to suffer and die without sin, could He not have done that by being a human like He appeared in Genesis to Abraham? But what would not have happened?

He would not have grown in wisdom and stature; He would not have developed a perfect character by His own choices with His own human brain that He assumed through His own life experiences.

*Hebrew 5:8,9: Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*

How did He destroy him who holds the power of death? What is Satan's power? Lies and selfishness!

John 17:3, *life eternal is knowing God, then eternal death is not knowing God*, then Satan's power is the lies about God we believe that keep us from knowing Him. This is also the same thing as breaking the circle of love, since God is love. And broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness. Thus Satan's power is lies and selfishness.

How did Jesus destroy Satan's power? By revealing the truth which destroys the lies and wins us to trust and by living perfectly in love culminating at the Cross where in Christ Jesus love overcame and destroyed selfishness!

How do you make sense of the part that says it is not angels but descendents of Abraham He helps? Doesn't the Bible teach other place that all things in heaven and earth are reconciled to Christ on the Cross? Didn't the angels need the truth about God which Christ revealed in order to confirm them in their loyalty? How then do we understand this passage?

The angels only needed the truth to confirm their trust, the loyal angels' character was not warped by sin. But mankind not only needed the truth to win to trust, but we needed a new heart and right spirit, we needed the law of God written on the heart and mind. God's law of love had to be restored back into the human species and this is what Jesus did for us as well!

How do you understand verse 18? How have you heard that passage? That Jesus, having been tempted now understands how hard we have it and is in heaven as our High Priest pleading to the Father telling Him, "But Father you don't understand what it is like for them..."

The SDA Bible commentary on this passage states:

The human nature of Christ felt the full force of temptation. Otherwise, Christ would not have understood the terrific struggle of a poor sinner who is mightily tempted to yield. Vol 7 p 407.

Do you think that the infinite God had to actually become human for Him to "learn" something He didn't already know? That somehow by becoming human God gained something in knowledge He didn't already possess? Would that mean that prior to becoming human God was not all knowing? That there was some aspect of God that needed completion before He was aware of our plight?

Or, as my model would say, that Christ became human in order to develop a perfect character, the remedy to sin and it is this He freely offers to all who will accept it. Christ didn't need to become human in order for God to know something, He became human in order to procure, in humanity, a perfect character and thus is now equipped, with a perfect human character wrought out by His own life experience that enables Him to heal and save all who trust Him!

One of the founders of our church saw it similarly to me:

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}

## WEDNESDAY

Read Bible verse and then first paragraph – thoughts?

Why is it true that life is only through Jesus? What is the basis of life?

- The law of love
- A relationship with God
- Connection with God

All mean the same thing receiving from God and giving as we have received, which is the fulfillment of the law of love! Christ came and restored this law, God's character of love, back into humanity and thus becomes the connecting link for humanity to receive God's life giving love again!

*Read John 12:25 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.*

## THURSDAY

Read top Bible text and then question immediately below- thoughts?

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

*... "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. " Jn 3:3*

Jesus said to those who condemned Him to death:

*MK 14:60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" 61 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.*

*Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"*

*MK 14:62 "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."*

*REV 1:7 Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him;*

Will these wicked men see Jesus coming in the clouds of glory? Will they see God's kingdom? No! Why?

Because their minds are so settled into the lies about God that when He appears they don't see Him for who He is, but they see Him as their twisted and warped minds think He is, a God who is like Satan has alleged Him to be!

Read last paragraph "If you read..." thoughts? Why do you think the gospel of John is so different from the other gospels? Could it be John was the only Apostle to actually be at the Cross and witness what Jesus did there?

## FRIDAY

Read question 2 and discuss

**2008 Q3 Lesson 8      From Folly to Faith: The Apostle Peter**

Notes are not available.



## 2008 Q3 Lesson 9     A Pillar of Mission: The Apostle Peter

When you think of Peter any thoughts, questions or lessons from his life you would like to discuss?

### THURSDAY

After Pentecost was Peter complete in his understanding and methods or was their still growth to do? What about for us today? What about after Christ comes again and we are all in heaven with Him? Will we ever stop growing?

Was it just a matter of growth for Peter or was he actually wrong on some issues?

*GAL 2:11 When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. 12 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.*

If Peter was clearly wrong after Pentecost does that mean prophets and Apostles can be wrong? Was Peter wrong on some issues that needed correcting? What about other prophets?

In 1Kings 13 we have the story of the young and old prophet. The young prophet is given a message to take to the king and told not to stop on the way there or back to eat or drink. But the old prophet intercepts the young prophet and says:

*1KI 13:18 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.*

*1KI 13:20 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.' "*

Can prophets and Apostles be wrong? How about more modern prophets? Do we permit them to grow in understanding or do we think that whatever a prophet says must be true?

What about EGW?

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. Great care should be exercised by all believers to advance these questions carefully, and always stop when you have said enough. 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}

The more we look at the promises of the Word of God, the brighter they grow. The more we practice them, the deeper will be our understanding of them. 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}

I do not claim infallibility, or even perfection of Christian character. I am not free from mistakes and errors in my life. Had I followed my Saviour more closely, I should not have to mourn so much my unlikeness to His dear image. {DG 272.6}

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 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. {CW 37.1}

What is the take home point no matter who says it?

*RO 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.*

## TUESDAY

Read last paragraph – “Throughout the book of Acts...”

Any danger of such happening in our church?

What about presenting stand alone doctrines like Sabbath, state of dead, baptism by immersion, the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, the second coming etc. by using proof texts to persuade of the Biblical accuracy of these doctrines, but as stand alone points. Then people are converted to believe these facts but never change their basic understanding of God’s character, the Great Controversy, the purpose of the Cross. So we convert people who have at the core of their understanding basic paganism believing in an angry, offended God who requires appeasement and who will kill all those who don’t offer Him something to assuage His wrath.

Is our church in danger of slipping back into paganism?

## SUNDAY

Read Bible verse at top – thoughts? What is this referring to? Who is the Rock upon which the church is built? Jesus, how do we know?

*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.”*

Thoughts about this text? What does it mean? Not only is Christ the chief cornerstone, but what are we? We are the building blocks of which the Temple is constructed!

What about the idea of the gates of hell not prevailing against it? What kind of weapon is a gate? A defensive weapon!

2Cor 10:3-5 tells us the war is in the mind and our weapons demolish everything that sets itself up against the knowledge of God! Satan took the minds of mankind captive with lies about God and our characters were warped with fear and selfishness. Jesus Christ came into Satan's domain and revealed the truth about God which demolishes the lies and overcame fear and selfishness with perfect love and trust.

Now, because of Jesus, Satan is no longer on the offensive but on the defensive. He is working to close minds to the truth, to hold what he has, but the gates of hell, the gates of lies about God, the gates of demonic distortion will not stand as we present the truth about God in love we demolish Satan's strongholds and set people free!

Does this have something to do with cleansing of the Temple?

*2TH 2:1 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.*

*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.*

This is the final work of preparation Christ is doing before He comes! He is preparing a people to be like Him when He appears.

Christ came to earth and He crushed the serpents head. Christ won the victory we could never win, but now, for those who trust in Christ the Holy Spirit will take Christ's very character and reproduce in us and we will be like Jesus triumphing over Satanic agencies for the purpose of revealing the glory/character of God to all the universe!

*Ezekiel 36: 23-27: 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.** `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. 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. 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. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

And notice what Paul says will happen when God does this in us:

*RO 16:20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*

## SABBATH

Read first paragraph “Last week we...” thoughts?

The last sentence of the first paragraph the quarterly states Peter’s fall was not God’s intention for this flawed hero – how true, what is God’s intention? Victory – what does it tell us about God’s willingness to work with flawed people?

What examples can we give of God working with flawed people?

- Noah – drunkard
- Abraham – polygamist
- Isaac – refused to follow God’s direction
- Jacob – liar and cheat
- Rahab – prostitute
- Samson – womanizer
- David – Murderer and adulterer
- Solomon – mega polygamist, idolater, sacrificed his own son
- Peter – denied Jesus

How many of these people would you consider worthy to be deacon, elder, pastor, teacher in your church? What does it say about God? What is the key element that God looks for in people? What should we do when we find out about someone’s past sins?

The issue is not whether we have sinned, all of us have for we are all infected with sin. The question is, are we participating with God for healing, restoration, recreation, renewal!

God will use anyone who trusts Him!

Why was Peter unstable? What was the underlying issue? Was Peter purposely working to undermine success or was there some element of his character that sabotaged his own intentions?

When Peter said “*Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.*” Luke 22:33, was Peter lying? Then what happened? What led Peter to deny Christ three times?

Fear and selfishness, Peter was afraid, afraid of what others thought of him, afraid of what might happen to him, afraid of humiliation and embarrassment. Where did such fear and selfishness come from? What is another name for it? Survival of the fittest, looking out for number one and we are all born infected with this element of Satan’s government.

How does this principle impact our lives? Examples from society today?

- Cheating to get ahead, athletes, countries, business
- Lying to protect self
- Attacking others verbally or physically
- Criticizing others, gossiping, rumor spreading

What is the solution? What is the only power that can free our hearts and minds of fear and selfishness? LOVE!

Patient who was always afraid of what others thought of her overcame her fear when she began to think of others needs rather than herself

Soldiers overcome their fear for self by love for their friends, comrades and fellow soldiers and thus will put themselves in harms way to save their buddy

Parents will sacrifice their selves for their children

Where does such love originate? Can we produce it on our own? How can we have it in our lives?

*RO 5:1 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.*

*RO 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*RO 5:9 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! 11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

*RO 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-- 13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. 14 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.*

*RO 5:15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17 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.*

*RO 5:18 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.*

Thoughts? In order to understand the passage, we need to understand the words, key words that need understanding are:

- Justified
- Faith
- Glory
- Blood
- Wrath



- Justified – set right, put right, made right, put in harmony
- Faith – trust
- Glory – character
- Blood – life and truth
- Wrath – letting go, giving up (Romans 1:18,24,26,28)

My Paraphrase of Romans 5:1-19

*Romans 5:1 Therefore, if our minds and hearts have been set right through trust, we are at peace with God through the remedy brought by our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup> It is through Jesus that we know the truth about God, are won back to trust and thus open our minds to experience God's gracious healing power. And our joy is found in the hope of full restoration into beings possessing Godlike character. <sup>3</sup> Because of this, we rejoice in our trials and afflictions, because we know that trials bring to light our shortcomings and defects of character <sup>4</sup> and if we persevere, choosing God's methods, the defects are removed and character is purified; and pure character increases our hope for God's kingdom. <sup>5</sup> And our hope will not be disappointed, because God pours out his love into our hearts maturing, ennobling, perfecting us into his image by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

*<sup>5:6</sup> You see, at the exact moment it was needed, when we were infected with distrust, rebelling against God and our condition was terminal, Christ died to restore trust and cure the terminally ill. <sup>7</sup> Very rarely will someone die for a healthy man, though this might rarely happen. <sup>8</sup> But God the Father demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were dying and in rebellion against him, Christ died to restore trust and cure sinfulness in order to heal us and restore us to unity with God.*

*<sup>5:9</sup> Now that we have been won back to trust, cleansed, healed and set right with God by the truth revealed when Christ died, how ridiculous to think that God would now let us go. <sup>10</sup> For if, when we distrusted God and fought against him in every way, His Son died to win us back to trust and friendship and cure our rebellious hearts, how much more, having won us back to trust and friendship, will God heal all the damage caused to us while we were in rebellion against him! <sup>11</sup> And even better yet, having experienced this healing of mind and heart we are filled to overflowing with joy for God whom we know through Jesus and through whom we have been restored to friendship with God.*

*<sup>5:12</sup> 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 as all are born infected – <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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.*



*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 mankind 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 choice infected humanity with the fatal condition of distrust, fear and selfishness, so too Christ's action reveals the truth and dispels the lies of Satan, establishing trust and bringing 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.*

Thoughts? How do we experience God's love in our lives? We see the truth about God which Christ revealed and are won back to trust. In trust we open the heart and the Holy Spirit is poured out. The Holy Spirit takes what Christ has achieved, perfect love, perfect character, and this love is poured into our hearts and fear and selfishness are removed and we live lives in love to God and others rather than in fear and selfishness!

## MONDAY

The Shadow of Peter – what do you think the significance of this is? Why were people being healed by Peter's shadow? Were these healing miracles occurring because people had great faith or their faith was weak and needed encouraging? Were these miracles for the purpose of jump starting the expansion of the Christian church?

What happened to all the people who experienced healing of some physical malady from Peter or the other Apostles? They died and are in the graves today, what does that mean? Is it God's primary plan to heal our current physical illness? What is His primary plan? To heal our characters/minds for eternity, then would the physical healings be part of that mission?

## WEDNESDAY A Wider Vision

What wider vision do we need to have? How wide do we need to go? Do we need to see beyond ourselves to the universal struggle which has involved angels? Did Christ's death have any benefit for angels? Did Christ's death have benefit for mankind angels didn't need?

*COL 1:15 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. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 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.*

Notice that heavenly things were reconciled to Christ at the cross, what does this mean? Were the angels in heaven fallen or were they loyal? Then what does it mean reconciled?

*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-- 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16 **For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.** 17 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.*

But here the Bible tells us that Christ did something not for angels but for mankind, what? Where is the balance?

All intelligent beings throughout the universe needed to have the truth about God revealed to destroy the lies Satan had told and secure the unfallen beings in their loyalty. Thus, Christ's life, death and resurrection demonstrates the truth and "reconciles" all things in heaven and earth to God.

But mankind not only needed the truth revealed but also needed the damage sin had done to us healed, the angels didn't need that. Thus Christ came and took our sick status and cured it by His victorious life! He perfectly restored love back into the human species in His own life on earth and simultaneously destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light.

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph and discuss – some of the best witnesses for Christ made the biggest mistakes.

**2008 Q3 Lesson 10 Women of Mission**

Notes are not available.

## 2008 Q3 Lesson 11 Mission in a Pagan Land: Daniel and Company

### SABBATH

Read memory verse – thoughts? What was the issue? What kind of food did they ask for? Was this primarily about vegetarianism? Have you ever heard this put forth as an argument? What evidence could we have that these Hebrew men were not primarily concerned about being vegetarians?

*EX 12:1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, 2 “This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. 3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household... 6 Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. 7 Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. 8 That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast... 10 Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. 11 This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD’s Passover.*

Do you think Daniel and his friends were vegetarians? Then what was the issue? Possibly unclean meats, which would have been unclean to the Jew because of health concerns or ceremonial religious concerns?

Throughout the book of Daniel what seems to be the primary concern of these four Hebrew men? Representing God rightly!

Then would refusing the king’s meats and wines have anything to do with this goal?

The first paragraph is quoting Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Thoughts? – Does it mean all things are good? All things in this world are not good but from all things God can bring good and works for our good. Any examples from scripture? Any examples in your own life?

### SUNDAY

Today’s lesson suggests that the success of Daniel and his friends was due to their parents and the spiritual training received at home – thoughts about this?

Are parents responsible for the outcome of their children’s lives? No, parents are responsible for their conduct in parenting! How do we know? Even when parenting is perfect, as in God parenting Lucifer and Adam the outcome didn’t turn out right.

Read second paragraph – thoughts? How is the idea that following God’s commandments leads to life and disregarding them leads to death often taught to children? How have you heard it taught?

In the Passover why did some live and some die? What was the cause of their death? In Sodom what was the cause of their death? When Nadab and Abihu disobeyed the commands of God regarding fire in the temple what caused their death? What caused the death of the wicked at Noah’s time, who did it?

*DT 6:13 Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. 14 Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; 15 for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land. 16 Do not test the LORD your God as you did at Massah. 17 Be sure to keep the commands of the LORD your God and the stipulations and decrees he has given you. 18 Do what is right and good in the LORD's sight, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take over the good land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers,*

What ideas about why obedience leads to life and disobedience leads to death might someone draw? Are these ideas accurate? Are these ideas correct? What is the problem with believing that disobedience results in death at God's hand?

**The Law of Liberty** is a law which says that love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom, when we violate freedoms love is destroyed, a desire to rebel is instilled and if we voluntarily choose to stay individuality is destroyed.

- Imagine saying to your spouse, love me or I'll kill you...
- 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
- It is one of the principles that life is designed to operate upon and our health and happiness is dependent upon harmony with it.
- God is LOVE and love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom!
- 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,

THEN WE have something—Something measurable, tangible, reliable, predictable!

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.

Love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom. God is love and with God we are always free!

God has given us evidence upon evidence demonstrating this:

From the beginning of the war in heaven Satan has been on a character assassination crusade against God. He has been lying about God suggesting that God will use His power to hurt, torture and kill His creatures—this is the ultimate root of the rebellion against God and this is the ultimate issue in the closing of the war.

When Lucifer started his rebellion in heaven, did God have the power to destroy Lucifer or was God impotent, powerless? Then why didn't God destroy him? Because God doesn't work that way, love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom

Notice the progression of God concepts through history – What God concepts are taught in Paganism?

- All forms of paganism have a God who must be appeased
- Where did Catholicism come from? Paganism

- Mary, Jesus and saints pleading to God, indulgences, penance
- All protestant churches came from the Catholic church
- Core of paganism – appeasement
- Core of Catholicism – appeasement Mary, Jesus, Saints, indulgences, penance, works
- Core of Protestantism – appeasement Jesus pleading His blood to the Father, Jesus paying the price to the Father –

And what is the final contest over? What will be the culmination of events? A conflict over worship, over two systems over two pictures of God:

1. The Beast System which violates liberty, neither buy and sell
2. God's system of love, these are they who did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death

What is the result of worshiping a God who does not value our freedom? A God who will use His power to destroy, a God who much be appeased?

We either become shadow people who worship out of fear of punishment and become non thinking empty shells afraid to have an independent thought, rigidly clinging to rules, rituals and ceremony. God said it, I believe it, That settles it. We become like that god and will use power to control others, dominate others, coerce others into our way, bombing abortion clinics, flying planes into buildings. 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

This is Satan's goal – to destroy love and trust for God and thus destroy humanity!

Love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom and pastors who preach a God who must use His power to torture and kill the wicked in the end are teaching Satan's lies about God!

Thus the Bible says,

*"Not by might nor by power but by the way the Spirit works says the Lord." Zech 4:6*

One of the founders of our church saw it similarly –

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

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}

The kingdom of Christ does not and cannot bear any resemblance to the kingdoms of the world. In the kingdom of Christ there is no instrument of coercion. In it force has no place. The gospel of Him who gave His life for the life of the world is a gospel of peace. It is the Saviour's grace, His love, His tender compassion, that breaks every barrier down. The gos-



pel is a power of itself, above all and encompassing all. It is a divine, immutable principle, as well-spring fed by the stream that flows from the throne of God. {21MR 152.4}

What is the gospel? The Good News about God's character of love! God is Love, love has no coercion, no force, no intimidation – any concepts of God which put Him in the role of executioner of the wicked in the end are lies of Satan.

Christianity has become infected with Satan's lies about God and rather than preparing a people ready to meet God Christianity that presents a punishing, severe, cruel God is either turning people into rebels or destroying their very souls!

Then how do we understand the stories in the Bible where God does put children to rest in the grave?

First recognize that according to God's definition of death God has killed no one. When Jesus was on earth, God in human flesh how did He describe what we call death?

*MT 9:23,24 When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd, he said, "Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him.*

*John 11:11-14 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." His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead,*

So according to God, in human flesh, has He put many of His children to sleep? Yes, is that the same as being dead? Not in God's eyes, not from God's perspective.

Have you ever asked questions? Why would God use His power to put people in the grave? Have you ever asked what it means? Have you ever asked what were the circumstances?

Have you ever notice that God has not acted to put His children in the graves since the time of Christ as He did before the time of Christ? Have you ever wondered why?

Has the world since the time of Christ been a more loving, kind, gracious and Christlike place? Has evil gone away? Are there no problems of hedonism, idolatry, violence, abuse equal to what transpired prior to Christ's arrival on earth?

Nero, Stalin, Hitler, Amin, Pol Pot, Cannibalism, the worship of Kali the Hindu goddess of death, WW I, WWII, Rwanda, Bosnia

But despite all this abuse since the Cross do you see God intervening as He did before the Cross? Have you ever wondered why?

Because prior to the Cross Satan was working with all his might to prevent the Messiah from coming to earth. Satan was working to close every avenue through which Jesus would come and God was working to keep open the channel for the Messiah!

Genesis as soon as man sinned God said to the serpent that a Messiah was coming that would crush his head –

Satan knew that his hold on this world was not secure, that Jesus was coming to rescue us, to break the bonds of Satan's kingdom, to set us free – so Satan immediately began working with all his ability to prevent Jesus from coming, to close the avenue through which the Messiah would come.

Flood: 1 righteous man – so God acted to keep open the channel

God's channel was near Sodom, God acted to protect the avenue through which Jesus would come

But don't confuse what God did with the death that is the wages of sin – everyone put in the grave by God will be resurrected, this is not the case when the wicked die in the end

But then why would God speak such harsh language to the people in Bible times threatening them? What was He dealing with? Do parents ever threaten their disobedient children? Do the threats get more intense if the child is engaged in some life threatening activity?

The last paragraph on Sunday asks if it is important for parents to do the same today in training their children as parents in Bible times – thoughts?

Can religious instruction and Bible training actually drive children away from God? How and why?

Rules without reason, religious observance without relationship, obedience without thinking, conformity without explanation, fear of punishment without love of person – all of these types of actions will destroy individuality and the unhealthy will surrender and become non thinking shadows perpetuating the lies about God, the health will rebel against it.

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "It is all too true..." thoughts?

Were Daniel and his friends 10 times wiser than all the other wise men in Babylon? Would that mean they understood all of this as well? What do you think about exposing our children to such concepts?

Last paragraph read "From the beginning..." thoughts?

What was the key to their success? They were more concerned about doing what was right than protecting self. Their love for God was stronger than their love for self!

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph "The biblical story..." thoughts?

What does this tell us about God's attitude toward people, cultures, races, nationalities? Does God value one group of people more than another?

What then was the purpose of Abraham's descendents? To be God's acting troupe to act out the plan of salvation in their mini theater and to thus prepare the world for Christ's arrival.

## WEDNESDAY

Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and wants the wise men to tell him what it is – they can't Daniel does and then explains it – what do you make of this event?

Why did God send the dream to Nebuchadnezzar?

In the life of Daniel do you notice a progression in his journey with God and God's communicating with Daniel.

In this story how does the message of the future events come to Daniel? Through the instigation of the king, the dream came to Nebuchadnezzar and his threat resulted in Daniel seeking God's wisdom.

So God communicates future events initially through a pagan ruler to Daniel. Then later Daniel has dreams and visions directly from God, then later the angel Gabriel comes to talk with him directly. As we accept the truth, internalize the truth and are transformed by the truth then we are able to handle more and more and more of God's presence. As we cooperate with Him for our healing He will change us so that we are able to receive more and more of Him culminating in the day we will see Him face to face!

#### THURSDAY

The fiery furnace and lion's den, what is the key that enabled Daniel and the three worthies to stay faithful?

Fear had been replaced with love in their hearts. Is it possible they realized the greater issues in the war between Christ and Satan? Is it possible they understood the difference between the kingdom of love and the kingdom of fear and selfishness? Is it possible that they not only loved God but the people of that foreign land? Is it possible they in love they were willing to give their lives as a means of demonstrating the power of God's kingdom to free us from fear? That they were willing to sacrifice themselves if that is what it took to not only be true to God but to reveal the power of God's character of love?

What about those who are ready to meet Jesus when He comes?

*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*

#### FRIDAY

Question 2 read and discuss

**2008 Q3 Lesson 12 Gifted for Service: Philip**

Notes are not available.

## 2008 Q3 Lesson 13 Here I am! Send Me: The Prophet Isaiah

### WEDNESDAY

How did the people respond to Isaiah's message?

What are the major points in the book of Isaiah? Or what do we learn from Isaiah?

- God does not want worship from rote, rituals without understanding but invites us to understand and reason and by doing this with God we are cleansed from sin.—Isaiah chapter 1
- God is coming to earth to save the earth—Isaiah 9:6
- The Great controversy began in heaven with Lucifer over believing lies about God which led to pride and self exaltation and resulting in the minds of man being darkened—Isaiah 14
  - Isaiah 60:2 See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.
- The truth about hell—Isaiah 33:14,15
- Christ, when he comes, will take our condition upon himself in order to heal it but we would misunderstand that God punished Christ and thus must punish sin:
  - *ISA 53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.*
  - *ISA 61:1 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, ISA 61:2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor.*
- The Sabbath as God intended and for eternity
  - *ISA 58:13 "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, ISA 58:14 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." The mouth of the LORD has spoken.*
  - *ISA 66:22 "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure. 23 From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the LORD.*
- That God wants to save all people not just descendants of Abraham
  - *ISA 25:6 On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine-- the best of meats and the finest of wines. ISA 25:7 On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations;*
  - *ISA 56:7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."*
- *All will be restored and there will be no more death—Isaiah 62, 65*

- *ISA 25:8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.*

## SABBATH

Read first paragraph “A central part...” thoughts?

How was Isaiah received when he spoke out against sin? Who was Isaiah speaking to? Was his mission to go and speak out against sin in the world or in the nation of Israel? Today, what happens if someone speaks out against sin in the church, how are they received?

What is sin? What is the root to all sin? What is the sin from which all other sin has arisen? Lies about God! What happens when someone speaks out in the church when God is being misrepresented?

Notice Judah was to represent God to the world – who is to do that today?

*Revelation 24:7 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.”*

What is this referring to? What is God’s glory? How do we give God glory? God’s glory is His character of love and we glorify Him by cooperating with Him for our healing so that we reveal His character in our lives! Notice this is not a work we do but one God does in us:

*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.*

## SUNDAY

Read third paragraph “In response to his...” Then read the green section at the bottom – thoughts?

Why did Jesus come in human flesh rather than with unveiled glory?

Does this give us insight into why the wicked will die in the end? Is it an imposed penalty or a natural consequence?

How do we know? What evidence do we have?

*ISA 33:14 The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless:  
“Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire?  
Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?”*



*ISA 33:15 He who walks righteously and speaks what is right,  
who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes,  
who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil—*

- Exodus 3:2-4 God speaks to Moses at the bush – and what did the bush do? Burned – but did it get consumed? Stephen in Acts 7:30-36 confirms this same account
- Ex 24:17 God came to Mt Sinai and His presence was described as a “consuming fire” did the elements melt like a nuclear explosion?
- 2 Chron 5:14 & 2 Chron 7:1-3 Tell us that when Solomon’s Temple was dedicated the Priests couldn’t enter because the brightness of God’s fiery glory was too great – but did the Temple burn down? So was it heat that was keeping the priests out?
- Daniel 7:9,10 God’s throne was “flaming with fire, the wheels were ablaze and rivers of fire came out from him” and millions of beings were living in this fire without being harmed
- Ezekiel 28:14,16 tells us that Lucifer used to walk among the “fiery stones” of God’s presence
- Matthew 17:2, mount of Transfiguration Jesus, in His human body that was still subject to death – His face shown like the sun and his clothes were bright white – but did His clothes burn off or did He receive 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns?
- DT 4:24 and Hebrews 12:29 Says, “our God is a consuming fire.”
- Revelation 22:5 tells us that in the new earth there will be no need for the sun and moon to light the earth for God’s presence will be its light!

What is the lie that Satan has foisted upon us? The place you don’t want to go, the place you don’t want to be is the place of eternal burnings and consuming fire and that place is God’s very presence!

The righteous will be transformed by this life giving glory – as Moses was after 40 days with God –

Ex 34:29-35 Moses would speak to God face to face and His face would radiate the fiery, life giving glory of God – Did Moses have 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns? No, it was not harmful – but what about the children of Israel, when they saw Moses what did they do?

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}

Notice the evidence: Moses face radiated the glory but caused no injury to Moses, demonstrating the fire is not harmful. Moses also came down as their friend on their side, communicating God’s favor and love NOT anger, yet because of their condition of heart they experienced suffering from the reflected fire of God’s glory. They felt under divine displeasure, but they weren’t, thus we see the deceitfulness and destructiveness of sin, not destructiveness coming from God. They

begged Moses to cover His face, i.e. hiding themselves from Moses face, just like the wicked will do to Christ in the end.

At the second coming of Christ, this same fire that transforms the righteous, as we are changed in a twinkling of an eye, as this mortal puts on immortality, as we are invigorated by this life giving fire, this same fire is described in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 as destroying the man of sin,

But what kind of fire is this? How can fire not burn up bushes, buildings and faces and actually transform and heal the righteous but at the same time cause anguish, discomfort, pain and destruction to the wicked?

What kind of fire is this?

This is a fire that is to cleanse the earth of sin, a fire that consumes wickedness – so let me ask you a couple of questions:

- What is a book made out of?
- What is a table or chair made out of?
- What is sin made out of?

Sin is an idea, attitude, thought, method, principle and at its root there are two elements that sin is based upon:

- Lies and selfishness

Now, what is it that consumes and destroys a lie?

- The truth—and the HS is called the Spirit of truth.

What is it that consumes and destroys selfishness?

- Love and God is Love – so when God's Spirit comes it is the Spirit of Truth and Love

And at Pentecost, when the Spirit came they saw “tongues of fire” – did the house burn down or anyone get injured?

Then why will the wicked suffer when the fires of truth and love burn freely, when these fires of truth and love transform and ennoble and invigorate the righteous, when the fires of God's presence are revealed?

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

What happens in the mind of those who have reject truth and cling to falsehood when the truth of God comes shining through? Torment of mind, anguish of heart – suffering of psyche

And what happens to those whose hearts are filled with selfishness when pure, undiluted, love of God comes shining through?

- Proverbs 25:21,22 and Romans 12:20 tells us that  
*“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.”*

And what will those who have solidified their minds in lies who have hardened their hearts in selfishness do when Christ appears? When they come face to face with undiluted, infinite truth and love?

*REV 6:16 They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!”*

Why will they do this? Is God inflicting an external penalty upon them or is their very condition the cause of their suffering when they come into God's loving and holy presence?

God has actually given us evidence (not claims evidence but action evidence) that the fire of His presence consumes sin, not material substances. In Leviticus we read about Aaron's sons who, as priests, brought unauthorized fire before the Lord. Notice what happens:

*Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. So **fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them**, and they died before the LORD... Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, "Come here; carry your cousins outside the camp, away from the front of the sanctuary." So they came and **carried them, still in their tunics**, outside the camp, as Moses ordered. Leviticus 10:1-5*

Notice that "fire of the Lord" "CONSUMED" them yet their bodies weren't burnt and their tunics were still intact. The fire is the fire of truth and love which totally overwhelms those living in lies and selfishness, those who haven't been healed in heart and mind to be like Jesus.

Now notice what God says about how Lucifer dies:

*EZE 28:18 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.*

In the Bible we have the claim/proclamation texts and we have the historical facts texts. For instance:

1 John 4:8 God is love – is a proclamation, a claim, and in isolation it is meaningless for we would not know who God is or what love is. What gives 1 John 4:8 power is the historical evidence of Jesus Christ who revealed God to us and what love actually is. The evidence of Christ's life informs the claims text of 1 John 4:8

Many theologians and pastors don't understand this and they read proclamation texts and fail to have those text informed by the evidence and thus make up theories. Classic is the idea that God will punish because of proclamation texts which appear to say such things but they fail to use the actual historic evidence of what transpired to inform their conclusions. Thus they end up perpetuating Satan's misconceptions about God.

Do we have more evidence to demonstrate this point?

- The Law of Liberty is a law which states that love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom. There are three predictable consequences which occur when freedoms are violated:
  - love is destroyed
  - rebellion is instilled
  - individuality is destroyed
- This is a law, it is testable, it is constant, it is evidence. This is not a claim, you can check it out and when you are convinced we have a standard against which we can test theories that are floated about God. God will never violate our freedoms for to do so would be a violation of His own character of love!

Those who claim that God will inflict an external punishment upon the wicked have no direct evidence for this. They only have speculation, which actually misrepresents God!

One of the founders of our church agrees with me on 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}

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

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}

The kingdom of Christ does not and cannot bear any resemblance to the kingdoms of the world. **In the kingdom of Christ there is no instrument of coercion.** In it force has no place. The gospel of Him who gave His life for the life of the world is a gospel of peace. It is the Saviour's grace, His love, His tender compassion, that breaks every barrier down. The gospel is a power of itself, above all and encompassing all. It is a divine, immutable principle, as well-spring fed by the stream that flows from the throne of God. {21MR 152.4}

Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which flesh is heir. He has represented Him as a God who delights in the sufferings of His creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and dethrone human reason. {CT 27.2}

I put much of this together in the GNT talk last week at LLU church which is available on our website under the title God's Standard – Freedom.

## MONDAY

Read fifth paragraph "In and of himself..." thoughts? which do you like better "purged" or "covered"? Why?

In the vision of Isaiah 6 it says:

*I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.*

Could this have any symbolic significance? What does the robe of Christ represent? What does the temple represent? Could filling the temple with the train of the Lord's robe symbolize filling the spirit temple with the righteousness of God? purging from sin? Recreating in righteousness?

## TUESDAY

Read top section "When Isaiah hears..." thoughts? Could Isaiah have responded simply because he loves God and God asked for help?

Read second paragraph “The ‘therefore’...” – thoughts? When Jesus was given all power and authority in John 13 what did He do? He washed dirty feet. Does this give us some insight into how we are to take this message to the world?

#### THURSDAY

First question, How do we as Adventists, understand our role in the out reach to the world?

ISA 49:6 he says:

*“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob  
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.  
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,  
that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”*

#### FRIDAY

Read question 1 and discuss – what would Isaiah say to our church?

- Stop accusing God of killing His Son on the Cross?
- Stop accusing God of being the source of death?
- Stop accusing God of inflict punishment?
- Realize Satan’s war is a political war, a war of ideas, methods which attack God, His character of love and government of love.
- Realize Jesus, the child born is the “everlasting Father.”
- Realize Jesus came to heal our condition not pay a legal penalty but restore the law of love into our hearts!

## 2008 Q4 Lesson 1      **God's Nature: The Basis of Atonement**

As we begin this quarter, let's begin with a clear Biblical definition of what atonement is and what it is not.

What is atonement? At-one-ment being at one, being united, being reconciled, being in harmony, unity, oneness.

Are there other concepts of atonement out there? What are they? Appeasement, expiation, payment of legal debt.

Which concept is Biblical and what evidence do we have?

First, the Bible was not written in English but in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic.

The English word itself, back in 1611 when the KJV was written did not mean appeasement or expiation, but meant reconciliation, bringing to unity or oneness. This is the correct understanding of the Hebrew and Greek words translated as atonement.

The Hebrew *Kaphar*, used in the OT sanctuary service with all the atonement statements is translated: atone, purge, forgive, reconcile.

The Greek in Romans 3:25 "sacrifice of atonement" is *hilasterion* and means the lid to the ark of the covenant.

*See Hebrews 9:5 "Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now."*

The word translated "atonement cover" in the NIV is translated mercy seat in other versions and is the same word in Romans 3:25 translated "sacrifice of atonement" and means the lid to the ark.

Hebrews 2:17 "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."

The Greek is *Hilaskomai* and means reconciliation.

A better translation of Romans 3 is:

*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. <sup>22</sup> 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, <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> Yet all, who are willing, are healed freely by God's gracious remedy that has been provided by Jesus Christ. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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.*

Is there other evidence this is the right understanding? What did Jesus say about atonement?



*John 17:22-23 "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."*

So when we think of atonement and the Cross of Christ what are we thinking? God's method, means, way of restoring mankind back into unity and oneness with Him! It is not a method of payment, appeasement, expiation, penal satisfaction etc. all such concepts are remnants of pagan theology which has infected the body of Christian thought!

## INTRODUCTION

In the introduction to the study guide it tells a story of a man whose life was changed when he heard these words, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin."

What do these words mean?

First, is it talking about red corpuscles? When Jesus said unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no part with me was he talking cannibalism? No, the blood is symbolic of what? Leviticus tells us the "life is in the blood" so the life of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

Second, what is being cleansed according to this passage? Record books in heaven or we the people? Are there other passages that support this?

*Malachi 3:1-3 "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. 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.*

*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 10:22 "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.*

And what is sin? Lawlessness (1John 3:4), what law is not being kept? The law of love – and how did the law of love get broken? And when it is broken what is the result?

- 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
- Acts of sin result in damage to mind, character and body

So, Christ came to purge lies, fear and selfishness from humanity and restore God's perfect character of love back into the tablets of the human heart, thus reconciling us to God or bringing us back into Oneness with Him, this is what atonement is all about.

The Study Guide rightly points out, "We should never give the impression that the death of Christ was needed in order to persuaded God to love us. God sent Christ to die for us because He already loved us." Absolutely, any thoughts?

While Christ didn't have to die in order to get God to love us, what about the idea that Christ had to die in order to give God legal permission to save us? Or in order to take care of God's wrath toward sin? Or in order to expiate divine anger toward sin?

## SUNDAY

In the beginning, God created... – Before God created, what existed?

- Go back far enough, there was just God
- Genesis In the Beginning - God – but God is not a name, it would be like calling me human, in the Hebrew there is actually a name – Elohim, but this name is interesting because it is a plural name, it would be like calling me Tims
- What do you think it means that God has a name that is not singular but plural? Does it imply anything about His nature of love?
- Dt 6:4 hear oh Israel Lord the Lord our God is One
  - *Hear oh Israel Yahweh our Elohim, Yahweh is **one***  
The Hebrew has two words for “one” Yacheed and Echad, Yacheed means singular as in one and only, echad means the oneness of two or more, in the text Echad is used
- God is love – “God is love” 1John 4:8,
  - *“Love is not self seeking”* 1 Cor 13:4,5
  - God is other centered –
- In the beginning love flowed from the Father to the Son and the Son to the Spirit and the Spirit to the Father in a perpetual circle of other centered goodness -
- Love flows from God through Christ to all the universe and then back through Christ to the Father the circle of life
- God is love -
  - Eternal power and Divine Nature – Romans 1:20
  - Other centered Love is the principle of Life!!!

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

What is the greatest revelation of God? Jesus Christ – He is the lens we must use to understand all other actions.

In the OT, which member of the Godhead was it that interacted with the people in OT times? Jesus, how do we know?

*Colossians 1:16,17 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.*

*1CO 10:1 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.*

Why is this important to realize? Have people ever been confused as they draw concepts about the Father from the OT and concepts about Jesus from the NT? Does it make a difference to realize the OT God and Jesus are one and the same?

Read last paragraph – “The statement...” thoughts? No question God is love and there is nothing we can or need to do to generate love from God. He is the source of all love. What do you think it means Jesus as our Mediator? Mediating what?

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph “The Bible explicitly...” thoughts?

What is meant by “this creation”? Is it just this earth or is the plan of salvation for the entire universe as well?

*Colossians 1:19,20 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.*

Read bottom pink section – thoughts? If we create artificial intelligence (AI) and we wanted the AI to be able to actually and genuinely love us what would we need to do? Set it free, would we then still “own” it? Would it be property? While we would have the “right” to own it, if we sustained that right and commanded obedience could it ever love? Does God command our obedience or does He set us genuinely free to love Him or not?

If you did create an artificial intelligence, where did you get the resources, ability, intelligence etc. from God or from yourself? If the resources came from God, then does that mean God created it? If you create a computer program that is designed to wreak havoc and cause damage and destruction, where did your ability to do this come from? Where did the resources come from? Does that mean God created it or did you?

What about your child, who created your child in your image? Did God in heaven determine who you would share your gametes with? Did God use His power to create via nothing a new life that became your child? Or did you, via the abilities that God has given you?

## WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph “God’s holiness...” thoughts?

What does it mean “God’s holiness does not tolerate sin but reacts against it” Is God’s holiness something separate from God’s intellect, something other than His being, something other than His love, something outside His character? Is it a reflex God has no control over? Is it an instinct God is obliged to follow? What does it mean “does not tolerate”? How does God react against sin?

- Does He react in anger? In vengeance? With wrath?
- Does God seek to destroy sin? YES!!!!
- Does God seek to destroy sinners? NO!!!!

How does God seek to destroy sin? What is sin? Rebellion, selfishness based on what? Lies about God, so what does God use to destroy lies and selfishness? Love and truth!

God’s reaction to sin is to love and reveal more truth and to love and reveal more truth. Where sin abounds God’s graciousness and love abounds all the more!

Thoughts about the rest of the paragraph? Could God not “see” evil? Does God not know what is going on down here because He can’t take it? He hasn’t looked? Is Jesus somehow more capable of seeing evil than the Father? What do these statements mean? Did Jesus hate sin less than the Father?

How does the sacrifice of Jesus make us holy?

#### THURSDAY

Read second paragraph “It is not...” thoughts? Does God know the future? Some say God is an infinite calculator and knows all the possible futures of all the possible choices people make but He doesn’t know what choice people will actually make until they make it, this is called Open Theism, but it is wrong. The reason people have this idea is they cannot conceive of a God who could actually know our choices and not use that information manipulatively, a Being of such divine love that we would remain genuinely free if God knew our choices before we make them. So people make up this theory as a way of comforting themselves that they have freedom. But the truth is God does know and we are still completely free, that is what is so absolutely incredible.

Read last paragraph, “God’s omniscience...” thoughts?

Why was this mystery hidden? What is the mystery which heals from sin? What is the truth that has been hidden in darkness? What is the message that sets free and restores? The truth about God’s character of love, and why was it hidden? Did God hide the truth about Himself? Or was the truth hidden because of Satan’s lies about God and only through Christ are those lies taken away and the truth about God finally fully revealed?

#### FRIDAY

Read second paragraph – thoughts?

**2008 Q4 Lesson 2      Cosmic Crisis: The Disruption of God's  
Established Order**

Notes are not available.

**2008 Q4 Lesson 3 The Fall Into Sin**

Notes are not available.



## 2008 Q4 Lesson 4 Atonement and the Divine Initiative

Read Memory Text – thoughts?

What is the mystery of God in this text? To bring all the universe into unity, into oneness through Christ – why was this a mystery?

Do you think before Lucifer rebelled there was a mystery about God being a God of love? Was there some mystery, or mystic, or confusion about God's desire for unity and oneness before Lucifer rebelled?

Is there a mystery because God is being mysterious? Is there a mystery because God obfuscates the truth or works to cause confusion? In other words, is God the source of the mystery?

*JN 18:20 "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."*

Who is the father of lies? Who obfuscates? Who is the author of confusion? Why are there questions about God's intention to bring all the universe into unity through Christ? Because Satan has lied about God and we have believed those lies!

Read last paragraph on Sabbath's lesson – thoughts? Did God just see the possibility of sin or did God see that sin would happen? Does God know what will happen or only what might happen? What does it say about God that He chose to create even though He knew what would eventually transpire?

### SUNDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

Was God obliged to be God? Is love compelled to be loving, selfless, other-centered? Does love compel one to reach out to save? Could we say God's character of love compelled Him or obliged Him to save us?

Does a parent have any obligation to their children? What is that obligation? Is God our parent? Does He have any obligation? What would that be?

Does a parent have an obligation only to their obedient children or to their unruly children as well?

TC page 43 states,

"God created perfect creatures, and they chose to create chaos. In response, God chose to clean up the mess humans made. Discuss the scenarios God could have chosen instead of offering Redemption. After examining these other potential outcomes, how do we understand God's character better? Suppose He had decided to leave us to our fate, without the option of salvation?"

Thoughts? What was necessary to clean up the mess? Was it a mess made only by humans? Was the mess something transpiring in the heart and mind of God? Was the plan designed to somehow clean up God? To assuage His wrath etc. etc.?

What was needed? What mess needed to be changed? The heart, mind and character of man needed to be changed.

What would have happened to mankind if God did not intervene to save?

TC page 43 states,

“Would you die for a power hungry dictator, terrorist, drug dealer or a prostitute? What does your answer tell you about the character of God?”

Thought? What if that person was your child and in dying for them you not only saved them from earthly death but you transformed their character to be like Jesus and save them eternally, would you die for your terrorist child then? That is what Jesus did; He didn’t pay a legal penalty to save some criminal from execution, He died to cure the sickness which warps our character and leads to such destructive behavior!

## MONDAY

Read Memory text – thoughts? What does it mean?

Read bottom paragraph “In the Bible...” thoughts? What is the paragraph saying? Any questions?

Was grace extended to Satan and his angels? Was grace just for mankind? Is God ungracious to Satan and his angels? Does God love differently toward those who are saved and those who are lost? Does God love Satan less than mankind?

Why is it mankind can be saved but Satan and his angels cannot?

In the middle of the paragraph it states, “God’s grace implies that our sin is inexcusable....” Who is the “our” in this sentence? Is it speaking about the human race in the persons of Adam and Eve i.e. there was no excuse for them to sin, or is it speaking about every human being since Adam and Eve or both?

Did any human other than Adam and Eve and Jesus have a choice not to be a sinner? Do we as individuals have an excuse for being born into the world of sin?

If an HIV infected man and woman have a child born HIV infected did the child do anything wrong? What about all of us since Adam? Did we do anything wrong to be born into sin?

If the HIV infected child grows up and there is a remedy that will cure him and he refuses the remedy will he have an excuse for that? This is our situation, it is not our fault we are born in sin, but it will be our individual fault if we refuse the remedy provided by God through Christ!

TC page 45 states,

“In creating Lucifer and Adam and Eve perfect in a perfect environment God made all the provisions possible for their happiness and success. The law is a perfect picture of how things are in a perfect world. But when sinners choose to step outside of the perfection of God’s environment, neither they nor the law can fix what has been broken. God provided more than a perfect environment; He provided Himself, a perfect offering of self-forgetful love, long before our creation and our sin.”

*Thoughts? What law is it talking about in this text? Do you think it is referring to the 10 commandments? Are the 10 commandments a “perfect picture of how things are in a perfect world”?*

*EX 20:2 “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*

*EX 20:3 “You shall have no **other** gods before me.*

*EX 20:4 “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. 5 You 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.*

*EX 20:7 “You shall not **misuse the name of the LORD** your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.*

What about the idea that the law cannot fix the problem? What law? What about the law of love can it fix problems?

*PS 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.*

Where does the law of love originate?

*God is love 1John 4:8.*

*God pours His love into our hearts Romans 5:8*

*We become partakers of the Divine Nature 2Pet 1:4*

*And thus through Christ God’s law of love is written again in our hearts Heb 8:10.*

Does having the law of love, written in the heart result in healing? Who writes it there? What is our responsibility?

## TUESDAY

First sentence read – thoughts? How do you understand the words “extremely expensive for Him”?

Read sixth paragraph “Fourth, this mystery...” thoughts?

TC page 47 states,

“Before we were ever created and before we sinned, God chose us to be holy and blameless and to live eternally. This was possible only because Christ was chosen to be slain for our sins, before our sins had ever been committed and to provide for us what we could not provide for ourselves – a sinless life, worthy of eternal life.”

Thoughts? Why do we need Christ’s sinless life and why is it worthy of eternal life? How do we get this life?

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 law requires righteousness? Why does it require this?

The law of health requires we breath, why? Because human life is based on aerobic respiration, life simply cannot exist out of harmony with this law.

Likewise God designed all life to operate upon the law of love, it simply isn’t possible for life to exist outside this law thus the law requires it.

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Would it have been necessary for God to destroy Adam and Eve if He didn't want to save them? What would have happened if He didn't destroy them but He didn't send Christ either? What did God tell them? They would have died, why?

What would have happened in the universe if God did use His power to destroy sinners?

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}

Has God ever destroyed a sinner?

Read second paragraph "But there was one..." thoughts?

Who ran after Adam sinned? Who hid? In other words, who changed their routine, who changed the way they were living, behaving acting? Who was it that changed the way the relationship worked? Who wanted to put distance in the relationship? Did God? No!

Thoughts or questions about why Christ had to die?

## THURSDAY

The lesson talks about the things Christ must do or accomplished and over halfway down quotes Matthew 16:21 where Jesus said He had to go to Jerusalem to be killed. Why? And who killed Jesus?

What is the common teaching on this question? Did God kill His Son in order to execute justice on sin? No!

The Bible prophecies that we would misunderstand what Christ would do and think God killed His Son:

*ISA 53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows,  
yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.*

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}

Jesus said,

*"Satan was a murderer from the beginning" John 8:44*

At the Cross what did Jesus say about His Father, "why have you..."?

Who killed Jesus?

TC page 51 states,

“Throughout His life, Jesus acknowledged that He was there not to do His own will and work but His Father’s work. How is this consistent with statements that He laid down His own life and took it up again?”

Thoughts? If Jesus died, as some allege, to pay the legal penalty for our sin, which is eternal death, then on what basis did He rise again? And if He rose again then eternal death has not been “legally paid”. What is a more coherent way to understand this?

Jesus died to:

*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-- 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

*This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10 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 2:9,10*

What did His death accomplish? He destroyed him who holds the power of death and he destroyed death itself, that is why He rose again because He destroyed the very basis for death – which is????? Breech in the law of love since the law of love is the very basis of all life. Christ destroyed the selfish, survival of the fittest instinct which infects humanity, the law of sin and death which severs the law of love resulting in death. Christ restored in humanity God’s perfect law of love, thus He rose victorious over Satan and sin and death and the grave!

And His victory, His perfect character of love is a free gift to all who trust in Him, we become partakers of the divine nature and love is written into our hearts and we are changed from selfish beings in a terminal state to loving beings who will live forever!

FRIDAY

Question 1 read and discuss

**2008 Q4 Lesson 5     Atonement Announced**

Notes are not available.



**2008 Q4 Lesson 6     Atonement in Symbol Part 1**

Notes are not available.

**2008 Q4 Lesson 7     Atonement in Symbol Part 2**

Notes are not available.

## **2008 Q4 Lesson 8      Born of a Woman: Atonement and the Incarnation**

Read Memory Verse 1 John 3:5 – thoughts?

Take away sin from where? Where do the sins go? Did Jesus come to take away our acts of sin or did He come to take away sinfulness? If it is acts how can He do that? Does history get erased?

When David committed adultery with Bathsheba and she got pregnant and then he murdered Uriah did David afterward repent? Were his sins “taken away” by Jesus? Does that mean that Bathsheba wasn’t pregnant nor was Uriah murdered?

Or was it true that even after David repented, even after he experienced forgiveness and reconciliation with God that Uriah was still dead and Bathsheba pregnant? Where was the sin take away from if not from history?

Christ came to take sin, sinfulness out of our hearts, our minds and our characters. Christ came to remove evil, guilt, shame, fear, selfishness and sinfulness from the heart, mind character of mankind! He came to cure the race from sinfulness and thus return us to full unity and harmony with God!

Read the paragraph on the first page of the lesson “Scientists concede...” thoughts?

What do you think about the idea that without the incarnation there would not be reconciliation with God? Absolutely true! We will explore why in a minute, but what about the idea that without the incarnation there would not be forgiveness of sin?

What do you understand forgiveness to mean? Is forgiveness something that the offender extends from his or her heart? If we understand forgiveness in this way which came first God’s forgiveness or Christ’s incarnation?

In the OT did people experience forgiveness? Was this forgiveness genuine or was in conditional on Christ coming and dying? If Christ didn’t come and die would God have been unforgiving? Did Christ’s death change God from unforgiving to forgiving? Or was God always forgiving and Christ’s death was the means necessary to bring more than forgiveness but to bring healing and restoration?

### **SUNDAY**

Read second paragraph “The coming of Christ...” – thoughts?

What do you understand the nature of Christ to be? What views have you heard on this topic?

What is the evidence of Scripture?

- How did Adam and Eve enter the world? What was their condition? (created from dust by God perfect)
- How did we enter the world? What is our condition? (born of sinful mother and father)
- How did Jesus enter the world? (born of sinful mother but Holy Spirit is Father)

Jesus is unique in all creation history – what significance does this have for us? Why is this important?

Read third paragraph “The point is that...” thoughts? We all agree Jesus was fully God, yes? Did Jesus on earth ever use His own personal divine abilities? How do we know?

*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. John 5:19*

*By myself I can do nothing; John 5:30*

*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. John 8:28*

Was Jesus tempted to use His power in self interest? What do we learn about Jesus? What do we learn about God?

Some teach that Jesus came with only the character of God but without any access to the divine attributes of God, what is the problem with such a position? What do we not learn? What question remains unanswered about God’s character if this is true? How God wields power!

If Christ didn’t have access to divine power then we don’t know if He would have used it selfishly, we don’t know what God would do when His creatures torture Him. You have heard the saying power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, well if Jesus didn’t have divine power this statement remains unrefuted in God.

But praise God, Jesus was fully God and in Him we see not only the divine character of love fully displayed we also see how God uses power and that Christ and God are completely safe with all power because Christ has demonstrated He will never use it selfishly even when His own life is on the line!

*Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. John 13:3-5*

## MONDAY

The last sentence of the first paragraph states, “The reality of the union of the human and the divine in Christ is indispensable for the atonement.”

The second paragraph then asks: “Why?...” someone read the second paragraph – thoughts?

Why was this union necessary? What did Christ come to accomplish?

TQ page 93 states, “It was the only possible plan that would demonstrate the truth character of God and at the same time save humanity.”

What was demonstrated by Christ’s life, death and resurrection?

- God’s character
- Christ’s character (Philippians 2)
- The nature of sin
- How God treats the wicked
- Exposing of Satan
- God’s use of power (unselfish)
- No defect in God’s design of humanity
- The perfection of God’s law of love

What was accomplished or achieved by Christ's life, death and resurrection?

- Destruction of Satan (Hebrews 2:14)
- Destruction of death (2Tim 1:9,10)
- Perfect character by a human being Jesus (Heb 4:15, James 1:11, Heb 5:8)
- Curing the sinful condition when love overcame selfishness in Jesus Christ

TQ page 93 states, "Ask your class to think of everyday things that they cannot explain and that they accept by faith. How does this make them feel?"

Does the fact you cannot explain something mean you accept it by faith? If you can explain something is your acceptance of it no longer on faith?

There is a type of "faith" that is not faith at all but presumption and this presumption is a faith for which we cannot give explanation, a faith which has no evidence, a faith that says just believe.

### **FORECLOSURES: DID GOD WANT YOU TO GET THAT MORTGAGE?**

By David Van Biema

Has the so-called Prosperity Gospel turned its followers into some of the most willing participants — and hence, victims — of the current financial crisis? That's what a scholar of the fast-growing brand of Pentecostal Christianity believes. While researching a book on black televangelism, says Jonathan Walton, a religion professor at the University of California Riverside, he realized that Prosperity's central promise—that God would "make a way" for poor people to enjoy the better things in life—had developed an additional, toxic expression during sub-prime boom. Walton says that this encouraged congregants who got dicey mortgages to believe "God caused the bank to ignore my credit score and blessed me with my first house." The results, he says, "were disastrous, because they pretty much turned parishioners into prey for greedy brokers."

Others think he may be right. Says Anthea Butler, an expert in Pentecostalism at the University of Rochester in New York state, "The pastor's not gonna say 'go down to Wachovia and get a loan' but I have heard, 'even if you have a poor credit rating God can still bless you — if you put some faith out there [that is, make a big donation to the church], you'll get that house, or that car or that apartment.'" Adds J. Lee Grady, editor of the magazine *Charisma*, "It definitely goes on, that a preacher might say, 'if you give this offering, God will give you a house. And if they did get the house, people did think that it was an answer to prayer, when in fact it was really bad banking policy.'" If so, the situation offers a look at how a native-born faith built partially on American economic optimism entered into a toxic symbiosis with a pathological market.

Although a type of Pentecostalism, Prosperity theology adds a distinctive layer of supernatural positive thinking. Adherents will reap rewards if they prove their faith to God by contributing heavily to their churches, remaining mentally and verbally upbeat, and concentrating on divine promises of worldly bounty supposedly strewn throughout the bible. Critics call it a thinly disguised pastor-enrichment scam. Other experts, like Walton, note that for all its faults, it can empower people who have been taught to see themselves as financially or even culturally useless to feel they are "worthy of having more and doing more and being more." In some cases, the philosophy has matured with its practitioners, encouraging good financial habits and entrepreneurship.

But Walton suggests that a decade's worth of ever-easier credit acted like drug in Prosperity's bloodstream. "The economic boom 90s and financial over-extensions of the new millennium contributed to the success of the prosperity message," he wrote recently. And not positively. "Narratives of how 'God blessed me with my first house despite my credit' were common. Sermons declaring 'it's your season to overflow' supplanted messages of economic sobriety," and "little at-

tention was paid to the dangers of using one's home equity as an ATM to subsidize cars, clothes and vacations."

With the bubble burst, Walton and Butler assume that prosperity congregants have taken a disproportionate hit, and are curious as to how their churches will respond. Butler thinks that some of the flashier ministries will shrink along with their congregants' fortunes. Says Walton, "You would think that the current economic conditions would undercut their theology." But he predicts they will persevere, since God's earthly largesse is just as attractive when one is behind the economic eight ball.

A recently posted testimony by a congregant at the Brownsville Assembly of God near Pensacola, Fla., seems to confirm his intuition. Brownsville is not even a classic Prosperity congregation—it relies more on the anointing of its pastors than on scriptural promises of God. But the believer's note to his minister illustrates how magical thinking can prevail even after the mortgage blade has dropped. "Last Sunday," it read, "You said if anyone needed a miracle to come up. So I did. I was receiving foreclosure papers, so I asked you to anoint a picture of my home and you did and your wife joined with you in prayer as I cried. I went home feeling something good was going to happen. On Friday the 5th of September I got a phone call from my mortgage company and they came up with a new payment for the next 3 months of only \$200. My mortgage is usually \$1020. Praise God for his Mercy & Grace."

And pray that the credit market doesn't tighten any further.

Thoughts?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? John's baptism was the baptism of repentance. What is repentance? A turning around? Jesus came as the second Adam to do what? To reverse what Adam had done, to turn the human race around???? Was the baptism then part of Jesus declaring His mission as the second Adam to die a death which would destroy death and rise again thus turning the human race around from the path of death and put the human race back in harmony with God and eternal life?

How was Jesus turning the race around? Symbolically? Legally? Literally – to actually take our condition and reverse what sin had done to mankind?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? What does this tell us? Who was involved in the salvation of mankind? The entire Godhead, who is for us? The entire Godhead, no need for one to work on the other they are all involved in our salvation!

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph "The temptations..." thoughts? Did Jesus have it harder than Adam? Did Jesus have to do more than Adam had to do? What? How so?

Last sentence on the page states, "The perfect sacrificial Lamb took on Himself our sin in order to restore us to unity and harmony with the Creator." – thoughts?

What does this mean? Who is our Creator?

*Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.  
 John 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. Col 1:16*

Jesus was reconciling the human race to Himself as well as the Father and the Spirit!

## THURSDAY

Read the memory verse at the top Matt 9:35 – why did Jesus do so much healing?

Because it is the best way to demonstrate the plan of salvation which is the plan of healing! Notice Jesus did not go around legally defending criminals in court and getting everybody off, no because this would misrepresent the plan of salvation. Instead, He went around healing showing the truth that the plan of salvation is the plan of healing and restoration!

Read second paragraph “His miracles...” thoughts?

Imagine an AIDS ward, some are suffering with pneumonia, some with meningitis, some with lesions on their skin, some with eye infections because while all have the same underlying disease it manifests differently in people. But imagine if those with pneumonia were making fun of those with meningitis and those with skin lesions are hateful to those with eye infections and on and on. How stupid would that be?

This is how we are on earth. We all have the same sickness of sinfulness but it manifests differently in different people, but notice how critical we are of others who symptoms are different than ours?

But God sees us all sick and suffering and all in need of the same remedy and sees how healthy we will all look if we accept His remedy. Shouldn't we see it the same way?

Last paragraph – read – how do you see our relationships with each other in heaven? Will there be differences or do you see us coming into oneness as Jesus prayed:

*JN 17:20 “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.*

Where else in the Bible do you find two people being described as being one? Adam and Eve the two shall be one, could it be that in heaven we will have such unity that we will love others and be loved by others so completely it will be equal to what we experience in marriage here?

## FRIDAY

Read questions 1 and 2 and discuss

**2008 Q4 Lesson 9      Metaphors of Salvation**

Notes are not available.

**2008 Q4 Lesson 10 Atonement at the Cross**

Notes are not available.

## 2008 Q4 Lesson 11 Benefits of Christ's Atoning Sacrifice

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph "The doctrinal significance..." – thoughts? Any problems with this?

- What about the idea that without the resurrection of Christ there is no forgiveness?
- What is the underlying premise that contributes to this idea? That forgiveness equals salvation.
- Is it possible to be forgiven and not saved?
- Does God ever remain unforgiving?
- Will God have an unforgiving heart, hold a grudge for all eternity against those who refuse salvation?
- Can God forgive and people still be lost?
- Was God precluded from being forgiving or extending forgiveness without the death and resurrection of Jesus?

Bottom of Monday's lesson states, "Have you sinned, even after you've accepted Jesus as your Savior? If so, what comfort do you get from knowing that Christ is mediating God's forgiveness on your behalf in heaven?" – thoughts?

- Who would Christ be mediating God's forgiveness in your behalf in heaven to?
- If God is forgiving, then is there a need for Christ to be mediating that forgiveness in heaven to the Father?
- Who needs the forgiveness of God "mediated" to them? Would it not be us?
- Romans 2:4 God's kindness leads us to repentance
- Romans 5:8 While we were still sinners Christ died for us

Miriam was arguing with Moses over who should lead the people (Numbers 4) and God struck Miriam with leprosy.

- What does leprosy symbolize? Sin, as long as Miriam had leprosy she could not go back into the camp of Israel.
- Could God have forgiven Miriam and yet she still have leprosy?
- In other words, could God extend forgiveness to Miriam yet she still not be healed?
- Would she be able to go back into the camp? No, not until the leprosy is gone and she is "cleansed."
- Likewise, God can forgive sinners but forgiveness extended from God is not the same as healing the sinner, cleansing the sinner, recreating the sinner. We can't go to heaven with sinful hearts and minds, we must be renewed, reborn, recreated, regenerated, healed to be like Jesus. Jesus came to do this!

Back to Sunday's lesson, God forgives because God is forgiving. Christ did not come to earth to achieve forgiveness from God; He came to minister the forgiveness of God!

Read 1 Cor 15:16-18

*For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 1COR 15:16-18*

Does this text say anything about our forgiveness being dependent on Christ's resurrection? No! It does say something about our salvation being dependent upon it.

Read second paragraph, "The death of Christ..." thoughts?

Why would the death of Christ have no atoning power without His resurrection?

What do the lesson authors mean by "atoning power"?

If atoning means expiation, paying of legal debt and our legal debt is eternal death, then in order to pay that debt and "atone" us wouldn't Christ need to stay dead? Or another way to ask the question: Wouldn't we be more secure that our "legal debt" was paid if Christ was still dead – His life paid for our, but since He rose again whose life has paid for ours?

What do you understand atoning to be?

The resurrection of Christ is the inevitable consequence to the law of love destroying the law of sin and death in Christ's victorious life! (Heb 2:14; 2Tim:1:9,10). Just as recovery and health is the inevitable result of curing a disease, life is the result of Christ's victory over sin! His resurrection is the proof that He won, that He destroyed sin and death and that the remedy He achieved works to cure sinners and thus we are assured that the first death has no power over those who trust Jesus!

Read last paragraph "Jesus took to heaven..." thoughts?

- It says "Christ removed the barrier of sin", where was this barrier?
- What was preventing God's love from flowing to His people without Christ?
- Was God restricting the outpouring of His love until Christ or without Christ, or was God's love obstructed from flowing into the hearts of mankind without Christ? Why?

## MONDAY

As we talk about the "mediation" of Christ, here is a list of sentences from this week's lesson:

### Monday

- The death and resurrection of Christ make possible the mediation of Christ **before the Father**
- That makes the role of our Mediator **before the Father** an indispensable element in the plan of salvation.
- In the Bible the mediation of Christ **before the Father** is never separated from His atoning sacrifice.
- John says we have an advocate who can represent us **before God** and through whom we can be forgiven.

### Wednesday

- Earth probably would be as desolate as Mars if not for the Cross of Christ and for Christ's mediation **before the Father**.

