



The Sanctuary Lesson 8 4Q 2013

Christ, Our Priest

Before we start I need to follow up on a question that came in from an online viewer last week.

An online viewer to my weekly Bible Study Class asked this week how do I understand this quotation from an article in Signs of the Times Dec 23, 1886:

The altar and the promise stand side by side, and one casts clear beams of light upon the other, showing that the justice of an offended God could be appeased only by the death of his beloved Son.

I deferred answering because I wanted to know the context, what altar was referred to etc. I am glad I did. The context of the article is that of Cain and Abel. The altar is the altar built by Cain and Abel, at the instruction of Adam.

The author contrasts the attitudes of the heart of Cain and Abel.

The article starts out with this:

These two brothers, Cain and Abel, represent the whole human family. They were both tested on the point of obedience, and all will be tested as they were. Abel bore the proving of God. **He revealed the gold of a righteous character, the principles of true godliness.** But Cain's religion had not a good foundation; **it rested on human merit. He brought to God something in which he had a personal interest,**--the fruits of the ground, which had been cultivated by his toil; and **he presented his offering as a favor done to God,** through which he expected to secure the divine approval.

Note the context is over character, one of love and trust versus pride and selfishness. The article describes how Abel understood the principles of God's government, how God is always the giver, not the receiver, but Cain sought to put God in the role of receiving the offerings to earn favor.

Abel worked with God to act out a lesson, Cain sought to appease God with payments.

So, with this context what does the quote mean?

Through which "law" lens to you understand justice? Imposed law or designer law, the protocols upon which life is built?

What is God's justice? Doing what is right, doing what is right as defined by the law of love, which is what? What does love require? To heal, to restore, to redeem, to save.



Thus the promise given to Adam, that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head, but the serpent would bruise his heel stands beside the altar, which visually acted out the selfless sacrifice of Christ to achieve what was promised. The promise and the theater (altar) enlightened each other.

Then what about the justice being appeased? Again which law lens do you look through?

If the imposed law then one believes this is legal payment to an offended God. But the article itself disallows this interpretation, as it makes clear throughout that the gifts are not given to God, which Cain tried to do, but are from God to man for man's need. Here is another example from the article:

Man, in the pride of his heart, would like to believe that he can confer some favor upon God; that our heavenly Father may be the receiver, and not always the giver. But God will not be bribed.

God is not bribed. The barrier set up between God and man is that of sin in man, thus what is required is provided by God to fix the problem of sin in man.

It is offensive to God (as it is to any being with a heart of love) to see pain, suffering, death, which occur when God's design for life is broken. Thus God hates sin because it breaks the protocols upon which life is constructed, inflicts pain, suffering, death and is an offense to the pure loving heart of God.

Therefore, if we look through the lens of designer law, the law upon which life is built, we see that the sacrifice of Christ was the only means to please God's purpose in saving mankind.

Do you think I am being dishonest with the quote? Well, here is the dictionary definition of the word appease:

“to make (someone) pleased OR less angry by giving or saying something desired”

What would please God, after Adam deviated from God's design and plunged humanity into a death spiral? Would it not please God to see mankind delivered and saved? Is this not what God desired? Thus, the only way God's justice of love could be pleased was through the death of Jesus, who provides remedy for the terminal condition Adam inflicted upon the world, fulfilling God's desire to save the human race!

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “After his resurrection...” Thoughts?

Why, after the resurrection, why after the Old symbolic system was done away with, why after Christ fulfills what the Old system pointed toward do we still insist on using symbolism to describe things? Why not just state it plainly?



What does it mean to be “covered by faith by His blood”? Does it mean we are washed in plasma?

One of the rituals of ancient Rome is that they would sacrifice bulls. Gladiators would do this and walk beneath the bull as it was sacrificed and have the blood of the bull wash over them and they were literally covered in the blood of the bull.

Is it talking about actually being covered by blood? What does it mean?

It depends on the lens you interpret the symbols through.

Penal/Imposed Law

Blood is legal payment
Pays for our bad deeds/sins
Covers our defects of character
Removes record of sin from books
Symbolic of death

Healing/Design Law

Blood symbolizes Remedy
Heals the heart/condition
Transforms our character
Removes sinfulness from hearts
Symbolic of life (Love/Truth)

The founders of our church saw it the way I do, sadly most of Christianity, including many of our current church leaders, see it through Roman Imperial law constructs. Here are some quotes written over 100 years ago to show you how our church started out:

- 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}
- In the beginning, man was created in the likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature. **Sin defaced and almost obliterated the divine image; but Christ came to restore that which had been lost.** GC 645
- When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}
- **The law of God should be loved and honored by His true people now more than ever before.** There is the most imperative necessity of urging the injunction of Christ upon the minds and hearts of all believers, men and women, youth and children: "Search the Scriptures." Study your Bible as you have never studied it before. Unless you arise to a higher, holier state in your religious life, you will not be ready for the appearing of our Lord... **Much time should be spent in prayer, that our garments of character may be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.** {5T 717.1}



- **The leaven of truth** works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. **By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb.** {COL 102.3}
- **In the study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God,** which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life.” Fundamentals of Christian Education 378.1

Thoughts?

