

Worship Lesson 7 3Q 2011

Worship in the Psalms

What is your favorite Psalm and why?

Psalms 23? The psalm of the conversion experience?

What about Psalms 19? Let's examine it:

- How does the heavens reveal the glory of God?
- Why does the psalmist start out talking about creation and then talk about the law?
- What law is he talking about?
- What law makes us wise?
- Why does the law give strength?
- Why does happiness and wisdom come from the law?
- What does it mean no one can see his own errors?
- Does the law have any role here?
- Was the written law given to help us with this?

Romans 7:7-12

⁷ What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet."⁸ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.⁹ Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

Here is my paraphrase:

^{7:7} What shall we say then? Is the law evil and selfish because it increases the amount of evil and selfishness we see? Absolutely not! For I would not have known what evil and selfishness looks like if it wasn't for the diagnostic efficacy of the law. I would not have realized that coveting was evil and selfish if the law didn't say, "Don't covet."⁸ But selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the law is only a diagnostic instrument and not a remedy, magnified every covetous desire within me. For apart from the diagnostic ability of the law, sin is unrecognizable.⁹ Once I thought I was healthy and free from the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness, but then the commandment examined me, exposed how utterly infected I was and diagnosed me as terminal.¹⁰ I discovered that the very commandment given only to diagnose my condition, I had unwittingly attempted to use as a cure and thus my condition only worsened.¹¹ For selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the commandment could only diagnose and not cure, deceived me into thinking I could be cured by working to keep the commandments, but instead my terminal state only worsened.¹² So understand this, the law diagnoses perfectly, and the commandment is the standard of what is right and good, set apart by God, to reveal what is evil and destructive.

So the law helps us, diagnosis us, does the law cure us? What does?

- When the psalmist asks for deliverance over willful sins, what is he asking for?
- Is it not a change in character a new heart, a new motive a purified will?
- Where do we get a new character? Where in the universe does a perfect humanity exist? In Jesus Christ – we

- become partakers of the divine nature through our unity with Him.
- If you were a villain, and you wanted to destroy people, as many as possible, a good weapon might be a biological weapon, something like a virus that spreads to everyone.
 - And once they were all infected, if someone brought a remedy, what strategies would you employ to prevent as many as possible from partaking the remedy?
 - Misrepresent the one who brought the remedy so no one trusts Him to take what He offers
 - Offer counterfeit remedies
 - What about offer the idea that one needs to go to court and get oneself legally declared healthy?

Lets examine some sections of Psalms 22:

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from the words of my groaning?
- 6 But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by men and despised by the people.
- 7 All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults, shaking their heads:
- 8 “He trusts in the LORD;
let the LORD rescue him.
Let him deliver him,
since he delights in him.”
- 9 Yet you brought me out of the womb;
you made me trust in you
even at my mother’s breast.
- 10 From birth I was cast upon you;
from my mother’s womb you have been my God.
- 11 Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is no one to help.
- 12 Many bulls surround me;

- strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.
- 13 Roaring lions tearing their prey
open their mouths wide against me...
- 15 "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and I'm as dry as
an old piece of pottery. My tongue clings to my jaws.
You have brought me to the dust of death."
- 16 Dogs have surrounded me;
a band of evil men has encircled me,
they have pierced my hands and my feet...
- 18 They divide my garments among them
and cast lots for my clothing...
- 22 I will declare your name to my brothers;
in the congregation I will praise you.
- 24 For he has not despised or disdained
the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him
but has listened to his cry for help...
- 27 All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
will bow down before him,
- 28 for dominion belongs to the LORD
and he rules over the nations.
- 29 All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—
those who cannot keep themselves alive.
- 30 Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord.
- 31 They will proclaim his righteousness
to a people yet unborn—
for he has done it.

The Hebrew translated “encircled” actually means “crowned” and what is being said is that strong bulls, or bullheaded rebellious men have crowned me, a prophecy of the crown of thorns put on Christ’s head by the Roman soldiers.

"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and a reed in His hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews.'"

Psalm 22:15: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and I'm as dry as an old piece of pottery. My tongue clings to my jaws. You have brought me to the dust of death."

Crucifixion drains the body of fluids and literally dries one out. Remember Jesus' words, "I thirst."