### Friday

- The Saviour presents the virtue of His mediation **before the Father**, and pledges Himself to the office of personal Intercessor.
- If God loves us and sent His Son to die for us, why is it necessary for Jesus to function as a Mediator **before the Father**?

Thoughts about this phrase “before the Father” what does it mean? How do you hear it? How have you thought of this in the past?

The lesson suggests that John says we have someone who can represent us before God – let’s look at that text 1John 2:1:

*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have **one who speaks to the Father in our defense**--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. NIV*

*I am writing this to you, my children, so that you will not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have **someone who pleads with the Father on our behalf**—Jesus Christ, the righteous one. GNT*

*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, **we have an Advocate with the Father**, Jesus Christ the righteous; NASB*

*My dear children, I write this letter to you so you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, **we have a helper in the presence of the Father**—Jesus Christ, the One who does what is right. NCV*

*I write this, dear children, to guide you out of sin. But if anyone does sin, we have a **Priest-Friend in the presence of the Father**: Jesus Christ, righteous Jesus. Message*

*My precious children, I am writing you so that you will realize the power of God’s love to free you from selfishness and therefore experience God’s healing and no longer live selfishly. But, if during the healing process, relapses into selfishness occur don’t be discouraged, Jesus Christ stands at the helm of all power, right next to God, and is pouring his love into our hearts to complete his restoring and healing work. Jennings paraphrase*

Is Jesus as our “mediator” somehow working on the Father to influence the Father to be kind, loving, forgiving, saving? No! All such ideas are pagan. How do we know?

*John 14:9 Anyone who has seen Christ has seen the Father, they are one*

*John 16:26 Jesus said He would not pray the Father for us*

*Romans 8:31-34 – If God is for us who can be against us...*

Whatever mediation means it does not mean one member of the Godhead working on the other member of the Godhead to influence the other member to be gracious or loving toward us.

Read first paragraph Monday – “The death of Christ...” thoughts?

Notice how the lesson attempts to shift the problem from mankind to God. Guilt and sin are part of the human experience “in the sight of God.” What is the implication of this sentence?

Is it implying that we have a problem because our sin is in the sight of God, but fortunately Jesus is there to mitigate God’s response and “advocate” on our behalf?

Why is sin and guilt in the “sight of God”? Because God sees reality as it is and we are still infected with sin and guilt.

Imagine a doctor who has a patient with cancer and we say the deformity and devastation of cancer is seen by the doctor. Would we think, “Oh, I sure hope there is an advocate with the doctor to help us if He actually sees how sick we are”?

If Christ is not “mediating” to the Father where is the focus of Christ’s mediation?



Where does a doctor focus his interventions? In the patient! Christ is working, mediating in the sinner all His goodness, all His “merits”, all He has accomplished. He is working to heal us, to restore in us God’s law of love, to win us back to trust, to remove the lies and distortions about God from us. He is working to bring us back into unity, at-one-ment with the Father!

Read second paragraph – “In the Bible...” thoughts? Christ is the means through which God’s forgiveness is communicated and made real to us. We would not know the forgiveness of God except for Christ.

Read last paragraph – “It is perhaps...” thoughts?

Read Hebrews 2:17:

*Wherefore 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. KJV*

*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. NASB*

*This means that he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way, in order to be their faithful and merciful High Priest in his service to God, so that the people’s sins would be forgiven. GNT*

*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. NIV*

*For this reason Jesus had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every way so he could be their merciful and faithful high priest in service to God. Then Jesus could die in their place to take away their sins. NCV*

*That’s why he had to enter into every detail of human life. Then, when he came before God as high priest to get rid of the people’s sins, Message*

*For this reason, he had to become one of them -completely human in everyway, in order to purge humanity of selfishness, enlighten the darkened minds of men about God so they would trust him as the mediator of God’s remedy and thus perfectly heal mankind back into unity with God in heart, mind and character. Jennings paraphrase*

Thoughts? What is Christ doing in heaven? He is directing all the agencies of heaven to heal and restore you and me!

*“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. <sup>15</sup> All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. John 16:12-15*

- If the Holy Spirit is not speaking on His own, who is He speaking for?
- Who is the Holy Spirit listening to?
- He takes what is Christ’s and makes it known to us! Christ is in heaven and is pleading before the Father to you and me. The Holy Spirit communicates Christ’s pleadings to us.

Those who respond and open the heart the Holy Spirit, at the direction of Christ, takes what Christ has achieved and reproduces it in us!

- He takes the truth about God as revealed by Christ and enlightens,
- He takes the purity of Christ and cleanses,
- He takes the love of Christ and empowers,
- He takes the mind of Christ makes wise,
- He takes the character of Christ and recreates,
- He takes the nature of Christ and restores to oneness with God.

Read pink section at bottom – thoughts?

Would it not mean that we need to be comforted from fear of what God will do to us?

That we have comfort knowing Jesus is in heaven pleading to His Father to obtain His forgiveness?

In other words, this theory has our problem being God and we are comforted knowing Jesus is there to protect us. But, not so, we are comforted to know Jesus has overcome sin and will perfectly heal all who trust Him!

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph “If the death...” thoughts?

Why could the resurrection not be separated from the death?

- His resurrection demonstrates He perfectly cured the sin condition, that He eradicated the infection which brings death, that He perfectly restored the basis of life into humanity.
- His resurrection was the natural consequence to His victory over sin, just as health is the natural consequence of eradicating disease!
- Therefore if He didn’t rise again it would mean He didn’t cure the condition and we have no remedy and thus are without hope of healing. But He did rise again which proves He cured the condition and His remedy will heal all who trust Him.

The lesson points us to the work of Christ in the “heavenly sanctuary” what do you understand that to be?

What Bible texts enlighten us about this concept?

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, <sup>2</sup> and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man. Hebrews 8:1,2*

*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.” Hebrews 8:5*

Thoughts about this? Is the Bible teaching an idea that there is a sanctuary in heaven and that the OT one was modeled after it? Yes, it does.

How do we understand the heavenly sanctuary?

God’s law is – the law of love, is this law a code or is it a living law?

Can the law of love be understood on stone or only in intelligent living creatures?

In the OT system where was the law kept? In the ark,

In the NT where is the law? Written on the heart and mind –

Does this give any insight into what the Heavenly Sanctuary is?

In the OT system the blood was taken throughout the system where did Jesus say the blood was to be taken? Into the believer: Unless we drink His blood we have no part with him (John 6:53,54). Does this give us any insight into what the Heavenly Sanctuary is?

*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Eph 2:19-22*

*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." 2 Cor 6:16*

*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 1 Cor 3:16*

*As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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."*

*<sup>7</sup> 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," 1 Pet 2:4-7*

*"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. 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, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years. Malachi 3:1-4*

*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. 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*

If the Temple was already in existence in heaven, then why is Christ going to build it?

What do we say the Bible teaches about the day of Atonement? Judgment? Cleansing from sin? Notice the next passage:

*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. 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?" 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. The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua: “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. “ ‘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.** See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘and I will **remove the sin of this land in a single day.**” Zech 3:1-9*

Who is the Branch? Christ and He comes to His temple, to do what? To cleanse it and who/what is being cleansed? The people!

What about the Hebrews text that the sanctuary in heaven is not build with human hands?

*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.** 2Cor 5:1*

*“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 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. 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 my Father’s “house” ??? Temple? Sanctuary? Is room for many???

*One day the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. Job 1:6*

*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. Heb 12:22,23*

*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 2:4*

Do these passages give any insight as to what the heavenly sanctuary is? Where God dwells? What Christ is trying to cleanse?

Where does sin occur? In the hearts and minds of intelligent beings and Christ is mediating the truth and love of God to reinfuse it back into all His intelligent creatures who trust Him, in order to fulfill His mystery:

*And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 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*

## WEDNESDAY

Second paragraph states, “Although sinners deserve death, their natural life is preserved through God’s grace, all made possible only through the Cross.” – thoughts? What does this mean?

Why do sinners deserve death?

Why does a man who jumps off the Empire State building deserve death?

Why does a person who ties weights on their legs and jumps in the ocean deserve death?

Why does a child born with HIV deserve death? Is it the child's fault?

Is it our fault as individuals that we are born in a terminal state?

Why does a person with a terminal condition who refuses a remedy deserve death?

Why do we deserve death?

Why is life possible only through the Cross?

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph "In order to..." thoughts? Is God's grace different? Are there two types of grace coming from God? Or is it that God's grace is always healing, always redemptive, always restoring the only difference is in the response of the recipients of His grace?

Read second paragraph "Jesus said..." thoughts? Why does the Cross become ineffective without the work of the Holy Spirit?

First, because without the HS our minds could not rightly comprehend what Christ accomplished so we wouldn't trust and second, because it is the HS who takes what Christ has achieved and makes it effectual in our lives!

## FRIDAY

Second paragraph – thoughts?

- Where does the Spirit dwell?
- Where does sin occur?
- What is Jesus working to cleanse from sin?
- Who is Jesus agent in accomplishing this cleansing work?
- Is intercession related to working in the hearts and minds (the Spirit Temple) to cleanse from sin?
- What happens when a person hardens their heart to the point they have completely shut out the Holy Spirit?
- What happens when more and more people in the world do this?

## 2008 Q4 Lesson 12 United to Christ

Read Memory Text – 2Cor 5:17:

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Thoughts? What does it mean to be “in” Christ?

*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> 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. John 17:20-23*

Does the above text shed light on what it means to be in Christ? How do you see it?

Does “in Christ” mean:

- In unity with Him?
- Union of mind, method, principle, motive?
- Harmony of values, morals, ethics?
- Oneness in desire, longing, drives?
- Loving others more than self?
- Being a new creation via the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?
- Other Bible metaphors or example to being a new creature?

*But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Cor 2:16*

*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*

*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*

*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.*

*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. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. <sup>28</sup> You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. <sup>29</sup> I will save you from all your uncleanness.*

How do we become new? Who does the renewing? Who does the recreating? Who does the cleansing? Who does the healing? What is our job? How do we experience this healing?



- Our job is to surrender in trust to our heavenly Physician
- God's job is to recreate, renew, heal us
- Our job is to choose to follow the prescription
- God's job is to strengthen us to follow His prescription

What is it that interferes with our ability to do this? Why is it so hard to experience this healing?

- Believing lies – many believe they cannot be changed, healed renewed here, that they get forgiveness here but renewal at the second coming.
- Believing false gospels or constructs of God that undermine genuine trust
- Habits, ingrained patterns of acting and behaving which take time to change. But when an old habit occurs many get discouraged believe a lie that they can't change and quit
- Trusting feelings over evidence
- Valuing the opinions of others over truth
- Ultimately, feelings of fear rather than motives of love

Why is it importance to realize that the plan of salvation is about renewal, regeneration, recreation not mere pardon or forgiveness?

I have many patients who come to see me who have suffered under sin. They have been overcome, they have made decision for which they now experience guilt, shame, self-loathing; what happens to that guilt, shame and self-loathing when a person is made new, when it is “no longer I that live but Christ lives in me”? What happens when we realize we are not the same person we used to be?

In the judgment what is the issue that determines where each sinner ends up? Their condition – we are all born terminal “dead in trespasses and sin” but we have been offered a free remedy that will cure us. All who have opened their minds to receive the remedy are transformed and thus will experience eternal life, but those who reject the remedy will be lost.

What is the remedy? Jesus, His perfection, His character, His life, which is downloaded from Him, via the HS to us!

The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God.” Ps. 40:8. {DA 175.5}

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}

Any Bible texts which support this view? The text from Ezekiel 36 above, Heb 8:10, 2Pet 1:4...

How do we experience this renewal, this regeneration? By trusting Jesus, by coming to know Him, by purposely inviting Him into our lives, by asking Him to send His Spirit to rewrite our minds, thoughts, desires to be like His. Then choosing to apply what He prescribes for our lives.

Does this mean we lose our individuality? No, we keep our individuality our personality but it is freed from the encumbrances of fear and selfishness, free to love others, free to stand for the right, free to give ourselves for others, free to stand up into our true selves, children of God!

Read key thought – thoughts? What do you understand the significance of the phrase “the new humanity instituted by Him in His own person”?

Read first paragraph “The sacrifice....” Thoughts? Christ’s sacrifice absolutely provided everything we need for salvation. The Cross will be our science and song through all eternity, thus we will constantly be gaining insights into what Christ has done for us at the Cross. But what do we currently understand Christ to have provided for us through His life, death and resurrection?

- Reveal the truth to win us to trust
- Truth about the Father
- Truth about Himself
- Truth about God’s use of power
- Truth about what God does to sinners
- Truth about Satan
- Truth about why death comes
- Truth about why the law cannot be broken
- Truth about the basis of life
- Truth that outward obedience does not make us friends of God and rituals don’t heal
- Other truths?
- Destroyed sin and cured our condition

*Overcame the infection to act in self-interest with perfect love thus destroying sin, satan and death (Heb 2:14, 2Tim 1:9,10).*

What do you think about: “This incorporation into Christ, through the ritual of baptism, is our participation in His death and resurrection; it’s our recognition that His death is our death because He died as our Substitute.”?

Does a ritual incorporate us into Christ? Or does the ritual of baptism merely symbolically represent what has already transpired? Does a wedding ring join people in the loving unity of marriage or does it symbolize what has transpired in their hearts?

Read Isaiah 1:11-18:

*“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 1:12 When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts?*

*ISA 1:13 Stop bringing meaningless offerings!*

*Your incense is detestable to me.*

*New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your evil assemblies.*

*ISA 1:14 Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates.*

*They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.*

*ISA 1:15 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;*

*ISA 1:16 wash and make yourselves clean.*

*Take your evil deeds out of my sight!*

*Stop doing wrong,*

*ISA 1:17 learn to do right!*

*Seek justice, encourage the oppressed.*

*Defend the cause of the fatherless,*

*plead the case of the widow.*

*ISA 1:18 “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.*

Thoughts – what is going on? What is the problem? What are the people doing? All the rituals that God instructed them to do, yet God is not pleased why? Because their hearts and minds were not transformed, they were still selfish and wicked. God wanted them renewed in heart, mind and character.

What about baptism? Does the ritual of baptism do anything to heal us? Is it possible to misunderstand baptism and think the ritual has some merit to cleanse, that by undergoing the ritual somehow unites us with Christ? Does it?

Is the ritual of baptism our incorporation into Christ’s death or symbolize our incorporation into His death?

Read Romans 6:1-4

*RO 6:1 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. NIV*

*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, fear 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 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. Jennings paraphrase*

## SUNDAY

The Two Humanities – what are they? At their base level how would you describe the two humanities?

- Terminal and Eternal?

Thoughts about the lesson's comparison of the humanity we inherent from Adam and the one we obtain through Christ?

Number six says Adam's humanity "brought condemnation" while Christ's brought "justification." Thoughts?

How do you hear this? Does it sound judicial? When I present the healing model many people, who like this view, ask why is there so much legal language in the Bible? Here is an example Romans 5:18 is often used to support the legal model. Let's read that verse:

*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.*

Thoughts? Does it sound legal? It kind of does, but what does the very next verse say?

*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. Romans 5:19*

Does that sound legal or does that sound constitutional – in other words in our very constitution, our very nature, our very being, our very condition?

Then what would be the cause of our condemnation? Our condition as sinners i.e. our condition is terminal and what would be the cause of our "justification"? Our healed condition we are actually transformed, set right, rightified, put right by Jesus Christ, as the verse says we are actually "made righteous."!

Read first paragraph "The fall of Adam..." thoughts? What does "spiritual death" mean?

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. <sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. Ephesians 2:1-5*

What kind of death is being described in this text? Are the people physically dead? What is the difference between spiritual death and physical death?

Does this text have any bearing?

*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. Matthew 10:28*

The word soul is *psuche* from which we get psyche, means our individuality, identity, personhood.

Would spiritual death be that state in which one has severed themselves from their source of life but the body is still alive, slowly dying but still alive? A state in which the mind is operating on principles that inevitably lead to death?

Physical example – tie weights on your legs and jump in the ocean – cut yourself off from the source of life, in this case air, but for a while still alive.

Sin is what? Distrust of God based on lies which severe the circle of love and trust, cut us off from the source of life which is God Himself. Thus when Adam sinned the human species was severed from the circle of life and was dying, except for God's interventions to save and restore.

This is demonstrated in the OT sacrificial system, when they confessed sin on the head of the animal the sinner would then cut the circulation. The animal is dead, but not immediately dead. It took some time as the heart continued to beat and pumped the blood out. Likewise, when Adam sinned He severed His connection with God, His condition was now terminal, without divine intervention He would die. Christ came to reverse what sin did to mankind and restore mankind back into unity with God.

And the OT system the blood represented the life of Christ was taken throughout the system revealing His life cleansing, renewing, regenerating, recreating, unifying and resurrecting the Spirit Temple as the Ephesians text says.

Read second paragraph "How then..." thoughts? What do you understand this paragraph to mean?

## MONDAY

First sentence is excellent, "The ultimate goal of Christ's work of salvation is to make all things new, thus permanently undoing the damage caused by sin." – thoughts about this?

Read second paragraph – thoughts? No question the work of redemption is one of recreation, what about the anthropomorphic (human-centered) view of this issue, do you agree with that view?

Is the problem of sin primarily and directly related to the fall of humans?

Where did sin originate? In heaven. With who? Lucifer who was an angel and 1/3 of the angels rebelled into sin before humans did. Is sin limited to humans only? What is so significant about the fall of humans? Why was Adam's fall so devastating to God's cause? Because Adam was created as part of the answer to Satan's rebellion. Mankind was created in God's image with the power of procreation and dominion to rule and they were created as the repository of God's living law of love. Thus, in the middle of the heavenly war over God's trustworthiness this world became God's lesson book, God's theater to reveal the answers to stop the sin problem (1Cor 4:9). Satan targeted this planet to co-opt God's lesson book and turn mankind into his agents to misrepresent God.

The last paragraph cites Ephesians 2:15 about Christ making one man out of the two and thus bringing unity to all mankind, doing away with the walls of division. What do you understand this to mean?

Christ unified humanity in His person by taking our sinful condition upon Himself, uniting it with His divine self and thus curing our humanity in His own perfect, selfless life. There is now one humanity and we can experience this reality in our lives as our sinful self is brought into unity with His divine perfect self thus the two become one and selfishness is eradicated by His love and we become partakers of the divine nature!

## TUESDAY

Read third paragraph “In other words...” thoughts? How does this work? What enables us to experience this? Love and trust which allows us to surrender our selves to God and resist the internal drive of “save self”.

## WEDNESDAY

Any further thoughts on what it means to be “in Christ”?

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph “There is a...” thoughts? What does it mean in day to day life when we walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh? Does this mean that once we are filled with the Spirit we are beyond making spiritual mistakes?

What about Peter after his conversion, after Pentecost when he was filled with the spirit, what did he do regarding the Jews? Did Paul have to confront him openly? Why? Was Peter in the wrong? What does this mean? Wasn’t Peter an Apostle and Prophet? Wasn’t he walking in the Spirit?

To me it means that even though we have been converted, even though our desires and motives are to do all God would have us do, we still operate in fallen bodies, with fallen brains which have many habit patterns that take time to change. We have many biases which take time to remove and many things we still don’t understand correctly. Thus, those walking in the Spirit make mistakes and can be wrong, not wrong in motive or desire to do what is right, but wrong in their actions, choices, conclusions on the journey to ultimate perfection. But what Spirit led people do demonstrate is the capacity to learn from mistakes, willingness to follow the truth, openness to new light, perspectives, ideas and willingness to renounce error when the light of evidence and truth is brought to bear. Peter did this!

How do we relate to those who we view as having Spiritual gifts, insights, light or wisdom? Do we surrender our thinking to them? Do we think for ourselves?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? What constitutes the church? Is it denominationally defined or is it constructed of all those who have put their lives in Christ’s hands?

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? How do you understand this insight? Do you hear this as Jesus doing something to the Father so that the Father can now find it in His heart to love us? Or do you hear it as Christ doing something to mankind so that we can enter into God’s love as Christ does? How does God love His Son?



## 2008 Q4 Lesson 13 Atonement and Universal Harmony

Thoughts about the title?

Was the death of Christ needed for more than the salvation of mankind? Any Bible texts to support this?

*And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. <sup>8</sup> But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. <sup>9</sup> 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. Revelation 12:7–9*

*Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. <sup>12</sup> In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” <sup>13</sup> Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!” Revelation 5:11–13*

*For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. 1 Cor 4:9*

*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, <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Col 2:13–15*

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Eph 6:10–12*

Do we have a Biblical basis to understand that sin includes more than human beings? Do we have enough Biblical basis to understand that the loyal beings in the universe needed the Cross? But what did they need the Cross to accomplish for them? Did they need forgiveness of sins? What did they need?

We have a Biblical basis to understand that when Christ came to save mankind that He was also securing the rest of the universe from falling away into Satanic deception.

Do we see any examples in the Bible in which Satan battles with loyal heavenly beings and even tries to deceive them?

Job Chapter all the sons of God gathered before God and Satan came from roaming the earth and began to make allegations against God. Satan was attempting to press his case with heavenly beings, trying to gain more supporters, trying to spread the rebellion.

Daniel Chapter 10:

*In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.*

<sup>2</sup> At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. <sup>3</sup> I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

<sup>4</sup> On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, <sup>5</sup> I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. <sup>6</sup> His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

<sup>7</sup> I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. <sup>8</sup> So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. <sup>9</sup> Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.

<sup>10</sup> A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. <sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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....”

<sup>20</sup> 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;** <sup>21</sup> 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? Who is the king of Persia? A human being Cyrus. Who is the prince of Persia that resisted the angel that came to Daniel for 21 days? Who is the “Prince of this world?” (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11)? Satan, then would the prince of Persia be greater than the prince of the entire world? No, so it is not Satan, it is not one of God’s angels, and it is not a human being, then who is it? One of Satan’s angels that left heaven with Satan, and who would the “prince of Greece” be? Another of Satan’s angels.

Why do you think the angel from God says no one supports him against the fallen angels except Michael? Do you think the rest of the angels are in heaven idly watching and doing nothing?

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? Heb 1:14

Could it imply that there are angelic battles like this going on all over the earth with good angels working to hold back the power of evil angels and the other angels were currently busy with their own conflicts?

Or might it imply there are levels of angelic authority and power or ability and there were few angels with the skill and ability to contend with the prince of Persia? (see the Eph 6 text above).

We are asking the question do the beings of others worlds need the Cross? Notice what Jesus said about the Cross and the Prince of this world:

*Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself.” John 12:31, 32*

What is this talking about? Many texts say draw all “men” but the word men is supplied by the translators it is not in the Greek. Jesus didn’t say He would draw all *men* but He would draw *all* to Himself.

From where is Satan cast out? How does the Cross of Christ accomplish this?

Satan is cast out of the hearts and minds of intelligent beings. At the Cross all the loyal beings in heaven saw Satan exposed for the liar and fraud he is and all sympathy, all question, all willingness to listen was erased and all the intelligences in the universe after the Cross closed their minds to Satan. He was cast out. Christ also, in His victory cast out the Satanic infection from humanity and restored God’s law of love into this species again.

Notice that the Cross of Christ is not only for our reconciliation, but the universe 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*

Thoughts about God’s plan to heal His universe?

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph “The restoration...” What do you understand this to mean? I believe the lesson is correct the Day of Atonement ritual was teaching “the restoration of God’s creation to its original design.” If this is correct, where is such work taking place? Would it not be in the creation itself?

Read last paragraph “The cleansing...” thoughts? Where does much of our current understanding come from on this subject? Is it new Biblical insights that have been discovered in the last 75 years or are they perspectives which were discovered and taught at least 120 years ago? Now, it doesn’t mean something is incorrect because it has been taught for years, not at all, but isn’t truth unfolding? Are we not to advance in truth? Should not our appreciation, comprehension and insight grow over time? Or is our understanding to stay stagnant?

What would you think about a physician who was using the same understanding and knowledge from 120 years ago? Or a dentist, contractor, plumber, physicist, mathematician? Don’t we see knowledge increasing?

Doesn’t the Bible specifically promise that Biblical knowledge will increase as we near the end of time?

*But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” Daniel 12:4*

Have we over the last 75 years been experiencing increasing knowledge in our Biblical understanding or are we stagnant holding to understanding that is over 100 years old?

The history of the reformation is one in which a reformer would discover new truth and then the reformer dies and his followers stagnate no longer growing or searching for new truth themselves. Then another Bible student comes along and uncovers new truth taking the reformation further until that person dies and further stagnation, while many refuse to follow new truth sticking instead to the old landmarks. Are we as a church in danger of doing this? Are we in danger of refusing to follow the unfolding of truth and instead are we stuck in the past?

One of the founders of our church, who was intimately involved in crafting our current understanding of the sanctuary doctrine said the following, in 1900, after our doctrinal position on this subject was formed:

“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, 1900

Is there more to discover on this topic? Should we rest with what has already been stated? Should we dig deeper?

What is the key to understanding the old symbolic system? The Gospel of Jesus Christ! Far too many make the mistake of studying the symbols of the OT and then form theories in which Jesus is forced to conform to their interpretation of the symbols rather than understanding the symbols in light of Jesus!

What are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit waiting on? Why have they not returned? Is there some legal battle going on in a court in heaven that is preventing them from returning? Is the devil such a good attorney that They haven’t been able to finish all the cases in heaven?

*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. 2Peter 3:9*

What is the Lord waiting on? For people to be ready, for us to get well, for His children on earth to accept His remedy and be healed! For us to open the doors of the Spirit Temple to the Holy Spirit so He can cleanse us and prepare us for translation!

Does God need a heavenly court scene in order for Him to hear the evidence and figure out who should be saved and who should be lost?

Then what is going on?

*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”*

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

Do we take the evidence of all these texts to understand our position? Have we grown in our understanding?

The lesson specifically cites in paragraph two Daniel 7:9,10,22 and states this means we have a legal foundation or judicial process going on in heaven, do we?

<sup>9</sup> *“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.*

<sup>10</sup> *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...*

<sup>13</sup> *“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. <sup>14</sup> 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*

What is being described? “The court was seated” does it mean a judicial court or a royal court? In context 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 given all power and authority, crowned as Sovereign!

The texts do not tell us what books are opened or the purpose of the books, but we do know Christ is receiving power and authority. Is it possible the books are the books of Christ’s accomplishments, of the achievements He has made demonstrating all the evidence of His right to be Sovereign?

Then, if we keep reading in Daniel seven, we are taken back and told that an evil power will arise and will war against the saints until something happens? What?

Our lesson authors would have us believe that it is until God and Christ in heaven make a judgment in our favor, a judicial act, a legal pronouncement. They get this idea from Daniel 7:22.

*As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, <sup>22</sup> 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*

Does the Biblical evidence support this as a judicial act, a legal pronouncement by God in our favor?

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. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> 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? 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?

*Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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.*

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 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.

In Daniel 7 we see symbolically taught that Jesus comes to His Father and is empowered to go forward with all the agencies of heaven to enlighten, cleanse and purify His people on earth. 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:

*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.*

*<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.*

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 real transformation where we love others more than ourselves!

TQ 151 states "God's plan will ultimately wipe out sin." My question is how? How do you understand God does this? What models have you heard?

What is sin made out of? Lies and selfishness, what is it that wipes out lies and selfishness? Truth and love, can lies and selfishness be destroyed by the use of might and power? Remember the war is occurring in our minds and the weapons we use destroy everything that sets itself up against the knowledge of God!

## MONDAY Vindication of God's People

What do you understand this to mean? The lesson cites 1 Cor 15:51-54

*Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—<sup>52</sup> 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. <sup>53</sup> For the perishable must clothe itself with*



*the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.* <sup>54</sup> *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."*

What is it talking about in this text? Recreation, regeneration, transformation, renewal! Exactly, this is what God is working to do to restore us back to His original design specifications, to undo the damage of sin!

The lesson also cites Hebrews 9:27,28

*Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

How do you understand this passage?

Paul is saying man's natural destiny is terminal. Without the intervention of Christ we are destined to be born and die and face ultimate eternal separation from God. The Greek translated "face judgment" can mean experience separation. But because of Jesus He resolved the sickness that separates us and thus is returning to fully reconcile all those who have had their hearts and minds reunited to Him!

## TUESDAY

What is going on during the 1000 years?

Read second paragraph "The millennium..." thoughts? Of all the beings in the universe who wouldn't be ready for the final annihilation of the unrepentant, besides maybe the unrepentant? Wouldn't it be the saved from earth? Then what would be going on during the 1000 years to get the saved from earth ready for this? Does this mean during the 1000 years the saved from earth are changing, growing, maturing, developing?

Will anyone on earth when Christ appears know 100% correctly everything in the Bible? Will we all have a lot to learn? Will the thief on the cross have much to learn?

Could it be that the idea of "judgment" during this time is not about us passing down penalties or determining outcomes or meting out punitive sentences of appropriate retribution as has often been suggested, but about the saved developing their judgment as to what is happening? Is it about the saved maturing in their ability to think so they can accurately judge or comprehend or draw appropriate conclusions about what is transpiring?

What about these Bible texts suggested by the quarterly?

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. 1Cor 4:5

Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! 1Cor 6:3

*I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Rev 20:4*

Do these say the righteous pass sentence upon and hand out penalties to be imposed upon the wicked or does it say we make judgments about the wicked? Could it mean we make judgments about the reasons why they are where they are and about God's role in all of this?

*“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. <sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. <sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” Matthew 12:33-37*

What is this text saying? Is it not saying that the condition of the person determines the destiny of the person? If the heart is evil, it brings forth evil and condemns itself? If a person is terminal and refuses the remedy that person will get sick and die, by their own condition they are condemned? Those watching will judge why they die. Do the unrepentant die because the doctor gets mad at their refusal to accept his treatment and then executes them or does the doctor cry as he watches his patient die?

What about these passages?

*Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son. John 5:22*

*You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. John 8:15,16*

What do these texts mean? Was Jesus lying when He said this? Will Jesus have to back track and say, “Well I actually didn’t mean exactly that, the Father is going to judge everyone and I am going to be there to be your defense attorney to protect you from His harsh judgments”? Of course not, God does not have to pass judgments on the wicked who refuse His remedy because their very, unhealed, terminal condition is self-revealing, self-determining, self-terminating.

### WEDNESDAY

First paragraph states, “Biblical hope embraces the universe, and it anticipates the moment when the reconciliation obtained through the blood of the Lamb will reach universal dimensions.” How do you understand this? What does this mean?

The lesson states “the enemies of God will be confronted with the record of their sin and rebellion.” How does this happen?

The lesson points out that the wicked, Satan, and his angels all at some point acknowledge they were wrong and God and Christ are right. Then the lesson states “thus admitting that they deserve to die.” Why do they deserve to die if they admit they were wrong and God and Christ are righteous?

Last paragraph states “Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven. He has trained his powers to war against God; the purity, peace, and harmony of heaven would be to him supreme torture.” Does this sound like he is lost because of an imposed penalty or by natural result of how sin has transformed his nature and character?

### THURSDAY

The lesson states in last paragraph, “The glorious subject of the atonement will keep on challenging our deepest intellectual and spiritual capacities throughout eternity as we attempt to gain a more complete understanding of the love of God revealed on the cross.” Do you think the Cross would be the focus of Satan’s distortions and misrepresentations such that people draw the wrong lessons of what Christ has done? How has this happened?

**2009 Q1 Lesson 1      Heaven's Means of Communication**

Notes are not available.

## 2009 Q1 Lesson 2 The Prophetic Gift

What is the gift of prophecy? Is the prophetic gift different than the gift of prophecy? Does someone have to prophesy in order to have the prophetic gift?

What does it mean to be a prophet?

According to Easton's Bible Dictionary:

**PROPHET** — (Heb. *nabi*, from a root meaning “to bubble forth, as from a fountain,” hence “to utter”, comp. Ps 45:1). This Hebrew word is the first and the most generally used for a “prophet.” In the time of Samuel another word, *ro'eh*, “seer”, began to be used (1 Sam. 9:9). It occurs seven times in reference to Samuel. Afterwards another word, *hozeh*, “seer” (2 Sam. 24:11), was employed. In 1 Ch. 29:29 all these three words are used: “Samuel the seer (ro'eh), Nathan the prophet (nabi'), Gad the seer” (hozeh). In Josh. 13:22 Balaam is called (Heb.) a *kosem* “diviner,” a word used only of a false prophet.

The “prophet” proclaimed the message given to him, as the “seer” beheld the vision of God. (See Num. 12:6, 8). Thus a prophet was a spokesman for God; he spake in God's name and by his authority (Ex. 7:1). He is the mouth by which God speaks to men (Jer. 1:9; Isa. 51:16), and hence what the prophet says is not of man but of God (2 Pet. 1:20, 21; comp. Heb. 3:7; Acts 4:25; 28:25). {Easton, M.G.: *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996, c1897}

Thoughts? A prophet then proclaims the message from God but does not have to make predictions about the future.

What is the difference between a prophet a teacher and a preacher?

A prophet, in addition to correcting and reproofing sin and explaining truth, is used by God to unfold truth, to help people grow in knowledge, to reveal new light. The preacher proclaims the light already known and the teacher instructs, educates and helps people understand the truth already known.

What does it mean to be inspired?

Webster Dictionary:

- **a:** divine influence or action on a person believed to qualify him or her to receive and communicate sacred revelation
- **b:** the action or power of moving the intellect or emotions **c:** the act of influencing or suggesting opinions

Can someone be inspired by something or someone other than God? What? Can we be “inspired” by another person? Can we be inspired by evil forces?

### SABBATH

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Any examples of people making predictions that didn't come true? Did anyone get the email that was going around this summer? Here is one I got this summer:

### PRIORITY REPORT: MARTIAL LAW IS NOW ONLY WEEKS AWAY!

I don't know whether you have heard of George Green, but he is a former investment banker (Registered Financial Principal with the N.A.S.D.) and a Broker/Dealer, Securities Un-

derwriter, Real Estate Developer, Insurance Broker and Publisher, who was invited to become a member of the ‘Power Elite’.

However, faced with a moral and ethical dilemma, he turned his back on his former associates and chose to walk an entirely different path in which he has tried to warn the world of the Power Elite’s plans for the future.

The bottom line is that Bush is now expected to introduce Martial Law on or before 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008 - since this date marks the end of the Fiscal Year, when revelations about the true state of the economy - and the questionable practices of the Federal Reserve - are likely to result in riots in the streets and stockbrokers, bankers and financiers throwing themselves off the roofs of their buildings! It is not certain what pretext Bush proposes to use to ‘justify’ the imposition of Martial Law, but keep an eye on any War Games scheduled to take place in September 2008. My own money is on a Fort Detrick created Flu Pandemic spread primarily by compulsory vaccination but, judging from the deliberate complexity and diversity of 9/11, we must be prepared for multiple false flag events to throw state government and the citizenry off balance.

Thoughts? How often do you get this kind of stuff? How do you deal with it?

## FRIDAY

Read question 2 – thoughts?

There is a person I know, who for thirty years has been crying: Emanate economic meltdown, give your money to missions, take out your retirement and savings and give it to missions before you can’t give anymore... –thoughts about this approach?

Ultimately those who preach the demise of the economy, the demise of freedom, will eventually be right, because the Bible tells us that such events will occur before Christ comes, but is it helpful to preach for decades that such a collapse is immanent?

Graham Maxwell tells that when his parents were dating, WWI occurred and many of the leaders were preaching “this is the end”—don’t marry, sell all you have & give to the church, etc. but, his father read the Bible which says, “occupy until I come” and so he went forward and married, for which Graham was grateful.

Where is the balance between presenting the truth that we need to be preparing for Christ’s coming and extremes in which we would actually avoid fulfilling God’s cause for our lives?

What is the primary purpose of Bible prophecy? Is the primary purpose of Bible prophecy so that people can accurately predict the future?

The primary purpose is so inspire hope, encouragement, wisdom and that when the future events unfold the people of God will see that God was not taken by surprise, that God knows the events before they happen and our faith, confidence and trust in God will be affirmed. So that we can recognize God’s hand as reality unfolds, thus not be caught off guard, or confused as history occurs. The promise and prophecy of a Messiah were given so that when the Messiah appeared humans could know He was the one.

## SABBATH

Read last paragraph “In Scripture, individuals...” thoughts? If prophets are not perfect does that mean everything they say or do is correct? Do genuine prophets from God ever make mistakes, which if followed by the church, would lead the church astray?

What about Peter after his conversion, after his reinstatement by Christ what did he do when it came to dealing with Gentiles? Did Paul have to confront him openly because he was wrong? What could have happened in the church had Paul not confronted Peter? Could Peter's example have become part of Christian teaching and doctrine? Could people have been led astray?

What is the lesson for us when it comes to how we deal with prophets, even when we know they are from God? Are we to give up our thinking and follow what God has told someone else? Or are we to hear what the prophet says and then study it out for ourselves, communing with God for ourselves, and with a Holy Spirit enlightened mind come to our own conclusion as to how we will respond to the message from the prophet? Romans 14:5 we are to be fully persuaded in our own minds.

## SUNDAY

The lesson focuses on Abraham and his life and how he was not only a patriarch but also a prophet. Read the bottom green section – thoughts?

Can you think of others in the Bible, who God used who struggled with sin in their lives?

- Noah – had a drinking problem
- Isaac refused to follow God's revealed will
- Rebekah was a deceiver
- Jacob was a deceiver and polygamist
- Judah had a child with his daughter-in-law who he thought was a prostitute
- Rueben had an affair with Jacob's concubine Bilhah
- Aaron built a golden calf and led the people in idolatry and failed to discipline his sons
- Eli was a poor father
- Samuel was a poor father
- David was a man of blood, adulterer, murderer, polygamist
- Solomon was a mega polygamist, built temples to false gods and sacrificed his son to Moloch
- Jonah was a racist
- The twelve Apostles were arrogant, proud and constantly strove for supremacy
- Martin Luther was a racist and alcoholic

What does this tell us about God? What does this tell us about how we should treat others when we know about some sin in their lives?

Does a person have to be perfect in order to be a prophet? What is necessary in order for a person to be one of God's agents? Willingness to trust God and grow with God over time.

## MONDAY

The lesson points out that Moses was the first named prophet over Israel, yet God made a distinction between Moses and prophets what was it?

Read Numbers 12:1-8

*Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. <sup>2</sup> "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And the LORD heard this.*



<sup>3</sup> (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.) <sup>4</sup> At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, “Come out to the Tent of Meeting, all three of you.” So the three of them came out. <sup>5</sup> Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward, <sup>6</sup> he said, “Listen to my words: “When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. <sup>7</sup> But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. <sup>8</sup> With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD.

Thoughts? Clearly Moses was a prophet, but was there more? What about Abraham: did God call Abraham and Moses something special?

*But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, Isaiah 41:8*

*The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Exodus 33:11*

Both Abraham and Moses were called friends of God – why might that be?

What distinguishes someone as a friend? Is a friend someone who genuinely cares about the other, genuinely is interested in the other person, their problems, their concerns, shares in their joys and protects them?

What did Moses and Abraham both do in their relationship with God? They argued with Him for a particular reason – why?

*The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. <sup>23</sup> Then Abraham approached him and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? <sup>24</sup> What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? <sup>25</sup> Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Ruler of all the earth do right?” Genesis 18:22-25*

What was Abraham concerned with? God’s reputation! God you can’t do it, what would it do to your reputation to destroy the righteous with the wicked, you certainly aren’t a God like that!

What about Moses – what did he argue with God about?

*“I have seen these people,” the LORD said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. <sup>10</sup> Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.”*

*<sup>11</sup> But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. “O LORD,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup> Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. Exodus 32:9-12*

Thoughts? Moses was also concerned about God’s reputation about what others would think of God.

Jesus invites us into understanding friendship with Him (John 15:15) telling us that we may know God’s business, what would it mean for us to be one of God’s friends? What would be one of our highest priorities? Revealing the truth about God, saying of God what is right!

What would you prefer to be known as, a prophet of God or a friend of God?

Maybe friends of God are prophets because His friends will speak of Him what is right! Might you be a prophet of God? Will God have prophets at the end of time, people who speak for Him?

Revelation 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. <sup>2</sup> 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: <sup>3</sup> “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.**”*

Who are these “servants” of God? They are people being sealed before the end of time, before a great multitude comes into God’s kingdom – but who are they?

Revelation 10:7 and over twenty other places in the Bible:

*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.**”*

Is God going to have a group of prophets on the earth before He comes again?

*Acts 2:17, 18 “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.*

*Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.*

What is God waiting for? For a group of people so settled into the truth about Him that they cannot be moved!

## TUESDAY

Read last paragraph “All through...” thoughts?

Was the Bible dictated by God and the prophets were just taking down what God said or did God inspire the prophets with truth, concepts, insights, wisdom, light, knowledge and left the prophets free to use their own methods and style of communication to write out these ideas?

How do we understand the inspiration of Scripture? Are the words of the Bible inspired? Is there one version of the Bible more inspired than another, for instance the KJV?

Does it matter which language the Bible is read in? When we translate what is most important to accurately translate the words or to accurately translate the meaning?

*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. <sup>15</sup> For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. <sup>16</sup> 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: <sup>17</sup> Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 1Thes 4:13-17 KJV*

What do you think about the idea that we which are alive won't prevent those who are asleep? Do you think it means, don't worry the saved on earth won't be trying to hold people in the graves to keep them from going to] heaven?

The English in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century meant something different than it does today. In fact, the meanings of certain words have reversed themselves. In 1611 the word prevent meant to precede, where as the word LET meant to hinder. Today if you let someone do something what are you doing? Giving permission, except in tennis where a LET ball is a hindered ball. In 1611, let meant to hinder and prevent meant to precede.

Should we use versions in which the language has so changed the meaning is lost?

### WEDNESDAY

In Bible times there were prophetesses what does it say about God that He spoke through women?

What about today? Is God willing to speak through women today? Is He willing to have women represent Him in leadership in the church? Are we?

Why do we resist allowing women into leadership in the church?

### THURSDAY

Read the third paragraph "In the New Testament..." thoughts? What do you think about the reasons the lesson gives that sets the Apostles apart? How many had seen Christ die? Only John, all the rest ran. And do you notice anything different about John's gospel than the other three? Do you think John learned something at the Cross that the other's missed?

Generally, the term apostle is reserved for the twelve and Paul, but is there legitimate application beyond them?

What makes someone an Apostle? Being an envoy or representative of another, being sent by another as their ambassador or representative – was Jesus also an apostle?

*Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. Heb 1:1*

Again Jesus said,

*"Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." John 20:21*

Who then is an apostle?

## 2009 Q1 Lesson 3     **Spiritual Gifts and Prophecy**

### SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs “Seventh-day Adventists believe...” thoughts?

What is the most important point of these two paragraphs? Everything is to be tested by the Word of God!

- The Mormons believe the Bible was in error and needed to have Joseph Smith correct portions of it and the Book of Mormon supersedes the Bible.
- The Jehovah Witnesses believe the Bible has errors, and corrected several portions.
- Other organizations believe church tradition is more reliable than the Bible.

Notice the SDA position:

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. FW 77

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}

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}

Thoughts? The above statements remain the official position of the church. Do you find that our members generally practice this counsel of building all our position from the Bible?

### SUNDAY

Read second paragraph “According to the New Testament...” thoughts?

Spiritual gifts are given to help the church complete its mission, what is the mission of the church? How would you say it?

- To bring people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ?
- To proclaim a message that will free people from the bondage of sin?
- To tell the truth about God which destroys the lies of Satan and wins to trust?
- To love people as God loves people?
- A hospital for sinners?

Upon all who believe, God has placed the burden of raising up churches. The express purpose of the church is to educate men and women to use their intrusted capabilities for the benefit of the world, to employ the means God has lent, for His glory. He has made human beings His stewards. They are to employ His intrusted talents in building up His work and enlarging His kingdom. Pacific Union Recorder August 1, 1901

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}

It was to give in His own life an illustration of unselfishness that Jesus came in the form of humanity. And all who accept this principle are to be workers together with Him in demonstrating it in practical life. To choose the right because it is right; to stand for truth at the cost of suffering and sacrifice—"this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." Isaiah 54:17. {Ed 154.4}

How do we show unselfishness in the church? How are we to treat those who have stumbled in sin?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

If you take the position that the edifying gifts are permanent but the sign gifts were not, what would be the internal conflict with that position? That position posits that the Bible is inspired and the Holy Spirit will enlighten to understand the Bible, blessing with knowledge and insight. It posits that the Bible is true and unerring and authoritative, yet it denies its own position because it denies what the Bible teaches will occur in the latter days:

Joel 2:28-32

*"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.*

*<sup>29</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.*

*<sup>30</sup> I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth,  
blood and fire and billows of smoke.*

*<sup>31</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood  
before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.*

*<sup>32</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved;  
for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance,  
as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.*

In the latter days, before Christ's return there will be the gift of prophecy, so if one were to believe the Bible and accept its teaching one could not discount the entire spectrum of spiritual gifts.

Another, problem I personally have with restricting the spiritual gifts is that we are basically denying the Holy Spirit to gift people as the Holy Spirit sees fit to do.

Read last two paragraphs – "The church father..." thoughts?

What contributes to increased or decreased spiritual gifts in the church? Is it related to the people in some fashion? How? Does it have to do with the willingness and openness of the hearts and minds of the people to follow truth? Does God arbitrarily open and close the doors of heavenly blessing? Could the belief a person holds about God matter? Do we have any examples of God empowering people to lie about Him? Do we have any examples where God gave spiritual gifts

to take a false message to the world? Would it be necessary for the gifts of the spirit to be manifested that we come back into a true knowledge of God?

What about the idea that the gift of prophecy is to be manifested in the “end-time remnant church”? The lesson quotes Revelation 12:17 as Biblical support for this. Let’s read this passage.

*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.*

Does this passage say anything about the gift of prophecy? Often it is linked with Revelation 19:10, which is sometimes interpreted as:

*At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do it! 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.” NIV*

What does this mean? When we put the two texts together is the most reasonable conclusion is that the remnant people will keep the commandments of God, have the testimony of Jesus, and the testimony of Jesus means that the prophetic gift will be manifested that group? Or is there other reasonable maybe more reasonable interpretations?

*I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “Don’t do it! I am a servant together with you and with your fellow-believers, all those who hold to the truth that Jesus revealed. Worship God!” For the truth that Jesus revealed is what inspires the prophets. Rev 19:10 GNT*

Does this translation make a difference in how we understand what it means to be the remnant people? Would the remnant people not only keep to the commandments of God but possess the spirit which inspired the prophets? Would they not hold to the actual testimony of Jesus? And what was the central theme of Jesus testimony?

*If you have seen me you have seen the Father! John 14:9*

*Father I have finished the work you have given me to do I have made you known unto men! John 17:4-6*

What would be a more reliable identifier of God’s end time people in addition to living like Jesus lived, which means living the law of love, which is the same as saying keeping the Commandments

- someone manifesting supernatural abilities and prophetic gifts or
- a group of people holding to the actual testimony of Jesus?
- Was the Jewish Nation specifically chosen by God and called a remnant?
- Were they blessed with the commandments of God?
- Did they have the prophetic gift manifested amongst them?

And when Jesus came who did Jesus say they were children of? Satan, why? Because they held to Satan’s lies about God and rejected Jesus’ testimony about God!

Could there be another organization which has the commandments of God, has had the prophetic gift revealed amongst it, yet has been infected with lies about God?

Why do we say we are the remnant today? On what basis do we make this claim? Because EGW had the prophetic gift, if we make the assumption that all people in the world agree she had the genuine gift of prophecy, what does that mean for this church today? We have the writings of a



dead prophet – and what is the Bible? The writings of dead prophets, which all the churches have. So how is the gift being manifested in our church today?

Is it possible, we have missed the point of this prophecy, that the remnant will have not an individual who had the prophetic gift as an historic figure in their church, but the remnant will be a group of people who have the law of God written on their hearts and they give the same testimony that Jesus gave about the Father? And I would posit further, that the remnant have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that filled the prophets. They are so settled into the truth they cannot be moved!

If we as a people hold to lies about God will it matter whether the prophetic gift was once demonstrated amongst us? Did it matter for Israel when Christ came?

The issue for us today, present truth for our time is NOT whether the prophetic gift has been demonstrated amongst this organization, the present truth is “Are we obedient to God’s law of love and holding to the actual testimony Jesus gave – primarily about His Father?”

## TUESDAY

Counterfeit gifts of the Spirit –

Can you list any gifts or workings of the Holy Spirit that have been counterfeited?

- Snakes, water to blood, frogs – the first three plagues of Egypt
- Speaking in tongues
- Healing
- Prophecy
- Preaching
- Teaching
- Exorcism

Read last four paragraphs starting at “Counterfeit gifts...”

If gifts of the spirit can be counterfeited what is the most reliable thing to base your faith, trust, belief upon? The truth! The actual message, methods, principles taught and practiced.

We must know God’s character and law, not merely the 10 Commandments but the law of love and liberty such that we can recognize when those who promote the commandments are actually violating God’s law.

In Christ’s day would the religious leaders have been promoters of the 10 Commandments? Was their message from God? We must look deeper than the 10 Commandments to the basis for the 10 Commandments which is the law of love itself! The principle of self-sacrifice, giving, beneficence, esteeming others more highly than ourselves.

What is the danger when there is too much emphasis on the miraculous? It shuts off thinking, it shuts down the pursuit of truth, it blinds the mind and actually leads away from God.

*“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. <sup>22</sup> 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?’ <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ Matthew 7:21-23*

*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, <sup>10</sup> 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. 2 Thes 2:9,10*

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Does it bother you that some people, apparently not inspired by God, are able to make accurate predictions of future events?

If a student enrolled in college and made a prediction that they would graduate in four years with a BS and then four years later they did, would you consider they had the prophetic gift because their prediction came true? Why not?

If a person predicts the murder of someone in the neighborhood on a specific date and then later, the person who made the prediction carries out the murder on the specified date would you consider that person to have the prophetic gift?

Do evil angels have the ability to predict what they intend to do and then carry out what God does not restrict them from doing? Does that mean they know the future?

Is the fulfillment of a prediction a guarantee that it is a true prophecy from God?

Read last paragraph “Prophets were men...” thoughts? If someone gave a prophecy until it happened how would you know whether it was from God or not? By the truth, by whether it is in harmony with God’s character and law of love and liberty. By testing it against the Scripture read widely.

## THURSDAY

The gift of tongues – what does the Bible teach this gift is and what was its purpose?

In Genesis, after the flood mankind unified in rebellion against God, as a means to slow the tide of evil God confused the languages, which resulted in cultural division. At Pentecost God is neutralizing this barrier and opening the channels of communication to accelerate the spreading of the gospel.

The true gift of tongues is always to open channels of communication for the spreading of the gospel. Satan counters God’s gifts with false gifts and has a counterfeit gift of tongues in which various unintelligible noises are made associated with heightened emotions which are supposedly works of the Holy Spirit. These utterances do not open channels of communication or the spreading of the gospel but cause confusion requiring some other person to stand up and “interpret” what was said. Often these utterances are associated with evidence demonstrating them to be from the false spirit.

In Galatians we are told what happens when the true Spirit comes, we develop certain traits of character, the last being “self-control.” When God’s Spirit comes upon people they do not lose control of themselves in emotional hysteria falling on the floor, barking, laughing uncontrollably, or other outbursts but have ever increasing self-governance.

John the Baptist had more the Holy Spirit than anyone else, according to Jesus, and he never lost control of Himself. And Jesus Himself who was full of the Holy Spirit was never seen flopping around on the ground hollering gibberish. In fact, the Biblical record describes the demoniacs as the ones who fall around out of control.

God is a God of order and everything He does is done in perfect order. God created mankind with reason and works via the truth to ennoble, cleanse and restore His image within. Satan works with counterfeit gifts to shut down the avenues of the mind which are sensitive to the truth for he knows he has no truth. The false gift of tongues is one of those avenues which close the mind to truth.

FRIDAY

Question 3 read and discuss

**2009 Q1 Lesson 4 The Gift of Prophecy and God's Remnant Church**

Notes are not available.

**2009 Q1 Lesson 5 The Inspiration of the Prophets**

Notes are not available.

## 2009 Q1 Lesson 6 Testing the Prophets

What is the purpose of the gift of prophecy? God is trying to break through the darkness in our minds and reach us.

Why does God have prophets?

Is prophecy God's preferred method of communication? Why is it necessary?

Read last paragraph Sabbath's lesson, "Although Mrs. White..."

This is significant, EGW never made the claim, others have felt the need to push this idea. EGW was focused on ministering to others God's love and truth to the best of her ability.

First, before we get into the lesson is it important to believe Ellen White was a prophet?

Does the Bible teach that Spiritual things are Spiritually discerned? What does that mean? Doesn't it mean that our carnal minds, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, cannot comprehend the things of God? Then, wouldn't that mean that whoever writes the truth is only able to do so because the Holy Spirit enlightened their minds?

If Billy Graham speaks or writes the truth, who enabled Him? Max Lucado? You, your pastor or Ellen White? To the degree someone presents the truth about God they are only able to do so because of the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

Is the truth spoken by a prophet any purer than the truth spoken by a church member, teacher, preacher, lay leader?

So the question as we will see, the only truly important question is, is the person speaking truth?

### SUNDAY

How did God speak to prophets? Dreams and visions, was this God's preferred method?

Read second paragraph "During her..."

Thoughts? Some have suggested Ellen White had a seizure disorder called Temporal Lobe Epilepsy (TLE) and it is this neurological disorder which has accounted for her visions and dreams.

In temporal lobe epilepsy, the following can occur:

- Often occurs after a head injury
- Alteration of consciousness
- Staring off into space
- Stereotypic movements, lip smacking, posturing, rigidity
- Complete unawareness of surroundings
- Non-responsiveness to any external stimuli including pain
- Hallucinations of various kinds, visual, auditory
- Excessive religious preoccupation
- Hypergraphia – writing profusely
- Often has an aura
- Typically lasts less than two to three minutes
- Breathing may be extremely shallow or even absent, but only for a few seconds or less than a minute
- Several minutes of confusion after the seizure is over



Symptoms of TLE vary widely from person to person, but the same person only has a few symptoms that repeat over and over again with each seizure.

TLE does not increase IQ, creativity, insight, wisdom, or provide any new information. During a seizure, neural circuits of the brain fire and thus one experiences only events, memories or knowledge already contained in their data base. No new information has ever been discovered during a seizure

The movements in TLE are purposeless and repetitive

The hypergraphia of TLE is not creative but repetitive and often meaningless, repeating a verse over and over again hundreds of times, long lists of irrelevant items. I had a patient with TLE and she had journals and journals of different material. Her handwriting changed throughout and the subject matter jumped all over the place with no organization or reason.

EGW's writings demonstrate clear organization, insight, wisdom and truth consistent with scripture. Therefore, her writings are not products of a seizure disorder.

What about reported physical phenomenon that accompanied the visions of Ellen White?

- Did not breathe for over an hour, examined by physicians, no cyanosis
- Supernatural strength
- Unaware of her surroundings
- Are these good reasons to believe anything she wrote? Why or why not?
- Are these proof she had the genuine prophetic gift? Why or why not?
- Supernatural signs and wonders can be counterfeited and thus are not good evidence to determine whether someone is from God or not.

Moses threw his staff down and it became a serpent and so did Janis and Jambres the sorcerers of pharaoh.

Satanic agencies have the ability to perform supernatural feats, strength, etc., yet this doesn't prove a message from such a person is true.

### MONDAY—Agreement with the Bible

A test of a true prophet is that their writings always agree with the Bible—notice this written by EGW:

The Lord designs to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the importance of the truth of His Word. The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man's duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God's Word; yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse. {FLB 295.5}

What does it sound like she says her writings were to do? A children's Bible commentary, making the Bible easier to understand but not presenting new truths.

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. FW 77

Let the Testimonies be judged by their fruits. What is the spirit of their teaching? What has been the result of their influence? “All who desire to do so can acquaint themselves with the fruits of these visions. . . .” This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work . . . bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter. The Testimonies are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil.” FLB 296

Thoughts? What do you notice about her attitude? Think for yourself, examine the evidence, come to your own conclusion, don’t believe because someone says to, don’t believe because of supernatural signs. Do you like this approach?

What evidence can we look to? How about testable things she wrote?

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.

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....

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.

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).

Science has now documented that the choices we make, the foods we eat, the activities we engage in result in changes in our DNA expression. This is called epigenetic changes. Chemical groups called methyl groups attached to DNA regions modifying how genes are expressed and these modifications which occur during our lifetime are passed along to our children. Thus, EGW was correct. How could she know this 100 years before science revealed it to be true? Good guess? (See articles at end of notes)

Other examples of scientific truth revealed before its time?

- Tobacco was prescribed by doctors in her day for lung disease, she warned of its damaging effects
- She warned that meat eating increases cancer when everyone thought meat and potatoes was the best diet to eat
- She warned of “cancerous germs” now science has documented various viruses cause cancer HPV, it wasn’t until the 1980’s that HPV was discovered to cause cervical cancer

How could a woman with a third grade education write counsels on health so accurately that went against the scientific knowledge of her time?

Read first paragraph Monday – thoughts?

- What does the test of a prophet apply to? Does it apply to everything the prophet says, does or writes?

- What if a prophet gets a message from God that contradicts a message previously sent by God? What then?
- Did Abraham get a message from God to sacrifice Isaac? Did he later get a message contradicting that?
- Did Balaam get a message from God not to go with the pagan emissaries? Did he later get a message to go?
- Did Jonah get a message that God was going to destroy Nineveh? Did God do something different?
- Did God tell the Israelites through Samuel, no kings? Did God through Samuel pick their first two kings?

What is the point? Does God ever say, “Stop thinking, become mindless robots and do what you are told?” Or does God want each of us to think for ourselves, even when a message comes from a prophet, and come to our own conclusion?

What is more important than being able to tell who is a prophet from God and who is not a prophet of God? Becoming a friend of God so that you can learn to think for yourself and discern the right from the wrong. So that even if an angel from heaven comes with another message you won’t be deceived.

In the end of time when Satanic delusion reaches a crescendo only those who have developed the ability to think for themselves and weigh the evidence will be safe from being drawn into the power of the lie.

Read bottom green question – thoughts?

What is it that makes someone or something ultimately authoritative? The truth itself!

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “The fulfillment...” thoughts?

I am not a Hebrew scholar but it struck me that words can have multiple meanings. Overthrow could merely refer to physical destruction and overthrow, but could also refer to a overthrow of nature, heart, motive etc. i.e. conversion or repentance.

I wondered if the Hebrew would support this possibility.

From The Dictionary of Biblical Languages:

**200** פָּאָק (*hā·pāk*): v.; Str. 2015; TWOT 512—**1.** LN 20.31-20.60 (qal) **overthrow**, i.e., to cause ruin as an extension of flipping over an object (Ge 19:21); (qal pass.) **be destroyed**, formally, overturned (La 4:6+); **2.** LN 13.48-13.68 (qal) **change**, turn into, i.e., change the essential form or nature of something (Lev 13:3); (nif) **change**, transformed, be turned into (Ex 7:15); **3.** LN 25.223-25.250 (nif) **be disturbed**, i.e., have great feelings of distress which are difficult to control as an extension of the chaotic flipping over of an object. { Swanson, James: *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*. electronic ed. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, S. DBLH 2200, #3 }

From Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon:

**2015** פָּקַח [*haphak* /haw·fak/] v. A primitive root; TWOT 512; GK (Goodrick-Kohlenberger) 2200; 94 occurrences; AV translates as “turn” 57 times, “overthrow” 13 times, “overturn” five times, “change” three times, “turn ...” six times, “become” once, “came” once, “converted” once, “gave” once, “make” once, “perverse” once, “perverted” once, “retired” once, and “tumbled” once.

1. to turn, overthrow, overturn. 1A (Qal). *IA1* to overturn, overthrow. *IA2* to turn, turn about, turn over, turn around. *IA3* to change, transform. 1B (Niphal). *IB1* to turn oneself, turn, turn back. *IB2* to change oneself. *IB3* to be perverse. *IB4* to be turned, be turned over, be changed, be turned against. *IB5* to be reversed. *IB6* to be overturned, be overthrown. *IB7* to be upturned. 1C (Hith-pael). *IC1* to transform oneself. *IC2* to turn this way and that, turn every way. *ID* (Hophal) to turn on someone.

Could it be possible that the prophecy of Jonah meant more than just physical destruction? Was God moving to reach the people of Nineveh for salvation? Is it possible that Nineveh was not overturned physically because they were overturned spiritually?

## WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph – thoughts? What purpose did Jesus take humanity upon Himself?

“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

Do you hear the uplifting of Jesus Christ as our Savior?

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Might the picture of God one presents make a difference? Would the fruits of the life and the outcome of health depend on the type of God one believes in?

- Extrinsic religiosity was a significant predictor of child abuse potential
- Intrinsic religiosity was not (Dyslin & Thomsen, 2005)
- Physical abuse has a negative relationship with spiritual development, but not with religiosity (Webber & Cummings, 2003)
- Religion without knowing God results in greater abuse of children
- A 1996 study of 596 hospitalized elderly patients found those who believed in a punishing God were more likely to have died two years later than those who believed in a more loving God.

## FRIDAY

questions 1 and 3 read and discuss

**REWRITING DARWIN: THE NEW NON-GENETIC INHERITANCE**

09 July 2008

From New Scientist Print Edition. Subscribe and get 4 free issues.

Emma Young

HALF a century before Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, the French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck outlined his own theory of evolution. A cornerstone of this was the idea that characteristics acquired during an individual's lifetime can be passed on to their offspring. In its day, Lamarck's theory was generally ignored or lampooned. Then came Darwin, and Gregor Mendel's discovery of genetics. In recent years, ideas along the lines of Richard Dawkins's concept of the "selfish gene" have come to dominate discussions about heritability, and with the exception of a brief surge of interest in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, "Lamarckism" has long been consigned to the theory junkyard.

Now all that is changing. No one is arguing that Lamarck got everything right, but over the past decade it has become increasingly clear that environmental factors, such as diet or stress, can have biological consequences that are transmitted to offspring without a single change to gene sequences taking place. In fact, some biologists are already starting to consider this process as routine. However, fully accepting the idea, provocatively dubbed the "new Lamarckism", would mean a radical rewrite of modern evolutionary theory. Not surprisingly, there are some who see that as heresy. "It means the demise of the selfish-gene theory," says Eva Jablonka at Tel Aviv University, Israel. "The whole discourse about heredity and evolution will change" ([see "Rewriting Darwin and Dawkins?"](#)).

That's not all. The implications for public health could also be immense. Some researchers are talking about a paradigm shift in understanding the causes of disease. For example, non-genetic inheritance might help explain the current obesity epidemic, or why there are family patterns for certain cancers and other disorders, but no discernible genetic cause. "It's a whole new way of looking at the inheritance and causes of various diseases, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and diabetes, as well as cancer," says Robyn Ward of the cancer research centre at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia.

Lamarck's ideas about exactly how non-genetic inheritance might work were woolly at best. He wrote, for example, of the giraffe's neck becoming elongated over generations because of the animal's habit of stretching up to feed on leaves in high treetops. The recent research, by contrast, has a firm basis in biological mechanisms - in so-called "epigenetic" change.

Epigenetics deals with how gene activity is regulated within a cell—which genes are switched on or off, which are dimmed and how, and when all this happens. For instance, while the cells in the liver and skin of an individual contain exactly the same DNA, their specific epigenetic settings mean the tissues look very different and do a totally different job. Likewise, different genes may be expressed in the same tissue at different stages of development and throughout life. Researchers are a long way from knowing exactly what mechanisms control all this, but they have made some headway.

Inside the nucleus, DNA is packaged around bundles of proteins called histones, which have tails that stick out from the core. One factor that affects gene expression is the pattern of chemical modifications to these tails, such as the presence or absence of acetyl and methyl groups. Genes can also be silenced directly via enzymes that bind methyl groups onto the DNA. The so-called RNA interference (RNAi) system can direct this activity, via small

RNA strands. As well as controlling DNA methylation and modifying histones, these RNAi molecules target messenger RNA - much longer strands that act as intermediaries between DNA sequences and the proteins they code for. By breaking mRNA down into small segments, the RNAi molecules ensure that a certain gene cannot be translated into its protein. In short, RNAi creates the epigenetic “marks” that control the activity of genes.

