



Origins: Lesson 7 1Q 2013

Through a Glass, Darkly

SABBATH

Read memory text, “The wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written; ‘He catches the wise in their craftiness.’” (1Corinthians 3:19 NIV)

Thoughts?

What *is* the wisdom of this world? In this world what is the “wise” method, action, principle of conduct?

- Survival of the fittest
- Do unto others before others do unto you
- Arm yourself and watch your back (Peter had the same philosophy, remember he carried a sword)
- Kill or be killed
- Kill them all and let God sort out the innocent
- Might is right
- If you don’t get caught it isn’t cheating
- It’s only illegal if you get caught
- Rules are meant to be broken
- Someone’s got to pay
- No good deed goes unpunished
- Justice requires punishment
- Happiness comes from winning – from beating the other person
- Happiness comes from richness – getting more than the other person
- Happiness comes from power – over other people
- Happiness comes from – gratifying self, regardless of other people

A few years back a local pastor shared the following Sports Illustrated story in a sermon:

- Olympic athletes – 1997 poll
 - It was a poll of Olympic athletes and aspiring Olympians. 198 sprinters, swimmers, power-lifters and others answered two questions:

Q) You are offered a banned performance-enhancing substance with 2 guarantees: you will not be caught and you will win your competition. Would you take it?

A) 195 – yes, 3 – no



Q) You are offered a banned performance-enhancing substance with 3 guarantees: you will not be caught, you will win every competition you enter for the next five years and, you will die from the side effects. Would you take it?

A) More than half – yes

source: Sports Illustrated, April 14, 1997

Does this sound wise to you? Is the wisdom of the world foolishness? Why?

Let's re-examine the common ideas above and consider their "wisdom."

- The strong survive
 - Based on what principle? And what does this principle actually lead to if followed?
 - Adolf Hitler practiced what principle? Those with power could dominate and destroy the weak. He not only killed Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, but all the infirmed, mentally ill, mentally retarded, elderly in nursing homes, and recidivist criminals. He wanted to purify the gene pool. He practiced the principle of evolution and wanted to use power to remove from the gene pool what he considered weak genes to create a master race. This is the theory of godless evolution carried out to its logical, moral-less end.
 - Where does this principle lead?
- Do unto others before others do unto you
 - Based on what principle?
- If you don't get caught it isn't cheating
 - Based on what kind of law?
 - If you don't get caught smoking by your mother, do you get healthier?
- Rules are meant to be broken
 - Based on what kind of law?
- Someone's got to pay
 - Based on what kind of law?
 - Do we see this in theology?
- No good deed goes unpunished
 - Based on what underlying principle?
- Justice equals punishment
 - Based on what kind of law?
 - Do we have to punish people who refuse to exercise by giving them obesity and heart attacks?
 - What happens to the criminal who injures another?
 - What is the just course of action in God's government?
- Happiness comes from winning – from beating the other person
 - Based on what principle?
 - What if you love the other person? Do parents ever let their children win? Why?



- When does the person become more important than the game?
- Happiness comes from richness – getting more than the other person
 - Based on what principle?
 - What if you love the other person? Do parents ever go without in order to provide for their children? Are they less happy when they do?
- Happiness comes from power – over other people
 - Based on what principle?
 - Do parents have power over their children?
 - And does such power make the parents happy? Or do the parents experience real happiness when their children mature to the point that the parents can relinquish such overseeing power and set them free? So happiness comes when such power is surrendered!
- From where does happiness come?
 - Healthiness – the healthier we are mentally, physically, relationally and spiritually the happier we are, the more diseased we are in these areas the more unhappy we are.
 - And what contributes to healthiness? Being in harmony with God’s design, his natural law, the law of love.
 - Then what contributes to unhealthiness? Violating God’s design
 - And worldliness is a methodology in violations of God’s law of love, thus it is foolishness.

In the memory text how does God “catch” them? In their craftiness – give them enough rope and they hang themselves. Their own methods, being out of harmony with how God built life to operate, destroys them. And they can’t figure why they aren’t happy.

SUNDAY

The title for the day is “The Earth is the Lord’s” – what do you think about the title?

This is a true statement and has significant implications to how we understand Scripture and God’s conflict with Satan.

Has the earth ever been Satan’s? Did Satan ever have “ownership” over the earth? Did Satan ever claim the earth as his? But was it his? What difference does this make?

Some theologies have ideas that when Christ came to earth to battle Satan for the salvation of mankind and the ultimate eradication of sin, that his battle with Satan included some “legal” battle for the ownership of earth. Did it?

