



## The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 9 3Q 2017 Paul's Pastoral Appeal

### SABBATH

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Read the first paragraph, "As we've seen..." Does correct doctrine matter? Yes! Why?

What is the importance of correct doctrine?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against **the knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2Cor 10:3-5

What is the central issue in the war between good and evil?

The truth about God—His character and methods of love, truth and freedom, thus doctrine is important AS it reveals truth about God that ultimately wins us back to trust in God!

What did the war start over in heaven?

How did Satan get Adam and Eve to rebel? What issue?

Let's ask some clarifying questions:

- What does it mean to be saved? Does it mean a legal declaration or a restoration to righteousness, an actual regeneration of heart, mind, character to be like Christ, which results in immortality?
- Can a person be saved who holds to fear, selfishness and deceit? Why not?
  - It would be like asking can a person be healed who insists on ingesting cyanide, or smoking, etc. why can't they be healed?
- Can a person claim to accept the legal payment of Jesus but still prefer the methods of coercion, fear, selfishness? Are such persons saved?
  - Why not?—it would be like what they did to George Washington—when he had pneumonia the doctors said they were going to heal him and what did they do? They bled about half his body blood to get rid of the evil humors—the doctors claimed to have the remedy, but they didn't in fact what they did was make his condition worse. This is what happens in the false legal model. The pastors and theology professors who hold it are like the doctors treating George Washington—those doctors really wanted to cure Washington, they were doing what they thought was right, but in reality it was



NOT right and thus they harmed while trying to do good. This is what the legal penal model of salvation does, harms while claiming to do good.

- Can a person have their characters renewed such that selfishness is replaced with other-centered love, but have never heard the message of Scripture? (Rom 2:12-14)
- Can a person be saved while rejecting the methods of God?
- Can a person be saved who doesn't worship on Sabbath?
  - Now remember we are talking about the importance of right doctrine, what is its importance—to bring us back to a trust relationship with God such that we are renewed in heart to be like Jesus—can that happen for people who don't worship on Sabbath?
- Can a person be saved who is never baptized by water?
- Can a person be saved who never joins a Christian church?
- Can a person be saved who believes in immortality of the soul?
- Can a person be saved who believes in eternal burning hell?
- Can a person be saved who doesn't believe in the Trinity?
- Can a person be saved who doesn't believe in six days of creation?
- Can a person be saved who doesn't partake communion or practice foot-washing ceremony?
- Can a person be saved who rejects love, truth, freedom, who values lies, coercion, selfishness—regardless of what religion they are, or what blood payments they claim?

What do we learn from this? What is the importance of doctrine?

Doctrines are important as they enlighten and inform us of reality—which originates and centers upon God, who is the source of reality—the Creator. If we have doctrines that are disconnected from God, that stand alone as tests of orthodoxy, then we actually obstruct the saving truth that Christ came to bring.

So, let's examine some doctrines and ask what do they tell us about God?

1. Holy Scriptures—the doctrine that the Old and New Testaments are inspired by God and contain the information necessary for salvation.
  - What does this doctrine tell us about God?
  - God communicates with us, provides us with evidence to refute the lies told about Him, as well as explanation of our circumstance, how reality works, His plan to heal and fix what is wrong with us and how we can cooperate with Him for salvation. Which says what about God?
  - Why would God take the time to explain things to us?
  - Does this mean God wants our understanding and agreement?
  - What does this say about God? What kind of God wants agreement?
  - Why didn't God just say get in line and obey or else?
  - Helpful—ideas, truths, wisdom, primarily about God, His character, design, and methods in contrast to Satan and his methods are communicated. The ideas and truths are what is important, the specific words are not special, magic, inspired and



thus the Greek and Hebrew can be replaced with English or other languages as long as the truths are retained.

- Harmful—words are inspired and must be taken literally; it is instruction manual of deeds to be done and sins to be shunned. We are not to ask questions or think, merely to believe and do what it says. Only King James is acceptable.

## 2. Trinity

- Helpful—God is love, love is other-centered, outward moving. The smallest number that exists to have genuine other centered love is three. Love cannot exist in a singularity, two can be narcissistically reinforcing, but three requires self-sacrifice for the other two. God is love and the Trinity is evidence of this reality. All three are equal in character, ability, eternity.
- Harmful—There is a hierarchical difference between the Godhead, or there is no Trinity. One being dominates and governs all other beings.

