

Atonement and the Cross of Christ Lesson 4 4Q 2008

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