

Third Quarter 2023

EGW Notes - Lesson 5, 22 – 28 July

Horizontal Atonement: The Cross and the Church



Sabbath Afternoon, July 22

God chose Israel to reveal His character to men. He desired them to be as wells of salvation in the world. To them were committed the oracles of heaven, the revelation of God's will. . . .

But the people of Israel lost sight of their high privileges as God's representatives. They forgot God and failed to fulfill their holy mission. The blessings they received brought no blessing to the world. All their advantages they appropriated for their own glorification. They shut themselves away from the world in order to escape temptation. The restrictions that God had placed upon their association with idolaters as a means of preventing them from conforming to the practices of the heathen, they used to build up a wall of separation between themselves and all other nations. They robbed God of the service He required of them, and they robbed their fellow men of religious guidance and a holy example.

— *The Acts of the Apostles, p. 14.*

Advancing in faith, Paul labored unceasingly for the upbuilding of God's kingdom among those who had been neglected by the teachers in Israel. Constantly he exalted Christ Jesus as "the King of kings, and Lord of lords"

(1 Timothy 6:15), and exhorted the believers to be “rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith.” Colossians 2:7.

To those who believe, Christ is a sure foundation. Upon this living stone, Jews and Gentiles alike may build. It is broad enough for all and strong enough to sustain the weight and burden of the whole world. This is a fact plainly recognized by Paul himself. In the closing days of his ministry, when addressing a group of Gentile believers who had remained steadfast in their love of the gospel truth, the apostle wrote, “Ye . . . are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” Ephesians 2:19, 20.

– *The Acts of the Apostles, p. 175.*

I heard so many say that the different nationalities of Europe were peculiar and had to be reached in a certain way. But the wisdom of God is promised to those who feel their need and who ask for it. God can bring the people where they will receive the truth. Let the Lord take possession of the mind and mold it as the clay is molded in the hands of the potter, and these differences will not exist. . . . I warn you, brethren and sisters, not to build up a wall of partition between different nationalities. On the contrary, seek to break it down wherever it exists. We should endeavor to bring all into the harmony that there is in Jesus, laboring for the one object, the salvation of our fellow men.

– *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 181.*

Sunday, July 23 Brought Near in Christ

In turning to the Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas did not cease laboring for the Jews elsewhere, wherever there was a favorable opportunity to gain a hearing.

Later, in Thessalonica, in Corinth, in Ephesus, and in other important centers, Paul and his companions in labor preached the gospel to both Jews and

Gentiles. But their chief energies were henceforth directed toward the building up of the kingdom of God in heathen territory, among peoples who had but little or no knowledge of the true God and of His Son.

The hearts of Paul and his associate workers were drawn out in behalf of those who were “without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” Through the untiring ministrations of the apostles to the Gentiles, the “strangers and foreigners,” who “sometimes were far off,” learned that they had been “made nigh by the blood of Christ,” and that through faith in His atoning sacrifice they might become “fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” Ephesians 2:12, 13, 19.

– *The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 174, 175.*

We are commanded to love one another as Christ has loved us. He has manifested His love by laying down His life to redeem us. The beloved disciple says that we should be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. For “everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (verse 1). If we love Christ, we shall love those who resemble Him in life and character. And not only so, but we shall love those who have “no hope,” and are “without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). It was to save sinners that Christ left His home in heaven and came to earth to suffer and to die. For this He toiled and agonized and prayed, until, heartbroken and deserted by those He came to save, He poured out His life on Calvary.

– *The Sanctified Life, p. 82.*

We must gather about the cross. Christ and Him crucified must be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion. We should have special praise services for the purpose of keeping fresh in our thoughts everything that we receive from God, and of expressing our gratitude for His

great love, and our willingness to trust everything to the hand that was nailed to the cross for us. We should learn to talk the language of Canaan, to sing the songs of Zion.

—*Lift Him Up*, p. 249.

Monday, July 24 Reconciliation: God's Gift From the Cross

These [Greek] men came from the West to find the Saviour at the close of His life, as the wise men had come from the East at the beginning. At the time of Christ's birth the Jewish people were so engrossed with their own ambitious plans that they knew not of His advent. The magi from a heathen land came to the manger with their gifts, to worship the Saviour. So these Greeks, representing the nations, tribes, and peoples of the world, came to see Jesus. So the people of all lands and all ages would be drawn by the Saviour's cross. So shall many "come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 8:11.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 621.

The cross is invested with a power that language cannot express. . . .

