

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" Shackelford at October 5, 2007 02:45 PM

The Refiner's Fire Lesson 3 4Q 2007

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}

Thoughts?

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, <sup>2</sup> 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.* <sup>2</sup> Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our *heavenly dwelling*, <sup>3</sup> because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> 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 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 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’s lesson

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.