We know that genes—and possibly also non-coding DNA—control RNAi and so are involved in determining an individual’s epigenetic settings. It is becoming increasingly apparent, though, that environmental factors can have a direct impact too, with potentially life-changing implications. The clearest example of this comes from honeybees. All female honeybees develop from genetically identical larvae, but those fed on royal jelly become fertile queens while the rest are doomed to life as sterile workers. In March this year, an Australian team led by Ryszard Maleszka at the Australian National University in Canberra showed that epigenetic mechanisms account for this. They used RNAi to silence a gene for DNA methyltransferase—an enzyme necessary for adding methyl groups to DNA—in honeybee larvae. Most of these larvae emerged as queens, without ever having tasted royal jelly (*Science*, [DOI: 10.1126/science.1153069](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1153069)).

“All female honeybees, including queens, develop from genetically identical larvae”

For honeybees then, what they eat during early development creates an epigenetic setting that has fundamental lifelong implications. This is an extreme example, but researchers are starting to realise that similar mechanisms are at play in other animals, and even in humans. And, as for honeybees, it seems there is a critical early period during which an individual’s pattern of gene expression is “programmed” to a large extent. Environmental factors can feed into this programming, possibly with long-term health impacts.

In 2000, Randy Jirtle at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, led a ground-breaking experiment on a strain of genetically identical mice. These mice carried the *agouti* gene, which makes them fat and prone to diabetes and cancer. Jirtle and his student Robert Waterland gave one group of females a diet rich in methyl groups before conception and during pregnancy. They found that the offspring were very different to their parents—they were slim and lived to a ripe old age. Though the pups had inherited the damaging *agouti* gene, the methyl groups had attached to the gene and dimmed its expression.

Jirtle then tried supplementing the diets of pregnant *agouti* mice with genistein, an oestrogen-like chemical found in soya. The dose was designed to be comparable to the amount consumed by a person on a high-soya diet, which is associated with a reduced risk of cancer and less body fat. These mice were also more likely to give birth to slim, healthy offspring which had less chance of becoming obese in adulthood. This change was associated with increased methylation of six DNA base-pair sites involved in regulating activity of the *agouti* gene.

These and other animal studies strongly suggest that a pregnant woman’s diet can affect her child’s epigenetic marks. So perhaps it is not surprising that the effect of certain nutrients is being called into question. Folate, for example, is a potent methyl donor. It is routinely recommended during pregnancy and added to cereal products in certain countries, including the US, because it reduces the risk of spinal tube defects if eaten around the time of conception. But Jirtle wonders whether it could also be inducing as-yet-unknown, damaging epigenetic effects.



## THE LEGACY OF STRESS

Diet is not the only environmental factor that can influence the epigenetic setting of some genes. Michael Meaney at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and colleagues have found that newborn mice neglected by their mothers are more fearful in adulthood - and that these mice show much higher than normal levels of methylation of certain genes involved in the stress response. On a brighter note, these mice also point the way to a possible way to reverse epigenetic changes ([see “In sickness and in health”](#)).

In humans, too, there are troubling hints that damaging experiences early in life, while the brain is still developing, can affect epigenetic settings, perhaps with catastrophic consequences. In May, Meaney and his colleagues reported a study of [13 men who had committed suicide](#), all of whom had been victims of child abuse. They showed clear epigenetic differences in their brains, compared with the brains of men who had died of other causes. It is possible that the changes in epigenetic marks were caused by the exposure to childhood abuse, says the team. Could the changes have contributed to their suicides too?

There is recent evidence that abnormal epigenetic patterns play a role in mental health disorders. In March, Arturas Petronis at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, Canada, and colleagues reported the first epigenome-wide scan of post-mortem brain tissue from 35 people who had suffered from schizophrenia. They found a distinctive epigenetic pattern, controlling the expression of roughly 40 genes (*The American Journal of Human Genetics*, vol 82, p 696). Several of the genes were related to neurotransmitters, to brain development and to other processes linked to schizophrenia. These findings lay the groundwork for a new way of understanding mental illness, says Petronis, as a disease with a significant epigenetic component.

“These findings lay the groundwork for a new way of understanding mental illness”

As with the people who had committed suicide in Meaney’s study, these epigenetic marks may have arisen during development. Yet there are also hints that the people with schizophrenia might instead have inherited them from their parents - and that they in turn might pass the marks on to their own children. In theory, epigenetic marks are wiped clear between generations in mammals. Intriguingly, though, the abnormalities in DNA methylation in Petronis’s subjects were not restricted to their frontal cortex: they were also present in their sperm. “[This] suggests that it is possible that inherited epigenetic abnormalities may be contributing to the familial nature of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder,” says team member Jonathan Mill at the Institute of Psychiatry at King’s College London.

This work is only suggestive, but when it comes to cancer, the evidence is stronger. Some colorectal cancers are known to develop when a key DNA-repair gene called *MHL1* becomes coated in methyl groups, preventing it from working. In 2007, Ward and her colleagues published a study of a woman with this type of cancer and her three children. The *MHL1* gene was active in two of the children, but one son had a heavily methylated, silenced gene like his mother (*The New England Journal of Medicine*, vol 356, p 697).

The paper caused a sensation among cancer researchers because it suggested an entirely new way in which disease risk might be inherited. Of course the finding could have been a coincidence, or the son might have inherited a genetic propensity to methylation of this gene, rather than the epigenetic mark itself. Since the paper came out, though, direct inheritance is starting to look more likely. Other teams have identified similar families, and in all cases the effect seems to be transmitted down the maternal line via the egg. The *MHL1* gene in the sperm of affected men appears normal.

Some epigenetic marks may also be inherited from fathers, however. In a now classic study published in 2005, Matthew Anway at the University of Idaho in Moscow and colleagues showed that male rats exposed to the common crop fungicide vinclozolin in the womb were less fertile and had a higher than normal risk of developing cancer and kidney defects. Not only were these effects transmitted to their offspring, they were passed from father to son through the three following generations as well (*Science*, vol 308, p 1466). The team found no DNA changes, only altered DNA methylation patterns in the sperm of these rats, suggesting that epigenetic factors were to blame.

The following year, a team at the University of Maryland in Baltimore found that male mice that had inhaled cocaine passed memory problems onto their pups. Again, their sperm showed no apparent DNA damage, but in the seminiferous tubules, where sperm are produced, the researchers found changes in the levels of two enzymes involved in methylating DNA.

In people, too, there is evidence that environmental impacts on fathers and mothers can produce changes in their children. This has led some researchers to consider a startling possibility. Could the current epidemic of type II diabetes and obesity in developed countries be related to what our parents and our grandparents ate?

“Could the current epidemic of obesity be related to what our parents and grandparents ate?”

Nutrition does seem to have some lasting effect, according to a study by Marcus Pembrey of the Institute of Child Health at University College London and his colleagues. They analysed records from the isolated community of Överkalix in northern Sweden and found that men whose paternal grandfathers had suffered a shortage of food between the ages of 9 and 12 lived longer than their peers (*European Journal of Human Genetics*, vol 14, p 159). A similar maternal-line effect existed for women, but in this case by far the biggest effect on longevity of the granddaughters occurred when food was limited while grandmothers were in the womb or were infants. It would appear that humans thrive on relatively meagre rations, and the team concluded that under these conditions some sort of key information - perhaps epigenetic in nature - was being captured at the crucial stages of sperm and egg formation, then passed down generations.

Pembrey’s team also looked at more recent records from the UK, collected for the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children. They identified 166 fathers who reported starting smoking before the age of 11 and found that their sons - but not their daughters - had a significantly higher than average body mass index at the age of 9.

Also in 2006, Tony Hsiu-Hsi Chen at the National Taiwan University in Taipei and colleagues reported that the offspring of men who regularly chewed betel nuts had twice the normal risk of developing metabolic syndrome during childhood. Betel nuts are also associated with several symptoms of metabolic syndrome in chewers including increased heart rate, blood pressure, waist size and body weight.

The mother’s nutrition might affect a child’s risk of obesity, too. Women in the Netherlands who were in the first two trimesters of pregnancy during a famine in 1944 and 1945 gave birth to boys who, at 19, were much more likely to be obese.

All these results raise an important question. Why should factors like food intake or smoking around the time sperm or eggs are created, or at the embryo stage, have such an influence on a child’s metabolism and weight?

Extended periods of too much or too little food might trigger a switch to a pattern of gene expression that results in earlier puberty and so earlier mortality, says Pembrey - and this might be heritable. “The reason why some people gain weight more easily is because their metabolic genes are used differently,” says Reinhard Stöe­ger at the University of Washington in Seattle. He suggests that long before the emergence of modern humans, a network of metabolic genes evolved that was honed for a relative scarcity of food, but not feast or famine. “These genes have become epigenetically programmed during the early stages of life in response to adverse environmental conditions - such as feast. This might explain the current epidemic of type II diabetes and obesity in the west, where food is plentiful.” Prolonged epigenetic silencing in response to the environment might also lead to a DNA change that “locks in” epigenetic marks, Stöe­ger suggests.

Out of the melting pot of recent findings, a host of fundamental questions are now being thrown up. If what we eat could affect our grandchildren, should we be more careful? If so, in what ways? Should we be more concerned about the long-term impact of war or child abuse? Could we choose a diet to reduce our own cancer risk, and that of our children? We are only starting to get an inkling about how to answer these, but one thing is clear: genes are only part of the story.

**Evolution** - Learn more about the struggle to survive in our comprehensive [special report](#).

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From issue 2664 of New Scientist magazine, 09 July 2008, page 28-33

Rewriting Darwin and Dawkins?

The realisation that individuals can acquire characteristics through interaction with their environment and then pass these on to their offspring may force us to rethink evolutionary theory. While examples of this “transgenerational epigenetic inheritance” are only just emerging in mammals, there is long-standing and widespread [evidence for it in plants and fungi](#). That may explain why botanists are much more ready to acknowledge and promote the idea that epigenetic inheritance has a significant role in evolution, whereas zoologists are generally reluctant to do so, says Eva Jablonka from Tel Aviv University, Israel.

That looks set to change. “There was a trickle of findings of epigenetic inheritance in animals through the 20th century, and it is turning into a flood about now,” says Russell Bonduriansky, at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. One of his favourite recent examples involves the water flea, daphnia. When predators are around, the fleas develop large, defensive spines. If they then reproduce, their offspring also develop these spines - even when not exposed to predators.

For Bonduriansky, this suggests a possible adaptive function of epigenetic inheritance - the fine-tuning of an individual to short-term variations in its environment. “There’s no lag time for the offspring to respond to the environment on their own,” he says.

The idea that epigenetic variation could be adaptive - rather than a form of random, non-directed variation - is very controversial, harking back as it does to the discredited theory of Lamarckian evolution. Nevertheless, this has not deterred some researchers from exploring the full implications of epigenetic inheritance.

For example, there is evidence that epigenetic changes can affect mate preference. Last year, David Crews and Andrea Gore at the University of Texas at Austin published a study of male rats whose great-grandfathers had been exposed to the fungicide vinclozalin. Previ-

ous research has revealed that such exposure leads to increased infertility and higher risks of cancer even four generations later. Crews and Gore found that female rats tended to avoid these males. They could sense something was wrong, says Gore. The females seemed to select mates on the basis of an epigenetic pattern, as opposed to a genetic difference, she adds.

### Back to the future

For Bonduriansky the accumulating evidence calls for a radical rethink of how evolution works. Jablonka, too, believes that “Lamarckian” mechanisms should now be integrated into evolutionary theory, which should focus on mechanisms, rather than units, of inheritance. “This would be very significant,” she says. “It would reintroduce development, in a very direct and strong sense, into heredity and hence evolution. It would mean the pre-synthesis view of evolution, which was very diverse and very rich, can return, but with molecular mechanisms attached.”

That needn’t necessarily mean an end to the idea of the gene as the basic unit of inheritance, or Richard Dawkins’s selfish gene, according to some. “I don’t think it violates the basic concept that Dawkins articulated,” says Eric Richards, at Washington University in St Louis, Missouri. “Epigenetic marks can also be viewed as part of that basic unit in a more inclusive definition of a gene,” he says.

What does Dawkins himself think? “The ‘transgenerational’ effects now being described are mildly interesting, but they cast no doubt whatsoever on the theory of the selfish gene,” he says. He suggests, though, that the word “gene” should be replaced with “replicator”. This selfish replicator, acting as the unit of selection, does not have to be a gene, but it does have to be replicated accurately, the occasional mutation aside. “Whether [epigenetic marks] will eventually be deemed to qualify as ‘selfish replicators’ will depend upon whether they are genuinely high-fidelity replicators with the capacity to go on for ever. This is important because otherwise there will be no interesting differences between those that are successful in natural selection and those that are not.” If all the effects fade out within the first few generations, they cannot be said to be positively selected, Dawkins points out.

### In sickness and in health

Epigenetic abnormalities have been found in nearly every type of cancer and in other diseases, such as cardiovascular disease. But the discovery that diseases can be caused by environmental factors influencing the expression of genes has an upside. “The beauty of any epigenetic modification is that it is reversible by drugs,” says Robyn Ward from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia.

Take the epigenetic marks acquired by mice as a result of maternal neglect during infancy. Here, methyl groups become attached to genes involved in the stress response, resulting in heightened anxiety. But, using drugs, Michael Meaney at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and his team have reversed the methylation of these genes and their associated behavioural responses in adulthood (*Journal of Neuroscience*, vol 25, p 11045). They injected the drugs directly into the brain although it is possible that a special diet could do the same trick, Meaney says.

### New Role for Old Drugs

Other drugs that influence methylation are now in early-stage anti-cancer trials. Some of them are not new, but are being reassessed in the light of new knowledge about how they

work. Azacytidine, for example, which was used years ago with limited success to treat a range of bone-marrow stem-cell disorders, is undergoing trials again on these very same disorders. Now that it has become clear the drug induces epigenetic changes, researchers are altering doses and redesigning trials with the aim of activating tumour-suppressor genes that have been silenced by methylation.

This approach does have a major drawback - epigenetic drugs are not specific. Side effects, such as nausea and diarrhea, are probably down to their broad range of action, says Ward. It might be possible to target drugs more specifically, but that is a very long way off. Still, the fact that it offers a whole new way of treating disease leads many to consider the epigenetics approach to be very promising.

## YOU ARE WHAT YOUR MOTHER ATE

09 August 2003

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Philip Cohen

WHETHER or not some of your genes are active may depend on what food supplements your mother took.

That is the implication of an intriguing study in mice. The coat colour of offspring was changed by simply giving females extra doses of four common nutrients, including folic acid and vitamin B12. The offspring were also less prone to obesity and diabetes than genetically identical mice whose mothers had not been given supplements. The differences were due to heritable changes in the activity of at least one gene in the offspring.

It is not yet clear if the same phenomenon occurs in people. If it does, what women eat during the formation of the egg and early embryo, including supplements, could have an even more profound effect than anyone thought. Changes in gene activity could make their descendants more or less likely to suffer from a range of disorders, including obesity, cancer, diabetes and possibly even autism.

Many people think that there is no downside to food supplements, says the senior researcher, Randy Jirtle of Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina. "But there could be a lifelong downside and we have no clue yet what those effects are."

His team's work establishes the tightest link yet between diet and a strange form of inheritance known as epigenetics: characteristics passed on to offspring that cannot be explained by changes in the DNA sequence. Scientists have long been intrigued by possible epigenetic effects. For example, Dutch women who went hungry during the second world war unsurprisingly gave birth to small babies. These children had normal diets most of their lives, yet when they had children of their own, they too were undersized.

While such cases remain controversial, several mechanisms have since been discovered that can explain epigenetic inheritance. For instance, adding tags known as methyl groups to DNA - a chemical change that does not alter the underlying sequence - can switch off a gene. These methylation marks can be passed to future generations, and experiments in mice have shown that various factors can alter them, including certain drugs, viral infections and the way an embryo is handled during IVF.



Jirtle and his colleague Robert Waterland wondered whether even subtle differences in diet could affect methylation. To find out, they used a mouse strain in which the activity of a gene called agouti, which establishes coat colour, is controlled by the degree of methylation. The more the gene is methylated, the less agouti activity there is and the browner the coat becomes.

The team fed female mice either a normal diet or a diet supplemented with choline and betaine as well as folic acid and vitamin B12. Sure enough, the vitamin-enriched mums were more likely to give birth to pups with browner coats, and chemical analysis showed the agouti gene was more highly methylated (Molecular and Cellular Biology, vol 23, p 5293). Because agouti also affects other aspects of metabolism, the brown mice are less prone to obesity and diabetes.

“It’s a very important result,” says Emma Whitelaw of the University of Sydney in Australia, whose team helped prove that epigenetic effects really can determine an offspring’s traits (New Scientist, 13 November 1999, p 16). “It establishes a close link between diet, methylation and gene activity, which is going to lead to some interesting experiments.” But she is not convinced the results have any immediate relevance to humans.

While Jirtle’s group plans to look for similar dietary effects in people, Whitelaw points out that the agouti gene is very unusual. It is not clear if there are equivalents in humans, she says.

But Jirtle’s team already has unpublished mouse data suggesting that early nutrition can also alter the methylation of “imprinted genes”. These are genes where one of the two parental copies must be turned off for normal development. Incorrect methylation of imprinted human genes is known to cause certain diseases and can contribute to the development of cancer. If nutrition affects imprinted genes in people, it might even explain the rise in some disorders. “People ask themselves why autism is going up, why asthma is going up,” says Jirtle. “Is something as subtle as this going to be the cause?”

From issue 2407 of New Scientist magazine, 09 August 2003, page 14



## 2009 Q1 Lesson 7 The Work of the Prophets

What do you understand the work of the prophets to be?

- Communicating the truth about God
- Chastising sin
- Temporal guidance, where to live, when to fight
- Communicating messages from God
- Prophetic predictions
- Exposing error
- Preaching and calling to repentance and reformation
- Promote social order and healthful living
- Settle disputes
- A check on political power

### SUNDAY Preaching the Gospel

Read first question – thoughts?

Read first paragraph -

- *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. Genesis 3:15*
- Abraham's experience with Isaac
- Sanctuary Service

Thoughts about this? What is the message taken away from these examples?

What is the gospel? The Good News – about what? God? How do the examples above communicate the truth about God?

Do you think the people at the time understood the Gospel from these examples? Do we?

Before we can know what the Good News is, what the plan of salvation is really all about we need to step back and determine what the problem is that is being addressed.

- Where did sin begin? In heaven
- With whom? Lucifer
- Over what? God's character, can God be trusted
- Why is this so critical to understand?
- What is the core characteristic of God? – love!
- What is the law of life in the universe? Love
- What does the Bible say sin is? Transgression of the law
- What law? The law of love
- What happens when the law of life is broken? Death
- What breaks the law of love? Lies
- Who is the father of lies?
- In Eden, what was the sin Adam and Eve committed?

- They believed lies about God which broke the circle of love and trust and resulted in fear and selfishness which led to the taking of the fruit

Notice the emphasis of Scripture:

*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*

*Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3*

*Romans 1:18-34 – when the truth of God is exchanged for a lie the mind becomes darkened, foolish and depraved*

*John 8:32 You will know the truth and the truth will set you free – from what?*

*Hebrews 8:10,11 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. 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.*

How did the law of love get broken? Lies about God were told. What is necessary to destroy the lies? The truth about God.

*When 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. <sup>7</sup> 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." Revelation 14:6,7*

What is the eternal gospel, the gospel that has always been true through all eternity past and will be true through all eternity future? The truth about God!

With this in mind can you think of other examples from the Old Testament that reveal or communicate the Gospel, the Good News about God?

As soon as Adam sinned he ran and hid and how did God treat him? After Adam said he ran because he was afraid and naked, God said, "who told you that you are naked?" What were the possible answers? What is implied in the question? God is saying, "Hey Adam you didn't hear me point out your nakedness. I am not the one condemning you."

*Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. 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, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Exodus 34:5-7*

All over the OT we find texts like this:

- "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love." Ps 103:8
- The giving of Manna and then of quail
- The giving of prophets and kings
- The dealings with Nebuchadnezzar

Any other examples of the truth about God's character of love being revealed in the OT?

Do you see God's character of love in the sanctuary service? Where?

God used basically two chapters of the Bible to describe Creation of this solar system and life on this planet. How many did He use to describe the construction of the Sanctuary? Over 50 – why?

- Because humans were building and God wasn't speaking it into existence
- Because it is easier to create from scratch than to recreate from sin

What resources did God have to use to create this planet and life on it? Energy and Love

What resources did God have to use to recreate this creation? Everything He had!

When Christ came to the world, all heaven was poured out in this one great gift. God Himself came to us in Christ. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Christ said. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (John 14:9). {1888 131}

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 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. {LHU 232}

When you think of the sanctuary service and the gospel what comes to mind? Any questions?

Read second question in Sunday's lesson, "Does the preaching..." thoughts?

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup> Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. Dt 6:4,5*

*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*

*This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it 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," declares the LORD. Jer 31:33,34*

*"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. 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. '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. 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. 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. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. EZ 36:22-27*

Thoughts? Was a different gospel preached in the OT than in the New?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph – “The leaders...” thoughts?

What purpose were the leaders, prophets, Apostles guiding the people? Would it be for the purpose of bringing each person into a personal saving relationship with God so that each person becomes another agent of God’s kingdom?

When that happens is it God’s desire for each person to come to ever increasing intimacy with God such that the need for prophets would evaporate? Or does God prefer a hierarchical structure in which some people are precluded from direct interaction and conversation with God and must get it passed down to them from others?

Does God want each of us to become His prophets of the last day, His Elijah people to take an Elijah message of preparation to the world? Can we do that if we don’t personally know Him?

Read bottom green question – thoughts?

What reasons have you heard about why people don’t want to be part of an organized church?

- Hypocrites
- I don’t need to go to church to have a walk with God
- Don’t believe in their mission
- Haven’t found one I like
- Legalistic unloving attitudes
- Ugly twisted views of God

What are some reasons that are likely involved but for which people may not disclose?

- Got feelings hurt
- Church convicts of sin in the life not willing to give up
- Church holds accountable
- Don’t like people

What are the benefits of joining a church?

- Fellowship
- Spiritual growth
- Pooling of resources and coordination of energy to promote the gospel
- Participate in ministry

## TUESDAY

Read top question – thoughts?

If we had a prophet alive today what evils do you think would make the top 10 list to be reproved in the church?

- Misrepresenting God?
- Gossip?
- Pride?
- Music?
- Worldly entertainment?
- Coldness of heart?
- Need for reformation?
- Politics in the church?

What message do you think a prophet would say to the church regarding its mission at this time in earth's history? I would like to suggest this as one for consideration:

“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

## WEDNESDAY

What ways did prophets communicate God's messages to people?

- Speaking directly, public proclamation
- Private interviews
- Writing
- Acting out – lying on one side, marrying a prostitute

Why all these different methods? What is the point? God is constantly working to speak a language the people can understand.

What does this tell us about Bible translations? Does God's message to us do us any good if we can't understand it?

## THURSDAY

Predicting the future – examples from Scripture:

- The kingdoms from Babylon to the end of time in Daniel
- The birth of the Messiah
- The captivity and release of Israel

## FRIDAY

Read last two paragraphs and then first paragraph– thoughts?

Do we see this happening today? What common points of doctrine do you see foremost in bringing these organizations together?

## 2009 Q1 Lesson 8 The Authority of the Prophets

Memory Text – read – thoughts?

What does this mean? Are we to accept what a prophet says because a prophet says it or are we to test what the prophet says?

We have talked about testing a prophet by comparing scripture with scripture to be sure a prophet is not contradicting inspired revelation. But is there an even more basic test we must put the prophet, preacher, teacher to?

Is what they say true? Does it get borne out in reality?

For instance, throughout my lifetime, there have been periodic dates set by some for the return of Christ or the collapse of the economy or the invasion of Israel etc. When such prophecies come how do we test them? By watching and waiting and see what happens.

Here is one written in 1897:

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. They are not to exhaust and waste their physical and mental powers in seeking to acquire all possible knowledge of the sciences; but every individual 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. Fundamentals of Christian Education 340.

Thoughts?

**Middle-aged workers who consistently work overtime appear to be at risk for mild cognitive impairment (MCI), researchers report.**

*Am J Epidemiol.* Published online before print January 6, 2009.

In a prospective study of middle-aged British civil servants, those who typically worked more than 55 hours a week scored worse on a vocabulary test and showed a greater decline in reasoning ability than their colleagues who worked 35 to 40 hours a week.

Since MCI predicts dementia and mortality, identifying risk factors for the condition in middle age is important, the researchers, led by Marianna Virtanen, PhD, from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, in Helsinki, write.

Working more than 55 hours per week was associated with worse baseline and follow-up performances on vocabulary testing, with a decline in performance on the reasoning test over the 5-year period.

Thoughts?

I received this last night from one of our online listeners:

Our message is not that our prophet is better than yours, our message should be that our God loves you just like you are. If we continue on this detour of naming the true prophet we would soon be stuck in an eddy with no way out. Mary Baker Eddy, Joseph Smith, the Fullers, Amenhotep, Ellen White, David Koresh, Jim Jones and Moses should all be judged by the same standard, “Do they point you to the Savior or themselves?” Does one, after being exposed to them, know God better? That is the only valid test. If we would spend more time reading Ellen White than trying to defend her, our church would be a less caustic environment for tender growing Christians.

But we shouldn’t read just Ellen White, she herself was well read. For our own growth we need to see God from a multitude of perspectives. Why? To discern truth for ourselves. I am not suggesting that truth and falsehood are not important, they certainly are. But it is the work of the Spirit in your heart, it is the work of the Eternal for eternity.



Our work is to make choices that make our hearts a place where the Spirit likes to hang out. If God is actually in your heart don't you think when you read or hear something that its correctness will be decided together? God and I deciding its value makes so much more sense.

Thoughts?

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Have you ever been called to speak for God? Are parents called to speak for God to their children? What message about God did you get from your parents?

Are children to test the message they get from their parents? Have you tested the message about God your parents gave you? What conclusions have you drawn?

Would the church be a better place if all children tested the message about God they get from their parents?

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

What do you think about the idea of Moses becoming God to Aaron?

God used the children of Israel as an acting troupe to put on an elaborate play with a very intricate script. God was the director and everyone had their part.

Moses got to play what part? And Aaron? Remember in Hebrews where it says only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy place of the sanctuary and then only once a year. But Moses used to go in and talk with God face to face all the time, after Aaron was the High Priest – why?

Moses represented Christ before His incarnation, the Lamb represented Christ during His incarnation and Aaron represented Christ after His ascension. Christ before His incarnation was in constant communion with His Father as they coordinated their efforts and plans for the salvation of the race. Thus we see Moses going in and talking with God. Aaron's ministry represented Christ's work after His ascension applying the remedy He achieved during His time on earth.

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

## MONDAY

Read top Bible verse, Matthew 28:18 – thoughts? What power was given to Jesus? What did Jesus do with the power? What importance is it to us to recognize Jesus had all power? How is this truth important in the conflict with Satan?

How do these texts fit in?

*'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. Zech 4:6*

*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*

With what power does God win the war with Satan? Is it by physical might? Why not? What is the battle over? Our hearts and minds, can love be won by force? How does the Spirit work? By love and truth – the truth destroys lies wins us to trust and then love is written in freeing us from fear and selfishness.

While it is true Christ never used His own divine power while on earth, but rather relied on His Father's power accessed through faith (like any other human prophet performed miracles), why is it important not to conclude, as some have done, that Christ didn't have access to His divine power?

If Christ didn't have access to His divine power then what do we learn about how God uses power in trying circumstance? If Christ was just as helpless as the two thieves on the cross do we learn anything about how God wields power?

Read bottom two paragraphs – thoughts?

When you think of the judgment, what comes to mind? What is the purpose of judgment?

- If someone is accused of murder what is the purpose of judgment?
- If someone is accused of embezzlement what is the purpose of judgment?
- If someone is accused of child abuse what is the purpose of judgment?
- If someone with AIDS is accused of not taking their antiviral meds what is the purpose of judgment?
- If someone with cancer is accused of refusing the chemotherapy what is the purpose of judgment?
- If someone jumps out of an airplane and is accused of not having a parachute what is the purpose of judgment?

Is there a need for judgment in the first three scenarios? Is there a need for judgment in the last?

Do we see God's law as imposed or natural? Do natural laws require imposed penalties or judgments?

How about if you didn't know anything about cancer and you saw two people with cancer and one the doctor saved and the other died because they refused the treatment – might there be a need for a judgment? Why? Who would be judged?

*Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup> that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. <sup>24</sup> "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. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. <sup>27</sup> And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. John 5:22-27*

*You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. <sup>16</sup> But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. John 8:15,16*

*"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. <sup>48</sup> 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*

*"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. <sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. <sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." Matthew 12:33-37*

Does God have to hold a court scene in order for Him to know who is guilty or who is innocent? Does God have to hold a court scene in order for the rest of the universe to determine innocence and guilt? Yes, the question is who are the intelligences of heaving judging? Who is the one the court scene is designed to judge?

*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*

Who is the one on trial? Who was accused of being untrustworthy? Who is the one being judged? God

<sup>19</sup> “Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, <sup>22</sup> 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 7:19-22 NIV

*I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; <sup>22</sup>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 7:21,22 ASV*

Thoughts? Who is being judged? God.

Why does God not have to hold a court scene for the intelligences of heaven to figure out in the end who should be brought to heaven and who should not be brought to heaven?

Why did Jesus not come to earth 2000 ago in His full heavenly glory?

*2 THES 2:8 – the wicked are destroyed by the brightness of His coming – what would have happened if Christ would have come in brightness two thousand years ago?*

Moses came down off the mountain – what was his face doing? What did the children of Israel do? Why?

In the end when Christ appears what do the wicked do? Why?

When Christ shall come in His glory, the wicked cannot endure to behold Him. **The light of His presence, which is life to those who love Him, is death to the ungodly.** The expectation of His coming is to them a “fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” Hebrews 10:27. When He shall appear, they will pray to be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. {Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings 26}

If this is the condition of things when Christ returns will there be a need for an external judgment imposed by God or will each person’s condition be demonstrated for what it is when God reveals Himself?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph –thoughts? How is God’s word mistreated today? Only in the ways described in the paragraph or in other ways? What about those who would apply it rigidly without thinking?

In Christ's day did the religious leaders ridicule, ignore, denounce as out of date the Scripture? Did they claim to be people of Scripture? But Jesus said:

*"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. Matthew 23:15*

Thoughts? How could people be converted to God's chosen people and made twice the son of hell? What were they teaching their converts that did this? Lies about God!

Could we do this today? Could we convert someone to the truth about the Sabbath, the state of the dead, the sanctuary message, the sacredness of scripture, the importance of healthful living, tithing etc. and still make them twice the son of hell as they were before? How?

Read second paragraph "Yet, no one..." – why? Why will we sooner or later suffer if we ignore the scripture? Is it because God will finally get us or is it because the consequences will finally come to bear?

Read fourth paragraph – "all through..." thoughts? What is the message we should hear in this statement? What errors might occur from this thought alone?

What about Galileo – Should the Bible be tested by science or not? The church at the time said that the Bible taught the earth as the center and the sun revolved around the earth, should science be brought to bear? When we read about the angels standing at the four corners of the earth should we test what that means by science or should we conclude the earth is flat?

Here is another statement from EGW:

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}

Does this give further clarity to what she was saying before? Do you agree? Are there any areas where you have struggled to find harmony between science and scripture?

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

What is the sword of God? The Word of Truth – then how do you understand this passage?

*Isaiah 26:21,22 See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer. In that day, the LORD will punish with his sword, his fierce, great and powerful sword.*

Consider the following verse:

*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.*

Notice the sword is coming out of the rider's mouth – the Rider is Christ, what does the sword represent? Truth!

*The wicked are destroyed “because they did love the truth and thus be saved.” 2 Thes 2:10.*

In other words, 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.

When people sin, they are convicted with guilt, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. No one likes guilt and we all want it to go away. There are only two ways to resolve appropriate guilt, God’s way – repentance and restoration and reconciliation. And Satan’s way, lies, denial, distortion, externalization. Adam said after his sin, “It wasn’t me. It was that woman you gave me. If she had not brought me the fruit I would have never ate it. Don’t blame me, blame her.”

This is the hardened condition of all those who have not opened their hearts and minds to the Spirit of Truth here. What will it be like for those who have lived in the darkness of lies to come face to face with infinite truth, truth which can not be denied, truth that cannot be avoided, truth which sears through to their souls? Their minds cannot take it and they die. Do we have an example of this demonstrated in Scripture where someone was living in lies and was confronted by truth and were slain by the sword of truth?

*Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet.*

*Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.”*

*When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. Acts 5:1-5.*

## THURSDAY

How did we get the books that make up scripture? It was a slow process of several hundred years culminating in 327 A.D. when only the books that all the churches agreed were inspired were included. So the selection was one of experience and consensus.

See next page.

## Long Working Hours in Middle Age May Impair Cognition

Marlene Busko

January 19, 2009 — Middle-aged workers who consistently work overtime appear to be at risk for mild cognitive impairment (MCI), researchers report.

In a prospective study of middle-aged British civil servants, those who typically worked more than 55 hours a week scored worse on a vocabulary test and showed a greater decline in reasoning ability than their colleagues who worked 35 to 40 hours a week.

Since MCI predicts dementia and mortality, identifying risk factors for the condition in middle age is important, the researchers, led by Marianna Virtanen, PhD, from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, in Helsinki, write.

“This study suggests that in addition to traditional risk factors for cognitive decline, such as biological age and disease, work-related factors, such as overtime, might contribute to cognitive decline,” Dr. Virtanen told *Medscape Psychiatry*.

The study is the first to show this association in a large sample of diverse middle-aged employees who were followed for several years, she added.

“I would recommend that people keep their working hours reasonable,” she said.

The study was published online January 6 in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

### Working Longer Not Necessarily Smarter

Working overtime is common, the researchers note. For example, in Europe in 2001, an estimated 12% to 17% of employees worked overtime. However, long work hours have been linked to adverse health outcomes, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, fatigue, and depression.

Working long shifts is known to impair cognition, but little is known about how overtime, as opposed to shift work, affects cognition.

To examine the association between long working hours and cognitive function in middle age, investigators analyzed 1997–1999 baseline data and 2002–2004 follow-up data from 2214 British civil servants who participated in the Whitehall II study.

The participants, 1694 men and 520 women, had a mean age of 52.1 years at baseline.

At baseline and at 5-year follow-up, participants were tested on 5 aspects of cognitive function:

1. Short-term verbal memory.
2. Verbal and mathematical reasoning.
3. Vocabulary.
4. Phonemic fluency.
5. Semantic fluency.

Participants were divided into 3 groups on the basis of self-reports on the length of their typical workweek, including work they brought home:

- 35 to 40 hours: 39% of participants.
- 41 to 55 hours: 53% of participants.
- More than 55 hours: 8% of participants.



Compared with employees who worked a standard 35 to 40 hours per week, those who accumulated 15 to 20 or more overtime hours every week were more likely to be married men with a higher education level, a higher job level, and a higher income. They also slept fewer hours and had greater psychological distress and alcohol consumption, but they did have greater social support.

Working more than 55 hours per week was associated with worse baseline and follow-up performances on vocabulary testing, with a decline in performance on the reasoning test over the 5-year period.

The researchers found a dose-response pattern between the 3 ranges of working hours and the vocabulary and reasoning measures.

The associations were robust after adjustment for 20 potential confounding factors, including age, sex, marital status, education, occupation, income, physical disease, psychosocial factors, sleep disturbance, and health-risk behaviors.

Working longer hours was linked to worse vocabulary scores in men but not in women. However, larger sample sizes are needed to confirm this sex difference, say investigators.

The effect of long working hours on cognitive function had an effect size equivalent to smoking. Further research is needed to identify potential factors behind these associations and to examine the generalizability of the study findings, the authors write.

The Whitehall II study has been supported by grants from the British Medical Research Council; the British Heart Foundation; the British Health and Safety Executive; the British Department of Health; the US National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; the US National Institute on Aging; the US Agency for Health Care Policy and Research; and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Research Networks on Successful Midlife Development and Socioeconomic Status and Health. Dr. Virtanen has disclosed no relevant financial relationships. The financial disclosures of the other authors are listed in the article.

*Am J Epidemiol.* Published online before print January 6, 2009. [Abstract](#)

## 2009 Q1 Lesson 9 The Integrity of the Prophetic Gift

The question the lesson authors want us to address this week regarding prophetic writings is, are they reliable? And what if a prophetic writer borrowed writings from another person?

Does it matter?

Any examples from scripture?

How about if the prophetic writer not only borrows but makes a new interpretation or application than the original author?

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

*“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us.” Matthew 1:23,24*

This text is referenced in your margin to Isaiah 7:14. The question: when Isaiah wrote 7:14, was he speaking about the Messiah? And was he speaking about a virgin?

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14 NIV*

*Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him ‘Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14 GNT*

Which was Isaiah referring to: a virgin or young woman?

(*āl-mā(h)*): Strong's 5959; TWOT 1630b—LN (Louw-Nida Greek-English Lexicon) 9.34-9.40 **young woman**, i.e., sexually mature female of marriageable age, which may or may not be sexually active (Ge 24:43; Ex 2:8; Ps 68:26; Pr 30:19; SS 1:3; 6:8; Isa 7:14), note: context will demand or suggest if the young woman is sexually active. Note:

What is the context of Isaiah 7? Judah was being threatened by invaders, King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of the king of Israel. The Lord sent Isaiah to King Ahaz, King of Judah to encourage him. Isaiah tells King Ahaz that the invasion will not happen and to ask the Lord for a sign but Ahaz refuses. Therefore Isaiah says in Chapter 7:

*Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup> “Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.”*

*<sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.”*

*<sup>13</sup> Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. <sup>15</sup> He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right. <sup>16</sup> But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. <sup>17</sup> The LORD will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah—he will bring the king of Assyria.”*

What does this sound like? What was the purpose of Isaiah's prophecy to king Ahaz? Was it to promise a Messiah hundreds of years in the future or was it to promise deliverance from their current threat?

If we read further in chapter 8 of Isaiah:

*Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. And the LORD said to me, "Name him Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. <sup>4</sup> Before the boy knows how to say 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria." (verses 3,4)*

Thoughts? Did Matthew borrow from Isaiah? When Isaiah wrote chapter seven do you think he was referring to the Messiah hundreds of years on the future? Is it okay for one inspired person to reinterpret and reapply the writings of another?

Does this undermine our confidence in Jesus' birth and the promise of a redeemer? No, because we have another child promised by God in the prophecy of Isaiah, in chapter 9:6,7

*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.*

*Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.*

*He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.*

*The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.*

What child is this text referring to? Clearly the Messiah!

Any other examples of Bible writers borrowing?

- Hebrews 8:10 – borrowed from Jeremiah,
- A great portion of the NT is borrowed from the Old Testament.

## SUNDAY

Read 1Kings 22:1-23

Thoughts?

Is God a liar? Does God send angels to lie? Does God instruct His prophets to lie? Does God use deception, deceit and falsehood?

Who is the father of lies? Satan! (John 8:44)

*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. James 1:17*

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6*

*When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; James 1:13*

If God doesn't lie or instruct His angels or prophets to lie, then why does 1Kings read as it does?

In Old Testament, the people were in serious darkness about God, about the Great Controversy, the existence of Satan, etc. They attributed to God not only the things He directly did but that which He permitted. This was their mindset, and the Bible writers recorded events in the mindset

of the people. Additionally, God's goal is to save and redeem. He had His prophets speak a language that the local people would understand.

Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me."

*But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it. <sup>5</sup> When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him. <sup>6</sup> So Saul and his three sons and his armor-bearer and all his men died together that same day. 1 Samuel 31:4-6*

How did Saul die?

*Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, <sup>14</sup> and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse. 1 Chron 10:13,14*

Was the prophet who wrote Chronicles lying? Did God kill Saul? Why is this language used? Because in the mind of the people if God didn't stop it they considered Him doing it.

Therefore, when God didn't stop evil angels from influencing the false prophets in their minds it was the same as God doing it. Micaiah capitalized on this and spoke a language the people would understand. And the essential message that the two kings needed to hear was – God is not telling you to go into battle you are being deceived.

Did Saul know the truth? But did Saul want to follow the truth? What is the lesson? Those bent on evil and not interested in following the truth the truth does them no good.

Consider those coming to arrest Christ, did they want the truth? Divinity flashed before them and they were struck down, you think they might have gotten a clue? Peter cuts off Malchus' ear and Jesus puts it back on in front of them, did they see the truth? Incredible, this is what happened to Ahab as well. He didn't want the truth. It didn't matter what Micaiah said, but the way Micaiah said it was most likely to get through to Ahab.

Ahab himself rejected the report that they should go into battle. Then Micaiah, in the common mindset of the day, said that the message they had been given by the 400 prophets was a lie.

1 Kings 20:35-42

The prophet was not lying but revealing truth through an enactment, a drama, a lived out parable. The prophet represents Ahab, the captive represents Ben-Hadad. God had delivered Ben-Hadad into Ahab's hands to be destroyed. Instead Ahab made a treaty with him and let him live. Several years later Ahab died in battle with the forces of Ben-Hadad.

## MONDAY

Read top paragraph "A few months after..." thoughts? What message did Jeremiah give them about their plan? What did the people do? Why didn't they listen to Jeremiah?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph "The prophets repeatedly..." thoughts?

Divine Authority – what is it? What gives a message divine authority? If someone comes and say "Thus says the Lord..." Does that mean their message has divine authority? Why or why not? How about if you know the prophet is a true prophet of God and he says, "An angel of God came

to me and by the word of the Lord...” Is that authoritative? What cautions, if any, should we take?

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.)

What would you do if a person you believed had the gift of prophecy came to you with such a message? What is the point? Even if a prophet of God says “thus says the Lord” each person must still be fully convinced in his own mind.

What do you use to become convinced in your own mind?

How does God use His authority?

*The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.” Luke 1:27*

*When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, <sup>2</sup> and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Luke 9:1,2*

What is the authority? Is it the ability to perform miracles? Why are miracles not authoritative? Miracles can be counterfeited. What about driving out of demons? Do these texts add insight?

*“Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. <sup>2</sup> For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. <sup>3</sup> Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:1-3*

How does Christ give eternal life? What authority does Christ have to give eternal life? What is eternal life? Knowing God, what is Christ’s authority? The truth about God which destroys the lies and reunites us with God!

*Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> 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, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20*

What authority do we have? The authority of truth to teach them everything Jesus taught us about God, His kingdom of love, His methods of truth, His character!

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph “Prophets did not...” thoughts?

Why is this important? Could a prophet write something and not understand what it meant? What does this mean for us? Could it mean a prophet might not get everything right?

Read green bottom section – thoughts?

Will we grow in grace to be friends of God if we let prophets do our thinking for us?

## THURSDAY

Read top dark section “What was wrong...” thoughts? Could David tell that Nathan was speaking only on his own?

Read first paragraph “The prophet Nathan...” thoughts?

When David called Nathan to ask him about building the Temple was David asking Nathan as a friend or because Nathan was the prophet?

Read last paragraph, “We must remember...” Thoughts? What is the take home point when reading any inspired writing? We must think for ourselves.

- What is actually said,
- Who was its primary audience,
- What did it mean in the context,
- Does it have any relevance to me today? If so, what?
- Has more light been shed since the message was given?

Bottom green section read – thoughts?

What happens if we constantly focus on perceived error or mistakes? Do we grow in grace or do we grow in doubt?

## FRIDAY

Why do you think it is so important for some to defend Ellen White the person rather than examining the message itself for its quality, truthfulness and accuracy?

Why do you think it is so important for some to attack Ellen White instead of examining the message she gave for its quality, truthfulness and accuracy?



## 2009 Q1 Lesson 10 The Message of the Prophets

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph “Sin is the greatest...” thoughts?

What is sin? What are the roots? Lies about God and selfishness. Lies about God break the circle of love, the law of love, resulting in fear and selfishness. This is a terminal condition without remedy. I really liked how the lesson stated,

“Sin kills, and no modern medicine can cure it.” That is exactly what the Bible teaches. The Bible does not teach that God kills the wicked because of sin.

*Evil will slay the wicked; Psalms 34:12*

*The wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23*

*Sin when full grown brings forth death James 1:15*

*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. Galatians 6:8*

Thoughts? Why is sin a terminal condition? Sin is lawlessness, meaning sin is outside the law of life operations. It would be like saying sin is *breathlessness* or *pulselessness*.

Why is it impossible for man to “merit” anything by his own good works?

If someone is born with cystic fibrosis, a terminal genetic lung disease, is there any good work they can do to heal themselves? Likewise, there is no good work we can do to heal ourselves.

Read last paragraph – thoughts?

Who does the justifying? Have you ever heard it is Jesus? The lesson is right, God justifies, through Jesus.

*What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> 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? <sup>33</sup> Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> 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*

*God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. 2 Corinthians 5:19*

What does it mean to be justified? Does it mean to have Jesus pay our legal penalty to the Father?

Justify simply means to be set right, to take what is not right and make it right. To take what is terminal and make it healthy. Now, what is not right that needs to be set right? Our minds, hearts, characters!

What are we not right about? Primarily we are not right about God! Jesus came to set us right about God, to put us back into unity and harmony with God! And then when we trust Him in mind/heart He then, via the Holy Spirit transforms us to be like Him!

Why do good works follow? If you had pneumonia and had fever and cough and then were treated with antibiotics would your symptoms get less as you got better? Acts of sin are symptoms of hearts that are filled with fear and selfishness. As Christ applies His remedy to our hearts we live differently!

Are we saved by faith?

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:8-10*

We are not saved by faith – we are saved by God’s grace through faith. What does this mean?

If you have a terminal condition and someone develops a cure for it, but that someone is a person you hate and distrust will you take the remedy? No, we must trust in order to get well, in order to be saved. But if you have a terminal condition and have a father who is loving, kind and gentle and you absolutely trust him, but he has no remedy will your trust in your father get you well? No, it takes both, restored trust and a remedy that actually works to heal and restore.

We are saved when we trust God because of what Christ accomplished. If you have a disease and trust a doctor who has a remedy, do you have to understand how the remedy works in order to benefit from taking it? But do you have to trust the doctor?

Why is our salvation rooted in Jesus Christ? Because He has revealed the truth about God which destroys the lies and wins us back to trust and Jesus overcame the infection of fear and selfishness and restored the law of love perfectly into humanity. Jesus is the means through which the law of life is restored back into humanity again.

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph “In the Old Testament...” and then bottom green section - thoughts?

First, what is the great mistake made by many who study the sanctuary service? Using the Old Testament symbols to understand Jesus and His ministry, rather than allowing Jesus the living Word be the lens through which we understand the Old Testament service.

Jesus is the Word made flesh. He is God’s thoughts made audible and visible. He is the heavenly light come to earth. He is the starting point. It is through Jesus that the Old Testament comes into focus. Too many have spent careers studying the Old Testament trying to squeeze Jesus into their concepts.

But Jesus said,

*Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” Matthew 9:17*

The new wine is the truth that Jesus brought but too many try to force it into the old wineskin and they fail to drink the healing waters of life.

We have much work to do in our church to free our minds of old wine on this subject.

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

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

What is the cleansing of the sanctuary about? About cleansing the living temple of God, the place where God dwells by His Spirit from the defilement of sin. It is not primarily about cleansing books in heaven. In fact books cannot be cleansed, because sin does not happen in books, sin happens in people. Only the hearts, minds, characters of intelligent beings can be cleansed from sin.

What about the blood? In the old system blood was taken all over the place and without blood things were not cleansed, but if we use Jesus as our lens what do we learn?

*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. <sup>54</sup> Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. <sup>56</sup> Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. John 6:53-56*

What is Jesus trying to open our minds to? Where does Jesus want the blood administered, in buildings or in the hearts and minds of people? Is Jesus talking cannibalism? No, then what does the blood represent?

The life was in the blood and in this case the blood is the life of the lamb, who is Jesus. Christ is the Truth, it represents the application of the truth which destroys the lies which win us to trust and the blood represents the life of Christ, His perfect character which is reproduced in those who trust! It represents the application of Christlikeness into the believer!

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. COL 102

Why is it that only blood atones? What does atone mean? It means at-one, and blood means truth and life of Christ, thus the blood taken into the heart, mind means the truth taken in which removes the lies wins us to trust, and then the character of Christ taken in which restores us to Godliness we are at-one with God again! All through the work of Jesus Christ!

Why would going into the Most Holy place without blood mean death instead of atonement? Because the blood represents healing, restoration to Godliness and therefore we can live in the life giving glory of God. But what happens to unregenerate sinners who come into God's unveiled love? They are destroyed, why?

Does God need the "blood" of His Son ministered to Him in some way in order for God to be able, willing or otherwise encouraged to forgive? No! This is paganism. God was in the Son reconciling the world to Himself. God does not need blood ministered to Him – we do!

Read last paragraph "The pre-Advent..." Thoughts? Who determines whether you are saved or lost? Whose decision is it? Does God have to "decide" who is saved or lost or does each person make their own decision?

What do we make then of the pre-Advent judgment?

*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." Revelation 14:7*

When in history is this text referring before or after the second Advent? Before, this is a pre-Advent judgment and who is being judged? What is the emphasis of the text?

"Wake up earth, get with the program, figure it out. Give honor and glory to God, the Creator and Sustainer of all because the time of His judgment has arrived, the time in which God is being judged."

Romans 3:4

*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*

*By no means! 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." ASV*

*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*

Who is on trial? What is God waiting for? He is waiting for a people to drink the blood of Jesus, the truth about Him, judge rightly about Him and be transformed to be like Him!

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph "The fourth commandment..." thoughts?

What about the Pharisees in Christ's day? Did they question which day of the week was the Sabbath? Did they observe it rigidly? Did that make them friends of God? Something more than the right day of the week is needed.

Read third and fourth paragraphs "In a certain..." thoughts? While the lesson has said some very good things this week, here they are wrong. In fact, here they argue the enemies position.

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

God is not arbitrary, never arbitrary, such assertions are lies. The assumption that the Sabbath is not rooted in some natural phenomenon and that there is no reason for it is false.

What is the reason for it and what natural phenomenon is it rooted in?

The Sabbath was given at the end of creation week of this planet. And what was happening in the universe that week? A war over whether God can be trusted: Did God use His power to force all beings in the universe to bow to Him, or did He give evidence of His character, creating a new planet with new life forms and sharing with them His ability to create and govern?

And then, after this, what did God do? “Universe, I rest my case! Take 24 hours aside and consider the evidence for yourself: no pressure, no coercion, come to your own conclusion.” What does it say about God who in the context of an assault on His rulership, rather than using His power to force all into conformity, He instead created a day for freedom to think? The existence of the weekly Sabbath is proof that with God we are free.

The Sabbath is rooted—grounded—in the natural phenomenon of the Law of Liberty, a principle upon which the universe runs. It is for Freedom that the Sabbath exists, for without Freedom there is no Love. Love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom, and constructs that teach the Sabbath is arbitrary rip the Sabbath away from God’s character of love, away from the law of liberty, and instead put forth false conceptions of God who would arbitrarily use His power.

True Sabbath-keeping then is more than going to church on a certain day, it is more than avoiding work on a certain day; true Sabbath-keeping is internalizing into one’s character the principles it was created upon—The Truth presented in Love and leaving others Free! This is what a true Sabbath-keeper looks like. And they will stand in sharp contrast to the worshippers of the Beast who will use power to coerce, for no one can buy or sell save him who has the mark of the beast.

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Very well stated!

Read last paragraph “In Matthew...” thoughts?

Does the paragraph seem to suggest that the fire goes out? Does the fire ever go out? Why or why not?

## THURSDAY

How will Christ return? Why is this important?

Why the delay in Christ’s return? What is He waiting for? Love cannot flow where lies about God are retained. When Christ returns He returns with the fullness of God’s love.

*for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away.*  
*Song of Solomon 8:6,7*

*...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. Daniel 7:9,10*

What will happen to those whose characters are solidified in selfishness and lies about God when the truth and love of God burns freely on earth again?

FRIDAY

Question 1 read and discuss.



## 2009 Q1 Lesson 11 Interpreting the Prophetic Writings

Read Memory Text – thoughts?

What is the purpose of Scripture? Do you think the memory text exaggerates when it says, “He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself”? Or do you think all the Scriptures is the Scripture designed to provide us the truth about God, ourselves, the GC and God’s plan to reconcile us to Him?

### SUNDAY

“Exegesis is concerned with the original meaning of a text. It focuses on what the author wanted to say and what the text meant to the original reader.”

The lesson asks us to read Romans 2:14-16:

*<sup>14</sup>(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, <sup>15</sup>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.) <sup>16</sup>This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.*

Thoughts? What does this mean? Does this mean people can be saved who have never heard of Christ? Can people be saved who have never accepted Jesus as their Savior?

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

*Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6*

How do we harmonize these passages? What about when we bring in the following passages?

*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 past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. Hebrews 1:1,2*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. John 1:1-3*

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> 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. Colossians 1:16,17*

Who is the member of the Godhead through which nature was created? Jesus, and Paul says in Romans 1:20 that *God’s invisible qualities are seen in what He has made so men are without excuse*. So, if someone learns about God through the book of nature, who are they coming to God through? Jesus, the Creator of nature!

The lesson suggests we read Ezekiel 3:17-19:

*17 “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. 18 When I say to a wicked man, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. 19 But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself.*

Thoughts? How do you read this text?

If you see a three-year-old playing with rat poison, or lighter fluid and matches, or a loaded gun, what would it mean if you did nothing but sat back and watched when you had the chance to intervene?

Our behavior, our reaction to others reveals whether love has been restored into our hearts or not. If we don’t work to tell others the Good News about God, then we reveal the lack of love in our own heart and our own condition will condemn us.

How would you feel if you were an engineer who designed plans for a bridge, and in order to make more money you cut corners, cheated, faked reports and used substandard materials, all on purpose, and later your wife and child die when the bridge collapses? How will it be for us when we come to the realization that our refusal to share the truth about God with others diminished the opportunity some had for salvation?

Read second paragraph, “On occasion...” thoughts? What determines our salvation? What prevents it? Why will all be lost who are lost?

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. Ephesians 2:1-3*

*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 1John 3:14*

Thoughts about these texts? What is the condition we are born into? Is it a condition that is compatible with life or is it a condition that is terminal unless changed, cured, remedied? And what is the remedy? Jesus, and what does Jesus do in those who trust Him? Restores His character of love in us, then we have crossed over from death to life. Why do people die in the end? Because they remain in selfishness and refuse to be renewed in love!

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

Conscience is never to be used as a guide without the balancing and restraining hand of an ennobled reason. Reason and conscious combined form our judgment.

Any examples of conscious leading astray?

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph – thoughts? What do you think of the idea that there is a kingdom of Grace and a kingdom of Glory?

Is it possible this distinction is a by-product of a finite mind trying to comprehend an infinite God? Is it possible the truth is like white light all the colors of the rainbow are in it but when it

passes through a prism we see their individual spectrums? Is Grace and Glory mere colors of Love and God's kingdom is the kingdom of Love?

## TUESDAY

Today's lesson speaks of the importance of recognizing the time and place the Scripture was written, why is this important?

What about women speaking and leading in church: is this a text that is limited to a particular time and place or one which is for all people in all times?

Why do we struggle with it?

Others?

What about the Levitical laws, the food restrictions were they for a particular time and place or for all people in all time?

What do you say to Christians who argue Jesus gave us permission to eat all foods?

Agree with them that we are no longer restricted by ceremonial law from eating certain foods. Then ask, "When Christ did away with the ceremonial law did that abolish the laws of health?" Just because we are free to eat whatever we choose doesn't make all choices healthy and as stewards of the Spirit Temple is it not our duty to maintain it as fitfully as possible?

So what is the principle, never eat meat, or eat what is healthiest and let the circumstances determine?

From the White Estate:

MRS. WHITE MOST LIKELY ATE SOME OYSTERS. IN 1882, WHEN SHE WAS LIVING AT HEALDSBURG, CALIFORNIA, SHE WROTE A LETTER TO HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, MARY KELSEY WHITE, IN OAKLAND, IN WHICH SHE MADE THE FOLLOWING REQUEST: "Mary, if you can get me a good box of herrings, fresh ones, please do so. These last ones that Willie got are bitter and old. If you can buy cans, say, half a dozen cans, of good tomatoes, please do so. We shall need them. If you can get a few cans of good oysters, get them." {MR852 2.3}

What about the time and place any spiritual counsel is written whether scripture or other writings?

Sick people who take drugs do appear to get well. With some there is sufficient life force for nature to draw upon to so far expel the poison from the system that the sick, having a period of rest, recover. But no credit should be allowed the drugs taken, for they only hindered nature in her efforts. All the credit should be ascribed to nature's restorative powers.--H. to L., Chap. 3, p. 50. {Healthful Living 244.1}

Drugging should be forever abandoned; for while it does not cure any malady, it enfeebles the system, making it more susceptible to disease.-- T., No. 32, p. 57. {HL 244.3}

There are more who die from the use of drugs than all who would have died of disease had nature been left to do her own work.--H. to L., Chap. 3, p. 61. {HL 244.4}

Medicines have no power to cure, but will most generally hinder nature in her efforts.--H. to L., Chap. 3, p. 62. {HL 244.5}

Medicine deranges nature's fine machinery, and breaks down the constitution. It kills, but never cures.--H. to L., Chap. 3, p. 57. {HL 244.6}

The endless variety of medicines in the market, the numerous advertisements of new drugs and mixtures, all of which claim to do wonderful cures, kill hundreds where they benefit one. . . . Yet people keep dosing, and continue to grow weaker until they die. Some will have medicine at all events. Then let them take these hurtful mixtures and the various deadly poisons upon their own responsibility. --F. of F., p. 140. {HL 245.1}

1051 Everywhere you go you will see deformity, disease, and imbecility, which in very many cases can be traced directly back to drug poisons.--H. to L., Chap. 3, p. 51. {HL 246.1}

Thoughts? Should we take time and situation into account?

The follow was written by medical students to EGW:

“FROM OUR STUDY OF THE TESTIMONIES AND THE LITTLE WORK, HOW TO LIVE, WE CAN SEE THAT THE LORD IS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THE USE OF DRUGS IN OUR MEDICAL WORK. ... SEVERAL OF THE STUDENTS ARE IN DOUBT AS TO THE MEANING OF THE WORD ‘DRUG’ AS MENTIONED IN HOW TO LIVE. DOES IT REFER ONLY TO THE STRONGER MEDICINES AS MERCURY, STRYCHNINE, ARSENIC, AND SUCH POISONS, THE THINGS WE MEDICAL STUDENTS CALL ‘DRUGS,’ OR DOES IT ALSO INCLUDE THE SIMPLER REMEDIES, AS POTASSIUM, IODINE, SQUILLS, ETC.? WE KNOW THAT OUR SUCCESS WILL BE PROPORTIONATE TO OUR ADHERENCE TO GOD’S METHODS. FOR THIS REASON I HAVE ASKED THE ABOVE QUESTION.” {2SM 278.3}

Her answer:

Drug poisons mean the articles which you have mentioned. The simpler remedies are less harmful in proportion to their simplicity; but in very many cases these are used when not at all necessary. 2SM 279

Thoughts? Should we today avoid the use of all medicines? What about in her day?

Mrs. White’s son, when traveling with her in Australia, wrote the following:

“ONE TIME WHILE WE WERE IN AUSTRALIA, A BROTHER WHO HAD BEEN ACTING AS A MISSIONARY IN THE ISLANDS, TOLD MOTHER OF THE SICKNESS AND DEATH OF HIS FIRST-BORN SON. HE WAS SERIOUSLY AFFLICTED WITH MALARIA, AND HIS FATHER WAS ADVISED TO GIVE HIM QUININE, BUT IN VIEW OF THE COUNSEL IN THE TESTIMONIES TO AVOID THE USE OF QUININE HE REFUSED TO ADMINISTER IT, AND HIS SON DIED. WHEN HE MET SISTER WHITE, HE ASKED HER THIS QUESTION: ‘WOULD I HAVE SINNED TO GIVE THE BOY QUININE WHEN I KNEW OF NO OTHER WAY TO CHECK MALARIA AND WHEN THE PROSPECT WAS THAT HE WOULD DIE WITHOUT IT?’ IN REPLY SHE SAID, ‘NO, WE ARE EXPECTED TO DO THE BEST WE CAN.’” --W. C. WHITE LETTER, SEPTEMBER 10, 1935.--COMPILERS.]--Counsels on Health, p. 261 (1890).

Thoughts? What do you think about EGW’s attitude? What is the point? Principle not rules, do what is healthiest, most likely to preserve life and health!

## WEDNESDAY

The lesson advises us to be aware of the immediate context of a passage – read the first two paragraphs “In the immediate...” –thoughts?

What about the suggestion at the end that there will be no children born to the redeemed in the new heaven and earth? They cite Matthew 22:30 which reads, “*At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.*”

Does this text say anything about children?

Read bottom green section – thoughts? What gives you assurance? If we are focused on our assurance where is our focus? Is it self-centered? What about Moses? Did He stop worrying about whether he would be saved and even offered himself to save other? And Paul? And the righteous in the end? Is it possible one of the most righteous sounding ploys of the devil is to get everyone focusing on themselves, “Am I saved?”

What about saying to God, “I know you so well that I know you are completely trustworthy. I give you my life and if you know that heaven would be a better place without me then don’t let me be there”?

## THURSDAY

Read dark section – thoughts about salvation by faith and how works play in?

Read first paragraph “When we look...” thoughts?

If one patient is taking medicine and the other is cheeking the medicine, why is one valid and one invalid? Because only one results in actual healing and transformation! Genuine faith results in transformation of character and as we get well, our symptoms decrease. What are the symptoms of sinfulness? Acts of sins. What are the signs of righteousness? Loving others!

## FRIDAY

Read questions 2 and 3 and discuss

## 2009 Q1 Lesson 12 The Blessings of the Prophetic Gift

Read memory text –

*“Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets” Amos 3:7*

Thoughts? What does this mean to you? What would be included in this?

Will the Second Coming occur without Christ revealing it to His servants the prophets?

Does this require the prophetic gift to be manifested again prior to the second coming? Or does it mean that the second coming has already been prophesied about so there is no need for a prophet or prophets to arise in the actual generation that sees Christ come?

Revelation 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. 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: “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.”*

Is this describing the time before or after the second coming? Who are the “servants” of God who are sealed in their forehead?

*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*

Who are the servants of God? Is it referring to the prophets? Will there be people with the prophetic gift at the end of time?

*“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. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls. Joel 2:28-32*

What does this prophecy predict? Do we expect the second coming of Christ to occur without the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, without the rising up of a people who are empowered with the Holy Spirit to speak rightly for God?

Or will the later rain fall preparing a people to meet Jesus? With that outpouring will they be gifted with the gift of prophecy?

### SUNDAY

Top question “Why did God elect Israel as His special people?”

Read first paragraph “God chose Israel...” – well said, thoughts or questions?

How did it go wrong? What happened? Here is a people chosen by God, blessed with His presence, directions, prophets, teaching tools yet it all went terribly wrong, how?



Lies about God were retained in their minds, pagan concepts of God infected their thinking. They valued power more than character. Therefore, after periods of rebellion, after chastisement by God, leaders arose devoted to never falling backward again. So what did they do?

They enacted all types of manmade rules and regulations to control behavior. But this only caused greater insecurity, anxiety, fear, evil surmising, jealousy, and sickness of heart. They began to judge each other and criticize and chastise those who broke the rules.

One of the founders of our church wrote it this way:

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? So what went wrong? They devised their own rules to conform behavior and never came to a right knowledge of God.

What about Christianity today? What was the purpose of the Christian church? Have we done what we were called to do? What has gone wrong?

The Christian church has gotten infected with twisted ideas about God. The church built up human exactions to conform behavior and the Dark Ages were terrible times of legalism, rules, exactions, meaningless rituals, judgmentalism, power and coercion over others all to conform behavior. What kind of a God did this represent?

