

Revival and Reformation

The Word: the Foundation of Revival

Lesson #3 for July 20, 2013

Scriptures: Psalm 119:50,74,116; Hebrews 4:1,2,12; 11:3; John 5:39; Acts 20:27-32.

1. In this lesson we will study the Bible and its intended role in the Christian's life. What role will the Bible play in the final events of this earth's history? What is the relationship between faith and the Bible? What is God's relationship to the Bible?

The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed.—*Review and Herald*, December 15, 1885; *Selected Messages, bk. 1*, 416; See also 5MR 49; 3SM 21.

Every chapter and every verse of the Bible is a communication from God to men.—*Patriarchs and Prophets* 504 (1890); 4T 449; *Gospel Workers* (1892) 140; AG 350.

Make the Bible its own expositor, bringing together all that is said concerning a given subject at different times and under varied circumstances.—*Review and Herald*, October 9, 1883; *The Signs of the Times*, May 19, 1887; *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, 42,43.

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain **a knowledge of its grand central theme**, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. . . . He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. *Education* 190.2 (1903); *Counsels to Teachers* 462; *Lift Him Up* 115; *1MCP* 346; *7aBC* 458.1.

2. Read Psalms 119:50,74,116,154. We do not know exactly what form of the Bible was available to David. Did he have large portions memorized? But, it seems clear that he depended upon God's Word to guide him, to comfort him, to encourage him, to help him in times of depression and disappointment, and to give him wisdom. There were times when David's life seemed to be directly guided by words or visions from the Holy Spirit. (2 Samuel 2:1-4.)
3. Is there life to be found in the Bible? What does it mean to be "revived"? Why is the Bible different from any other type of literature? How would you classify Ellen White's writings?
4. We believe that God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—created our universe. Shouldn't They be able to re-create us? What is the Holy Spirit's main contribution to Christian life? Wasn't it the Holy Spirit who inspired the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament to write our Bible?

The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. **Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature, and re-creates the soul in the image of God.**—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 126.4.

5. It is very easy to read the Bible casually and receive almost no benefit. We can enjoy the interesting and inspiring stories and marvelous miracles and praise God for the way He led His people down through the generations. But, God challenges us to read the Bible as a letter from Himself to us with the purpose of revealing His character to us. Do we really want to be His Friend? Instead of trying to conform the Bible to what we think, are we prepared to let our lives be transformed by what God thinks as presented in Scripture?
6. Romans 8 makes it very clear that all three Members of the Godhead are on our side. How can we lose unless we refuse to join the Team? When we read the Bible, do we honestly take it as a revelation of God to us? Do we just focus on the parts that we like?
7. Have you ever had an “Emmaus road” experience? (Luke 24:13-35) Jesus gave those two disciples an amazing Bible study. But, how He did it is perhaps even more amazing!

Jesus did not first reveal himself in his true character to them, and then open the Scriptures to their minds; for he knew that they would be so overjoyed to see him again, risen from the dead, that their souls would be satisfied. They would not hunger for the sacred truths which he wished to indelibly impress upon their minds, that they might impart them to others, who should in their turn spread the precious knowledge, **until thousands of people should receive the light given that day** to the despairing disciples as they journeyed to Emmaus.

He [Jesus] maintained his disguise till he had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in his life, his character, his mission to earth, and his death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, **not** because it was supported by his personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of his life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. When the object of his labors with the two disciples was gained, he revealed himself to them that their joy might be full, and then vanished from their sight.—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 214.1,2; *The Signs of the Times* October 6, 1909 par. 8; *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1125.12; 6Red 32. Bracketed content supplied.

8. Faith is based on evidence. On the day of His resurrection and with all of heaven waiting to rejoice over His victory in the great controversy, Jesus took that much time to teach those two disciples—and the rest of us listening in—how to read and understand the Bible. **Imagine God Himself disguising Himself so that we would not believe His words just because of who He is! God wants us to believe Him because we have proven that His words are true, not just because of the His authority as God. We need to search the evidence.**
9. The time is coming very soon in our history when someone claiming to be God will make all kinds of false statements and claims? How can we prepare ourselves for that time when the Devil will appear in person?
10. Great feelings are often thought to be an evidence of revival. But, unfortunately, feelings are largely a result of external forces. And the Devil knows how to manipulate every kind of external force you can imagine. In fact, right now the Devil is preparing an entire generation to think that at all cost they must avoid any unpleasant feelings! Look at the music and film industries in the United States. Look at the pharmaceutical industry. It is all about feeling good! With so many people depending upon external influences to control

their feelings and their lives, when the Devil is able to control those external influences, would it be correct to say that those people will be “demon-possessed”?