## 3. Creation

- Helpful—God is Creator and designed life to operate in harmony with His own character of love. We see love in nature in all the protocols of giving upon which life is constructed. Yet all nature groans under the weight of sin and thus we see disease and defect, not of God's design or origin, but due to violations of God's design and all such defects will one day be eliminated by God.
- Harmful—God didn't create directly in six literal days but used evolutionary forces over millions of years with the strong killing the weak to eventually evolve humans to the point we are today. What kind of being would God be if this were true?
  - Certain Christians hold to this view because they still cling to imposed law models of right and wrong. Thus they have no problem with a god who is the source of death.

## 4. Nature of Man

- What does it say about God that we have freedom to choose?
- What does our ability to love, to procreate say about God?
- What about or mortality—what does it say about God?
- Helpful—man was created mortal with conditional immortality pending development of a perfect sinless character of love
- Harmful—man was created immortal unconditionally—what would it say about God if God created human beings immortal in Eden—He either doesn't have foreknowledge (or even good anticipatory skills), or is sadistic and unloving

## 5. Great Controversy

- What kind of a God would allow questions to arise and give liberty to rebel?

## 6. Life, Death, Resurrection of Christ

- What is revealed about God in the life of Jesus?
- Helpful—Jesus partook of humanity in order to reveal the truth that destroys Satan's lies and wins us to trust, destroy the infection of fear and selfishness, develop a perfect human character by restoring God's design (law) of love into the species human and thereby carry humanity to perfection and becoming the source of salvation for all who trust and obey Him. All of this in accordance with God's



will. God was in the Son reconciling the world to himself.

- Harmful—God was angry His law was broken and was required by law to kill the breakers of His law, so Jesus came in order for God to kill Him so that the legal penalty could be paid and God wouldn't have to kill us. Jesus now stands between us and God working to keep God from killing us.

#### 7. Baptism

- Helpful—water baptism is a symbol of the immersion of the heart, mind, character into God—where fear and selfishness, sin, guilt, shame are washed away and we are renewed to be like Christ by the cleansing waves of truth and love emanating from God, revealed and fulfilled in Christ and distributed by the Holy Spirit
- Harmful—water baptism is a legal requirement and the water baptism itself provides saving benefit

#### 8. Communion

- Helpful—bread and wine are reminders to us of Christ and what He provides for our salvation, healing, nurturing and growth. Just as bread and wine provide nutrients to the body which become part of the cells of our bodies, so Jesus is the Word made flesh, the source of all truth. As we ingest into our minds the truth it dispels the lies and becomes the building blocks of ideas, concepts, perspectives, beliefs that form our mindsets and result in our hearts moving from distrust of God to trust. When we trust God we open the heart and God pours His love into our hearts, this is symbolized by the wine, which is the blood, which is the life, which is the perfect character of Christ, which we receive as a gift and we actually experience new motives, desires, in harmony with God.
  - The bread and wine symbol is to be more than a ceremony but to remind us just as our body needs daily nutrition by ingesting bread and wine so our minds/hearts need daily nutrition by ingesting the truth and love that comes from Jesus. So at every meal we are to be reminded of and partake of Jesus!
- Harmful—the bread and wine are either magical or legal, they magically transform to the literal flesh and blood of Jesus and by taking them they magically do something to make us acceptable to God; or they are a legal requirements that we must partake in order for Jesus to go to the Father in our behalf and pay the legal payment to God so God won't punish us.

#### 9. Law of God

- Helpful—God's laws are design protocols upon which life is constructed, deviations are destructive to the deviant. God has been working through Christ to restore humanity back into harmony with God and His design (law). God like a loving parent, added laws (10 Commandments, Levitical laws) to educate, diagnose, protect, and lead, but never as a means of salvation i.e. healing because the law cannot fix what is wrong.
- Harmful—God's law functions no differently that human law, a system of imposed rules requiring legal adjudication and infliction of imposed punishments. Therefore God is the righteous judge who hold legal court and investigates records to determine guilt, innocence and length of punishment and then God uses His power



to inflict pain, suffering and death on the legally guilty.

#### 10. Sabbath

- Helpful—Sabbath is a *sign*, an evidence, a proof of God’s character of love, created in the context of an assault on His right to rule—rather than using power to force His way, God created a day for freedom to think. The Sabbath is evidence of design law, creation, how reality is built to operate. And all who model themselves after God and Christ present the truth in love and leave others free—which is what the Sabbath evidences.
- Harmful—the Sabbath is an arbitrary test of obedience, just observing this day as a weekly religious day of observance makes one right with God, and working on this day ensures one is condemned to hell.