What happened because of this? Reformation – and what has happened in the aftermath of the reformation? Instead of a system in which we have to work to pay God, to earn God's approval – no more Hail Mary's, Our Father's, no more penance, indulgences, pilgrimages, no more need for Mary or the Saints to pray the Father for us – all that done away with, and instead what do we have?

Our legal penalty paid by the blood of Jesus to assuage the Father's wrath so He won't have to lash out against us and kill us. Sin, cannot be overcome, sin cannot be cured, sin cannot be removed – we are stuck in our sin until Jesus comes it can only be paid for by the blood of Jesus. Oh, and the record of sins can be erased from heavenly records – but not from hearts and minds????? Do you like this concept? This is twisted!

Christianity is stuck, we have missed the Good News, Jesus victory means healing of our hearts, minds and characters. It means cleansing of the Spirit Temple. It means renewal of God's people on earth, it means victory over sin in our lives now!

*What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Romans 6:1,2*

*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 5:15*

*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. Galatians 2:20*

*So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. Ephesians 4:17*

What about the SDA church, what is the purpose of the SDA church? How are we doing? What message are we taking to the world?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph “Through the father’s...” thoughts?

What are the benefits of this system? What are the drawbacks?

Because this system is spelled out in the Bible, should we revert to this type of education today? Why would this system not be good for today?

What lesson do we learn from this? Are there instructions found in the Scripture that were good for a particular place and time but not good for us today? Any others?

- Circumcision?
- Starting a fire on Sabbath?
- Ceremonial washing?
- Phylacteries?
- Animal sacrifices?
- Women not speaking in church or teaching men?

Are there some examples from Scripture that we have wandered away from that we would do better to practice again?

- Church leaders not being graduates of seminary?
- What seminary training did the Apostles have?
- Does that mean seminary training is bad?
- Sabbath observance?
- Healthful living?

Bottom green section – what should a Christian school be like today? How should it be different from other schools?

What should be the highest priority?

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}

Such an education provides more than mental discipline; it provides more than physical training. It strengthens the character, so that truth and uprightness are not sacrificed to selfish desire or worldly ambition. It fortifies the mind against evil. Instead of some master

passion becoming a power to destroy, every motive and desire are brought into conformity to the great principles of right. As the perfection of His character is dwelt upon, the mind is renewed, and the soul is re-created in the image of God. {Ed 18.1}

## TUESDAY

Health reform – what is the purpose of health reform and healthy lifestyle?

What health principles have you found most beneficial?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

When does the health message become unhealthy?

–When we practice rules rather than principles; example:

- ‘Never eat meat’ rather than ‘eat what is most nutritious to the body’
- Soy is always a better protein-source than meat (fish)
  - Soy is high in phytoestrogens and can contribute to hypospadias in male children.
  - Some emerging evidence is suggesting the estrogen-like effect in utero and early infancy could contribute to feminizing effects on male brains, increasing the risk of homosexuality.
  - Unfermented soy proteins may inhibit trypsin—an enzyme needed for digestion, contributing to significant GI disturbance, and nutritional absorption problems.
  - Animal studies show high-soy diets inhibit normal growth, bone development and sexual development, and increase infertility.
  - Soy processing often results in the formation of nitrates, which are carcinogenic, and in order to flavor the soy byproduct, many artificial agents are added.
  - Phytic acid is contained in all seeds and hulls and binds to essential minerals such as calcium, zinc, magnesium and iron. Diets that are solely legume-based result in mineral deficiency. (Long, slow cooking reduced phytic acid in most legumes, but soy requires fermentation in order to reduce this substance.)

## WEDNESDAY

Read top question “Where were the...” Thoughts?

*Dt 11:18 Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.*

Which is the more important place to have them written?

Publishing work – what is the importance of publishing?

What was perhaps the most significant contributor to the emergence from the Dark Ages?

The printing press – knowledge could be disturbed widely. And what has been the most translated, printed, published and sold book in the world? The Bible.

When Martin Luther nailed his 95 thesis to the wall in Wittenberg and the reformation started, what event came next that scared the Catholic church more than any other? Luther’s translation of the Bible into German. Why?

Does this give us any insight into the benefit of publishing? If you could publish a message what would you want to see published?

## THURSDAY

Theology – the lesson documents the theological battles that occurred in our church in the early years, how various unhealthy teachings tried to infiltrate the church:

### Holy Flesh movement

The things you have described ... the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit. {Mar 234.1}

The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. ... A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. The powers of Satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working. ... Those participating in the supposed revival receive impressions which lead them adrift. They cannot tell what they formerly knew regarding Bible principles. {Mar 234.2}

No encouragement should be given to this kind of worship. The same kind of influence came in after the passing of the time in 1844. The same kind of representations were made. Men became excited, and were worked by a power thought to be the power of God. ... {Mar 234.3}

Men and women, supposed to be guided by the Holy Spirit, held meetings in a state of nudity. They talked about holy flesh. They said they were beyond the power of temptation, and they sang, and shouted, and made all manner of noisy demonstrations. ... Satan was moulding the work, and sensuality was the result. The cause of God was dishonored. Truth, sacred truth, was leveled in the dust by human agencies. ... {Mar 234.4}

### Perfectionism movement

- Date setting for Christ's return
- Pantheism
- Spiritualism
- Arianism
- Legalism

What about today? What unhealthy theologies have penetrated or threatened to penetrate our church?

- Evolution as a means of creation?

## FRIDAY

Read question 2 and discuss

## 2009 Q1 Lesson 13 Confidence in the Prophetic Gift

Read memory text 2 Chron 20:20 – thoughts?

What does it mean to believe God's prophets?

Consider these two scenarios:

A calculus teacher puts a problem on the board: you have no idea how to do calculus, but the teacher is a long-time friend who after putting the problem on the board, tells you the answer and you believe him, OR

You have learned from your friend how to do calculus and as he tells you the answer, you understand the calculations and, realizing his answer is correct, believe him.

Is there a difference in the two types of belief?

What kind of belief does God want us to have in His prophets? In Him?

What are all of God's prophets trying to accomplish? Move people into a saving relationship with God!

*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*

If we experience the fullness of the New Covenant, will there be a need for prophets?

### SUNDAY Biblical Authority

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Are there any ideas, teachings, doctrines, beliefs in our church you have heard that do not have Biblical support?

Are there any ideas that have Biblical support, but need to be further developed, expanded, matured, grown, brought out into greater light? For instance, was the teaching about animal sacrifice Biblical? Did it need, at the time of Christ, to be developed and expanded to understand Jesus as the fulfillment of that system?

What about our understanding of the cleansing of the sanctuary? Is it Biblically based?

*Unto 2300 days and then shall the sanctuary be cleansed Daniel 8:14*

*"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. 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*

Are there things we need to further develop, expand, mature in our understanding, just like the animal sacrifices need to transcend to the reality of Jesus?

As we reflect back on the study of prophecy and prophets have we discovered that prophets are all knowing? Or do they have limited knowledge? Do prophets grow in their understanding over time?

With that in mind, one of the founders of our church wrote the following after our current sanctuary position had been founded:

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} (1900)

The system of Jewish economy was the gospel in figure, a presentation of Christianity which was to be developed as fast as the minds of the people could comprehend spiritual light. Satan ever seeks to make obscure the truths that are plain, and Christ ever seeks to open the mind to comprehend every essential truth concerning the salvation of fallen man. **To this day there are still aspects of truth which are dimly seen, connections that are not understood, and far-reaching depths in the law of God that are uncomprehended.** RH Nov 23, 1893

What do you hear in these statements? Does it sound like there is more unpacking of this to do? Have we as a church seen any significant growth in our position on this doctrine since it was formed in 1850-1860s? Why not?

What areas do you think we need to expand on the sanctuary doctrine? What questions have you had? The following was written in 1890 – the earliest statement we will read, after we read this statement will we see a progression in understanding?

The most important part of the daily ministration was the service performed in behalf of individuals. 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. By his own hand the animal was then slain, and the blood 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. In some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place; but the flesh was then to be eaten by the priest, as Moses directed the sons of Aaron, saying, "God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation." Leviticus 10:17. Both ceremonies alike symbolized the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary. {PP 354.2} (1890)

Such was the work that went on day by day throughout the year. The sins of Israel being thus transferred to the sanctuary, the holy places were defiled, and a special work became necessary for the removal of the sins. God commanded that an atonement be made for each of the sacred apartments, as for the altar, to "cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel." Leviticus 16:19. {PP 355.1} (1890)

Can someone find a Bible text to support that the sanctuary was contaminated by the blood of the sacrificial lamb? Every text I have been able to find says that the blood of the sacrificial lamb makes things holy, cleanses, purifies, sanctifies, but never defiles.

What does the sacrificial animal represent? What does the sacrificial animal's blood represent? Are we comfortable saying that when Jesus came into contact with confessed sin (when He became our "sin bearer") that His blood is not what cleanses, but what contaminates? When Christ



confronted sin, took our position, became “sin though He knew no sin” did Christ become defiled or did Christ win, overcome and vanquish sin?

When 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. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. John 6:53-56, was Jesus telling the disciples they must defile their spirit temple until 1844?

What is Jesus saying? What does His blood and flesh represent? His life! His perfect, righteous, holy, sinless life! And it is to be taken into our hearts and minds so that we become like Jesus in character, so that we are purified not defiled. So that the Spirit Temple is cleansed of sin!

Notice the progression in EGW’s understanding from her previous statement written in 1890:

He [Christ] was the way when Adam lived, when Abel presented to God the blood of the slain lamb, representing the blood of the Redeemer. DA 663 (1898)

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} (1898)

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} (1898)

Is there a relationship between the lamb in the OT and Jesus? Is the blood of the sacrificial lamb symbolic of the blood of Jesus? Where did Jesus say His blood is to be applied? Does that mean that up until 1844 sin was being applied to all those who accepted Jesus? I think not!

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 wrought 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} (1903)

“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 (1900)

“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.” Special Testimonies on Education page 220 (1897)

What about the pattern shown Moses on the mount?

When Moses was about to erect the sanctuary in the wilderness, he was cautioned, “See ... that thou make all things according to the **pattern** showed to thee in the mount.” Hebrews 8:5. In His **law**, God has given us the **pattern**. Our **character building** is to be after “the pattern showed to thee in the mount.” The **law** [of love] is the great standard of righteousness. **It represents the character of God**, and is the test of our loyalty to His government. And it is revealed to us, in all its beauty and excellence, in the life of Christ. . . Special Testimonies on Education (1897)

What law? The law of love! What is the temple? What is to be built? A character like Christ’s built upon the law of love, this is cleansing of the sanctuary. This is the message we are to be taking to the world, but what have we been doing for the last 150 years?

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

Do you see a progression in understanding from the initial quotation to later quotations? What does it sound like the blood is and does in the later quotes?

Then what is happening on the Day of Atonement? The day of at-one-ment?

The sacrifices happening on a daily basis, the sin offerings, represent what is happening in the lives of individuals. The annual feasts represent what is happening corporately/globally.

**Passover** = God intercedes and holds the consequences of sin at bay while providing a solution to heal mankind, Jesus who became the Passover Lamb (Romans 3:25)

**Unleavened Bread** = Jesus and eating it symbolizes internalizing the Bread of life, partaking of Jesus, His Words of truth and His character (John 6:58,59)

**Wave sheaf** = Jesus resurrection from the dead, His victory over sinfulness and His perfect restoration of the Law of Love into Humanity destroying the basis of death!

**Feast of Weeks or Harvest or Pentecost** = when the harvest of the kingdom starts, bringing in the converts and the spreading of the gospel

**Trumpets** = trumpeting the second coming of Christ, the Loud Cry

**Atonement** = the last day generation, who have understood the truth about God, had the lies of Satan removed, made right judgment about God and by the working of the Holy Spirit are prepared to meet Christ

**Tabernacles** = Second coming of Christ where we tabernacle with God eternally

The lesson points out in the middle of Sunday that even after three years with Christ and after the resurrection the disciples still had misunderstanding about things. Are we open as a church to

acknowledge we might have some misunderstandings? Or are we so arrogant to believe that everything we believe and teach is correct?

How big a gap is there between finite beings and an infinite God? Why do some think we have no more to learn?

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} 1892

Have you ever tried to take symbolic language and make it more reality based, deciphered?

The incense, ascending with the prayers of Israel, represents the merits and intercession of Christ, His perfect righteousness, which through faith is imputed to His people, and which can alone make the worship of sinful beings acceptable to God. Before the veil of the most holy place, was an altar of perpetual intercession, before the holy, an altar of continual atonement. By blood and by incense, God was to be approached--symbols pointing to the great Mediator, through whom sinners may approach Jehovah, and through whom alone mercy and salvation can be granted to the repentant, believing soul. FLB 197 (1890)

My decoding of the symbols:

The sweetness, in the prayers of God's children, represents the lovely traits of Christlike character established in the heart through Christ's work in the believer, His perfect righteousness, which through trust is established in His people, and which can alone make the worship of sinful beings acceptable to God. Because of the lies of Satan that separate us from God, Christ is perpetually interceding in our minds to establish His character, but in order for Christ to cleanse our hearts we must keep the heart continually open to Him. By truth and by loveliness of Christlike character, God was to be approached--symbols pointing to the great Ambassador revealing God to man, through whom sinners may come to know Jehovah, and through whom alone mercy and healing can be granted to the repentant, believing soul.

In the offering of incense the priest was brought more directly into the presence of God than in any other act of the daily ministration. As the inner veil of the sanctuary did not extend to the top of the building, the glory of God, which was manifested above the mercy seat, was partially visible from the first apartment. When the priest offered incense before the Lord, he looked toward the ark; and as the cloud of incense arose, the divine glory descended upon the mercy seat and filled the most holy place, and often so filled both apartments that the priest was obliged to retire to the door of the tabernacle. FLB 197 (1890)

My decoding:

In the offering of prayers filled with the sweetness of Christlike character the believer was brought more directly into the presence of God than in any other act of the daily healing therapy. As the lies Satan told about God which infected our minds did not completely eclipse the truth from reaching us, the character of God, which was manifested through Christ, was partially visible to the converted mind. When the believer prays sweetly before the Lord, he keeps in mind God's methods, principles and Law of Love and Liberty; and as the prayers arise, the divine character is magnified by Christ and fills the mind of the believer, and often is so overwhelming that the believer is left without words.

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph – “Ellen White...” thoughts? What does it mean that for Ellen White the Bible was the source of authority?

How do you understand the Bible to be infallible? Notice the emphasis, “Infallible revelation of God’s will.” Does that mean infallible in counting the number of people in attendance at a particular meeting? Infallible at calculating the distance walked by the disciples on a certain day? No, we may find discrepancies in such trivial things, but such things are not the purpose of the Bible. The Bible is to reveal God’s will, and what will do you see revealed in the Bible?

## TUESDAY

Read John 5:39 at top – can you think of where the OT teaches of Jesus?

*Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. PS 16:9,10*

*Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. PS 41:9*

*They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing. PS 22:18*

*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. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. Isaiah 53:3-9*

Read second paragraph – thoughts? What does it mean to be saved from our sins?

## WEDNESDAY

Read Matthew 23:28-31 at top – thoughts?

How do we persecute the prophets today? What about attacking those who present a message from the Lord even if they aren’t recognized as prophets – Jones and Waggoner?

Do we do this today?

Why did they attack the prophets? Why do people today reject the words of truth?

## THURSDAY

The lesson states, “Miracles are fine, but they are hardly the final test and mean nothing if the teachings are unbiblical.” Well said, - how do you tell if something is unbiblical?

Do you think most people think they are teaching unbiblical things? So, if so many are teaching what they think is Biblical but they are often contradictory what does that mean for each one of us?

*“Every person is to be fully persuaded in their own mind” Romans 14:5*

We must each come to our own conclusion for ourselves and not trust someone else to do our thinking for us.

FRIDAY

read questions 2 and 3 and discuss

## 2009 Q2 Lesson 1 Love

### INTRODUCTION to study guide

Read first three paragraphs – “One of the greatest..”

Do you think there is anything about God that is unreasonable? Irrational? Illogical? Inconsistent?

If something is beyond our comprehension does that mean it is not scientific? If we can’t understand something does that mean it cannot be measured, tested, and explained in rational terms?

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Black Plague killed over 40 million people in Europe – they had no idea of such things as bacteria, infections, vectors so they concluded a wrathful God was punishing. They were sure that such things could never be explained scientifically.

Are we in danger of taking a similar mindset – believing that because we are finite and have limited comprehension and knowledge therefore truth is not rational, reasonable, testable, scientific, explainable?

Or should our attitude be that all truth is reasonable, scientific, understandable, explainable, testable, we are just, currently, too ignorant to even conceive of a possible explanation?

What does God want for us, to understand as much as we can and to keep growing with open minds hungering to understand more or to take the attitude we are not supposed to understand?

God intends that to the earnest seeker the truths of his word shall be ever unfolding. The mysteries it contains are not such because God has sought to conceal truth; **the inability to understand is not in his purpose**, but in our inability to understand. But it is impossible for any human mind to exhaust even one truth or promise of the Bible. One catches the glory from one point of view, and another from another point; yet we can discern only gleamings. The full radiance is beyond our vision. It will take eternity to unfold it all. {The Southern Work, April 23, 1907 par. 10}

### SABBATH

Read last paragraph – “God is love...” Well said, thoughts?

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – “We need...” thoughts?

Taking our lead from the quarterly, what happens to people who refuse to eat or refuse to drink?

Can there be life outside of love? So what happens to people who refuse or allow God to restore them to love?

Why is it commonly taught that what happens to people who refuse love is that God, in order to be just, must kill them? Why? Because Satan wants to destroy love and love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom. So, teachings that suggest God must inflict death, suffering, torture upon people who refuse love actually set up barriers to love and prevent the very healing God wants to provide.



I received the following in an email from Jon Nash:

### **STAND UP, STAND OUT**

for March 11, from God Space

by Tompaul Wheeler

*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. 1 John 4:18*

Evil is easy. If it weren't, it wouldn't be so popular - on the battlefield, on the playground, at the movies. Evil is glamorous. Evil is fun. Evil means big bucks.

Standing up against evil. Now, that takes creativity and genuine guts. Everybody wants to save their skin. When Paul wrote, "After all, no one ever hated his own body" (Ephesians: 5:29), he wasn't kidding. Until we've been pushed beyond despair, we'll do anything to keep going in the face of evil, no matter the compromise, body or soul.

Evil is second nature, and so ingrained that it's easy to forget that it truly is our second nature. God created us noble, loving, wise, but we swallowed the bitter pill, so shrewdly sugarcoated, and ever since we've either battled or embraced the buzz.

If evil is easy, if evil is big business, what does it take for someone to stand up, speak out, and defy the powerful? What makes people willing to stick their necks out? Samuel and Pearl Oliner decided to find out. They studied people who risked their own lives during World War II to rescue Jews. They wanted to know why, despite the authoritarian environment, they didn't just toe the line. The Oliners discovered that those courageous people all had something major in common: their parents had not physically punished them. Instead of spanking, their parents talked things out with them, encouraging them to think for themselves.

Rescuers' parents "reasoned rather than threatened," Eva Fogelman wrote in "Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust". Instead of motivating their kids by fear of punishment, they taught them to think things through and to do the right thing because it was the right thing.

Social psychologist Martin Hoffman has extensively studied what makes people compassionate. Hoffman found that "parents who explained rules and used inductive reasoning instead of harsh punishment tend to have children who care for and about others. After all, parents who voluntarily relinquish the use of force in favor of reasoning send their children a message about how the powerful should treat the weak."

Evil is easy. But love is eternal.

If you would like to read the story of Samuel Oliner you can visit his website at

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=482>

In his words, from his website:

Who are these people who put the welfare of others alongside their own?

They are deeply empathetic. We found a clear correlation between empathy and altruistic behavior—helpers simply could not stand by and see others suffer. We also found that altruists, unlike bystanders, had internalized the ethic of caring and social responsibility they learned from their parents and significant others. As children, they were likely to have been disciplined by reasoning and taught to consider the consequences of their misbehavior. The capacity for love and compassion was yet another important characteristic, as well as a sense of self-esteem and efficacy (a sense of self that tells them that they can succeed at some task, even dangerous ones). Ecumenically inclusive religious or spiritual beliefs, such as regarding all people as children of the same God, worthy of protection and love, are other important factors associated with helping. We found that among certain rescuers, such as those in Holland, religious factors were more important than for those in Poland, where compassion for the victim was of greater significance in rescue.

Thoughts? What about concepts of a God who will use punitive measures to punish His children in the end? Do you think such concepts could translate into abusing our fellow man? What about such concepts that God doesn't want us to reason with Him, He only wants blind unthinking submission?

Martin Luther was a staunch anti-Semite who, while moving out of darkness toward the light, retained much error in his thinking. He wrote extensively about how the Jews should have their property taken and didn't even deserve to live. Some historians believe his writings on these lines influenced Germans later to accept Hitler's final solution.

Read second paragraph “God’s love...” thoughts?

It says, “True ‘love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power.’” Is that scientific? Are principles constants that can be measured?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph “It is often...” thoughts?

The lesson gives us four examples of love in the Old Testament

- Creation
- The promised Messiah
- The Sabbath
- Prophecy

Any thoughts or questions about any of these and how they reveal God’s love?

Are there any stories from the OT that you struggle to see God’s love?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

When God told them to kill all the people, men, women, children, babies, cattle – was this God’s preferred method of dealing with things?

What was God’s preferred method? Friendship, conversion, unity, oneness – why didn’t that happen? Can God force people to love each other? Can a parent force children to love each other? Will you get more love from your children if you increase your threats and beatings?

So why didn’t God’s preferred method win out? The people were too hard hearted, selfish and bigoted to actually be willing to love their enemies.

What was God’s second method? To send in the hornet and pestilence and slowly drive out the occupiers so the Israelites would come into an abandoned land. But that didn’t happen.

How can it be that killing everyone, given the circumstances, is the most loving course of action?

- God is working to bring people eternal life, not a few years of sinful life –  
*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. Mt 10:28*
- God is working to restore the entire world, heal the universe and eradicate sin
- God was working to keep open the channel for the Messiah, without Jesus no human being would be saved.
- God is not constrained by time. He feels the pain of evil throughout the history of the universe with equal magnitude.

If Israel would have done as God said how many people would have been killed back then? And what would have transpired over the next 3500 years? Might Israel have been more successful in their mission? Is it possible less life would have been lost if Israel would have followed God’s direction?

Would this have been loving, given the circumstances?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What do you think about, “We are in no position to answer these questions”? What’s the point if we are in no position to answer these questions? In fact, God has done all of this so we will be in a position to answer these questions.

What answers do you have for these questions?

- Why did Jesus have to come and die?  
In order to:
  - Destroy him who holds the power of death (Heb 2:14)
  - Destroy death (2Tim 1:9,10)
  - Destroy the devil’s work (1John 3:8)
 How?
- What is the devil’s power?
  - Lies, Christ revealed the truth that destroys lies and thus the devil’s power
- What is the basis of death?
  - The broken law of love i.e. fear and selfishness, survival of the fittest instinct, Christ came and developed perfect character, lived in perfect accord with the law of love and in His humanity destroyed the infection of sin
- What is the devil’s work?
  - To destroy the image of God in man and place Satan’s image in its place. Christ perfectly restored God’s image in mankind!

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.  
LHU 48

Any questions on how Jesus did this?

Did Jesus have to die on a cross? No, He had to come and die, to destroy selfishness, to give Himself in perfect love, to restore the law of love into humanity. But it didn’t have to be on a cross. Why does sin result in death? Does sin result in death because someone tortures and executes? Or does sin result in death because it severs the circle of love, which is the circle of life? Then, in order for Jesus, “to become sin who knew no sin” what did He have to experience? Separation from the circle of love without using His power to stop it!

Where did this experience occur? In Gethsemane:

*They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.” Mark 14:32-34*

Christ fell down dying in Gethsemane when He accepted the cup of God’s “wrath” which is God letting go, allowing the connection with the circle of love to be broken. An angel was dispatched to strengthen His human nature to be able to take more, to go through to the Cross to reveal more truth in order to ultimately win the war.

*He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” An angel from*

*heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. Luke 22:41-44*

From the Desire of Ages, we read:

Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world's Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to Himself. He accepts His baptism of blood, that through Him perishing millions may gain everlasting life. He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression. And He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin. His prayer now breathes only submission: "If this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." {DA 690.3}

Having made the decision, **He fell dying to the ground** from which He had partially risen. Where now were His disciples, to place their hands tenderly beneath the head of their fainting Master, and bathe that brow, marred indeed more than the sons of men? The Saviour trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him. {DA 693.1}

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}

The worlds unfallen and the heavenly angels had watched with intense interest **as the conflict drew to its close**. Satan and his confederacy of evil, the legions of apostasy, watched intently this great crisis in the work of redemption. The powers of good and evil waited to see what answer would come to Christ's thrice-repeated prayer. Angels had longed to bring relief to the divine sufferer, but this might not be. No way of escape was found for the Son of God. **In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake**, when the mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of Christ. The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love. He came to give power to the divine-human suppliant. He pointed Him to the open heavens, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings. He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved. {DA 693.3}

Christ's agony did not cease, but His depression and discouragement left Him. The storm had in nowise abated, but He who was its object was strengthened to meet its fury. He came forth calm and serene. A heavenly peace rested upon His bloodstained face. He had borne that which no human being could ever bear; **for He had tasted the sufferings of death for every man**. {DA 694.1}

Read second paragraph “God’s holiness...” thoughts?

If God’s holiness is His separateness then does that mean when Jesus, rather than separating from the unclean and profane, but joined Himself to us, was no longer holy?

Read bottom pink- thoughts? How does Revelation 14 reveal God’s love?

The three angels’ messages Revelation 14:

*<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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.”*

*<sup>8</sup> A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”*

*<sup>9</sup> 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, <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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.” <sup>12</sup> This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.*

Do you see God’s love all the way through?

## WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph “If we truly have been converted...” Excellent –thoughts?

Read third paragraph “If we truly have been changed...” thoughts? What impairs us from experiencing the power of God’s love from transforming our lives?

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph “Jesus Christ is our...” thoughts?

“Why should He have loved these people?” “How could He love them at those moments when they totally forsook Him?” Because of who He is and who they are!

Does a loving physician father love his child with fever, with diarrhea, with vomiting? Why? Even if the child vomits on his new suit? Why?

Do we love parents with Alzheimer’s, even if they behave badly? Why?

When God sees us does He see just the sickness of sin or does He see what we can be if we let Him heal us? And if a child with a terminal illness refuses life saving treatment, how does the parent feel toward that child? Does the parent ever stop loving the child? Does the parent ever need to torture or punish the child?

How could He love them? They are His children!

## FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

## 2009 Q2 Lesson 2 Faith

### SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs “Faith is not...” – thoughts?

How would you define or describe faith?

In what do you have faith? What is the basis of your faith?

### SUNDAY

Read third paragraph – “Now, the question...” thoughts?

Is the lesson suggesting faith is unexplainable, mysterious, it just happens?

If faith is a miracle of God, then who is responsible for why some have faith and some don’t?

Read first paragraph, “A simple definition...” thoughts? Does this sound like faith is based on evidence of God acting throughout history? Then from where does our faith come? Then is the “miracle” of faith that comes from God, not Him tweaking our brain in some fashion to instill faith, but the miracle of His self revelation throughout history which inspires our faith as we see and know Him?

### MONDAY

Read first paragraph “A famous...” thoughts?

Do you think faith is a mystery beyond our comprehension?

Read second paragraph “Clearly, the Scriptures...” thoughts?

Read question four from Friday’s lesson: “You don’t need faith to believe in what you can prove; you need faith to believe in what you can’t prove.”

Is the definition of faith you are hearing tending toward enlightening your mind or darkening it? Is it leading you down a path of believing without evidence? How is this definition of faith different from superstition?

Dictionary definition of **superstition**:

- a belief or notion, not based on reason or knowledge, in or of the ominous significance of a particular thing, circumstance, occurrence, proceeding, or the like.
- a system or collection of such beliefs.
- a custom or act based on such a belief.
- any blindly accepted belief or notion.

Is genuine Christian faith nothing more than superstition? Is genuine Christian faith believing things that are unreasonable, irrational, without evidence, blindly accepted without thinking? Has Satan successfully gotten Christians to exchange faith for superstition?

In the war between Christ and Satan how much truth supports Satan? None, how much supports Christ? 100%, if you were Satan would you want people thinking, reasoning, examining evidence or would you want people to think that true righteousness comes when we stop thinking, stop reasoning, stop examining evidence and just blindly believe?

*1 Thessalonians 5:21. “Test everything. Hold on to the good.” (NIV)*



How can we test everything if we don't reason, think, weigh evidence? Should we test our faith? Or should we have faith in what we cannot test?

*Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Psalms 34:8*

Would tasting mean sampling, gathering evidence, testing to determine?

Proverbs 14:15.

*"A fool will believe anything; smart people watch their step." (GNB)*

*"A simple man believes every word he hears; a clever man understands the need for proof." (NEB)*

*"Only a simpleton believes everything he's told! A prudent man understands the need for proof." (TLB)*

Is our faith in God to be based in claims, proclamation, declarations or evidence that appeals to our reason? One of the founders of our church said:

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}

"God gives sufficient evidence to every soul. He does not promise to remove every doubt, but He gives a reason for faith. And sufficient evidence was given to the Jews." *Review and Herald*, January 24, 1899 (4RH 13:2:4); 5BC 1097(MS 127, 1899)

"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

Thoughts? What is the problem with the idea that faith is believing sincerely in something without evidence and doesn't make sense? It damages the mind. It opens us to believe error claiming it as truth.

Examples of what happens to people who have faith without evidence. In other words, they don't understand the reasons for what they are doing, they just believe they have to.

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 leads to sullen submission and or keeping God's commands from mere obligation? Does the man who understands, who has investigated the evidence, whose mind comprehends the truth obey from sullen submission? Or is it the one who has been taught we are to believe without evidence, have faith without understanding, submit without comprehension that ultimately becomes a rebel?

Any examples of this in history? Those who crucified Christ – sullen submission, obedience without understanding – are we in danger of this happening again in our day? Any examples?

Back to the point about proving our faith – can you prove that your mother is trustworthy or that your spouse loves you? Can you know it? How do you know it? Is your knowledge based on claims, proclamations, declarations or evidence?

If a stranger came up to you in the mall and said, “I want you to come with me, no questions, just follow me, have faith, you can trust me.” Would you go? Why not? How about if they said they were a pastor or priest? If a stranger came up to you in college and said, “You are the most beautiful person I have ever met. I love you with all my heart, marry me, you can trust me.” What would you do? Why?

Does God come to us with claims or does He come with evidence of who He is and ask us to get to know Him? And what happens when we get to know Him? We love and trust Him, why? When we love and trust someone based on our experience with them is that blind or enlightened, evidence based trust?

Has anyone seen the moving the Miracle Worker – about Helen Keller?

- Helen was deaf, dumb and blind, she lived in a dark world and was wild and out of control.
- Annie Sullivan came and began to discipline her – why? Was it punishment? Was Annie angry at Helen for being in such a horrible situation?
- What did Annie want for Helen? Did Annie discipline Helen in order to get “blind obedience”?
- Did Annie want to “enlighten” Helen, to lead her out of darkness and open the world to her?
- Did Helen come to love and trust Annie? Why?

What does God want for us?

What do you say about preachers or messages who say that God doesn't want to enlighten, He doesn't want us to understand, He doesn't want us to think or reason or comprehend, we are merely to stay blind and obey?

If Annie approached Helen with only punishment, threats, pain, intimidation and without enlightenment, would Helen have ever loved Annie?

Teachings which suggest God wants ‘blind obedience’ are from the enemy of souls, they are designed to keep us in darkness and to destroy love from the heart.

If we have scientific explanations and understanding, does that undermine faith? After last week's lesson, I received feedback that some were troubled with the idea that what God does can, over time, through eternity, be understood by His created beings – somehow the fear was that such would undermine faith.

Our church received a message about healthful living 140 years ago. It was radical for its day. Science didn't provide evidence to explain the physiological reasons to move away from meat to a plant based diet, to open the windows and breathe fresh air, to exercise, to use fresh water and avoid stimulants, to avoid alcohol and tobacco. Yet, when people began to practice these healthier habits, was there evidence in their own lives?

Now that science is discovering the underlying physiological reasons why this message was correct, does such understanding undermine your faith, or strengthen it?

What is your faith strengthened in? In God! our faith was never in the health message; our faith is in God. Likewise, throughout our eternal future, the more we understand about science, how God does things, the more our faith in Him will grow.

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph "In their telling..." thoughts?

When miracles are performed, are they generally performed for the strong in faith or for the weak?

- Gideon – why the miracle?
- Elijah and fire – who was the miracle for?
- Jesus' miracles - who were they for, Jesus or others whose faith was weak?

Why are miracles not a good barometer upon which to base our faith? They can be counterfeited.

Read second paragraph "Our faith..." thoughts?

While specific interventions by God often occur after we have come to a faith relationship with Him, does our faith often precede God's interventions in our life or is our faith a response to God's interventions in our life?

The last paragraph states "*without faith it is impossible to please God*" quoting Heb 11:6.

Why is it impossible to please God without faith? What pleases God? The health, happiness, wellbeing of His children! Is it impossible for His children to be healthy, happy, have eternal life without faith? Why?

Imagine a physician who has a child dying of a terminal illness. The child knows he is sick, even that he is dying. He doesn't fully understand why, but he doesn't feel well. His father, a physician, has a remedy which will cure the child. Does the child have to understand how the remedy works in order to benefit from taking it? Does the child need to trust his father, the doctor, and take the medicine? Is the child's faith in the medicine or in the doctor? Does the child have evidence upon which to base his faith in his father?

Does this analogy have any bearing on what faith is in our relationship with God? Does it give any insight into why we cannot please God without faith?

What can we do to increase our faith?

*Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17*

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Feelings are unreliable basis upon which to base our beliefs, faith, decisions – no question about it. But are feelings totally independent of reality or do they react to facts, evidence and reality, i.e. have you ever said, “I have a bad feeling about this.” And then later identified objective reasons you were feeling uneasy?

Does healthy Christian faith press ahead against the evidence? When Christian’s had faith that the earth was the center of the universe, were they right to deny Galileo’s assertion that the earth revolved around the sun? Where does “faith” get balanced, modified, redefined by evidence?

This is not just some esoteric cognitive exercise – I have patients who have “faith” that taking medication is sin and they are not willing to examine scientific evidence to contradict their faith – is that a healthy approach?

What is a healthy balance to science and faith?

Third paragraph states, “Faith in Jesus will grow as you become better acquainted with Him.” Why? What would cause faith to grow as we get better acquainted with Jesus? Would our faith be based on evidence of His trustworthiness and our “knowledge” of Him?

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – excellently said – our doctrines are primarily there to enlighten us about God – then how do we know if our doctrines are true? Don’t all the denomination believe their doctrines are true, even ones that contradict each other? What tools can we use to help determine which are true and which are not?

What does this doctrine say about God?

- Jesus is an exact representation of the Father, any disparity between the two reveals falsehood in the doctrine
- Understanding God’s universal laws of love and liberty, which are constants, we can use to test our doctrines

Read third paragraph, “Sound doctrine...” Excellent, faith is our trust in a person! What is trust in a person based upon? Their trustworthiness, which we know how? Is that evidence based or blind?

## FRIDAY

Read top section – thoughts? Are we to understand or believe blindly without understanding? Who is afraid of you turning on your brain and reasoning and thinking through the evidence? The one who has no evidence!

Question 1 read – thoughts? Imagine a doctor with many sick patients who suffer with a variety of symptoms, yet they all trust the doctor and follow his prescriptions and get well. Why is the doctor not mad at them for their symptoms? How does this apply to Hebrews 11?

Question 3 – thoughts?

## 2009 Q2 Lesson 3 Hope

### SABBATH

Read memory text – what hope do you have? From where does your hope arise? Or what is the basis of your hope? Why is hope important?

How many of you heard this saying: “Where there is life, there is hope”?

Actually, it seems that is not correct; it is other way around: “Where there is hope, there is life.”

Psychology Department of Duke University in North Carolina conducted an experiment in the late 80s to test this hypothesis. In one container researchers placed a rat for whom there was no apparent possibility of escape. He swam just a few moments, 4 or 5 minutes to be exact, and then ducked his head to drown. In the other container they made the hope of escape possible for the rat. It was not easy but it was possible. That second rat swam for many hours (37 to be exact) before finally it ran out of energy and drowned. This experiment demonstrated that it is not “As long as there is life, there is hope.” That experiment proved that, “As long as there is hope, there is life.”

Read first two paragraphs, “The twentieth century...” – thoughts?

What has God promised us through Jesus?

- Eternal life?
- Freedom from sin?
- Assuaging of the Father’s wrath?
- Payment of our legal debt?
- A new heart and right spirit?
- Healing in the inner man?
- Christlikeness of character?
- Forgiveness?

Was God’s forgiveness promised through what Jesus would achieve, in other words did Jesus come to do something in order for God to be able to forgive, or was God forgiving so He sent Jesus to bring us His forgiveness and reconcile us to God? Do we need more than God’s forgiveness?

Matthew 26:28

*This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*  
NIV

*For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*  
KJV

Does this text offer hope? What hope does it offer? Does the hope it offers change, depending on the version we read?

Is it offering legal pardon or something else? Is it offering transformation, cleansing, renewal, rebirth, recreation? Is Christ offering us the hope that through His victory we can experience sin in us going into remission? Is He offering us the hope that our sinful hearts can be cured, cleansed, renewed, regenerated?

Is this a different hope than the hope that ‘Christ is providing us legal pardon with His Father’?

The word translated “forgive” or “remission” is:

**859 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.

The word translated “sins” is:

**266 ἁμαρτία** [*hamartia* /ham·ar·tee·ah/] n f. From 264; TDNT 1:267; TNTA 44; GK 281; 174 occurrences; AV translates as “sin” 172 times, “sinful” once, and “offense” once. **1** equivalent to 264. 1A to be without a share in. 1B to miss the mark. 1C to err, be mistaken. 1D to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honour, to do or go wrong. 1E to wander from the law of God, violate God’s law, sin. **2** that which is done wrong, sin, an offence, a violation of the divine law in thought or in act. **3** collectively, the complex or aggregate of sins committed either by a single person or by many.

What difference does it make to understand the meaning of these words? Are there other Bible texts that shed light onto this?

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 17:3

The word translated save is:

**4982 ἐκσώζω, σώζω** [*sozo* /sode·zo/] v. From a primary sos (contraction for obsolete saoz, “safe”); TDNT 7:965; TDNTA 1132; GK 1751 and 5392; 110 occurrences; AV translates as “save” 93 times, “make whole” nine times, “heal” three times, “be whole” twice, and translated miscellaneous three times. **1** to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction. 1A one (from injury or peril). 1A1 to save a suffering one (from perishing), i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health. 1B1 to preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save or rescue. 1B to save in the technical biblical sense. 1B1 negatively. 1B1A to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment. 1B1B to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance.

Other texts?

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Do you agree fear is rising? What is the relationship between fear and love?

Fear and love are inversely related, as fear goes up love goes down, when love rises fear goes down. Perfect love casts out fear.

What are sources of increasing fear in society today, why is there so much, what impact does it have on us?

- Explore fear circuitry of the brain
- Explore consequences to body and brain when this circuitry is imbalanced
- Explore factors which inflame fear and impair pre-frontal cortex ability to calm fear centers
- Diet
- Sleep deprivation
- TV/Music



- Breakdown of families
- Over-controlling parents/punitive interventions
- Abuses of various kinds
- False concepts of God taught in church
- Explore consequences of unabated fear on relationships and society  
Where fear increases love decreases. Satan's goal is to increase fear and decrease love.

Third paragraph speaks of greed, what impact is greed having in our world today?

- Global warming
- Degradation of food supply
- Damage to environment
- Damage to economy
- Damage to public good will and trust

The quarterly states, "But whatever happens, we have hope through Jesus." Do we have more than hope? Can we have more than hope? Can we have confidence, assurance, certainty?

*"Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains. Matthew 24:3-8*

When a woman goes into labor are the pains the worst at the beginning? Does she want to stop and wait another nine months? While she knows pain is coming is there a hope that overrules the pain?

Bottom pink section states, "Why is it so fruitless and empty, to place our hope in this world or in what this world offers?" My question is, why do so many do it? Could it be because we haven't told them about a God who can actually be trusted? Is it possible that what the world is offering is actually more appealing than what most of the religions of the world, including much of Christianity, is offering?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "The Christian hope..." thoughts? What is it that changes when we accept Christ? Love increases in the heart and fear is purged. How does the life change when this happens? What impact do those changes have on the life?

Read last paragraph, "There are two keys..." thoughts? Believing what? Does it matter in what we believe? I had a patient who believed smoking cigarettes was good for her lungs. Was she free to believe this? In believing this, every time she smoked she felt better "helping my lungs." But was she? Does it matter? What about spiritually, does it matter?

"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}

*"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. <sup>22</sup> 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?' <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" Matthew 7:21-23*

Who do you think the people Jesus is speaking about "believe" in? What is the problem?

What happens inside our brains and bodies when we believe lies?

Inflames the fear centers which drive the fight/flight reaction which impairs immune system, prevents healthy growth, and shuts down pre-frontal cortex thus impairing spiritual development!

## TUESDAY

Last sentence of first paragraph states, "Death is our archenemy, but it is one that will be defeated." – thoughts?

Which death is it talking about: the first or the second? Does it matter? Has either the first or the second already been defeated?

When the Bible says the wages of sin is death, what is it referring to?

- Is this death the same as what humans have experienced since Adam's fall? When Jesus said don't be afraid of the one who can destroy the body, but the one who destroys body and soul, (Matthew 10:28) what was Jesus saying?
- Is Jesus saying what destroys the body is not our true enemy? What destroys the soul is our enemy?
- Is Jesus making a distinction between those who die the first and second death?
- How did Jesus refer to the first death?

Has Jesus already defeated the second death? What is the basis of life? What is the cause of death? What did Jesus do?

*"This is life eternal that they might know you the only true God and Jesus Christ who you have sent." John 17:3*

Eternal life is knowing God, or being in a perfect, intimate relationship with Him, which means living in perfect love, or in perfect harmony with the law of love, which is the basis for all life.

*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*

*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. 2 Tim 1:9,10*

Christ destroyed the power of death by revealing the truth and destroying the lies of Satan and He perfectly restored the law of love into humanity by His life and self-sacrificing death. Thus He destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light!

Read third paragraph, “Of course, there are...” thoughts?

Consider a laptop computer with hardware and software and the computer is connected through a wireless connection to a server where everything is instantly backed up. If someone destroys the laptop, what happens if you get a new one, empty hard drive and download all the data from the server? Resurrection of your computer!

How would you explain to those who believe in consciousness in death and that loved ones are alive with God in heaven at this time?

*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. <sup>14</sup> 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.** <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage each other with these words. 1Thes 4:13-18*

He brings their unique identities, individualities, with Him on the heavenly server and downloads them into newly created bodies and then they are resurrected and live again!

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}

Read last paragraph, “We have no idea...” Thoughts? Do we have no idea? No way of conceiving of it? No way of comprehending it? Is it just gibberish, non-sense? Or has God revealed to us truth that enlightens our mind on the principles of His kingdom of love and we have seen that Jesus has conquered the kingdom of Satan and restored love into mankind? Do we have understanding as to how our individualities can be secure and yet we sleep, awaiting for new bodies? Do we know all the specific science of how God creates? No, but do we understand some of the general principle?

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “How can finite...” Thoughts? How did Jesus define eternal life? “knowing God” not by length of time, what significance is that to us?

How will the meaning of time change in eternity?

How many decisions do we make based on time? How many have thought of a career change, but at a certain age, there just isn’t enough time? How many times have you said, “I just don’t have enough time to get it all done?” Will we have those problems in eternity? What might you do with an eternity?

## THURSDAY

Read middle section “How does the time aspect mentioned in 2 Peter 3:8,9 impact our understanding of the term *soon* in connection with the Second Coming?”

*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. 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.*

Thoughts? Does time move at different speeds in different places, a time dilation? Might it actually be that in heaven only a little more than six 24 hour periods have gone by since mankind sinned?

Read second paragraph, “The ultimate...” well said, thoughts?

## FRIDAY

Read question 3 and discuss

## 2009 Q2 Lesson 4 Life

### SABBATH

Read memory text – John 10:10 – What is the basis of life?

*Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3*

*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. <sup>15</sup> Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. 1 John 3:14,15*

Thoughts? What do these text say are the basis of life? Knowing God which results in what? Love, we love others and selfishness is removed.

*“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. <sup>48</sup> 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. <sup>49</sup> 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. <sup>50</sup> I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.” John 12:46-50*

What judges the wicked in the end? Why don't they have eternal life? They didn't follow the Father's command which is what? John 13:34,35

*“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

How are knowing God and love connected? God is love, God is the source of love, only in connection with God can we ever experience love and then love others.

- How is love connected to life? *Love is not self seeking 1Cor 13:5*
- Love emanates from God and is the design template for life

Respiration is a law for life, a manifestation of the law of love, life is only possible in harmony with the law of respiration

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.

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 sin? Sin in lawlessness 1John 3:4 – what does this mean?

We have unfortunately concluded that God's law is an enacted law and God is the great cosmic enforcer of His law and therefore must inflict penalties to make people pay. With this as the problem we have concocted the idea that Jesus came to appease His Father and pay our penalty.

*The truth is that the law of the universe is the law of love. This law emanates from God who is love. It is not a created or legislated law but the principle, template, design protocol that life is constructed to operate upon. The reason God could not change His law is that life is not possible in any other way. Therefore, when man broke the law, the actual basis for life, Jesus came to fix it. To perfectly reproduce the law of love in humanity, to rebuild the basis of life, perfect love in the human being. Jesus did this by becoming one of us and being tempted in everyway like us yet without sin (Heb 4:15).*

Now, because of Jesus each of us can receive freely from God a transfusion of His love which will heal and transform us, thus we become partakers of the divine nature and, in that relationship with God, partakers of eternal life.

## SUNDAY

Read first two paragraphs "How did life originate?" thoughts?

It is commonly taught that life evolved over billions of years and science, such as rocks on earth dated to billions of years, is cited as examples of the Genesis account being wrong. How do we harmonize the Genesis account with the facts of science?

- How do we understand rocks being billions of years of age in harmony with the Genesis account?
- How do we understand carbon dating suggesting organic material is 50,000 years old?
- How do we understand light was created on day one of creation week but the sun moon and stars were not created until day four?
- How do we understand that animal brains show a progressive complexity as we move up the "evolutionary" chain?

Job 38:7 sons of God sang together when earth was made and Heb 1:2 (ASV) God, through the Son made the "worlds." – In other words, Genesis 1 does not describe creation of the entire universe but creation of our solar system.

Genesis 1:2 describes the earth as a black, empty, void with no light – what is being described? Perhaps a black hole in the Milky Way? When God said let there be light He dissipated the black hole and there was light and then He used the matter from the center of the black hole, which God had previously created billions of years before when He made the universe, to create earth and put life on it about 6000 years ago.

Carbon dating assumes carbon 14 levels have been constant throughout earth's history. Carbon 14 is an isotope of carbon 12 and when a living organism dies the carbon 14 levels begin to decay and can be measured to suggest age. But C14 is generated by solar radiation. The Bible tells us before the flood there was water layer above the earth which came down at the time of the great flood. The water layer would have dissipated the solar energy, like a greenhouse, creating a temperate climate over the entire globe and vastly reducing the amount of C14 in the environment. So anything living before the flood would appear to be tens of thousands of years older than it really is.



Read third paragraph “What is true...” and bottom pink section – thoughts?

- When did God create human life?
- In what condition was human life when God created it?
- Did God give humans an ability to pass their life along i.e. procreation?
- Who decides whether two people procreate?
- When Adam and Eve sinned did they change themselves such that humanity was no longer functioning as God designed?
- When Adam and Eve had children, were they born in sin, conceived in iniquity (Ps 51:5)?
- Did God create Adam’s children in sin? Does God create sinners?
- Has God, by His direct action, created each of us? Or has God created mankind in Adam and each of us through His laws of nature, design template and principles of governing and His sustaining power?
- When a man rapes a woman and she becomes pregnant, is that God creating? Does Love create by rape?

The lesson cites Psalms 139:13,14:

*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

What does this mean?

Does it mean God creates each of us as individuals?

- It is a commonly assumed and taught idea that each of us were created by God as we are, is this true?
- If it is when children are born with spinal bifida, congenital heart defects and other deformities was God having a bad knitting day?
- If it is true that God creates us as we are, then when a child is born with a defect, what right do we have to try and repair it? If God created the person that way wouldn’t we be obstructing the divine will to try and fix it?
- If God is using His divine creative power to make each of us then how do we explain the multiple birth defects of children born to alcoholic mothers? Shouldn’t God’s power be stronger than alcohol?

I have many patients who ask, “Why did God want me to have bipolar disorder? Why did God want my child to have schizophrenia?” The truth is He didn’t!

Then how do we understand Psalms 139? David is acknowledging the incredible beings God designed and created and gifted with such wonderful abilities. David is admiring God’s continue sustenance of a planet in rebellion allowing God’s life sustaining energies to continue to support planet earth and the creative process.

The lesson states that “human life in a very special sense – is sacred.” Besides the obvious, a discrete human being, what actually constitutes human life? What about

- A sperm?
- An ovum?
- A fertilized egg?
- A zygote?

- A hair follicle?
- A skin cell?
- A toenail?
- A denucleated ovum?
- A decucleated ovum with a foreign nucleus added?
- Blood?
- Organs like heart, lung, spleen, appendix, uterus, testicle?

When God created Adam and formed him out of the dust of the ground, there was a time before God breathed into him the breath of life. Adam had all the organs, he had all the cells, all the DNA, but wasn't alive. Was Adam, before he became alive, more sacred than any other part of God's creation? What made Adam more sacred than other parts of creation?

When he was brought to life, he was brought to life as a being in God's image—not just physically but mentally, with the ability to love, to give, to sacrifice for others. The living law of God was written on Adam's heart. Adam was the showcase, centerpiece of creation revealing most clearly a God of love!

Reproduction, as God designed, is the process of two people giving of themselves in love to bring forth new life. Rape is a violation of this: it is not two people giving in love but one person abusing, violating and exploiting another.

Now, the last question in pink, "How should our stance on the origin of life impact our views about things such as the death penalty, abortion and euthanasia?" – thoughts?

Should the church, Christians, use their energy to reform governments, get the right politicians elected, the right judges in office and seek to use the power of the state to enforce its beliefs on society?

In Christ's day, what was society like? Were there human rights abuses of all kinds? Was there hedonism and perversions? Did Christ or His disciples use their energies or that of the church to try and get the right senators or governors into office or change the laws of Rome? What lesson is there for us?

What is the mission of the Church? To represent Christ! To take the message of eternal salvation to people and change hearts and minds. And when that happens what automatically happens to society?

Don't be fooled into investing in agendas that have laudable goals but use ungodly methods to achieve those goals, i.e. the position of protecting innocent life by the use of coercion, intimidation, force and imposition. God's methods are the methods of truth, presented in love while leaving others free. We want to promote life and health in the context of freedom because love can only exist in an atmosphere of freedom.

I recently read the following:

...the brain nerves that connect with the whole system are the medium through which heaven communicates with man and affects the inmost life. Whatever hinders the circulation of the electric current in the nervous system, thus weakening the vital powers and lessening mental susceptibility, makes it more difficult to arouse the moral nature. {Ed 209.2}

Do you believe that the brain nerves are the only medium God can communicate with man? If this is true, does it give any insight into what it means to be human? In other words, can you be a person, have an identity, worship, love, know God or anything else, without a brain?

## MONDAY—Physical Education

Why is physical education and activity important?

- Healthy body, which improves brain function
- Creates neurotrophic factors to make brain healthy
- Balanced development of neural circuits which improves mental capacity
- Cerebellar development which improves organization of thought

Read last paragraph “The way we treat...” thoughts?

Read pink section – thoughts?

Why are some foods unsuitable for human consumption? Are the foods unhealthy because God said so, or did God say not to eat them because they were unhealthy?

## TUESDAY

Read top memory verse, 2Cor 5:17 – what does it mean to be “in Christ”? Would it mean to be in union, harmony, love, oneness, fellowship, unity of mind and heart?

What things become new when we do this?

Read middle section beginning “This eternal life...” when did this rebirth experience take place for Peter? What was the essence of what happened? Prior to Peter’s denial of Christ was Peter converted?

*And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: <sup>32</sup> But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. <sup>33</sup> And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. <sup>34</sup> And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. Luke 22:31-34 KJV*

When was Peter converted? Did Peter love Jesus prior to his conversion? Then what happened at conversion? He lost his love for himself – prior to conversion Peter loved Jesus but he still loved himself more, that is why he acted to protect self by denying Jesus. But after his denial he finally died to self and loved Jesus more than self.

## WEDNESDAY Social Life

What is the importance of social life? Why is church attendance important? What happens in the brain when we minister to others? What happens in the brain when we exploit others?

Brain research shows that fellowship with others increases the development of the prefrontal cortex. This is the portion of the brain in which we experience love, empathy, compassion, sympathy, reason, worship, conscience etc.

Isolation results in deterioration of the higher cortical centers.

## THURSDAY

Read middle section “As we grow...” thoughts? Does Christianity bring liberty or restriction? Who is the one who is free and who is a slave, the person who worries so much about what others think that they work themselves to death trying to please their boss? The person freely using illegal drugs? The person who lives sexual immoral life? Where is real freedom?

How does God’s law bring freedom?

**2009 Q2 Lesson 5      Revelation**

Notes are not available.

## 2009 Q2 Lesson 6 Sin

Read memory text – thoughts?

Because of Adam all humans are born terminal. Because of Christ a remedy exists that cures all who trust God.

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

- What does the lesson say sin is? How do you hear it? What is the law that was broken? Why is it sin to break the law? Is it wrong to break the law because God said not to do it, or did God say not to do it because it is wrong?
- What makes breaking the law wrong?
- What law did the angels break in heaven? Had it been written down, were they told “thou shalt not”? What made it wrong?

Read second paragraph – thoughts?

- Where does the Bible say God punished Adam and Eve?
- Can someone find a text that says God punished Adam and Eve for what they did?
  - “*cursed is the ground for thy sake*” *Genesis 3:17*?

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}

The curse on the ground was not punishment for sin, but intervention for their redemption, therapy, intercession to protect them and part of the plan for their recovery. Have you ever heard, “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop?” God was providing occupation to keep busy and decrease time to destroy self with indulgence while simultaneously strengthening the brain circuits of self governance.

If you believe the law of God is an imposed law, then you believe God has to inflict punishment for its transgression. But when we see that the law of God is the law of love and violations are incompatible with life, then we realize that as soon as Adam sinned, God began intercession to save, not punishment.

Read question “What will be the major...” and paragraph following – thoughts?

*This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. Revelation 14:12*

What are the commandments of God? The lesson suggests it is the 10 commandments – thoughts?

When were the 10 commandments given? Did Adam and Eve know about the 10 commandments? Did the angels?

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

*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*

What is THE Commandment of God? What is the law of God? Love! What is Revelation 14:12 speaking about? Loving others more than self.

2000 years ago, there was a people who were Sabbath keeping, tithe paying, creation God believing, sanctuary observing, health message abiding, who fastidiously "kept" the commandments, but they did not love and when God came to them they hated Him and killed Him.

Will it be this way in the end again?

*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?' <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' Matthew 7:22,23*

Notice what Paul says about the law:

*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— <sup>13</sup> for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> 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. Romans 5:12-14*

Thoughts? Death reigned before the law was given, what law? Paul is saying that the 10 Commandments were not given until Moses – yet Adam broke a command, what command did Adam break? Not to eat the fruit – which occurred because? He believed a lie about God, the law of love was broken and he distrusted God. Why did some die even though they didn't break a command as Adam had done?

One of the founders of our church understood the law of God is the law of love and it is this law Adam broke and the 10 Commandments were added later.

"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24). In this Scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. The law reveals sin to us, and cause us to feel our need of Christ, and to flee unto Him for pardon and peace by exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. {1MR 130.2}

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}

So, what does it mean to obey the commandments?



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 par. 11}

Three levels of obedience –

1. Level one – childlike obedience fear of punishment
2. Level two – adolescent obedience love parent and don't want to hurt them
3. Level three – mature obedience, understanding friendship and agreement

What obedience does God want from us, the obedience of a well trained dog? God said it, I believe it, that settles it? Does God want us to say whatever you tell us we will do, just tell us what to do, or does God want us to understand, the obedience of an understanding friend?

The essence and flavor of all obedience is the outworking of a principle within--the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer, doing right because it is right. When the Word of God is a burden because it cuts directly across human inclinations, then the religious life is not a Christian life, but a tug and a strain, an enforced obedience. All the purity and godliness of religion are set aside. {TMK 118.4}

But adoption into the family of God makes us children, not slaves. When the love of Christ enters the heart we strive to imitate the character of Christ. ... The more we study the life of Christ with a heart to learn, the more Christlike we become. Into the heart of every true doer of the Word the Holy Spirit infuses clear understanding. The more we crucify selfish practices by imparting our blessings to others and by exercising our God-given ability, the more the heavenly graces will be strengthened and increased in us. We will grow in spirituality, in patience, in fortitude, in meekness, in gentleness. ... A train of cars is not merely attached to the engine; they follow on the same track as the engine. Whom are we following? {TMK 118.5}

What is the essence of all obedience? Love, but where does this love come from? Is it level two obedience or is it an enlightened level three obedience? It is doing right because it is right, which requires we actually understand the difference between right and wrong.

According to the writer, how do we become more Christlike? By studying the life of Christ with a heart to learn, brain research indicates the heart is the anterior cingulate cortex, which grows measurably within four weeks of meditation and worship of a God of love. It is in the ACC we experience love, empathy, compassion, altruism and where we make the choice to love others or to act selfishly. When we choose to love others, the ACC grows stronger. This description is exactly what neuroscience indicates happens in the brain when we choose to worship a God of love and act in love toward others.

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Why is sin often played down? Because we make it about behavior and performance and people get discouraged when they are taught they must perform. But, when we understand sin is a condition we are born with and God wants to heal us from it, how many would argue against God's plan to perfectly heal all who trust Him?

Read second paragraph – thoughts? Is desire sin?

*When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; <sup>14</sup> but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. <sup>15</sup> 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*

What does this passage say? Desire tempts, but it isn't sin until the desire is conceived, which is the choose of the will to say yes.

Jesus in Gethsemane had a desire which tempted Him, a desire to not go through the Cross. He was tempted in every way just like us, but Jesus said no to the desire – and Jesus was without sin. The desire to sin is not sin, but part of the sinful condition which leads us to choose to sin.

The lesson asks us to read Matthew 23:23 to see where Jesus described sins of omission:

*“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. 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.*

What were they omitting? Love!

In Matthew 25 Jesus speaks the parable of the talents, the lesson asks us what happens to the servant with one talent?

*“Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’*

*<sup>26</sup> “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? <sup>27</sup> Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.*

*<sup>28</sup> “ ‘Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. <sup>30</sup> And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

How do you understand this parable?

God designed our brain to work similarly to the rest of our bodies, those neural circuits which are utilized are strengthened and expanded, recruit more neurons and abilities are enhanced. Those neural circuits which are not utilized are eventually deleted.

What happens to a child who was born with musical ability but never practices or plays music? What happens to someone with mathematical skills that never learns math?

If we don't utilize the abilities God has given us and invest in developing our talents, what happens to what we have? Is this an arbitrary imposition by a powerful dictator to take back what He has given us? Or is it the natural result of our own choice?

## TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts? This theological understanding underpins the origin of the anti-abortion movement. If you believe this idea then each abortion is sending an immortal soul to hell. What do you think about this idea?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts? What does it mean?

One of the founders of our church wrote the following about the people who will be alive and ready to meet Jesus when He comes. What do you understand is being described?

When the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received "the latter rain," "the refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and they are prepared for the trying hour before them. Angels are hastening to and fro in heaven. An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received "the seal of the living God." Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, "It is done;" and all the angelic host lay off their crowns as He makes the solemn announcement: "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." Revelation 22:11. Every case has been decided for life or death. Christ has made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The number of His subjects is made up; "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven," is about to be given to the heirs of salvation, and Jesus is to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. {GC 613.2}

When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. **In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor.** The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then 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. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old. {GC 614.1}

Thoughts about this passage? Why will we no longer have/need an intercessor? What is the job of the intercessor? What is Christ interceding to accomplish?

## WEDNESDAY

Read bottom pink section – thoughts? Did Jesus ever seek to use the governments of earth to promote His agenda? What about His disciples? What about Christian's today?

## THURSDAY

Read second paragraph – thoughts? Who decides who is saved and who is lost? Who decides who enters heaven?

*This is good, and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:3,4*

What does God want for all men? For them to be saved, then why will all men not be saved? Does God choose that they won't be saved or do they choose not to be saved? Who decides your salvation?

The lesson asks, "Why was Jesus the only One who could save fallen humanity?"

Read last paragraph – thoughts?

What does it mean of sufficient value to meet the claims of the law? What does the law claim or require? The same writer said the following:

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 it mean “His own divine perfection of character to atone”? What does atone? At-one, reconcile, reunite, bring us back into unity with God. God is love, Christ, in a human brain, developed a perfect human character of love, which was in perfect accord with God’s character i.e. at one with God. Thus all who trust God will be imbued with the character of God and be at one with God themselves!

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read questions 2 and 4 and discuss

**2009 Q2 Lesson 7      Grace**

Notes are not available.

## 2009 Q2 Lesson 8     Rest

Read memory text – thoughts – what does it mean?

Read first paragraph – did God give Adam and Eve the Sabbath for this reason?

If Sabbath was made for man, was there a Sabbath before man? Why was the Sabbath made? Why was it needed? What was the context? Why did mankind need it even before Adam sinned?

One of the founders of our church and proponents of the Sabbath said (it is found in Sunday's lesson bottom section):

God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. He needed to lay aside his own interests and pursuits for one day of the seven, that he might more fully contemplate the works of God and meditate upon His power and goodness. He needed a Sabbath to remind him more vividly of God and to awaken gratitude because all that he enjoyed and possessed came from the beneficent hand of the Creator. {PP 48.2}

God designs that the Sabbath shall direct the minds of men to the contemplation of His created works. Nature speaks to their senses, declaring that there is a living God, the Creator, the Supreme Ruler of all. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Psalm 19:1, 2. The beauty that clothes the earth is token of God's love. We may behold it in the everlasting hills, in the lofty trees, in the opening buds and the delicate flowers. All speak to us of God. The Sabbath, ever pointing to Him who made them all, bids men open the great book of nature and trace therein the wisdom, the power, and the love of the Creator. {PP 48.3}

What purposes are outlined for the Sabbath in Eden?

- Lay aside his own interests
- Contemplate the works of God
- Meditate upon His power and goodness
- Remind man of God and awaken gratitude to Him
- Contemplate God's created works
- Trace God's wisdom, power and love

He needed to lay aside his own interests, why was this needed?

- What was happening in the universe when the Sabbath was created?
- What is the root to Satan's rebellion?

*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! 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. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." Isaiah 14:12-14*

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

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}

- Sin originated in self seeking—Does the Sabbath have benefit to protect Adam and Eve? How So?
- What did Satan allege of God? That God was self-exalting—what does the Sabbath reveal about God's character?
- If the purpose of the Sabbath was to contemplate God's character, wisdom etc. would it have helped protect Adam and Eve from deception
- What about today, has God's purpose for the Sabbath changed or is it still to be evidence to us of God's character and protect us from Satanic deception?
- Contemplate the works of God – what benefit, why would this be necessary – what do we learn about God from contemplating His works?
  - Why did Adam and Eve in Eden need to contemplate the works of God?
  - Adam and Eve were created in God's image, with the ability to create beings in their image, given dominion to rule and govern – were they at risk of becoming proud with all these abilities? Would a weekly Sabbath be beneficial to protect them? How?
  - The law of love seen in nature
- Meditate upon God's power and goodness – what is the ultimate power of God?
  - Certainly God has the power to create everything with a thought – but is that what is the true power of God?
 

“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.” MacDonald, George, *Discovering the Character of God*, Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989, p. 29.