They pierced "my hands and feet." Crucifixion was not yet a form of punishment when David wrote this, thus he was prophesying about the Messiah.

They gambled for His clothes.

And Jesus spoke the words of this Psalm, "Why have you forsaken me?"

But what is the ending of the Psalm? A future in which Christ will reign in love and righteousness and all will be united to Him. That is yet to come. How can we help bring that about?

What is God waiting for? Why hasn't Christ returned? What do you understand are the obstacles for the return of Christ?

- Gospel of the kingdom preached to the entire world – has this happened? What is the gospel of the kingdom? What kingdom? The kingdom of love – are we taking this gospel to the world?
- EGW says the final message of mercy to lighten the world for Christ's return is the truth about God's character of love. Is this the gospel – the good news about the King of

- the kingdom of love? Are we taking this message to the world?
- What stands in the way? 2 Cor 10:3-5 another view of God stands in the way and we are to stand up against it with the truth about God.

This week as I was preparing the lesson I received an email from one of our listeners. The listener was confused as to why I had so much difficulty with the Study Guide as they were familiar with the principle contributor and also had seen the lessons prior to their submission for publication in the Study Guide. Fortunately I was supplied with a copy of the author's original material before submission.

I want to give you a little example of the changes made by the editors. A few weeks ago Lesson five of Monday's lesson, we read:

The Hebrew wording in both Leviticus 9:24 and 10:2 was the same, "and fire came out from before the Lord and consumed" (9:24 NKJV). Consumed what? In the first case, the offering; in the other, the sinners. What a powerful representation of the plan of salvation. At the Cross, the "fire from God," the wrath of God, "consumed" the offering, and that was Jesus. Thus, all who put their faith in Him never have to face that fire, that wrath, because a substitute did it for them."

Here is what the principle contributor submitted for lesson five, Monday last paragraph:

According to vs. 21, 22, the entire congregation was in danger of being destroyed because of the rebellion of these men. Presumption breeds disobedience. Disobedience, not checked, develops into full-blown rebellion. **Rebellion self-destructs!** Moses pled with

both the congregation and the rebels. This was their opportunity, for, “Jesus, the Angel who went before the Hebrews, sought to save them from destruction.

Forgiveness was lingering for them.” Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs & Prophets*, (Mountain View, C.A.: Pacific Press, 1958) p. 401. (emphasis supplied) But they stubbornly persisted in their rebellion. God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, dared not allow them to live and continue their vicious work, which would have resulted in anarchy and an even greater loss of life.

Wow – are these the same thoughts? Are these the same conceptions of God? How can we finish our mission as a people when we don’t even present the truth about God’s character of love?

I asked Dean to do a digital analysis of the originals submitted by the principle contributor and what was actually published and assess what percent was changed.

Over 60% of the original manuscript was deleted and replaced by the editors.

I know personally two other principle contributors of the past, and both of them experienced the same thing, major changes to what they submitted.

One was so distraught that he created his own website to make available his originals, but he worked for the GC at the time and his boss ordered him to take it down.

Why is this happening? And does this have any relationship to what we have experienced here in Collegedale?

Historic Adventism valued freedom of thinking, promoted the principles of Romans 14, “let everyone be fully persuaded in

their own mind” and sought to practice the loving unity of the Apostolic church. Thus we see that EGW was a Trinitarian, while Uriah Smith and James White were Arian, but this disagreement on a major doctrinal issue, the divinity of Christ, did not disqualify any of them from leadership in the church. Why? Because they all valued the principles of God’s kingdom, truth, love and freedom, recognizing that each person must be persuaded in their own mind. As long as one realizes God is love, understands His law of love and is practicing the principles of love in their lives they can have variations on how they understand certain concepts, because they are willing to grow in truth as the Holy Spirit enlightens their minds.

Adventism historically is an open and tolerant church. Because of this history the SDA church is filled with many perspectives and beliefs and views and all have historically been accepted within a very large umbrella. But something seems to have changed.

Why do the editors delete gracious God concepts and insert punitive God concepts? Why don’t they allow a divergent view? Recently when our own local leadership had the Rainbow-Views on the Atonement, why wouldn’t they allow our views to be presented?

Is this part of a spiritual war over the nature and character of God?

Do we see this as part of the inevitable process of these two opposing views coming into more and more conflict as the world prepares to meet Christ?

