

Glimpses of Our God Lesson 9 1Q 2012

The Bible and History

Thoughts about the Title?

SABBATH

Read first three paragraphs, “Is human history...”

Great point that just because God works through history doesn't mean He causes all that happens.

Is there a difference to you whether God causes something, or whether He allows something?

- If a person has kidney failure and refuses dialysis, and you know they will die, but you respect their choice and allow them to die, even though you have a dialysis machine that you could use to keep them alive, is the same thing as you taking a gun and shooting them?
- If God allows the wicked to die as a result of sin, is that the same as God executing them?
- Does it make a difference to differentiate what God allows versus what God actually does?

Do Bible writers always make this distinction clear?

Here are examples of God allowing things to happen, but the Bible sometimes makes it sound like God is causing it:

- Hardening Pharaoh's heart
- Saul's death

And God's wrath is when He allows us to reap the results of our choice to reject Him, but too many theologians have also made it sound like God's wrath is something He inflicts.

Have you ever struggled with what has happened in history, including the history of your life?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “The circular...” thoughts?

What do you think the lesson is alluding to in this paragraph?

Ancient cultures such as Incan, Mayan, Hopi, and other Native American Tribes, as well as the Babylonians, Ancient Greeks, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism believe in a wheel of time, that regards time as cyclic and over great periods of time life is relived with repeating ages that happen to every being in the Universe.

The Bible teaches a linear time line.

What is the significance to realize life is linear?

- Choices today change the course of our lives
 - Different choices result in different lives/outcomes
 - Marry a different person, have different children
 - Go to different school have different friends, maybe different career, maybe different spouse
 - Be late to work on September 11, 2001...
- No redo’s
- History cannot change – so, in God’s plan what does change? Our hearts/minds/characters
- What did Adam’s choice do to human history?
- What course was humanity on as God created them?
- What course after Adam sinned?
- God also intervened, introducing a new element, to alter the natural course of history that Adam’s choice set in motion. What did God do?
- Does that give us a new history?

Turn to THURSDAY's lesson, read third paragraph, "The whole doctrine..."

Thoughts?

Does God cancel our history? Does He rewrite history? Does He erase our history and rewrite in the record books of heaven his history? Do we all suddenly remember being born in Bethlehem in a manger?

Do you find this expressed in the most clear and effective way?

Why do you think they take the tack of changing our history?

We have been hammering this theme, but it is at the root of all these misconceptions – if you accept that God's law is imposed, and therefore the imposer of law in order to be just, must impose punishment for breaking the law. Then, the just imposer of punishment, must have an accurate record, or history of your crimes/sins, so that proper punishment can be carried out. Justice, in this system requires all crimes/sins to be punished, so if any unpaid crime remains God would have to inflict punishment, so we must have the records changed to show our crimes erased, less we still be punished.

But all this fantasy arises because of accepting Imperial Rome's version of law. Once we realize God's laws are the laws He built His universe to run upon, like the laws of health, then we realizes the records don't get erased but stand, what changes is the heart/mind/character of the sinner, who has sinfulness erased out of the heart. But the recorded history of the universe will stand.

The history of our lives will stand. And it is this history that makes what God did so much more powerful in healing and transforming us.

The lesson points out that our lives run in a line, or are linear. Is God's existence linear? In other words, is God confined

within the constraints of time, does He live within the flow of time, or is God outside the bounds of time?

Any inspiration to give insight into this?

- “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.” Rev 1:8
- I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. Rev 21:6
- I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Rev 22:13

One of the founders of our church saw it this way:

I Am means an eternal presence; the past, present, and future are alike to God. He sees the most remote events of past history, and the far distant future with as clear a vision as we do those things that are transpiring daily. We know not what is before us, and if we did, it would not contribute to our eternal welfare. God gives us an opportunity to exercise faith and trust in the great I AM (Lt 119, 1895). {1BC 1099.5}

What is the significance of this?

- What would it mean if God were constrained to a linear existence?
 - Would He then have some power which limited Him in some way?
 - Would He truly be master of everything or would time be over Him?
 - Would He be able to tell the future accurately?
 - Would He be able to apply Christ’s achievements to those who lived before Christ?
- If God is outside time, what would this mean?

- That He created time and is outside of and over the flow of time
- He can control time, thus stop the sun in its orbit to lengthen the day for Joshua, or slow time down or speed time up, or create time dilation fields in which time moves faster in one place than another. Thus, 6000 years may pass on earth, while 6 days pass in heaven, so God is not slow in keeping His promises.
- We recognize more of the sacrifice Christ made when He assumed humanity, He stepped into time and lives a linear existence
- He can take all Christ achieved and apply it to all who trust Him no matter where in time.
- He can predict accurately the decisions of all people because he sees them happening or does God not know the choices and is only a good calculator ---

Back to SUNDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “We are talking...” thoughts?