*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 Gentil. Romans 1:16*

- Does the Sabbath have anything to say about the Good News? Was this necessary in Eden? Is it necessary today?

## SUNDAY

First question asks “Why did God Himself rest on the seventh day after the creation of the world?”—thoughts? Was God tired? Is there some other kind of rest? Did the universe need time to consider what was transpiring? Did God's creation on this earth reveal things to the angels?

*For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. 1Cor 4:9*

Did earth become a spectacle to angels only after mankind fell, or were they keenly interested in what God was creating here before Adam fell?

*“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*

Who was watching when the earth was created? What did the Sabbath reveal about God to the angelic host?

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 19.2}

**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.” Ps. 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}

In the beginning, during creation week of this planet who was watching? What law is the law of life? The law of love, and from where does it originate? Would this law be revealed in God’s creation? If this law is revealed in creation and it originates in the heart of God, then what were the angels supposed to see when God created this world and the Sabbath? The heart of God! How is the Sabbath especially designed to do this?

What do we learn about God on day one of creation week? He has power, day 2-6 He has power! On day seven what do we learn?

Read second paragraph “After resting...” thoughts? Was this an arbitrary act or was there a reason given, inherent in the Sabbath? What reason?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Is God holy? Is God set apart for a specific use? What do you think about the definition of holy supplied by the quarterly?

Remember to keep the Sabbath holy – what makes it holy? Is something holy merely by an arbitrary declaration by God or is there something inherent in Sabbath that cannot be changed that makes it holy?

Read second paragraph – “The Sabbath is a powerful...” Does this author sound like he believes that God can give a mandate to change the holiness of Sabbath to another day? Can God by mandate change the holiness? What is the problem with this thinking?

Can God give a mandate to make things holy? Can God give a mandate which would make Satan holy? Can God give a mandate that would make molesting a child holy? Can God give a mandate that makes pornographic videos holy? Are things made holy by mandates from God? Or is holiness conferred by something other than a mandate?

What is the problem with positions that make the holiness of the Sabbath dependent upon a mandate from God? It puts God in the position of being an arbitrary God, it removes the reasons attached for the Sabbath and it sets believers up for deception by any being who convinces them they are God.

What would you do if Jesus appeared on earth and commended Sabbath keepers for remembering the day He made holy and then said, but today, I by my divine authority, am changing the day. Here is my divine mandate! What would you do? Why?

Can God change His law? Why or why not?

The law of God is the law of love, it emanates from His personhood and it is the design template for life. This law cannot change without the destruction of the entire universe and all living things. This is not a mandate, therefore Christ/God cannot change His law without destroying the universe and also becoming a being other than love.

The idea that God can change the Sabbath by a mandate is another subtle attack on the character of God changing Him from a Being of love to an authoritarian power monger. This is Satan’s goal, when we worship a being of power we become like him, love is damaged and we practice coercive and controlling methods. Thus, just like the Jews in Christ’s day, who worshipped on the Sabbath, those who hold to this twisted concept of God will not experience transformation of character.

The quarterly asks, “How does the weekly holy seventh-day Sabbath impact those who choose to obey the command to keep the Sabbath according to God’s appointed day of holy time?”

Did the Jews in Christ’s day keep it according to God’s appointed day of holy time? And what kind of people did they become? Why?

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}

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 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}

Love cannot be commanded, coerced, forced, and when such methods are applied it actually creates Satanic character in people. Thus Satan infects the church to follow Bible teaching, but by applying methods of force coercion etc, people actually become like Satan and not like Christ! This happens to people who obey the Sabbath for the wrong reasons, just like the Jews in Christ's day who crucified the Creator.

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph – "The Sabbath is a sign..." Thoughts?

What about those who say that Sunday commemorates the resurrection and it is the sign of our salvation?

What is the Bible commemoration of the resurrection?

*Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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. Romans 6:3,4*

What did Jesus do immediately after His work of creation? Rested, for what purpose? To leave intelligences free to consider for themselves the meaning of what God had just done, to think freely and come to their own conclusion. What does it say about God that He provides such time?

What did Jesus do immediately after His work of redemption? Rested over the Sabbath, why? What would the angels and the intelligences in the universe have done if Jesus would have resurrected immediately and gone to heaven? Would there have been celebration? But maybe there wouldn't have been as much learning and appreciation of what Christ had accomplished?

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}

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}

Remember we already read that the earth is a lesson book to angels and to men 1Cor 4:9.

What makes the Sabbath holy? It is an expression of the divine character – truth, presented in love, leaving beings free to think for themselves, no coercion, no pressure, no intimidation. The Sabbath is evidence of God's character of love and true Sabbath keeping entails more than avoiding work Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, it involves more than going to church on Saturday, it involves more than acknowledging God as Creator, one can do all of this and still crucify Christ. True Sabbath keeping involves having the law of love written on the heart so we live like Christ, we present the truth in love and leave others free!

### WEDNESDAY

Read middle two paragraphs "It is an extremely..." thoughts? Why does this happen? How can we enjoy the Sabbath?

### THURSDAY

Read third paragraph – "Now, a simple question..." thoughts? Because we have made the Sabbath into an arbitrary test of obedience to God, something we must do, obey, observe in order to have the "seal" of God. Thus, those who promote the Sabbath as an arbitrary test are actually destroying the very purpose of the Sabbath and rather than being a blessing that God provides to assist in our development it becomes a tool to harden the heart, just like what happened in Christ's day.

Read fifth paragraph “From the pre-fall world...” thoughts? The Sabbath can only be truly kept by those who have had the law of God written on the heart, Heb 8:10 and the evidence it is written on the heart is not which day we keep, for those who crucified Christ kept the right day but didn’t have the law written on the heart. The evidence that the law is written on the heart entails more than which day we keep, it entails presenting the truth, in love and leaving others free – having character like Jesus, loving others more than self!

### FRIDAY

Question 2 and 3 read and discuss



## 2009 Q2 Lesson 9 Heaven

### SABBATH

Read Memory texts – thoughts? What does this passage mean to you? Do you have any questions about this passage?

Read both paragraphs – thoughts? Is heaven real? What is heaven?

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph “It is quite...” thoughts?

What evidence is there for mortality of mankind? The lesson cites several verses –

*Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death; Psalms 13:3*

How do we respond to the idea that this is a poem and the psalmist is speaking in euphemism and necessarily to be taken literally?

We bring in other Bible passages and evidences

*For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun. Ecc 9:5,6*

How do we respond to those who say Ecclesiastes are the writings of a man who was depressed, discouraged and exploring how futile life is, and is not to be taken literally? For instance, do we take literally that even the memory of the dead is forgotten? Do we believe that never again will they have part in anything that happens under the sun or do we believe there is a resurrection? Is this the best text to support the idea of mortality?

How do we respond to those who claim near-death experiences as evidence there is consciousness after death?

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.

What texts give more insight into the nature of man?

*I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— <sup>52</sup> 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. <sup>53</sup> For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. <sup>54</sup> 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.” 1Cor 15:50-54*

If the mortal must put on immortality would that mean that we are not currently mortal?

*While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. “Your daughter is dead,” he said. “Don’t bother the teacher any more.” Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, “Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.” 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. Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. “Stop wailing,” Jesus said. “She is not dead but asleep.” They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But he took her by the hand and said, “My child, get up!” Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened. Luke 8:49-56*

Thoughts? Jesus said she is asleep, they say she is dead, yet when Jesus said to get up her “spirit” returned to her. How do we understand all of this?

The Greek word translated spirit is *pneuma*, from which we get pneumonia or pneumatic, and means wind or air. In the Bible, this word is translated with four different meanings

- Wind
- Spirit (both Holy Spirit and our spirit)
- Breath, including breath of life
- A mystical apparition called a ghost

How do we know which one was meant in this verse?

*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.” His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” John 11:11-15*

What did Jesus call death? Sleep, why?

*“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. Genesis 3:4*

*God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen. 1Tim 6:15,16*

If God alone is immortal why do we say humans are immortal?

If Adam and Eve could not die, then what was God speaking about in the Garden?

Why have some come to believe that mankind is immortal?

*“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. <sup>20</sup> At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores <sup>21</sup> and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. <sup>22</sup> “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. <sup>24</sup> So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’ <sup>25</sup> “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’ <sup>27</sup> “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ <sup>29</sup> “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’ <sup>30</sup> “‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ <sup>31</sup> “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’ “ Luke 16:19-31*

Thoughts about this text? Is this real or a parable? Why? Jesus is talking to the people not the disciples the Bible says He only talked in parables to the people (Matthew 13:34, Mark 4:34).

The parable has a point and Jesus gave it

Some argue that because the name of a person was used it was not a parable because He never used names in parables, but they miss the greater picture. Why the name Lazarus in this parable, because Jesus was doing all He could to help reach the minds of the people. Jesus knew that He was going to raise a real man Lazarus from the dead and hoped by using the name in the parable they would remember the lesson.

The rest of the weight of Scripture – the focus of the NT was not on dying and wafting off to heaven, but the Christian hope is in the resurrection, why? Because when our individuality, spirit, goes to heaven safe and secure in Christ, we are unconscious, asleep, not interacting waiting for our new bodies to live again.

*Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 2Cor 5:6-9*

*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. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

What difficulty is presented in this passage for those who believe in soul sleep? Christ brings with Him those who have fallen asleep, not those who are already resurrected, but those who have fallen asleep. How do we resolve the difficulty?

How do we put all of it together? We must harmonize all the scripture and not make a teaching out of just the parts we like. We must fit together:

- Christ called death a sleep
- The dead resurrected never reported anything
- The Christian church looked forward to resurrection not spirit transportation

Go back to our memory text, if the disciples were going to die and in a short time waft off to heaven to be with Jesus, why didn't Jesus say, "I go to prepare a place for you and if I go in a short time you will die and come and join me?"

- Paul's comments about absent from the body present with the Lord
- Wages of sin is death, not eternal life in suffering
- God alone is immortal
- Jesus brings with Him those who have fallen asleep

We must ask, what would it say about God if He were to create beings and put them in a place of torment for all eternity? And What would it say about God if He were not to know the future and give immortality to beings and then be helpless to prevent them from suffering from all eternity?

What does it say about God if people die and no longer exist?

One of the founders of our church wrote the following on this topic:

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}

Does this help us put it together? Consider a computer/server metaphor with our brains being the computer and the heavenly record books being the server.

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph “Not all people...” thoughts? Do we all agree in the end it is our own choice? Then why do so many have God sitting in judgment and making determinations on who is saved and who is lost if the choice is ours? Are we suggesting our choice is unknown until God pronounces it? Are we suggesting that God must investigate to figure out who has accepted and who hasn’t?

Read last paragraph, “But hell also...” thoughts?

What is hell? If the wages of sin is death and the gift of God is eternal life, does God give the gift of eternal life to the wicked so they can live forever in hell? What kind of being would He be if He did?

Where is hell? What are the fires of hell? Do the fires of hell ever go out?

Isaiah 33:14,15, Heb 12:29 (see my blog The Question of punishment Part III).

*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, <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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.” Revelation 14:9-11*

Where does the burning take place? In the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb -

Peter Kreeft states:

“What is the wrath of God...? Is it real or not? It is real, but it is not part of God himself. God is not half love and half wrath, or 99 percent love and 1 percent wrath. God is love. Wrath is how love appears to us when we sin or rebel or run away from him. The very light that is meant to help us, appears to us as our enemy when we seek the darkness.”

EGW one of the founders of our church wrote:

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}

Why do the wicked die in the end? What is hell? Where do the fires arise? Do they ever go out?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What does it mean to enter into life, to move from death to life? Why? Life is based on love, the law of love, death occurs when we live in selfishness. We are born selfish, thus we are born terminal. When we accept Jesus, die to self, are converted, allow God to write the law of love on our hearts, we are reborn, new creatures with a new life of love – and love is life! We have crossed over from selfishness (death) to love (life).

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What have you imagined heaven will be like? What kinds of things do you dream about doing in heaven?

- Meeting Jesus, Father, HS
- Meeting your guardian angel – what things would you like to ask your angel?
- Meeting Adam and Eve, Moses, Daniel, John, Enoch
- Finding out who shot JFK
- Travelling to other planets and exploring the universe
- Singing in harmony?
- Flying without a machine?
- Moving objects with your mind?
- Telescopic and microscopic vision?



- Watching the earth recreated after the destruction of the wicked – how might God do it? Might it take six days again and finish with a Sabbath?

## THURSDAY

Read second paragraph “We cannot yet imagine...”

Meeting Jesus face to face –

What questions might you like to ask Jesus?

What might you want to say to Jesus?

## FRIDAY

Read second paragraph “And I saw...” Thoughts? Do the fires go out or do they burn forever?

What fires consume the wicked – in the passage we read earlier the same author writes “Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire.”

“I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance,” said John; “but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Matt. 3:11, R. V., margin. The prophet Isaiah had declared that the Lord would cleanse His people from their iniquities “by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.” The word of the Lord to Israel was, “I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.” Isa. 4:4; 1:25. **To sin, wherever found, “our God is a consuming fire.” Heb. 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.** Jacob, after his night of wrestling with the Angel, exclaimed, “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” Gen. 32:30. Jacob had been guilty of a great sin in his conduct toward Esau; but he had repented. His transgression had been forgiven, and his sin purged; therefore he could endure the revelation of God’s presence. But wherever men came before God while willfully cherishing evil, they were destroyed. At the second advent of Christ the wicked shall be consumed “with the Spirit of His mouth,” and destroyed “with the brightness of His coming.” 2 Thess. 2:8. **The light of the glory of God, which imparts life to the righteous, will slay the wicked.** {DA 107.4}

Read question 1 and 2 and discuss

## 2009 Q2 Lesson 10 Discipleship

### SABBATH

Read Memory Text – thoughts? Why is it to the Father’s glory that we bear much fruit?

In whose image were we created? For what purpose? What happened when mankind sinned? Why did Satan want to target mankind and get mankind to sin? What was Satan trying to accomplish in the fall of humanity?

Mankind was created in the image of God, to reveal the truth about God to the onlooking universe. Why was this needed? Satan had lied about God causing confusion in the minds of intelligent beings about God’s trustworthiness.

Mankind was created as the repository of God’s law of love, His character of beneficence and if mankind were to have stayed loyal earth would have been a bright shining lesson book to the entire universe of who God is and how His government works.

Satan targeted earth and Adam in order to misrepresent God and replace, in man, God’s character of love with Satan’s character of selfishness and thereby cause the intelligent beings in the universe to draw false conclusions about God.

Christ came to fix this problem, to accurately reveal God while simultaneously saving/healing mankind.

So, now, how is it that our bearing fruit of righteousness glorifies God?

If someone has cancer, terminal, dying and a doctor gives a remedy which completely cures them who gets the glory the patient or the doctor?

When God’s healing power is experienced, what is revealed in us that wasn’t revealed in Christ’s life, and that brings glory to God?

*John 14:9-14 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’? 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. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. 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. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

Thoughts? What did Jesus tell Philip that He was revealing? The Father and those who trust in Jesus will do what? They will do what Jesus was doing; and what was Jesus doing? Revealing the Father. Yet Jesus said, “He will do even greater things than these” – how? What could this mean?

Did Jesus’ life show what God originally created mankind to be – perfect love, sinless perfection? Yes!

Did Jesus’ life show how God’s love, methods, principles accepted into the heart of a sinner—a person warped by sinful living—can heal and perfectly recreate the character to Christlike perfection? No, when we trust God and open the heart can our lives show this?

What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus?

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}

Read first paragraph "It is important..." thoughts?

Is perfect knowledge of all doctrine necessary for salvation? Absolutely not! What is necessary? What is salvation? Salvation comes from the root word *salvo* from which we get *salve* and *salvage* and means to heal or restore. So, what is necessary for us to be healed? Trust in the doctor!

Today the English word *salvo* means a volley of artillery or firearms, how does that relate to salvation or healing?

### Salvo

1719, alteration of *salva* (1591) "simultaneous discharge of guns," from It. *salva* "salve, volley" (cf. Fr. *salve*, from It.), from L. *salve* "hail!," lit. "be in good health!," the usual Roman greeting, regarded as imperative of *salvere* "to be in good health," but prop. voc. of *salvus* "healthy" (see [safe](#) (adj.)). The notion is of important visitors greeted with a volley of gunfire into the air.

Online Etymology Dictionary, © 2001 Douglas Harper

In ancient Rome, *salvus* meant healthy and a greeting *salvere* or *salve* would be said which meant be healthy or be in good health. This became a common salutation. When dignitaries would arrive a salutation of gunfire, or volley of gunfire was fired as a salute, honoring or recognizing the person – a greeting, which eventually was carried over to mean any volley of gunfire *salvo*.

But the meaning of salvation is one of healing, recreation and regeneration. Does a patient have to know how a medicine was developed in order to benefit from taking it? Does a patient have to know how a medicine works in order to benefit from taking it? Does a patient have to trust the doctor and follow the prescription in order to benefit from the medicine? Yes, likewise in God's healing plan we don't have to understand the doctrines, or how Christ achieved our salvation but we do have to trust our Heavenly Physician and follow His prescription.

If you were Satan, then what would be your one and only hope of keeping people from being saved? Undermine trust in God our Heavenly Physician.

While we don't have to understand the doctrines all correctly to be saved, do doctrines impact our ability to trust God? How so? Which doctrines have helped or hindered your ability to trust God?

The lesson states correctly that to be a disciple is to be a lifelong learner. As God in infinite and we are finite there will never come a time in the future that we will stop learning. As has been said by one of the founders of our church, truth is progressive or is unfolding with time. What new truth has our church learned or grown into in the last 100 years? Is it time we began advancing again in the truth? What areas to you see in our church for learning, growth and development in regard to our teachings and doctrines?

- Why Christ had to die?
- The heavenly sanctuary?
- Christ as our mediator?
- The heavenly record books?
- The final end of sin and sinners?

## SUNDAY

Followers and Leaders – what types of leaderships styles can you name?

- Autocratic or authoritarian
  - Directive, dictatorial
  - Can be abusive as in dictatorships
- Participant or democratic
  - Collaborative, gets input from subordinates but maintains final decision
- Bureaucratic
  - Rigid by the book, rules oriented approach, pressuring and enforcing adherence to the rules
- Charismatic
  - Energetic, emotional based leadership where leader is constantly injecting huge doses of affirmation and emotional energy into subordinates
- Laissez-faire, Free rein or delegative
  - leaves subordinates free to analyze and determine for themselves which action to take to achieve the task
- People-oriented / relationship-oriented
  - Focuses on development and organization of the members of the team
- Task-oriented
  - Focuses on the task, dictates assignments, priorities and cares little for the team as long as goal is reached
- Transactional
  - Quid pro quo relationship, contractual make a deal and pay subordinates for the work they will do, if work not done to standard then the leader can punish by withholding the reward
- Transformational
  - Inspires team with shared vision of the future, highly communicative leader
- Servant
  - Often not recognized as a leader within the group but this person leads by meeting the needs of the members
- Loving Eclectic
  - Using the style necessary to the circumstance to maximize the likelihood of the desired outcome in harmony with the Law of Love

What type of leadership do you think God prefers? What is His primary style – top three?

Servant, transformational and people oriented?

*Your attitude should be the same as that of 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! Philippians 2:5-8*

What leadership style do we see from Jesus?

*'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. Zech 4:6*

Why is this type of leadership the only leadership that will work in God's government?

Love cannot be commanded, coerced, dictated, it can only be freely given. Therefore, the only leadership style to get love is truth, presented in love, leaving others free. Which looks like Jesus! Servant, people oriented transformational leadership with a vision for the future!

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}

Does the type of leadership used impact the type of followers found within the group?

What type of followers are found in a group run by an authoritarian power monger – someone like Hitler, Stalin, Hussein who says do it my way or I will kill you?

- Is thinking allowed in such regimes?
- Do such dictators permit their actions to be questioned and scrutinized?
- What do such leaders do to those who ask questions?

What kind of followers are found worshipping a God who says, do it my way or I will torture you in hell?

- Do those who worship such a god like questions? Or do they prefer, "God said it, I believe it, that settles it"?
- Do those who worship such a god like their beliefs challenged, scrutinized or criticized?
- How do they respond?

## MONDAY

Obedience and loyalty – what does that look like in the life a true disciple of Christ? What does obedience mean? What does it look like? What does God want from His followers?

Does God want the obedience of a well trained dog? Does God want the obedience of a slave? Does God want blind, unthinking obedience? Or does God want His followers, to as far as possible, understand every reason for what He calls them to do?

*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*

But, does God want the obedience of absolute trust, that even when we don't understand we still obey because we know He is trustworthy?

What is such trust based upon?

## TUESDAY

Read middle section "Rather than promising..." thoughts?

- How is it costly to follow Jesus?
- It is never costly to follow Jesus it only feels or appears that way!
- I have patients who are addicted to substances and they think it is costly to give up their addiction – is it? Or is it costly to continue in their addiction?
- I have patients in relationships with abusers, people who beat them, ridicule, criticize, dominate, curse constantly, yet the thought of leaving is terrifying it feels like it will "cost" them everything. Is it costly for such a person to leave or to stay?
- I know a doctor who recently had to fire someone for embezzling money. The employee's husband had lost his job, they were behind in their house and car payments and so she embezzled money. Let's imagine for a moment the employee was not caught and was able to keep her car, house etc. The lesson would suggest to follow Jesus and be honest and not embezzle would be costly as the person might lose their home, car etc. Which is more costly, to lose houses, cars, material substances or to embezzle and sear the conscience, warp the reason, destroy the soul?
- It is never costly to follow Jesus, it only feels or appears this way because of the limited perspective, and broken brains which naturally run on fear and insecurity.
- It is always cheap to follow Jesus – we always get the better deal. When we follow Jesus we exchange corruption for perfection, mortality for immortality, guilt for peace, fear for love, loneliness for oneness with God!

The last paragraph states, "Following Christ is not an easy thing to do. It inevitably will involve suffering. Just as Christ said that He 'must suffer,' so must we." Thoughts? Why must we suffer?

- We are broken and the healing process involves a path of suffering
- After a broken leg the healing path will be painful but not harmful
- After emotional trauma the healing path will be painful but not destructive
- We too often are duped into believing health is determined by how it feels rather than evaluating what is being accomplished.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm tells us that our Shepherd wants to lead us in the paths of righteousness for His name sake – and where does the Shepherd lead us? Into the valley of the shadow of death – note it is not the valley of death, it is the valley of the shadow of death. Christ leads us into the valley where we will come face to face with sin in our own lives in order that we can die to self. It will feel like we are dying, but we are not. He is there to guide, comfort and deliver so that we may be free and live healthy and in peace.
- Consider the addict, they cannot be free without going through the valley in which they feel like they are going to die, but if they go through the withdraw, if they go through the treatment they come out the other side free.
- Christ never asks us to sacrifice anything that is for our good and only that which is destroying us. We never lose when we give our lives to Christ!



## WEDNESDAY

How do we come to experience peace in this world? By dying to selfishness and experience God's transforming love which brings us to the point of loving others more than self.

Love is the only power that can free our hearts from fear – fear of what others think, fear of rejection, abandonment, loss, embarrassment, financial ruin, divorce, sickness or death. The only power to free us from fear is love for others.

I had a patient who lived in fear of what others thought of her. She hated to be the center of attention, therefore she avoided social gathers and when in one would hide in the corner. She came to see me distraught, melting down because her daughter was getting married and as the wedding approached the fear of walking down the aisle with everyone looking at her was overwhelming. What was her core problem? What solution would you suggest? How could love come in and solve this situation?

I asked her where her focus was? Whose day this was? Suggested she try to take the focus off self and start focusing on her daughter and how much joy it will bring her daughter for mom to be there for her. Patient came back and told me she couldn't believe it but she walked down the aisle and wasn't afraid at all, she just kept thinking how much she loved her daughter and what joy it would be for her daughter to be there for her.

Perfect love casts out all fear.

## THURSDAY

Read last paragraph – “It's one thing to...” thoughts? What is His command?

*“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.” John 13:34,35*

*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. Romans 13:8*

*And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 1John 3:23*

*Do these texts by Jesus and His Apostles give the same emphasis as the quarterly “a true disciple will obey His commandments”? The quarterly quotes John 14:15,*

*“If you love me, you will obey what I command.” John 14:15*

Is there a difference in focus from commandments to command, which is love? Can love be commanded? Then what is going on here? Why is Jesus insistent upon love? What is the law upon which all life is based? Love! This is the only possible way we can have life. But commandments can be performed, worked at and can lead to false security and spiritual arrogance. It is when we love God and others more than ourselves that we have fulfilled the law!

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph “It was not enough...” What is the emphasis, behavioral conformity to the commandments or a transformation of heart from selfishness to love?

*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. 2Thes 3:9*

## 2009 Q2 Lesson 11 Stewardship

### SUNDAY

Read Matthew 25:14-30

<sup>14</sup> “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup> The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. <sup>17</sup> So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. <sup>18</sup> But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

<sup>19</sup> “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.

<sup>20</sup> The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’

<sup>21</sup> “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

<sup>22</sup> “The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’

<sup>23</sup> “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

<sup>24</sup> “Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

<sup>26</sup> “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? <sup>27</sup> Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

<sup>28</sup> “‘Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. <sup>30</sup> And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Thoughts about this parable? What lessons do you see being taught?

- Who is the one going on a journey? Christ who left earth and went to heaven but will be coming back
- From where do our talents come?
- Does everyone start with the same number of talents? Why does one person have more talent than another? Who decides how many talents a person has? Is God in heaven determining how many talents each person has or are other factors involved?
  - Can God from heaven supply talents or abilities to persons which are not naturally endowed? Samson’s strength, Solomon’s wisdom
  - Are some talents inherited? (abilities and wealth)

- What does it mean that a person, by investment, can multiple their talents? Does this apply only to money?
- Does the parable mean that only those with few talents can bury them?
- What happens to the man with five talents who buries them? If it is money then five talents will be there when he digs it up, but what if the talent buried is an ability?
- Why is talent taken from one and given to another?
- Is the critical issue involved how many talents you have or something else? What? What you do with the talents you have, which mean the focus is on character or the development of character.
- What prevented the man with one talent from investing his talent? His belief about the master, which was?
- Does God harvest where He has not sown or gather where He has not spread seed? Then why did Jesus describe it as such in the parable? He was giving the wicked servant's view! Does this give us a clue as to what underlies who is wicked and who is not?
- What did the war in heaven start over? Lies about God, what obstructs God's healing love in our lives? What sets us free?

Read bottom paragraph – “Reality number four...” thoughts?

Why is it serious business to not use one's talents? What does God do to those who refuse to use their talents for Him?

He eventually lets them go:

*Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone! Hosea 4:17*

*Romans 1:18-34*

Why does God let them go? The neural circuits we fire are the ones that grow; the neural circuits we leave idle are the ones that die. Thus, when we invest our energies in Godliness, through God's grace not only do our characters grow but our brains change. But when we invest our energies into wickedness, eventually we destroy the ability to recognize and respond to God, truth and love, and thus God 'lets us go.'

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph “In today's stressful...” thoughts?

Any thoughts on effective time management?

- What interferes with your ability to manage your time?
- Is it okay to turn down requests for ministry?
- Is it okay to take time off to relax and to have fun?
- What happens to the person who doesn't take time off?
- What about the Sabbath: how did Jesus “not miss the blessings of the Sabbath”?
  - What is the blessing of the Sabbath? Do you ever find that the idea of the blessings of the Sabbath is stated and assumed but rarely defined? How would you define the blessings of the Sabbath?
  - Did Jesus work on the Sabbath?

*After healing the man at the pool of Bethesda the Jewish leaders confronted Him: So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. <sup>17</sup> Jesus said*

to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.” <sup>18</sup> 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

- What blessing did Jesus not miss on the Sabbath?

Read last paragraph – thoughts?

The lesson states that “God has the first claim on our time. We manifest this in our keeping of the Sabbath and our daily time for prayer and worship.”

- Does this mean that all those who observe the Sabbath are manifesting that God is first in their lives? What about those who crucified Christ, why did they want Him down before sunset?
- What about today? Can we be Sabbath observers and take time for prayer and worship and still not have God first in our lives?
- If someone doesn’t keep the Sabbath, does that mean that we can know that God is not first in their lives?
- What do you think about the idea that what day one worships upon is the best evidence to determine whether someone has God first in their lives or not?
- Do you think it is helpful to use such things as which day we worship on to determine who is right with God and who is not?
- Why is it dangerous to use such practices?
- Does this mean that which day we worship upon is totally inconsequential and doesn’t matter?
- Why does the day of worship matter—what difference does it make?
- What blessing do you receive from the Sabbath?
- Can the Sabbath become a cursing rather than a blessing? If so how and why?
- Does one have to attend church on Sabbath to keep the Sabbath holy?
- Are we to judge others based on their day of worship? I know some non-SDA Christians who attend church on Sunday but keep the Sabbath with their family each week.
- What is the day of worship not useful for? Determining the heart-relationship a particular person has with God.

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Are we our own property? Why or why not?

The lesson suggests we read 1Cor 6:19,20:

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*

Thoughts? What does it mean? What do you think the lesson is suggesting? Is the lesson suggesting someone other than us is to be in charge of our bodies, is to be deciding what we do with our bodies? In the Corinthians 6 text, after the Apostle says ‘we are not our own, we are bought with a price,’ who does the Apostle give the responsibility and authority to govern the body to? The believer! Who has God given authority to determine what you do with your body? You! Now, does that mean all decisions are healthy?

But what if someone prefers the position that God has bought us with a price and we are His property, or He is our Master?

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, <sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Luke 4:18,19*

*Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:34-36*

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> 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*

If the Master sets us free are we free or are we slaves? If the Master sets us free then who is in governance of our bodies, us or the Master?

How do we know we are free? Because we are not robots – God has the power to control our choices, but He doesn’t. When the Holy Spirit has His way in our lives we develop Godly traits of character known as fruits of the Spirit, the last one being “Self Control!” Why is this important? Love cannot exist if we are not free.

But if we use our freedom to indulge appetite what happens? The laws of health are not rescinded because God has given us freedom to govern our own bodies. If you choose to drink, smoke, eat an unhealthy diet God doesn’t send an angel down from heaven to ruin your liver, give you lung cancer or make you obese – these are the natural consequences to violating the laws of health.

And as we violate the laws of health we lose our freedom. A person with physical illness and disability is not as free as one who is healthy. A person with morbid obesity is not as free as one who is of normal weight. The chains of our slavery are self-imposed as we chose to live in violation of the laws that God created the universe to run upon. And slowly we are enslaved and don’t even realize it.

This is what Paul is talking about in Romans 6:16-23:

*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? <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. <sup>21</sup> What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

To whom has God given governance of your body? Whose decision is it what you do with your body? Does your decision have real consequences?

Read third paragraph “But the basic idea...” thoughts?

Let's read what Paul says immediately following his statement that "our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit; we are not are own but bought with a price." Read Romans 7:1-6

*Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. <sup>2</sup> But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. <sup>3</sup> The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup> The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. <sup>5</sup> Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. <sup>6</sup> I say this as a concession, not as a command.*

Does this add any light on the subject of our body not being our own? What does it mean? Does it mean your spouse is in governance of your body? Does it mean your spouse determines what you do with your body? Or does it mean when you gave yourself in marriage you gave your spouse access to your body and you promised to honor your spouse with your entire self, including your body? But who still decides to fulfill the promise? How is this connected to the body being a Temple of the Holy Spirit we are not our own?

Who determines whether the Holy Spirit will dwell in you? Christ stands at the door and knocks, who determines whether He comes in?

## WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph "Fact number one..." thoughts?

How do you like the way the lesson expressed it, "God owns everything"? It is true that God created everything and is "rightful owner" But does being rightful owner sound the same as "God owns everything"? Is there a difference? Does the rightful owner have the ability to give or share or delegate or endow or surrender abilities, authorities, ownership? Does God do this?

- Did God give Adam dominion, rulership of planet earth? Did Adam "own" planet earth? No, but was Adam supposed to govern planet earth by the "free" exercise of his God given abilities, in harmony with God's principles of love? Or was Adam to suspend his abilities and wait for God to give him daily instructions on what Adam was to do each day?
- Does God give us the right to decide what we do with ourselves ultimately deciding whether we will be saved or lost?
- When Christ comes again does He share His throne with the redeemed? What does this mean?
- On Earth does God's ownership of a farm determine whether that farm will produce a bountiful harvest? Does God's ownership determine whether poppies or marijuana will be grown? If God is the owner should we hold Him responsible for the misuse of His property?

Read third paragraph "Fact number two..." thoughts?

- What happens if, when you sit down to write out your bills you write out the bills first and tithe and offerings last? Does God care? Do you get a smaller blessing? Do you get a cursing? What if you write your tithes and offerings last because you want to see how much is left over after your bills so you can increase the size of your offering?
- While the tithe is God's the offerings are free will, expression of our love and thanks. Would God prefer we give all our money to Him each week and not pay our bills?



Read last paragraph “Fact number four...”

- What does it mean the more we give the more we are blessed?
- Why is this true? It is the law of love, the design template upon which the universe is built
- But why is it true only if we give in order to give and not give in order to get?

#### THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

- What does it mean Jesus will ask for an account? Why will Jesus ask for this?
- Why does God say we should have no other gods before Him? Is it because He will punish us if we do? Or is it because we become like the god we worship and as the highest created beings on planet earth there is nothing on earth we can worship and actually grow and develop. Every false god we worship causes us to degrade. God says to worship Him because He wants our ultimate good, health and happiness.
- Is this why Jesus asks for an account? Not because He is concerned about His “credit sheet” but because He is concerned about us, our healthy, maturity, development and if we fail to invest what He has given us we will suffer the consequences. Is He asking for an account to help, even the lost to realize, they are lost by their own choice not because God is mad or angry or out to get them but by the result of their own self destruction?

#### FRIDAY

Read second paragraph – thoughts?

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2

## 2009 Q2 Lesson 12 Community

### SABBATH

Read first paragraph “Humans are social beings...” Thoughts?

How many humans did God directly create and how many were created by other humans? If God had made hundreds of millions of humans individually, as “stand-alones,” would the way we relate be different? Would our “connection” to one another be different than it currently is? How does God’s design for humanity link us all together? Does this linkage, unity of design, tell us something about God and His relationship to all His creatures?

Why do we not experience unity with other humans now? Why is there so much division? What does Satan want to do to God’s universe? Divide it, sever it, fracture it. How has Satan achieved fracture and division on earth?

Believing lies about God resulted in love and trust being replaced with fear and selfishness in the heart – what does fear, insecurity, anxiety, worry, dread, distrust do to relationships? How is this manifested in humanity today?

- Racism, Sexism, Elitism, Phariseeism
- Terrorism
- War
- Spousal abuse
- Child abuse
- Political attacks
- Gossip
- Extortion
- Coercion
- Jealousy
- Bullying
- Cheating

Do any of these problems occur in the church? Is the church part of God’s plan to reverse what Satan has done? How so?

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}

What did the Apostolic church look like? Was there selfishness or real love for others? What happened? How did the church go from real selflessness to becoming intolerant and warmongering?

Can the church be a conduit for God’s healing methods if we continue spread lies about God? Or put another way can the fullness of God’s healing power be experienced in the church if we don’t know the truth about God? Are their God concepts currently promulgated in Christianity that obstruct the flow of God’s healing love? What?

## SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to contrast the difference between the community being built at Babel after the flood and the community God directed Abraham to start. What is the difference?

What were the motives for establishing Babel? What were they trying to do? Make a name for themselves, what does this mean? Establish their own identity, universe, reality separate and distinct from God. They were trying to sever their connection from God – which would be death, suicide, so God intervened to save them.

Abraham, however, wanted unity with God, not separateness from Him. But what happened to the community started by Abraham?

- Division – Abraham’s grandchildren Jacob and Esau
- War – Jews and Arabs
- What caused/causes these divisions?
- What is the only healing solution? Why?

Read second paragraph “From the story...” then read bottom pink questions, thoughts?

- An elite priesthood
- Leadership devaluing the thinking ability of members
- Only those taught in their schools can know truth and be in church leadership
- Believing that membership in the organization conferred special benefit with God
- Believed that their rituals conferred special blessing and right with God
- Believing behavioral conformity to the law merited favor with God
- Believing God favored one people more than another
- Saw God as primarily powerful rather than as love

Do we struggle with any of these?

What kind of people do we become when we believe such things? – The kind that can crucify Jesus and think we are doing God service!

## MONDAY

Read last paragraph “A church member...” thoughts?

Do you experience that you are a valued member of the body of believers?

How can we increase the unity, harmony and cooperation in the church so that every member experiences they are valued?

How do we value those who see God differently than us?

Why are some members unable to be valued and useful in the church?

*Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup> But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. <sup>26</sup> When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.*

*<sup>27</sup> “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’*

*<sup>28</sup> “ ‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.*

*“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’*

*<sup>29</sup> “No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’” Matthew 13:24-30*

Who are the wheat and who are the weeds? Are both in the church? Why are there weeds in the church? Do weeds ever get into church leadership?

“Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.” {COL 70.1}

“The field,” Christ said, “is the world.” But we must understand this as signifying the church of Christ in the world. The parable is a description of that which pertains to the kingdom of God, His work of salvation of men; and this work is accomplished through the church. True, the Holy Spirit has gone out into all the world; everywhere it is moving upon the hearts of men; but it is in the church that we are to grow and ripen for the garner of God. {COL 70.2}

“He that sowed the good seed is the Son of man. ... The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.” The good seed represents those who are born of the word of God, the truth. The tares represent a class who are the fruit or embodiment of error, of false principles. “The enemy that sowed them is the devil.” Neither God nor His angels ever sowed a seed that would produce a tare. The tares are always sown by Satan, the enemy of God and man. ... **By bringing into the church those who bear Christ’s name while they deny His character, the wicked one causes that God shall be dishonored, the work of salvation misrepresented, and souls imperiled.** {COL 71.1}

Christ’s servants are grieved as they see true and false believers mingled in the church. They long to do something to cleanse the church. Like the servants of the householder, they are ready to uproot the tares. But Christ says to them, “Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.” {COL 71.2}

What is the key to distinguish those who are tares in the church? They call themselves Christian but deny God’s character, thus they misrepresent God! Thoughts? What do we do when we see weeds in the church?

There is in the Saviour’s words another lesson, a lesson of wonderful forbearance and tender love. As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. Were they to be separated from the church, others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast. {COL 72.1}

We cannot read the secrets of the heart therefore we are not to be in the business of trying to separate the weeds from the wheat. But because the wheat and tares grow together unity in the church is impaired. Some tares will not fit in and find their place because their hearts are not unified with God. Additionally, the tares may discourage, interfere or otherwise obstruct the wheat from realizing its full potential.

How can we improve this situation? By ever more consistently representing the truth about God as revealed by Jesus!

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “All must move...” thoughts? Who assigns us our role?

Does Satan want to obstruct us from fulfilling our role? What strategies might he employ? What about getting us into roles or assignments that we are not called by God to fulfill?

Read last paragraph – thoughts?

- We need people who believe God has called them to help this class.
- We need people who can help organize get-togethers, potlucks and socials.
- We need people who would seek to spread the good news to people not attending this class.
- We need greeters to welcome visitors.
- We need donors to support our weekly radio program.
- We need people to initiate community Bible studies to share this message locally.
- We need members to invite their friends to attend or listen on the web.
- We need ideas to better minister God’s love to the world!

## WENDESDAY

Read second paragraph – what is required for unity amongst believers?

Is there one central element that supersedes all others that when experienced results in unity?

*Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 1Peter 4:8*

*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. The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Galatians 5:13,14*

If every person had hearts where God’s law of love was perfectly written in would there be unity? Where does such love originate?

*We love because he first loved us. 1John 4:19*

Love originates with God – what then is the central truth we must come to in order to have unity? The truth about God Himself!

Last paragraph “The peoples...” then read bottom pink section – thoughts?

Why is there so much conflict today? Because we have two different views of God warring for supremacy in our minds. It is a law that by beholding we become changed, we become like the God we worship and admire. When we worship a God who is power, a God who is punitive, authoritarian we become like that God and will use power over methods to enforce what we believe is right.

## THURSDAY

- What is the church built upon? Jesus Christ is the foundation of the church – the chief corner stone.
- What is the church? What constitutes the church?
- Where do denominations fit in? How did we get so many denominations?

- Where does the SDA church fit in?
- Are we saved by affiliation in a denomination?
- Are we saved by being a Christian?
- What is the purpose of the SDA church? Are we fulfilling that purpose?
- What was the purpose of the Jewish nation? Did they fulfill their purpose? Why not? What stopped them? Are we in danger of the same obstructions?
- If a particular church organization is built on Jesus Christ, what would it look like?
- The Jews in Christ's day claimed to have Abraham as their father, but Jesus said their father was Satan – what does this mean?
- Does it have to do with the methods practiced in one's life?

## FRIDAY

Read question 1 and discuss-

Read question 2 and discuss – what do you do when the sermon presents lies about God? Not just a point of disagreement but the sermon actually present lies?

- What would we say if a church was teaching that the human leader was God in human form, like some cults have done?
- Or that God wanted the little girls to sleep with the leader as some cults have done?
- What if a church taught God will burn people forever in an eternally burning hell if they don't love Him?
- What if a church taught God is required to kill all those who don't agree with Him?

What did Martin Luther do when he discovered distortions in his church? What did his church do to him?

Read question 3 and discuss



## 2009 Q2 Lesson 13 Mission

### SABBATH

Read memory text – 1 Peter 3:15 – are we ready to give an answer to everyone for the reason for the hope in us? Let's practice -

- What hope do you have?
- What is your hope based upon?
- What evidence do you have for your hope?

Read last paragraph “We, as followers of Christ...” thoughts? Are we as a church fulfilling our mission? Are we moving forward in the truth? Are we taking the final message of mercy to the world? Are we in danger of becoming institutionalized? How can we protect ourselves from this?

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph “Theologians through the ages...” thoughts?

Do you like the way this is expressed? Is it true there are things for which we don't have the answers? Does that mean we can't have the answers to them?

Let's take the philosophy expressed in this paragraph and explore it in history:

In 1844 a group of people believed Christ was coming that year. When He didn't what should they have done? “There are questions which we don't have answers” and leave it at that or should they search the Scriptures to find answers they didn't have?

In the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, the Black Death—bubonic plague—ravaged Europe. They didn't have answers to what was happening. Priests and laity alike believed it was God's wrath upon the people. Should they have taken the approach: no answers/God hasn't revealed it, which they did, or should they have searched for answers, which later revealed this was a bacterial infection carried by fleas?

Jesus said to His disciples I have much to tell you but you cannot bear it, did Jesus want them to know and understand more? Where was the limitation on the followers of Jesus knowing more, God's unwillingness to reveal or the limited ability of the followers to understand?

Does our attitude toward what may be known impact our willingness to seek and find, to inquire, to search, to stretch our minds beyond current understanding?

Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. 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. {CW 38.3}

The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people, should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves, to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition, and worship they know not what. {CW 39.1}

Thoughts? Does this sound like we should rest satisfied with our current understanding or push forward to know more?

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph “The gospel...” thoughts?

What is the gospel? Can we assume that if there is a Christian presence somewhere in the world that the gospel has been preached there? What about if an SDA presence is there? When Christ came to earth the first time, at that time in human history, what was the organized body on earth that God had chosen, blessed and empowered to take the gospel to the world? The Jewish nation – and what message did they take?

*“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. Matthew 23:15*

Now Jesus had told the woman at the well that salvation was from the Jews – but yet He tells these Jews that they are enslaving people into hell – what is going on?

Could Christians today and SDAs included be in danger of the same problem? What were the Jews doing that made people in bondage to hell?

- Worshipping on the wrong day?
- Wrong health practices?
- Failing to pay tithes and offerings?
- Wrong dress code?
- Teaching evolutionary origins of humanity?
- Allow homosexual leaders into the church?

No, none of these – what was the problem?

- Teaching lies about God!

What good news do we have to take to the world?

- The Father is exactly like Jesus and will heal all who trust Him!

## TUESDAY

Read top question – thoughts? What is your understanding of the message of the three angels?

Let’s read Revelation 14:6-12

*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.” A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.” 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, 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. 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.” This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.*

What do the angels represent? Do they represent heavenly beings or messengers, including human messengers?

The Greek is ἄγγελος [aggelos /ang-el-os/ a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, an angel, a messenger from God.

*Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” John 20:21*

An envoy, messenger flying in midair with the eternal gospel – what does it mean flying in mid-air? Or mid heaven as in some translations.

When translated heaven, which heaven? The message is to go to the people of the earth so mid heaven means the atmosphere of the earth, thus midair is more accurate in this context. This means first the worldwide proclamation of a saving message. But could it mean more?

*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, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. Eph 2:1,2*

Who is the ruler of the kingdom of the air? What is the kingdom of the air? The kingdom of selfishness, the kingdom of fear, the kingdom of sin and this angel of Revelation has a message that flies through midair – right through the lies of the Satan! And what is that message?

*“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.”*

What does it mean to fear God? In this context, who are the ones told to fear God? Those who are to bring Him glory, would that be the lost or the saved? Will these people know God? God is love and perfect love casts out all fear so in the context this means to be in awe, in reverence, in admiration for God. Let your life reveal His character of love because the time has come for all to decide which God they will serve. God’s judgment has come. We must decide which God we will worship – we are to worship the One who made all things!

But another messenger comes with a second message:

*“Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”*

What does this mean? This angel is the same angel as Revelation 18:1-4

*After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. 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. 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.” 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;*

What is the message of the second angel? What is this movement?

The “glory” radiating from the angel of Revelation 18—so brilliant and beautiful that it illuminates the whole world—is

*“the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4:6).*

He is “the brightness” of God’s “glory” and the “express image of His person” (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus is the complete and accurate revelation of the Father’s character to a world that does not know Him as He is.

*“The Word became 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.... No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (Jn 1:14, 18).*

The prince of the air – has corrupted the atmosphere of earth, filled it with every foul and detestable lie about God. The entire world is reacting to the lie about God – what is the lie about God?

That God is a power monger, someone who uses power to force His way, a being who doesn’t value the freedom of His creatures. God is a being who must be appeased by the blood of His Son.

How has the world reacted to this teaching?

- Corrupt systems of appeasement and atonement to pay off the anger of the Father
- Rejection of God and agnosticism and atheism
- Legalistic religions
- Religions that depersonalized God into a force without personality
- Satan began his war in heaven by lying about God. He spread his rebellion to earth by lying about God. The world was covered in darkness, minds were held in bondage but Christ came to set the minds free.

*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. 2Cor 10:3-5*

So if this is how the war is fought what did Christ do by His death?

*“Having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the Cross” (Colossians 2:15, NIV)*

How did Christ disarm the devil? By revealing the truth! Now all Satan’s lies stand impotent, powerless. We now are able to go forward and the gates of hell cannot prevail against us. Lies cannot stand up to the truth. Satan took this world by deceit. Christ has revealed the truth which destroys the lies of Satan, and the truth demolishes Satan’s strongholds and sets people free.

We as a church are to be taking forward the truth about God as revealed in Jesus to free minds held in bondage of fear of God.

*“From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to ‘the principalities and powers in heavenly places,’ the final and full display of the love of God.” Ephesians 3:10” (The Acts of the Apostles, p. 9).*

What is the message of Revelation we are to take 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

Read bottom pink section – thoughts? Could focusing on self rather than mission have something to do with preaching a fear inducing message? Could it have something to do with preaching a God who will burn and destroy those who don’t love Him rather than preaching the truth about God’s character of love?

### WEDNESDAY

Witnessing – read second paragraph – “Not all of us...” thoughts? Anyone want to share how they have found ways to witness the truth about God?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts? What does it mean to grow in grace? To become more like Christ? To have selfishness replaced with love? What does it look like?

### THURSDAY

Read first paragraph “There is no doubt...” thoughts? How do you hear this paragraph? Do you hear it as “Christ, who along with His Father, is interceding in our situation to save us from the devastation caused by sin?” Or do you read it as “We sure are glad that Jesus is interceding with His Father to protect us from the anger and wrath of God”?

Read second paragraph “If we want...” and then the last paragraph states, “If there is no connection with Jesus Christ, a doctrine will be no more than a piece of technical information, which may be interesting and intellectually challenging, but nothing more. But if rooted in Jesus Christ, a doctrine will help us better understand the plan of redemption and will enhance our relationship with the Lord.”

Thoughts? Is there something more to doctrine than what is suggested here? I like the connection the lesson is making between doctrine and Jesus Christ. Isn’t the purpose of all doctrine to reveal to us some aspect of God’s character? Some truth about God’s methods, Person, motives, law of love?

If a doctrine isn’t connected to Christ it isn’t as benign as the lesson would have us think and is nothing more than an intellectually challenging. When doctrine is not connected to Christ it actually damages the mind, obstructs the path to God and becomes an obstacle to salvation.

With that in mind let’s explore some of the doctrines and see what they teach us about God:

- What do we learn about God if we believe man is immortal?  
What do we learn about God if we believe man is mortal?
- What do we learn about God if we believe Christ was a created being?  
What do we learn if we believe Jesus is fully God as well as becoming fully man?
- What do we learn about God if we believe the wicked die in the end because God inflicts death?  
What do we learn if we believe the wicked die in the end as a natural result of being so out of harmony with God they cannot survive in His presence?

- What do we learn about God if we believe Jesus died to pay our legal debt, assuage the wrath of His Father, to meet the demands of divine retributive justice?  
What do we learn about God if we believe Jesus died to reveal the truth about the Godhead, the nature and character of sin, expose Satan as liar and to reverse the damage sin caused humanity achieving a remedy for sin?
- What do we learn about God if we believe God doesn't know the future choices His creatures will make?  
What do we learn about God if we believe He does know our choices before we make them?
- What do we learn about God if we believe He predetermines all our choices, some for salvation and some for damnation?  
What do we learn about God if He gives us genuine freedom to choice for ourselves?
- What do we learn about God from the Bible Sabbath?  
What do we learn about God from Sunday sacredness?  
What do we learn about God if we allege the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience?
- What do we learn about God from the sanctuary message?  
What do we learn about God if we allege Christ is pleading to His Father in heaven in our behalf? Or if we allege Christ is covering us with His robe of righteousness so the Father cannot see our wickedness?  
What do we learn if we teach Christ is working as His Father's agent to reveal the truth to win us to trust and then to reproduce in us Christlike character so when the Father sees us He sees the perfection of His Son?
- What do we learn about God if we teach that the genetic descendants of Abraham have a special opportunity for salvation that the non-genetic descendants don't have?  
What do we learn if we recognize all humanity is descended from Adam and thereby all are terminal and all in need of the one remedy procured by Christ and freely offered to all?
- What do we learn about God if we teach that He is keeping records in order to judge us by and that His judgment is what determines our eternal destiny?  
What do we learn if we teach God's records are there as evidence of His unfailing love and perfection in all His actions?
- What do we learn about God if we teach a secret rapture?  
What do we learn if we teach a literal visible appearing?

## FRIDAY

Read second paragraph "The church is God's..." thoughts?

Read questions 2,3 and discuss.



## 2009 Q3 Lesson 1 Jesus and the Johannine Letters

Read Memory Text – thoughts?

- What does the text mean? From what was Jesus coming to save the world?
- Satan? God or God's wrath? The penalty of the law? Death? Guilt? Shame? Responsibility?
- Do we have all types of ideas and concepts about why Jesus had to die? How do you understand it? What ideas have you heard? Are all the reasons given correct? Does it make a difference?

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John 1:29

What does Jesus take away? Sin is translated from:

**266 ἁμαρτία** [*hamartia* /ham-ar·tee·ah/] n f. From 264; DNT 1:267; TNTA 44; GK 281; 174 occurrences; AV translates as “sin” 172 times, “sinful” once, and “offense” once. **1** equivalent to 264. 1A to be without a share in. 1B to miss the mark. 1C to err, be mistaken. 1D to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honour, to do or go wrong. 1E to wander from the law of God, violate God's law, sin. **2** that which is done wrong, sin, an offence, a violation of the divine law in thought or in act. **3** collectively, the complex or aggregate of sins committed either by a single person or by many.

What is the sin of the world?

- Did Jesus come to take away the sinful acts people have committed?
- Did He come to take away the record of the acts?
- Did He come to take away the punishment for the acts of sin?
- Did He come to take away God's wrath toward sin?
- Did He come to take away the consequences of sin?
- Did He come to take away sin?

Christ came to take away sin!

- From where did Jesus come to take away sin?
- If we take away sin, if sin is removed from a being then what happens to that being?
- If sin is removed, totally eradicated, from a being what happens to death?

From where does death arise? From sin (Romans 6:23, James 1:15). If we remove sin what have we removed? Death!

*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*

*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*

How does Jesus death destroy death? How is this related to removing sin? What did Jesus take upon Himself?

*Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. 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 53:4,5*

What does this sound like to you? What did the Isaiah text say happens as a result of his wounds? We are healed! Does it say anything about legal penalties being paid? Does it say anything about appeasing anger and wrath of His Father?

What about the “punishment” that was upon Him? Other translations use the word “chastisement” the Hebrew:

, מוֹסֶרָה [mowcer, mowcerah, mocârah /mo-sare/] n m. From 3256; TWOT 141f; GK 4591 and 4593; 11 occurrences; AV translates as “bands” six times, and “bond” five times. **1** band, bond.

What was it that banded, bonded, chastised or caused Jesus to suffer? Was it something inflicted by His Father or was it the condition of sin He took upon Himself?

When the text says “pierced for our transgressions” and “crushed for our iniquities” what does it mean “for”?

The Hebrew:

מן (min): prep; ≡ Str 4480; TWOT 1212, 1213e—**1.** LN 90.14-90.16 **from**, by, i.e., a marker of a source of an event or activity (Ge 17:16), see also LN 90.1–90.7; **2.** LN 84.1-84.15 **from**, away from, i.e., a marker of an extension from a source (Ge 26:16); **3.** LN 63.13-63.20 **part of**, some, from, i.e., a marker of a fractional part of a whole unit of an object or event (Ex 16:20); **4.** LN 89.141-89.142 **made of**, from, i.e., a marker of the substance something is made of (Lev 11:32); **5.** LN 90.8-90.13 **by means**, from, i.e., a marker of instrument of an occurring event (Ge 9:11); **6.** LN 67.118-67.135 **since**, from, i.e., a marker of an extent of time from a point in the past (Ex 5:23); **7.** LN 89.15-89.38 **because of**, from, i.e., a marker of a reason or cause of an event (Ge 48:10); **8.** LN 64 **than**, from, i.e., a marker of comparison or contrast (Ge 3:1); **9.** LN 78.28-78.39 **more than**, i.e., a marker of a comparative degree (Ge 7:20);

Does it make a difference if we read the text:

*Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced because of our transgressions, he was crushed because of our iniquities; the discipline that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. Isa 53:4,5*

And in Corinthians Paul 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 2:15*

What is the purpose for Christ’s suffering? It was for the purpose of producing righteousness in us – which again is healing!

In other words, the death of Christ was to remove sin, iniquity and restore us to righteousness. In the Epistles of John, he emphasizes the importance of Christ being both God and man, why? Why was it necessary for Christ to be both?

- How did Lucifer get the angels and Adam and Eve to sin?
  - *He lied about God and the lies were believed*
- What is the remedy to the lies about God which broke trust?
  - *The truth about God which restores trust.*
- Could a created being reveal the true character of God?

- If an angel would have died on the Cross what would we have learned about God? That He sacrifices His creatures to protect Himself.
- What was the problem sin caused the plan of salvation is designed to fix?
- When Adam sinned did God get changed in some way? Did Adam?
- Was the plan of salvation designed to fix mankind?

Notice 1John3:8

*He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

Jesus death not only destroys the devil and death but also the devil's work – what is that work? One of the founders of our church saw it this way:

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.  
LHU 48

Satan has been working to destroy God's image in man, to make mankind demonic. Christ came to reverse all of this. Do you see a connection to why Christ had to be human, why Christ had to die and how His death heals humanity?

Christ came to fix humanity, to put God's law of love back in the living Temple He created to be the repository of that law – Man! He did this by the exercise of His human brain!

## MONDAY

Read bottom green section – thoughts? Have you identified any theological errors that need to be dealt with?

In Christ's day did any theological errors enter the organized religious system? Did those errors make it hard for the people to recognize and accept Christ?

Is it possible errors are actively taught within the organized body of Christianity? What about within the SDA church? What errors have you seen?

## TUESDAY

The lesson argues the purpose of John's letters was to deal with doctrinal error in the church. What happens if we teach errors? Does our concept of God change if we do? What happens to us when we believe errors, falsehoods or lies?

- Sam Shoeman diagnosed with liver cancer in the 1970's and told he had just months to live. He died within those months but at autopsy it was discovered the doctors were wrong. He had only a tiny tumor that had not spread. He didn't die of liver cancer. He died of the belief he had terminal liver cancer.
- Placebo effect versus Nocebo effect – placebo believing something positive, nocebo is believing something negative. PET scans reveal changes in brain chemistry with dopamine levels and brain opioids increasing with the placebo effect but decreasing with the nocebo effect. The cause of these brain changes – what we believe!
- Derek Adams, in aftermath of breakup with girlfriend, overdosed on all the pills he had been given from the antidepressant trial he was in. But then afraid he might die, he called for help and collapsed at the hospital. He was shaky, pale, drowsy, and his blood pressure

dropped. Labs were normal. He was given 6 liters of fluids to try and stabilize his blood pressure, but no improvement. A doctor from the trial was contacted to find out what substance he had overdosed on – when the protocol was unsealed, it was disclosed Adams was in the control group and had overdosed on harmless placebo. Within 15 minutes of finding out the news his symptoms resolved and blood pressure was normal.

Does it matter what we believe? Satan is the father of lies. He is good at it and he has filled humanity with all kinds of lies. When we believe lies we get damaged!

Last week we didn't get to explore how our concept of God is impacted by the doctrines we hold so let's explore some of those ideas this week:

- What do we learn about God if we believe man is immortal? What do we learn about God if we believe man is mortal? What impact might each belief have on us?
- What do we learn about God if we believe Christ was a created being? What do we learn if we believe Jesus is fully God as well as becoming fully man?
- What do we learn about God if we believe the wicked die in the end because God inflicts it? What do we learn if we believe the wicked die in the end as a natural result of being so out of harmony with God they cannot survive in His presence? What happens to us if we believe either of these ideas?
- What do we learn about God if we believe Jesus died to pay our legal debt, assuage the wrath of His Father, to meet the demands of divine retributive justice? What do we learn about God if we believe Jesus died to reveal the truth about the Godhead, the nature and character of sin, expose Satan as a liar and to reverse the damage sin caused humanity achieving a remedy for sin?
- What do we learn about God if we believe God doesn't know the future choices His creatures will make? What do we learn about God if we believe He does know our choices before we make them?
- What do we learn about God if we believe He predetermines all our choices, some for salvation and some for damnation? What do we learn about God if He gives us genuine freedom to choose for ourselves?
- What do we learn about God from the Bible Sabbath? What do we learn about God from Sunday sacredness? What do we learn about God if we allege the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience?
- What do we learn about God from the sanctuary message? What do we learn about God if we allege Christ is pleading to His Father in heaven in our behalf? Or if we allege Christ is covering us with His robe of righteousness so the Father cannot see our wickedness? What do we learn if we teach Christ is working as His Father's agent to reveal the truth to win us to trust and then to reproduce in us Christlike character so when the Father sees us He sees the perfection of His Son?
- What do we learn about God if we teach that the genetic descendants of Abraham have a special opportunity for salvation that the non-genetic descendants don't have? What do we learn if we recognize all humanity is descended from Adam and thereby all are terminal and all in need of the one remedy procured by Christ and freely offered to all?
- What do we learn about God if we teach that He is keeping records in order to judge us by and that His judgment is what determines our eternal destiny? What do we learn if we teach God's records are there as evidence of His unfailing love and perfection in all His actions?

- What do we learn about God if we teach a secret rapture? What do we learn if we teach a literal visible appearing?

### WEDNESDAY

Read last two paragraphs – thoughts? Are people trying to separate the Father and Son today? How so?

- What about the idea that Jesus died to assuage the Father's wrath?
- Jesus is in heaven pleading to His Father?
- The Father executed the Son?
- The OT God is the Father and the NT God is Jesus?
- Two dispensations, one of law and one of grace?

### THURSDAY

The lesson highlights some texts for us to evaluate, lets explore some of them.

*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*

- What does this text mean?
- How does the blood of Jesus purify us?
- What does the blood represent?
- Where did Jesus say we were to place His blood (John 6)?
- What does it mean to drink His blood?
- If we open the heart to Christ and internalize Him do we get cleansed from all sin?

*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*

- What change does this text imply has occurred within the believer?
- Is it possible for us to change our selfish nature?
- Do those who love others more than self have a change of nature?
- From where did that change arise?
- Did Christ's life, death and resurrection have something to do with it? What?
- When the Holy Spirit comes into the life does He speak on His own? Who is the Holy Spirit listening to? From who is the Holy Spirit taking to impart life to us?

*We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. 1John 5:18*

- What does this mean?
- What is sin? Lawlessness,
- What law? The law of love,
- So those born of God love God and others they don't continue to live life for self – this is what the text means!

### FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

**2009 Q3 Lesson 2     Experiencing the Word of Life**

Notes are not available.



## 2009 Q3 Lesson 3 Walking in the Light, Turning Away from Sin

### SABBATH

Read the entire section starting with “In 1982...” thoughts?

Can you stare at sin and not be harmed? Is the harm that comes from staring at it different from the harm that comes from participating in it? What have angels and intelligences in heaven been doing? How have they been harmed? How have we been harmed? Wouldn't the analogy be closer if when sitting in front of the loaded shotgun you had your finger on the trigger? Don't we have to decide to sin or not sin – of course without the Holy Spirit we wouldn't have a choice.

### SUNDAY

Read 1John 1:5 – What does it mean to you “God is light, in him is no darkness at all”?

### MONDAY

Read 1John 1:6-10

*If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 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. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.*

Thoughts about this passage?

Read the two paragraphs starting with “The first statement discusses...” – thoughts?

What does walking in darkness mean? Isaiah 60:2 *Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people* – what was the darkness? Jesus is the light which lightens all men? The light about what? Is the darkness acts of sin? Or is the darkness something else that results in acts of sin or sinful living?

What does it mean to live in sin? What does living in sin look like?

- Not attending church?
- Smoking, drinking, carousing?
- Violence?
- Lying, cheating, stealing?
- Breaking the commandments?
- What was John dealing with in his Epistle? What kind of sin? Was he dealing with people who were openly sinning?
- What about Paul in his Epistles when dealing with what was called the Judaizers?
- Would those who wanted Christ crucified constitute as people who live in sin? What did their lives look like to the community?
- What is the greatest commandment? Love the Lord and the second to love each other – what might the greatest sin be? Not to love God and second not to love each other, which means to be selfish. What might that look like?
  - *Seeking glory for self rather than God? A church musician who plays to be seen?*

- *A pastor who preaches to be recognized, get promoted, have power?*
- *A church leader who exercises authority over those who disagree with Him – misrepresenting God by the methods employed?*

What does it look like to walk in the light? To love God and others more than self – this is the light of the world – the truth about God's kingdom of love!

What hope do you hear from this passage? What attitude do you hear regarding God toward the sinner in this passage?

Why is it important that we acknowledge our sinfulness? What happens if we don't? Does God get mad? What happens if you have cancer but refuse to acknowledge it?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Yes, absolutely right, sin will destroy us. Why then do so many teach that God is the one who destroys the sinner? Does it make a difference if we believe that sin, if unremedied, will destroy us versus believing God will destroy us? What difference?

What is sin? Lawlessness or without the law or outside the law – what law? The law of love and why is this significant? What difference does it make if an intelligent free will being chooses to go outside the law of love?

Satan's version says that if you choose to violate God's law that God, in order to be just must use His power to punish you. This is from the book *Desire of Ages* and states it beautifully:

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

What are the consequences to believing Satan's lie about God, to believing that God is required to punish sin?

- In Satan's version where is the origination of pain, suffering and death? Where does death arise? From God!
- If it is true that God is the source of death, the great grim reaper of the universe, could we really trust Him?

