

ONE GREAT CONTROVERSY, ONE GOSPEL

Accepting as it reads the Harmonious Testimony of the Prophets, regarding the Purpose of the Gospel.

INTRODUCTORY TEXT(S):.....

1 JOHN 3:4-11 (KJV)>> ⁴Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. ⁵And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. ⁶Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. ⁷Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. ⁸He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. ⁹Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. ¹⁰In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. ¹¹For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

The term *Gospel* as defined by the Prophets.....

1) Amidst all of men's colourful interpretations, where can we find a succinct, scriptural definition of the term *gospel*?

ROMANS 10:15 (KJV)>> ¹⁵And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that **preach *the gospel* of peace, and bring *glad tidings* of good things!**

ISAIAH 52:7 (KJV)>> ⁷How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth *good tidings*, that publisheth peace; that bringeth *good tidings* of good, that publisheth *salvation*; that saith unto Zion, *Thy God reigneth!*

As we can see from the aforementioned scriptures, the *gospel* means *glad tidings*, which could be translated today as *good news*. The gospel expresses news that is a reassurance to something: Paul and Isaiah harmonize to show that it is news of *peace*, *salvation* and the fact that *God reigns*. These terms – *peace*, *salvation*, *thy God reigneth* – plainly indicate that through the gospel: a)there is a *peace* to be gained out of something, b)there is something to be *saved* from, and c)God's *reign* or *sovereignty* was to be vindicated by this gospel.

2) Through what instrument, then, does the gospel derive its purpose? Who is responsible for this good news having any meaning to us? Is there one to be acknowledged as the beginning and the end of the gospel?

MARK 1:1 (KJV)>> ¹The beginning of the gospel of *Jesus Christ, the Son of God*;

ROMANS 1:1-4,16 (KJV)>> ¹Paul, a servant of *Jesus Christ*, called to be an apostle, separated unto *the gospel of God*, ²(Which *he* had promised afore by *his* prophets in the holy scriptures,) ³*Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; ⁴And declared to be *the Son of God* with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. . . . ¹⁶For I am not ashamed of *the gospel of Christ*: for *it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

1STCORINTHIANS 15:1,3-4 (KJV)>> ¹Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you *the gospel* which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand. . . . ³For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how *that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures*; ⁴And that *he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures*:

MATTHEW 1:21 (KJV)>> ²¹And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name **JESUS**: for **he shall save his people from their sins.**

It is evident, beloved, that the gospel, the good news is about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus Christ, the Son of God is the instrument through which the gospel has its purpose. Yet remember the prophets tell us that this plan is interchangeably called, “the gospel of God” (Rom.1:1). The gospel involves the divine identities of the Son of God (Jesus Christ), and God the Father (Jehovah). **The gospel of peace is the same as the “counsel of peace,” which is, “between them both.”** (Zech.6:13). The Father, equally as the Son, transacted the purpose of this gospel – saving humanity (John 3:16; 1stJohn 4:14).

Furthermore, even from the few Scriptures we have observed, the prophets clearly introduce what humanity is to be saved from, if they are to be saved. Beloved, it may seem to some that it goes without saying, but for every last one of us, we need be reminded that **Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for our sins; he lived upon this earth and died to save us from our sins.** It is of utmost importance that we know, without a thread of doubt, that without this thing called *sin*, the gospel would not have been necessary. The *good news* of the gospel is a direct response to the *bad news* of *sin*. If we do not get this point right, beloved, in our own hearts we shall make the gospel of none effect, and the complete testimony of the prophets meaningless. This is serious!

Scriptural harmony on the true meaning of *Sin*

3) Having been guided by the Scriptures on defining *the gospel*, how can we likewise find a harmonious definition of *sin* from the same?

1ST JOHN 3:4 (KJV)>> ⁴Whosoever *committeth sin* transgresseth also the law: for ***sin is the transgression of the law.***

JAMES 1:13-16 (KJV)>> ¹³Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: ¹⁴**But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.** ¹⁵**Then *when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*** ¹⁶**Do not err**^[Gr.be deceived, go astray], my beloved brethren.

