

Lesson 128 – What does it mean to have unbelief?

1. What happens with the connection with God because of unbelief? **Romans 11:20**

EGW: Paul likens the remnant in Israel to a noble olive tree, some of whose branches have been broken off. He compares the Gentiles to branches from a wild olive tree, grafted into the parent stock. "If some of the branches be broken off," he writes to the Gentile believers, "and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." {AA 377.1}

2. What will unbelievers suffer? **John 3:36**

EGW: The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; but it is a part of the Gospel to warn the sinner of the doom that awaits the unbelieving and unrepentant soul. The love of God has been manifested in the gift of his dear Son to the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; but, while salvation is promised on condition of faith in God's Son, condemnation is pronounced upon those that believe not. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." God has indescribable love for the sinner, but he declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; for it is his will that all men should have eternal life through faith in the Son of God. {ST, April 18, 1895 par. 10}

3. In the last days, what is the wrath of God? **Revelation 15:1**

EGW: Then Jesus will step out from between the Father and men, and God will keep silence no longer, but pour out His wrath on those who have rejected His truth. I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead, were separate and distinct, one following the other; also that Michael had not stood up, and that the time of trouble, such as never was, had not yet commenced. The nations are now getting angry, but when our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and then the seven last

plagues will be poured out. {CET 100.2}

4. What is the destination of those who do not believe? **Revelation 21:8**

EGW: Those outside of the city are among the most confident, boastful, and apparently zealous ones who love in word, but not in deed and in truth. Their hearts are not right with God. His fear is not before them. The fearful and unbelieving, who are punished with the second death, are of that class who are ashamed of Christ in this world. They are afraid to do right and follow Christ, lest they should meet with pecuniary loss. They neglect their duty, to avoid reproach and trials, and to escape dangers. Those who dare not do right because they will thus expose themselves to trials, persecution, loss, and suffering are cowards, and, with idolaters, liars, and all sinners, they are ripening for the second death. {2T 630.1}

5. What do unbelievers usually do, symbolized by the relationship between Jews and Gentiles? **Acts 14:2**

EGW: (no comment)

6. What will unbelievers who are stubborn in their unbelief cause people to express towards the unbeliever? **Mark 6:6**

EGW: (no comment)

7. What could Jesus' followers not do through their unbelief? **Matthew 17:19-20**

EGW: The nine disciples were yet pondering upon the bitter fact of their own failure; and when Jesus was once more alone with them, they questioned, "Why could not we cast him out?" Jesus answered them, "Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Their unbelief, that shut them out from deeper sympathy with Christ, and the carelessness with which they regarded the sacred work committed to them, had caused their failure in the

conflict with the powers of darkness. {DA 429.4}

8. What item will people not believe is applicable? **Hebrews 4:11, 4**

EGW: The time is fast approaching when this scripture will be fulfilled. The world and the professedly Protestant churches are in this our day taking sides with the man of sin; and to those who have the light of the commandments of God is the message given, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. . . . For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." The great issue that is coming will be on the seventh-day Sabbath. This day God would have us reverence. "I am the Lord your God," he declared; "walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." {RH, April 19, 1898 par. 5}

9. Those who do not believe in the rest, what will happen to their hearts? **Hebrews 4:6-7**

EGW: Too many are counting on a long stretch of a tomorrow; but that is a mistake. Let every one be educated in such a way as to show the importance for the special work for today. Let every one work for God and work for souls; let each one show wisdom, and never be found in idleness, waiting for someone to come around and set him to work. The "some one" who could set you to work is overcrowded with responsibilities and time is lost in waiting for his directions. God will give you wisdom in reforming at once; for the call is still made, "Son, go work today in My vineyard." Some may still be undecided, yet the call is still heard, "Go work today in My vineyard." "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." The Lord prefaces the requirement by the use of the word "son." How tender, how compassionate, yet withal, how urgent! His invitation to work in His vineyard is also a command. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."--"Special Testimonies on Education," March 21, 1895. {FE 366.2}

10. What type of heart does an unbeliever have? **Hebrews 3:12**

EGW: I saw that we are now in the shaking time. Satan is working with all his power to wrest souls

from the hand of Christ and cause them to trample underfoot the Son of God. An angel slowly and emphatically repeated these words: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Character is being developed. Angels of God are weighing moral worth. God is testing and proving His people. These words were presented to me by the angel: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." God is displeased that any of His people who have known the power of His grace should talk their doubts, and by thus doing make themselves a channel for Satan to transmit his suggestions to other minds. A seed of unbelief and evil sown is not readily rooted up. Satan nourishes it every hour, and it flourishes and becomes strong. A good seed sown needs to be nourished, watered, and tenderly cared for; because every poisonous influence is thrown about it to hinder its growth and cause it to die. {1T 429.1}