The work of the sons and daughters of God must be of a different character than has yet been manifested by a large number. If they love Jesus, they will have enlarged ideas of the love that has been expressed for fallen man, which required the provision of so expensive an offering to save the human race. Our Saviour asks the cooperation of every son and daughter of Adam who has become a son or daughter of God. Our Saviour declares that He brought from heaven as a donation eternal life. He was to be lifted up upon the cross of Calvary to draw all men unto Him. How then shall we treat the purchased inheritance of Christ? Tenderness, appreciation, kindness, sympathy, and love should be shown to them. Then we may work to help and bless one another. In this work we have more than human brotherhood. We have the exalted

companionship of heavenly angels. They cooperate with us in the work of enlightening high and low.

—*Sons and Daughters of God, p. 229.*

John declares: “Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.” 1 John 2:3-5.

One of Christ’s last commands to His disciples was “Love one another as I have loved you.” John 13:34. Do we obey this command, or are we indulging sharp, unchristlike traits of character? If we have in any way grieved or wounded others, it is our duty to confess our fault and seek for reconciliation. This is an essential preparation that we may come before God in faith, to ask His blessing.

—*Christ's Object Lessons, p. 144.*

Tuesday, July 25 Breaking Down the Dividing Wall

In the days of Christ, selfishness and pride and prejudice had built strong and high the wall of partition between the appointed guardians of the sacred oracles and every other nation on the globe. But the Saviour had come to change all this. The words which the people were hearing from His lips were unlike anything to which they had ever listened from priest or rabbi. Christ tears away the wall of partition, the self-love, the dividing prejudice of nationality, and teaches a love for all the human family. He lifts men from the narrow circle that their selfishness prescribes; He abolishes all territorial lines and artificial distinctions of society. He makes no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. He teaches us to look upon every needy soul as our neighbor and the world as our field.

—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 42.*

The early church was made up of many classes of people, of various nationalities. . . .

The hearts of those who had been converted under the labors of the apostles, were softened and united by Christian love. Despite former prejudices, all were in harmony with one another. Satan knew that so long as this union continued to exist, he would be powerless to check the progress of gospel truth; and he sought to take advantage of former habits of thought, in the hope that thereby he might be able to introduce into the church elements of disunion.

Thus it came to pass that as disciples were multiplied, the enemy succeeded in arousing the suspicions of some who had formerly been in the habit of looking with jealousy on their brethren in the faith and of finding fault with their spiritual leaders, and so “there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews.”

— *The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 87, 88.*

However large may be a man’s claim to knowledge and wisdom, unless he is under the teaching of the Holy Spirit he is exceedingly ignorant of spiritual things. He needs to realize his danger and his inefficiency, and to place entire dependence upon the One who alone is able to keep the souls committed to His trust, able to imbue them with His Spirit, and to fill them with unselfish love for one another, thus enabling them to bear witness that God has sent His Son into the world to save sinners. Those who are truly converted will press together in Christian unity. Let there be no division in the church of God, no unwise authority exercised over those who accept the truth. The meekness of Christ is to appear in all that is said and done.

— *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 146.*

Wednesday, July 26 Jesus, Preacher of Peace

The peace spoken of by the great Teacher is larger and fuller than we have imagined. Christ is ready to do large things for us, to restore our natures by making us partakers of His divine nature. He waits to link our hearts with His heart of infinite love, in order that we may be fully reconciled to God; but it is our privilege to understand that God loves us as He loves His Son. When we believe in Christ as our personal Saviour, the peace of Christ is ours. The reconciliation provided for us in the atonement of Christ is the foundation of our peace; but gloomy feelings are no evidence that the promises of God are of no effect. You look at your feelings, and because your outlook is not all brightness, you begin to draw more closely the garment of heaviness about your soul. You look within yourself, and think that God is forsaking you. You are to look to Christ. In me, Christ says, ye shall have peace. Entering into communion with our Saviour, we enter the region of peace.

—*Lift Him Up*, p. 332.

Christ is “the Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6), and it is His mission to restore to earth and heaven the peace that sin has broken. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1. Whoever consents to renounce sin and open his heart to the love of Christ, becomes a partaker of this heavenly peace.

There is no other ground of peace than this. The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife.

Christ's followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God, is a peacemaker.

– *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 27, 28.*

Thursday, July 27 The Church, a Holy Temple

The Jewish temple was built of hewn stones quarried out of the mountains; and every stone was fitted for its place in the temple, hewed, polished, and tested before it was brought to Jerusalem. And when all were brought to the ground, the building went together without the sound of ax or hammer. This building represents God's spiritual temple, which is composed of material gathered out of every nation, and tongue, and people, of all grades, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. These are not dead substances to be fitted by hammer and chisel. They are living stones, quarried out from the world by the truth; and the great Master Builder, the Lord of the temple, is now hewing and polishing them, and fitting them for their respective places in the spiritual temple. When completed, this temple will be perfect in all its parts, the admiration of angels and of men; for its Builder and Maker is God.