JAMES 2:8-12 (KJV)>> ⁸**If ye fulfil *the royal law* according to the scripture, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,* ye do well: ⁹**But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin,****

and are convinced of the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whosoever shall keep ***the whole law***, and yet ***offend*** in one point, he is guilty of all. ¹¹For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a ***transgressor of the law***. ¹²So ***speak ye, and so do***, as they that shall be judged by ***the law of liberty***.

LEVITICUS 5:14-15,17 (KJV)>> ¹⁴And ***the LORD spake*** unto Moses, saying, ¹⁵***If a soul commit a trespass, and sin*** through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks. . . . ¹⁷***And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD;*** though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.

PROVERBS 21:4 (KJV)>> ⁴An ***high look***, and a ***proud heart***, and the plowing of the wicked, ***is sin***.

PROVERBS 24:8-9 (KJV)>> ⁸He that ***deviseth*** to do evil shall be called a mischievous person. ⁹The ***thought*** of foolishness ***is sin***: and the scorner is an abomination to men.

ROMANS 14:23 (KJV)>> ²³And he that ***doubteth*** is damned if he eat, because he ***eateth*** not of faith: for ***whatsoever is not of faith is sin***.

JAMES 4:17 (KJV)>> ¹⁷Therefore to him that ***knoweth to do good, and doeth*** it not, to him it is ***sin***.

1STJOHN 5:17 (KJV)>> ¹⁷***All unrighteousness is sin***: and there is a sin not unto death.

Notice in the aforementioned Scriptures, spanning across Old and New Testaments there can be seen a tangible harmony on what sin is. The apostle John gives us the most succinct, plain, definition of sin as being, “the transgression of the law” (1stJohn 3:4). His fellow apostle James agrees exactly with this, as James’ teaching of exposing sin appeals directly to the *royal law*, the *law of liberty* (James 2:8-12). James indeed reflects the fact that sin is the transgression of the law. According to James and John, without a true recognition of the law of God, we cannot have a true recognition of sin. But even the apostle Paul, who many say emphatically emphasizes grace, agrees also with James and

John on the connection between the law and sin. Paul says, “I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, *taking occasion by the commandment*, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.” (Rom.7:7-8). Beloved, the sin from which Christ saves us, has everything to do with our recognition of God’s law.

But taking more of the Scriptural testimony aforementioned, we are told about even the very nature of sin. We are told how we can know when something becomes sin, and when it is not sin. The apostle James took us step by step when he said, “But every man is *tempted*, when he is drawn away of his own *lust*, and enticed. **Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.**” (James 1:14-15). Therefore, beloved, *sin* is manifested when for us a lustful temptation has been *conceived*, or *taken hold of*, grasped, engaged, *committed to*, as expressed in the Greek. When the will becomes engaged, committed to carry out the lustful temptation, *then* there is sin; in fact, the very engagement, the very commitment of our will to carry out the lustful temptation *is an act* in and of itself.

Beloved, if we will take the inspired counsel of the apostle as it reads, we must recognize that the indwelling, tempting lust of which we battle with inside is *not sin*. Temptation is *not sin*. Temptation has to be *conceived, engaged upon, committed by the will*, for sin to be imputed to us. That is what James told us. If in Christ we resist temptation, and flee from the enticements of these inward lusts, we shall have no sin. This is what the gospel empowers us to do. If we refuse to believe this, we do not believe the apostle James, nor the one, self-same gospel the other prophets agree in teaching. James knew what he said was the true understanding of sin, which was integral to grasping the one gospel of the Scriptures. This is why he gives the warning immediately after his teaching on sin: “Do not err [be deceived, or go astray], my beloved brethren.” He was inspired to warn us not to be deceived on this point, especially in these last days. Be not deceived, beloved: James and the prophets agree on sin.

