



1st Quarter 2015 – Proverbs Lesson 10 – Behind The Mask

SABBATH

“Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, and do not stand in the place of the great”
(Proverbs 25:6, NKJV).

The 1st lesson speaks about deception [Satan’s deception of Eve, and appearing as an “angel of light”], and calls “self-pretention” a more dangerous deception. I think they have the same source – SELF. Think about why Satan would present himself as he was originally created, instead of what he’s become.

Don’t we all have “masks” to varying degrees? Has anyone heard of “progressive disclosure”? It’s a technique related to learning very detailed processes [usually with computer / web systems], however, it is also used in sales, and even evangelism. Do we, tell our Catholic brethren, interested in SDA doctrines, that we believe the Papacy represents the antichrist in our first conversation or do we typically disclose this little tidbit later? Do we reveal all of our closet’s skeletons at the beginning of a dating relationship or sometime later? Even Jesus wanted to tell His disciples “more”, but they were not ready [see John 16:12], so His disclosure had to be progressive. Bear in mind, Love sometimes avoids telling the truth [if it will injure], and Selfishness sometimes tells the truth [see I Sam 28 – Saul consulting the witch of Endor]. Satan impersonated Samuel, *and told the truth about what would happen in the future*. His intent, however, was to discourage Saul [see PP Chapters. 66, 67].

Most of us have heard about someone [usually a politician] who has falsified a job application, falsely claimed military service [aka “stolen valor”], or exaggerated their abilities/endeavors [ref. Brian Williams, NBC news]. When their deceptions are discovered, what happens? What happens is the deception is never discovered? Which is more dangerous? Does it matter which “Law” lens this is being viewed through?

SUNDAY

The Mystery of God.

From the lesson:

“Physicist David Deutsch wrote that “every- day events are stupendously complex when expressed in terms of fundamental physics. If you fill a kettle with water and switch it on, all the supercomputers on Earth working for the age of the universe could not solve the equations that predict what all those water molecules will do—even if we could somehow determine their initial state and that of all the outside influences on them, which is itself an intractable task.” — David Deutsch, *The Beginning of Infinity: Explanations That Transform the World* (New York: Penguin, 2011), Kindle edition, locations 1972–1975.

First, I think this is one of the more compelling arguments for Creation [intelligent design], as I’ve ever read. Is there more we can glean from this passage?



“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter. As the heavens for height and the earth for depth, So the heart of kings is unsearchable.” Prov. 25: 2, 3

Why is it God’s glory to “conceal a matter”? Why is it the glory of kings to search out a matter? Is this God’s only glory? Does it make a difference which “matters” are concealed/revealed? Does it make a difference *how* they are concealed/revealed? How [if, at all] is this related to “Natural Law”?

Why is there a tendency, in Christianity, to just give up on searching out the mysteries of God? While there is an obvious, insurmountable gap between finite created beings, and their infinite Creator, does this mean we should just not bother? Should we just “have more faith” [see the colored section at the bottom of today’s lesson]? Might there be some benefit from wrestling with some of these “mysteries”? [see Isa. 1:18] Might we develop a better appreciation for an infinite God, while bettering ourselves as well? Might we have a better insight in to the 1st Commandment [see Ex: 20: 2,3]?

MONDAY

The Fool as Wise.

Is truth actually “relative”? The lesson gives the example of people, in different countries driving on the Left or Right side of the road. Which type of “Law” determines which side of the road will be driven on? Do the laws of physics [momentum, inertia, friction, acceleration] care which side of the road we drive on?

I have the expensive hobby of high performance driving, where I take my car to a local race track and “drive it like I stole it.” The general manager of the driving club likes to tell us in the 2nd day’s drivers meeting, that the laws of physics have not changed overnight, and we still need to drive within our abilities. Can the laws of physics be changed to meet us “in our condition” if we decide to drive on the wrong side of the road?

The lesson goes on to speak of our “moral law”. Any connection between driving on the wrong side of the road, or without brakes, and our moral code? What are some of the parallels or differences?

Why is “God’s foolishness” wiser than “man’s wisdom”? [I Cor 1: 25] How can “doing what’s right in our own eyes” lead to trouble? [see Prov 14:12 & 16:25]

How do we see “the folly of fools” play out today? Anyone here on Facebook or Twitter? Anyone watch the news?



TUESDAY

The Sluggard.

“The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth” (Prov. 26:15, NIV).

Ever meet anyone like this? Solomon has a lot to say about the lazy “sluggard” [see Prov 6: 6, 9; 10:26; 12:24, 27; 13:4; 15:19; 19:24; 20:4; 21:25; 24:30; 26:13-16]. We see laziness surrounding us today in our nation of plenty. What is the real problems with the “sluggard”? In addition to the numerous personal and social problems, **THE CONDITION IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH LIFE.** Does this change our conception of the 4th commandment now?

8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

Verse 9 can be read as *permission* to work 6 days OR a *command* to work 6 days because that’s how life operates. Everything in Creation is in motion. From the subatomic quarks, leptons, & bosons to single cell organisms to human beings to colossal super galaxies 4 billion light years across, everything moves, because motion is life is motion.

Why was Sodom destroyed? Most of Christianity would say it was God’s anger at homosexuality. His Word says otherwise.

Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and **abundance of idleness**; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy [emphasis added.] Eze. 16:49

The true joy of life is found only by the working men and women. The angels are diligent workers; they are the ministers of God to the children of men. The Creator has prepared no place for the stagnating practice of indolence. PP 50.

Did you know that God “works”? [see John 5:17]

WEDNESDAY

The Friend as Enemy

The lessons asks, “When can a rebuke be a sign of love?” Simple answer – When it’s in their best interest. Love does what’s right because it’s right.



We all struggle with this either with friends or family. How many have held their tongue when a young person was dating/marrying someone “unfit”? When the inevitable train wreck happened, how many asked their friends/family “Why didn’t you say something, then?”

THURSDAY

The Enemy as Friend

We even have a label for this kind of friend “a frenemy” [An enemy disguised as a friend - Urban Dictionary].

Read Prov 26:17-23. Any of this sound familiar? Do we know any eloquent speakers whose words don’t match their works [think church and national leadership]? Satan, himself, is an eloquent orator, however, he’s also known as the “father of lies”. How will we be able to distinguish the difference? I love the quote from the bottom of Tuesday’s lesson:

“In the judgment men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 55.