

Worship Lesson 9 3Q 2011

Trust Not in Deceptive Words: The Prophets and Worship

SABBATH

Read Memory text, Isaiah 44:7 – thoughts?

How good are we at predicting the future? How many of you have tried to prophecy the future?

- How many of you create imaginary scenarios in your mind about what the future will hold and then begin worrying about it?
 - There is no use in applying for that job, I will never get it...
 - I will be alone forever, I will never find someone to love me...
 - I will never find a career, I'll never get ahead...
 - My ex husband is going to take my kids from me...
 - My son is going to get deployed to Iraq and...
 - If I bow down to the idol I will die in a fiery furnace.
 - If I pay tithe I won't have enough money to pay bills.

Do we try and prophecy? How good are we at predicting the future? How much suffering, worry, distress do we experience because we don't realize we cannot predict the future?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Unlike every other religion..." thoughts?

What does it mean to be accepted by God? What does it take to be accepted by God? Why doesn't God accept us as we are?

Sin has caused a gap in our connection with God, why can our works not bridge it? Where does the "gap" actually exist, in man or in God? In other words, where is the defect that causes

the break in our relationship with God – is the defect in God or man?

Then, whatever the plan of salvation is designed to do, if the defect, which causes the break in our relationship with God, is not in God, is there any element of the plan of salvation that must to be applied to fix God? No! The entire Godhead are working in complete unity for the restoration and fixing of the brokenness in mankind to restore us into unity with Them and to eradicate sin from the universe.

What does “atone for sin” mean? Why can good works not “atone for sin?”

If we say “atone for sin” means to pay a legal penalty to God or the law, then where have we just suggested the problem is? Where does such a description place the application of the remedy?

Read second paragraph – thoughts? There is much good in this paragraph, particularly the idea that sin caused a problem that leads to death and only the death of Christ could solve that problem. Very nicely said. Much different that sin caused a legal problem that resulted in the Father standing as an executioner over His children and the death of Christ was designed to appease (fix) the Father’s wrath and anger.

Thus, Micah, the prophet we are studying in today’s lesson, makes it clear the Father doesn’t need any sacrifice, we need to have a change in heart, character to be back in unity with God’s design.

Micah 6:6-8:

With what shall I come before the LORD
 and bow down before the exalted God?
 Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
 with calves a year old?
 7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,

with ten thousand rivers of oil?
 Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
 the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
 8 He has showed you, O man, what is good.
 And what does the LORD require of you?
 To act justly and to love mercy
 and to walk humbly with your God.

Thoughts?

Read first sentence green section, “What do you think is more important: correct theology or correct actions?” Thoughts?

What about those with humble, loving hearts who worship on Sunday? Or those Sabbath keepers who wanted Christ down by sunset?

Read first sentence of last paragraph, “Those who claim to be children of God but who fail to show justice and mercy to their fellow men are acting out the spirit of Satan no matter how piously they may adhere to the forms of worship.” – thoughts?

This is also well said, - question – what is Bible justice?

His [Christ's] object was to **reconcile the prerogatives** of Justice and Mercy, and let each stand separate in its dignity, yet united. **His mercy was not weakness, but a terrible power to punish sin because it is sin; yet a power to draw to it the love of humanity.** Through Christ, **Justice is enabled to forgive** without sacrificing one jot of its exalted holiness. {7BC 935.15}

Justice and Mercy stood apart, in opposition to each other, separated by a wide gulf. The Lord our Redeemer clothed His divinity with humanity, and **wrought out in behalf of man a character that was without spot or blemish.** He planted His cross midway between heaven and earth, and made it the object of attraction which reached both ways, drawing both Justice and Mercy across the gulf. Justice moved from its exalted throne,

and with all the armies of heaven approached the cross. There it saw One equal with God **bearing the penalty for all injustice and sin. With perfect satisfaction Justice bowed in reverence at the cross, saying, It is enough** (MS 94, 1899). {7BC 936.1}

Thoughts? What do you hear, what does it mean? What is God's justice?

Why is mercy the power to punish sin?