Why is Satan's version of reality wrong? Why does God not have to punish sin?

*Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law Romans 13:10*

*If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. James 2:8*

*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 1John 3:14*

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}

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. {The Southern Work 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 basis of all life in the universe? Love – the principle of giving, other-centeredness! What happens when this law is broken?

*The wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23*

*Sin when full grown brings forth death. James 1:15*

Where did the law of love originally get broken and how was it broken?

In heaven itself **this law was broken. [Law of love] 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.** DA 21

What difference does it make today if we teach God is the one who must inflict punishment upon sinners? We continue to spread Satan's lie, which prevents the circle of love from being restored! Such doctrine opposes God's plan to heal and restore us to unity and oneness with Him!

Read second paragraph "Forgiveness of sins..." What does this mean? How can these words be understood to be in harmony with Scripture? How can these words be understood to misrepresent God and obstruct His healing plan?

Why was forgiveness of sins not possible without the death of Christ? Was God forbidden, prevented, restricted, unable to be forgiving without the death of Christ? Was Christ's death some-

how designed to get God to extend forgiveness to the sinner? Or was the death of Christ somehow the means employed by God to convey His forgiveness to mankind?

Read last paragraph Thursday's lesson:

When we talk about Jesus as our Advocate and take great comfort in the fact that He is instrumental in providing forgiveness for our sins, we must be careful not to give the impression that the Father is mean and harsh and must be persuaded by a go-between to forgive us. Such a picture of God is unwarranted. He is the One who sent Jesus in our behalf (John 3:16). Also, a few verses earlier we were told that He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us (1 John 1:9). Jesus does not have to pacify the Father. On the contrary, the Father is the One who has revealed, through Jesus, His desire for our salvation.

The lesson is absolutely right on this point! So, if Jesus didn't die to somehow work on His Father how is Jesus' death connected to forgiveness?

From Thursday's lesson we read,

"our forgiveness is secured because, through His sacrificial death, Jesus brought about propitiation, or atonement; this means that He paid the penalty for our sins. The debt that we owed, which we could never pay, Jesus paid for us."

Is this clear or does this confuse after the fantastic statement about not working to change the Father? Does He pay a penalty to the Father? The law? Did Jesus pay our legal debt? Did God forgive us our debt? If our legal debt was paid, then what need is there for forgiveness? If we are forgiven our debts what need is there for payment?

Jesus death was absolutely essential for our salvation, but not as a legal payment in the sense of a fine, imposed penalty, or judicial enforcement, rather it was necessary as the means to destroy Satan, death and the devil's work thus providing the remedy to sin (Heb 2:14, 2Tim 1:10, 1John 3:8)!

What does it mean His blood purifies us from all sin? What is sin? Lawlessness, being outside the law – what law? The law of love, which is the law of life, what would it mean to be purified? Wouldn't it mean to be put back in harmony with the law of love? What does the blood of Jesus represent? His life, which was the law of love lived out perfectly. Where did Jesus say His blood was to be put? John 6 – unless you drink my blood... What does this mean?

*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. Galatians 2:20*

*His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2Pet 1:3,4*

Jesus said, Be perfect as your Father is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God's children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9); and the life of Jesus is made manifest "in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:11). **That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law;** for "the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul" (Ps. 19:7, margin). Through love "the righteousness of the law" will be "fulfilled in us, who walk not

after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:4).--Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 76-78.

“Till heaven and earth pass,” said Jesus, “one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” By His own obedience to the law, Christ testified to its immutable character and proved that through His grace it could be perfectly obeyed by every son and daughter of Adam. On the mount He declared that not the smallest iota should pass from the law till all things should be accomplished--all things that concern the human race, all that relates to the plan of redemption... So long as heaven and earth continue, the holy principles of God's law will remain. His righteousness, “like the great mountains” (Psalm 36:6), will continue, a source of blessing, sending forth streams to refresh the earth. {MB 49.3}

Because the law of the Lord is perfect, and therefore changeless, it is impossible for sinful men, in themselves, to meet the standard of its requirement. This was why Jesus came as our Redeemer. **It was His mission, by making men partakers of the divine nature, to bring them into harmony with the principles of the law of heaven.** When we forsake our sins and receive Christ as our Saviour, the law is exalted. The apostle Paul asks, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” Romans 3:31. {MB 50.1}

The new-covenant promise is, “I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.” Hebrews 10:16. While the system of types which pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world was to pass away at His death, the principles of righteousness embodied in the Decalogue are as immutable as the eternal throne. Not one command has been annulled, not a jot or tittle has been changed. **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.** {MB 50.2}

Why will all in the Earth renewed obey the law of love? What would the place be like without perfect love?

So, why would we be eternally condemned if Jesus didn't die? Because the law of love, which is the basis of life, would not be restored within us!

Read third paragraph, “However, from our side...” Thoughts?

What does it mean forgiveness of sin comes only from God? Would it mean anything different if it said, “forgiveness comes only from God?”

According to the Bible what will the universe, relationships in the universe, look like when God finishes His work of salvation? Unity, oneness, at-one-ment, does that mean unity with God only or unity with each other? Have you ever been wronged, injured, exploited, sinned against? Will God's forgiveness of the sinner who wronged you fix your heart and bring you into unity with the rest of creation if you refuse to forgive your offender?

Then, do each of us not only need to experience forgiveness but also extend it? So, what about the idea that all forgiveness comes from God, just as all love comes from Him. As we experience His forgiveness we are enabled to forgive and in so doing we move from isolation into unity?

## WEDNESDAY

*Read 1John 2:1 “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;”*

What do you think about the admonition to sin not? Is John telling us something that is impossible to do? Is he saying something equivalent to “breathe not” or “feel not” or “physically move not”? All impossible for a living human being to do, is John saying something similar when he says “sin not”?

When he says, but if you do sin we have an advocate with the Father – what does this mean? Jesus is God’s thoughts made audible and visible, Jesus is the medium through which God fulfills His purpose for mankind – therefore, we are to love perfectly, but if we don’t, we have a resource, in the Father’s hands to perfectly heal and restore us, Jesus Christ the Righteous!

The last two sentences in Wednesday’s lesson states, regarding Christians who sin, “Therefore they need help. They need someone to help them resist temptation, but they also need someone who intervenes for them after they have sinned.”

Intervenes to do what? What intervention do we need after we have sinned?

- Do we need healing?
- Do we need the lies removed?
- Do we need the self loathing, guilt, shame removed?
- Do we need the rationalizations, excuses, blame of others removed?
- Do we need to be brought to repentance?
- Do we need the desire to sin removed?
- Do we need the fear and selfishness removed?

Is this where our Advocate is intervening? Is He intervening in us to heal, change and transform us?

## THURSDAY

Read second and third paragraph beginning with “How? First, He is...” – thoughts?

What about this idea that our forgiveness is “secured”? What does this mean? What ideas are being connoted? Secured from who? What was obstructing our forgiveness? How did Jesus’ death bring about propitiation or atonement?

Would it be more clear if the lesson said, “Our forgiveness is secured because, through His sacrificial death, Jesus destroyed Satan, death, the devil’s work and achieved our remedy unifying us with God. This cost God everything He had to give, Himself!

Read paragraph, “John therefore portrays...” thoughts? What is Jesus doing in heaven?

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph—who is Christ pleading to? You and me!

Read and discuss questions 3, 4 in Friday’s lesson



## 2009 Q3 Lesson 4      **Walking in the Light: Keeping His Commandments**

Thoughts about the title?

If you were making the lesson title, how would you complete the title that begins with “Walking in the Light:\_\_\_\_\_?”

- Living a life of Love?
- Loving others more than self?
- Living to give?
- Serving others?
- Follow the example of Jesus?
- Do what Jesus had instructed?

### SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts? What do you think is meant by “His commandments”?

*Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law Romans 13:10*

*If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. James 2:8*

*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 1John 3:14*

If Life eternal is “knowing God” John 17:3, and knowing God is the same as passing from death to life, would loving our brothers be evidence we know God and be synonymous with keeping the commandments? i.e. love fulfills the law?

Read the last paragraph “This week, John...” - thoughts? What does love look like? Matthew 25:31-46

*“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

*<sup>34</sup> “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. <sup>35</sup> 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, <sup>36</sup> 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.’*

*<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’*

*<sup>40</sup> “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.’*

*<sup>41</sup> “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. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me*

*nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> 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.'*

<sup>44</sup> *"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?'*

<sup>45</sup> *"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.'*

<sup>46</sup> *"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*

Would what Christ described here be "keeping the commandments"? What if they don't worship on the same day we do?

Read the first two paragraphs "A pastor had..." In the scenario from the lesson, what if the wife had cheated first, would we then conclude her husband was acting in love? What if after the husband cheated the wife got a gun and shot and killed him, would that be love? Then why do we say that if we "cheat" on God, i.e. our hearts go after false gods He will kill us?

What about God? Does our disobedience ever result in God acting in ways other than love? Or is God always love and His actions are always love?

## SUNDAY

What does it mean to "know the Lord"?

How can a person come to know the Lord? What sources are available for a person to come into the knowledge of God?

- The Bible
- Nature
- Direct revelation from the Holy Spirit
- Personal experience with God
- Angelic testimony or revelation
- Testimony of another
- Love flowing through another

Read first two paragraphs "The phrase..." thoughts? What does the lesson seem to suggest is the reason this is so important to know? It is true, our eternal destiny is at stake, but what do you think about the reason?

A few verses down in 1 John 2 John states: "Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did." How did Jesus walk? Was Jesus concerned with saving His own life?

What happens when our motive for knowing God is so that we can save ourselves?

*For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.  
Matthew 16:25*

Thoughts? How would you feel if someone wanted to marry you in order to get US citizenship, in order to avoid getting deported? If that was their motive would love flow in the heart or would that motive obstruct love? What happens when our motive to follow God is to save ourselves? Could the preaching of a save-self message, if persisted, actually obstruct the plan to heal and restore?

Is there any other motive we can have? If we come to God with selfish motives, which is the only way we can come before we know Him since we are born selfish, do we experience a change in motivation in our continued relationship with Him?

What is the change in motivation we experience once we have come to know God?

*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13*

What motive do parents have in relationship to their children? What do you think when all we hear is avoiding punishment and seeking eternal reward? I frequently hear people say how can we know if we are saved. I say, have you come to know God so well you can say to Him, "I trust you with my life. If heaven would be a happier and healthier place without me, its okay?"

What was Jesus motive? To glorify His Father and help others, is that to be our motive? Does such a motive increase or decrease fear?

## MONDAY

In the top dark section, the lesson suggests we read several passages. Let's look at all of them except the two verses in 1John 3, we will get those in a moment.

*"If you love me, you will obey what I command. John 14:15*

◦ *Is this a command or a promise of what we will look like when we love Him?*

*Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." John 14:21*

*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. John 15:10*

*This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome. 1John 5:3*

*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. Revelation 12:17*

*This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. Revelation 14:12*

Thoughts on these texts? What idea, concept or belief is the lesson trying to convey in focusing on these passages?

Read middle paragraph, "Keeping the commandments..." thoughts?

Now let's look at the two verses the lesson suggests from 1John 3, verses 22 and 24

*Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God <sup>22</sup> and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. <sup>24</sup> Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. 1John 3:21, 22, 24*

I wonder, why did the lesson leave out verse 23 of 1John 3?

<sup>23</sup> *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*

Why do you think they didn't include this verse? Should we include this verse? Does this verse have any bearing on all the other verses John wrote about obeying His commands?

While you think about it, let me tell you a story:

When I was in the military stationed at Fort Steward, GA, I attended SDA services on base at a military chapel each Sabbath. There were less than 30 people who attended and there were no musicians. A Baptist lady, who worked on base, volunteered her time to come and play the piano for SS and church each week. Naturally, she participated in the SS discussion and listened to the sermon. One week the lesson was on Matthew 5 where Jesus said He did not come to destroy the law but fulfill it. At this point the person teaching the lesson turned to the Baptist lady and began chiding her for not keeping the Sabbath. What would you have done?

I intervened and pointed out that love is the fulfillment of the law and those who crucified Christ wanted Him down so they could have religious behavior during the Sabbath hours. I pointed out her selfless sacrifice was demonstrative of God's law of love written on the heart. After that I was told I wasn't welcome at services anymore.

Who do you think in the story was obeying God's commands?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? How do we express our love to God?

Then what about the Sabbath? Does it matter? If so why?

I was in New Orleans recently having a discussion with several people about the Sabbath asking what they would say to a Christian who worships on Sunday as to the reason for the Sabbath? One person said, "How would you feel if your wife decided to celebrate your birthday on a day that wasn't your birthday, one of her choosing?" What do you think about this argument?

For me I often have my birthday celebrated on days that are not my birthday and it doesn't matter, what matters is the love being expressed from those who have remembered me. Haven't you had that experience?

But, more disturbing to me is the motive alleged for the Sabbath that the Sabbath is for God and He is the one who misses out if we don't remember it. Not at all, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath and the Sabbath was not made for God. Why? What was the purpose in God making the Sabbath? What benefit is there in the Sabbath? Why was it needed in Eden before sin? And what does it mean to be obedient to God's command to remember to keep the Sabbath holy?

## TUESDAY

What does it mean to obey? A humble willingness to listen and follow!

What is God primarily concerned with, obedient performance measured or heart/motive? Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart.

What about a toddler helping mother garden and pulls up a good plant instead of weeds, intending with all their heart to help mommy? What about an adolescent who pulls up only weeds but curses mother under her breath for keeping her from doing something else?

Rahab lied, but was in the hall of faith. Why? Is lying good? Why is she in the hall of faith? Because it is not primarily about behavior, it is about hearts that love others more than self. Rahab was willing to put herself in harms way to protect another. Yes, she was immature; yes, she had a lot of healing and growing in grace to do, but she stepped over from simply watching out for herself to trusting God and putting herself in harms way for His cause.

Read last two paragraphs, "Although..." thoughts?

How do you understand these paragraphs?

## WEDNESDAY

Read last paragraph “Finally...” thoughts? How do you see the connection between the 10 Commandments and the law of love?

## THURSDAY

Read 1John 2:9-11

*Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. <sup>10</sup> Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. <sup>11</sup> But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.*

Does this mean literal biological brother or does this mean all fellow human beings? Then what would this mean for people who long to see Adolf Hitler burn in hell? Or long to see people who have wronged them suffer in the end? Or who are looking forward to sitting on committees to determine punishment for the wicked? What about those who look forward to seeing Satan suffer in the end? Are they excused because Satan is not a brother? What about preachers who preach such things?

How do people who claim to be Christian justify hostile attitudes toward the wicked and ideas of brutality at God’s hands? Is it related to distortions about God? And do these distortions distort the characters of those who hold them?

Read last paragraph “In Scripture...” thoughts? Does this nullify our discussion about those who look forward to seeing the wicked suffer? Or does this expand to include in darkness those who merely are preferential?

What was the sin of Sodom? Was it related to what John is talking about?

Read Ezekiel 16:49-50

*‘Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. <sup>50</sup> They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.*

What does it sound like is the problem? Failure to love, failure to sacrifice self for other, and instead exploiting others to gratify self!

## FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-4

## 2009 Q3 Lesson 5      Walking in the Light: Renouncing Worldliness

### SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

What do you think John means by “the world”?

Read all four paragraphs beginning “In 1933...” thoughts?

Is it true that this world, as we currently know it, is temporary? What is the benefit in realizing this? What is the danger in forgetting this?

- Benefit in remembering
  - *Our pain, trials, suffering will end*
  - *Hope for a better future*
  - *Keep a larger perspective*
  - *Avoid exchanging life for death*
- Danger in forgetting
  - *Narrows our view*
  - *Falsely think our trials will never end*
  - *Increased discouragement*
  - *Accept temporal rewards which destroy the soul*

What about the idea of being rescued from death, are there some things worse than death? When Patrick Henry said, “Give me liberty or give me death” was he overstating it?

What would be worse than death? What about living in a universe governed by Satan?

Does God want to rescue us from death? How does God rescue us from death? Are there theories told about God that actually make His rescue from death sound worse than death itself? In other words, do some of the theories on the plan of salvation teach loss of liberty, that God is the great policeman in the sky?

### SUNDAY

Read 1John 2:12 at the top of the lesson – thoughts?

What does “His name sake” mean?

“Name” in Hebrew culture carried character connotations. So what does it mean that our sins our forgiven us for His character’s sake? Does it mean that God’s forgiveness is a revelation of His character, who He is, that it is not dependent upon us, but upon God? What do we learn about God that He forgives?

Read dark section in top third beginning, “In 1John 2:12...” thoughts?

What is the basis of our forgiveness? God’s character or Christ’s death – is there a difference? Can God extend forgiveness from heaven without the death of Christ or is God prohibited, prevented, obstructed from forgiving, in His heart, without the death of Christ? In other words, was the death of Christ necessary to get forgiveness into God’s heart?

Read paragraph “John wants his hearers...”



Does God's extension of forgiveness, (God having a forgiving heart), equal salvation? Is our assurance based on knowing we are forgiven or is it in knowing God?

Forgiveness can be used to mean two different things. It can mean the forgiving attitude of the offended person, or it can be used to mean the entire experience of reconciliation and regeneration. In the Bible it is often employed to mean the entire experience of reconciliation and regeneration, but today we almost always hear it as the forgiving attitude of the person who was offended. What is the danger in hearing it in this way?

The lesson suggests we examine several texts:

*God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. Acts 5:31*

Thoughts? What is Christ doing? Giving repentance and forgiveness to His children, NOT paying God to get God to forgive!

*For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Col 1:13, 14*

How is forgiveness used in this passage? What is the dominion of darkness? What is the kingdom of the Son he loves? What does it mean "in whom we have redemption"?

Read Col 2:8-15

*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. <sup>9</sup> For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, <sup>10</sup> and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. <sup>11</sup> 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, <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Col 2:8-15*

What are the traditions and basic principles of this world? Remember we are not to love the world or the things in the world – what are we not to love? What are the principles of the world? The world is based on survival of the fittest, selfishness, getting yours at the expense of others. Is the world based on love and forgiveness or on vengeance, appeasement, payment for one's debts? Is not the world focused on saving self, getting exonerated, getting its records expunged?

Would teachings about our forgiveness which suggest that Jesus had to pay our legal debt be in keeping with God's character or be based on the traditions and basic principles of the world?

When did God forgive us our sins? What did Christ do for us? Do you hear legal pardon or regeneration, recreation, healing?

What does it mean He "disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross"?

What authorities and powers? Satan and his evil host, Christ disarmed, took away their weapons, what are Satan's weapons? How did Christ disarm them at the cross?

*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> 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*

*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— <sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Heb 2:14, 15*

What are Satan's weapons? Lies, fear, selfishness and death.

Christ disarmed Satan at the cross because Christ:

- Revealed the truth which destroys all Satan's lies
- Restored God's law of love perfectly into humanity, thereby destroying death (2Tim 1:10)

Read first sentence last paragraph, "The crucial point..." absolutely true, why?

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph "When the young men..." thoughts? Who overcame Satan? How is Christ's victory going forward? How do we experience Christ's victory in our lives?

## TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "The term *kosmos*..."

Thoughts? What do you think about the tension the lesson highlights?

Does God love the world yet we are not to love the world or does the word "world" mean two different things in these passages?

What are we not to love? Pride, selfishness, self-exaltation, lust, greed, sensualism, exploitation of others, arrogance, lies, deception, violence, cruelty, inhospitality, perversion. In other words, we are not to love all the sickness sin has caused the world. Does God love all of this?

Does God love the people of the earth, all of us who are suffering under the weight of sin? Does God love the animals of the earth and all of nature which is also suffering under the weight of sin? Are we to love the people and God's creation? Yes! Is there really any tension here at all or complete harmony?

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "While verse 15..." thoughts?

Did God create us in the condition we are in, infected with sin, lustful, prideful and greedy? Is John warning us against God's design for humanity, against how God designed mankind in Eden to be? What is John warning us against? The infection which is destroying God's design, what is that infection? How does it impact our lives?

This week one of our online listeners emailed me. He participates in an online discussion forum and someone posted the following and he wanted my thoughts on it:

As we've observed so often, understanding sin is absolutely essential if we're to see the truth of the atonement. Seeing God as imposing a penalty for sin inevitably places him in a wrong light. If however sin has its own consequence, a natural "penalty," then God is experiencing that in Jesus on the cross.

The reason why there's so much confusion and debate over how God makes us right is that we fail to understand what went wrong in the first place. Ideas of payment and propitiation assume that God imposed a penalty on sin. Ideas of substitution assume that God demands a death before he can forgive sin. Ideas of “infusion” of some spiritual “substance” assume that sin is an actual object that can be dealt with, or that sin is some metaphysical dirt that must be mechanically washed away.

All these concepts are wrong because they see sin wrongly. Sin is not some object—not dirt, nor a pathogen, not a disease agent or whatever. Sin cannot be weighed by the pound or physically observed. Sin is the broken relationship—that is the key. Only as we accept this understanding can such confusion be cleared up, since the answer to a broken relationship is a restored relationship. We may think that to call sin a disease is helpful, but even here we can be mistaken because then we think that what needs to happen is to provide some kind of antidote or antivirus, whatever. No—sin is only a disease metaphorically—you can't see sin under a microscope!

Thoughts? Below is the response I sent:

The writer is correct in that seeing God imposing penalties is erroneous and that sin has its own natural penalty.

However, I think the writer does not communicate the issues at stake and has created his own straw man of physical pathogens to shoot down. An infection of a computer by a virus cannot be seen under a microscope, but we all know that there is something very real in the system that is not supposed to be there that interferes with normal functioning. Our minds are like this. We have been infected with lies about God, which caused a change in our base functioning. This pathological change had to be reversed and Christ came to do this in addition to reveal the truth.

Where the writer is correct is from the perspective of the sinner. We sinners, in order to be saved have only to return to trust in God. He will take care of the rest. We don't have to understand anything that God needed to accomplish in order to restore us to oneness with Him and eternally save us. But we do have to trust Him. A child with terminal illness doesn't have to understand how they got sick, what the sickness is doing on a molecular level, how the antidote was achieved or works, but the child does have to trust the doctor and follow the prescription. The writer is trying to simplify Christianity for people who have been confused by all the legal distortions and to get people to return to trust in God. He is absolutely right in doing this, for this is the only essential thing we must do – trust God and follow where He leads– in order to be saved.

But I think the writer errs when he attempts to describe the plan of salvation from what God had to accomplish to bring about our healing. God had to do more than merely reveal the truth to win us to trust. Christ came to absolutely reveal the truth to destroy Satan's lies and win us to trust, but Christ came to do more. He came to “destroy” death, the devil and Satan's work (2Tim 1:10, Heb 2:14, 1John 3:8). This He did by taking our infirmities (condition) upon Himself and “developing perfect character” in His human brain. This He did by restoring the law of life (love) perfectly back into the human species. The writer fails to communicate the actual construction parameters for life, which is perfect harmony with the law of love. Jesus came to restore this as well. I like how it is stated in Desire of Ages:

- *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 that the law does not require penalty or payment or appeasement, which is exactly what the writer is saying. So he is correct on this point. But what the law does require the writer leaves out. He says only a relationship is required, but what the restored relationship (i.e. restored trust in God) results in is the reproduction of Christlike character within the believer. This is accomplished because we actually receive what Christ accomplished His perfect character. This free gift is not applied to record books in heaven and the writer is correct in rejecting such “legal” transactions. This free gift is applied to our actual minds, hearts, characters. The very thought processes of our individuality is rewritten to be loving rather than selfish and this is all accomplished through the template of Jesus’ perfect victory accomplished in His human brain.

Read bottom paragraph “The idea of...” thoughts? Absolutely true that our lives originate from God and we are totally dependent upon Him for our existence and thus should be humble. But the lesson states, “As sinful, fallen beings whose very existence depends totally upon the grace and beneficence of our God...” What about the sinless angels in heaven, where does their very existence arise or depend? Does our existence depend on the grace and beneficence of God only because we are sinful? Or does all life depend on God’s grace and beneficence? Why?

Is there a difference in our life depending upon God’s grace and beneficence and the lives of unfallen angels?

## THURSDAY

Read third paragraph “In 1John 2:8...” thoughts? Will the world’s problems be solved by political solutions? Why or why not?

What does that mean for where we should spend our energy? Should Christians get caught up in the political fray? If we want to expedite the healing of the world where should we spend our energy? What is the final message of mercy to lighten the world (COL 415)?

Would Satan want Christians to become political? Why? What are we focusing on if we become political? Is it not the world? What methods are used to achieve political goals? Are they the methods of God? What happens to our character when we employ methods of coercion, manipulation, misrepresentation, pressure, deceit, compromise of principle?

What are we not focusing on when we become political? In Christ’s day were there humanitarian abuses, societal injustices, human rights violations? Did Jesus or His Apostles spend time trying to change government, get the right senators elected, judges or governors appointed? No! Who did such things? Herod, Caiaphas, Annas.

How are the nations of the world represented symbolically in Scripture? As wild, ravenous beasts – why? How is God’s kingdom symbolized? There is no beast symbolizing God’s kingdom, for no earthly animal can accurately represent it! The closest is the lamb, which represents Christ - gentle, loving, trusting.

What is the mission of the church? To spread the truth about God which wins people back to trust so that they will open their hearts to God, experience the power of the Holy Spirit and be transformed back into God's loving ideal.

Read second to last paragraph, "If the world..." Thoughts? What about the idea that our theology must be lived? Why is it the case that we do live our theology? We become like the God we worship and admire, therefore if we worship an authoritarian god, we become like him and will practice those methods in our lives. It is only when we worship a God of love, as revealed in Jesus that we actually experience regeneration of heart, mind and character.

### FRIDAY

Read questions 2,4,5 and discuss.

## 2009 Q3 Lesson 6 Walking in the Light: Rejecting Antichrists

### SABBATH

Read memory text- thoughts? What does this mean? Does this mean only people who accept Jesus can be saved? If you met a person at work, say a Buddhist, who told you they heard about Jesus and rejected Him, can they be saved in that state?

Should we ask, “Tell me about the Jesus you reject?” This lesson is on “antichrists” those who oppose Christ or who would pretend to be Christ or take Christ’s place. What if the only “Christ” someone had ever heard of was a false christ then would their rejection mean they were separated from God?

Does this text mean someone has to come to a knowledge of Jesus in order to have salvation and know the Father? Or does the text mean that all knowledge of the Father comes through Jesus so if someone knows the Father they were only able to know the Father through what Jesus has done or revealed? Would this be true even if someone isn’t a Christian?

What Bible texts shed further light on this subject?

During Old Testament times did the saved worship a God called Jesus?

Who were they worshipping?

*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. <sup>2</sup> They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. <sup>3</sup> They all ate the same spiritual food <sup>4</sup> and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 1 Cor 10:1-4*

Is God primarily concerned by the name we use when we worship Him? What names does God go by in the Bible?

- YHWH
  - Latin - IHWH
  - German, French, Dutch – JHWH
  - Translated as “Yahweh” or “Jehovah”
  - Hebrew pronunciation “yovah”
  - Appears over 6800 times in the Bible
  - Typically translated LORD
  - Jewish tradition substitute Adonai when reading
- Adonai – Lord
- Hashem – means “The Name”
- Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh “I Am”
- El – “diety”
- Elohim “god” or “gods”
- Elyon “Supreme” or “Supreme Court” or “Most High”
- Shaddai or El Shaddai
- Yah – first two letters of YHWH found in Elijah and Joshua

What do you think about God, the true God, being worshipped by names of heathen gods? Buddha, Neptune, Thor, Zeus, etc.?



- Adonai is the name of the Greek god Adonis, Adonai was also used by the Phoenicians for their god Tammuz.
- El – “diety” is used for both the God of Israel and other gods.
- Elohim – means God and is used for both the God of Israel and other gods; the many gods of the Greeks were called Elohim. In the commandment “Thou shall have no other gods before me” Exodus 20:3 – the Hebrew for gods is Elohim.
- Elyon – also used by the Phoenicians for their god.
- Shaddai – The name of God worshipped by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

*God also said to Moses, “I am the LORD. <sup>3</sup> I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. (Exodus 6:2,3)*

- *Shaddai thought to be attribute of a Semitic goddess related to Hebrew sad (breast) “the one of the breast”*
- *Others believe it is derived from Shadu – “mountain” Shaddau “mountain dweller” – one of the names of Amurru, a sematic shepherd god son of the sky god Anu and sometimes called bêlu šadī or bêl šadê and is the origin of the fertility god Baal adopted by the Canaanites.*
- Yah – origin of Rastafarian god Jah

Does God get offended at the “name” or “label” we use when we address Him? Is the label (name) we attach to God what is most important? Or is it the character we know Him by? Do you think that God and the heavenly beings really speak Hebrew or English?

Does this mean that rather the immediately condemning someone who worships a god with a different name than the one we worship that we should take the time to ask, “tell me about your god” and see if they are describing Jesus, the God of the Bible?

Below are common names used for God:

- Aleim — sometimes seen as an alternative transliteration of Elohim
- Avinu Malkeinu — “Our Father, our King”
- Boreh — “the Creator”
- Ehiyeh sh'Ehiyeh — “I Am That I Am”: a modern Hebrew version of “Ehyeh asher Ehyeh”
- Elohei Avraham, Elohei Yitzchak ve Elohei Ya’aqov — “God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob”
- Elohei Sara, Elohei Rivka, Elohei Leah ve Elohei Rakhel — “God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Leah, God of Rachel”
- El ha-Gibbor — “God the hero” or “God the strong one”
- Emet — “Truth”
- E'in Sof — “endless, infinite”, Kabbalistic name of God
- HaKadosh, Baruch Hu — “The Holy One, Blessed be He”
- Kadosh Israel — “Holy One of Israel”
- Melech HaMelachim — “The King of kings” or Melech Malchei HaMelachim “The King, King of kings”, to express superiority to the earthly rulers title
- Makom or HaMakom — literally “the place”, meaning “The Omnipresent”; see Tzimtzum
- Magen Avraham — “Shield of Abraham”

- Ribbono shel 'Olam — “Master of the World”
- Ro'eh Yisra'el — “Shepherd of Israel”
- YHWH-Yireh (Jehovah-jireh) — “The Lord will provide” (Genesis 22:13-14)
- YHWH-Rapha — “The Lord that healeth” (Exodus 15:26)
- YHWH-Niss”i (Yahweh-Nissi) — “The Lord our Banner” (Exodus 17:8-15)
- YHWH-Shalom — “The Lord our Peace” (Judges 6:24)
- YHWH-Ra-ah — “The Lord my Shepherd” (Psalm 23:1)
- YHWH-Tsidkenu — “The Lord our Righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:6)
- YHWH-Shammah (Jehovah-shammah) — “The Lord is present” (Ezekiel 48:35)
- Tzur Israel — “Rock of Israel”

## SUNDAY

The Last Hour – why do you think John used the language ‘the last hour’? What does “the last hour” mean?

The last days or the last hour refer to the time period after Christ’s first advent. In order to end sin and save mankind it was necessary for Christ to come and complete His mission. Once He did that and ascended the rest is mopping up and thus the final phase or the application of what Christ has done – the last days, final days, last hour.

Read last paragraph “What’s important to notice...” thoughts? What do you think about all the emphasis on time setting, or event setting?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

Have you heard of “Evolution Sunday”? It was started in 2006 and has spread to almost 700 Christian churches since then. Here is a 2006 news report describing the event:

Nearly 450 Christian churches in the United States yesterday celebrated the 197<sup>th</sup> 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... More than 10,000 Christian ministers... signed 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.”

Thoughts? How deep can the lies go? Do we need to guard against attacks on God today? What are the implications if God were to have created by means of evolution?

For clarification we are not speaking of “adaptation” which is when a species changes over time in response to its environment. God created us with the ability to adapt. We are talking about the idea that one species, through evolutionary pressure, survival of the fittest, actually develops into another species. What is the problem with this idea – besides the fact that no scientific experiment has ever demonstrated it to be true, and science instead demonstrates just the opposite.

But what would it say about God if He were to have created in this way? What is the basic principle of evolution? Survival of the fittest – me first, kill or be killed. The idea that God created by evolution attributes to God the very character of Satan and makes Christians embrace the survival of the fittest method thus they will be able to practice those methods on others and will embrace Satan when he impersonates Christ!

## MONDAY

Who is antichrist?

Satan of course is the ultimate antichrist. He opposed Christ in heaven and has done so on earth. Are there others who work for Satan doing the same thing?

- John was fighting a particular kind of heresy in his day known as Gnosticism and there were two primary types – Docetism and Cerinthianism.
- Gnosticism was the pursuit of knowledge, but these two religions taught falsehood regarding the nature of Christ.
- Docetists denied Christ actually became a human and claimed Christ only appeared to have a human body, or to come in human form.
- Cerinthus, a contemporary of John, claimed that Jesus was born naturally from the union of Joseph and Mary and at His baptism Christ (or Messiah, God the Son) entered His body and withdrew prior to the crucifixion.

John aggressively attacks these heresies and calls those who promote them antichrists.

What is the problem with the two Gnostic theories? Why, if true, would they fail to provide salvation?

If one has a legal model, a model that says a sinless God must die to pay my legal penalty, then is there any real problem with the Docetic model? If the only problem was a legal payment then such a model could work, but our problem wasn't legal.

When Christ came to visit with Abraham in the Old Testament, in what form did He come?

Human. Why was it insufficient for Christ to come like this as our Savior?

- If Christ didn't become human, did He condescend?
- If Christ didn't become human, did He take our iniquities, our infirmities, our condition upon Himself?
- And if He didn't take our condition upon Himself then could He cure it?
- If Christ didn't become human did He overcome sin with a human brain?
- If Christ didn't become human did He demonstrate that there was nothing wrong with His design of humanity?
- If Christ didn't become human did He restore the law of love back into humanity?
- If the law of love is not restored in humanity what happens?

What is the problem with the Cerinthian model? God bails out before the crucifixion saving Himself and leaving His creature to suffer and die. What kind of a god would do this? Not Jesus, that's for sure! Do you see how these two distortions attack the plan of salvation?

Do we have to hold to one of these two lies to be worshipping a false god? How might we worship a false god today?

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}

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

What false teachings have you found that threaten to divide us?

- God executed His Son on the cross
- Jesus died to pay our legal debt
- God requires appeasement, propitiation
- Atonement is Jesus shedding His blood to take away the wrath of God
- Jesus is in heaven pleading to His Father to be merciful
- God's judgment determines our destiny
- God will inflict punishment upon the unrepentant
- God erases the records of sins confessed
- God keeps records in order to judge and punish
- Jesus had a nature just like Adam's
- Jesus had a nature just like ours
- The Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience
- The mark of the beast is worshipping on the wrong day

Others? What is the root to all of these lies? A false picture of God that He is something other the Love!

But for clarity, so no one draws the wrong conclusion let me state it plainly:

- We could not be saved without the death of Christ—it just wasn't for the reasons often given
- The unrepentant will die a most horrible death in the end, but not at the hands of an angry god
- The Sabbath is sacred and holy, but is not an arbitrary test
- Jesus' ministry after His ascension is just as important to us as His victory here on earth. It's just for different reasons than often presented.

## WEDNESDAY

Read 1John 2:20, 21:

*But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 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.*

Thoughts? What is the anointing?

Read second paragraph “What the true...”

Thoughts? How are the Holy Spirit and Scripture connected? Who inspired the Scripture? Jesus is called the Word, why? Is there a connection between the living and written Word?

*John 15:26 - "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.*

Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the Word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.--General Conference Daily Bulletin, April 13, 1891. {1SM 43.2}

What would the anointing be? Would it be the anointing of truth, which dispels lies, wins us to trust and when we open the heart we receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

Where are the righteous sealed? In their foreheads, where we do our thinking. Does sealing have anything to do with experiencing the truth about God as revealed in Jesus, does it have anything to do we changing the way we think?

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}

Read the third paragraph "The antidote to..." Thoughts? What about the moment believers stop thinking and take concretely everything in the Bible, "God said it, I believe it, that settles it" are they in danger of all sorts of delusions and errors?

It requires both, that we trust God's Word as the divinely inspired rule of faith, but the Bible must be rightly understood. This can only happen from the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and it requires our cooperation with Him. He invites us in Isaiah to come and reason with Him. It is only when we actually reason out the truth for ourselves that it transforms our lives.

## THURSDAY

What does it mean to "abide" in Jesus?

*John 17:20-23: "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> 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.*

Thoughts? What does it mean to be "in" Jesus? In unity? Of one accord? Sharing a common love, interest, motive, purpose, desire, vision, value? Could this common unity be our unity in our knowledge, love and appreciation for God?

What was Christ's mission – to reveal the Father and restore the Father's love in mankind!

Read middle dark section “One of the promises...” Thoughts?

Now it is absolutely wonderful that we are promised eternal life, but what about the question, “What would our faith offer us if we didn’t have that promise?”

- A relationship with God
- Happiness
- Joy
- Love
- Peace
- True knowledge
- Wisdom
- Healthier life

Do you spend time with your spouse because of a promise of some reward? Do you look forward to spending time with your children because they are going to bring your presents or gifts?

## FRIDAY

Questions 1-4 read and discuss



## 2009 Q3 Lesson 7      Living as Children of God

Read memory text 1John 3:1 – thoughts?

Who created mankind? In Luke chapter three we read the genealogy of Christ and it ends with this:

*the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,  
the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch,  
the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel,  
the son of Kenan, the son of Enosh,  
the son of Seth, the son of Adam,  
the son of God. (vs 37,38)*

Adam was whose son? What about Eve, whose daughter was she? Who made the angels? Whose children would they be? Did they cease to be God's children after they sinned?

When your child grows up do you say, "How great the love I have for my Johnny that I allow him to be called my child"?

Is this text talking about children of God by creation? What, then, does it mean to be called children of God? Some have asked the question, "Are only your obedient children members of the family or are the disobedient ones still your children?"

What about God? The issue here is not about all creatures being God's children by creation, or by love in His heart – they are. Another issue is going on – what?

Have you ever noticed our children look like us, physically, mentally, in personality? The question is, in our sinful state do we still look like God? Or do we look ugly, deformed, even disgusting?

*From the sole of your foot to the top of your head  
there is no soundness—  
only wounds and welts  
and open sores,  
not cleansed or bandaged  
or soothed with oil. Isaiah 1:6*

But God didn't abandon us in this state. Instead, He became one of us in order to heal and restore us back to His likeness. Those who accept the truth about God as revealed by Jesus and open their hearts are renewed in mind, character, heart and again look like God loving others more than self. These are called His children! "Hey – look at those kids, aren't they beautiful! They are my children! They look like Me!"

But those who remain in lies, who remain in darkness about God who prefer a god that would use power to promote his way are like that god and Jesus called them children of Satan or like their father the devil.

The question as to whether our father is God or Satan is answered by which picture of God we accept and therefore who we are like in heart, mind and character.

So, while it is true all creatures are God's children by creation, not all creatures remain members of God's family, only those who look like their Father.

At the cross, which picture of God did those who crucify Christ have? What did they say to Him?

*Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”*

*<sup>41</sup> In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. <sup>42</sup> “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. Matthew 27:39-42*

What did they want Christ to do in order for them to worship Him? Use His power to save self! They believed God is a selfish being, a being who uses power to lord over His creatures, one who is just like Satan says! This is the issue in whether we are God’s children or Satan’s!

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Did you have a volitional role in your own birth? Do you have a volitional role in your adoption as a child of God? Is there a difference?

We had no choice in whether we were born into this world physically, but it is our choice as to whether we experience rebirth or not. While we do not regenerate our own hearts, heal our own deformities, or save ourselves, it is our choice to open the heart to God and allow Him to do this in us!

## MONDAY

Read dark section “What is the difference between...” thoughts?

*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.  
  
I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;  
I will make myself like the Most High.”  
But you are brought down to the grave,  
to the depths of the pit. Isaiah 14:13 - 15*

What is being described here? Lucifer is trying to do what? Promote self, exalt self in order to achieve what? To be like the Most High—what does that tell us about his concept of God? The entire problem of sin resulted from distortions about God, originating in the mind of Lucifer!

But notice the difference as to God’s true nature and character:

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:*

*<sup>6</sup> 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.*

*<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!*

*<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under*

*the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:5-11*

Do you see a difference between Lucifer's attitude and Christ's? Which way was Lucifer directing himself? And where did he end up? And what about Christ?

Some have pointed out that Lucifer's took five steps of self-exaltation followed by the sixth step of destruction. But Jesus took six steps of humiliation followed by the seventh step of exaltation by the Father.

Thus some conclude 666, the number of a man, is the mark of those who try to promote self, exalt self, save self. We can promote ourselves only so far with the outcome being the sixth step of self-destruction. The seventh step is not one we can do for ourselves, it is the step of healing, recreation, exaltation, glorification which is a gift from God. Only to those who surrender self to God can experience the seventh step.

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Does it sound contradictory? What contradictions do you hear? How can we harmonize?

*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, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Phil 2:12, 13*

What does this text mean? Do we have a work to do? What is our work? If we have a work to do how is it that we are saved by grace through faith and not by works?

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> 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*

How do we put all of this together? The legal model fails to give workable answers, but the healing model fits perfectly. Christ came and overcame sin as a human, developed a perfect character, exposed Satan for the liar and fraud he is, and procured our remedy to sinfulness reconnecting mankind to God's circle of love. Our work is to "reason" with God (Isa 1:18) in order to be fully persuaded of the truth in our own mind, thus being won to trust in God. Then, in trust, we receive all Christ has done via the work of the Holy Spirit and we intelligently choose to apply God's methods to our lives, trusting Him with the outcome.

Read bottom paragraph, "Besides the legal implications..." thoughts?

Does the term lawlessness mean we are dealing with a legal problem? If you had a person who drank alcohol, smoked cigarettes, never exercised, took drugs, ate only hamburgers and fries, had unprotected sex with prostitutes, rode motorcycles without a helmet etc. Could we say such a person "violates the laws of health"? Could we say such a person is living in opposition to the laws of health, is against the laws of health or opposed to the law of health – anti-health law? Would that be the same as saying the person has a legal problem or there are legal implications?

This is what John is saying sin is. Sin is without law, against the law, outside the law – the question is what law and why is that a bad thing?

What is the law? The law of love! Where does the law of love originate? In the heart of God! God is love! Thus to be against the law or oppose the law is to oppose the very heart of God.

God's heart is love so to be against God is to be against love and all life is constructed to operate upon this law of love!

If one opposes the law of love what would such a person say about God? Would they represent Him correctly or incorrectly? Then what about the man of lawlessness? What are the issues at stake?

*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> 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*

If we oppose the knowledge of God, what are we opposing? We would be against love or the law of love, we would then be lawless or antichrist!

*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. <sup>4</sup> 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*

Where does the lawless one set himself up? In God's temple? Where is that? What temple? How does He do it? What are the weapons he uses to get into God's temple?

*I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; <sup>22</sup> 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 7:21, 22 KJV*

Who is this horn that is making war against the saints? Is it the lawless one? What kind of war? What weapons are being used? He prevails until when? Until judgment is given to the saints – until discernment, wisdom, the ability to see through the lies about God and break from the power of the horn.

*Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, "How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?"*

*He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated." Daniel 8:13,14*

Is the little horn the same as the man of lawlessness? Is the sanctuary the same as the temple? What temple? How did it get defiled? From what does it need to be cleansed?

Notice the prophecy:

*The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. <sup>13</sup> Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. <sup>14</sup> They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.*

<sup>15</sup> *"Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."*

*<sup>16</sup> Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.  
Revelation 16:12-16*

The Euphrates is a river which runs into what city? Babylon, and in Scripture what does Babylon represent? Satan's kingdom, confusion, lies about God.

The angel from God dries up the river flowing into Babylon. In history has the river ever been dried up flowing into Babylon? Yes by the Medes/Persians, which are to the East of Babylon.

- When the wise men came to see Jesus from where did they come? The East!
- In the OT sanctuary service from which direction did the priests enter the Temple? The East.
- When Jesus returns again from which direction is the small cloud seen? The East!
- The East represents the messengers of God, those who bring the Good News, those who bring the final message of mercy to lighten the world, which overthrows Babylon.

This is referring to the same event as the first and second angel's messages of Revelation 14.

What are these evil spirits that look like frogs? Why frogs? How do frogs catch their prey? With their tongue – what are these three evil spirits doing through the systems of the world? Lying about God to deceive the world into accepting Satan's version of God.

What is The Battle of Armageddon – what is that battle?

The Hebrew *Har Megiddo* means Mount of Megiddo. Which mountain do you see from the valley of Megiddo? Mount Carmel!

This is the Battle of Mount Carmel – what was the battle of Mount Carmel? It was over two pictures of God. Elijah was God's man and his name means *YHWH is my God!*

*“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. Malachi 4:5*

What does this mean? What is the final battle? What kind of war is this? What weapons do we use? Where is the battle fought? Who then is Elijah? Elijah and the kings of the East are one and the same. They are those who at the end of time speak clearly the truth about God which destroys the lies of Satan setting minds free.

“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

## WEDNESDAY

Read 1John 2:20 – what is the anointing? What does it mean to be anointed by the Holy Spirit? What does the anointing of the Holy Spirit do in a person? How does the Holy Spirit work? What result is seen from the working of the Holy Spirit?

Who inspired the Scripture? Does the Spirit who inspired the Scripture contradict the Scripture or work in harmony with Scripture?

Read third paragraph “The antidote....” It is absolutely true that if we lose confidence in Scripture we open ourselves up to all kinds of error. But what about the person who has confidence in

Scripture but takes the “God said it, I believe it, that settles it” approach to Scripture? Do they open themselves up for all kinds of delusions and error?

It is not enough to have confidence in Scripture we must also understand the meaning of the Scripture.

#### THURSDAY

Read first paragraph “The word rendered...” thoughts? What does it mean to abide in Jesus? How do we do this? What prevents us from abiding in Jesus? What severs our connection with Him?

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust. To the degree we hold to lies about God our connection with Him is damaged or severed. It is the truth that sets us free and ultimately the truth about God!

Read dark section “One of the promises...” thoughts? Why spend time with your spouse or children? Is it because they promise you gifts? Why stay loyal to your spouse at all if they aren’t going to give you presents and rewards for your loyalty?

Why do we remain in Christ? Could it be that we love Him? Could it be that we find fulfillment in union with Him? Could it be that we understand, even if there was no eternal life, that right now on earth life is more rich, rewarding, fulfilling, happier when we live in harmony with Him and His methods? Do we only seek God for the rewards He promises?

In Job chapter 1 what allegation did Satan make about God and Job’s relationship? That Job only obeyed God because God bought Him off with rewards, is this how we see God? Is this the motive we should be espousing?

#### FRIDAY

Read questions 1-4 and discuss



## 2009 Q3 Lesson 8 Loving Brothers and Sisters

### SABBATH

Read the story beginning with the first paragraph, “A pastor was...” - thoughts?

What do you think about the pastor’s advice? What was the pastor trying to do? What was his motive? Do you agree with his motive?

What if the woman would have, after acting loving, divorced her husband and then told people her pastor told her to do this? Did the pastor take a risk? If things had gone differently, by the freewill choices of the woman, could the pastor’s reputation have been hurt?

Does God ever do this? Examples?

- Moses when God said He was going to wipe out the people
- Abraham instructed to sacrifice his son
- Ten plagues of Egypt
- Genesis 3 the curse of the ground
- Threats and thundering in the Old Testament

### SUNDAY

Read last paragraph “First John...” thoughts? Can someone explain the meaning of this paragraph?

Do we agree that the cross of Christ is central to God’s plan of salvation and resolving the problem of sin in the universe? Does Satan know this? Do you think Satan has spent any energy focusing on the cross of Christ, in order to twist and distort the true significance?

How do you hear atoning sacrifice? What is the Biblical view of this idea? How has Satan twisted it? In other words, what is the pagan view of atonement?

*I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one... “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> 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. John 17:11,21-23*

*And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 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*

What is the Biblical definition of atonement? At-one-ment, being at one, being unified, reconciled, in harmony, did Jesus come to achieve this? Absolutely!

How has this idea been corrupted? Any idea that causes disparity, divergence, splitting amongst the Godhead so that one member the Godhead has to do something to another member of the Godhead to change that member is a lie, perversion and distortion of the truth!

From a 1999 article published in Christianity Today entitled

### “A call for Evangelical Unity”

Jesus paid our penalty in our place on his cross, satisfying the retributive demands of divine justice by shedding his blood in sacrifice and so making possible justification for all who trust in him (Rom. 3:25-26). The Bible describes this mighty substitutionary transaction as the achieving of ransom, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation, and conquest of evil powers (Matt. 20:28; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 3:23-25; John 12:31; Col. 2:15). It secures for us a restored relationship with God that brings pardon and peace, acceptance and access, and adoption into God's family (Col. 1:20, 2:13-14; Rom. 5:1-2; Gal. 4:4-7; 1 Pet. 3:18).

- 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.
- We deny that any view of the Atonement that rejects the substitutionary satisfaction of divine justice, accomplished vicariously for believers, is compatible with the teaching of the Gospel.

Thoughts? Do you see any error that has crept into the thinking of Christianity?

Notice the idea that Christ is propitiating the Father – that Christ had to die to do something to the Father, that Christ's death somehow changes the Father, that the Father needed Christ's blood, death, sacrifice in order for the Father to be satisfied in some way.

This idea is pagan and comes from Satan's view of God who will not sacrifice self but requires some sacrifice to meet His demands. What does Scripture say?

*What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> 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? <sup>33</sup> Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> 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*

*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 2Cor 5:19 NASB95*

*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. John 14:9*

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}

This idea that Jesus was doing something to propitiate the Father is part of Satan's attempt to misrepresent the truth of what God accomplished at the cross.

Our text for today's lesson 1John 4:10

*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. NIV*

*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. KJV*

What does this mean? How do you hear it?

According to the *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains* the Greek translated atoning sacrifice or propitiation is:

ἱλασμός (*hilasmos*), οὖ (ou), ὁ (ho): n. masc; ≡ Str. 2434; TDNT 3.301—LN 40.12 **means of forgiveness**, an atoning sacrifice (NRSV, NIV, REB), expiation (RSV, NAB, NJB), propitiation (KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB), the remedy for defilement (NEB), (1Jn 2:2; 4:10+) note: expiation focuses on the means for the forgiveness of the sin, propitiation would focus on God's view of satisfaction or favorable disposing. There is much debate which English word is the better rendering.<sup>1</sup>

Thoughts? When we bring the rest of the Bible to bear on the subject which rendering do you think is most accurate? My paraphrase of 1John 4:10:

*This is what love is: not that we have loved God or done something to get him to love us, but he loved us so much he sent his Son to become the remedy and cure for the infection of sin and selfishness, so that through him we might be restored into perfect unity with God.*

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph “The negative example...” – thoughts?

Beautiful description of love as self-sacrifice for others. What do you think about love means to forgive and forget? Does this mean amnesia, memory erasure or something else?

In the new heaven and earth will we actually have no memory of events that transpired here on earth?

- David, Uriah, Bathsheba, Solomon – will they know each other?
- Woman who anointed Jesus feet – those who are forgiving much love much – will we remember what we have been forgiven for?
- Revelation the redeemed sing a song of their experience
- Do we retain our own identity, individuality in heaven? What makes us who we are? Is it not our memories? What happens to someone when memory is erased? Do you know

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NRSV New Revised Standard Version

NIV New International Version

REB Revised English Bible

RSV Revised Standard Version

NAB New American Bible

NJB New Jerusalem Bible

KJV King James Version

NKJV New King James Version

ASV American Standard Version (1901)

NASB New American Standard Bible

NEB New English Bible

+ I have cited every reference in regard to this lexeme discussed under this definition.

<sup>1</sup>Swanson, James: *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)*. electronic ed. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, S. DBLG 2662

someone with Alzheimer's as memories are erased what happens to the person? Will God erase memories?

Then what does it mean to forgive and forget? And when is it safe to do so?

Read second paragraph "But love is..." thoughts? What do you think about the example given? What is the problem with the example? They have taken one of love's counterfeit's and used it as an example. Love is never without the focus on another person, love is never meaningless, love is never capricious or presumptuous, thus the example given is empty and actually introduces a false idea into our minds.

What might have motivated this example being placed in the lesson? Fear of the Moral Influence Theory, which states Jesus died merely as a demonstration of God's love and not as a payment for our legal debt. The Moral Influence Theory states that Christ's death was necessary to reveal God's character of love in order to influence sinners to be moral or to turn away from sin and live moral lives. It might be the lesson is trying to undercut this theory by this statement.

What is a better way to demonstrate the weakness of the Moral Influence Theory?

If you are terminal with a condition you have no power to cure and there is a person who has what he says is a remedy, but that person is Adolf Hitler and you are Jewish would you take it? Why not? Because you don't trust him, does trust in the one providing the remedy need to be established? Yes, so Christ did come to demonstrate the truth about God to restore trust.

But what if you have a physician father who you trust but he has no remedy for your condition will your trust get you well? The Moral Influence Theory states Christ only had to restore trust, and therefore it falls short in its attempt to explain all that Christ accomplished to save us.

But the MIT is a reaction against the pagan penal substitution theory of Christ appeasing the wrath of His Father or propitiating Him. The MIT rejects these ideas and is right to do so, it just hasn't taken us the next step in understanding what else was needed besides the restoration of trust.

Are these two (MIT and Penal Substitution) the only two ways to understand what Christ accomplished? Christ had to reveal truth to restore trust, but more was needed, Christ came to remedy sin, to cure the condition.

Read last paragraph, "However, the statement..." What do you think they are trying to say in this paragraph? Are they saying that those who love but don't keep the commandments are not born of God and don't know God? Can someone genuinely love another on their own, without the Holy Spirit working in them?

What do you think the passage means?

## TUESDAY

Read 1John 3:19-22

*This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence <sup>20</sup> whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.*

*<sup>21</sup> Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God <sup>22</sup> and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.*

Read first paragraph "What Christian at..." thoughts?

From where does condemnation arise? Does condemnation come from God? When Adam sinned, why did he run? Was he afraid? Why was he afraid? Who told him he was naked, where did the awareness arise? Was God condemning Adam?

Condemnation, shame, guilt, are the natural way our minds respond to living outside of the law of love. Just as an engine will grind, and smoke and eventually freeze up without lubricant so our minds naturally malfunction experiencing condemnation, shame, guilt and eventually death when we operate outside of God's law of love.

If you assessed an engine that was running without oil and heard it squealing, grinding and preparing to seize up, and you made a judgment about the problem, diagnosed the issue and said, "This engine, if something isn't done, is going to die, going to seize up, going to break down." Is your conclusion causing the engine to die? Is your conclusion a "condemnation" of the engine in its current condition? Is the problem that the engine needs to get a substitute engine for you to look at so that you will then say the malfunctioning engine is running perfectly? What is the problem? What is the solution? How does this apply to our situation?

### WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph "John is not..." thoughts? Does this remind you of Jesus' words? Why is it true that if we hate in our hearts we are murderers? What happens to the character, the brain, the neural pathways if we hate in our hearts? Will our character be different from a murderer if we hate in our heart but never carry it out?

Read third paragraph "However, John is opposed..." thoughts?

What does love in action look like?

The obvious:

- Ministering to those with sickness
- Helping people where famine arises
- Rescuing people from persecution, torture, genocide
- Protecting people from exploitation and abuse
- Using one's resources to promote the welfare of others
- Speaking kind and encouraging words
- Putting self in harms way to rescue others

The less obvious:

- Your son has drug problems and isn't paying his utility bills and his electricity is going to be turned off
- Your son is in prison for the 6<sup>th</sup> time for drugs, stealing, fraud, weapons, each time in prior incarcerations you have used your money on lawyers to get him out and each time he has gone back to destructive living. What does love do?
- An alcoholic, living on the street, asks you for money for food
- A family member, who has a disability, asks you to help them with activities they could do for themselves, but it would be significantly more difficult for them to do the activity than prior to the disability.
- Someone has cheated you, lied about you, stolen from you, abused you in someway – how do you treat them?
- "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." 2Thes 3:10

## THURSDAY

The first sentence of the lesson states, “Both passages that we have studied this week end with a reference to the commandments.” And then the lesson asks, “What do the passages teach about the commandments apart from that they should be kept?”

Thoughts? Do the passages talk about the commandments? Read 1John 3:21-24

*Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God <sup>22</sup> and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. <sup>23</sup> And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. <sup>24</sup> Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

*And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. 1John 4:21*

Do these passages speak about the commandments? Can love be commanded? Can you say to someone I command you to love me and legitimately expect that to work?

Can what God wants from us be commanded from us? If so why didn't God, when Lucifer started his rebellion, just simply command obedience and be done with it?

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 happens if we change the word commandment to command, which is how the NIV translates it, does that change how you hear it?

What if we change command to directive, or direction, or prescription?

*1 John 3:21 Therefore my friends, if our hearts and minds have been healed and no longer condemn us, we are no longer afraid of God <sup>22</sup> and will follow his prescription and do the things that please him. <sup>23</sup> And this is his prescription: to value, cherish and trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, and to be like him loving one another as he has prescribed. <sup>24</sup> Those who take his prescription live in oneness with him and his character of love and he is in unity with them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: His Spirit dwells in us and heals us to be like him.*

*God's prescription is this: Internalize God's love which transforms the entire being so we love both God and man. So whoever loves God will also love others. 1John 4:21 (TRJ paraphrase)*

Read second paragraph “John says that...” thoughts?

Do we work to keep the commandments so that God will hear our prayers?

## FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

Question 3 read and discuss



## 2009 Q3 Lesson 9 Believing in the Son of God

### SABBATH

Thoughts about the lesson title? Would you have liked the title better if it would have read “Believing in God the Son”? Would it make a difference?

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

What are your thoughts about Jesus?

- Who is Jesus?
- Is Jesus fully God or a lesser God or not God at all?
- Did Jesus derive His life from His Father or does Jesus have life original, unborrowed und-derived?

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning.<sup>3</sup> 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*

*“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from (the days of eternity) ancient times.” Micah 5:2*

*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. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Col 1:16,17*

- Is Jesus God?  
*“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. John 17:24*

*“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*

*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*

- What form did Jesus take before incarnation? An angel? What Biblical evidence for this?  
*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. <sup>3</sup> So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” <sup>4</sup> 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.” <sup>5</sup> “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” <sup>6</sup> 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. Exodus 3:2-5 (also see Acts 7)*

*But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. <sup>12</sup> "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." <sup>13</sup> Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. <sup>14</sup> So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." <sup>15</sup> The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time <sup>16</sup> and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup> I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, <sup>18</sup> and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." Genesis 22:11-18*

*The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you. Judges 2:1*

◦ *All through the book of Judges but here is one more example:*

*Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, "What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?" <sup>18</sup> He replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding."<sup>a</sup> <sup>19</sup> Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched: <sup>20</sup> As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground. <sup>21</sup> When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD. <sup>22</sup> "We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!" Judges 13:17-22*

◦ *What does your Bible say the answer the angel of the Lord gave when Manoah asked his name? Check your footnote – it means "wonderful" – does that remind you of anything?*

*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. Isaiah 9:6*

*And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. <sup>8</sup> But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. Revelation 12:7,8*

*But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Jude 9*

*"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. <sup>2</sup> Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Daniel 12:1,2*

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<sup>a</sup> Or is wonderful

Who is Michael? What does the name Michael mean? “who is like God” So when Satan started his war in heaven and the angel’s said here comes Michael they were saying, “Here comes “who is like God” or if they were looking for Michael they would ask, “Have you seen the One who is like God?”

Michael is the One who is like God because Michael is the pre-existent, fully Divine Creator, Sovereign Ruler of the universe we today know as Jesus!

- Why? What difference did it make? Why is it important to realize Jesus was not a created being?
- What difference does it make to recognized Jesus preincarnate appeared in the form of an angel?
  - *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*
  - *Who is the morning star or day star? Jesus, what is the Greek translated day star? “phosphoros” which when translated into Latin, translate as – Lucifer – the bright and morning star! Light bearer, the source of light!*
  - *Who shared this name? Who was the other light bearer? Lucifer the created angel who became Satan*
  - *Does it make any difference to understand this? What?*
- How did Jesus’ humanity come about?
- What kind of humanity did Jesus have?
- What difference does it make?

## SUNDAY

Read memory text – thoughts? What does it mean? Can someone believe Jesus is the Christ and not be born of God? Does Satan believe Jesus is the Christ? Is something more meant by the text than belief in the factual reality that Jesus is the Son of God our Messiah?

What about believing what Jesus said He came to accomplish, that as our Messiah He came to reveal the Father and we believe also the Father is just like Jesus, and are thereby won to trust in Him?

Satan attacked the divine/human nature of Christ to introduce distortions – what other distortions has Satan introduced about Christ? Any distortions about Jesus’ mission?

## MONDAY

Read 1John 5:6-8:

*This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. <sup>7</sup> For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup> the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.*

What do you think this means? Read third paragraph “The phrase...” – thoughts?

Read last paragraph, “In these verses...” thoughts? John was dealing with various heresies about the nature of Christ. One of those heresies was that Jesus was just a man and at the baptism the

Messiah entered His body and did the 3.5-year ministry and exited just before the crucifixion. But John says, no, the Jesus the Messiah was both baptized and crucified.

There is another possibility as well. One of the other heresies John was dealing with is the heresy of Jesus “appearing” in the form of a man, like He had done to Abraham in the Old Testament, but without actually being a man. Therefore, another possibility to combat this heresy is that Jesus came of water birth, amniotic fluid, really born into the world and of blood, His final victory at the cross. This would be along the lines of John 3 when Jesus told Nicodemus

*In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again (born from above).” “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. John 3:3-5*

Does it make a difference what one believes about the sin problem and what was needed to achieve atonement? What difference does it make?

It makes a difference if the belief incites fear and undermines trust in God or whether our belief enhances trust and opens the heart for God’s love!

## TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, “For John, ...” thoughts? What is the point? Is our belief in Jesus without evidence or based on evidence? What evidence do we have for a belief in Jesus as the Son of God our Savior?

- The testimony of all those who saw and heard
- The evidence of life experience
- Jesus own testimony about Himself
- The evidence of His life lived out
- The empty tomb

What would you say to someone as to why you believe Jesus is God the Son, incarnate and our Savior?

## WEDNESDAY

What Biblical evidence is there for the Trinity?

- We must remember all the text we already read regarding the angel of the Lord being God. Then add to it:

*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. <sup>2</sup> They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. <sup>3</sup> They all ate the same spiritual food <sup>4</sup> and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 1Cor 10:1-3*

- *So we learn that Christ is God and the member of the Godhead who interacted with Israel in OT times.*
- Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: DT 6:4 The literal, speaking with the Hebrew names for God would read: “Hear, O Israel: *Yahweh* our *Elohim*, *Yahweh* is One.” Or, “The One is more than one yet is One”

- *In 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.*

*And now the Sovereign LORD has sent me, with his Spirit. This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: Isaiah 48:16,17*

*“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. Isaiah 42:1*

*“If you love me, you will obey what I command. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> 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*

*Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, 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 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*

- *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Genesis 1:1 God is Elohim, and in Hebrew this is in plural form.*

What qualities does God possess?

- Omnipotence
- Omnipresence
- Omniscience
- Unrestrained by time
- Inability to sin or be tempted
- God is love

What roles does each of the Godhead take?

The Father acts as the source of all, the Son as the mediator, conduit, medium through which God and His purposes flow and the Spirit as the actualizer or applier of all that the Father and Son accomplish.

The Father gave His Son, Jesus gave Himself, the Spirit gave Jesus birth.

God spoke at the baptism, Jesus went under the water and the Holy Spirit anointed Him.

The Father was in the Son reconciling the world to Himself, Jesus was the vehicle, conduit, mediator who carried the Father's purpose on earth and the Holy Spirit takes all the Father and Son achieved and makes it effectual in our lives.

What is the best argument for the Trinity – God is love – love cannot exist in isolation. Love by definition is other centered. God cannot be love as a singularity, it is in the plurality of God that we find His true nature. God is love!

#### THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Do you agree? What does it mean that eternal life is found in Jesus Christ only? Does it mean those who have never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ, as revealed in Scripture, are doomed to eternal loss, have no opportunity for salvation?

