

The Storm Does Not Care If You Are SDA or Not!

Description

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A study related to the SDA
Sabbath School Lesson for 2021, 4th Quarter
Present Truth In Deuteronomy
Week 5
by [Mary Zebrowski](#)
Edited by [Trent Wilde](#)

This week's lesson is entitled, "The Stranger In Your Gates," and discusses the importance of being no respecter of persons. Friday's discussion question reads.

"Think about it. We can worship on the right day and understand the truth about death, hell, the mark of the beast, and so forth. That's fine. But what does it all mean if we treat others nastily or oppress the weak among us or don't administer justice fairly when we need to judge a situation? Especially because of the truth that we have, why must we be extra careful not to think that, somehow, just knowing the truth, in and of itself, is all that God requires of us? Why is that a potentially dangerous trap for us?"
Sabbath School Quarterly Lesson, Friday, October 29, 2021

This is a great question. Does God favor SDAs just because we know about the truth about the state of the dead? There are many people who may assume that just knowing the truth will be enough to save them, or, allow them entrance into the kingdom of heaven. But, as the lesson asks, is that enough?

Well, according to Micah 6:8 and many other places in the bible, just knowing the truth is not sufficient to fulfill the requirements of God. It is necessary, but not sufficient. Micah 6:8 reads,

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Think about it, even the demons believe that Jesus is the son of God. It profits them nothing (See Matthew 8:29; Mark 1:24; Luke 4:41; James 2:19). Merely knowing and believing true things about Jesus, or about death or hell or righteousness or anything else will not gain us entrance into the kingdom.

Ellen White often spoke about the danger of having a "theory of the truth" without having an experimental knowledge of the truth. In other words, knowing about the truth is one thing, but living it is another, and **living** by the truth is necessary if we are to be judged as righteous. And we

need God to help us do this, of course, but we first need to be aware of the fact that we do actually need to live righteously. It is hard to receive help if you don't know you need it. This is the Laodicean problem (see Revelation 3:17). We must understand our need to be righteous in order for our minds and hearts to be able to receive help from God in this area. Sadly, many assume that just believing that Jesus died and rose again is enough. In this way, Satan lays a snare for us.

Many also might think that we will magically be righteous when we get to heaven, or when Christ returns. But this is also a snare. Again, think about it – Satan was in heaven, but he did not magically live righteously, and neither did a third of the angels. Just being in heaven, obviously, will not solve the sin problem.

Also, consider Adam and Eve. They were in a utopian situation, they actually walked with God and the angels, but they also fell into sin.

We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). Grace is the unmerited favor and love of God for us while we are ignorant and in sin. In grace, God gives us His love and teaching and help so that we will be able to overcome our sin. And yes, part of this salvation involves knowing the truth. God's Spirit – the Holy Spirit – teaches us how to know what is truth (John 16:13). Once we know what is truth, we can then realize or recognize our error and then align our thoughts and lives accordingly. We can then go beyond having a theory of the truth to having a true experimental knowledge of it.

We are saved through faith in the truth, that is, through trusting in the truth. This is not a blind faith. Blind faith is trusting in something when you don't have evidence that it is trustworthy. That is misplaced trust, or misplaced faith. The only faith that can be the means of salvation is well-placed faith; that is, trusting in Christ and in the truth because we have the evidence for their trustworthiness. To have this evidence is to have a knowledge and understanding of that evidence gained by careful experiment. It is in this way that we can stand on the truth because it has been shown to be true by the weight of evidence. There is nothing blind or presumptuous about it. For more on the importance of experiment in both scientific and religious matters, see our video series, ["Experience Not Reliable"](#) for a deeper study of Ellen White's chapter by the same name in Testimonies to the Church, Volume 3, page 67.

So, let's do an experiment on partiality. We know that God is no respecter of persons. This is because righteousness is right doing, period, no matter if you are rich or poor, popular or unpopular, a native or a foreigner. Conversely, sin leads to death, no matter who does it.

Romans 6:23 reads,

“For the wages of sin is death...” or, the result of sin is death.

Similarly, James 2:15 reads,

“...sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”

It doesn't say, “...sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death, except if you believe in Jesus.”

We are not to be “respecters of persons” because material reality is no respecter of persons. We either think and live according to truth, or we do not.

Ellen White said,

“Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine.”
Ellen White, Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 312

If we have faith in the truth of righteousness, we will have corresponding righteous thoughts and works. James 2:14, 17-20 reads,

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ... 17 ...faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
18 But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

Jesus taught this same principle. Luke 6:46-48 reads,

46 “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? 47 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.”

The rock, in this case, is Jesus’ teachings. We are not allowed entrance into heaven by calling Jesus our savior, or even in knowing what His teachings are, but **by both** knowing his teachings and doing them.

The storm does not care if you are rich or poor, or SDA or not. It doesn’t care only about what we know or don’t know. God is no respecter of persons, not just because he is kind, but because he knows the truth of reality – that sin, when it is full-grown, leads to death no matter who it is that sins.