- Why is medical mercy the power to punish disease? To patient ravaged by cancer the doctor administers a remedy which punishes and destroys cancer – is this merciful? Could the mercy be expressed without the power to punish and destroy the cancer? Is punishing the cancer the same as punishing the patient?
- And thus a doctor who effectively and totally, attacks, punishes and destroys cancer will draw thousands of patients to him. Likewise, God's mercy, which is the power to punish and destroy sin, when rightly seen and understood is "the power to draw to it the love of humanity."
- But what if an enemy of the doctor started telling people that the doctor hates cancer so bad, if he ever finds even one cancerous cell in a patient his anger and rage and wrath will be felt full force by the cancer patient? Would you want to go to that doctor?
- Can a doctor heal a patient outside the laws of health? Then what does the law of health "require" if a doctor is going to heal a patient? "perfect" compliance with the law? Could we say that health "justice" requires perfect obedience to the laws of health?

What is the penalty of injustice, i.e. violations of the law, both physically and morally? How did Christ bear it?

What is sin? Lawlessness, transgression of the law, what law? The law of love, which is the law of life, which results in what? Death, how did Christ bear this? When?

Why was “justice” satisfied with what Christ achieved? What does the law of health require in order to heal, in order for justice to be fulfilled? And what does the law of righteousness require?

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." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10. {DA 762.3}

As we have taken our time to slowly think through the meaning of the quotations just read, does it become clear what was necessary for our salvation and what God's justice and mercy are?

Do you ever wonder why prophets don't always say things clearly?

Was David a prophet of God? Consider the implications of the following:

The psalmist David in his experience had many changes of mind. At times, as he obtained views of God's will and ways, he was highly exalted. **Then as he caught sight of the reverse of God's mercy and changeless love, everything seemed to be shrouded in a cloud of darkness.** But through the darkness he obtained a view of the attributes of God, which gave him confidence and strengthened his faith. But when he meditated upon the difficulties and danger of life, they looked so forbidding that he thought himself abandoned by God because of his sins. He viewed his sin in such a strong light that he exclaimed, "Will the Lord cast off for ever? will he be favorable no more?" {3BC 1149.2}

But as he wept and prayed, **he obtained a clearer view of the character and attributes of God**, being educated by heavenly agencies, and he decided that his **ideas of God's justice and severity were exaggerated.** He rejected his impressions as being the result of his weakness, ignorance, and physical infirmities, and as dishonoring to God, and with renewed faith he exclaimed, "This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." {3BC 1149.3}

What implications from this passage? First, do you believe it is true, did David have various changes in perspective to God and divine things? What implication does this have when we read prophetic writings? Are all prophetic writings equally as clear and accurate regarding God's character?

What does it mean that we grow and develop our understanding?

What if we don't? What if we instead find ourselves going backward, reversing our gains and instead, cling to 500 year old theology?

This is a problem for our church today. Our church today is stubbornly clinging to theology that is 500 years old, rather than advancing in the truth. God is waiting for a people who will march forward in understanding, who will think for themselves, who will love the truth and embrace the truth rather than refuse to move forward with new insights into the reality of God and what He accomplished for us through Christ.

MONDAY

Read Isaiah 6:1-6 – then read third paragraph, “Try to imagine...” thoughts?

What did Isaiah see? Why did he react the way he did? The lesson uses the language, “Suddenly, he sees his own sins and the sins of his people...”

Where did he see this? Who is the accuser of the brethren? When we get true glimpses of God is He standing there with a list of sins with which to accuse us? When God approached Adam in Eden did Adam become acutely aware of his sinfulness? Yes, was God pointing it out to Him? From where did Adam’s awareness of his sinfulness arise?

God is the source of truth and love, in His presence we are unable to avoid the truth of our own condition. It is by contrast that we become aware of our deficiency, it is not because God stands with a list to point it out to us.

The lives of the righteous, by contrast, will bring conviction to the wicked, this is why teens doing drugs pick on, criticize and degrade the “goody too shoes” who wont.

It is sinfulness in our own hearts, characters and minds that bring fear and insecurity and uneasiness and dissatisfaction with self and causes us to feel unworthy. But, notice God’s response, God’s attitude – what did He say to Adam? Did He

condemn Adam? What does the angel say to Isaiah? What did Jesus say to the woman caught in adultery?

God does not condemn, criticize, point out our defects to hurt, humiliate or embarrass us. God searches us for defects exactly like a good doctor will search his patient for disease, never to embarrass, criticize, mock or punish, but to heal and cure!

We may “feel” insecure and unworthy as we approach God, as we get a greater sense of our defects, our need, but as we see God’s true character as revealed in Christ, the greater our awareness of our defects, then the greater our confidence in God’s desire for us to come to Him – because He is longing to heal!

