



Rebellion and Redemption 1Q 2016 Lesson 7 Jesus' Teachings and the Great Controversy

Introducing a new resource available on the comeandreason.com website: James Ehrlich has taken a full 5 years' worth of notes – all the notes from 2010 through 2015 - and combined them into one single, **searchable** PDF document! This is huge for being able to pinpoint specific topics or key words. Find it in the Archive column of the Bible Study Class menu.

By its very definition, the GC theme is a “big-picture” view...the *biggest* picture...and we tend to think of it only in grand, over-arching terms, because it is a “meta-narrative” that explains a large portion of our reality. But the lesson makes the point that no matter how grand and all-encompassing the GC theme is, or how substantial the issues at stake, in many ways the Great Controversy gets played out daily, right here on our little planet...right here in our own daily lives. How?

- How we represent and reflect God's true character of love
- How we demonstrate his healing, transforming power in our own characters
- How we practice his methods, principles, government (truth, love, and freedom)
- How we love others

In Romans 3:4, Paul tells us that God is the One on trial, God is the One accused, and God is the One who will be proved innocent: Paul says:

God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. Romans 3:4 KJV

May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “That You may be justified in Your words, And prevail when You are judged.” NASB

Certainly not! God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, “You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.” GNT

No! God will continue to be true even when every person is false. As the Scriptures say: “So you will be shown to be right when you speak, and you will win your case.” NCV

God, may you be proved right and true in the hearts and minds of your intelligent creatures when you present yourself openly for their judgment. The Remedy



How will that happen? How will He win His case and be proven...right...the winner of the Great Controversy? It will all be decided based on the evidence. Jesus Christ is Exhibit A...He is the most convincing evidence of the true, loving character of God – if you have seen me you’ve seen the father...the father and I are one. And His life, death, and resurrection are the most convincing evidence that God is nothing like Satan has alleged Him to be. When my character is transformed from selfish to selfless I am Exhibit B...when you practice His methods of truth, love, and freedom you are Exhibit C! We all have a role in how this plays out. There is no way to have insight into this big-picture Great Controversy perspective, and think that your life is insignificant...there is no way to be unsure about your purpose here.

SUNDAY

Many Kinds of Rest

This week’s memory text is a very familiar passage from Matthew 11:28 –

“Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.”

From the Message:

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

The concept of rest is very rich in Scripture. The Greek word for “rest” – “anapausis” – is very similar to words associated with Sabbath, and can be used as both a noun and a verb meaning “solemn rest”...so the same Greek word is used in “I will give you rest” and “a day of rest”.

So...we have talked about yokes in this class before: What is a yoke? What is its purpose?

A yoke is not a harness but an instrument that shares the load between two animals allowing them to work as a team to pull the load. Take My yoke upon you,” Jesus says. The yoke is an instrument of service. Cattle are yoked for labor, and the yoke is essential that they may labor effectually. By this illustration Christ teaches us that we are called to service as long as life shall last. We are to take upon us His yoke, that we may be co-workers with Him. The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God...{DA 329.3} (notice she didn’t say written on stone)



By wearing His yoke and learning of Him, we become like Him in aspiration, in meekness and lowliness, in fragrance of character. {AG 322.5}

So, what does it mean to yoke with Christ? Consider these quotations, do you agree or disagree? What are the implications?

While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part. His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}

We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God. The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). Man is to work with the facilities God has given him. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}

There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies-- divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. It is in this way only that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding, but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

"Lifting the cross cuts away self from the soul, and places man where he learns how to bear Christ's burdens. We cannot follow Christ without wearing His yoke, without lifting the cross and bearing it after Him. If our will is not in accord with the divine requirements, we are to deny our inclinations, give up our darling desires, and step in Christ's footsteps."—Sons and Daughters of God, p. 69.

How can taking on His yoke bring rest to our souls? Hebrews 5:5 in The Remedy says,



“If they refuse the truth, if they reject the evidence I have provided, their minds will never find rest and they will not get well.”

If we surrender our lives to God, surrender our plans and our best efforts – surrender the “outcomes” to Him and simply follow His directions in carrying out our duty – doesn’t that remove worry, stress and anxiety?

MONDAY

Planting and Harvesting

Monday's lesson talks about the parable of the sower and how it contains implicit Great Controversy themes...as well as natural law themes! The law of sowing and reaping is natural design law. This is likely a familiar story to most of you, but let’s do a quick review of it in Matthew 13:

“³Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Any thoughts on how this parable reveals great controversy themes?