Do you think we need to move past symbols to reality?

Read second paragraph, “This week...” thoughts?

What does it mean Jesus is “standing in the presence of God ministering the merits of His sacrifice in our behalf”?

What are the merits of His sacrifice? It depends on the lens through which you view it. Let’s contrast the two lenses:

Penal/Imposed Law

Merits = Credits/Points/Payment
Presented to God to earn favor
Offered to earn pardon
Applied to record books

Healing/Design Law

Merits = traits of character
Presented to us to earn trust
Offered as remedy to cure hearts
Reproduced in people

Why do we end up with such confused thinking? Because the filters/lenses/biases people have when they read. The Bible is written in many symbols, riddles, dreams, metaphors, parables, and “dark speech” and thus is open to wide interpretation. When people read they bring with them their preconceived ideas and understand the symbols and metaphors through those lenses. (This is why we use the integrative evidenced based approach, harmonizing Scripture, Science and Experience)

Here is a quotation from a founder of our church. Consider how this is most frequently understood, and how do you understand it or explain it?

The world's Redeemer possessed the power to draw men to Himself, to quiet their fears, to dispel their gloom, to inspire them with hope and courage, to enable them to believe in the **willingness of God to receive them through the merits of the divine Substitute.** As subjects of the love of God **we ever should be grateful that we have a mediator, an advocate, an intercessor in the heavenly courts, who pleads in our behalf before the Father.** {LHU 320.2}

Thoughts? Does this quote from the same person give additional insight to what might have been meant?



While Jesus, our Intercessor, pleads for us in heaven, the Holy Spirit works in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure. All heaven is interested in the salvation of the soul. Then what reason have we to doubt that the Lord will not and does not help us? . . . {2MR 37.1}

Thoughts? Jesus pleads, but all heaven is interested in our salvation, what does this mean? It means that those in heaven do not need persuasion. So if Christ's pleading is not to persuade the beings in heaven, including His Father, then it must be need to persuade others, who? He is pleading in heaven, through the HS to us!

- We are the ones who doubt God's goodness.
- We are the ones burdened by guilt and shame and lies to think we are too far gone, too sinful, too wicked, too unholy for God to still love.
- We are the ones who doubt that Christ's love, Christ's righteousness could still be for us.
- We are the ones who are confused, groping in the darkness of this world seeking for the light and Christ from heaven that pleads, through the Holy Spirit, to you and to me, "I love you. Don't give up! Listen to my voice. Follow me. I will never leave you nor for sake you. Trust me, let me into your heart, choose me and I will heal you!"

Satan has lied and Christianity has been infected with his lies about God's law being imposed, and therefore the solution and pleas of Christ are directed toward God and God's law rather than toward you and me! This penal idea undermines trust and obstructs Christ's ability to actually heal us.

MONDAY

The lesson starts with Romans 8:31-34, lets read it:

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Read first paragraph, "The background..." thoughts?

What is the lesson trying to say? What lens do they read the Scripture through?

The Roman Imperial law lens – but notice the Scripture does not have a legal courtroom described, if any kind of court is described it is a royal court, the place where God rules, but not a legal courtroom.

Read the next paragraph, "However, we do not..." thoughts?

Why, according to the lesson, do we need not fear?



Did you notice anything in the Bible text that was overlooked by the lesson? “also” Jesus is “also” interceding for us? Also means what? In addition to who, in addition to the Father, read verse 28:

Rom 8:28: “And we know that in all **things God works for the good of those who love him...**”

Who is working for our good? And what about verse 26?

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the **Spirit himself intercedes for us** with groans that words cannot express.

So who is interceding for us? God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit – ALL THREE are interceding FOR us. One member is NOT interceding with another member of the Godhead, instead all three are working together to intercede for us – with what or whom?

Could it be like this?