Read last paragraph, “Think for a moment...” wouldn’t it be great to experience, in worship the presence of God? Why do we often not experience this?

What kind of response would we elicit from the worshippers if the worship service has been hijacked by a false god concept?

Does our modern church service have its roots in the Bible or paganism?

- Is the separation of ordained clergy from the laity Biblical or pagan? What does this idea suggest about God?
- What was the setting and “liturgy” of the New Testament church?
 - They met in homes – what was the atmosphere connoted by fellowshiping in homes? Would it generate eye to eye contact, fellowship, interaction, honest heart to heart communication, sharing and caring?
 - What about the setting of churches with pews bolted to the floor all facing forward, with tradition pressuring no eye contact, no talking, no sharing, no fellowship, but quietness, receiving a lecture,

without opportunity for discussion and interaction?
 What message is sent?

- Does it connote a authoritarian hierarchy?
 - Is this concept Biblical or pagan?
 - What did Satan allege about God?
 - What did Jesus say He wanted in regard to relationship with Him?
 - How did Jesus speak to the crowds?
 - Did He allow questions and discussion and dialogue?
- What about the church building? Do we ever get the idea that the church building is holy and say things like, this is God's sanctuary, where God dwells, we must be reverent in the sanctuary?
 - Is this idea Biblical or pagan?
 - According to the Bible what is God's sanctuary? Where does God dwell?
 - The OT sanctuary, where God dwelt, was a theater to act out a larger reality. God's presence in that sanctuary was to teach is desire to dwell somewhere else – where? Was it in buildings made by human hands?
 - When you hear “the church” do you think building or people? Which is the holy sanctuary where God dwells?
 - What impact does it have on our understanding of God to shift the idea of the church from the community of believers to a building?

Read green section- thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “It is easy...” thoughts?

Why was it necessary for prophets to speak this way to the people who had been given the written word of God and the little theater of the sanctuary? What about the church today?

Are we any better than they were? Do we understand God and His methods better than the pagans?

The lesson diagnoses correctly the problem, that the children of Israel were doing the rituals without thinking and that God called them to think through the meaning and to treat others with love, i.e. live God's law of love!

Read third paragraph, "But that is not..." well said.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, "However much..." thoughts? Why is God alone worthy?

How do we know God alone is worthy? Do we know because God said it, or because God showed it? How did God show it?

What does the death of Christ reveal regarding God's worthiness of our worship?

THURSDAY

Read last two paragraphs, "Look especially..." thoughts?

They had more light than their pagan neighbors. No doubt God had provided much more light, then how do we explain the Roman Centurion that Christ said had more faith than all in Israel?

What happened that the children of Israel failed to be blessed by the Temple and its service? They failed to understand the meaning of the symbols.

What about today? Do we as a people make the same mistake? Have we failed to understand the reality of the heavenly sanctuary?

I believe in a literal, physical temple in heaven, now let me ask you. If you use only inspired sources, out of what is the temple in heaven built?

- Paul says, “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's HOUSE [sanctuary/temple], built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building [sanctuary/temple] is joined together and rises to become a HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord. And in him YOU too [you all] are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22.
- And Peter says, “As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- YOU also, like LIVING STONES [building blocks of the Temple], are being built into a SPIRITUAL HOUSE [Temple] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet 2:4,5.
- And Paul says, “For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building [Temple]...Don't you know that you yourselves [the church] are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you [you all] are that temple.” 1 Cor 3:9,16,17.
- Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. Revelation 3:12
- The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made

with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use. {3MR 231.3}

Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}

- 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." Malachi 3:1-3. {DA 161.1}

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. {Ed 35.2}

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... {Ed 35.3}

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: {Ed 36.2}

"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. {Ed 36.3}

There is a real, physical, material temple in heaven which Christ ministers and it is constructed out of intelligent beings. This is the temple in which Satan wanted to sit enthroned. Satan didn't want to sit in an empty temple building made out of inanimate material. He wanted to sit enthroned in the heart/mind temple of intelligent beings as the one most loved and adored. Thus the warfare we fight is a spiritual warfare over the knowledge of God and Christ came to restore in man God's law and character, to dwell again in the temple He designed without human hands!

FRIDAY

Read top two paragraphs, "In Isaiah's day..." thoughts?

Read and discuss questions 2-4.