The 2nd paragraph of Monday’s lesson contains a small quote from Christ Object Lessons, but the book’s entire Chapter 2 is devoted to this parable of the sower, and we could honestly spend the whole rest of the hour on this because it is really good...but I highly recommend it for further study.

“The sower soweth the word.” Christ came to sow the world with truth. Ever since the fall of man, Satan has been sowing the seeds of error. It was by a lie that he first gained control over men, and thus he still works to overthrow God’s kingdom in the earth and to bring men under his power. A sower from a higher world, Christ came to sow the seeds of truth. He who had stood in the councils of God, who had dwelt in the innermost sanctuary of the Eternal, could bring to men the pure principles of truth. Ever since the fall of man, Christ had been the Revealer of truth to the world. By Him the incorruptible seed, “the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever,” is communicated to men. 1 Peter 1:23. In that first promise spoken to our fallen race in Eden, Christ was sowing the gospel seed. But it is to His personal ministry among men and to the work which He thus established that the parable of the sower especially applies. {COL 37.1}



The word of God is the seed. Every seed has in itself a germinating principle. In it the life of the plant is enfolded. So there is life in God's word. Christ says, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." John 6:63. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." John 5:24. In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God." {COL 38.1}

"But the teacher of sacred truth can impart only that which he himself knows by experience. "The sower sowed *his* seed." Christ taught the truth because He was the truth. His own thought, His character, His life-experience, were embodied in His teaching. So with His servants: those who would teach the word are to make it their own by a personal experience. They must know what it is to have Christ made unto them wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. In presenting the word of God to others, they are not to make it a suppose-so or a maybe. They should declare with the apostle Peter, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty." 2 Peter 1:16. {COL 43.1}

Soil by the Wayside:

"The battle for souls is real, and the enemy uses whatever means he can to turn people away from salvation. For instance, in the context of the seed falling by the wayside, Ellen G. White wrote: "The seed sown by the wayside represents the word of God as it falls upon the heart of an inattentive hearer. Like the hard-beaten path, trodden down by the feet of men and beasts, is the heart that becomes a highway for the world's traffic, its pleasures and sins. Absorbed in selfish aims and sinful indulgences, the soul is "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Hebrews 3:13. The spiritual faculties are paralyzed. Men hear the word, but understand it not. They do not discern that it applies to themselves. They do not realize their need or their danger. They do not perceive the love of Christ, and they pass by the message of His grace as something that does not concern them. {COL 44.2}

As the birds are ready to catch up the seed from the wayside, so Satan is ready to catch away the seeds of divine truth from the soul. He fears that the word of God may awaken the careless, and take effect upon the hardened heart. Satan and his angels are in the assemblies where the gospel is preached. While angels of heaven endeavor to impress hearts with the word of God, the enemy is on the alert to make the word of no effect. With an earnestness equaled only by his malice, he tries to thwart the work of the Spirit of God. While Christ is drawing the soul by His love, Satan tries to turn away the attention of the one who is moved to seek the Saviour. He engages the mind with worldly schemes. He excites criticism, or insinuates doubt and unbelief.



The speaker's choice of language or his manner may not please the hearers, and they dwell upon these defects. Thus the truth they need, and which God has graciously sent them, makes no lasting impression."—Christ's Object Lessons, p. 44."

Soil In Stony Places:

The seed sown upon stony ground finds little depth of soil. The plant springs up quickly, but the root cannot penetrate the rock to find nutriment to sustain its growth, and it soon perishes. Many who make a profession of religion are stony-ground hearers. Like the rock underlying the layer of earth, the selfishness of the natural heart underlies the soil of their good desires and aspirations. The love of self is not subdued. They have not seen the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the heart has not been humbled. This class may be easily convinced, and appear to be bright converts, but they have only a superficial religion...But those who in the parable are said to receive the word immediately, do not count the cost. They do not consider what the word of God requires of them. They do not bring it face to face with all their habits of life, and yield themselves fully to its control... But the stony-ground hearers depend upon self instead of Christ. They trust in their good works and good impulses, and are strong in their own righteousness. {COL 46.4}

