

Origins Lesson 10 1Q 2013

Stewardship and the Environment

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “According to Genesis 1:26...” thoughts?

Do you think Adam could affect the weather? Why or why not? Any evidence to suggest he might have had such ability?

- If he was given dominion over the planet, and if he was made in God’s image, and if they were to govern like God governs, it makes sense he would have such delegated ability
- After Satan usurped Adam’s authority from him Satan demonstrated ability to affect weather, we see this in the book of Job, but perhaps this was just some ability Satan possessed on his own, or perhaps it was authority wrested from Adam.

What are some reasons you can think of that Adam was given dominion on planet earth?

- Reveal God is not selfish and does share power, authority, ability with his creatures, including creative ability and authority to govern
- Showcase God’s character and methods in governing his universe
 - How would Adam reveal this?
 - Would Adam, before sin (even after) eat animals?
 - Would Adam have exploited the animals for gain?
 - Why not? No need, any other reason?
- Demonstrate the limitations in our relationship with God – how?
 - What limited the intimacies and shared knowledge, decision making, planning etc., between Adam and the animals?
 - Was it Adam’s unwillingness?
 - Was it an inherent inability to participate with Adam?
 - Would this teach anything about our relationship with God?
 - Which has the bigger gap, Adam and a lion, or God and a human?

Do you think C.S. Lewis’ depiction of Narnia is accurate? Do you think the animals could talk to Adam, or Adam could communicate with the plants? I read this in a book called Patriarchs and Prophets, what do you think?

The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. They were full of the vigor imparted by the tree of life, and their intellectual power was but little less than that of the

angels. The mysteries of the visible universe--"the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)--afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. The laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men's study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. **They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life.** With every living creature, from the mighty Leviathan that playeth among the waters to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, "the balancings of the clouds," the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night--all were open to the study of our first parents. **On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God's name was written. The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power.** They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude. {PP 50.3}

So long as they remained loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would continually increase. They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unfailing love of God. {PP 51.1}

Thoughts?

- What do you think it means held converse with leaf and flower and tree?
- What does it mean God's name was written on every aspect of nature?
- The laws of nature – what would they teach?
- What does loyalty to God's law have to do with an ability to expand one's comprehension and understanding?

As I was preparing for this week's lesson I came across an interesting quotation and wanted to read it to you and get your thoughts. It was written over 100 years ago in a magazine called Signs of the Times, Feb 1, 1899:

But since sin entered the world, men have been serving self. The world today takes much satisfaction in talking of the progress of the age. But in this God does not delight. In the antediluvian world there were many wonderful works of art and science. Fresh from the hand of the Creator, **these descendants of Adam possessed capabilities that we do not now see.** But they forgot God; and so it is today. Men have sought out many inventions; but what is the influence exerted by the improvements and the abundant facilities for intercourse that are everywhere seen? **Men have not kept God's commandments,** and therefore the railways, the telegraph wires, the cables that connect the nations and kingdoms of the earth, **have not brought the fallen world any nearer the higher world.** {ST, February 1, 1899 par. 4}

Obedience to God's law brings men into harmony with heavenly intelligences. It is the duty of each human being to offer God whole-hearted service, to strive to find the right path, the narrow way, **that leads through the gate of self-denial into the city of God.** The road that leads to death is broad, and full of indulgence; but at the end thereof is no city whose builder

and maker is God. The road that leads to heaven is narrow, and few there be that find it; for by no device can this path be made smooth or easy. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," Christ declared. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." {ST, February 1, 1899 par. 5}

Thoughts? What do you hear? Have you ever heard similar language before?

Do you hear this through the lens of imposed law, or the law of love? Which makes more sense and why?

I found it fascinating to read this through the lens of God's law of love, the protocol upon which life is built. Notice, this says that if we step outside of God's design for life, don't keep his commandments, we are not ennobled despite our intellectual inventions. Further, it is through obedience to God's law we are brought into harmony with heavenly beings – which means what? That when we harmonize with the protocols that God constructed life to operate upon we unite with the rest of God's universe. And through self-denial is the gate to God's city, which means what?

That it is by love that we enter into God's kingdom, and love is not self-seeking. This means we die to selfishness, but it doesn't mean we abuse and mistreat ourselves, it doesn't mean we flagellate ourselves or do various forms of ritualistic punishment. It means we choose to love others more than self and say no to those actions and choices that are contrary to how God constructed life to operate.

Doesn't it all make sense when we understand God's law as the law of love, the design template upon which life is built? But if we see it as many have taught it, as an imposed set of rules, enforced by a powerful governor, then what view do we get?