11. No wonder Jesus asked, “When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8, *NKJV*) We need to find the truth about God in every part of the Bible.
12. What is the relationship between faith and feelings? How would you define *faith*?

Faith is just a word we use to describe a relationship with God as with a Person well-known. The better we know Him, the better the relationship may be.

Faith implies an attitude toward God of love, trust, and deepest admiration. It means having enough confidence in God—based on the more-than-adequate evidence revealed—to be willing to believe what He says as soon as we are sure He is the One saying it, to accept what He offers as soon as we are sure He is the One offering it, and to do what He wishes as soon as we are sure He is the One wishing it, without reservation—for the rest of eternity. Anyone who has such faith would be perfectly safe to save. That is why faith is the only requirement for heaven.

Faith also means that, like Abraham and Moses, we know God well enough to reverently ask Him, “Why?”—Stated many times by Dr. A. Graham Maxwell

13. But, like the ancient Israelites, so many of us today want to do things our way! How can we make the Word of God a living, life-giving force in our lives? Compare Exodus 23:20-33 and Deuteronomy 20:16-18. Why did they want to fight their way into Canaan?
14. Look at some examples of faith—and the lack thereof—in the Gospels: Matthew 8:5-13; John 5:1-13; Matthew 14:29-33. Each of these people responded by acting. But, Peter doubted. Which one of these three stories would you say comes closest to your life of faith?
15. The apostle Paul spent years ministering in Corinth (one and one-half years) and later in Ephesus (three years). Looked at superficially, those two cities were large and very sinful. When Paul first looked at Corinth, he was inclined to say, “I had better move on; there is not much I can do here!” But, God told him to work in Corinth, and a great work was accomplished. After ministering for a long period of time in Ephesus, Paul traveled away from there. When he returned, he told them that they should depend upon God’s Word for everything. (Acts 20:27-32) More than that, he warned them that fierce wolves would come from within the church itself to try to tear things apart. Where do you think the Devil has worked—and will work—most successfully? Will our church leaders mislead us?
16. Ellen White has given us some very stern and important words regarding our future as a church.

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. **Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions.** At every revival of God’s work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. **So closely will the counterfeit**

resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested. [Compare Matthew 24:24]

Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. **None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 593, 594.

17. Do we know the Bible so well that not even the Devil himself, in person, will be able to confuse us about its teachings? Our only safety is in making the Bible our daily study.
18. When discussing faith and works, one scholar simply said, “Faith works.” What does that imply? *Faith* is an action word.
19. Have you ever read the stories, the prophecies, or even the history in the Bible with the specific intent of asking what you can learn about God from every passage or story?

Men and women of prayer, their minds saturated with the Word of God, have changed the world as the Holy Spirit changed them through the Word. One such earthshaker was Martin Luther. Luther, however, had difficulty believing that God actually loved him. His picture of God was one of a vindictive judge and a wrathful tyrant. One day while examining some books in the library at the University of Erfurt where he was a monk, Luther discovered a Latin Bible. This was the first time he had ever held a copy of the entire Bible in his hands. Ellen G. White describes his reaction this way: “With mingled awe and wonder he [Luther] turned the sacred pages; with quickened pulse and throbbing heart he read for himself the words of life, pausing now and then to exclaim: ‘O that God would give me such a book for myself!’ . . . Angels of heaven were by his side, and rays of light from the throne of God revealed the treasures of truth to his understanding.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 122; *Adult Teacher’s Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, p. 36

20. How do we respond when we hold a Bible in our hands? The Devil is doing everything possible to keep us so busy that we do not have time to open our Bibles, let alone really study them. How will we ever overcome that problem?
21. Just as the Bible is the written Word of God, Jesus is the living Example of the Word in human flesh. By looking to and studying the life of Christ, we can be transformed.

The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. **Every command is a promise;** accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God.—*Education*, p. 126.

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Last Modified: June 1, 2013

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