There are very many who claim to serve God, but who have no experimental knowledge of Him. Their desire to do His will is based upon their own inclination, not upon the deep conviction of the Holy Spirit. Their conduct is not brought into harmony with the law of God. They profess to accept Christ as their Saviour, but they do not believe that He will give them power to overcome their sins. They have not a personal relation with a living Saviour, and their characters reveal defects both hereditary and cultivated. {COL 48.1}

Soil Among Thorns:

The gospel seed often falls among thorns and noxious weeds; and if there is not a moral transformation in the human heart, if old habits and practices and the former life of sin are not left behind, if the attributes of Satan are not expelled from the soul, the wheat crop will be choked. The thorns will come to be the crop, and will kill out the wheat. Grace can thrive only in the heart that is being constantly prepared for the precious seeds of truth. The thorns of sin will grow in any soil; they need no cultivation; but grace must be carefully cultivated. (Anyone here have a garden and find this to be true? The weeds flourish with no effort at all) The briars and thorns are always ready to spring up (remember, "an enemy has done this"), and the work of purification must advance continually. If the heart is not kept under the control of God, if the Holy Spirit does not work unceasingly to refine and ennoble the character, the old habits will reveal themselves in the life. Who here has not experienced this first-hand? Men may profess to believe the gospel; but unless they are sanctified by the gospel their profession is of no avail.



If they do not gain the victory over sin, then sin is gaining the victory over them. The thorns that have been cut off but not uprooted grow apace, until the soul is overspread with them. {COL 50.4}

Who or what determines what kind of soil a person is?

“Throughout the parable of the sower, Christ represents the different results of the sowing as depending upon the soil. In every case the sower and the seed are the same. Thus He teaches that if the word of God fails of accomplishing its work in our hearts and lives, the reason is to be found in ourselves. But the result is not beyond our control. True, we cannot change ourselves; but the power of choice is ours, and it rests with us to determine what we will become. The wayside, the stony-ground, the thorny-ground hearers need not remain such. The Spirit of God is ever seeking to break the spell of infatuation that holds men absorbed in worldly things, and to awaken a desire for the imperishable treasure. It is by resisting the Spirit that men become inattentive to or neglectful of God’s word. They are themselves responsible for the hardness of heart that prevents the good seed from taking root, and for the evil growths that check its development. The garden of the heart must be cultivated. The soil must be broken up by deep repentance for sin. Poisonous, Satanic plants must be uprooted. The soil once overgrown by thorns can be reclaimed only by diligent labor. So the evil tendencies of the natural heart can be overcome only by earnest effort in the name and strength of Jesus...This work He desires to accomplish for us, and He asks us to cooperate with Him. {COL 56.2}

The quarterly says, "We need to be careful how we approach those who don't seem to respond to the gospel as we think they should." How should we always respond? Speak the truth in love and leave people free. Let everyone be fully persuaded in their own mind.

Pink box: Why do we sometimes see people, just newly baptized, walk out the door...or others who simply show no interest at all?

TUESDAY

Building on Rock

Another familiar parable told by Jesus in Matthew 7 starting with verse 21...this is from The Remedy:

21 “Not everyone who professes me as ‘Lord’ will enter the heavenly kingdom of love, but only those who have partaken of the Remedy, have been healed in heart, and live in harmony with my Father who is in heaven. 22 There will be many who will cry out to me that day, ‘Lord, Lord,



don't you remember that we preached many sermons, saying "Jesus saves," we performed exorcisms, saying "Jesus cast you out," and performed many miracles, saying "in Jesus' name, be healed"?' 23 Then I will tell them the reality of their situation: 'You never trusted me, and we were never united in heart. Depart, because you are hardened in selfishness!' 24 "So understand this: Those who hear the truth I speak, and apply it to their lives, are like the wise person who built their house upon a solid rock foundation. 25 Then when it rained, and flood waters rose, and winds beat against that house, it did not fall, because it stood upon solid rock. 26 But everyone who hears the truth I speak and does not apply it to their lives is like the foolish person who built their house upon sand. 27 Then when it rained, and flood waters rose, and the winds beat against that house, it collapsed with a loud crash."

The Message says: 24-25

"These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are **foundational** words, words to build a life on (design law/reality). If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock. 26-27 "But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a stupid carpenter who built his house on the sandy beach. When a storm rolled in and the waves came up, it collapsed like a house of cards."

