



Biblical Missionaries 3Q 2015 Lesson 9

Peter and the Gentiles

At the end of last week's lesson we closed on the story of Jesus healing the demoniac. I gave a quotation from a letter written more than 100 years ago from EG White to a man and his wife, describing extreme selfishness with tantrums as demonic.

What I didn't discuss is that mental illnesses such as bipolar, schizophrenia, schizoaffective d/o, depression, OCD and others, are physical problems with brain and body and NOT demonic activity.

What we are promised now is new characters, we don't get new physiology until the second coming. Thus, a person can have a saving relationship with Jesus and still struggle with a mental health problem.

SABBATH

Read Memory Text:

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." Acts 2:38,39 NKJV

What does this text mean? The text is filled with words that have become common use in Christianity, but do we know what they mean?

Repent—what is repentance?

What does it mean to be baptized? Going through a ceremony with water and saying the words "I baptize you in the name of Jesus"?

Does it mean having your mind and heart immersed into the truth about God, opening the heart to God and receiving the Holy Spirit to recreate the character of Christ within and enable one for duty?

Can one go through the symbolic water baptism and still not be baptized into Jesus Christ?

What does it mean by "in the name of Jesus"?

- Does it mean speaking the words "in the name of Jesus"?
- "But to pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and Spirit of Jesus, while we work his works, believe his promises, and rely on his matchless grace." {ST, August 21,



1884 par. 13}

What does, for the remission of sins mean?

What law lens are you looking through?

If through imposed law it means someone paying a penalty to the legal authorities for your sins and you by accepting that payment can have the sins erased from your legal ledger.

If you look through Design Law, you understand that remission of sin is like the remission of cancer. When cancer goes into remission it means the cancer cells have either been eliminated or remitted back to their precancerous condition. Sin going into remission is having sinfulness, fear and selfishness, in our hearts removed and our characters remit back to God's original design—like Jesus perfect love!

Read second paragraph, "Peter worked..." What are the unchangeable diving absolutes versus cultural practices?

- Covering head while in church or while praying?
- Length of one's hair?
- Growing a beard?
- Women speaking in church?
- Ordination of men or women?
- Wearing shoes in sanctuary?
- Baptism in water?
- Partaking of communion ceremony?

How much of our religious practice is simple application of divine absolutes, and how much of it is cultural rituals?

What does it look like to carry out divine absolutes?

All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go



to visit you?’

⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ MT 25:32-40

Is this what true religion looks like? Why? What divine absolute is being expressed here?

- This is the law of love in action—giving to others

What about this passage:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. MT 5:38-45

What is divine absolute and what is cultural? What about “eye for eye”—divine absolute or cultural practice?

Some believe if God says it then it is a divine absolute, but did God ever give instructions that were cultural practices or rituals?

Why is loving others a divine absolute? What makes it so? What happens if you don’t do this?

What about this?

Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” MT 22:37-40

Is this a divine absolute? How and why?

- Law of love but also the law of worship—by beholding we become changed
- Love your neighbor, means don’t steal, murder, betray, bear false witness or covet – why? What happens to the one who breaks the law? They are damaged, they sear their conscience, warp their character, harden their heart, thus are deviant from design protocol, i.e. divine absolute. Absolute because life is absolutely created to operate upon this protocols.



Can you think of any other divine absolutes?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Jesus’ last words...” What do you think of the interpretation of “a divine mandate?” When you read Acts 1:8 do you hear a mandate?

The word “mandate” most commonly means an authoritative order or command – is that what you hear?

The authors left off the first phrase of this passage in Acts, lets hear the entire verse:

But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Does this sound like a mandate, as in authoritative order, or more like a prophecy, a description of what they would do when the Holy Spirit came upon them?

Does it make a difference if we hear it as an order or we hear Christ’s words as predictive, telling what would happen?

If a doctor had a patient with pneumonia and said to them, “I give you this mandate: You are to cough no more!” Is that the same as saying, “When the antibiotics finish their work in you, you will cough no more.”?

How do you hear the 10 Commandments—as mandates, or descriptions of what we will be like when we surrender ourselves into His hands?

Second paragraph states, “The Great Commission found its first fulfillment on the Day of Pentecost. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit had as its aim the evangelization of the world.”

Absolutely right! But what was the world to be evangelized about? What is the message that is to be taken to the world?