But we go further by saying that the definition of sin *by Jehovah’s own mouth*, tells us that sin is an act. If we shall remember Leviticus 5 above, it begins by saying, “And **the LORD spake** unto Moses, **saying**, If a soul *commit a trespass*, and *sin*. . .” (Lev. 5:14). According to Jehovah God, *sin* is the same as *committing* a trespass – sin is something *committed*. From the Jehovah’s own mouth the thought is expounded even more fully. Continuing the same instruction, the Eternal Father says, “And **if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD...**” (Lev.5:17). Who among us will dare go against the first-hand words of Jehovah? He said to *sin* is to *commit* something. He said sin is something forbidden to be *done* by what? -- *The commandments of the Lord*. Sin is an act, a committing, and it is strictly defined in connection with the commandments of God. I yield to the plain word of Jehovah – all the prophets words must stem from his definition, and never contradict it.

So when Solomon says, “An *high look*, and a *proud heart* . . .is *sin*,” (Prov.21:4), I know that these are evidences that such guilty persons have their wills *engaged, committed* to feel better than others. I will know that such persons have *given into the temptation* of thinking themselves more elevated than others. Their disposition is of their choosing; they have allowed their own minds to feel this way, and that is an act of itself. The same Solomon

tells us, “He that *deviseth* to do evil shall be called a *mischievous* person. The *thought* of foolishness is *sin*...” (Prov.24:8-9). The very devisings and thoughts of men, wilfully militating against the law of God, are *sin*. These are acts, yea they may be intangible, but they are still acts.

And when Paul says, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin,” remember he was speaking just before in the same sentence that, “he that *doubteth* is damned.” (Rom.14:23). To doubt is an act – to doubt is to act against faith in God – therefore it is sin. And when James says in another place that, “to him that *knoweth* to *do* good, and *doeth* it not, to him it is sin,” he quite clearly shows us that sin is the opposite of *doing good*. Sin is directly relative to the knowledge we have to do good – sin is the active opposition to this knowledge. The knowledge we have to do good is informed within us by the law of God which is spiritual (Rom.7:14; 2:15); when we do not act in harmony with this knowledge, we sin.

Lastly here, when the apostle John says, “All unrighteousness is sin,” (1stJohn 5:17), remember he is the same one who said that, “sin is the transgression of the law.”(1stJohn 3:4). When John said *unrighteousness*, he expects us to understand that it is synonymous to the *transgression* of God’s law. John knew that both sin and righteousness were associated with the act of the will. And like James, he was inspired to warn us:

1st JOHN 3:7-8 (KJV)>> ⁷Little children, **let no man *deceive* you: he that *doeth* righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.** ⁸**He that *committeth* sin is of the devil; for the devil *sinneth* from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the *works* of the devil.**

In God’s foreknowledge, he knows the devil would seek to deceive many in these last days on the point of sin and righteousness. Through his servants, God wanted us know for a fact that *being* righteous is proven by *doing* righteousness; that *being* of the devil is proven by the *committing* of sin. Righteousness is judged by our acting in harmony with God’s law; unrighteousness is judged by our acting out of harmony, our transgressing of, God’s law. God’s servants told you beloved – be not deceived on this point. Christ came to destroy sin: he came to this earth not to destroy a mysterious *state of being*, but, “*the works* of the devil”.

An all-important, momentary review of this Scriptural gospel

Beloved – for those in our world who have not been acquainted with the gospel, and even those who profess to believe the gospel – to come to grips with what the Scripture *actually* teaches about the gospel has the deepest implications for us all. We have learnt that the gospel is the *good news* about *salvation*; the gospel is the good news of *peace* which is to affirm the fact that *God reigns* (Isaiah 52:7). We have learnt that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Way through which this gospel has been accomplished (Mark 1:1;