Does God know only the “possible” choices humans can and will make, or the actual choices they will make?

In other words does God know all the possible choices of all persons of all time and all the possible consequences, but doesn't know exactly which choices will be made until the person makes them, or does He know the actual choices before they are made?

I believe this view limits God to a linear existence, but with an infinite brain and thus He is a great cosmic calculator, but is constrained within the flow of time.

If we believe God is outside the flow of time then it makes sense He can observe the freewill decisions of beings in what is our future and know how events will unfold.

What evidence do we have either way?

- The number of ark's to build – how did He know only 8 would get on? Or was the preaching of Noah a fraud?
- The prediction of what choosing to have kings would do to the people of Israel
- The prophecies of Daniel
- Calling Cyrus by name 150 years before Cyrus was born to be the ruler to let Israel go
- Malachi prophecy of John the Baptist being the forerunner of Christ

MONDAY

Read second and third paragraph, “The reader...” thoughts?

First question – do we have evidence from history that history and the Bible harmonize? Is there archeological evidence that the Bible is reliable?

- Dead Sea scrolls
 - The **Dead Sea Scrolls** are perhaps the greatest archaeological find of our time. Produced by Jewish monastic Essenes, the scrolls number about 800; 200 of which are of biblical material. In 1947, shepherds discovered them quite by accident in caves above the Wadi Qumran Valley, northwest of the Dead Sea. A few of the scholars and archaeologists who contributed to their discovery and verification include E. L. Sukenik, G. Lankester Harding, Roland G. de Vaux, Yigael Yadin and William F. Albright.
 - The Dead Sea Scrolls contain at least fragments of every book in the Old Testament except the book of Esther. More than ten scrolls were beautifully preserved intact including two copies of Isaiah. [1](#) Professor Millar Burrows of Yale University assigns these copies to the first century BC. Johns Hopkins University Professor William F. Albright places

them more conservatively in the second century BC.²

- These copies of Isaiah, written 1,000 years earlier than the previously oldest known copies have proven to be "**word for word identical** with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling. [emphasis mine] " ³

1. Shanks, Hershel, The Dead Sea Scrolls After Forty Years Biblical Archaeology Society 1990. P 9.
2. Bruce, F.F., The Books and The Parchments' Fleming H. Revell Co. 1984 p. 105.
3. Archer, Gleason L., Jr., A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, Moody Press, Chicago, IL Rev. 1974, p. 25

Do the decisions of humans have a role to play in the shaping of history?

- Or is God forcing people to make decisions the way He wants?
- Or is God making decisions and changing people's memories about what happened?

How do you balance God's foreknowledge, sovereignty and human free will choices in the forging of history?

Could Jonah give us an example?

Have you ever wondered why God called Jonah to be His messenger to Nineveh? Jonah hated the Ninevites. He didn't want to go, in fact ran away when God told him to go.

Could all of this been known to God before God made His choice, and God incorporated his knowledge of Jonah's choices into why He chose Jonah?

- Do you ever do this? Do you ever anticipate a person's choices and incorporate your belief about what they will do into a choice or action you are going to take? Does

your anticipation of their choice, and utilizing that information in your choice, take away their free choice?

If we assume God knows how a person will choose, then it could very well be like this:

- God looks down upon Nineveh and sees how selfishness is running out of control.
- God loves these people and wants to turn them around, yet they are in darkness about God and worship a pagan God, Dagon – the God of the fish.
- God wants to send a message of salvation, a message to repent – who does God choose? To whom will the people of Nineveh listen?
- God looks at Jonah, looks at how Jonah will respond, sees his refusal to go and his running to the sea and God says – That is exactly who I need! (And remember Jonah is already a prophet, who has dedicated Himself to God to be God’s man, used as a soldier in God’s cause).
- So God calls Jonah – and Jonah freely chooses to flee to the sea.
- God uses His power to bring a great storm, which causes Jonah to be thrown into the sea
- God uses His power to direct a great fish to swallow Jonah, and swim to the shore near Nineveh and vomit Jonah up
- Perhaps, some persons from Nineveh were nearby, and what would they have seen? A giant fish coughing up Jonah, who then goes to the city and tells the people who worship the fish God to repent – and they do.

In this story, does God violate anyone’s free will? Does He use His knowledge to orchestrate events to bring about healing and His will, all within the bounds of free will? Did His knowledge of future events restrict the liberty of Jonah?

Do our choices then play a role in the shaping of history?

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, “Of course...” This is well said, “love that is forced cannot be love.”