- We are sinners—criminals and all guilty in God’s heavenly court, sentenced to eternal punishment? But God loved us too much, so He sent His Son and punished Jesus in our place? If you accept the payment of Jesus’ blood to the Father in your behalf, you can be declared legally righteous?
- OR—God is not like you have been taught! God is not a cosmic judge waiting to sentence you and His law is not a list of imposed rules He polices. God is like Jesus and His law is love! Yes, we are sinners—which means we are sick of heart and mind, selfish rather than loving and thus deviant from God’s design. Without remedy our condition is terminal. But



God loved us too much to let us die, so He sent His Son to take this terminal condition upon Himself and cure it. And all those who trust Him will receive the Remedy of a new heart and character achieved by Jesus and applied in us by the indwelling Spirit and will be restored to harmony and unity with God and His kingdom of love.

Which message is to go to the world? Which has?

MONDAY

The story of Cornelius and his conversion – the lesson points out that the question the church struggled with then was, “Can a Gentile become a Christian without first becoming a Jew?”

Do we have similar questions today?

- Can a person be saved without being a member of our denomination?
- Can a person be saved without a baptism ceremony in the name of Jesus?
- Can a person be saved without becoming a Christian?
- Can a person be saved who tells you they reject Christianity?

What does it mean to be saved?

What law lens to you look through to answer the question?

Through the imposed law lens it means that you must accept the legal payment of Jesus in your behalf; you must publicly declare it; you must go through the ritual of baptism and if you don't then your sins remain on the record books of heaven and you will be executed by God. But if you do accept the legal payment, God declares you righteous, even though you are not.

If you look through Design law you realize that life only exists in harmony with God, who is the source of all life. Thus He created all life to operate in harmony with Himself. Deviations from His design separate us from Him and are terminal. Salvation is being reconciled to God and experiencing, via the work of the Holy Spirit the application of Christ's character into our hearts so that we have a new heart and right spirit, that we love others more than self. Such a transformation cannot be accomplished by human effort; it cannot be accomplished by religious ritual; it cannot be accomplished by psychotherapy or human philosophy—it can ONLY be accomplished by God, taking the victory of Jesus and making it real and applicable in our hearts and minds.

So this means everyone who is saved is saved only because of the Remedy achieved by Christ.

Does that mean then, that the Holy Spirit requires the right syllables (i.e. the words “In the name of Jesus”) to be spoken before the Spirit will apply Christ's victory to someone's heart? Or will the Spirit work in any heart that is willing?



For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse... All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) ¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. Rom 1:20, 2:12-16

Here are two historic quotes in harmony with Romans:

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, **but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit** they have been a blessing to those about them. **Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness;** before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them **at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly,** those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. **Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.** {DA 638.2}

Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. **In heathen Africa, in the Catholic lands of Europe and of South America, in China, in India, in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law.--** Prophets and Kings, pp. 188

What does it mean to be saved? There is no legal aspect in the sense of courtrooms, legal proceedings, dealing with record books, paying penalties or anything else associated with human type law systems.

God's law is not like created beings can impose, God is Creator and His law holds the very fabric of the cosmos together! Salvation means healing those who are deviant from that Design and Jesus is our Remedy. He overcame where we could not!

Listen to this historic quote:



"In assuming human nature, that he might reach to the very depths of human woe and misery and **lift man up**, Christ has shown what estimate he places upon the human race. In this work everything was at stake. **Satan claimed to be the lawful owner of the fallen race**; [notice who takes the legal approach!] and with what persistent effort did he seek to overthrow Christ through **his subtility**! [What subtility? The subtle change in the way intelligent beings understand God's law. By making God's law appear imposed and then claiming legal rights and the need for justice. He paints God as the cosmic executioner and the entire world is drinking this poisonous view of God.] It was only by the most desperate conflict with the powers of Satan that **Christ could accomplish his purpose** [and what do you think this author says that purpose was? To regain legal rights? To make legal payments?] **of restoring the almost obliterated image of God in man, and place his own signature upon his forehead.** {General Conference Daily Bulletin, March 2, 1897 par. 17}

Or this one:

In his humanity, Christ lived a perfect life, thus elevating humanity in the scale of moral worth with God. [In His human brain Christ developed a perfect human character, thus elevating humanity from deviant to harmony with God and His law of love] With his human arm Christ lays hold of man, while with his divine arm he grasps the throne of the Infinite. **Thus he imbues man with his own spiritual nature, and lifts him to his side, to be cherished and loved as the Father loves his Son.** [What does "imbues" mean? We become partakers of the divine nature! It is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me. We are recreated within with new motives! We partake of the remedy Christ procured!] {ST, August 26, 1897 par. 6}

The atonement of Christ is **not** a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; **it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health.** It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us **but in our hearts and characters** (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

Notice, it is restoration of righteousness within! This is salvation and it is only possible through Christ, even for those who don't know Christ or have never heard of Christ. If they have opened their heart to the Holy Spirit and experienced a new heart of love, it was only possible because of Christ's victory, procuring a perfect character and the Holy Spirit applying in that human what Christ achieved.