Rom.1:1-4,16; 1stCor.15:1,3-4). We have learnt that Jesus Christ came to save us *from our sins* (Matt.1:21; 1stJohn 3:5,8). We have learnt that sin is *the transgression of the law* (1stJohn 3:4). We have learnt that sin is *an act* of the will, distinct from temptation (James 1:14-15). We have learnt that temptation is *not sin*, but it is when we *conceive, engage, embrace, commit to* temptation that we finally sin. We have learnt that *all sin* is to be identified with reference to *the law, the commandments of God* (James 2:8-12; Rom.7:7-8; Lev.5:14,17). Beloved, we have just tread the clear line of biblical revelation: all who are sincere will admit that this is what we gleaned from the Scriptures. We have seen the points interconnect link by link. The question we must all ask ourselves is: Do I believe the gospel in its totality? Have I taken the Scripture *as it reads*, that I may accept these interconnected witnesses to the gospel?

“Now, how important is this?” one may be asking. “What are the implications?” another may be inquiring. We can list quite a few responses. Note the following:

1. Taking the Scriptures *as they read*, do we have the gospel if we reject that **Jesus Christ is really and truly the literal Son of God?** (Mark 1:1; John 3:16-18, 20:31).
2. Taking the Scriptures *as they read*, do we have the gospel if we reject that Christ came to save us **from our sins**, and **NOT in our sins?** (Matt.1:21; John 8:24; Ezek.18:20-24; 1stJohn 3:5).
3. Taking the Scriptures *as they read*, do we have the gospel if we reject that **sin means the transgression of the law?** (1stJohn 3:4; James 2:8-12).
4. Taking the Scriptures *as they read*, do we have the gospel if we reject the position that **temptation is not the same as sin?** If we reject the position that **to sin we must first engage temptation, commit something against the commandments of God?** (James 1:13-16; Lev.5:14,17).
5. Taking the Scriptures *as they read*, do we have the gospel if we **reject or downplay the law, the commandments of God, as an archaic yoke of bondage**, which need not be obeyed wholeheartedly? If we reject **the very commandments given to tell us what sin is?** (Rom.3:31, 7:7-8).
6. Taking the Scriptures *as they read*, do we have the gospel if we reject the position that **when Christ died for our sins, it was in direct relation to the law of God, seeing that sin is the transgression of the law of God?** If we reject the reality that **if there was no sin, no transgression, then Christ need not have died in the first place?** (Isa.53:5-12; 1stJohn 3:5,8).
7. Taking the Scriptures *as they read*, do we have the gospel if we believe there is no original, everlasting, divine legal standard by which Christ was adjudged the necessary Sacrifice? After all, if the law of God has no binding purpose for us created beings – whether before the cross or after – then why did Christ need to die? How could it be said that the curse of sin, transgression, entered the world, if there was no established standard to have transgressed? Why then was a Saviour needed, who had to be *wounded for our transgressions?* What truly did Christ die for? How does Christ truly save you? (Isa.24:5-6, 53:5-12; 1stJohn 2:1-4).

Beloved, these implications above demand an honest answer from every single soul who has been born into this earth. For, whether we have acknowledged it yet or not, we are all involved in *one great controversy* which sets forth *one gospel* as its solution. Let us answer the call of this gospel by taking all the evidence of the Scriptures *as they read* and harmonize. It is our most gracious hope for you to see that *the great controversy* and *the gospel*, from the very beginning, bear out all that we have understood thus far.

The great controversy and the gospel, from the very beginning

4) What was the origin of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the great controversy between righteousness and sin?

To understand this, we must go back in the ages, to those inspired narratives which give light as to what took place leading up to the fall of man:

ISAIAH 14:12-14 (KJV)>> ¹²How art thou fallen from heaven, ***O Lucifer***, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! ¹³**For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.**

EZEKIEL 28:13-17 (KJV)>> ¹³Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering. . . . ¹⁴**Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁵Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. ¹⁶By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, *O covering cherub*, from the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁷Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.**