11. What is their heart considered when holding onto unbelief? **Mark 16:14**

EGW: Our greatest sins which separate our souls from God are unbelief and hardness of heart. Why is it that we are so unbelieving and unimpressible? The reason for it is, we are filled with self-confidence. We feel self-sufficient. If we receive some token of God's blessing, we take it as a guarantee that we are all right; and when reproof comes, we say, "I know that God has accepted me, for he has blessed me, and I will not accept this reproof." What a terrible condition we would be in if the Lord did not bless us! We must study Christ, the Pattern of character that God has given us. If we have a garment to cut, we study the pattern. And in the Christian life, we must give up our own ideas and plans, and go according to the Pattern. But instead of this, we work away from the Pattern. We should not be full of self-conceit. We must say as did John, "He must increase, but I must decrease." {RH, August 27, 1889 par. 2}

12. What type of mind and conscience do unbelievers have? **Titus 1:15**

EGW: While probation is graciously granted to you, come out from the world, separate yourselves from its customs, its maxims, and its influences, and put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. At whatever cost or humiliation to yourselves, you must do this if you would inherit eternal life. "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess to know

God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." {PH152 29.2}

13. What are we not to do with unbelievers? **2 Corinthians 6:14**

EGW: No one who fears God can without danger connect himself with one who fears Him not. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). The happiness and prosperity of the marriage relation depends upon the unity of the parties; but between the believer and the unbeliever there is a radical difference of tastes, inclinations, and purposes. They are serving two masters, between whom there can be no concord. However pure and correct one's principles may be, the influence of an unbelieving companion will have a tendency to lead away from God. . . . The Lord's direction is, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14, 17, 18). {CC 57.5}

What are we to do, then?--Let political questions alone. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" [2 Corinthians 6:14, 15.] What can there be in common between these parties? There can be no fellowship, no communion. {GW 392.2}

14. What are we to do with an unbelieving spouse when one person turns to believing but not the other? **1 Corinthians 7:13-14**

EGW: (no comment)

15. But if the unbelieving spouse wants to leave, what is to be done? **1 Corinthians 7:15**

EGW: (no comment)

16. What belief do some "servants of God" have that when held onto are no different than unbelievers? **Luke 12:45-46**

EGW: As a people we are surely saying by our works, "My Lord delayeth his coming." Our Lord has given us a fearful caution, not even to say this in "our hearts." With many the warning is utterly disregarded. Their works, and words, and their life is saying distinctly to others, My Lord delayeth his coming. Say not, unfaithful steward, this concerneth not me, I am a Christian. Was not the evil steward a professed Christian? a forgetful, negligent, slothful steward of his Lord's goods? He was outwardly a steward, a professed Christian. He calls Christ, "My Lord." He believes in the coming of his Lord; but he only says, That coming is delayed. Then he presumes on that delay to use for the gratification of his own appetite and pleasure, his Lord's goods. But his portion is assigned him with hypocrites and unbelievers, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. I entreat you my brethren to arouse from your sloth, and take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. As a people we are increasing in riches. I am alarmed as I see so little of the spirit of sacrifice. Selfishness and the love of the world is closing up the soul, that the rays of heavenly light cannot penetrate it. As God's stewards, I entreat of you to dispense of your means; lighten the load of care, burden and responsibility which is resting upon you. {RH, January 5, 1869 par. 11}

17. Though we may be in the right, what ought we be careful of not doing between brethren in front of unbelievers as that will hurt the chances for unbelievers to become believers? **1 Corinthians 6:6**

EGW: "But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" {RH, August 11, 1903 par. 2}

Will not the brethren and sisters of the Battle Creek church, and of the churches in every other place, remember that they are working as for eternity? Will not they obey the injunctions of God's Word, the teachings of which are to be brought into the life-practice as spiritual food? {RH, August 11, 1903 par. 3}

18. What is greater than our unbelief? **1 Timothy 1:12-14**

EGW: (no comment)

19. What happens to those who give up their unbelief? **Romans 11:23**

EGW: (no comment)

20. What ought we pray for? **Mark 9:24**

EGW: "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." How many a sin-burdened soul has echoed that prayer. And to all, the pitying Saviour's answer is, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." It is faith that connects us with heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong. But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ. Let these souls, in their helpless unworthiness, cast themselves upon the mercy of their compassionate Saviour. Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast out demons when He walked among men is the same mighty Redeemer today. Faith comes by the word of God. Then grasp His promise, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. Cast yourself at His feet with the cry, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." You can never perish while you do this--never. {DA 429.1}