The quarterly asks: What is so frightening about this parable? Is it frightening? The quarterly also says that "there is no way to tell the difference between the two completed houses until the floods come"...do you find that to be true...in your own life? In others?

Ms. White says in Our High Calling that building upon the rock is not merely a feeling, but a changed life.

"Satan leads people to think that because they have felt a rapture of feeling, they are converted. But their experience does not change. Their actions are the same as before. Their lives show no good fruit. (this seems to be inherent in penal substitution theology – they have a form of godliness but deny its power...there is no victory) They pray often and long, and are constantly referring to the feelings they had at such and such a time. But they do not live the new life. They are deceived. Their experience goes no deeper than feeling. They build upon the sand, and when adverse winds come their house is swept away. Many poor souls are groping in darkness, looking for the feelings which others say they have had in their experience. They overlook the fact that the believer in Christ must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling...When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon



Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—A changed life. There is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride. {OHC 159.5}

WEDNESDAY

Do Not Judge

The quarterly talks about the revolutionary nature of Christ's Sermon on the Mount given early in His ministry...and it really was. He told ordinary/despised/rejected people that they were valued and blessed in God's eyes, and that they were like the two highly-prized commodities of salt and light. He told how He was the embodiment of God's law (of love), and warned of trying to impress others with their own good behavior. And Jesus taught that character is determined by what a person thinks, not just by visible actions. All these were antithetical concepts to what was commonly taught by Jewish leaders and Pharisees.

Matthew 7:1-5 says,

“Do not be a fault finder, condemning and judgmental toward others, or you will discover that you are only exposing your own defects of character. For the way you treat others reveals the attributes of your own character, and the reality of your own condition is what determines your destiny. Why do you try to find the smallest defect in someone else's character, but ignore the malignant pathology in your own? How can you possibly think you can help another remove defects in their character when all the while your character is corrupt with selfishness? You charlatans! Healthy interventions require healthy minds: first address the defects in your own character, and then you will have the clarity and ability to help another remove defects in theirs.” (Remedy)

In what ways is the reality of the great controversy revealed in these texts – how is the interplay between good and evil manifested here?

What an invitation to conduct a relentless self-examination of our own actions and motives. Rarely do we look at ourselves squarely, critically, and honestly. We set ourselves up as the standard for everyone else. The problem with this is that there is so much we do not know or understand about other people. (Man can only look on the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart motives.) It is all too easy for us to see the mistakes in them. As a consequence of our tendency to sit in judgment of others, many people have been misrepresented. Aspersion has been cast on their characters unfairly. Unfortunately, in some cases, these individuals have left the church. Christ's teaching on this subject is direct and urgent based on the spiritual damage (to self and others) that judging others can cause. Do you think this advice is also for those who tend to be too hard, judgmental, and unforgiving of themselves?



DOA quote in the middle of the page, but in context:

“Judge not, that ye be not judged.” Do not think yourself better than other men, and set yourself up as their judge. Since you cannot discern motive, you are incapable of judging another. In criticizing him, you are passing sentence upon yourself; for you show that you are a participant with Satan, the accuser of the brethren. (yikes!) The Lord says, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” This is our work...The good tree will produce good fruit. If the fruit is unpalatable and worthless, the tree is evil. So the fruit borne in the life testifies as to the condition of the heart and the excellence of the character. Good works can never purchase salvation, but they are an evidence of the faith that acts by love and purifies the soul. And though the eternal reward is not bestowed because of our merit, yet it will be in proportion to the work that has been done through the grace of Christ. {DA 314.2}

Pink box: What is the difference between judging a person and judging the rightness or wrongness of their actions...is there a difference?

THURSDAY

I Am With You Always

God made the promise, “I will be with you,” and similarly “I will never leave you nor forsake you,” a number of times in scripture...and many times the promise is made in times of hardship and duress, when God’s words would be most relevant. What should that mean to us, in practical terms, in our own lives, in our own struggles, failures, and disappointments, and even when we feel that God has let us down?

“We fail many times because we do not realize that Christ is with us by His Spirit as truly as when...He moved visibly upon the earth. The lapse of time has wrought no change in His parting promise to His apostles as He was taken up from them into heaven...The Great Teacher has delegated power to His servants, who ‘have this treasure in earthen vessels.’ Christ will superintend the work of His ambassadors if they wait for His instruction and guidance.” {LHU 175.3}