As we see previous, before the fall of Adam and Eve there was a heavenly being, a covering cherub, the highest of the angels, who did something wrong. The Scripture tells us he *said something in his heart, his heart was lifted up, he corrupted his wisdom*. These are acts, actions, beloved – choices Lucifer made out of his own heart. And as mysterious as its origin would seem, we must accept that Lucifer *did* something in order that this mysterious thing called *iniquity, evil, sin* would come about. Ezekiel says he *sinned*, and it could only be then that *iniquity was found* in him. Lucifer sinned by yielding to a temptation he contrived within his own heart – pride. As James taught us, Lucifer *conceived, engaged, committed* himself upon his own temptation – upon his pride – and this committing to those feelings of pride *brought forth sin*. Note well this, dear brethren: Lucifer could have dismissed those feelings and he would not have sinned. The temptation to become proud was not sin, but Lucifer’s *wilful engagement* of that temptation brought forth sin. Lucifer chooses to *engage* this self-pride, and now his commitment manifests itself in Isaiah’s narrative: I *will* ascend; I *will* exalt my throne; I *will* be like the most high. Lucifer embraced the original temptation, confirmed his will upon it, and sin was brought forth into the universe.

One more thing we should consider here is that before Lucifer committed the first sin ever, he was described as *perfect in his ways*. This is also a most forceful evidence that when we sin, we cannot pass it off as an automatic by-product of our fallen nature. We cannot say it is because we are fallen, that is why we sin – because Lucifer was *perfect in his ways, till iniquity was found in him*. He was perfect in nature, yet still he sinned. How is that? Because sin is an act; it is a choice to do something out of harmony with God’s law. Nature of itself will neither make us righteous nor sinful, it is that which we *do* which will determine whether we are righteous or sinful. Remember, God said it: He made Lucifer *perfect in his ways*. Lucifer’s *ways*, that is, his feelings, thoughts, deeds, etc. – all of which are *acts*, whether tangible or intangible – were perfect up until the moment he first sinned.

Yes, beloved, it was possible that perfect beings, given complete free will by a most benevolent God, could sin. It should be clear that a divine law, an everlasting covenant, had to be in place for such a thing as sin to be identified, for to *sin* is to *transgress* something (Isa.24:5; Ps.32:1; Exo.34:7). If there was no divine law, no everlasting covenant to be transgressed, there would be no such thing as sin. But it is for the very fact that all these principles were existent that the story of redemption possesses its force. It was for the very emergence of sin – the transgression of the divine law – why the gospel even abounds. The gospel reveals Christ’s perfect obedience and perfect sacrifice in order that the claims of the law would be satisfied; Christ came and died for sin in order to *magnify the law and make it honourable* (Isa.42:21, 53:10-12). The gospel abounds because, through Christ, we can receive His grace, His Spirit, to once again keep the law perfectly (John 15:10). And so, when the great controversy is ended, all who are saved will understand that one simple departure from God’s law is enough to plunge the world in chaos. The immutability of God’s law will shine forth and all will conscientiously avoid any act which would be contrary the law of the universe. God will have settled it all through His Son. Saith the prophet, “What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.” (Nahum 1:9). Not for a

second time, not ever again shall we have perfect beings countenancing any doubt about God's government, as did Lucifer and his fellow fallen angels – the angels that sinned:

2 PETER 2:4 (KJV)>> ⁴For if **God spared not the *angels that sinned***, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. . .

REVELATION 12:7-9 (KJV)>> ⁷And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, ⁸And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. ⁹**And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**

The last-day gift of prophecy has been given in mercy – through visions, dreams, and prophesyings (Acts 2:17-18) – detailing upon the Scripture narratives we have been reading. From the book, aptly titled, *The Great Controversy*, notice the following:

Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it, is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. **Our only definition of sin is that given in the Word of God; it is “the transgression of the law;” it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.** {GC88 492.2}

Sin originated with him, who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God, and who stood highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of Heaven. Before his fall, Lucifer was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled. {GC88 493.3}

Little by little, Lucifer came to indulge a desire for self-exaltation. . . . Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of his creatures, it was Lucifer's endeavor to win their service and homage to himself. And, coveting the honor which the infinite Father had bestowed upon his Son, this prince of angels aspired to power which it was the prerogative of Christ alone to wield. {GC88 494.1}

Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under *an appearance of reverence for God*, he endeavored to *excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint*. Since *their natures were holy*, he urged that *the angels should obey the dictates of their own will*. . . . He claimed that in aspiring to greater power and honor he was not aiming at self-exaltation, but was seeking to secure liberty for all the inhabitants of Heaven, that by this means they might attain to a *higher state of existence*. {GC88 495.2}

Lucifer himself did not at first see whither he was drifting; he did not understand the real nature of his feelings. But as his dissatisfaction was proved to be without cause, **Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong, that the divine claims were just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all Heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels.** He had not at this time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had forsaken his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God's great plan, he would have been re-instated in his office. But pride forbade him to submit. He persistently defended his own course, maintained that he had no need of repentance, and *fully committed himself, in the great controversy, against his Maker*. {GC88 495.3}

I hope we can see, beloved, that from the very beginning of the great controversy, yea, even before the first sin was committed by Lucifer, there was a divine law in place. It was this divine law which Lucifer committed himself against. His commitment against the law brought forth the first sin, and this shows us truly that sin is the transgression of the law. God's law is concurrent with His own infinity; God's law was that which was broken by Lucifer's act of rebellion; and this is why God's law is at the heart of the great controversy. It was this same great controversy, originated by Lucifer in heaven, which was brought down to our world, through the medium *that old serpent*. We must understand these principles.

5) Why was the gospel necessary to bring the solution to this great controversy?

It was to test on what side of the great controversy our race would place itself, that Satan was allowed to unravel his true enmity for God's government upon earth. Unfortunately, our parents could well have chosen to abide in God's law, but they engaged with temptation. God sought to test them upon his law through the presence of a tree which to which divine conditions were attached. The devil was allowed to tempt the pair's free will, proving whether they would obey God's law, or embrace temptation like the original arch-rebel. We pick up this narrative from the book of Genesis:

GENESIS 2:16-17 (KJV)>> ¹⁶And the LORD God *commanded* the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ¹⁷But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *thou shalt not eat of it*: for in the day that thou *eatest* thereof thou shalt surely die.

GENESIS 3:1-7 (KJV)>> ¹Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, *hath God said*, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? ²And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: ³But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, *Ye shall not eat of it*, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. ⁴And the serpent said unto the woman, *Ye shall not surely die*: ⁵For God doth know that in the day ye *eat* thereof, *then your eyes shall be opened*, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. ⁶And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she *took*^[lust] of the fruit thereof, and did *eat*^[conceived], and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did *eat*. ⁷And *the eyes of them both were opened*, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Notice what took place there. God commanded that our parents should not *eat* the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The very appearance of the tree was a test, and conversely it could become a temptation if they chose to make it a temptation. Yet they had to *eat* of the tree in order to have broken God's command. Not when Eve touched the fruit – that was temptation, not sin – but when she *ate* the fruit. She could have touched it, and let it go, and there would be no sin. But when she *ate* the fruit, and gave it to her husband, and he *ate* it, then there was no turning back. It was *after* they *ate* that they fell; it was *after* they *ate* that their eyes were opened; it was *after* they *ate*, that sin was imputed to them,

and humanity needed a Saviour. Notice what God Himself was concerned with when He enquired of the guilty pair:

GENESIS 3:11-13,17 (KJV)>> ¹¹And he[God] said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? **Hast thou *eaten* of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not *eat*?** ¹²And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and **I did *eat*.** ¹³And the LORD God said unto the woman, **What is this that thou hast *done*?** And the woman said, **The serpent beguiled me, and I did *eat*.** . . . ¹⁷And unto Adam he[God] said, **Because thou hast *hearkened* unto the voice of thy wife, and *hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it*.** cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Beloved, Adam and Eve were not condemned for having a state of mind, just as Lucifer was not condemned in heaven for a state of mind. In both cases, it was because each consented to act in transgression of God's law. Before they *acted*, before they *engaged* with temptation, they could *resist* temptation and maintain a sinless allegiance to their Maker. Yet, having been under the serpent's bewitching, in mercy, our parents were given a second chance, just as Lucifer was given second chances while in heaven. For humanity, at the very point of the first sin, the gospel came into effect:

GENESIS 3:14-15 (KJV)>> ¹⁴And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: ¹⁵**And I will put *enmity* between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her *seed*; *it* shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise *his* heel.**

And that, beloved, is the great controversy and the gospel. The *great controversy* is the ongoing *enmity* between *the seed of the woman*, which is Christ (represented also in His true followers), and *the seed of the serpent*, which is Satan and his followers. The gospel is Christ's bruising of Satan's head – the Son of God defeating the devil's plan to maintain sin in the world indefinitely. When Christ died at the hands of satanic manipulation upon the cross of Calvary, proverbially the Saviour's heel was bruised; yet by the same act, Satan's claim to sinful dominion over humanity was overthrown. The sins of the world were paid for and Satan's true character was fully exposed. The serpent's head was bruised, yea it was crushed. We have such a victory – over sin and its originator – through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God!

Yes, this is the ONE great controversy and gospel of the Scriptures: the controversy about sin being the transgression of God's law; the gospel about Christ living a perfect life and dying a perfect Sacrifice in order that the law may be satisfied. We cannot afford to miss out or add onto any part of the scriptural representation of the great controversy and the gospel. It is understanding these principles correctly, that will decide whether we are saved or lost.

6) From beginning to end, has any principle changed regarding the great controversy and its gospel solution? Has any single moral requirement been modified or taken away?

The last-day gift of prophecy aids greatly in summarizing this issue beyond doubt:

It is essential to have faith in Jesus, and to believe you are saved through him; but there is danger in taking the position that many do take in saying, "I am saved." Many have said: "You must do good works, and you will live;" but apart from Christ no one can do good works. Many at the present day say, "Believe, only believe, and live." Faith and works go together, believing and doing are blended. **The Lord requires no less of the soul now, than he required of Adam in paradise before he fell,--perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement of God under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement he made in paradise,--harmony with his law, which is holy, and just, and good. The gospel does not weaken the claims of the law; it exalts the law and makes it honorable. Under the New Testament, no less is required than was required under the Old Testament. Let no one take up with the delusion so pleasant to the natural heart, that God will accept of sincerity, no matter what may be the faith, no matter how imperfect may be the life. God requires of his child perfect obedience.** {RH, November 1, 1892 par. 1}

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." **This is *the only definition of sin* given in the Holy Scriptures, and *we should seek to understand what sin is*, lest any of us be found in opposition to the God of heaven. We are required to be in a position of obedience to all of God's commandments.** Our salvation cost our Lord too much for us to be found going on in uncertainty when eternal

interests are involved, therefore we should open our minds and search the Scriptures, so that we may know for ourselves how we can stand under the banner of Prince Immanuel. ***God requires at this moment just what he required of Adam in paradise before he fell-perfect obedience to his law. The requirement that God makes in grace is just the requirement he made in paradise.*** We want to understand the claims of God upon us that we may reach the hearts of men, and teach them what God's word requires of them in order that they may have eternal life. We must live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Our Saviour has told us that in these last days there would be false doctrines and false teachers who would lead the people to accept fables and customs and practices of men, instead of the commandments of God, and that our world would be flooded with heresies. Are we bringing in heresies to turn souls from the truth of God's word? We want the truth of God's word on every point, and we need to practice it. Those who follow the course of error and live in transgression of the law of God, will not follow that course alone; there will be others who will imitate their example. {RH, July 15, 1890 par. 2}