- The Father intercedes by providing all the resources in heaven for our defense and restoration, thus He intercedes with the principalities and power of darkness. He sends the angels to hold the four winds, and to create protective hedge against evil forces, and to watch over His people. (Jesus said the angels of the children always have access to the Father). He also sent the most precious resource of all, His very own Son!
- The Holy Spirit intercedes in our hearts and minds, to enlighten with truth, convict of wrong, to draw with love, to woo to a better way, to make us dissatisfied with sin and create a longing for our heavenly home, and to apply what Christ achieved in us.
- Jesus intercedes with the course of sinfulness itself by becoming sin, though He knew no sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God. In other words, humanity, in Adam, was on a terminal course, but Jesus, by becoming human changed the outcome, interceded in the trajectory that the species was racing toward and offers, a new destination, instead of eternal death in Adam, we can have eternal life in Christ.

Do you see, in the healing model, how all three are working together, all three are interceding with the power of sin, evil, darkness for our recovery and salvation. But in the imposed law model, Jesus is often presented as interceding with His Father to plead His blood payment to an offended god.

Read the last paragraph to get a sense of this distortion: “Our Advocate...”

Read second to last paragraph, “This truth becomes...” again this is a distortion from accepting the false law construct, believing the lie that sin must be punished. Where did this lie originate? Here is what our church used to teach:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and



justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. **God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner.** {DA 761.4}

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. **For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** {DA 761.5}

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and **not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."** 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1}

[Why could the law not be changed? Because the law are the protocols upon which life is built. To change the law would be to destroy life. The law of respiration cannot be changed to meet the person who has tied a plastic bag over their head. What needs to change is the condition of the person. Thus, Christ was sacrificed for man's redemption, to reconcile man back to God, to restore man back to harmony with God. Actual transformation. Notice the very next words of what the law required. Satan alleged all sin must be punished. Penal substitution theology supports Satan's claim, stating all sin must be punished. Notice how our church thought over 100 years ago on what the law required...]

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and **developed a perfect character.** These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. **Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What is happening? Christ is the means whereby the law is sustained and the sinner is restored to harmony with it. This is justice. This is doing right. This is healing. All this inflicted punishment for sin is pagan and based on Satan's false presentation of God's law as imposed.



Also, the word “*parakletos*” is the same word used by Jesus to tell disciples that the “comforter” would come to them. It means someone who walks alongside to provide help, to guide, to assist, to lead into truth, to lead out of darkness. Thus, it is NOT a legal term, but a healing term, a “helper” to help use in our time of need.

Jesus is our “helper” along with the Father and the Holy Spirit. As Hebrews says, “surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.”

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Christ is called...” thoughts?

When we think mediator what do we think?

A go between? Yes, Christ is the go between. When did Christ become the one who goes between God and His creatures? Was it only after sin, or even before sin?

God lives in “unapproachable light” (1Tim 6:16), it is not about photons, but about knowledge, truth, wisdom and all the prerogatives of divinity. God is infinite in all things. Finite beings cannot enter into infinity, it is unapproachable to us. Thus, if we cannot approach infinity and God longs for closeness with His finite, yet intelligent, creation, what is required? A member of the Godhead to leave infinity and interact on the level of the creation. This member has always been Jesus.

Prior to actually partaking of humanity and becoming human, Jesus used to “manifest” (not actually be) Himself in the form of an angel (see Exodus 3) and other places.

So, Jesus has always been mediating, interceding, going between the Godhead and His creation. But, because of Imperial Roman law constructs we have interpreted 180 degrees backward what His mediation is about.

Rather than seeing Jesus mediating a new covenant, a new relationship, a healing remedy in which Jesus cures us and returns us to unity with the Father, we have described Jesus as pleading a legal payment to His Father, or Jesus hiding the truth of our condition from the Father etc. etc.

The third paragraph is correct, Jesus came to restore the connection between God and man that was broken by sin. This required fixing man, not changing God.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out correctly that Jesus was tempted in everyway, just like us, but without sin. It points to the experiences in the desert when Satan tempted him. And yes, Jesus did experience external temptation from the enemy as we do. But, this wasn’t the most powerful, nor the most significant, in my view.



Notice how Satan approached in the desert. He approached through the three primary avenues of our carnal nature – the lust of the flesh – appetite, the lust of the eyes – greed (all the cities), and the pride of life, throw yourself down and show us how special you are.

But later, Christ experienced even more powerful temptations. The most powerful temptations came in Gethsemane and crucifixion weekend, when he experienced temptation, from His own human emotions, when He felt emotions of fear, loneliness, rejection, hurt, humiliation, shame, when He was rejected by His friends, cursed by His followers, spit upon by His people, whipped by strangers, stripped naked and hung out before the world, mocked, belittled, teased, and then tempted by others to save Himself repeatedly. To be without sleep, dehydrated, weak, and feeling all alone, without even the comforting sense of His Father.

