

Thy Word is a Lamp Unto My Feet Lesson 2 2Q 2007

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 here 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 there 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 middle 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."--Ibid. {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."--Ibid. {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?