– *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 180.*

Upon the foundation that Christ Himself had laid, the apostles built the church of God. In the Scriptures the figure of the erection of a temple is frequently used to illustrate the building of the church. Zechariah refers to Christ as the Branch that should build the temple of the Lord. He speaks of the Gentiles as helping in the work: "They that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord;" and Isaiah declares, "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls." Zechariah 6:12, 15; Isaiah 60:10.

Writing of the building of this temple, Peter says, “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:4, 5.

– *The Acts of the Apostles, p. 595.*

In the quarry of the Jewish and the Gentile world the apostles labored, bringing out stones to lay upon the foundation. In his letter to the believers at Ephesus, Paul said, “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:19-22.

And to the Corinthians he wrote: “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” 1 Corinthians 3:10-13.

– *The Acts of the Apostles, p. 596.*

Friday, July 28 For Further Reading

That I May Know Him, “How to Settle Your Troubles,” p. 181;

Our High Calling, “All Honor to the Peace Makers!” p. 179.

How to Settle Your Troubles

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. Matthew 18:15. {TMK 181.1}

We should carefully consider what is our relation to God and to one another. We are continually sinning against God, but His mercy still follows us; in love He bears with our perversities, our neglect, our ingratitude, our disobedience. He never becomes impatient with us. We insult His mercy, grieve His Holy Spirit, and do Him dishonor before men and angels, and yet His compassions fail not. The thought of God's long-suffering to us should make us forbearing to one another. How patiently should we bear with the faults and errors of our brethren when we remember how great are our own failings in the sight of God. How can we pray to our heavenly Father, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12) if we are ... exacting in our treatment of others? .., {TMK 181.2}

If you think your brother has injured you, go to him in kindness and love, and you may come to an understanding and to reconciliation.... If you succeed in settling the trouble you have gained your brother without exposing his frailties, and the settlement between you has been the covering of a multitude of sins from the observation of others.... {TMK 181.3}

It takes special watchfulness to keep the affections alive and our hearts in a condition where we shall be sensible of the good that exists in the hearts of others. If we do not watch on this point, Satan will put his jealousy into our souls; he will put his glasses before our eyes, that we may see the actions of our brethren in a distorted light. Instead of looking critically upon our brethren we should turn our eyes within, and be ready to discover the objectionable traits of our own character. As we have a proper realization of our own mistakes and failures, the mistakes of others will sink into insignificance. {TMK 181.4}

Satan is an accuser of the brethren. He is on the watch for every error, no matter how small, that he may have something on which to found an accusation. Keep off from Satan's side. {TMK 181.5}

All Honor to the Peacemakers!

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Matthew 5:9. {OHC 179.1}

Peacemakers! What a treasure is a peacemaker in the family; what a blessing in the church! Peacemakers may be tempted, but their life is hid with Christ in God. They look unto Jesus, copying His pattern.... They receive the peace which Christ gives.... {OHC 179.2}

The true nature of our religion is not found in the position we occupy, but in the gentle spirit, the kindness, the peace which we manifest. Our religion is made manifest in the home circle by the atmosphere surrounding the soul that brings happiness to the family.... {OHC 179.3}

True Christians will not ... speak in a cheap or fretting way. In the familiar circle of the home they will do services of love and Christian courtesy. These services may seem very commonplace, but the universe of heaven will be interested in the consistent walk of those who seek to benefit others.... {OHC 179.4}

It is not only our privilege but our duty to cultivate gentleness, to have the peace of Christ in the heart and as peacemakers and followers of Christ to sow precious seed that will produce a harvest unto eternal life. Professed followers of Christ may possess many good and useful qualities; but their characters are greatly marred by an unkind, fretful, faultfinding, harshly judging temper. The husband or the wife who cherishes suspicion and distrust creates dissension and strife in the home. Neither of them should keep his gentle words and smiles for strangers alone, and manifest irritability in the home, thus driving out peace and contentment.... {OHC 179.5}

It is practical Christlikeness alone that can make one a peacemaker in the home, in the church, in the neighborhood, and in the world. Home religion is practical sanctification.... The true quality of religion is gauged by the manner in which each member in the family does his duty to his associates.... Learn the precious lesson of being peacemakers in your home life. {OHC 179.6}