I read this from Review and Herald July 25, 1871, consider if the underlying problem between the two groups is attributable to how we see God's law:

Christians should be the most cheerful and happy people that live. They may have the consciousness that God is their father, and their everlasting friend. **But many professed Christians do not correctly represent the Christian religion.** They appear gloomy, as if under a cloud. They often speak of **the great sacrifices they** have made to become Christians. They appeal to those who have not accepted Christ, representing by their own example and conversation that they must give up everything which would make life pleasant and joyful. They throw a pall of darkness over the blessed Christian hope. **The impression is given that God's requirements are a burden** even to the willing soul, and that everything that would give pleasure, or that would delight the taste, must be sacrificed. {RH, July 25, 1871 par. 1}

We do not hesitate to say that this class of professed Christians have not the genuine article. God is love. Whoso dwelleth in God, dwelleth in love. All who have indeed become acquainted, **by experimental knowledge, with the love and tender compassion of our Heavenly Father will impart light and joy wherever they may be.** Their presence and influence will be to their associates as the fragrance of sweet flowers, because they are linked

to God and Heaven, and the purity and exalted loveliness of Heaven are communicated through them to all that are brought within their influence. **This constitutes them the light of the world**, the salt of the earth. They are indeed savors of life unto life, but not of death unto death. {RH, July 25, 1871 par. 2}

Even the great God is a lover of the beautiful. He has given us unmistakable evidence of this in the work of his hands... {RH, July 25, 1871 par. 4}

God, who made the Eden home of our first parents so surpassingly lovely, has also given the noble trees, the beautiful flowers, and everything lovely in nature, for our happiness. **He has given us these tokens of his love, that we may have correct views of his character. He has implanted in the hearts of his children the love of the beautiful.** But by many this love has been perverted. The benefits and beauties which God has bestowed upon us have been worshiped; while the glorious Giver has been forgotten. **This is stupid ingratitude. We should acknowledge the love of God to us in all his creative works,** and our heart should respond to these evidences of his love by giving him the heart's best and holiest affections. {RH, July 25, 1871 par. 5}

Thoughts?

Read second paragraph, “According to Genesis 2:19... thoughts?

Names did have great meaning in biblical times, - when were biblical times? Would that be during the times when the Bible was being written? And were the names significant because of the Hebrew culture?

Was Adam alive during the time the Bible was being written, or part of the Hebrew culture?

Adam means – man –

Eve means? Genesis 3:20 Adam calls his wife Eve, the Bible commentary states the following regarding her name:

Eve, *chawwah*. *Chawwah* means “life,” and is here translated *Zoe* by the LXX [Septuagint]. It is an old Semitic form, found also in old Phoenician inscriptions, but was no longer used in the Hebrew language at the time the Bible was written. This has been suggested as indicating that Adam spoke an old Semitic language. If Moses had used a contemporary Hebrew equivalent, he would have written the woman’s name *chayyah* instead of *chawwah*, but by giving the name in an unusual archaic form he shows that his knowledge goes back into the remote past. In ch. 4:1 *chawwah* was roughly transliterated *Eua* by the LXX, whence comes our English “Eve.”¹

So it wasn’t Adam and Eve, it was Adam and Chawwah?

¹ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 1.* 1978 (F. D. Nichol, Ed.) (235). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

So where might Moses have gotten knowledge of old Phoenician inscriptions? Could his education in Egypt have had anything to do with it? Or did God give him a direct spelling of this word?

Regardless, Eve/Chawwah means life, or mother of the living. Interesting name, what do you think?

Read last paragraph, “Adam was assigned the task....” Thoughts?

How is the environment treated today? Do we respect and care for the environment? Do we have any responsibility to do so?

What factors lead humanity to damage the environment?

- Ignorance
 - Inventions intended to help having unforeseen affects, chemicals, technology etc.
- Selfishness - greed- capitalism
 - Purposeful exploitation for gaining wealth
 - Corporate farms
 - Genetic engineering of plants
 - Deforestation
 - Strip mining
 - Ivory
- Selfishness – seeking power
 - War
- Selfishness - sport
 - Hunting animals to extinction
- Selfishness - vanity
 - Using animal products, mink etc. for self aggrandizement
- Selfishness – appetite
 - Whale hunting
- Others?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Creation of the animals...” thoughts?

No doubt it is God’s will the animals should exist – question:

- Is it God’s will the animals should be in rebellion to human beings?
- Is it God’s will the animals should exist in the condition and state we find them today?

So, while it is God’s will they should exist, what impact in our decision making does it have when we realize that nature, including the animals, are not currently in the state God created them?

Do we find, for instance, that as good stewards, we might need to kill animals?