#### 11. Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

- Helpful—The entire OT sanctuary system of rituals and rites were symbolic representations of God’s plan, through Christ, to heal and restore human beings back into His original perfection. Thus Christ is in heaven directing all the agencies at His disposal to heal and cleanse the Spirit temple from sinfulness
- Harmful—There is a building in heaven in which Jesus presents blood, smoke and His sacrifice to the Father pleading the Father not to hurt us. In this process records of bad deeds are being removed from record books in heaven or amounts of time of inflicted pain and suffering in the fires of hell are being registered against those who have not accepted Jesus’ legal payment for their sins

Do we understand all doctrine is only important as it informs us of reality—of who God is, how His designs (laws) work, what happens when we break His designs (laws) and how God through Christ works to fix (save/heal) His creation and how we can participate in His healing plan?

## SUNDAY

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The lesson points us to Galatians 4:12-20. Would someone read these verses?

I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. <sup>13</sup> As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. <sup>14</sup> Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. <sup>15</sup> What has happened to all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. <sup>16</sup> Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? <sup>17</sup> Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them. <sup>18</sup> It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you. <sup>19</sup> My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, <sup>20</sup> how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!



What is Paul's concern? What did Paul want to see happen as a result of his labor for them? "Christ is formed in you!"

The lesson rightly points out in the last paragraph, "To be a follower of Christ is more than just the profession of faith; it involves a radical transformation into the likeness of Christ."

Is this radical transformation a legal event, or a healing action?

This is genuine salvation, being reborn, regenerated, etc. all the descriptions of Scripture are the same.

But it is interesting—we received an email this week from a person who just read the document put out 7 years ago after we met with some of the local theology professors. Do you remember? They wanted to know if we had a response. My response is *The God-Shaped Heart*. But, to sum up their position they claimed that while our healing view is taught in Scripture, it is only one metaphor amongst many, such as legal, ransom, lost and found and others. And that their view is much richer and deeper because they include all the metaphors while we emphasize only one.

Do you see what they have just done? Metaphor is only metaphor as long as it is directly tied to some reality. If there is no reality to which it is tied it is no longer metaphor but fantasy.

The reality of Scripture is healing, renewal, regeneration into Christlikeness. The metaphors of Scripture all point to this reality. When they say the healing view is metaphor they have removed the reality and thus they are no longer teaching truth but fantasy.

This is the exact same problem Paul was dealing with in Galatia. Paul has real concerns that his work to bring them the healing remedy of Jesus, which when partaken results in this genuine transformation of the inner person, is being interfered with and perhaps will be obstructed. What is it that Paul fears will prevent the Galatians from experiencing this regeneration into Christlikeness?

Paul's very next words tells us what the false teachers were doing to obstruct the healing truth: "Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says?" (Gal 4:21).

A legal theology was being introduced and Paul was concerned that such a theology would prevent them from experiencing Christ within. And Paul was right, this is exactly what has happened to Christianity. The human law concept infected the church and salvation has been corrupted into a legal process rather than a healing one.

Sadly, we are still fighting this same battle today!



## MONDAY

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The lesson points out that to other churches (Corinth etc.) Paul at times challenged them to imitate his behavior, but with the Galatians he instead challenged them to become like him.

What is the point Paul is trying to make?

Is there a difference in behaving and becoming? What is the difference?

To what does Paul want them to become?

The lesson states, “Paul is referring to his experience as a Christian, a foundation that rests on Christ alone, a faith that trusts in what Christ has done for him and not in his works of the law.”

What is the lesson emphasizing? What is the critical difference between works of the law and what Paul is calling for them to achieve?

The lesson rightly points out that Paul is calling for them to trust—what is the natural state of the sinful heart toward God? Enmity—one of distrust of God.

Thus, Paul is calling for them to experience not a mere behavior change, but a heart change, to be transformed from distrust of God to trust in God—this is what he describes about Abraham and it is called? Justification—the change of heart from distrust to trust is the putting right of a soul with God again.

Paul is telling them that this cannot be accomplished by legal acts or legal declarations, but only by an actual change within their inner being.

Thus, Paul is warning the Galatians to be ware of theologians who come along and say that salvation is a legal process, one of law, and justification is a legal declaration. Such a doctrine will obstruct them from experiencing what he has worked to achieve, Christ within. To experience Christ within, the heart must be changed from distrust to trust, and the law cannot achieve this.

Thus, today Christianity is still struggling with what Paul warned the Galatians about, falling into a false legal construct of sin and salvation and promoting a legal declarative salvation, rather than the genuine renewal of heart.

And this is why addictions, pornography, teen pregnancy, spouse and child abuse rates are no different in Christian homes than non Christian homes, because they have a form of godliness but no power—because as the Bible says the law is powerless to save and heal and much of Christianity is focused on legal solutions. The healing truth is not legal, it is experiential—a real trust relationship with a God



who loves and who will indwell, heal, restore, cleanse, free from guilt, free from shame, instill new motives, desires and principles in all who trust Him!