When Satan offered all the kingdoms of the earth to Christ, saying,

I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours. (Lk 4:5-7)



was he speaking the truth? Was the world his? Did he own it? Could he give it to whoever he wanted? Or did Satan claim it was his, but it was actually Christ's?

If it was actually Christ's then was there ever a need for Christ to legally win the earth?

Where did Christ need to prove his case, in some celestial court, or in the minds of intelligent beings?

I agree with the position taken in Desire of Ages on this issue:

When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his **own purpose of deception**. Satan's dominion was **that wrested from Adam**, but Adam was the **vicegerent of the Creator**. His was not an independent rule. **The earth is God's, and He has committed all things to His Son. Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King.** Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "**The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.**" Daniel 4:17. Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits. {DA 129.4}

When the tempter offered to Christ the kingdom and glory of the world, **he was proposing that Christ should yield up the real kingship of the world**, and hold dominion subject to Satan. This was the same dominion upon which the hopes of the Jews were set. They desired the kingdom of this world. If Christ had consented to offer them such a kingdom, they would gladly have received Him. But the curse of sin, with all its woe, rested upon it. Christ declared to the tempter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." {DA 130.1}

If someone kidnapped your child, and later claimed the child was theirs, would their claim make it so?

What if your child was stolen as an infant, raised by them, and grew up believing the kidnapper was their parent, even having affection and heart bond for them. Would the child then be theirs? What would be necessary for the child to be "yours" again? And in what way do you want the child to be yours? As property you own? Or as a being that loves and trusts you?

Does this scenario have any bearing on what Christ came to accomplish?

With these thoughts in mind, let's read the third paragraph, "A favorite..." thoughts?

What do you think of this idea? Does it sound right? Does it sound close to being right, but like something is just not quite right?

- Is it true God is creator?
- Is it true all things come from him?
- Is it true that there is no more legitimate claim to ownership than creatorship? I would question this.



- Do artists, graphic designers, software designers, inventors etc. always own what they create? Is their creatorship of something the most legitimate claim to ownership?
- Did God make us in his image? Yes, did he give us the ability to procreate? Yes, so what would you think if your parent came to you today and said, “I created you I own you. Don’t argue there is no greater claim to ownership than creatorship.” Is there something wrong with this idea?

What kingdom wants to “own things”? Did the Roman empire want to “own” things, lands, properties, wealth, even slaves? Is God’s government like this?

Read next paragraph, “Not only does...” thoughts?

God could certainly take the position presented here, but does he? Does God choose to “own” us?

Imagine one day, in the not too distant future, a human creates artificial intelligence, a cybernetic entity that can think for itself, could the creator of that entity choose to set it free, and while creating it, no longer “own” it?

Does God take the position of “owning” us, or the position of setting us free?

How does the emphasis of ownership represent God? In what light does it cast his character? Does it make him seem more like a power-over kind of being, a Roman emperor type leader?

What if we view God instead as the Scripture describes him, as our Heavenly Father? Parents procreate their children, do loving parents treat their children like property owned, or in some other fashion? What light does a parent-like construct put God in?

And, where does the ownership idea put the burden of work? Does ownership make a subtle suggestion that we are obligated to God, we are his property, servants or slaves and must obey?

Where does the parent view place the burden of work? God is our Heavenly Father, and he is constantly working for our good, health, protection, development, salvation, to love and heal and restore, just like a good parent. And we respond to his tender love and care by freely choosing to obey, not obeying out of obligation to our “owner.”

But what do we do with texts that say, “you are not your own, you were bought with a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.” 1Cor 6:18,19?

Is Paul saying you are a slave, property, don’t think, don’t ask questions, don’t grow, don’t develop, just do what the Master says? Or is he saying, God loved you so much he paid the ultimate price for your salvation, don’t squander what he died to give you?

What about the idea that we are all completely dependent upon God for our existence? It is true, just like we are dependent upon oxygen, food, water, but do these own us?



Read last paragraph, “More so, we are...” thoughts?

What does it mean that death denudes life of all meaning and purpose? Maybe the lesson means any ongoing, future, meaning and purpose because one is dead. But surely not that death denudes the life the person lived of meaning and purpose?

Did Christ die? Is his life without meaning and purpose?

How about others, if they die, even the wicked in the end, will their lives be without meaning and purpose?

Did Satan’s life have a meaning and purpose? Yes, it was purposefully destructive and meant to undermine God and his kingdom of love. And did we learn something from his life? Will his death denude his life of this meaning?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “The curse on the ground...” thoughts?