- Rabid animals?
- Diseased animals – mad cow disease?
- Cull populations to prevent mass starvation, because no natural predators?
- Kill predators to protect neighborhoods, pets, livestock?
- What about rats, and mice?
 - Bubonic plague happened because of rats
- What constitutes an animal?
 - What about roaches, ants, termites, wasps, hornets, bees – killer bees, mosquitos, ticks, spiders, flies, fleas, lice, bacteria?

So, are there times, in this world of sin, where, as stewards, we need to kill animals?

What about using animals for food? Why or why not?

- Not God's original design
- Not as healthy than a balanced vegetarian diet
- Misrepresents God's intention with the powerful preying on the weak
- Yet, Jesus ate animals and even prepared them for his disciples, what do we make of this?
- If Jesus did it why shouldn't we?
- What is the difference in today's world that the earth 2000 years ago?
 - Pollution and industrial farming have markedly deteriorated the quality of animal products and now animal products are more toxic and harmful than 2000 years ago
 - The population is so large that we are eating animal population to extinction, many fish species have been or are almost gone in the wild.
- Are there times and situations today where it is best to eat meat?
 - What about those places in the world where mass famine, and aid agencies bring in flour, and you can eat bread and chicken, but there are no fruits or vegetables? Is it better to just eat corn cakes or wheat bread three times per day, or eat some chicken with it?

Should animals be used for research? Why or why not?

- Should a dog and monkey have been sent into space before people?
- What benefits have resulted from animal research?
 - 1880s Emil von Behring isolated diphtheria toxin using guinea pigs, leading to the development of a vaccine and the essential elimination of this disease from the human experience and winning the Nobel Prize
 - 1921 Fredrick Banting, doing experiments on dogs discovered insulin and thus the treatment for diabetes, also leading to a Nobel Prize

- 1943 Samuel Waksman discovered streptomycin and coined the term antibiotics. Corwin Hinshaw and William Feldman experimented with guinea pigs using streptomycin to cure tuberculosis. Waksman won the Nobel Prize in medicine for discovery of antibiotics
- 1940's Jonas Salk and his team used rhesus monkeys to develop polio vaccine, which has helped hundreds of millions and basically eliminated the disease where the vaccine is used. 100,000 rhesus monkeys were used to create the vaccine.
- 1940s John Cade tested lithium in guinea pigs as an anticonvulsant, but discovered the animals were calmer and it was used as a mood stabilizer, prior to this animal testing bipolar patients were treated with lobotomy and electroconvulsive therapy
- 1960s Albert Starr developed heart valve replacement technology doing experiments on dogs
- 1968 Carpentier made heart valve replacements for humans using pig valves
 - Over 300,000 people receive heart valve replacement each year from their designs
- 1970s leprosy treatment was developed using armadillos

Should animals be used in research?

Should animals be used for clothing? Why or why not? Does it depend on situation and circumstance? What were Adam and Eve's first clothes after sin? Was God not capable of providing them something out of polyester? Or at least wool?

Should animals be used for sport? Does it again depend on what sport?

- Horse and dog racing?
- Polo?
- Hunting?
- Rodeo?
- Bull fighting?
- Circuses?
- Zoos?

Here is a quotation from one of the founders of our church:

It is because of man's sin that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together" (Romans 8:22). Suffering and death were thus entailed, not only upon the human race, but upon the animals. Surely, then, it becomes man to seek to lighten, instead of increasing, the weight of suffering which his transgression has brought upon God's creatures. **He who will abuse animals because he has them in his power is both a coward and a tyrant.** {2MCP 514.2}

A disposition to cause pain, whether to our fellowmen or to the brute creation, is satanic. Many do not realize that their cruelty will ever be known, because the poor dumb

animals cannot reveal it. But could the eyes of these men be opened, as were those of Balaam, they would see an angel of God standing as a witness to testify against them in the courts above. A record goes up to heaven, and a day is coming when judgment will be pronounced against those who abuse God's creatures.--PP 443 (1890). {2MCP 514.3}

Thoughts?

Do you agree it is satanic to have a disposition to want to cause pain and to inflict suffering? Then, what about various views of God which suggest he must inflict torture and suffering upon the wicked? Wouldn't such depictions also be satanic?

What do you think of the language describing a record kept in heaven in the courts above and judgment pronounced against them etc? Is this describing reality, or using a language necessary for the audience? Who is this written to impress, the tender hearted, or those being cruel to animals? And what kind of language is necessary when dealing with such people? This is why God said in OT times, "Israel is stubborn like a mule, how can I feed them like lambs in a meadow?" and in love, he often threatened.

