

Loved and Loving Johns Epistles Lesson 11 3Q 2009

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. 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! 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; *1SM* 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. ² 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. ³ 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.
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—¹⁵ 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, 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 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. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. ⁶ “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?