From where did the curse come? It is, as the lesson states, “a result of sin”?

What happens when we deviate from God’s design from life? This is the curse of sin.

Read last paragraph, “The Flood...” thoughts?

What does this sentence imply? “God graciously promised not to curse the earth again, but the soil we have inherited is a far cry from the rich, productive soil God originally created.”

Does this suggest that the curse came from God? Did the curse come from God or from deviating from God’s design? How would you say it?

Does it make a difference if we say God inflicted the curse, rather than God permitted the results of sin to be manifested, and this is the curse and God pronounced the results of sin, but did not cause those results?

What difference does it make if we make God out to be the source of the curse?

- Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, were very unlike in character. Abel feared God. **Cain cherished rebellious feelings, and murmured against God because of the curse pronounced upon Adam, and because the ground was cursed for his sin.** 1SP 54

Who did Cain blame for the curse? And what did choosing to view God as a curser, an inflictor of curses, do to Cain’s attitude?



But from where did the problems with earth's productivity arise – from God inflicting it, or from earth deviating from God's design and being infected with Satan's principle of selfishness?

- **Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds** when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up. In the parable of the sower the question was asked the master, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?" The master answered, "An enemy hath done this" (Matthew 13:27, 28). **All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares.** {2SM 288.2}

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read question 2 – thoughts?

Is science an entirely human undertaking? Or is science, science, and can be taken up by those who reject God and want to rely only on their own minds, but can also be taken up and practiced by those who surrender themselves to God and cooperate with him for their understanding?

The duties and qualifications of a physician are not small...**Every bit possible of that knowledge that is termed science should be acquired**, while the seeker daily acknowledges that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. **Every item of experience and everything that can strengthen the mind, should be cultivated to the utmost of their power**, while at the same time they should seek God for his wisdom, their consciences illuminated, quick, and pure; for unless they are guided by the wisdom from above, they become an easy prey to the deceptive power of Satan. Counsel to Physicians and Medical Students, p. 17. {Healthful Living 255.4}

God is the foundation of everything. All true science is in harmony with his works, all true education leads to obedience to his government. **Science opens new wonders to our view**; she soars high and explores new depths; but she brings nothing from her research that conflicts with divine revelation. Ignorance may seek to support false views of God by appeals to science; but the book of nature and the written word do not disagree; each sheds light on the other. Rightly understood, they make us acquainted with God and his character by teaching us something of the wise and beneficent laws through which he works. We are thus led to adore his holy name, and to have an intelligent trust in his word.--S. of T., 1884, No. 12. {HL 286.1}

Many teach that matter possesses vital power. They hold that certain properties are imparted to matter, and it is then left to act through its own inherent power; and that the operations of nature are carried on in harmony with fixed laws, that God himself cannot interfere with. **This is false science**, and is sustained by nothing in the word of God. **Nature is not self-acting**; she



is the servant of her Creator. **God does not annul his laws nor work contrary to them; but he is continually using them as his instruments.** Nature testifies of an intelligence, a presence, an active agency, that works in, and through, and above her laws. **There is in nature the continual working of the Father and the Son.** Said Christ, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." {HL 290.1}

God has finished his creative work, **but his energy is still exerted in upholding the objects of his creation.** It is **not** because the mechanism that was once been set in motion continues its work by its own inherent energy that the pulse beats, and breath follows breath; **but every breath, every pulsation of the heart, is an evidence of the all-pervading care of Him in whom we live and have our being.** It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth produces her bounties, and continues her motion around the sun. The hand of God guides the planets, and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens. **It is through his power that vegetation flourishes, that the leaves appear and the flowers bloom.** His word controls the elements, and by him the valleys are made fruitful. He covers the heavens with clouds, and prepares rain for the earth; he "maketh grass to grow upon the mountains." "He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes." "When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures."--S. of T., 1884, No. 12. {HL 290.2}

Thoughts? What are the implications? Do you believe this to be true? Then what would happen if God were to withdraw his presence? What would happen to nature? And when God let's go, or withdraws, what is that called in Scripture? God's wrath! Could it also be called a curse? And the earth is going to feel this coming, Revelation describes it as 7 last plagues. But what would cause God to withdraw? Where is God's dwelling place on earth? Does God force his way into hearts? So what happens when humans close their hearts permanently to God? He leaves them to themselves to reap what they have chosen – which will be what?

And what about the idea that our heart beats and we breathe because of God's sustaining energy? What would this mean regarding the tree of life? Would we have life separate from God, if we could just get a piece of that fruit?