## **TUESDAY**

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The lesson talks about how Paul not only challenged the Galatians to become like him in internal change from distrust to trust with the transformation of character that follows, but also points out that Paul became like the Galatians in that he stopped all the Jewish ceremonial law requirements and lived without those symbolic rules.

Read last paragraph, “Although contextualization is not always easy...” What is the core of the gospel that cannot be changed?

- God’s design laws of love, truth, freedom, worship, health, physics etc.
- Salvation is genuine trust in God which results in being renewed in heart to live like God designed life to operate, selfless love for God and others

What things can be contextualized?

- Religious ceremonies (circumcision, baptism, communion, weddings, funerals, Sabbath observance, church liturgy)
- Music
- Dress
- Diet
- Church organization
- Ordination
- Gender roles in the church
- Use of alcohol

But what about these can they be contextualized?

- Polygamy
- Slavery
- Use of drugs

## **WEDNESDAY**

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The lesson is about Paul’s physical health and the care he received at Galatia.

Why didn’t the Galatians reject Paul when he had health problems? Weren’t health problems frequently seen as a curse from God?

Why did God not provide miraculous healing to Paul?



In Scripture are miracles usually provided for the benefit of the strong in faith, or are they provided for those who need their faith strengthened?

- Visions of Pharaoh interpreted by Joseph
- Gideon and the fleece
- Elijah calling for the drought
- Elijah calling fire down from heaven
- Elisha raising the axe head
- Elisha's servant seeing the angel army
- Fiery furnace deliverance
- Daniel and Lion's den
- Jesus healing people
- Lazarus being raised from the dead
- The Apostles healing people
- Peter walking out of prison

Were these miracles primarily for those through whom the miracles were performed, for those with strong faith, or for those who needed their faith strengthened?

So, why did Paul not get a miracle? Paul didn't need a miracle and because God's grace, God's power to heal hearts and minds, which is the primary purpose on earth now, was made more powerfully manifest in Paul in Paul's infirmity. And perhaps, given Paul's history of Phariseeism, this was permitted as therapeutic for Paul, a constant reminder that his strength was always in God and not in Himself—a protection against the encroachment of any pride.

## **THURSDAY**

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Read first paragraph, "The expression..." Have you ever had the experience of speaking the truth to someone who doesn't want to hear it?

When do we speak the truth and when do we stay silent?

Jesus said to disciples he had much to tell them but they couldn't bear it at that time.

Is there only one truth or are there many truths?

Is truth dependent upon the developmental level of the person?

Is it true to a small child that they must brush their teeth or else they will get in trouble with their parent? But is that really true?

How many so-called truths do people hold about God that are like this, only true because of their level of understanding, but in eternal reality not true?



Was it true that the Law of Moses called for the stoning of a person who commits adultery? Was it true that stoning the woman caught in adultery and thrown down before Jesus would have been against God's will? How can both be true?

Context—why was it true in Moses' day, but not true in Christ's day?

Truth is unfolding, our capacity to understand truth and comprehend it increases as we utilize our ability to understand and assimilate truth, and as a species truth slowly is assimilated, but typically new truth is resisted and fought against by the establishment:

- Most medical advances met with opposition by those in authority
  - washing of hands before surgery
  - germ theory and sterilization of equipment
- Religious truth typically meets with opposition
  - Galileo and earth revolving around the sun
  - The truth about God's design law versus imposed law

Imagine you could travel back in time to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and bubonic plague was ravaging the land. You know that this is caused by a bacterial infection spread by fleas. Both the religious and medical leaders taught the people this was punishment from God, it was evil due to sin.

What do you think would happen if you began to try and teach people there were invisible living organisms that were infecting their bodies causing this illness that you could prevent by good hygiene and flea control?

Do you think the church leadership would have been relieved to hear that God was not punishing the people? Would this truth have been immediately embraced? Why not? What would cause people to hold to the lie?

Pride, power, authority and a preconceived system of beliefs.

Do we struggle with the same thing today?

Russell mentioned to me recently that there are four stages to acceptance of new truth:

- Truth is initially rejected or ignored
- Then it is ridiculed or mocked
- Then it is fought against, attacked, lectured against
- Then it is accepted

## **FRIDAY**

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Read and discuss questions



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**August 18,19, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

**Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart*** will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

**September 15,16 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Church in the Valley, Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada.

**September 26-Oct 1, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

**October 12-16, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Garden Grove SDA church in Garden Grove, CA. This will be a multi-speaker event focusing on the atonement. For more information contact:

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**October 27, 28, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will speaking at the Arlington SDA church in Arlington, TX. For more information contact: <http://www.arlingtonadventist.com/>

**November 17,18, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.