When you read such judicial language in Scripture, look at who is beings spoken to, it is language for the primitive, the hardened in heart, those who don't know God or his methods. As Paul said to Timothy, the law was NOT given for the righteous, but for the wicked.

TUESDAY

Read fourth paragraph, "By pointing us to..." thoughts?

What significance do you find in the Sabbath? Why is it important today? Is the primary importance of the Sabbath to remind us that God - the powerful - created?

I would suggest it is not about creative *power*, but about creative *principle*. Satan hasn't alleged God isn't powerful, so pointing to God's power in creation doesn't answer the questions, nor deter Satan's war against God.

But, when we realize the Sabbath in its context - truth, presented in love, leaving us free – and, the reminder that the Sabbath points us to creation – we realize the Sabbath is an evidence of God's character of love AND calls us to remember the principles upon which God built creation to operate.

In other words, Sabbath calls us to remember *how* God built creation to operate, upon what law. When we consider creation, what is the law it operates upon? The law of love, a natural law, not an imposed law.

This is why Satan hates Sabbath – and any ecclesiastical authority that votes to change the Sabbath can only do so after it first accepts the lie that God's law is imposed. What church committee ever decided to change the law of gravity, or the law of respiration? None, because they recognize these are natural

laws and cannot be changed because they are part of how life is built to operate. If Christian groups would have remembered God's law, as revealed in creation, which the Sabbath reminds us of, they would never have considered they could change the Sabbath – for the Sabbath's existence is evidence of God's nature and character of love.

People can certainly change the day upon which they worship, but they cannot change the law God built life to operate upon, nor can the evidence given by God and embodied in the Sabbath ever be changed.

But when we suggest the Sabbath is an imposed arbitrary test of obedience, then we take this amazing evidence of God's natural law and his character of love and we twist it to misrepresent God and support Satan's attack against God.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "As we have seen..." thoughts?

When we realize that everything God created was perfect when he created it, then what does this mean when we realize we are born defective? Does it give any insight into God's hand in our individual existence? Can we lay at God's hand birth defects?

- Should people who have children born with birth defects suggest it was God's will they have such children?
- Should doctors refuse to correct congenital defects claiming God created the baby that way and who are they to counter the divine will?
- Does God create sinners? Are we born "in sin conceived in iniquity"? (Ps 51)
 - Then is God actively creating each of us?
- No, God created man with an ability to pro-create and human beings are able to use the ability to produce children in their image

Is evolution the only model that incorporates the ideas of sickness and death being part of the landscape of our eternal reality? No, Eastern philosophies teach the eternal existence of good and evil in balance. And this idea has infected Christianity with the teaching of an eternal burning hell – a universe in which good and evil exist eternally, or a God who is the source of suffering and death – thus a universe in which good and evil exist eternally within God.

The eternal dualism theology leads to fear and fear leads to selfishness. It is one of the distortions that undermines our unity with God and impairs our ability to experience genuine healing.

Read last paragraph, "Let none...." Thoughts?

Is intemperance sin? What is sin? Transgression of the law, or lawlessness, or violating the design protocols upon which life is built. So, what is intemperance? Violating the design protocol for physical

health. Is this sin? Why? Because we broke a rule and an external authority is watching, keeping a record, and will judge and punish us unless we accept Jesus payment to avoid our punishment? Or, because intemperance violates the design life was built upon? And what happens when we violate that design? We destroy ourselves leading to what? And what does sin lead to?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “We often tend...” thoughts?

How do you like this suggestion? Do you like the “obligated” language? When you accept Rome’s Imperial law construct, obligation results in what? Rebellion, here is a quotation from one of our founders:

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. **True obedience is the outworking of a principle within.** It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. **The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God.** {COL 97.3}

What do you hear? Is there a difference in doing something out of obligation and doing it out of agreement, loyalty, principle?

What is the difference?

What is someone said, it is our obligation to drink water, is it true? Why? If we insist on thinking of our relationship with God in obligatory terms, then at least do so through the lens of natural law.

Matthew 25 talks about the talents and how if they are invested a person gets more and if they are not then they are taken from the person, what does this mean? Why are talents taken if we don’t use them and why does the one who invests them get more?

This has to do with natural law and how God designed us to function. When we exercise and develop our abilities our neural circuits naturally expand and we actually develop more abilities. But when we fail to develop our abilities the neural circuits are pruned and we lose what we have. How does God look through this understanding?

But what if this is instead viewed through imposed law, then how does the parable of the talents look?

FRIDAY

Read question 1 – what is the greater gap, human to pig, or God to human? How big a condescension would it be for a human to become a pig? How big a condescension for Christ to become human?