Read last paragraph, "Notice, too, what..." Did Cornelius sin when he bowed down to worship Peter? Why or why not?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Then Peter began..." What is the point of what Peter learned?



What do we learn about God from this story?

With what is God concerned?

- Occupation?
- Organizational affiliation?
- Ethnic group?
- Dress?
- Behavior?
- The name people call God in worship?
- Worship style?
- Character of the worshipper?

Which are important and why?

While all but character are ultimately not important, how can most impact what is important, namely, character?

- Occupation?
 - Are there certain occupations that make it easier or harder to develop godly character?
 - Occupations which are service oriented, health care, teaching, clergy, are these helpful? How?
 - Police, military, lawyers, politicians, pornographers, fashion designers/models, could these create obstacles? How?
- Organizational affiliation?
 - Does the religion one holds, including with which group one affiliates, have the ability to impact their character development?
 - Does the religious group to which one belongs have the ability to impact thinking or lack there of?
- Ethnic groups?
 - Could our ethnic group, how we were raised, impact our character development?
 - Could our attitude towards those of different ethnicity affect our character development?
- Dress?
 - Can dress affect behavior?
 - Is there a objective reason for certain standards in dress?
- Behavior?
 - Do our behaviors reinforce attitudes?
 - Does behavior matter?
 - But, can one have right behavior and wrong character?
- The name people call God in worship?
- Worship style?



WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “As we saw...” What changed Peter? He had a vision, which challenged his biases.

Read last paragraph, “There is a lesson...” What do they mean “Christian uniqueness and finality”?

How do you approach non-Christian religions? What do you find lacking in the following religions?

- Judaism
 - Many Jews no longer believe in God, to them being Jewish is part of belonging to the “tribe” to the culture and practices, but believing in God isn’t necessary
 - God’s law is imposed
 - God is either disinterested or the punisher of lawbreakers
- Islam
 - God’s law is imposed
 - God is a punishing god to the unfaithful
- Buddhism
 - Has no God
 - Operates on the landscape of dualism, the eternal existence of both good and evil, which is asserted to provides balance to the universe

What about Christianity?

- Within Christianity—what makes it better?
 - God’s law is love, the protocols reality is built upon
 - God became human to reveal Himself to us in order to win us to trust and also to take our terminal condition upon Himself in order to cure His creation.
 - Is this the picture of God Christians have taken to the world?
 - What picture has been taken to the world?

How is the god, whose followers fly planes into buildings, different from the god whose followers blow up abortion clinics?

How is the god who wants his followers to enforce Sharia laws through state legislations different from the god of those who want Sunday legislation or other restrictions on liberty?

When one does believe in God, but worships a god whose law is imposed, then one becomes like that god and sees no reason why the government shouldn’t impose just moral laws.



But when one worships the God who is love and who created reality to operate in harmony with His own character of love, one realizes that love cannot be imposed, legislated or enforced, it can only be won in an environment of genuine freedom.

THURSDAY

The lesson points out that the Jews had a great regard for the Old Testament laws and rituals. What was the purpose of those laws and rituals?

- Some were good community health measures
- Some were good civil organizational measures
- Some were part of the “stage play” they were enacting
- Some were descriptions of God’s design for life

The issue is differentiating those that matter, from those that don’t.

What did the church of the New Testament come up with?

“It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.²⁰ Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. Acts 15:19,20

From *The Remedy*:

"Therefore, it is my judgment that we should not put obstacles in the way of the non-Jews who are turning to God and desire to partake of the Remedy.²⁰ Instead, let's send them a letter advising them to live pure lives: to keep their hearts pure toward God and therefore avoid anything that leads the mind toward idols; to keep their relationships pure and therefore avoid all sexual impurity; and to keep their bodies pure by not eating blood, raw meat, or any meat from animals whose blood was not drained.

What was the purpose? To help them come to know God and not put barriers in their way.

FRIDAY

Question 1, read and discuss.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

September 9,10: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Baptist Boomer’s Conference in San Antonio, TX.

September 12: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr., CA SDA church.

September 23-26: American Association of Christian Counselors World Convention at Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville TN. Come and Reason will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and Dr. Jennings will be doing a preconference workshop and regular conference presentation, as well as commencement speaker for Light University graduation.

October 24: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Puyallup, WA.

January 9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.