So, understanding this, can God, at anytime say, “If you don’t respond to my love, by loving surrender to me, I will be forced by holiness and justice to kill you?”

Do you see the fundamental problem with the idea that God must inflict suffering, punishment and death upon those who don’t surrender to Him? It destroys love and incites rebellion.

The lesson recounts the prophecies of Daniel, the rise and falls of kingdoms and then, in paragraph four states, “The amazing...” thoughts?

How did He know it way in advance? In advance of who? In advance of us, but not in advance of Himself – He lives outside the flow of time and thus He has already observed/experienced the victory over sin, which is yet in our future.

How does God interact with human free will to bring about decisions for His cause?

Read Daniel 10:12-14, 20,21

¹² Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.”

²⁰ So he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; ²¹ but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.

What do you understand is going on in this section?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “No matter...” thoughts?

What are those two antagonistic principles?

How are they revealed through history?

How are they revealed today, in our community, in our lives?

Read paragraphs 4-6, “Satanic agencies...” thoughts

Do you agree with this description? What do you find noteworthy?

First, who killed Christ at the Cross?

What did the Father do to Christ at the Cross?

What do we learn from this regarding the two antagonistic principles?

What do you make of the idea that angels still didn’t comprehend all that was involved – what more was to be revealed regarding the two antagonistic principles?

- That God’s principles applied to the lives of sinners, transforms and heals
 - Paul changed from wanting to stone, to wanting to give his life for others

- Rev 12:11 they do not love life so much as to shrink from death
- That Satan's principles unrestrained, destroy everything

Any other thought on what is more to be revealed?

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, "Our sins have been..." thoughts?

What do you hear? What does this mean?

How did Jesus become our sin bearer?

He who could have doomed His enemies to death bore with their cruelty. His love for His Father, and His pledge, made from the foundation of the world, **to become the Sin Bearer**, led Him to endure uncomplainingly the coarse treatment of those He came to save. **It was a part of His mission to bear, in His humanity, all the taunts and abuse that men could heap upon Him. The only hope of humanity was in this submission of Christ to all that He could endure from the hands and hearts of men.** {DA 700.5}

Is this what it means to bear our sins?

Could it mean simply that he endured what our sinfulness brought with it and overcame restoring mankind to its perfect original ideal?

In quoting the prophecy of the rejected stone, Christ referred to an actual occurrence in the history of Israel. The incident was connected with the building of the first temple. While it had a special application at the time of Christ's first advent, and should have appealed with special force to the Jews, it has also a lesson for us. When the temple of Solomon

was erected, the immense stones for the walls and the foundation were entirely prepared at the quarry; after they were brought to the place of building, not an instrument was to be used upon them; the workmen had only to place them in position. For use in the foundation, one stone of unusual size and peculiar shape had been brought; but the workmen could find no place for it, and would not accept it. It was an annoyance to them as it lay unused in their way. Long it remained a rejected stone. But when the builders came to the laying of the corner, they searched for a long time to find a stone of sufficient size and strength, and of the proper shape, to take that particular place, and **bear the great weight which would rest upon it.** Should they make an unwise choice for this important place, the safety of the entire building would be endangered. They must find a stone capable of resisting the influence of the sun, of frost, and of tempest. Several stones had at different times been chosen, but under the pressure of immense weights they had crumbled to pieces. **Others could not bear** the test of the sudden atmospheric changes. But at last attention was called to the stone so long rejected. It had been exposed to the air, to sun and storm, without revealing the slightest crack. The builders examined this stone. It had borne every test but one. **If it could bear the test of severe pressure, they decided to accept it for the cornerstone.** The trial was made. The stone was accepted, brought to its assigned position, and found to be an exact fit. In prophetic vision, Isaiah was shown that this stone was a symbol of Christ. He says: {DA 597.5}

"Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." Carried down in prophetic vision to the first advent, the prophet is shown that **Christ is to**

bear trials and tests of which the treatment of the chief cornerstone in the temple of Solomon was symbolic. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Isa. 8:13-15; 28:16. {DA 598.1}

What was the purpose of these tests and trials which Christ was to bear? Why was He "bearing" it? Was it for the purpose of healing and transforming mankind back into God's original ideal? And is this depicted in the Biblical metaphor of building the Temple in heaven?

Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the **Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD.** ¹³ **It is he who will build the temple of the LORD,** and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' Zechariah 6:12,13.

He bore our iniquity, sinfulness, selfishness, and bore up under the external infliction of what sinful does to another, and overcame the internal temptation to act in self interest that comes our fallen humanity, in order to heal and restore humanity back into unity with God!

Is there any way the idea of Christ bearing our sins can be presented that misrepresents what Jesus did and also misrepresents God's character?

How might that be?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 2