When Satan comes to impersonate Christ what will separate the false from the true? Will it be the feet? Will it be the sound of the voice? Will it be the way he looks? Will it be the methods employed? What methods will the false Christ use? What

happens to those who won't receive the mark of the beast?
Coercion, imprisonment, death sentence.

What do some teach God will do to the wicked in the end?
Plagues to pressure, punish and coerce followed by torture
and imposition of a death penalty. This is the false god
concept. This is the idea Satan wants so deeply ingrained into
the mindset of people that when Satan comes claiming to be
Christ they will accept the use of such tactics and say, "This is
our god we have waited for him."

God is waiting for a people who will study for themselves, who
will think for themselves, who will not let another tell them
who God is, but as Hebrews says, will know God for
themselves, and then will take the final message of mercy, the
truth about God's character of love to the world!

Is it possible that the majority of Christians are, like the Jews
and Samaritans of Christ's day, eager, open and longing for
the truth about God as Jesus revealed, but there are many in
leadership that are stuck in another view? Thus when the
Study Guide uses the names of "principle contributors,"
misrepresents their views to teach a punitive god concept, they
are trying to make it appear that the majority of the church
sees God a certain way – when in fact, might the majority of
the church be longing for the truth as Jesus revealed?

MONDAY

Read last paragraph, "Here, too..." thoughts? What does
justice look like in God's government?

Some argue it looks like God, performing miracles, to keep
people alive in order to torture them as long as they deserve,
or some say eternally.

Hitler burned 6 million Jews in ovens in Nazi Germany, but had the decency to gas them first and we call him a monster. What kind of God do people promote when they teach God will burn people alive, and perform miracles to make sure they suffer. It is the grossest lie ever told about God and it is time we Christians stand up and reject it and call on our leaders to stop promoting it.

Top of TUESDAY's lesson we read, "All through the Bible, the Lord has warned about this exploitation of injustice. Those who are guilty of such exploitation, and who do not repent and turn away, will have a lot to answer for on Judgment Day."

Thoughts? What does this mean? How do we "answer" for it?

God has given in His word decisive evidence that **He will punish** the transgressors of His law. Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary. The death of the spotless Son of God testifies that "**the wages of sin is death,**" that **every violation of God's law must receive its just retribution.** Christ the sinless became sin for man. He bore the guilt of transgression, and **the hiding of His Father's face, until His heart was broken and His life crushed out.** All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed. **In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin.** And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgression. {GC 539.3}

God has given to men a **declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin.** "The Lord God, **merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands,**

forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Exodus 34:6, 7. "All the wicked will He destroy." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Psalm 145:20; 37:38. **The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.** {GC 541.2}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. **He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love.** He would have them obey Him because they have an **intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence.** And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and **even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited.** He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character. He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His

mercy. While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided. Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will? {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power **are not prepared to enter the presence of God.** Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become **fixed in their characters.** Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no;** years of probation were granted them, that they might **form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity;** they have never learned the language of heaven,

and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire.** They would long to flee from that holy place. **They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood **the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable.**
GC 542

What do you hear? Why do the wicked die? Is it because God inflicts death or because they are incurable, their condition is incompatible with life as God designed it to function?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The entire...” thoughts? What was the message of the sanctuary – sacrifice – what about reconciliation with God through sacrifice?

How does that work? Why was sacrifice needed? What was taught by the sacrifice? What happened after the animal was sacrifice? Where did the blood go? For what purpose?

The lesson rightly points out that it is a perversion to believe that sacrifices were designed to appease an angry god. Absolutely, then why do they in other places teach that God’s anger and wrath had to be appeased by the blood of His Son?

Read last paragraph, “The author’s...” thoughts?

What is true forgiveness?

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. {FLB 129.2}

What about the idea of moving away from symbols to reality – good idea? What about today? Do we struggle with any symbols today that impair our ability to embrace reality?

- Saved by the blood/washed in the blood
- Covered in the robe of righteousness
- Christ ministering in a heavenly sanctuary
- Prayers mingled with incense going to the Father

Others?

What is the reality behind these symbols?

THURSDAY

Why is it important we remember history?

We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history. 3 SM 162

Thoughts? What are we in danger of forgetting of our past? Could it be the openness, tolerance, freedom to think, mutual respect and love?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2