



SOULWINNING 201 SESSION 3

WHICH STUDY SHOULD I USE?

1. OUR MESSAGE

- A. Our message is a prophetic message drawn especially from the books of Daniel and Revelation.
 - i. The study and fulfillment of these prophecies gave birth to the Adventist Church, predicted its rise, provided its mission and message, and ultimately guarantee the fulfillment of its hope.
- B. Still, some Adventists today have grown weary of the prophecies.
 - i. A typical Bible study series is often viewed as being too complex and non-relational, or simply irrelevant and unappealing. The theory is that when Bible studies have a lot to say about prophecy and doctrine, they leave the heart untouched and only detract from Jesus and the gospel.
- C. So which study should I use? Are doctrinal studies still relevant, or should I be looking for something new?

2. CHRIST THE CENTER

- A. It has clearly been an issue in times past that doctrine has been preached without Christ. In Jesus' day, He told the religious leaders
 - i. "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life" (John 5:39-40).
- B. Ellen White, counseling the church of her day, wrote

The law of God has been largely dwelt upon and has been presented to congregations, almost as destitute of the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His relation to the law as was the offering of Cain. *FW 18*

As a people, we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa that had neither dew nor rain. We must preach Christ in the law, and there will be sap and nourishment in the preaching that will be as food to the famishing flock of God. *RH*

3.11.1890

- C. This has led some in our day to conclude that our Bible studies are “too doctrinal” and need to be more Christ-centered. However, this creates a false dichotomy. Doctrine is teaching, and the doctrines we believe as Seventh-day Adventists are the teachings of Jesus. Notice that Ellen White’s proposed solution was not to preach Christ *instead of* the law, but to preach Christ *in the law*. Our doctrines must be taught with Christ at the center.

The truth for this time is broad in its outlines, far reaching, embracing many doctrines; but these doctrines are not detached items, which mean little; they are united by golden threads, forming a complete whole, with Christ as the living center. 2SM 87

- D. In other words, we don’t need to *make* Christ the center of our doctrines, because He already *is* the center.
- E. Furthermore, there is comfort in knowing the truth.

The Comforter is called “the Spirit of truth.” His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. DA 671

3. CHRIST THE FOUNDATION

- A. Notice that the sacrifice of Christ is not to be the *topic* of every discourse, but the *foundation*.

The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption—the Son of God uplifted on the cross. This is to be the foundation of every discourse given by our ministers. Ev 190

- i. Ellen White was not recommending that we leave off the clear exposition of biblical doctrine and practical instruction to talk only about the love of Christ. What she was urging was that we allow the sacrifice of Christ is to shed its light upon every Bible truth -- in order to understand the truth as it is in Jesus, and find motivation to respond to that truth with loving obedience.
- B. Sharing a “Christ-centered” Bible study doesn’t require that we turn every topic into a study on the death and resurrection of Christ. What it does mean is that every Bible truth – doctrinal, practical, prophetic and otherwise, “from Genesis to Revelation,” – must be shared in light of its relation to Christ and the plan of salvation.

5. CHRIST IN PROPHECY

A. Christ's preaching was a prophetic message (Mk. 1:15; Lk. 24:44-46)

The burden of Christ's preaching was, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel." Thus the gospel message, as given by the Saviour Himself, was based on the prophecies. DA 233

- i. "Didn't our hearts burn within us...?" (Lk. 24:32)
 1. *Fulfilled prophecy gives evidence of a supernatural, all-knowing and all-powerful God. Fulfilled Bible prophecy, on the other hand, gives evidence of a supernatural God. It inspires confidence that the Bible is true, and therefore the plan of salvation is true, and Jesus truly is our Savior.*

B. The apostles' messages were based on the fulfilled prophecies of Christ

- i. Peter's sermon on Pentecost pointed to fulfilled prophecy as proof that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah (see Ac. 2:27; Ps. 16:10)
- ii. Paul preached the Christ of fulfilled prophecy (1 Cor. 15:3-4)

From the Old Testament Scriptures he showed that according to the prophecies and the universal expectation of the Jews, the Messiah would be of the lineage of Abraham and of David; then he traced the descent of Jesus from the patriarch Abraham through the royal psalmist. He read the testimony of the prophets regarding the character and work of the promised Messiah, and His reception and treatment on the earth; then he showed that all these predictions had been fulfilled in the life, ministry, and death of Jesus of Nazareth. AA 247

C. The Adventist Message is a revelation of Jesus Christ in prophecy

- i. The three angels' messages are clearly prophetic
- ii. But they also include our doctrinal understandings. Daniel foretold a time when truth would be "cast down to the ground" and error would be put in its place (see Dan. 8:12, 25). But at the end of "two thousand three hundred days" that truth would be restored. Daniel's prophecy is fulfilled in the Advent Movement.

6. MAKING IT CHRIST-CENTERED

A. It is the Spirit of God who makes any study effective. The gospel is not in wisdom of words, but in demonstration of HS and power (see 1 Cor. 2:1-5, 4:19-20).

There is far more being done by the universe of Heaven than we have any idea of, in preparing the way so that souls shall be converted. We want to work in harmony with the messengers of Heaven. We want more of God; we do not want to feel that it is our talking and our sermonizing that is to do the work; we want to feel that unless the people are reached through God, they never will be reached. EV 127.5

B. Christ in You

- i. The secret to being “Christ-centered” is to have your own, living connection with Him. Without this connection, it doesn’t matter how many times you say the name of Jesus or how many sentimental stories you tell. These will only be a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
- ii. Yet when Christ is in you (see Colossians 1:27), dwelling in your heart by faith (see Ephesians 3:17), it becomes nearly impossible *not to* keep Him at the center! With every topic, you will long for your study interest to see and experience Christ as a personal Savior, just like you have. The key to keeping Christ at the center of every Bible study you give, is to make sure He is the center of your own heart and life.

7. SOME SUGGESTED STUDIES

A. Prophecies of Hope

- i. This is a great set of lessons presented in the framework of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. They follow a clear and logical course, build confidence in our prophetic message, and include studies on topics essential for preparation for church membership. In addition, they include corresponding scripted notes for every study to aid in lesson preparation.

B. Search for Certainty

- i. This time-tested set of lessons does an excellent job of reinforcing the certainty of the Advent Movement, and the fill-in-the-blanks for each question require an answer to the question, not just a missing word, which challenges the student to dig more deeply. This set does not include certain lifestyle topics, however.

C. It Is Written Bible Study Guides

- i. This brand new colorful and contemporary set of lessons follow the standard fill-in-the-missing-word-blank format. They are clear and easy to follow, uphold our prophetic message, and are packaged very nicely in a box set. This set does not include certain lifestyle topics, however.

D. Landmarks of Prophecy

- i. This is another time-tested Bible study series that incorporates Bible stories to illustrate key doctrines. It follows the standard fill-in-the-word-blank format, and includes all topics essential for preparing an individual for church membership.
 1. *An added benefit is that this set can be used with the Landmarks of Prophecy DVD series by Doug Batchelor, which is based on these lessons.*