*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. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> (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, <sup>15</sup> 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.) <sup>16</sup> 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?

#### FRIDAY

Questions 3-5 read and discuss



## 2009 Q3 Lesson 10 Confidence

### SABBATH

Read memory text 1John 5:14:

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.*

Thoughts? What does it mean “he hears us”? That He is aware? That our prayers register in His consciousness? That His is willing to allow our prayers to reach His ears? That He cares?

Or, does it mean that when we ask in accordance with His will, we are demonstrating that our hearts are in harmony with His and thus our prayers, in that frame, hit a corresponding cord of unity in the heart of God?

Read the entire day starting with “Ben Franklin...” thoughts? How do you deal with uncertainty?

What, as Christian’s, are we to have certainty about? What is the source of our uncertainty?

What if we choose to go to the wrong school, major in the wrong career, choose to date the wrong person, choose to join the wrong church, accept the wrong job, move to the wrong city? What happens if we make choices that turn out not to be the best?

I have patients who fear making mistakes – do you fear making mistakes? Why? Are mistakes sin? Can you make mistakes that are not sinful? If you make mistakes do you feel guilty?

Will we make mistakes in heaven? We know we won’t sin in heaven, but will we make mistakes? Are mistakes and sin the same?

Will we learn in heaven? Will there be mental challenges for us to explore in whatever field of study interests us? Can you imagine Einstein in heaven discussing an astrophysics problem with Jesus regarding the fabric of space time and how God constructed the universe? There is a complicated equation Einstein has worked out – will it always be right? Will he make mistakes? Will Jesus always just tell the answer or will Jesus want us to think through the problem, work out the answers and experience the joy of discovery? If we make such mistakes will that be sin?

When we make such mistakes on earth today do we feel guilty? Why? Do we expect that we should know everything? Do we expect we are perfect and without defect? Do we accept that we will make mistakes? If we acknowledge we are finite, and not only finite, but imperfect, isn’t it a given that we will make mistakes? Then what is the healthy attitude to have?

That we are lovers of truth and are eager to know more and more truth, better and more efficient ways to live, understand, problem solve. We want to be people who are open to learn from our experience and grow from our mistakes, not people who are so afraid to make a mistake that we can’t acknowledge a shortcoming.

People who can’t make mistakes end up being like those who killed Christ, insecure of ideas that differ from their own, intolerant of divergent views, and seek to destroy those who disagree with them.

Do we need to fear making a wrong decision? What is our responsibility in decision making? To make the most healthy, reasonable choice, in harmony with God’s will, methods, principles that we can with the information we have at hand. Having done that, are we responsible for how things turn out?

If we make the best decision we know how and things don't turn out well, did we do something wrong? Should we feel guilty?

What about the three worthies and the fiery furnace – did they have confidence? In what? Were they certain how things would turn out? Were they certain about God, His character, His love for them and the ultimate end of all things? Did they trust Him with their lives? Do you?

Questions about this?

## SUNDAY

Read second paragraph “According to...” thoughts? Why does this give us confidence? What would have prevented us from having confidence before Jesus did this or if Jesus had not done this?

In what is our confidence based?

Read third paragraph, “The same term...” Thoughts? Why will Christians have confidence in the day of judgment? What does it mean they rely on what Jesus has done for them?

Consider the example from the Bible, people with leprosy – did they ever have to appear before the priest to be examined and judged? Now, when Jesus healed the leper, did Jesus tell him to present himself to the priest – for what purpose? For examination and judgment? Did the leper rely on what Jesus did for Him in that examination and judgment? Absolutely, did the leper do any work for himself to commend or influence the outcome of that judgment? No! Who was being examined in that judgment, Jesus or the leper? What did Jesus do for the leper? He healed Him!

Who gets examined in the Judgment? Who does the Father see? What is it that we rely on Jesus to do for us so that we are confident in the judgment?

Do you think the leper, when looking at his skin, pink, healthy, all the lesions gone, was confident going to that judgment?

Should we be confident in the judgment? Why?

The lesson asks us to examine in 1John 5:13-15, 18-20 the other areas for which we can have confidence:

- Eternal life
- Approaching God he will hear what we ask
- Receiving what we ask
- Victory over sinful living
- Child of God
- Understanding

Thoughts about these?

## MONDAY

1John 5:13 assures us of eternal life – what does this mean? How would you describe eternal life? How did Jesus describe eternal life?

*Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3*

How do you hear this definition? Did Jesus define eternal life in terms of length of time? Why not? What is the point Jesus is making?

What would non-ending existence outside of a true knowledge of God be like? A life of constant fear, insecurity, anxiety, pain, hurt, - literally hell!

Why should children of God “know” they have eternal life? What is the basis of life? What is life constructed to operate upon? If we are God’s children what has been restored in us?

Read third paragraph, “Some folk...” thoughts? What is the idea of once saved always saved predicated upon? What is the logic behind such an idea? What does it mean to be “saved” in this model? What is the problem with this model?

Why is the traditional objection to this model limited in its impact? Because the traditional objection comes from the same faulty legal understanding of the sin problem and actually inflames fear and insecurity.

Read bottom green section – thoughts? Is anyone disturbed by this section? What is the likely impact this section will have on readers – to increase guilt? Is it true that one could be struggling with insecurity because of some unrelinquished sinful habit in their life?

But is there another reason that a person may struggle with insecurity regarding assurance of salvation that is not about some behavior in which they are engaged?

What about the God concept with which they have been indoctrinated? One author wrote the following:

It is beyond the power of the human mind to estimate the evil which has been wrought by the heresy of eternal torment. The religion of the Bible, full of love and goodness, and abounding in compassion, is darkened by superstition and clothed with terror. When we consider in what false colors Satan has painted the character of God, can we wonder that our merciful Creator is feared, dreaded, and even hated? The appalling views of God which have spread over the world from the teachings of the pulpit have made thousands, yes, millions, of skeptics and infidels. {GC88 536.2}

Might people who hold such a concept of God struggle with assurance? Might they be afraid of God and need a doctrine to protect them from Him? And what better than the idea that Jesus paid the legal debt, and if we say the sinner’s prayer, accept His blood payment, get baptized in the water, then we have had all our sin debt past, present and future wiped out and we are eternally saved: once saved always saved—a doctrine created to protect us from a God who can’t be trusted.

But for those who reject the once saved always saved idea, yet still believe in a God who will use his power to inflict suffering, pain and torment upon His creatures – might this cause anxiety, fear and uncertainty? Yet the lesson authors want to place this back on the struggling sinner and blame them for this as if the insecurity is due to some choice they are making, rather than the false god concept that religious institutions have taught.

## TUESDAY

Read 1 John 5:16,17 and then third paragraph, “First John 5:16,17...” – thoughts?

What do you think this means?

This is my paraphrase:

*1 John 5:16 If anyone sees a fellow Christian, who desires to be Christlike, commit and act of sin, he should talk with God about him knowing that God will completely heal him and*

*give him life, if he opens his heart in trust to God. Such sin does not result in eternal death because it is merely a residual symptom of a heart in the process of being healed. However, there is no use in asking God to heal and give eternal life to the sinner who closes his heart to God and stubbornly refuses to allow God to heal him. Love cannot be forced and God cannot force people to love and trust him, so there is no use in praying for God to force people to accept him. 17 All violations of love are sin, but violations of love which occur in someone whose heart is open to God does not lead to eternal death. (Jennings paraphrase)*

### WEDNESDAY

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

Are there actions we can take that can obstruct God's healing plan in our lives? Examples?

- Pray for healthy teeth and don't brush
- Pray for healthy lungs and smoke
- Pray for good character and lie, cheat, steal
- Pray for peace of heart and gossip, spread rumors
- Pray for Godlikeness of mind and hold to lies about God and teach others falsehoods about God
- Pray for salvation and criticize teenage girl for wearing makeup
- Pray to be a faithful witness for God and ridicule college student wearing jewelry, demean those who don't observe Sabbath the way you do etc.

Colonel Gonin, a British officer who help liberate the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp after WWII wrote:

It was shortly after the British Red Cross arrived, though it may have no connection, that a very large quantity of lipstick arrived. This was not at all what we wanted, we were screaming for hundreds and thousands of other things and I don't know who asked for lipstick. I wish so much that I could discover who did it, it was the action of genius, sheer unadulterated brilliance. I believe nothing did more for these internees than the lipstick. Women lay in bed with no sheets and no nightie but with scarlet red lips, you saw them wandering about with nothing but a blanket over their shoulders, but with scarlet red lips. I saw a woman dead on the postmortem table and clutched in her hand was a piece of lipstick. At last someone had done something to make them individuals again, they were someone, no longer merely the number tattooed on their arm. At last they could take an interest in their appearance. That lipstick started to give them back their humanity.

### THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Are you comfortable with the idea that Jesus perfectly reveals the Father? Is there any character attribute about the Father that is not revealed in Jesus?

If Jesus has perfectly revealed the Father, can we use this revelation to differentiate various doctrines as either true or false depending how the doctrine represents God?

Can you think of any that need to be discarded because they contradict the character of God as revealed in Jesus?

- Woman caught in adultery, what did Jesus say, “neither do I condemn you.” Does this perfectly reveal the Father?
- When Jesus washed Judas' feet, was He revealing the Father?

- When Jesus forgave those who crucified Him was He revealing the Father?
- What will the Father do to those who betray Him and remain His enemies?

Read last paragraph “So far in...” thoughts?

**FRIDAY**

Questions 2-4 read and discuss

## 2009 Q3 Lesson 11 Important Themes in 1John

### SABBATH

Read Memory Text 1John 3:2 – thoughts? What does this text mean to you?

Do you hear any promises in this text? Why did God say to Moses, “No one can see my face and live”?

According to our memory text, are we going to see the face of God and live? What makes the difference? What is the key in the text? “We shall be like Him”! What about those who are not like Him? What happens when they see Him? Why?

*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 2Thes 2:8*

*Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. <sup>16</sup> They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! Rev 6:15,16*

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}

Does God have to sit in judgment and investigate records to determine before He comes who is like Him and who isn't and then by use of His power inflict some unpleasantness upon those who are not like Him? Or will each person's own character, their own attitude toward God, determine how they respond when He appears? Those who love and trust God will rejoice in His presence and be transformed, but those who have solidified themselves into Satan's version of God run in terror begging to die rather than be in His presence?

Do the angels in heaven need to sit in judgment and investigate who is like God and who is not, or will it be self-evident when Christ appears?

What implication does this have on our understanding of what is going on in heaven currently?

### FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Today, 1John...” Thoughts? Isn't this great wisdom and advice? What determines whether a doctrine is new or not?

When Martin Luther posted his protests on the door in Worms did some think he was coming up with new theology? Was he?

When we challenge ideas in our church that have been held for many years does that, necessarily, mean our ideas are the new ones?

One of the founders of our church realized this and wrote the following:

“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. The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth



and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition and worship they know not what.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 706,707 (1889); *GW* 297,298; *CWE* 39

“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. “Those who sincerely desire truth will not be reluctant to lay open their positions for investigation and criticism, and will not be annoyed if their opinions and ideas are crossed.” *Review and Herald*, July 26, 1892 (2RH 585:2:1,2); *CWE* 37; *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* 991; *CDF* 187

“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. ... *CW* 39

“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.” *Review and Herald*, February 18, 1890 (2RH 368:1:3); *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* 534; *ISM* 411

Read question #3 – “Fiorello...” thoughts? What is the problem with this scenario?

- Misdiagnosis the problem of sin as a legal problem and it is our fault if we are sinners
- Makes God’s law analogous to enacted human law
- Makes the penalty for breaking the law imposed rather than realizing what the Bible teaches that when we steal we sear the conscious, warp the reason, change the character and unfit ourselves for heavenly residence
- Makes it appear that what we need is to have our legal penalty paid by someone
- While the person in the story had their fine paid they did not have their character transformed.
- What kind of God do we get from such stories?

### WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph “Although John...” thoughts? What about the idea of theology informing ethics and wrong theology can lead to wrong actions – any examples? What wrong theology has led to the following?

- Shooting abortion doctors
- Picketing outside abortion clinics and calling a 16 y/o rape victim murderer
- Flying planes into buildings
- Suicide bombers
- Burning people at the stake

What about “wrong understanding of law and grace” which has “caused untold millions to trample on God’s Sabbath day”? Examples? What wrong theology has led to the following?

- The Jews who put Christ on the Cross and wanted Him down before sunset Friday?
- Adventists who make the Sabbath the most restrictive day of individual enslavement of the week driving their children from the church?
- Presentations of the Sabbath as an arbitrary test of obedience?
- The substitution of Sunday for Sabbath?

Read second paragraph, “We also...” thoughts? What does it mean when someone defends orthodox theology and runs away with his neighbor’s spouse? Is it possible the problem is with the man’s “orthodox theology”?

What does orthodox theology teach? That sin is a legal problem that requires the penalty be paid with the right payment, which is the blood of Jesus. We must go through the right steps to have this payment applied to our account, but if we do so then our sins are forgiven and we have eternal life. Does this theology contribute to problems? How so?

Read last paragraph “John makes it clear...” thoughts?

- Well said, it is more than a legal transaction in record books in heaven.
- Salvation is healing, transformation, regeneration which happens in the actual mind/brain of the believer. The truth frees us from lies, changes our beliefs, leads us to trust in God and we open our hearts to Him and the Holy Spirit works to transform and heal. Our neural circuits actually rewire based on the things we believe, imagine and behaviors in which we engage.

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “In 1 John...” – thoughts? Does Satan want us to see the truth about God? Why not?

*Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup> 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 4:1-4*

What methods does Satan use to obstruct our view of God?

- Lies
- Flattery
- Bribery
- Compelling power or extortion

- Abusive parents
- Emotions as reliable indicator of truth (James 1:13-15)
- Authoritarian church leaders
- People who call themselves Christian but live un-Christlike lives
- Believing symbols without meaning
  - *Power in the blood, cleansed by the blood*
  - *Power in the Bible*
  - *Covered by the robe of righteousness*
- Ugly pictures of God taught from pulpits
  - *God uses His power to torture His children*
  - *God is arbitrary – Sabbath arbitrary test of obedience*
  - *God must be appeased*
- Believing without thinking or without evidence
- Legalistic doctrines
  - *It is sin to wear jewelry*
  - *It is sin to swim on Sabbath*
  - *It is sin to wear make up*
  - *It is sin to take medication*
  - *It is sin to eat meat*
- Sinful living

Read bottom paragraph – “The letter refers...” thoughts? What do you hear? Is it stated simply, are they holding to symbols? What do the symbols mean?

How did Christ’s death defeat the devil’s work?

*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—<sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Heb 2:14,15*

*This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,<sup>10</sup> 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*

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

What is 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 to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image. Lift Him Up 48.

Do you agree?

Read bottom green section – my question – Do you hold ideas about God which disagree with what Jesus revealed in His life? If so, why not give them up?

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “From the time...” thoughts? Do you believe there is absolute truth? What is it? Can we name some absolute truths?

- God is love
- God does not change
- God cannot be tempted by evil nor does He tempt
- God cannot lie
- Love is the basis of health, happiness and life
- Love requires freedom

Other absolute truths? What about the 10 Commandments? Are they the final revelation of absolute truth or are they a distillation of the law of love unique for this planet?

Consider:

- Rahab – what did she do? Where is she found? How do we understand it?
- What about when someone commits adultery and repents genuinely, is it okay to continue to see the woman and have relations with her? What about David and Bathsheba? Why was it not ongoing sin for David to keep Bathsheba?
- Why was it not sin for disciples to pick grain on Sabbath or David to give the show bread to his men?

The issue of the law is love and in each case the law of love was being followed – Rahab was willing to risk her life to protect the spies, David had taken from Bathsheba her dignity, station, sustenance and position in society and love restores when repentance occurs. The only way David could restore all of that was by marrying her. Picking grain on Sabbath was not to gain money but to sustain the function of the body and carry out God’s will for their lives and David gave the show bread for the health and nourishment of his men, not to promote himself.

Read bottom paragraph “John knows...” thoughts? What do you think about the definition of a liar in this paragraph as someone who makes unsubstantiated claims? If someone tells a falsehood are they a liar?

What about a man who is having an affair, he leaves home to see his mistress and tells his child he is going out for a business meeting? When the mother comes home the child tells the mother that the father is at a business meeting. Did the child tell a falsehood? Is the child a liar?

## MONDAY

The Church – does our concept of church equal John’s concept of church?

Read second and third paragraphs, “In 1John it seems...” thoughts? Do you experience church like a family?

What difference does it make? What if your family was abusive, controlling domineering, could that make it hard to enjoy church?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The Bible...” thoughts? What did Jesus say His mission was?

*I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup> And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. <sup>6</sup>*  
*"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. John 17:4-6*

Christ came to reveal the Father and restore the law of love in man!

Why did Christ need to reveal the Father? What made it necessary? What is Satan's power? What happens to us when we believe lies about God?

Third paragraph, "The means of our salvation..." thoughts?

Why was Christ's death necessary?

Remember the texts we read earlier that by His death he destroyed death, the devil and the devil's work – how?

What is the basis of life? What then causes death? What would destroy death?

If we believe the basis of life is a whim from God and if we upset Him by disobeying His law and He therefore, in order to be just, inflicts death upon sinners – then what reason will we give for Christ's death?

## 2009 Q3 Lesson 12 John's Letter to the Chosen Lady

Who is the chosen lady and her children?

- Some suggest a specific lady with biological children
- Some suggest this is a euphemism for the church
- Some suggest a combination of both that he is writing to a female leader of a church group and the children are church members

### SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

Why will they not have God if they do not abide in the teaching of Christ?

- What was Christ's teaching?

*"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 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. John 14:6-9*

- So what happens if a person rejects the teaching of Jesus? They cannot have God because Jesus is the only source of the knowledge of God!
- Does that then mean someone has to have heard of Jesus for them to have God? No, it doesn't say they cannot have God if they have never heard the teaching of Christ. It is talking about those who have heard the truth about God as revealed by Christ but do not abide in it, or do not keep true to it.

What would it look like to "go too far" and not abide in the teaching of Jesus? Any examples? Consider these as we go through the lesson today:

- God will sit in judgment and mete out imposed penalties on the wicked?
- God executed Jesus in our place on the Cross?
- God is unforgiving except for the blood of Jesus?
- That God's love will save everyone and no one will be lost?

### SUNDAY

Read 2John 1-4 – and our lesson asks us "What word appears again and again, and how is John using it?" – thoughts?

What is John referring to when he refers to truth? Seeing reality the way it actually is? Knowing the facts about universal history? Knowing God's character of love?

Read second paragraph, "Notice, too..." thoughts? Any examples of love expressed in truth?

- When Jesus spoke to Peter in the upper room, first saying "Get behind me Satan" and later telling Peter of his upcoming betrayal, yet offering hope, "when you are converted feed my sheep."
- What about a daughter who is dating a guy who you believe is absolutely not qualified to be a life partner? He is past normal college age, unemployed, has a family from previous relationship, never finished school, moves from friend's home to friend's home living off



others, but your daughter is in love and believes he is the “one”, what does love do with truth?

- *Why is it essential, in love, to sit the daughter down and go over the facts and evidence, even if you know she is blinded by emotions and won't listen? (after doing so then you leave her free to make her own choice and support her in her choice).*
- *Because you can never avoid the truth, you can only delay the day you deal with it. If she insists on going forward with the relationship, then in time, the facts of his unfitness will be manifest and she will remember you loved her enough to warn her and have greater trust in you.*
- *Almost two years ago I did something similar with some friends regarding a project and an individual I realized was not qualified for the project. I, in love, spoke the truth to my friends involved with the project, but they did not think things were as serious as I suggested. So I left them completely free and didn't say another word about it. Just this week I got a call from them telling me they appreciated what I said because, in time, the truth was finally revealed.*

Read next paragraph, “If we talk...” –thoughts? Can you think of other Biblical metaphors for truth?

- Light
- Wisdom
- Sword

*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. Heb 4:12*

*In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. Rev 1:16*

What does truth do to those who live in lies and insist on holding to lies?

*The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse Revelation 19:21*

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

What does the truth do to those who love lies? How does it make them feel? What do they want to do?

We are talking about truth AND love. So, what about those who live in selfishness and harden their hearts to love, what impact does love have on them?

*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. Romans 12:20*

What does love do to those who prefer selfishness?

If truth torments those who prefer lies, if love tortures those who are selfish, then what happens to the wicked when they come into the unveiled fullness of the infinite love and truth of God's presence?

Is this an imposed penalty or a natural consequence? Does this give us some insight as to why God is waiting to return? What is He waiting for? For us to be like Him and ready to see Him face to face!

Read bottom green section – thoughts? Can pure Godlike love ever exist separated from the truth? The analogy the lesson gives is not possible, in fact, the lesson is pointing out one of Satan’s deceptions – the idea that love can exist without truth or truth without love. God is the God of truth and love. Satan’s counterfeits seek to separate the two, so we will see movements that *appear* to be loving or movements that *appear* to value truth, but are neither.

Godlike love is always truthful and Godlike truth is always loving!

## THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “The message...” What is antichrist? Is it only Satan? Is it any person or institution that is anti-Christ or against Christ?

What does antichrist look like today? Would antichrist be any person or system that presents a message that is opposed to what Jesus presented?

What was the message Jesus presented?

*Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, John 5:22*

If Jesus taught that the Father judges no one and someone teaches that the Father must sit in judgment in order to punish sin, are they teaching what Jesus taught or opposing it?

*You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. John 8:15*

*“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. <sup>48</sup> 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. <sup>49</sup> 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. <sup>50</sup> 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*

*“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. <sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. <sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” Matthew 12:33-37*

*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. Heb 4:12*

What did Jesus teach about the judgment of the wicked? If someone teaches that Jesus must sit in Judgment in order to determine who is saved and who is lost and then judge how much pain to inflict upon the wicked in order to justly punish sin, are they presenting what Jesus presented? If not are they opposed to Jesus message? Would that be part of antichrist?

## MONDAY

Read 2John 4-6 – what is John speaking about?

Read the first paragraph, “Verse 4...” Is he speaking about the 10 commandments? Are the 10 commandments included in what John is speaking about? Absolutely, but is John speaking about something more?

If we attempt to make this passage apply only to the 10 commandments are we doing God's cause a good service?

How are love and the commandments related? Can love be commanded? When you try and use power, authority, pressure, rightness of your position and a list of rules to enforce love, what happens?

Ty Gibson tells a story about a lady named Lynda:

Lynda was eager to be married and there were not many prospects on the horizon. She became very eager to meet someone to spend her life with. Then she met Her-man. He would open the door for her so she could walk through. After courtship, Herman one day proposed, and she immediately said yes. They were married.

Then the honeymoon, it was a very nice place. A wonderful honeymoon they had. But then the first morning after the honeymoon, early 5 a.m. Lynda awoke to a bright light. She opened her eyes and there was Herman saying, "rise and shine the honeymoon is over and we need to get down to real life."

She noticed he was holding in his hand a piece of paper and he presented it to her as the first of many lists yet to come. He had spelled out in great detail her responsibilities in two week segments.

March 1-14

5:30 rise and shower

6:00 begin breakfast, see attached menu

6:15 awaken Hermie-cuddles with a gentle kiss and turn on his shower

6:45 serve breakfast, (do not forget grapefruit)

7:15 begin breakfast cleanup while husband brushes teeth

7:25 meet Hermie-cuddles at the door with appropriate jacket, be sure to pay attention to the weather and say goodbye with a smile and a kiss

7:30 finish breakfast, cleanup

8:00 free time

8:15 house cleaning, cleaning supply list and more detailed instructions attached

- Monday north rooms,
- Tuesday east rooms,
- Wednesday south rooms,
- Thursday west rooms,
- Friday the garage

11:00 balance checkbook

12:00 lunch whatever you like except marked items, check list

12:30 miscellaneous duties

- M – car maintenance and wash car
- T – dry cleaning and banking
- W – Shopping

- Th – Wash windows
- F – yard work
- 3:30 dinner prep (see attached menu)
- 4:30 meet husband at door with kiss and hang up his coat
- 5:00 serve dinner
- 5:45 dinner cleanup
- 6:15 free time (see list of suggestions)
- 6:45 draw Hermie's bath
- 7:00 do next day's ironing
- 7:45 hand husband towel as he exits bath
- 8:00 neck and back massage for the man of your dreams
- 9:00 lights out, pleasant dreams sweetheart

Lynda was given a new list with slight variations every two weeks without fail. As the years drug on, they were dragging, 10 years into the relationship Hermi-cuddles drops dead of an unknown cause – praise God! She didn't know what to do: rejoice or grieve.

Then she made a vow she would never ever get married again. But after three years of being single, she met another guy, named Michael. He was so much like Herman, in some ways, he opened the door for a lady to walk through. He was polite and courteous. And she kept telling herself No way, No way, No way! and one day Michael popped the question and she said Yes.

Then came the honeymoon, and she woke up at 5:30 a.m. with a start and saw Michael standing at the end of the bed with a piece of paper in his hand. So she jumped into a karate stance. And she said No way! and yanked the paper and ripped it in two.

Michael said, "Lynda, that was a poem I wrote for you after you fell asleep last night."

She was so sorry and picked up the pieces and read it, and it broke her heart. As she was reading, he came in and served her breakfast in bed. And no list was forthcoming. 10 years passed being married to this wonderful man. One day she was doing spring cleaning and going through old things in the attic and came across an old shoebox full of lists given to her by Herman the horrible.

She pulled out one of those lists and began to read. And the strangest realization came over her, she said quietly to herself, wow I do all of these things for Michael and I never think about it.

What do you think about the story? What does it tell us about the commandments? What purpose do they serve? Has God given us a list of things to do and expects us to do them? Is this how it is often presented? What is the purpose of the commandments? They are a diagnostic instrument, an MRI of the soul, given to diagnose our sick condition:

*The law was added so that the trespass might increase. Romans 5:20*

*We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. <sup>9</sup> 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, <sup>10</sup> for adulterers and*

*perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine <sup>11</sup> that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim 1:8-11*

We know that the MRI is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the MRI is made not for healthy people but for those who are sick and diseased, the suffering, the ill, and all those who are dying, and all activities that are contrary to the principles of healthy living that conform to the model of health that the blessed God has entrusted to me. TRJ analogy

Read last paragraph, “How interesting...” thoughts? One of the problems of focusing on the rules, do’s, don’ts etc. is that it makes us very self-focused, what we can do and what we can’t do. But love’s focus is other centered.

The 10 commandments were given to focus our attention on ourselves for one purpose – to diagnose us as terminal and in need of a Savior. Once it has done that we are to take our focus off the commandments and place our focus on Jesus Christ – our heavenly physician the only One who can heal us!

Does this mean the 10 commandments are invalidated, absolutely not! It means that when we trust Jesus and walk with Him He writes the law on our hearts and mind and it is fulfilled in us by His regenerating power! And whenever we start thinking, that somehow we are spiritually healthy on our own, the commandments are right there to remind us of our sick state and need of Jesus.

## TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, “John is under no illusion...” thoughts?

Why does doctrine matter? How is it that false doctrine leads to loss of salvation? Does that mean one has to have all doctrine correct or they can’t be saved?

When Jesus comes again will there be anyone who knows correctly 100% of everything in the Bible? Will all of the saved know 100% correctly everything in the Bible?

Are there some doctrines that are essential and others that are less essential?

What is essential to salvation? John 17:3 *“This is life eternal, that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”*

Would that mean that doctrines which impact our knowledge of God, what we believe about Him, whether we trust Him or not, are the central issues in salvation?

Think about the Jews in Christ’s day. Did they have the correct day of worship? Did they teach the importance of tithing and offering? Did they teach the sacredness of Scripture, healthy living, sanctuary message and regular attendance at worship? Were they even teaching an advent message? And did all of this doctrine save them? What was missing?

They failed to understand the truth about God Himself. The war in heaven began over the knowledge of God and it ends over the same issue!

## WEDNESDAY

Read 2John 10, 11:

*If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.*

How do you respond when you have a couple of gentlemen, dressed in black pants and white shirts, riding bicycles, and with “Elder” name tags come to your door? Should you invite them in for a drink of water? Should you be kind and talk with them?

*If you meet anyone who is bent on presenting a false gospel, who desires to deceive, do not associate with or support him or his ministry in anyway. 11 By giving him a platform to speak or supporting him or his ministry you make it appear you share his views and thus you will share his wicked work of spreading lies about God. Jennings paraphrase*

## FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “The apostle teaches...” thoughts?

Have you ever known people to use this quote as justification for pointing out sin in other people’s lives? Have such quotes by EGW been used in such a way that you were discouraged and maybe thought EGW was harsh?

Consider this:

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 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}

Does this put it in balance? Do you usually hear this as the method and means to be employed? Do you find people holding their peace to point out the sins of others until they love them enough to die for them?



## 2009 Q3 Lesson 13 Power Struggle

### SABBATH

Read memory text:

*Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. 3John 11*

Thoughts? Can anyone give a definition of evil? What does evil look like? How do you know what is evil and what is good?

Would evil be anti-love? And what does that result in? Love is the basis of life, then would evil be anything that destroys, that brings death? Live spelled backwards is Evil!

What kinds of things today would be considered evil?

- Murder – obviously is anti-love and brings death, who does murder bring death to and why? What does murder do to the murderer? Is the one murdered the one who actually dies?
  - *“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.” Mt 10:28*
- Violence, abuse, rape, - are all evil because they hurt others, but what do such actions do to the perpetrator?
- Lying, stealing, embezzling, - why are these evil?
- Gossiping – is gossiping evil? Why? What does gossip do to relationships, to the gossip?
- Believing lies about God, is it evil to believe lies about God? And spreading lies about God?

Does evil, doing unloving, selfish things, have impact on the perpetrator? What impact? Does it destroy the reason, sear the conscience, warp the character and ultimately result in death?

Is this what the Bible means when it says *“the wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6:23) and *“sin when full grown brings forth death”* (James 1:15) and *“Evil will slay the wicked”* (Psalms 34:21)?

If this is so, then why do so many teach God is the one who is the destroyer, that God inflicts death upon the wicked?

- Would teaching that God must inflict death upon the wicked be evil?
- Why would it be evil? Because teaching such things misrepresents God, cuts ourselves off from the channel of blessing and results in ruin and death!
- What would teaching such things do to those who teach it?

How can we avoid evil and participate in the good? Is it enough to study and know what is true? Why is intellectual understanding not enough?

In order to be a great musician is it enough to intellectually study music composition and theory? Does one have to actually play? What happens differently when one not only studies music but also plays? Does the brain wire differently? Does the capacity for musical appreciation increase? Is there a unifying aspect within the being of bringing mind and heart and emotions together – a synergy and harmony within?

Is it enough to know the theory of God's love? Is it enough to know the facts about God's character? Is there some place we must begin putting into practice the truths we believe? What difference does it make in our lives?

Read the two paragraphs beginning, "Power struggles..." thoughts?

Do we ever have power struggles in local churches? Why? What is the basis of such struggles?

What does the Bible reveal is God's power, what power does God use to win the war with evil?

*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*

*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> 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*

*Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. Ephesians 6:13-18*

What are God's weapons? Truth and love presented in freedom!

Why does it take so long for the Almighty God, the Creator, to deal with rebellion and eradicate sin?

Where does sin occur? What is the root of sin? Where is God working to remove sin? Our hearts and minds! What is the only way to eradicate fear and distrust out of the heart? Truth and love over time in a free environment.

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What do you think of the idea that a letter, coming from the desk of a person containing a certain title, thereby connotes or contains authority?

Earthly governments delegate authority and person's hold authority over other persons by means of their position, rank and title. Is that how God's government works?

If you get a letter from the President of the General Conference, does the title "President of the General Conference" mean what he communicates is authoritative?

If you get a letter from the pastor, elder, pope or any other person does the title the person carries mean what they communicate is authoritative?

How does God's government delegate authority? What is authoritative in God's government? Truth and Love! Not position!

Notice the difference between Christ and Satan:

*Your attitude should be the same as that of 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! Philippians 2:5-8*

*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. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. Isaiah 14:13-15*

Did Christ seek “authority” based on the position He held or did He surrender position to seek authority based on truth of His character? How did Lucifer seek authority? By title, by position, this is not God’s method. The truth of God’s character is what makes God authoritative and worthy of our love, devotion and worship!

Christ wins the hearts of His creatures to lovingly, freely follow. He speaks with the authority that comes when every living being knows He is faithful, true, right, and loves them more than Himself and if necessary would leave His throne for every one of them.

Depictions of God exerting authority by force of power or position or rank (even though truthfully and rightfully His to do) still misrepresent God and bring Him down to our worldly values.

Middle of the lesson asks, “How do we understand what it means, as Christians, to love each other? How do we show that love?”

How can we as a class put into practice more fully in our lives the love that we see in God? Thoughts?

### WEDNESDAY

Read verse 12

*Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.*

Thoughts about this verse? Is there a difference in being spoken well of by everyone and being spoken well of by the truth itself? What is the difference? Which do you prefer? Do they always agree?

I have patients who are completely preoccupied with what people think of them. They go into the world with their emotional radar up constantly scanning the environment to perceive what people are thinking and trying to influence what people think so they will be liked. Such people live in fear constantly worried they won’t be liked, or accepted, or valued. They fear rejection so they spend their energy trying to get people to think well of them.

I ask them who they would rather be, a person who is thought well of by the majority of society, but in heart is actually selfish, evil and unchristlike, or be genuinely like Christ in heart and mind but have most people dislike them?

Would you rather be spoken well of by people or the truth?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

- If someone writes a report about you, what do you learn from the report? What the other person perceives or thinks.
- Does that necessarily mean what was written was accurate?
- What kind of report would Satan write about Jesus?

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. ST Jan 20, 1890

What report did Satan give about God? Who has believed it? Notice this next powerful statement:

The Lord is constantly at work to open the understanding, to quicken the perceptions, that man may have a right sense of sin and of the far-reaching claims of God's law. The **unconverted man** thinks of God as unloving, as severe, and even revengeful; His presence is thought to be a constant restraint, His character an expression of "Thou shalt not." His service is regarded as full of gloom and hard requirements. But when Jesus is seen upon the cross, as the gift of God because He loved man, the eyes are opened to see things in a new light. God as revealed in Christ is not a severe judge, an avenging tyrant, but a merciful and loving Father. {1SM 183.2}

What was one of the purposes Christ came? To reveal the truth about God and expose Satan's version as false.

What about those who, from the pulpit, present God as severe and revengeful, and one who says "thou shalt not" a severe judge and avenging tyrant? One of the founders of our church said that such presentations of God come from those who are unconverted. Have you ever thought such things? Have you been converted to the truth about God that is revealed in Jesus, that He is a merciful and loving Father?

## MONDAY

Read third paragraph, "What we see here..." thoughts? Do we agree with the need to support the spread of the gospel? What gospel? Does it make a difference? How do we decide whether a ministry is worthy of our support? Should we be particular in determining where we give our funds?

When we support spreading the gospel is there more involved than tithes and offerings? What other ways can we, here in our class, spread the gospel? Thoughts?

## TUESDAY

Read Mark 9:35 at the top of the lesson, thoughts?

What does this mean? In the military a commander never eats before his troops, why?

What kind of leadership is Christ describing? How does this leadership style connect with the gospel?

*Christ said, "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it." Matt 16:25 – why?*

Read 3John 9,10

*I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.*

What leadership style was Diotrephes practicing?

Read second paragraph, “Whoever this Diotrephes was...” thoughts?

What impact does controlling leadership have on the church? If someone does get enough earthly authority such that they can put people out of the church, fire pastors from their jobs, demote elders or deacons, what impact will transpire?

Will such leadership foster the growth of members? Will people experience freedom to think, ask questions, disagree, have honest loving debate? Which types of personalities or people will be the ones likely to be put out or leave? Those who are capable of thinking for themselves, articulating truth clearly, and those willing to stand firm for their convictions, who are likely to stay?

Will controlling leadership tend toward mental and spiritual development or the opposite, paralyze the mind, darken the faculties and infantilize the congregation? So do people become unthinking followers, “God said it, I believe it that settles it” or “We don’t ask questions we take that on faith”?

Do we see this leadership in cults? Does it have to be in a cult?

#### THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Can you have a crisis in leadership, someone who has personal ambition, without having a problem in theology?

It is a law that by beholding we become changed. We become like the God we admire and worship. Therefore, if someone is ambitious and governs with power over methods it is likely they worship a god who is authoritative and power mongering. Those who worship a God like Jesus will practice His servant leadership methods.

Read third paragraph, “Instead, all believers...” thoughts? Does the fact God does call people to leadership positions mean that everyone in leadership was called by God? Can some people be in leadership of the church because they were called by Satan? Who called Annas and Caiaphas to leadership of the church in Christ’s day?

Read last paragraph “Leaders must indeed...” thoughts?

Are such sentiments more than verbal accolades? What about in our church today? If all have received spiritual gifts for the running of the church, if the early church were led by people who were gifted by God, but not schooled in the schools of the prophets, why does our church only allow ordained pastors into leadership roles? Would our church be healthier if we had spiritually mature people, from other vocations, (teachers, doctors, lawyers, nurses, home makers, hospital administrators etc) in leadership roles of the church (i.e. conference presidents etc).

#### FRIDAY

Questions 1, 3, 4 and 5 read and discuss.

**2009 Q4 Lesson 1     A New Order**

Notes are not available.



**2009 Q4 Lesson 2     Preparing a People**

Notes are not available.

## 2009 Q4 Lesson 3 Worship and Dedication

### SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “Nevertheless, the unifying factor...” thoughts? Do we all worship the same God?

*“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. <sup>22</sup> 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?’ <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ Matthew 7:21-23*

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}

What about the idea that the basic truths taught to the Israelites are the same ones we are to learn today?

This is one of the problems in the church today, failing to grow in truth. Trying to bring us to the point of understanding the truth as the children of Israel did. Truth is unfolding – should we be learning the same basic truths that the Israelites learned or should we be far beyond it?

*We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. <sup>12</sup> 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! <sup>13</sup> Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. <sup>14</sup> But 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, and of faith in God, <sup>2</sup> instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. Heb 5:11-6:2*

Why did God give the Israelites this service? Was it because they understood truth or was it because they were very hard to teach, had darkened minds and understood very little?

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}

As we look at God and His actions throughout human history what do we learn about how God deals with us? God Stoops to Meet us where we are:

- When we were afraid of God – Moses or Jesus stood in between us and God
- When we hated manna – he gave us meat, and with a list of clean and unclean meats
- When we wanted a king to be our leader, rather than God – he gave us a king, even though it was harmful
- When we wanted to cruelly dismiss our wives in divorce – God gave divorce laws
- When we wanted to fight our way into Canaan – God helped us fight
- When we were so hardened and indifferent even to death and killing – God gave us rules such as “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth”
- When we were too immature and childlike to understand God’s law of love and how breeches bring death, He gave animal sacrifice, when we still didn’t comprehend He gave the 10 Commandments and then the Levitical laws.

Do we need to understand these things like the Israelites did?

How did the Israelites understand the purpose of the sanctuary services?

*The next day they made sacrifices to the LORD and presented burnt offerings to him: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams and a thousand male lambs, together with their drink offerings, and other sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. 1Chron 29:21*

*The number of burnt offerings the assembly brought was seventy bulls, a hundred rams and two hundred male lambs—all of them for burnt offerings to the LORD.<sup>33</sup> The animals consecrated as sacrifices amounted to six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep and goats.<sup>34</sup> The priests, however, were too few to skin all the burnt offerings; so their kinsmen the Levites helped them until the task was finished and until other priests had been consecrated, for the Levites had been more conscientious in consecrating themselves than the priests had been.<sup>35</sup> There were burnt offerings in abundance, together with the fat of the fellowship offerings and the drink offerings that accompanied the burnt offerings. 2Chron 29:32-35*

Do you think God was more impressed when the blood of thousands of animals was flowing? Does God like to see animals killed?

Listen to what God says to Jonah after Jonah complains that God didn’t destroy the city of Nineveh:

*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. 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*

Do you think God likes the sacrificial shedding of animal blood? What did God actually want?

*“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. When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. 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; wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed.*

*Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. "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. Isaiah 1:11-18*

*"What I want from you is plain and clear: I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me. (Hos 6:6 GN)*

*You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Psalms 51,16,17*

*One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" <sup>29</sup> "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>30</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup> The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." <sup>32</sup> "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. <sup>33</sup> To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup> When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions. Mark 12:28-34*

*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? 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? 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*

What did the children of Israel think of the sacrificial system?

*"He was hated and rejected; his life was filled with sorrow and terrible suffering. No one wanted to look at him. We despised him and said, 'He is a nobody!' He suffered and endured great pain for us, but we thought his suffering was punishment from God. He was wounded and crushed because of our sins; by taking our punishment, he made us completely well." (Isaiah 53:1-5 CEV)*

What did they think God wanted? Why did they think God wanted lots of animal sacrifices? Why did they misunderstand the sacrificial system and therefore misunderstand the Messiah?

*It is the duty of priests to teach the true knowledge of God. People should go to them to learn my will, because they are the messengers of the Lord Almighty. Malachi 2:7 GNT*

*The Lord says, "Let no one accuse the people or reprimand them—my complaint is against you priests. Night and day you blunder on, and the prophets do no better than you... My people are doomed because they do not acknowledge me. You priests have refused to acknowledge me and have rejected my teaching, and so I reject you and will not acknowledge your sons as my priests. Hosea 4:4-6*

*The priests did not ask, 'Where is the Lord?' My own priests did not know me. The rulers rebelled against me; Jeremiah 2:8*

Who was to teach the people the meaning of all this stuff? The priests, but what if the priests don't know God for themselves?

Who are the priests today? We are! Are we making the same mistake today? Are Christians today understanding the sacrificial system very much like the Jews did in the past? Do we think God is pleased by blood, only better blood than animals, the blood of His Son? Do we know God? Are we presenting a better picture than the priests of long ago? What does God want us to learn from this system?

## SUNDAY

The altar of dedication – what was the system designed to teach?

*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 1Cor 3:16*

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 1Cor 6:19*

What is the sanctuary or temple a model or object lesson for? The human soul!

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." Ex 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 wrought 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, worshipping 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}

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}

In the Old Testament service where was the blood applied? In the New Testament, where symbol met reality, where did Christ say the blood is applied? John 6 – in us!

What about the true sanctuary, the one upon which the model was patterned?

*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. Heb 8:1,2*

Who built this sanctuary? God – when?

*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. 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*

What does it mean He will build His sanctuary? Out of what is the sanctuary 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.*

Here is one opinion from one of the founders of this 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. {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}

When we understand that the temple of God is a living structure, then it make sense when the Bible says:

*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*

We also understand why Satan wanted to sit in God's temple – because to sit in God's temple means to be enshrined into the hearts and minds of God's intelligent creatures as the one worshipped and adored!

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What does the ark symbolize?

What does the entire system symbolize? Recovery from sin, restoration to unity and oneness with God. The final culmination is living with God for eternity. Before this happens we are brought into unity, or atonement with Him.

In the Old Testament system where was the law of God kept? In the ark, what about in 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*

What does the ark symbolize?

- The visible presence represents God
- The angels represent the onlooking universe
- The lid – made of solid gold, hilasterion – represents Christ
- The box, made of acacia wood covered in gold – the heart of the believers who are sealed, so settled they cannot be moved
- Three things were kept in ark – 10 Commandments, manna, Aaron's rod that budded – what order were they put in the box?
- The manna first – manna represents what? We must first partake of Jesus, the bread of life who is the truth. As we partake of the truth Jesus brought we are restored to trust in God. In trust we open our hearts and invite Him in...

- Then He fulfills the New Covenant and writes the law on our hearts and minds – and once the law of love is written again in our hearts we...
- Are no longer dead branches, dead in trespass and sin, but are restored to life, lives of love and bring forth fruits of righteousness!

The ark represents God's universe restored to unity when all things in heaven and earth are unified through Christ Jesus. Jesus –the golden lid – is the connecting link as all are united in Him – the Father touches the lid, the angels are on the lid, and the box is covered by the lid – unity again through Jesus!

Middle question – asks us to read Exodus 25:22:

*There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.*

Then asks, “Try to imagine what kind of an experience this would be. How would you like to have that kind of close encounter with God? What makes you think that you wouldn't be destroyed completely were you to get too close to Him?” – thoughts?

## TUESDAY

The Candlestick- made out of solid gold with almonds carved upon it. What does it symbolize?

Christ, primarily, infused with the Holy Spirit, but anything else?

*“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16*

Does the candlestick also represent the believers? Those who are filled with Christ? The High Priest was the one who trimmed the lamps morning and evening, what does this represent? Christ working in the heart/mind of the believer to trim us to shine more brightly for Him!

Interestingly, the sanctuary had almonds and pomegranates associated with it, and both of these foods have been shown to promote brain health and prevent dementia.

## WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY—Dedication of the Levites –

Who do the Levites represent in the system? The priesthood of believers.

What was the duty of the Levites?

The High Priest represented who? Christ

The daily priest represented who?

How were the daily priests dressed? In white, why? What was being taught?

What did the daily priests do? They carried vessels with blood around the system applying blood to the various point and depending on the offering also ate some of the meat and ate the show-bread each Sabbath. What is being taught?

What does it mean in Numbers 8 that the Levites make atonement for the people?

The word translated atonement is:

**3722** כָּפַר, כִּפֵּר [kaphar /kaw-far/] v. A primitive root; TWOT 1023, 1024, 1025, 1026; GK 4105 and 4106; 102 occurrences; AV translates as “atonement” 71 times, “purge” seven times, “reconciliation” four times, “reconcile” three times, “forgive” three times, “purge away” twice, “pacify” twice, “atonement ... made” twice, “merciful” twice, “cleansed” once, “disannulled” once, “appease” once, “put off” once, “pardon” once, and “pitch” once. **1** to cover, purge, make an atonement, make reconciliation, cover over with pitch. **1A** (Qal) to coat or cover with pitch. **1B** (Piel). **1B1** to cover over, pacify, propitiate. **1B2** to cover over, atone for sin, make atonement for. **1B3** to cover over, atone for sin and persons by legal rites. **1C** (Pual). **1C1** to be covered over. **1C2** to make atonement for. **1D** (Hithpael) to be covered.<sup>1</sup>

How do the Levites accomplish this? They stand between God and the people do to what? Why is it important for them to be cleansed and purified? What work are they doing? For what purpose?

Read second paragraph in Thursday’s lesson, “Scholars are divided...” thoughts?

Is this the lesson we are to learn that we need someone to protect us from the wrath of God?

## FRIDAY

Question 1 – Is it only the pastor who functions as a Levite or is it every true believer is a priest of God? Do we err in thinking only of pastors in such a role? What is the danger? Do we set up a false hierarchy in the church? Does this undermine the health of the church?

Questions 2,3 read and discuss.

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v v: verb

TWOT Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

GK Goodrick-Kohlenberger

AV Authorized Version

<sup>1</sup>Strong, James: *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., 1996, S. H3722

## 2009 Q4 Lesson 4 Trumpet, Blood, Cloud, and Fire

When you read the title for this week's lesson what comes to mind?

### SABBATH

Read the first paragraph, "At the last Passover..." thoughts? What did Jesus institute? Was it the reality or another symbolic ceremony? What is the difference between the first symbolic ceremony and the second? What was the Passover designed to teach? What is the communion service designed to teach? Is there a difference?

The Passover pointed forward to the coming of Christ, the communion reminds us of His completed mission on earth and His ongoing mission in our hearts and minds!

In the Passover the blood was applied to the doorposts, what did this symbolize? The life is in the blood and applied to the doorpost symbolizes the life of Christ applied to the door of the life which is the heart.

In the Communion service the wine represented what? The blood of Christ, which is His life and it is taken into the believer, thus it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.

In the Passover they ate the lamb, symbolizing the body of Christ. In the Communion they ate the unleavened bread symbolizing the body of Christ. Both taken into the believer, we eat the words of Christ, we ingest the truth about God as revealed by Christ, we hunger after and internalize the character of Christ.

The Passover preceded their departure from Egypt, likewise the communion precedes our departure from sin. Egypt symbolized enslavement to sin and Pharaoh was symbolic of Satan the ruler of this world of sin. Just as Pharaoh had more truth about God revealed to him than any other leader, yet rejected it and hardened his heart against God, so too, Lucifer had more truth about God revealed to him than any other created being, but rejected it and hardened his heart against God.

As Pharaoh enslaved the Hebrews, Satan enslaved mankind in sin. And as God sent Moses to deliver Israel from Pharaoh and slavery, God sent Jesus to deliver mankind from Satan and sin.

### SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "This was the first..." thoughts?

Who is the Angel of the Lord?

*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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."*

*<sup>4</sup> 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."*

*<sup>5</sup> "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." <sup>6</sup> Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."*

But does anyone's version say that the angel of the Lord struck down the firstborn? The NIV says it was the Lord Himself:

*Exodus 12:12,13, 29 "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. <sup>13</sup> The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt...At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well.*

Thoughts? Does anyone have a problem with this?

God was bringing judgment, not on people, but on all the gods of Egypt – how? The Egyptians worshipped many animals and also chimeras (animal human hybrids), like Anubis who had the body of a man and the head of a jackal. He was the god of the dead or underworld. By slaying the first born of all them, God exposed them as false. God thereby provided evidence to human minds of the impotence of their false gods so that the human beings could “judge” rightly about God and reject the false gods and choose Him. This is what God has been doing throughout the history of the human race.

Was God unleashing anger and wrath to inflict “judgment” and punish unthinking, inanimate idols? Or was God providing evidence of the powerlessness of the idols, and thus giving humans the ability to judge rightly?

In Daniel when the little horn wages war against the saints and overcomes until God gives judgment to the saints – until God provides enough evidence for human beings to judge correctly about God and reject the Satanic version of God (Daniel 7:22).

## MONDAY

Read third paragraph, “The Lord’s leading...” thoughts?

What is the Lord working to do in our lives? Where is the Lord leading us? Is He leading us out of the slavery of sin and into the promised land of eternity?

## Psalm 23

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.*

*<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,*

- Jesus is our caretaker, He will provide for our eternal needs

*<sup>3</sup> he restores my soul.*

*He guides me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.*

- Who is leading? And where is He leading? And for what reason? Then notice where this path of righteousness leads -

*<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk  
through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.*

- This isn't the valley of death – this is the valley of the shadow of death, the valley in which we feel like we are dying, but in which we only die to self, to sin, to the carnal man, to the life of selfishness. Even though we feel like we are dying, we are not afraid because Jesus is there comforting us through the process.

*<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.*

- In the face of worldly opposition, with Satan as a roaring lion seeking to destroy, Jesus pours out His Holy Spirit which ennoble, transforms, recreates, renews and regenerates us to be like Christ. Our hearts overflow with love for God and others!

*<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
forever.*

- Just as we read last week, the rough stones are made smooth in this world through the pruning and preparation of God. We are fitted to be the very building blocks of God's Heavenly Sanctuary and we dwell in the House of Lord forever! We are pillars in God's Temple and never will we leave it!

Read next paragraph, "But there's a deeper issue..." thoughts?

What is being symbolically taught by all of this?

The Jewish nation became God's chosen people – chosen for what? For exclusive salvation? Or chosen to reveal to the world the truth about God and prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah? What method did God give them to reveal this truth? A Grand Play!

The OT Jewish economy is a great theater, the Jewish people were the actors, God was the producer, Moses was the initial director and the Levitical law was the script. They had a beautiful stage, wonderful costumes and intricate props.

But the system did nothing to actually remedy the problem of sin, it only acted out the drama.

Can we identify some of the players and discover some of the lessons?

There are two general themes being taught within the system –

1. God's plan to restore the world (global restoration) to unity with the rest of the universe and
2. God's plan to heal individuals from sin.

Who did the High Priest represent? Jesus

Who did the sacrificial animal represent? Jesus

Who was the only one allowed to go in to see God in the Most Holy Place? The High Priest – then why could Moses go in after Aaron was the High Priest?

- Moses represented Christ before His incarnation when He and the Father counseled together over the plan of salvation.
- The Lamb represented Christ during His incarnation (33 years on earth)
- Aaron represented Christ after His ascension



Who did the children of Israel represent?

The Levites – The church, priesthood of believers

The rest of the tribes – the unconverted people of the world

*The families of the tribe of Levi, however, were not counted along with the others. <sup>48</sup> The LORD had said to Moses: <sup>49</sup> “You must not count the tribe of Levi or include them in the census of the other Israelites. <sup>50</sup> Instead, appoint the Levites to be in charge of the tabernacle of the Testimony—over all its furnishings and everything belonging to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they are to take care of it and encamp around it. Numbers 1:47-50*

*The LORD also said to Moses, <sup>12</sup> “I have taken the Levites from among the Israelites in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman. The Levites are mine, <sup>13</sup> for all the firstborn are mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether man or animal. They are to be mine. I am the LORD.” Numbers 3:11-13*

As the Levites were taken from the rest of the tribes and became God’s, so to Christians are taken from the world, bought with a price and become the Lord’s (Acts 20:28, 1Cor 6:19,20).

*<sup>5</sup> The LORD said to Moses: <sup>6</sup> “Take the Levites from among the other Israelites and make them ceremonially clean. <sup>7</sup> To purify them, do this: Sprinkle the water of cleansing on them; then have them shave their whole bodies and wash their clothes, and so purify themselves. Numbers 8:5-7*

As the Levites were washed and cleansed with water, so too the Christian is washed and renewed by the Holy Spirit.

*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.”*

Levi means *joined unto* and were joined or given to Aaron

*Of all the Israelites, I have given the Levites as gifts to Aaron and his sons to do the work at the Tent of Meeting on behalf of the Israelites and to make atonement for them so that no plague will strike the Israelites when they go near the sanctuary.” Numbers 8:19*

Just as the Levites were joined to Aaron so too the Bride, the Church is joined unto Christ or given to Christ

What does it mean the Levites will make atonement in behalf of the rest of the Israelites? Look at how they camped – does this give any insight? What do we learn about the plan of salvation from the way the camp was arranged?

What do you think this means?

*That is why the Levites have no share or inheritance among their brothers; the LORD is their inheritance, as the LORD your God told them.) DT 10:9*

*The LORD said to Aaron, “You will have no inheritance in their land, nor will you have any share among them; I am your share and your inheritance among the Israelites. Numbers 18:20*

*The Christian is to be a stranger and pilgrim in earth, our citizenship is in heaven. The people of the world worry about acquiring wealth, lands, possessions, we are God's ambassadors to bring people to the eternal home! (Philippians 3:20).*

Did everyone who left Egypt enter the promised land? Why not?

*The spies brought back discouraging reports (except Caleb and Joshua) and the people became afraid and said "would it be better that we died in the land of Egypt" (Numbers 13:26-33, 14:2).*

So what happened?

*In this desert your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. <sup>30</sup> Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. Numbers 14:29,30*

Who would die in the desert? Who, over twenty, entered Canaan?

*Numbers 1:20-44 – "All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed" All the tribes are listed – EXCEPT Levi (vs 47). The Levites were numbered from one month old and upward (Numbers 3:15).*

So the death sentence pronounced upon the children of Israel to die in the wilderness, all twenty and older (except Joshua and Caleb) did not apply to the Levites! Eleazar, Aaron's son, was more than twenty, yet he entered Canaan and was a prominent leader. And Phinehas son of Eleazar also entered the promised land.

What does this teach?

That those who are not bound to Christ become frightened by the devil's schemes, believe Satan's lies and rebel against God and die in the wilderness of this world. However, those who are bound to Christ, while ministering to those dying in the world, will be saved and taken into the promised land. Caleb and Joshua represent those Paul spoke about in Romans 2, those who respond to the Holy Spirit's leading yet have not heard the truth from Scripture.

When they marched they marched in the order that they camped with Levi and the sanctuary in the middle with six tribes in front and six tribes behind and the pillar leading.

What do we learn?

- Entire nation = the world
- Levi = the church
- Pillar = God

What does it teach us? God is constantly working to lead the entire world back to Him (For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son!). Yet, even though God is constantly leading and all the events of nations on earth are under His guidance, not all the people in the world (or Israel) recognize God's leadership. Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Yet God has His people in the midst of the world to work to teach the people the truth about Him!

Likewise today God is still leading, still shining the light of heavenly truth, yet not everyone follows the leading or accepts the truth.

## TUESDAY

Read top paragraph and dark section following – thoughts?

The priests blew the silver trumpets for what purpose?

- To call the entire assembly, blow both trumpets
- To call just the leaders blow one trumpet
- To signal the moving of the camp
- In time of war when an enemy is in their land blow the trumpets and the Lord will deliver
- For all festivals and burnt offerings

But only the priests could blow the trumpets – what does this symbolize?

Who among our teachers are awake and as faithful stewards of the grace of God are giving the trumpet a certain sound? Who are voicing the message of the third angel, calling upon the world to make ready for the great day of God? The message we bear has the seal of the living God. Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students 459

Those who present the truth are to enter into no controversy. They are to preach the gospel with such faith and earnestness that an interest will be awakened. By the words they speak, the prayers they offer, the influence they exert, they are to sow seeds that will bear fruit to the glory of God. There is to be no wavering. The trumpet is to give a certain sound. The attention of the people is to be called to the third angel's message. Let not God's servants act like men walking in their sleep, but like men preparing for the coming of Christ.--Review and Herald, March 2, 1905. {Ev 119.2}

## WEDNESDAY

Read bottom paragraph, “Even our Savior...” When Moses and Elijah came to the Lord do you think they spoke to Him? What do you think they might have said?

## THURSDAY

Read bottom pink section –

*Whenever the ark set out, Moses said,  
“Rise up, O LORD!  
May your enemies be scattered;  
may your foes flee before you.”*

<sup>36</sup> *Whenever it came to rest, he said,  
“Return, O LORD,  
to the countless thousands of Israel.” Numbers 10:35,36*

Thoughts? Why did God not use His power to make everything okay?

What does God want for each of us? Growth, maturity, development of character, how does that happen?

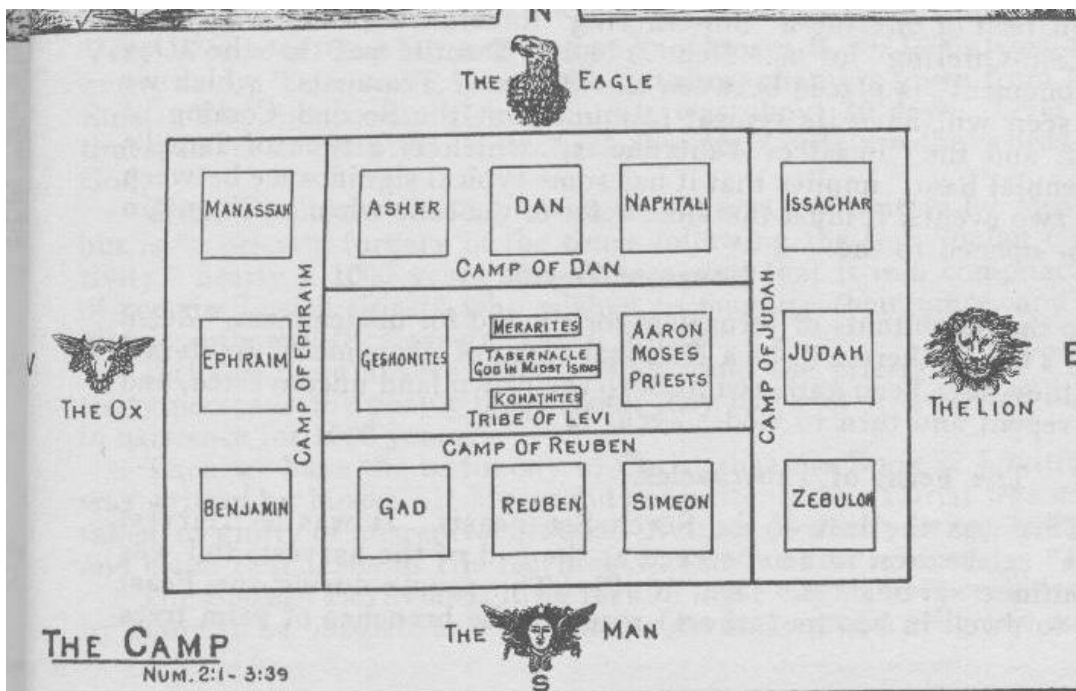
- If a teacher gives you all the answers do you develop the ability to think, reason, problem solve?
- If you have someone else do your piano lessons will your ability improve?
- If you have another person go to physical therapy after your broken leg, will your leg get stronger?

What does God want? Our individual development, growth, maturity and eventual “self-control”, autonomy!

FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

Read and discuss questions 1 and 3



**2009 Q4 Lesson 5      From Complaints to Apostasy**

Notes are not available.

**2009 Q4 Lesson 6      Planning Ahead**

Notes are not available.



**2009 Q4 Lesson 7      Power Struggle**

Notes are not available.

## 2009 Q4 Lesson 8     Priests and Levites

Several weeks back, a question came up regarding the tent of meeting and it was suggested that Moses had a separate tent called the tent of meeting that was outside the camp and was not the Tabernacle. And therefore, Moses did not meet with God in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle after Aaron was High Priest. This is referenced in Exodus 33. I said I would check it out and this is what I discovered.

There was a smaller, temporary tent used by Moses prior to the completion of the larger tabernacle, but both were called the tent of meeting. The smaller temporary tent was initially in the center of the camp but was moved outside the camp after Israel's rebellion to demonstrate they had removed themselves from God's presence.

Regardless of which tent one considers, the point I was making remains when we read Numbers 7:89:

*“When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony. And he spoke with him.”*

It is clear this is the Most Holy Place where the ark was kept. Therefore, my question how is it that Moses could enter after Aaron was anointed High Priest? Because in the theater of the Jewish economy, Moses represented Christ before His incarnation when Christ and God counseled together to enact the plan of salvation. The Lamb represented Christ during His incarnation as our sacrificial Savior. And the High Priest represented Christ after His ascension.

### SABBATH

Memory Text – Numbers 18:20 Read – thoughts? What does it mean God is their inheritance? Why did the other 12 tribes get an inheritance that was something other than God? Was God not their inheritance?

### SUNDAY

Read second paragraph “In Numbers 18:1...” thoughts? What do you think it being taught by the idea that non-priests approaching the sanctuary would defile it?

What do we understand the sanctuary to be? Was the sanctuary in the OT the literal reality of God's truth or an object lesson, a teaching tool? Could any ceremony associated with the OT sanctuary service save a sinner or cleanse a sinner from sin? Or were the ceremonies designed to teach God's method for restoration?

What was the OT sanctuary constructed after? Or upon what was the construction of the OT sanctuary based? Was it modeled after a building in heaven? Where do we get such an idea?

*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.” Heb 8:5*

*“See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” Exodus 25:40*

What was Moses shown on the mountain the actual sanctuary in heaven or a “pattern” a “drawing” a “blueprint” a “template”?

Moses did not see the actual heavenly sanctuary but only a pattern. When someone sees a “pattern” for a dress is that the same as seeing the dress? If someone looks at the blueprints of a house is that the same as seeing the house?

Moses was given a pattern, blueprint, template upon which to make the earthly sanctuary and the blueprint was designed to have Moses build a physical building which would teach things about the heavenly reality. Does that mean the reality in heaven is a building that looks like the earthly? Does that mean the reality of the heavenly sanctuary is built out of heavenly brick and mortar?

What is the heavenly sanctuary? From what is it constructed?

*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.’<sup>13</sup> 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*

*Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” John 2:19*

*Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness<sup>a</sup> is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.<sup>4</sup> 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*

*“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.*

What picture to you get from Scripture regarding the sanctuary of God? When we read in Daniel 8:14 *until 2300 days then shall the sanctuary be cleansed*, what might this be referring to? Could it be the actual restoration of Godliness into people on earth, i.e. cleansing us from sin?

One of the founders of our church recognized this and speaks of it in multiple places:

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**

<sup>a</sup> Some manuscripts *sin*

**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}

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}

If we recognize that the OT sanctuary was a metaphor of the place where God dwells by His Spirit, the heart and minds of His creatures then how do we understand what was being taught in the OT service if a non-priest should approach inside the curtain it would defile the sanctuary?

