

Discipleship Lesson 12 1Q 2008

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 mainline 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 Witness 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}

Thoughts?

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 sown, 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 Matth 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 this text mean?

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!