

## All Things to All Men: Paul Preaches to the World

In preaching the gospel, it quickly becomes apparent that throughout the world (or even in our own neighborhood) there are different issues for different people, and it becomes expedient to adapt the approach we might use. The Holy Spirit does that. He comes to each of us and speaks to our hearts: “There is something in your life that is hurting you; a fault or a defect that I would like to take away. Will you let me have it?” By saying “yes” we let Him remove our sin. For each of us that can be a different sin, for we each have pet ideas about life and character development—a result of our own life choices. By saying “no,” God backs away, gives us some space, and then returns to challenge us again on the same point, but maybe from a different angle. On each point, as we say “yes,” and God removes the sin from our lives, He can eventually move to the last issue. When we say “yes” to that, He has cleansed the last thing and we are free. Either way, whether we say “yes” or “no,” God varies His approach so that He might meet our individual needs.

As He uses us to work with others, and as we ask the Holy Spirit to give us words to speak that will encourage others, He will show us what to say, whether we understand what we are saying or not—regardless of whether we know the true issues of the heart of the one (or ones) we are talking to. God will vary even what we say to others.

As we learn about people and can have a little understanding of individual needs, is it possible to vary the approach we take with the 1888 message, the third angel’s message that is to go to the whole world? I have a few suggestions—these are at best simplistic, for no one can anticipate every need. Different individuals may be likely to hold on to specific aspects of the most precious message, and the following may be starting points in discussions with them, bearing in mind that all of these point to, and eventually should cause us to focus on the cross—*agape!* (1 Cor. 2:2).

- For scientists, particularly biologists and geologists: *God’s word has inherently within it the power to create what it says.* This obviously affects the creation story, but it also will affect anyone who is struggling with an understanding of the manner in which God deals with their own sin and ever deepening repentance. It forms the basis of faith (Genesis 1—God spoke and it was; *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 333; A. T. Jones, *Lessons on Faith*, p. 18).
- For teachers and students: *The three “P”s.* God has already (past tense) saved us from the **P**enalty of sin at the cross. God is (present tense) saving us today from the **P**ower of sin when we believe. God will (future tense) save us from the **P**resence of sin when He comes to take us home. This affects the way we interpret what we read in our studies for the writers use different tenses.
- For voters and politicians: *Jesus Christ is the representative of the human race*—the second Adam. What He did, He did *as* the human race. He completely reversed what the first Adam did, *and more* (Rom. 11:16—firstfruits; Gen. 2:7—breath of *lives* in Adam; Gen. 25:23—two nations in Rebecca; Heb. 7:9, 10—paid tithes in Abraham; Eph. 1:3, 4—all spiritual blessings in Christ; 1 Cor. 15:19-23—Christ is the firstfruits; Acts 17:24-26—one blood; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 112, 113, and *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 19,

20—Christ is our representative; *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 326; E. J. Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings*, pp. 11-13).

- For accountants, trust agents, real estate agents, and business in general: *Title vs. Possession*. God gave us all things—and He gave us all things by inheritance. He set up a trust fund for each of us before the foundation of the world. We begin to receive the possession of these things when we believe (see Eph. 1-3; 1 Tim. 4:9, 10; Eph. 2:4-6, 9-10; 1 Peter 1:3, 4; Eph. 3:2, 17—the dispensing of the grace of God and the dwelling of Christ in the heart by faith; *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 326, 327; E. J. Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings*, pp. 11, 12).
- Again, for attorneys especially (the Bible is full of legal concepts): *God Is on Trial*. God is the *Defendant* and *Judge*, Satan is the *Plaintiff*, we are God's *Witnesses*, and the whole universe is the *Jury*. The work of the judge is to represent and deliver the defendant (Psalm 76:8, 9; Judges 2:16; 1 Sam. 24:15; 1 John 4:17; Rev. 14:6, 7—God is on trial; Luke 18:8—the investigative judgment search for witnesses; Rev. 14:1-7; 7:1-17—the subpoena of the witnesses; Isa. 43:8-14—the trial (*Who God is!*); Isa. 14:12-14—the claim of the plaintiff; Job 1:6-12—the cross-examination of a witness by the plaintiff (trials).
  1. E. J. Waggoner, *General Conference Bulletin*, 1891, No. 3, p. 1: “God is Himself on trial before the universe and Satan and evil men have always charged Him with being unjust and arbitrary, but in the judgment all the universe will say, ‘Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.’”
  2. A. T. Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, No. 23, p. 448: “He came into the world to demonstrate the unrighteousness of that argument that Satan was presenting in the courts of God, as the prosecuting attorney from this country. That is the thought; it is legal all the way through. ... And He conquered and thus became by right the head of this dominion again and of all who will be redeemed from it and of the redemption of the dominion itself. ... And now that word also in the Greek which says that the accuser of our brethren ‘is cast down,’ conveys the idea of a prosecuting attorney who comes into court but he has no case any more. He is repudiated. He has no place for argument. Why? Because now we have an Advocate in the court, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
- For architects, builders, and contractors: *The earthly sanctuary illustrates the heavenly, and was built after the pattern of the heavenly* (Ex. 25:8, 9; Heb. 9:9; A. T. Jones, *The Consecrated Way*, pp. 81, 82).
- For all of us, especially pastors: *God's forgiveness is redemptive*. God not only pardons our sin, but He removes the sin and the guilt. He did this on the cross and He is doing this now as His office work in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary, cleansing the sanctuary of the sins of the people, thus preparing a people for His vindication in His trial and for His coming to receive His inheritance. I encourage all to let God give us a part in this glorious work.

—Craig Barnes