If we let ungodly things or people into our hearts they defile us, they will turn our hearts from God and His path – consider Samson and Delilah, Solomon and his wives. Allowing, someone who is not a "priest of God" into our hearts allows them the ability to influence our internal world, our thinking, our motives, attitudes, beliefs and can defile our sanctuary.

Does this have implication on who teaches our children? On whom we choose as friends, as marriage partners? Does this have any implication for counseling? Does it mean only a Christian counselor can be helpful?

If we look at the model – did Moses get counsel from Jethro? Was Jethro part of the system or outside it? Yet, Jethro was the priest of Midian. He was not a priest in God's Jewish economy, yet was a priest of God. What does this mean?

That the issue is not about what church you belong to, but who dwells in your heart - are you a follower of God and His methods or are you a follower of Satan and His methods. Could

someone be a priest, even High Priest in the Jewish system and still be a follower of Satan? Those who crucified Christ – therefore, just because someone advertises as a Christian doesn't mean they are a friend of God's or would necessarily be the best person from whom to receive counsel. Just because someone is a Christian pastor doesn't mean they are the best person from whom to receive counseling. Conversely, just because someone doesn't yet recognize Christ as Savior doesn't mean they are outside of God's kingdom or the Holy Spirit isn't working with them.

We must “guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” Prov 4:23. We must be careful who we allow into our “sanctuary.”

What do you think about this idea as the lesson being taught by not allowing a non-priest into the sanctuary?

Any other lessons?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph “When we read...” thoughts? Do you think God had reasons for what He did? Do parents, when talking to children, ever say “because I said so, period”? Why? Is it because the parents are power-mongers, have no reasons for what they do, or because the children either cannot or do not want to understand and the parent still wants to protect them?

Read second paragraph, “Notice, too...”

Underline the last sentence of that paragraph – excellent! “The whole plan of salvation, from start to finish, reveals the Lord's desire to redeem sinful fallen beings from the destruction that sin otherwise brings.” This is extremely well stated and helps us understand the meaning of the first part of the paragraph. What is wrath?

Romans 1:18-32 – Paul tells us three times that the wrath of God is “letting go” to reap the consequences of unremedied sin. But what about the OT?

In Deuteronomy God's wrath is threatened: *“For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that burns to the realm of death below. It will devour the earth and its harvests and set afire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap calamities upon them and spend my arrows against them”* (32:22, 23). *But God says the wise will understand what His wrath really is: “If only they were wise and would understand this and discern what their end will be! How could one man chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, unless the LORD had given them up?”* (Deut 32:29, 30, *emphasis added*).

*“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”*<sup>2</sup> (Deut 31:17, *emphasis added*).

If we understand God's wrath is not God striking out to hurt, but God giving people up to reap what their separation from Him incurs, then what is being taught by the idea that through the Levites God's wrath won't burn against the people?

What were the priests and Levites to do? Take the truth about God and His methods to the people, which would dispel the lies that separate them and would open their hearts to trust Him and

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<sup>2</sup>American Bible Society: *The Holy Bible : The Good News Translation*. 2nd ed. New York: American Bible Society, 1992, S. Dt 31:17

thus reconcile them to God. In other words, ministering the truth about God prevents people from acting on the lies and separating themselves from Him and experience “wrath” – God’s letting them go to experience their own free will choice.

Read third paragraph, “When you think...” thoughts? What ideas are being suggested? Does it sound like God arbitrarily uses His sovereign right to call people and that’s it? Do you think it could have anything to do with the responsiveness of the people called?

- God called Abraham – did Abraham have the responsibility to respond? Could Abraham’s responsive heart had anything to do with why he was called?
- Is every pastor who says they are “called” by God actually “called” by God? Yes and No – has God called all humanity to salvation? Has all humanity responded to God’s call? Have some instead chosen the path of self-exaltation (Caiaphas) yet claim to be called by God?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

When we think of the talents or abilities we have or don’t have, we know God has the ability to directly bless people with talents, skills, gifts and abilities (Samson’s strength, Solomon’s wisdom, Bezalel son of Uri (Exodus 31)) with craftsmanship, does that mean that all talent is directly and divinely instilled in a supernatural way by a divine act of God? In other words, does God determine for every human being which set of talents we receive?

What is being taught in the parable of the talents when those who invested received more but the one who buried his talent had it taken away? Is this God directly using supernatural powers to cause such transformation in ability? Or is it part of God’s design that we are created for adaptation and development and as we apply ourselves in harmony with God’s methods we develop our abilities and gain more abilities, but if we neglect our talents, don’t invest them, and instead bury them with laziness, drugs, etc. what happens?

What is the problem if we globally apply the idea that all talents we have or don’t have are a direct action on God’s part?

## TUESDAY/WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about tithing and offering to support the function of the sanctuary. What lesson do we learn from this? How does it apply to our lives? What is the purpose of the tithe? To promote the gospel – for what purpose? To heal people or cleanse the sanctuary? Where are we to give our tithe?

Here is what one of the founders of our church did:

“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}

I know that the faithful women should be paid wages as it is considered proportionate to the pay received by ministers. They carry the burden of souls and should not be treated unjust-



ly. These sisters are giving their time to educating those newly come to the faith and hire their own work done and pay those who work for them. All these things must be adjusted and set in order and justice be done to all. Proofreaders in the office receive their wages; those who are working at housework receive their wages, two dollars and a half and three dollars a week. This I have had to pay and others have to pay. But ministers' wives, who carry a tremendous responsibility, devoting their entire time, have nothing for their labor.”—12MR 160 (1898).{DG 106.2}

My brother, I wish to say to you, Be careful how you move. You are not moving wisely. The least you have to speak about the tithe that has been appropriated to the most needy and the most discouraging field in the world, the more sensible you will be. {2MR 99.2}

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}

In regard to the colored work in the South, that field has been and is still being robbed of the means that should come to the workers in that field. If there have been cases where our sisters have appropriated their tithe to the support of the ministers working for the colored people in the South, let every man, if he is wise, hold his peace. {2MR 99.4}

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}

I write this to you so that you shall keep cool and not become stirred up and give publicity to this matter, lest many more shall follow their example. --Letter 267, 1905, pp. 1, 2. (To Elder Watson, Jan. 22, 1905.) {2MR 100.3}

Third paragraph “At the same time...”

What lesson is being taught by this? The best was given to the priests because when we serve others in love we always receive more than we give.

## THURSDAY

Read third paragraph “After slaying...” thoughts?

First let’s appreciate the lesson being taught – the priest slew the heifer – what does this symbolize? Not the high priest, but the daily priest – what does it symbolize? It was because of our need, our condition, our terminal state that Christ died.

The blood taken by the priest and sprinkled seven times toward the sanctuary represents what? What does the animal’s blood represent? The life of Christ, which is perfectly applied to the sanctuary – what does the sanctuary represent?

What about the idea of Christ is in heaven using His blood to reconcile God to man?

This is pagan pure and simple – it is not Biblical; it is a hangover from the Dark Ages when paganism infected Christianity. Sadly, it has still not been rooted out of our church, yet needs to be!

The Bible teaches that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (2Cor 5:19). It does not teach that Christ is reconciling the Father to us, the Father does not need to change, appeased, have an attitude adjustment etc. There is nothing wrong with God, there is something wrong with man and Christ’s mission was to fix mankind, not God.

Christ is the Father’s thoughts, heart, attitude, made audible and visible to mankind. They are one!

## FRIDAY

Questions 1 and 2 read and discuss

## 2009 Q4 Lesson 9     The Sin of Moses and Aaron

What was the sin of Moses and Aaron? How would you define sin?

- Is it a commodity transferred from person to animal in a ritualistic way, or perhaps from sinner to Savior?
  - Can sin be transferred?
- Is it bad deeds, evil acts, bad behavior?
- Is it a condition of heart and mind which is incompatible with life?

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 10% of the students:

- Sin is not following the 10 Commandments
- Sin is going against the will of God

How do you hear these responses? Can you categorize them into groups or classes?

- sin is bad behavior, an act of disobedience, something we do wrong; or,
- sin is some evil commodity, entity, element, “some thing” or some “stuff” that separates us from God or makes us unhappy.

What do you think of these answers?

Three students saw sin differently. 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? Why does it make a difference?

- As a doctor, one of the first skills we are taught is how to diagnose, because if the diagnosis is wrong, then the treatment is usually wrong.
- Likewise, how we diagnose what sin is helps us understand God's treatment plan so that we can cooperate more effectively with Him to experience healing of heart and mind.
- Understanding what sin really is helps protect us from accepting as true one of the many false "remedies" or false gospels being promoted around the world.

So what is the right diagnosis? The Bible says, "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. The old King James Version says, "sin is transgression of the law." But we have to answer the next critical question – what law?

Before we can understand what sin is, we need to know what law is being broken, what law is sin out of harmony with? There are two primary ways of describing God's law:

1. A legal enactment by the Creator of the universe. An imposed set of rules to which created beings are required to adhere upon threat of an imposed penalty by the Creator of the law.
2. A principle, emanating from the Creator, upon which life is designed to operate or function. Deviations are inherently incompatible with life as the Creator designed it.

From these two ideas two separate ideas of sin have emerged and subsequently two very different "gospels."

- One version argues God is arbitrary and imposes laws upon His creatures that they must obey. When the law was broken, God, in order to be just, had to impose penalties upon His creatures. This view sees sinful mankind under the legal condemnation of God and without hope of life eternal, unless the "legal penalty" is paid.
- Sin, in this view, is disobedience to an imposed law, rule breaking, bad behavior. Very much like the high school students' description of "not following the 10 Commandments."
- This view of the law leads to the entire penal substitution "gospel."

But what if the law of God is not enacted, imposed, legislated or decreed? What if God's law is something entirely different? If that were the case, wouldn't sin be something different than mere rule breaking? And wouldn't the treatment or solution for sin be something other than legal payment? What does the Bible teach is the law of God?

*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).*

The Bible teaches that God's law is the "law of love"! The "law of love" is not something God "created," but is the life principle that emanates from God's very being, because "God is love"

(1John 4:8). Love is not enacted or legislated or in any other way imposed. It is simply the natural order of all things emanating from the God of love. This law of love is the design template upon which God constructed life to operate and is described in scripture as, “[love is] not self-seeking” (1 Corinthians 13:5). In other words, love is other centered and outward moving. The law of love is the law of giving.

- 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. Sin is **taking** rather than **giving**; **selfishness** rather than **selflessness**.

Thoughts? Then with this in mind what was the “sin” of Moses and Aaron?

Failure to love, failure to put God and others first. Self rising up and taking over the motives of the heart and the actions of the life. And, because of their position why was this so much more serious?

If we saw our pastor walk into the Tent of Meeting, saw the pillar of fire come down and meet with him there, saw him walk out with his face all aglow and then come and speak to us, would his words and actions have significant impact?

## SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, “The water gushed...” thoughts?

What idea about God was communicated by Moses’ action in striking the rock? What happens in the heart/mind when we believe God to be angry, wrathful, severe, unforgiving?

Does this give insight as to why God had to deal with Moses the way He did? What was God trying to say to the people?

Read bottom red section – thoughts? Are we powerless, helpless, just floating along in life waiting for the next event to trigger some angry emotion and hope, when it happens, we can restrain ourselves, or, can we take purposeful actions to reduce the likelihood that we will react with irritation and anger? What are some of those steps?

- Meditation on God’s word

It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. DA 83

- Why might this help?

- By beholding we are changed, we learn the truth of God’s love, we learn methods, tools, truths which we intelligently internalize
- We learn of God’s character and experience greater trust in Him
- Science has revealed that daily meditation on themes of other-centered-love actually causes the Anterior Cingulate Cortex (where we experience love, altruism, empathy) to grow stronger. The ACC is directly wired into the fear and anger centers and calms them. Thus, not only do we experience cognitive growth, relationship growth but our brains actually change and we are less capable of responding in irritation and anger.

- Physical exercise

- Produces proteins that keep the brain healthy and calm the emotion centers
- Good sleep
  - Sleep deprivation decreases the efficiency of the prefrontal cortex and increases irritability.
- Avoiding brain destroying poisons (alcohol, tobacco, drugs) which diminish the effectiveness of the prefrontal cortex and thereby increase violence, aggression, acting out
- Avoiding theatrical entertainment
  - Theatrical TV develops the primitive emotional centers and hinders the development of the prefrontal cortex and leads to more violence, attention problems and acting out
- Altruistic endeavors
  - Strengthens prefrontal cortex, calms the primitive emotional centers and leads to reduced stress hormones, lower blood pressure and better health
- Other ideas?

## MONDAY

Read first paragraph “Chapter 20...” – thoughts? What lessons can we learn from the history of those who came before?

What mantle are we picking up? Are we picking up the gospel mantle or some other thing? Do we see our generation making the same mistakes of the past, resting satisfied on truths already discovered by previous generations or are we pressing forward, always wanting to grow, advance and experience more and more of God’s truth?

Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. 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. {GW 297.2}

The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people, should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves, to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition, and worship they know not what. {GW 298.1}

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. {GW 298.2}

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.

Thoughts? Have any of you, through controversial dialogue, been driven to study and discovered there were ideas previously held that didn't make sense? Have any of you struggled to give explanation for what you believe, finding that it was hard to explain? How can we improve this situation?

What lessons can we learn from those who went before? Anything that might help us hasten the day of the Lord? When the gospel of the kingdom goes to the entire world the end will come, what is the gospel? Has any generation actually taken the gospel to the world or some other message?

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph "However much they..." thoughts? Why did they grumble? Was it because they kept focusing on themselves and took their focus off of all that God had done and was doing for them? Do we ever do this? What can we do to protect ourselves from falling into a similar trap today?

So what did God do to help them focus their minds more clearly? He stepped back so they could see what life would be like without Him – and what did they discover?

Parents, have you ever had a child that was unruly, difficult to deal with, you were constantly intervening to try and protect them but all they did was complain, and criticize? Did you ever just step back and say okay, if that's what you want go ahead, knowing they were going to get injured, but realizing they would never learn if you didn't? Is that what God was doing here?

Do you notice, how God was working in love to open the minds of the people, but how Satan has twisted God's actions so that many teach God was actively punishing, inflicting penalties, being mean, harsh etc.

## WEDNESDAY

Read Numbers 21:5-9

*They spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!" <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup> The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup> The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." <sup>9</sup> So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived. Numbers 21:5-9*

The lesson then says, "How again do we see Moses in the role of intercessor? Why, especially now, did the people need an intercessor?" - thoughts?

Why did the people need an intercessor? Because they didn't know God! Because they believed lies about God, because they needed someone to reveal the truth about God to them! Why do we need an intercessor? Who is our intercessor? What is Christ interceding to accomplish?

*For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form. Col 2:9*

*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. John 14:9*

*God was in the Son reconciling the world to himself 2Cor 5:19*

Was Christ's intercessions for mankind only?

*For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup> 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*

"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}

Read second paragraph, "There are about..." thoughts? Does this have any bearing on how the wicked will die in the end? Does it have any bearing on the plagues that fall in Revelation?

One of the founders of our church put it this way:

"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

## THURSDAY

The lesson reviews some of the early fighting with the nations of Canaan – what do you think about this? Why did the Israelites have to fight?

What was God's plan?

*My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out. <sup>24</sup> Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces. <sup>25</sup> Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, <sup>26</sup> and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span.*

<sup>27</sup> *"I will send my terror ahead of you and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run. <sup>28</sup> I will send the hornet ahead of you to drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way. <sup>29</sup> But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too*

*numerous for you. <sup>30</sup> Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land. Exodus 23:23-30*

Why didn't this plan get enacted?

What impact would it have on them? How would you like to march around a city, have the walls fall down and then go in and put to the sword every man, woman and child? Can you imagine what it would be like to enter a nursery school and, with a sword, kill all the children? Do you think doing such a thing could affect you? Did it affect the Hebrews?

## FRIDAY

Read second paragraph "Here was ground with which..." thoughts?

Read question 1 – thoughts? No question their healing was an act of God using His divine power – the question – when God heals does He violate His laws? Do miracles occur in violation of God's laws or only in harmony with them – including the laws of nature?

## 2009 Q4 Lesson 10 The “Madness” of the Prophet

### SABBATH

Read Memory Text – “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” KJV

Do you believe this to be true? Is it literal or metaphorical? Is money the root to all evil? Did Lucifer in heaven sin because he was motivated by money?

Two potential ways to understand the text:

1. Money is the root of a variety of evil, lots of evil or different kinds of evil:

*“For the love of money is a root of **all kinds** of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” NIV, ESV, GNT, NCV, NRSV*

*For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. NASB 95*

Does it make a difference “all evil” versus “all kinds of evil”?

2. Money is symbolic of what money does – power and the love of power is the root of all evil? Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.
  - Did Satan want power? Did his desire or love for power corrupt him and lead to all evil?
  - Does this mean power is bad or evil? Or possessing power is evil?
  - Does God have power? Does God (Father, Son and Spirit) love power, seek power, pursue power? What does God do with power?
    - God disperses it, expends it, gives it away for the good of others

*Your attitude should be the same as that of 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, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Thoughts? Why will Jesus be exalted? Is this exaltation something conferred or something earned? In what way is Jesus exalted over all others? Is it in some ability, capacity, talent, power He didn’t previously possess? Or is it be in the awareness or minds of created beings that they have an exalted appreciation of the true nature and character of Jesus?

What kept them from having such an appreciation previously?

Why will every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord? Will they be forced at flaming sword point?

“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.... Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. ... 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. ...**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 37, 38

Why was this meeting needed? When God proclaimed the true position of Jesus did the proclamation settle the issue and were all heavenly intelligences convinced? Does this inform us of how and why Jesus is exalted in the end? Is it due to the Father's declaration or Jesus' accomplishment?

Were angels the only ones blinded by Lucifer's deceptions? Have human beings been blinded and confused about God and Christ?

Read first two paragraphs, “The story of...” thoughts? Any examples of this?

Alcohol and drugs – what happens when we use alcohol and drugs? The prefrontal cortex is impaired, judgment is undermined, initiative is diminished, the fear/mood centers become disinhibited, self-control is undermined and over time brain damage occurs. We lose the ability to recognize what is happening.

What about bigotry, pride, arrogance? What happens to the ability to discern?

When we violate the law of love – commit adultery, steal, murder, gossip etc. The conscience will convict of guilt. Guilt is a destructive emotion. It causes activation of the negative of the stress cascade, increases destructive cytokines and activates the inflammatory cascade.

Because guilt is such a negative emotion we want to get rid of it. Assuming the guilt is appropriate guilt there are two ways to not experience it.

1. Experience God's grace – repentance and restoration
2. Denial and distortion – “it wasn't me; it was that woman...” But this always results in damage to the mind, warped reason, seared conscience and impaired judgment and thus over time we lose the ability to discern right from wrong or even the awareness that something is wrong

The Biblical metaphor of leprosy is quite accurate. We lose sensitivity.

## SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, “It's kind of ironic...” thoughts?

What kind of characteristics do pagan gods possess? Ashtoreth, Baal, Belzabub, Molech? Are they generally considered to be gentle, kind, beneficent? Are they thought to be powerful? And are they open to be influenced by the worshipper?

Spiritualism constantly projects the idea that we humans can “control” the spirits or get them to do our bidding. Thus voodoo dolls, incantations, magic, spells all are designed to get the spirits or gods to do the bidding of the human agent. If this is how Balak thought gods worked is it surprising he sought out Balaam to get Balaam to influence the God of Israel to do Balak's bidding?

Additionally, what is Satan's power? Hebrews says that Satan has the power of death, what is that power? John 17:3 tells us life eternal is knowing God. If eternal life is knowing God then what would cause death? Not knowing God, then what is Satan's power? Lies about God he gets us to believe.

Satan's power over us is in getting us to believe lies! What we believe has power over us and Satan is the father of lies.

With this in mind, what are superstitions?

a belief or notion, not based on reason or knowledge, in or of the ominous significance of a particular thing, circumstance, occurrence, proceeding, or the like

Was Balak superstitious? Do people who believe false god concepts become superstitious? And what do superstitions do to the human being? Do they increase fear and irrational decision making?

Then, while incantations and curses have no direct power to injure, could they have power if the people were to hear and believe them? Is this why God intervened to influence Balaam away from cursing Israel – because they were so immature they may very well have been harmed by such a curse?

This is what was happening in Romans 14 when some members were afraid to eat certain foods. In the market the meat sold was the meat of sacrificial animals offered to pagan gods. Some of the immature Christians were afraid to eat the meat for fear it was cursed and could harm them. Paul said those with great faith understood the pagan god is stone or wood and cannot harm you and therefore could eat anything without difficulty. However, if faith was weak and one believed the pagan god had power then don't eat the food.

Was Paul dealing with the laws of nutrition? No, he was dealing with the mind – that all food is spiritually clean i.e. not under some magic curse and capable of undermining your faith in God. However, this doesn't mean all food is equally healthy.

## MONDAY

Balaam – was Balaam an Israelite? No, he was an Aramaean prophet, what does this tell us? Did God speak and work only through the Israelites? Did God speak with Balaam and did Balaam know the true God? Was Balaam given the gift of prophecy?

*I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. Numbers 24:17*

This is a Messianic prophecy given by God through Balaam. What does this mean? If someone has the gift of prophecy and prophesies from the true God does that mean we should trust what that prophet says? Or are we still responsible for knowing God for ourselves, for checking out the evidence for ourselves, for thinking for ourselves and coming to our own conclusion? Why? Can prophets lie and be wrong?

Read second paragraph, "Balaam had urged..." thoughts? When Balaam didn't curse Israel as Balak wanted him to, what advice did Balaam give Balak? To seduce the Israelites into idolatry through the various fertility cults and this would result in their curse - what happened?

Why and how does this result in a curse from God?

## THURSDAY

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

If you haven't been to Brad Cole's revamped website [www.godscharacter.com](http://www.godscharacter.com) I encourage you to check it out. He has a section of quotes people have said about God. Here is one from a woman named Sharon Baker:



Whereas retributive justice seeks to fit the punishment to the crime, attempting to control wrongdoing through punishment, restorative justice forgives the crime and seeks to redeem wrongdoing through a repairing of the relationship...Justice, therefore, does not mean 'getting let off the hook,' or 'getting away with murder' (or worse). It means coming face to face with the shameful depravity of personal sin by coming face to face with the One who has the right and the power to punish but who instead loves and forgives. Love and forgiveness instead of anger and punishment bring repentance and redemption and in this manner, justice is served.

Thoughts? What is justice in God's government? What does God's justice look like?

Justice is doing the right or just act – what is the right or just act when the motive is perfect love for the other person?

## FRIDAY

Read top paragraph, "He who will abuse..." thoughts? Will angels have to testify? Why or why not? Which is more impactful to persuade you of someone's guilt, hearing the personal testimony from a victim or witness, or watching the security video of it happening and hearing the perpetrator describe the crime with their own mouth?

Will we have accurate recording of all the lives of all people to watch in better than 3D? Will we have even more - real time evidence of how each person acts when they see the reality of God's presence?

Then why use such language? What kind of people need to hear such a message? Those who are being cruel to animals. And what kind of minds do such people have? How tender are their consciences, how open to truth? How sensitive to the movements of the Holy Spirit? How much of God's true nature to such individuals know and appreciate? Then what kind of message will need to be given to reach them and convict them of wrong?

Does this give us some insight into why the Bible reads like it does in many places? What kind of people was God dealing with?

- Korah, Dathan and Abiram we just read about – their rebellion and how the earth swallowed them up – what happened the next day? The entire camp was in rebellion again –
- The Levite and his concubine
- When Christ wanted to heal someone on Sabbath what did the leaders do? When He did heal the man they went out to plot his death
- After raising Lazarus – they went to plot His death

Does the condition of the people have anything to do with the way the Bible reads?

Read question number 1 and discuss – Did God make Balaam into a robot and force the words from Balaam's lips? Did God take away Balaam's freedom? Or did God present evidence to Balaam that convinced Balaam to say what God wanted Him to say?

If God was going to take over one of His creature's brains, at some point in history, and program them like a robot to speak what He wanted them to speak, why didn't He just do that with Lucifer and avoid the entire sin problem?

Can love exist in an atmosphere without freedom? Will God violate His own character of love?

## TUESDAY

Read Numbers 22:21-33:

<sup>21</sup> Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab. <sup>22</sup> But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the LORD stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. <sup>23</sup> When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat her to get her back on the road.

<sup>24</sup> Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between two vineyards, with walls on both sides. <sup>25</sup> When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat her again.

<sup>26</sup> Then the angel of the LORD moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. <sup>27</sup> When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff. <sup>28</sup> Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"

<sup>29</sup> Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now."

<sup>30</sup> The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?"

"No," he said.

<sup>31</sup> 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.

<sup>32</sup> The angel of the LORD asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me. <sup>33</sup> The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared her."

Thoughts? What do you think of Balaam's response to his donkey? Rather bizarre unless he was in Narnia – don't you think?

Do you think this event was designed to turn Balaam away from going to Balak? Or was it designed to prepare Balaam to do what the Lord wanted? Do you think after this experience Balaam was more willing to listen to what the Lord said and less likely to speak his own words?

## WEDNESDAY

Read Numbers 23:7-10

*Then Balaam uttered his oracle:*

*"Balak brought me from Aram,  
the king of Moab from the eastern mountains.  
'Come,' he said, 'curse Jacob for me;  
come, denounce Israel.'*

<sup>8</sup> *How can I curse  
those whom God has not cursed?  
How can I denounce  
those whom the LORD has not denounced?*

<sup>9</sup> *From the rocky peaks I see them,  
from the heights I view them.  
I see a people who live apart  
and do not consider themselves one of the nations.*

<sup>10</sup> *Who can count the dust of Jacob  
or number the fourth part of Israel?  
Let me die the death of the righteous,  
and may my end be like theirs!”*

Thoughts? What does it mean to die the death of the righteous? The lesson suggests we read Romans 3:20-24 let's read through verse 26

*Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. <sup>21</sup> But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. <sup>22</sup> This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup> God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, <sup>a</sup> through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— <sup>26</sup> 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? What does it mean to you? How do you hear it? Here is my paraphrase:

*Therefore, no one will be declared to be perfectly healthy and 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.*

<sup>3:21</sup> *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. <sup>22</sup> 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, <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> Yet all, who are willing, are healed freely by God's gracious remedy that has been provided by Jesus Christ. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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.*

## FRIDAY

Questions 3 and 4 read and discuss

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<sup>a</sup> Or as the one who would turn aside his wrath, taking away sin

## 2009 Q4 Lesson 11 Immorality on the Border

### SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs – “Here again...” thoughts?

Did God want to do more than bring them into the land of promise? What more did God want to do?

What does it mean that God’s overriding providence succeeded then and will succeed? Did God’s overriding providence succeed in accomplishing what God truly wanted to accomplish? Did God want them to wander 40 years in the desert? Did God want them to kill when they entered the land of Canaan? Did God want them to get involved with fertility cults? Are their limits to God’s providence?

Providence – “the foreseeing care and guidance of God or nature over the creatures of the earth.”

Can we limit God’s ability to care for us? Does that alter God’s providence – not His desire but what actually transpires, what He actually does?

Why did He bring the ancient people into the promised land? Was it because they were righteous, mature, spiritually healthy people?

*“Listen, people of Israel! Today you are about to cross the Jordan River and occupy the land belonging to nations greater and more powerful than you. Their cities are large, with walls that reach the sky. The people themselves are tall and strong; they are giants, and you have heard it said that no one can stand against them. But now you will see for yourselves that the LORD your God will go ahead of you like a raging fire. He will defeat them as you advance, so that you will drive them out and destroy them quickly, as he promised. After the LORD your God has driven them out for you, **do not say to yourselves that he brought you in to possess this land because you deserved it. No, the LORD is going to drive these people out for you because they are wicked. It is not because you are good and do what is right that the LORD is letting you take their land. He will drive them out because they are wicked and because he intends to keep the promise that he made to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You can be sure that the LORD is not giving you this fertile land because you deserve it. No, you are a stubborn people. Never forget how you made the LORD your God angry in the desert. From the day that you left Egypt until the day you arrived here, you have rebelled against him**” (Deuteronomy 9:1-7 GN)*

Why did God bring the people into the land of Canaan? Because God was working on a larger mission, on the salvation of the entire planet and the eradication of sin from the universe- which means Jesus had to come. Therefore, God was working through Abraham’s descendants to keep the promise given – to bring the Seed – the Messiah, through whom salvation would come.

Did the children of Israel have to be spiritually mature for God to accomplish this purpose? Are there any differences between God’s providence working to bring the children of Israel into Canaan and His providence in working to bring us into our eternal promised land?

*Can we be in the same spiritual condition as the Jews were when we enter our promised land? Do we have a role to play in, as Peter says, to not only look forward to the day of the Lord but to “speed its coming”? (2Pet 3:12)?*

*With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 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 3:8,9*

What is God waiting for, the world to get more wicked or His people to get more righteous – or both?

“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.” [Mark 4:29]. 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}

Thoughts? Do you agree with this perspective, that God is waiting for a people to be ready to meet Him and then He will come? Is that something God accomplishes on His own, or does that require our participation?

Any suggestions on how we can cooperate with God to experience His healing of our minds and hearts more quickly?

1. Know God – the truth about Him as revealed in Jesus
  - Study the truth for yourself
  - God’s word is a revelation of Himself
2. Meditate upon His character/works daily
  - Brain science reveals meditation on God’s true character of love changes the brain and strengthens the area we experience empathy, other centered love, compassion and altruism
  - “It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit.” DA 84
3. Apply His principles to your life as you understand them
  - Engage in ministry, give of yourself to others
  - As we apply these principles the brain rewires
  - “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2Cor 9:7
4. Reject legal payment models which promote false security in something Christ legally did and fails to include the application of Christ’s character to your life.
  - “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}

*“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. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.” John 16:13,14*

“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}

#### 5. Confess sin one to another – why?

- “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
- When we sin, we are filled with fear, shame, guilt, self-loathing and anxiety that we will be rejected, abandoned, that no one will love us, that we are not good enough etc. This leads to isolation, internal turmoil, unresolved guilt and living behind masks.

This causes increased worry and fear and the activation of the stress response. This is the primary emotion associated with sin and leads to more self-protection. This chronic stress response causes the release of inflammatory factors which damage brain and body and increases, medical and mental illness. What is the only remedy for fear? Love, perfect love casts out all fear.

When we confess our sins, shortcomings, failings and experience acceptance, love and grace it is healing and powerful.

- Consider the woman caught in adultery – what empowered her to go forward and live a better life?
- Is our church a place where people can take off their masks, confess their hearts to one another and experience love, acceptance and help to overcome? Or is it like Philip Yancey describes in the opening page of his book *What’s So Amazing About Grace*:

- “I told a story in my book *The Jesus I Never Knew*, a true story that long afterward continued to haunt me. I heard it from a friend who works with the down-and-out in Chicago:

A prostitute came to me in wretched straights, homeless, sick, unable to buy food for her two-year-old daughter. Through sobs and tears, she told me she had been renting out her daughter—two years old!—to men interested in kinky sex. She made more renting her daughter for an hour than she could earn on her own in a night. She had to do it, she said, to support her own drug habit. I could hardly bear hearing her sordid story. For one thing, it made me legally liable—I’m required to report cases of child abuse. I had no idea what to say to this woman.

At last I asked if she had ever thought of going to church for help. I will never forget the look of pure, naïve shock that crossed her face. “Church!” she cried. “Why would I ever go there? I was already feeling terrible about myself. They’d just make me feel worse.”

What struck me about my friend’s story is that women much like this prostitute fled toward Jesus, not away from him. The worse a person felt about herself, the more likely she saw Jesus as a refuge. Has the church lost that gift? Evidently the down-and-out, who flocked to Jesus when he lived on earth, no longer feel welcome among his followers. What has happened?



Thoughts?

- What would happen in our church if someone came in with a remorseful heart confessing a problem with pornography, alcohol, marijuana, premarital sex, adultery? Would they experience grace?
1. Avoid theatrical entertainment
    - Theatrical entertainment activates limbic system and turns off the higher cortical centers and makes it harder to appreciate truth, hear the Holy Spirit and overcome fear and selfishness.
    - Teaches values, beliefs, concepts which impact decision making
    - Read FRIDAY first paragraph, “It was when...”
  2. Avoid toxic substances – damage the higher brain regions (Pre Frontal Cortex) and impair judgment and self-control
  3. Exercise - not only healthier body but brain produces factors which keep the brain healthy, calms the emotional centers, has anti-inflammatory effects, which reduces the risk of depression and improves the organization of the thought processes.
  4. Trust God with the future, with the outcome of events!

## SUNDAY

Read Numbers 25:1-3 “While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, <sup>2</sup> who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate and bowed down before these gods. <sup>3</sup> So Israel joined in worshiping the Baal of Peor. And the LORD’s anger burned against them.”

Read fourth paragraph, “Sex, food...” thoughts?

Any other examples in scripture of sexual relations being the avenue of downfall, in which men or women who were called by God were brought down through sex? Sampson, Solomon, any others?

Why is this such a powerful medium? When we have sexual relations with a person, there is a neurobiological change in our brain that emotionally ties us to the person. We become more susceptible to their influence and less capable of making an objective choice. During sex, dopamine surges occur in the reward pathways, combined with special neuropeptides called oxytocin and vasopressin. This combination of brain chemicals causes a biological bonding to the person with whom you have had sexual relations, making it harder to resist their influence over you.

This of course is predicated on having initial desire or attraction on your part for your sexual partner. The bonding impact does not occur when someone is sexually traumatized because such an experience is not pleasurable, dopamine doesn’t surge, but instead the fear cascade is initiated resulting in revulsion for the person not bonding.

Does this give any insight into why God warns against adultery and premarital sex? Does it give any insight as to why Satan attacks us sexually?

What do you think it means the Lord’s anger burned against them? Why was the Lord angry?

Parents, if you had a child in high-school and you found out your child was sexually active with prostitutes – would you be angry? Why? Would you hate your child? Would you want to literally kill your child? Would you be angry about the damage happening to your child as a result of their own foolish choices?

How do we understand God's anger resulting in many of them dying?

Imagine you are a soldier in Viet Nam, you are on guard duty up in a tower/tree and a 5-year-old Vietnamese child is walking toward your camp carrying a sack and you know it is explosives. If you do nothing what will happen? In order to stop many of your friends from being killed what do you have to do? What would you do? Would such a situation make you angry? Why would you be angry? Would you be angry at the child? Would you be angry because, in order to save in this horrible situation, you would have to kill the child?

You are not angry at the child because the child is a pawn of some evil person.

The Israelites and the women who seduced them were also being used as pawns by Satan, to do what? To try and destroy the entire camp of Israel so that the avenue for the Messiah will be closed.

What did God find it necessary to do? Kill over 20,000 of them. Do you think God enjoyed this?

## MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "At Balaam's suggestion..."

What is Satan's goal? What is Satan trying to accomplish with respect to human beings? Do you agree with this possibility, described by E.G. White?

"Satan's aim had been to reproduce his own character in human beings. No sooner was man created than Satan resolved to efface in him the image of God, and to place his stamp where God's should be." 6BC 1119

What is God trying to accomplish?

*"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. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> '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. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. EZ 36:22-27*

Thoughts? Does this text have any bearing on Revelation 14:7

*"Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come"?*

How do we give glory to God? How is God glorified? When He restores His image in us, when we have characters like His who gets the credit?

## TUESDAY

Great statement in the middle of the lesson "God calls us to obey Him, not because He's a demanding tyrant but because He loves His children and knows what's best for us."

Read top paragraph, "The fact..." thoughts?

Balaam was a prophet of God, weren't they right to listen to the prophet? Should we be cautious about following prophetic instructions? What about today? Should we use our own judgment in deciding what instructions to follow from God's prophets or should we say, well God's prophet said it then we should follow it? Any other examples from other prophets?

Deuteronomy 14:22-26

*Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. <sup>23</sup> Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always. <sup>24</sup> But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the LORD your God and cannot carry your tithe (because the place where the LORD will choose to put his Name is so far away), <sup>25</sup> then exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the LORD your God will choose. <sup>26</sup> Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, **wine or other fermented drink**, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice.*

Should we take the Bible as it reads, "God said it, I believe it, that's all there is." Okay, I have a new church mission project, let's take the tithe and open a wine store off the church lobby – good idea??

*Proverbs 31: 6,7 "Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more.*

Should we use the tithe to open a bar in the inner city for the homeless and poor? What does this mean? Should we think? And if we think what is likely to be message of Proverbs? Should we use pain medicines to give those who are dying of metastatic cancer so that their suffering will be eased? Is this the principle of Proverbs?

Let's consider another, from Thursday's lesson, Dt 21:10-14:

*When you go to war against your enemies and the LORD your God delivers them into your hands and you take captives, <sup>11</sup> if you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife. <sup>12</sup> Bring her into your home and have her shave her head, trim her nails <sup>13</sup> and put aside the clothes she was wearing when captured. After she has lived in your house and mourned her father and mother for a full month, then you may go to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife. <sup>14</sup> If you are not pleased with her, let her go wherever she wishes. You must not sell her or treat her as a slave, since you have dishonored her.*

Thoughts? Do you like this idea of trial marriages? What's going on?

Jesus gives insight in Matthew 19:3-8

*Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"*

*<sup>4</sup> "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' <sup>5</sup> 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'? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."*

*<sup>7</sup> "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"*

<sup>8</sup> *Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.*

Why did God, through Moses, give them rights of divorce? Their hearts were hard and they were immature. Look back to the Deuteronomy text, what was the basis to marry? In the context of marauding and killing her family you see a girl and are physically attracted. Do you take time to get to know her, build a relationship, find out her personality? No, you say, “she’s hot! I want her for my wife.” So what does God do? He gives an instruction to take her home, shave her head, cut her nails and then listen to her whine for an entire month, and if you still find her attractive then marry her. But, children, this is not a good foundation for a marriage. It is likely there are going to be problems. She may very well not want to stay with the man who killed her parents, therefore, if she wants to leave let her go!

Is this an example of God working with people where they were, trying to bring them to where He wanted them to be? It was not his ideal, but he knew what they were likely to do. So, He had them shave the heads of the women, in part, I think not just for mourning but to make them less attractive. He had them wait a month under the pretext of mourning, but I think to give time for the infatuation to wear off a little, to be worn down by their crying and whining. Also, the relationship was based only on physical attraction “if you find a beautiful woman and are attracted to her” and the month would give time to have other personality traits, etc. be considered.

But, I think God did not want them keeping these pagan women as wives and therefore he made it very easy to get rid of them. Consider what happened after the 70-year captivity with Ezra and how they were all told to get rid of their heathen wives. Why? Because of the influence they would have in turning the people away from God.

Do you think we should practice this Bible directive today?

What do we learn about God that He permitted such things? What was He dealing with? Do we see an incredibly gracious, patient, loving God working with terrible immature people?

Do we have similar problems today?

## WEDNESDAY

Great statement in last paragraph, “It’s not that God can’t forgive our sin; it’s that the sin can so warp us that we can get to the point that we don’t even see it as sin any longer.” – thoughts?

The problem with sin is that it changes the sinner, warps the mind and impairs the judgment.

Check out this EGW quote, written in the 1890’s sent to Uriah Smith, editor of the Review, who didn’t like it, so he filed it away in the Review files and never published it. It was discovered in the 1950’s and published in the selected messages:

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}

This is exactly what sin does. Sadly, Satan has tricked so many into being afraid of God, who is trying to heal and save, rather than the sin which is destroying us!

## THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “After the terrible...”

Do you like these kinds of explanations that say nothing and tell you, basically, not to think and just trust? Isn't that the attitude that got the Israelites into this mess as they trusted Balaam and didn't think for themselves?

Was the destruction of the Midianites “justice”? How so? In the sense of God giving up the Midianites to reap what they had sown? Was it for some other purpose? If God's justice works by people using military might to kill violators of God's law and seducers of His people, then wouldn't that mean that the Muslim Jihadists methods are the right methods? If God's justice works this way then shouldn't we Christians be organizing into military units and hunting down sexual perverts, pornographers, molesters and killing them and their entire families?

Is it an example of God's emergency measures, fighting, to, with as little killing as possible, keep open the channel through which the Messiah would come? Do you notice that since Jesus came and completed His mission on earth that God has not done such things in human history as He did prior to Christ's arrival on earth.

## FRIDAY

Questions 1-3 read and discuss

## 2009 Q4 Lesson 12 The Second Generation: Admonitions

### SABBATH

In the middle of the first paragraph it states, “In spite of the divine judgment on the nation, in which the first generation (except for Joshua and Caleb) perished, God had multiplied them abundantly, and the armies of Israel mustered in the plains of Moab were for all practical purposes as large as those of the first generation.”

What did we learn earlier in this quarter about who entered Canaan after the 40 years in the wilderness? Was Joshua and Caleb the only men from the first generation to enter Canaan? No, the Levites were not counted in the general census but were counted separately

*The families of the tribe of Levi, however, were not counted along with the others. <sup>48</sup> The LORD had said to Moses: <sup>49</sup> “You must not count the tribe of Levi or include them in the census of the other Israelites. <sup>50</sup> Instead, appoint the Levites to be in charge of the tabernacle of the Testimony—over all its furnishings and everything belonging to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they are to take care of it and encamp around it. Numbers 1:47-50*

*In this desert your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. <sup>30</sup> Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. Numbers 14:29,30*

Who would die in the desert? Who, over twenty, entered Canaan?

*Numbers 1:20-44 – “All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed” All the tribes are listed – EXCEPT Levi (v 47).*

The Levites were numbered from one month old and upward (Numbers 3:15).

So the death sentence pronounced upon the children of Israel to die in the wilderness, all twenty and older (except Joshua and Caleb) did not apply to the Levites! Eleazar, Aaron’s son, was more than twenty, yet he entered Canaan and was a prominent leader. And Phinehas son of Eleazar also entered the promised land.

What does this teach?

That those who are not bound to Christ become frightened by the devil’s schemes, believe Satan’s lies and rebel against God and die in the wilderness of this world. However, those who are bound to Christ, while ministering to those dying in the world, are not frightened away by Satan’s lies and will be saved and taken into the eternal promised land. Caleb and Joshua represent those Paul spoke about in Romans 2, those who respond to the Holy Spirit’s leading yet have not heard the truth from Scripture.

### SUNDAY

Numbers 27:1-11 describes where the daughters of Zelophehad, a descendent of Manasseh son of Joseph, petitioned for a portion of land since their father had no sons. The word from God was that they were right and that they should receive the portion of land due their father as their inheritance. According to the Lord what were they right about?

*Why should our father’s name disappear from his clan because he had no son? Give us property among our father’s relatives.” Verse 4.*



What do you think about the inheritance of land and how they handled it? Why was, and is to this day, the land so important? Is the land really important in God's economy or was it, just like the OT sanctuary, merely part of the symbolic system to teach something? Is there something special about the soil or earth there? Some would suggest yes, what did Jesus say?

In John 4:19 Jesus is conversing with the woman and the well, when the woman asks a question:

*<sup>19</sup>“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”*

What place is more holy? What space is most spiritually special? Where is the land that is the best location to worship God? How did Jesus reply?

*Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” Vs 21-24*

Here is my paraphrase of John 4:19-24

*John 4:19 Shocked and somewhat uncomfortable with such a personal revelation the woman said, “Sir, to know such things you must certainly be a prophet. <sup>20</sup>So please help me with a problem. Our people have always worshiped God here on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship God is in Jerusalem, which is it?”*

*John 4:21 Jesus declared, “Believe me dear woman, the place one worships God is not important, but the condition of the heart of the worshiper is what matters. Very soon you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You Samaritans worship a confusing tradition of rituals that don't enlighten the mind and has no ability to heal the worshiper; we worship the Creator God and our minds are enlightened and healed by him because all he asks of us is sensible and reasonable. The plan to heal humanity from the infection of selfishness and sin is provided through the Jews. <sup>23</sup>The time has now come that all true worshipers will worship the Father with an intelligent reasonable understanding of who he is – loving, admiring and respecting the truth about his nature, character, and methods; these understanding worshipers are the kind the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup>God is intelligent and reasonable, and his worshipers must worship him intelligently and reasonably, appreciating and valuing the truth of God's methods and principles.”*

So what do we make of the land? Why was it given and what was it to teach?

Who did the various tribes represent? Did the tribes that inherited land represent the saved followers of Christ? No, the Levites represented Christ's followers – the other tribes represented those who have yet to come to Christ. Does this give a clue?

What is it that the people of the world want? They want money, power, land, and a name for themselves. Thus, the tribes want land so their names can be remembered.

The land was to remain in the family and never be able to be permanently sold. Every 50 years the land would revert back to its original owner. What was God trying to teach with this? Was God trying to set out a system, that if the world followed, would minimize poverty, hunger, and the accumulation of great wealth by some at the exploitation of others?

What was the inheritance of the Levites?

*That is why the Levites have no share or inheritance among their brothers; the LORD is their inheritance, as the LORD your God told them. DT 10:9*

*The LORD said to Aaron, "You will have no inheritance in their land, nor will you have any share among them; I am your share and your inheritance among the Israelites. Numbers 18:20*

Does that mean the Levites names would not be remembered? Whose name did the priests and Levites want remembered? Name means character. The priests and Levites symbolize those who are not trying to promote earthly gain, or promote themselves but who want to promote the truth about God!

What inheritance are you desiring?

## MONDAY

Read top paragraph, "After so many..." thoughts? When God says He is going to do something are His promises absolute, unconditional certainties, or are some of God's promises conditional upon us? In other words, are some of God's promises made dependent upon our response "If you do this I will do that"? Any examples?

- The promises to the descendants of Abraham?
- The promises to each of us as individuals for salvation?
  - God's promise to provide a Savior was not dependent upon our response, but what about God's promise to heal/save us as individuals?
- Others?

Joshua becomes the successor to Moses and is acknowledged as such before all the people. How did the people respond?

*Then they answered Joshua, "Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. <sup>17</sup> Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Joshua 1:16,17*

If you were Joshua, what might you have thought about this response? Oh, please, not that????

## TUESDAY

Read second paragraph "Numbers 28:1-8 describes..." thoughts? What do you think is symbolized by the daily? The constant work of the Godhead within the hearts and minds of mankind to heal and restore?

What do you think is being described in Daniel 8:11-14

*It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. <sup>12</sup> Because of rebellion, the host of the saints and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.*

*<sup>13</sup> Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, "How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?"*

*<sup>14</sup> He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated."*

What is Satan's goal? What is Satan trying to accomplish with respect to human beings? Do you agree with this possibility, described by E.G. White?

“Satan's aim had been to reproduce his own character in human beings. No sooner was man created than Satan resolved to efface in him the image of God, and to place his stamp where God's should be.” 6BC 1119

How does taking away the daily do this? The daily represents Christ's work of revealing truth about God and the application of His character within the heart/mind of the believer. Taking away the daily represents the false god constructs that have supplanted the truth Christ brought in the minds of people. This is what Paul was referring to in 2Thes when the man of sin would arise and set himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God. Does this give insight as to why it would take 2300 years for the sanctuary to be cleansed?

What is God trying to accomplish?

*“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. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> “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. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. EZ 36:22-27*

Thoughts? Does this have any bearing on Revelation 14:7, ““Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come””?

How do we give glory to God? How is God glorified? When He restores His image in us, when we have characters like His who gets the credit?

## WEDNESDAY

Is about Vows and Oaths – why is it important that we keep our word?

If a parent tells their first grade child that they will give them \$10 for a 100% on a spelling bee and the child brings home a 100% but the parent doesn't give the money, what does the parent teach the child? That the parent cannot be trusted!

What if the parent says, if you don't put away your toys you cannot have dessert tonight after dinner. And the child doesn't put away the toys and when the dessert is being served and the child isn't getting one, the child begins to cry and wail and the parent gives a dessert anyway. What does the parent teach the child? That the parent cannot be trusted!

What impact does this have on the child? Increases fear and anxiety, just as Adam, when he believed lies about God and therefore believed God could not be trusted experienced fear and rebelled. Likewise, when we don't keep our word with our children we give them a real reason not to trust us and increase their distrust in us and thereby increase the amount of fear and anxiety with which they struggle. This generally leads to more acting out of various kinds as the children

seek for something stable and reliable in which to trust and thereby reduce their fear and anxiety – and until they find it they remain in rebellion seeking to watch out for themselves!

Read first paragraph, “It’s one thing...” thoughts? Do you accept this statement as always true? What about Rahab? What did she do? Hid the spies and lied about it when asked. Yet where do we find her in the Bible? The hall of faith in Hebrews, why is she there? Because Rahab lied while trusting in God or exercising faith in God, how can that happen?

What did Rahab know about God? Not much, only that He was powerful and the Holy Spirit convicted her that He was the true God and not her pagan gods. She made a choice to put herself on God’s side and put her life on the line to protect others. This was an act of faith, but did she know about God’s character, methods, principles? No, she didn’t know much; she was a child wanting to do her best to be on God’s side. God looked at her heart’s desire to please Him, not her specific performance.

Analogy: your toddler wanting to help you weed the garden picks a small tomato plant and holds it up with a big smile, “help mommy!” Do you punish the child? Is the child disobedient? Is the performance perfect?

Do the circumstances matter or should we just take rules, or prophetic writings and apply them blindly to all circumstances?

Listen to what EGW said about how some applied her writings:

My mind has been greatly stirred in regard to the idea, “Why, Sister White has said so and so, and Sister White has said so and so; and therefore we are going right up to it.” God wants us all to have common sense, and He wants us to reason from common sense. Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things. {5BIO 315.6}

Read second paragraph, “In this immediate...” thoughts? Do circumstances matter? Should we keep every vow and promise regardless of circumstances or are there some vows or promises that need to be broken? Any examples?

Last paragraph EGW states, “The obligation to which one’s word is pledged—if it does not bind him to perform a wrong act—should be held sacred.”

Does she put conditions on keeping our word? Are there circumstances in which our word should not be kept? Examples?

A patient came to see me who was distraught because she had promised her mother, some years before, that she would never put her mother in a nursing home. Five years before coming to see me the patient’s mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s dementia. She had gradually worsened to the point of no longer knowing when, where, or who she was. She called her daughter “mamma” most of the time. She wandered around constantly, didn’t sleep through the night, saw people who weren’t there and required 24-hour-a-day care. What should the lady do? She was an only child, didn’t have monetary resources so had been trying to keep her promise all alone but was completely worn out. One evening, after my patient fell asleep on the couch, her mother wandered out of the house and over to a neighbor’s and began screaming incoherently and the police were called. What should my patient do, keep her promise or break it?

What was the heart intent of the promise? To do what is best for her mother and in these circumstances, what was now best for mother?

Marriage vow? A Christian school teacher went to her pastor because her deacon husband has been violently abusing her for several years. She has been to the ER on more than one occasion

with broken ribs, black eye, bloody lip. The pastor counseled with the husband on several occasions but the abuse continued. There is no suggestion that her husband has had sexual relations with anyone else, should she stay married?

Has someone ever given you a vow or promise and you knew, at the time it was given, that they wouldn't/couldn't keep it?

I have patients who are in relationships with someone who cheats on them, after the cheating they express remorse, confess their wrong, promise never to do it again, yet cheat again. What is going on?

When Peter promised to die before betraying Jesus, was Peter lying? Why didn't Peter keep his promise?

## THURSDAY

The Reubenites and Gadites came to Moses before they crossed Jordan and asked for land on the East side of the Jordan because they had herds and flocks and there was much pasture land there. Moses responded with concern that they were going to discourage the people from crossing the Jordan and entering into the promised land and therefore God's anger would burn against them.

They responded that they would take up arms and enter Canaan and fight with the others until the land was subdued and all the other tribes had their inheritance and then they would return to the East side of the Jordan where their women, children and flocks had remained.

What do you think about this?

## SABBATH

Read memory text:

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup> Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."*

Thoughts about this text? Is God a singularity with one individuality or is God a plurality with perfect unity?

- 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 Israel: *Yahweh* our *Elohim*, *Yahweh* is One." Or,
- 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"
- In 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 teaches God is a plurality, not a singularity:

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness... Genesis 1:26*

*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*

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 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*

For more on the Trinity question please see my blog in the comeandreason.com archives at:

[http://www.comeandreason.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=227:trinity-more-questions&catid=52:tims-blog-archive&Itemid=70](http://www.comeandreason.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=227:trinity-more-questions&catid=52:tims-blog-archive&Itemid=70)

## FRIDAY

Read questions 1-3 and discuss



## 2009 Q4 Lesson 13 Cities of Refuge

What is your understanding of the cities of refuge?

Did God have more in mind with these cities than just the obvious protection from retribution? As we try to understand the meaning of these cities does context matter? What do you think of a man taking a sharp knife and cutting a child? What if the man is a surgeon seeking to save the child's life? Does context matter?

When we read about the cities of refuge how do we understand the context?

The plan of life that God gave to Israel was intended as an object lesson for all mankind. If these principles were carried out today, what a different place this world would be! {MH 188.4}

Had the Israelites obeyed the instruction they received, and profited by their advantages, they would have been the world's object lesson of health and prosperity. The Israelites failed of fulfilling God's purpose, and thus failed of receiving the blessings that might have been theirs. 9T 165

Do you agree with this? Disagree? Why?

Do these passages give us any ideas about context? What was the object lesson the cities were designed to teach? Keep this in mind as we explore the lesson.

### SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "Though God was faithful..." – thoughts?

They still refused to trust, refused to act in faith, despite witnessing dramatic manifestations of God's power – any thoughts about this?

What is trust based upon? When you consider those people who you genuinely trust is it the people you believe to be the most powerful? When you see the playground bully beat up other kids and are convinced he is the most powerful does that cause you to trust him?

Some would argue that the President of the United States is the most powerful person on the planet. If someone occupies a seat of power does that cause you to trust them? When Hitler was in power was he trustworthy?

Does possessing power and exercising power obtain for God the desire of His heart? What is the desire of God's heart?

- This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 1Tim 2:3,4
- Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. Dt 6:5
- But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul." Josh 22:5

God wants all His children to come back into a loving, trusting friendship with Him. Can He achieve this by the exercise of power?

- Flood – they rebelled and built a tower
- Plagues of Egypt – worshipped golden calf

- Earthquake Korah et al – next day rebellion of the camp
- Mt Carmel – people back into idolatry and rebellion
- Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead – immediately they plotted to kill Him
- Jesus put on Malchus' ear – they bound Him and crucified Him

Why does might and power not work? What does work?

*Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, ' says the LORD Almighty. Zech 4:6*

How does the Spirit work? By a revelation of truth and love. What wins you to trust someone?

*The kindness of God leads us to repentance – Romans 2:4*

So, in our object lesson – the nation of Israel, God uses power to deliver them and also discipline and what happens? Do they trust Him more? Then why did He do it?

Any parents want to give an example? Have you ever had to use might and power with your child? Does it instantly result in greater trust? Or often is the initial reaction one of anger, opposition and rebellion? Does it sometimes take years before they trust – and do they sometimes never trust? Then why do loving parents use might and power? Because of the need of the child!

## SUNDAY

The last sentence of the first paragraph states, “The Lord wanted them, and future generations, never to forget that the whole story of the Hebrew people on the move in the wilderness, was, really, the story about God and His dealings with sinful human beings in an effort to save them and to bring them to the Promised Land.”

Yes, the story is about God and His dealing with humans to not only bring the ancient people to the Promised Land but to teach, as an object lesson, His plan of salvation for humanity!

Read last paragraph, “Compromise with the world...” thoughts? What does this look like today?

Is it –

- Jewelry
- Cosmetics
- Clothing
- Diet

Is this what it looks like to compromise with the world or something else?

Who was closer to the world, the woman caught in adultery or the men who brought her before Christ? Whose heart was open to be reached by Christ? Could people like the woman caught in adultery not be compromising with the world, but suffering under the sickness of the world?

Does compromise with the world look like something else and if so what?

- How about the schools we send our children to? Does it matter?
  - Do we choose schools with the primary focus of having the child know God and develop Christlike character or do we choose schools with the primary purpose of giving our children earthly advantage?
- What is the world's perspective on God? Does the world teach that natural disasters are acts of God? Are they?

“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

- Do we compromise with the world by incorporating into our beliefs the worldly views of God? Any examples of worldly views of God?
  - God inflicting torture and death on the wicked
  - God who needs to be appeased
  - God who can't stand to look at a sinner so looks at His Son
  - God who is arbitrary
  - God who decides who is saved and who is lost
  - A God who is prejudiced, favors one genetic group over another, favors one country more than another, loves His friends and not His enemies thus the poor and ill are cursed of God.

## MONDAY

Read the last paragraph, "The Levites..." thoughts? What lesson is being taught by scattering the Levites throughout the entire nation?

What were the Levites to do for the people? Be God's representatives to continually teach the people about God. After the Babylonian captivity the Levites acted as supervisors for the construction of the temple and instructed the people in religious matters.

What application does this have for us?

How can we instruct people on the rebuilding of the temple? Would it include:

- Principles of healthy living?
- Avoiding mind damaging media?
- Studying God's word?
- Presenting the truth about God?
- Ministry of giving to others?
- Helping our fellow church members in crisis?
- Others?
  - What can we do to further spread this gospel message?
  - Our class sponsors Simple Solutions radio program – Just found out this week that we are now the number one rated radio program on the life talk network! And we are still growing – Thank you for all who support this ministry
  - Another avenue, which doesn't cost money is our website and Facebook page. Encourage your friends to become a fan of our Come and Reason Facebook page. This is a great networking tool to help bring people together and share this message. In two

weeks, we already have over 230 fans from all over the US and more than 8 countries around the world.

How do we as a group here in Collegedale come into the unity of fellowship that God designed? What needs to happen in our lives here? What prevents us from experiencing such oneness?

## TUESDAY

Cities of Refuge – what were they and what were they designed to do for the people at that time? What lessons do we draw from them in regard to the plan of salvation?

If someone accidentally killed another person, they could run to the city of refuge to have his case heard. If it was determined that he had no malice and it was an accident, then he could live in the city until the High Priest died without fear of reprisal from the one seeking blood vengeance. However, if he left the city before the death of the current High Priest he could be killed by the one seeking blood vengeance. Once the High Priest died he could return to his own land without fear of reprisal. But someone who committed premeditated murder could not use the cities as refuge and was to be stoned. (Numbers 35:9-21).

Thoughts? What is the object lesson?

Our quarterly in Thursday's lesson states, "the parallel is not exact, because our understanding of the Cross is that even those who have committed premeditated sin, even murder, can be forgiven by the Lord."

Thoughts about this? Agree, disagree?

The cities of refuge were part of the Levitical cities and represented Christ. Sinners can find refuge in Christ from death that comes from sin. We could only truly be free once our High Priest came and finished His mission, which means gives His life to save us. If we leave Christ we will be lost as sin will still destroy us.

What about the premeditated murderer? Can he find refuge in Christ? Then why couldn't they run to the cities of refuge? Did God somehow make an inadequate teaching tool?

Read last paragraph "Some people..." thoughts? What is seriously flawed with this logic? Notice how the lesson states that the gospel of Christ doesn't mean crime goes unpunished, even if someone repents.

What do you think about the idea that heinous crimes should be punished by society and this is what God was doing setting up social justice standards?

Let's examine some of the crimes God instructed should carry the death penalty:

*LEV 21:12 "Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death. <sup>13</sup> However, if he does not do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate. <sup>14</sup> But if a man schemes and kills another man deliberately, take him away from my altar and put him to death.*

*<sup>15</sup> "Anyone who attacks his father or his mother must be put to death.*

*<sup>16</sup> "Anyone who kidnaps another and either sells him or still has him when he is caught must be put to death.*

*<sup>17</sup> "Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death. Exodus 21:12-17, Lev 20:9*

*“If a bull gores a man or a woman to death, the bull must be stoned to death, and its meat must not be eaten. But the owner of the bull will not be held responsible. <sup>29</sup> If, however, the bull has had the habit of goring and the owner has been warned but has not kept it penned up and it kills a man or woman, the bull must be stoned and the owner also must be put to death. <sup>30</sup> However, if payment is demanded of him, he may redeem his life by paying whatever is demanded Exodus 21:28-30*

<sup>19</sup> *“Anyone who has sexual relations with an animal must be put to death.*

<sup>20</sup> *“Whoever sacrifices to any god other than the LORD must be destroyed. Exodus 22:19,20*

*Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people. <sup>15</sup> For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. Exodus 31:14, 15*

*The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> “Say to the Israelites: ‘Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the community are to stone him. Lev 20:1,2*

*“‘If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death. Lev 20:10*

*“‘If a man sleeps with his father’s wife, he has dishonored his father. Both the man and the woman must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. Lev 20:11*

*“‘If a man sleeps with his daughter-in-law, both of them must be put to death. What they have done is a perversion; their blood will be on their own heads.*

<sup>13</sup> *“‘If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.*

<sup>14</sup> *“‘If a man marries both a woman and her mother, it is wicked. Both he and they must be burned in the fire, so that no wickedness will be among you.*

<sup>15</sup> *“‘If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he must be put to death, and you must kill the animal.*

<sup>16</sup> *“‘If a woman approaches an animal to have sexual relations with it, kill both the woman and the animal. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. Lev 20:12-16*

*If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, <sup>2</sup> and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, “Let us follow other gods” (gods you have not known) “and let us worship them,” <sup>3</sup> you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>4</sup> It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. <sup>5</sup> That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God... Dt 13:1-5*

- Murder
- Battery
- Kidnapping
- Reckless homicide or involuntary manslaughter

- Bestiality
- Idolatry
- Sabbath breaking
- Infanticide
- Verbal abuse of parents
- Adultery
- Homosexuality
- Clairvoyance

What do you think about this? Would you like a society in which everyone of these “crimes” was met with the death penalty? Is the quarterly right that God was making a distinction between His character of love, forgiveness and grace and how society should operate?

When Jesus said,

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’<sup>39</sup> But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.<sup>40</sup> And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.<sup>41</sup> If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.<sup>42</sup> Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. Mt 5:38-42*

Was Jesus talking about their civil law or not? How do we understand the OT laws?

What is the context? What kind of people are receiving these laws? Are these laws representative of God’s ideal? Do they demonstrate God’s true standard? Do they represent what God does to sinners?

*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—Romans 3:25*

What is the punishment for sin? Death – sleep death or eternal death? What was being given in the OT? Was this the punishment for sin? No, the punishment for sin was left unpunished so that God could demonstrate His righteousness in resolving or curing the sin problem!

Let’s consider further the idea that God was setting up social justice:

- What is the reason society punishes crime?
  - To keep society safe
  - Other reasons?
- What if a person has a change of heart, repents, is no longer a person who is a danger to society – someone like king David – wouldn’t he deserve the death penalty? Did he get it?
- What about Manasseh? Sacrificed his son to Molech – what did God do to Manasseh after he repented?
- What should society do with an 85 y/o man whose wife of 63 years has a major stroke and is comatose on a ventilator and he, in harmony with her wishes, poisons her to end her life, and himself. She dies, he doesn’t, should we take him out and stone him?

Then how do we understand the fact premeditated murderers couldn’t run to the cities of refuge? Remember the cities represent Christ – therefore the crime of murder represents what? Why could premeditated murderers not run to the cities for refuge?

Does Jesus give us any insight?



*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 8:44*

If the cities represent Jesus, then what does the person who kills accidentally represent and those who murder with premeditation? Satan is a murderer; how? He lies about God. How do lies about God murder? They sever our relationship with Him. Then murderers represent those who believe lies about God and purposely tell lies about God. They can find no refuge in Christ, but will die.

However, those who were born in sin and suffer the result of what sin has done to humanity, and have experienced and caused injury to others, yet don't hold to lies about God can find healing and salvation in Christ! – thoughts?

### WEDNESDAY

Middle question, “Even though...” thoughts?

Even though it isn't our fault we were born into sin, we still have a terminal condition that unless cured will kill us. Without the death of Jesus, our High Priest, there is no remedy for sin therefore we can never leave this world of sin. But once Christ finished His mission a remedy exists and those who are hidden with Christ will leave this world of sin.

Last question, “Why do you think...” thoughts

### THURSDAY

Read the first paragraph, “The cities of refuge...” thoughts?

Who can take you out of the hands of Christ? Only yourself.

### FRIDAY

Questions 3 and 4 read and discuss