Then the devil hit him with coercion, pressure, threat, intimidation, rejection of friends, physical abuse and death.

It was an awful time, yet what did He do? He loved, constantly, totally, insistently, completely, perfectly. His human brain, though tempted, He never surrendered, never gave up, never quit, never stopped loving, but surrendered self in love for you and for me!

Yes, He knows the power of what our fallen nature does to us. He knows exactly the horror of fear, and the pull to act to protect self, and therefore we can have confidence that we are not alone. God really does understand!

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “As we have seen...” thoughts?

Yes, sin is bad, it is terrible – but is sin terrible because Jesus died? If Jesus had not died for us, would sin be less terrible? But if Jesus had not died for us would God be as good?

Why could animal sacrifices not suffice to deal with sin?

The legal model would say that it is because sin is so terrible, so offensive, it requires a payment that is more valuable than an animal, a perfect sinless payment, the death of Jesus.

But, again, it is because they have accepted the false law construct. The answer is quite simple, animals don't possess a human nature. Therefore, the death of an animal could not cure the human condition, cleanse the human conscience, or renew the human nature.

Thus Hebrews says:

This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper...¹¹ When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle



that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. ¹² He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ **How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences** from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Heb 9:9-14)

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our **hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience** and having our bodies washed with pure water. (Heb 10:22)

Notice, that the sacrifice of Christ was not to cleanse a building in heaven, to gain legal status change, but to actually cleanse us by restoring us into God's design, by healing and transforming us back to rightness, also known as righteousness.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 4, "The book of Hebrews..." thoughts?

I was emailed a link in which a Catholic priest and a protestant theologian discussed the Eucharist and transubstantiation:

<http://amazingdiscoveries.org/12.10.24-debate-about-the-mass-and-transubstantiation>

They went back and forth over things like whether a priest could stand in for Christ, over sacrificing Christ again and again, over it being a violation of the law to eat blood etc.

But the real issue was uncovered when The Catholic priest said:

"There are two elements to any sacrifice the immolation and the offering. The immolation is a bloody death. The lamb is slain, what is precious about that is the life in the blood of the lamb is precious and that pays back God. That's how the Old Testament rituals used to work. The immolation happened once but the offering is something Christ does for all eternity. He is right now in the presence of the Father, in the holy of holies, in the eternal presence, offering himself to the Father for the forgiveness of our sins.... Christ isn't killed again and again and again, he is offered [in the Eucharist] in the same eternal presence as Christ offers himself."

The priest said it was in this offering of his sacrifice over and over again that the sins were paid for. So each time we sin, we must take mass in order to have the sacrifice of Christ pay for that sin.

How do you think the protestant theologian responded? The protestant theologian responded, with the argument that Christ is not in heaven offering his sacrifice over and over, but offering his merits to the Father over and over.



So to the protestant theologian, each time we sin we don't need to go to a priest and take mass to have Christ's sacrifice presented to the Father to pay for our sins. Our sins were paid for, past, present and future, all at the Cross. No, when we sin we go to Christ, who presents his merits to the Father, reminding the Father that he has already paid for our sins so the Father can forgive us and not punish us.

Thoughts? Don't you see Satan laughing? Here we have Catholics and Protestants arguing, for centuries, whether Jesus is offering his sacrifice to God over and over again to pay for our sins, or whether he is offering his merits over and over to remind the Father that our sins are paid for.

What is the problem?

Daniel 7, the little horn power would seek to change God's law – how? By getting us to replace the truth that God's law is the law of love, the design protocol upon which life was built, with the idea that God's law is like a Roman emperor, put upon us to test our obedience.

Catholic and Protestant alike have accepted this change in God's law and both teach that Christ needed to die to pay for our sin, and both teach that Christ works to present something to the Father so the Father won't punish us.

But, the truth is God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. That God so loved the world he sent his son. That the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ bodily, so that even though he knew no sin, he became sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God.

When we accept the lie that God's law is imposed, then we create false doctrines that breaking the law requires the lawgiver to punish and Christ died to offer himself to the Father to pay the penalty for our sin.

When we accept the truth that God's law is the principle of love upon which life was built, we realize that breaking the law is incompatible with life and Christ died to destroy the infecting principle of selfishness and actually restore humankind back into harmony with God's design for life.

We have a message that is to lighten the world, to free minds from this insidious distortion of God and his character of love and people need this message, including many well meaning, sincere, good-hearted church leaders.