TUESDAY

Read the memory text at the top of the page, "The Lord said unto Satan, 'Whence comest thou?' Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, 'From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.'" (Job 1:7)

What do you understand is going on here and the implication this conversation?

Satan appears before a gathering of God's representatives in heaven. He seems to be alleging he is there as earth representative. What does God do? No, you don't represent earth, Job doesn't recognize you. Then what happens? And what do we learn from the story of Job?



- God is not the destroyer Satan is
- Angels can't read hearts and minds, if they could none would have followed Satan in the first place, and all would have known Satan lied about Job without Job going through what he did.
- God does know the future and the hearts of his creatures, thus he could with confidence call Job to the witness stand of the universe, knowing his testimony would be true
- The issue is over God's trustworthiness and Satan tried to misrepresent God
- And, as the last paragraph points out, Satan has the ability to affect nature and the weather causing disasters, when God removes his restraining hand. What importance does this fact have for us today?

Rev 7 describes the four angels holding back the four winds of strife and the angels are described as having power to harm the land and sea and trees. How does these angel harm? By letting go what they are holding back. Does Job give us any insight into what they are holding back?

I love this quote from one of the founders of our church, she put this pieces together and came to this conclusion, which is so different than traditional views of God, but absolutely in harmony with Scripture:

"I was shown that the judgments of **God would not come directly out from the Lord** upon them, but in this way;

"They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reprovcs, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care **will follow their own course**, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, **if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.**

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and **storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work.** He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; **we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of.**" Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

thoughts? Have many conceive of God as a punishing God? In our own Bible commentary in Revelation we describe the plagues as God using his power to inflict terrible suffering and death upon his children. We must come back to the truth about God! We must reclaim the message our church was founded upon, and we must begin telling the truth about God's character, methods, principles so people can be informed of his true character so they won't be deceived by Satan's master deception, of a punishing God who must inflict torture and death.

We live in terrible times and God is waiting for the good news about him to lighten the world so minds can break free of these lies! We are privileged to take this incredible good news to the world.



WEDESDAY

The title of the day's lesson is "The 'Wisdom' of the World", read first paragraph, "As humans..." thoughts?

The lesson is right that mere knowledge, facts, information is not the same as wisdom. What is wisdom?

The dictionary says wisdom is:

- a** : accumulated philosophic or scientific learning : knowledge
- b** : ability to discern inner qualities and relationships : insight
- c** : good sense : judgment
- d** : generally accepted belief <challenges what has become accepted *wisdom* among many historians — Robert Darnton>
- e** : a wise attitude, belief, or course of action
- f** : the teachings of the ancient wise men

Which of these definitions do you like best? How would you define wisdom?

Rightly discerning and applying information to one's life in harmony with God's design, principles and methods?

The lesson points out that our knowledge in science and information has grown significantly over time, but what about our knowledge of God? Has our theology grown? Has our insight into God's kingdom, methods, and the achievements of Christ grown? And if not, why not? Why are we stuck teaching centuries old, out dated, Dark Ages views of God?

I was listening to a presentation on Revelation by Sigve Tonstad on godscharacter.com and saw this quote. It is profound. It from a book looking at the early church history, and examines the first church historian Eusebius. Note, what transpired, this is a quote:

"There are no reserves in the stilted encomium with which Eusebius closes his history, no wistful regret for the blessings of persecution, no prophetic fear of imperial control of the Church. His heart is full of gratitude to God and Constantine. And it is not only his feelings that are stirred. He is ready, with a theory, indeed a theology, of the Christian Emperor. He finds a correspondence between religion and politics... With the Roman Empire monarchy had come on earth as the image of the monarchy in heaven." S.L. Greenslade, *Church and State from Constantine to Theodosius* (London: SCM Press, 1954).

Wow, did you hear that? One of the first *church* historians recounts how the Roman system was viewed as God's method of governing heaven. This is the root of paganism in the church, the change in God's law as predicted by Daniel, and accepted by all Christian churches, including many in our own church.



This is why God waits. He waits for the gospel to go to the world. He waits for the truth about his kingdom of love to be presented. He wants for people to come to know him and reject the beastly views of God that has intoxicated the entire world!

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph, “Many have looked...” thoughts?

When you consider the vastness of the universe, do you grow in admiration for God, or when you consider the universe and then look around at the pain, suffering, abuse, exploitation, sin on earth, question how God could allow this, and whether God even exists?

What do you say to those who seeing evil, question the existence of God?