We must inquire what captain we are following, under whose banner we are standing. ***Satan was the first transgressor of the law of Jehovah. We read in the Bible how sin entered into the world. Satan was the first one who ever questioned the holy will of God, and his very first work was to transgress God's law, and then he came to Adam and Eve in Eden, and through his temptations caused them to break the commandments of God. Satan thought to win the human family to his side that they might war against the family in heaven. It was Satan's plan to war against the God of heaven. God has a constitution and laws to govern those whom he has created, and it would be a terrible thing if any of us should be found on the wrong side, warring against the government of Heaven. There are many deceptions to lead us away from the truth. Many think that Adam and Eve were very foolish in listening to the voice of the tempter that caused their fall from the high and holy estate, yet those who criticise do the same thing. Why do not the children of Adam who find fault with him for his sin, cease themselves to transgress?*** {RH, July 15, 1890 par. 3}

God requires of every soul *today* what he required of our first parents in Eden, --*perfect obedience* to his law. There must be found in the life unswerving allegiance to God, *righteousness without a flaw* in the character. We must be clothed with *the righteousness of Christ*, and stand without blemish before God. The requirement that God has made in grace *is the requirement that God made in Paradise.* {ST, May 12, 1890 par. 4}

Conclusion.....

The Father and the Son, through the Spirit, desire that all who can be saved shall be saved. And the reason every sincere soul needs to be saved is because there is such a thing as sin, from which they need saving. Such a thing as sin – existent because there was an original transgression of the everlasting covenant, the law of God. Lucifer, Satan, was the originator of transgression, but our race became propagators of the same. All of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom.3:23). Jesus Christ came to save us from these *sins* – our transgressions against God’s law. Whilst we appeal to you to wholeheartedly choose Christ as our Saviour from sin, take heart that in your battle for righteousness, temptation is not sin. Temptation was not sin for Lucifer, and neither is it for us. We have to *give in* to temptation, *commit* to transgress God’s law, in order to sin. The gospel is the power through Christ to resist such temptation, and obey God’s law. Through Christ’s death we are forgiven for past sins, and through His life we are empowered to obey the divine law perfectly.

Taking plainly as it reads the Old and New Testaments, and the last-day gift of prophecy – there is overwhelming harmony to convince us of these truths. These truths surround the *one great controversy* and *one gospel* – having the very same principles at stake from the beginning, heading right down to the prophesied conclusion. The time is coming, beloved, when sin and sinners, Satan and his followers, root and branch, shall be forever destroyed (Mal.4:1). Death shall be no more, and God’s kingdom, eternally governed by his divine law, shall be vindicated. Only those who accepted the whole gospel of Christ – having been saved from sin through Christ, and faithfully kept God’s commandments through Christ – will finally dwell in the sinless kingdom of a new heaven and earth. The gospel of peace shall have been accomplished and the great controversy shall be ended:

1STCORINTHIANS 15:22-26,28 (KJV)>> ²²For as in Adam all die, even so in **Christ** shall all be made alive. ²³But every man in his own order: **Christ** the firstfruits; afterward they that are **Christ's** at **his** coming. ²⁴Then cometh the end, when **he** shall have delivered up the kingdom to **God**, even **the Father**; when **he** shall have put down all rule and all authority and

power. ²⁵For **he** must reign, till **he** hath put all enemies under **his** feet. ²⁶The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. . .
²⁸And when all things shall be subdued unto **him**, then shall **the Son** also **himself** be subject unto **him** that put all things under **him**, that **God** may be all in all.

Do you, beloved, want to be on the right side of the conclusion of this great controversy? The startling fact is that the majority of the world will not (Matt.7:13-14; Rev.20:7-8). This is why it is so serious that you believe the **whole** gospel provided as the solution to the great controversy. May we apply ourselves honestly to the weight of evidence of the *Thus saith the Lord*. Your salvation depends on it. I may only leave you one last time with the divine admonition of the apostle John, which brings everything together in so positive a manner. If we had only a few minutes to hear the gospel, these precious words, taken in all the fullness of their bearing, would suffice:

1ST JOHN 3:7-11 (KJV)>> ⁷Little children, let no man *deceive* you: *he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.* ⁸He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. ⁹*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. ¹⁰In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: *whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.* ¹¹For *this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.*

May God bless you.

AMEN.

Shared with you out of love, in the service of the gospel,



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