

Sabbath School Lesson #1 – Jesus Wins — Satan Loses – 25-31 March 2023

Christ would have us beware of the work of Satan in these last days. Wrote the beloved apostle, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17). Satan not only works disobedience in men, but he works this “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” So it was that when he led the powers of this world to condemn Jesus they knew not what they did. But he knew. And he carried on the war against Christ by turning the wrath of the powers of this world against the followers of Christ. But “they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives under the death.” Satan continues the warfare to the end; the conflict will become more severe as the end draws near; the saints will have Christ to deliver them from the wrath of Satan. “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth ... the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time....” Victory is in Christ; it is only in abiding in Christ that Satan can be defeated.

Sunday: The Battle in Heaven – Can man be neutral in the battle that begun in heaven? Earth is the battleground for the continuing battle that begun in heaven between Christ and Satan; Christ says, “He that is not with Me is against Me” (Matthew 12:30). Although the battle is between Christ and Satan, men cannot be mere spectators. There is no neutral ground where one can be on neither side. Satan succeeded in getting man to join his rebellion against God’s authority, and so he makes of every natural heart a citadel of opposition against God. But God, in His love and mercy, did not leave man when he had chosen the side of Satan. “When we were enemies,” He gave His only begotten Son to bring to us deliverance “from the power of darkness,” and to translate all who desire it “into the kingdom of His dear Son.” He calls to every one, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve.” Every day each one is making the choice. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16). “Without Me ye can do nothing;” “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (John 15:5; Phil 4:13). With Christ, means His life manifested in mortal flesh; Without Christ means to be against Christ, for the life will inevitably be “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). Every act of disobedience is the direct working of Satan against the truth of God. Every act of obedience is the working of Christ’s power in hearts of those who choose Him. “For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil 2:13). Satan not only works disobedience in men, but he works this “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.”

Monday: Satan’s Attack – In what ways is the Sonship of Christ the central ground of Satan’s attacks? We do well to recount how the Sonship of Christ is at the centre of the great controversy: First, the fallen angels would obscure the fact that Christ is the Son of God: “Angels were expelled from heaven ... This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God...” {Ellen White, TDG 128.2}. Second, the chief fallen angel tempted Jesus to doubt He was the Son of God: “If thou be the son of God...”; “If thou be the son of God...” (Matthew 4:3, 6). Third, the Jewish church leaders rejected Jesus’ claim that He was indeed the Son of God: Jesus referred to God as His Father, and the Jews took stones to stone Him, saying that He being a mere man call Himself the Son of God and in that sense made Himself equal with God (John 10:29-36) – “The whole nation of the Jews called God their Father, therefore they would not have been so enraged if Christ had represented Himself as standing in the same relation to God. But they accused Him of blasphemy, showing that they understood Him as making this claim in the highest sense” – Ellen White {DA 207.4}. Fourth, the church in Nazareth, where Jesus grew up, rejected that He was the Son of God: they regarded Him merely as the son of Joseph, and after He read from Isaiah and said the prophecy referred to Him, they thrust Him out of the church and would have thrown Him over the cliff headlong had He not escaped (Luke 4:16-30). Fifth, the Sanhedrin Council condemned Jesus to death on the charge of blasphemy; they said to Pilate, “We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son

of God" (John 19:7). But this was not blasphemy, for He was what He declared Himself to be. Today, our Seventh-day Adventist theologians say that the Sonship of Christ is a mere metaphor. In an article, "A Question of Sonship" published in 2015, the Bible Research Institute says, "Christ is the eternal Son of God. ... We are dealing with metaphorical use of the word 'son.' Metaphorical significance: The Son is not the natural, literal Son of the Father" (website; re-printed in Adventist World, November 2015, p 42). Christ's Sonship is not a metaphor, it is a fact. If Christ's Sonship is a mere metaphor, then explain how fallen angels wanted to obscure what was simply a metaphor! "Christ was the only begotten Son of God, and Lucifer, that glorious angel, got upon a warfare over the matter, until he had to be thrust down to the earth" {25LtMs, Ms 86, 1910, par. 29}. And this warfare was over the fact that Christ was a literal Son of God. Lucifer's warfare in heaven was, and Satan's warfare today is on same grounds, over a reality and not over a metaphor, of the Sonship of Christ.

Tuesday: Accepting Jesus' Victory – Can we have Jesus' victory without Jesus? To accept Jesus' victory, we must confess Him abiding in our flesh. "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:3). Christ must abide in us. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Without Christ in us, our accepting Jesus' victory is mere intellectual assent to having victory. Jesus' victory abides in Him. "Is Christ divided?" (1 Corinthians 1:13), No, and so His victory is not divided.

Wednesday: The Woman in the Wilderness – Who did Satan use to persecute the saints of God represented by the woman in the wilderness? Satan used the little horn. One of the identifying marks of the little horn is she plucks up three horns or kingdoms (Daniel 7:8, 24). The power that fits this is the Papacy. The Papacy comes to power in AD 538. Three of the ten kingdoms were uprooted to give way to the Papacy: the Vandals (in 534 AD), the Heruli (in 493 AD) and the Ostrogoths (in 538 AD). These three kingdoms were uprooted or destroyed because they opposed the Papal teachings of infant baptism, Mary worship, prayers to the saints, Sunday observance, and the Trinity. They were Sabbath-keepers and non-trinitarians. Historians tend to mis-label these non-trinitarian Sabbath-keepers as pagans. But the Vandals, the Heruli, and the Ostrogoths, were Christians who refused the trinity, and were branded "Arians" and heretics. Our Seventh-day Adventist Church having accepted the trinity, shies away from featuring these three uprooted horns as Sabbath-keepers because they were also labelled "Arians". The saints, or "the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore [1260] days" (Revelation 12:6). The persecution that started when the Ostrogoths were plucked in 538, ended 1798 when Berthier under Napoleon, entered Rome, took the pope prisoners, and Rome was declared a Republic.

Thursday: God's End-time Remnant – How does the dark ages compare with troubles that God's end-time remnant will suffer? While the Dark Ages was a time of the remnant's great trial, in our time, the true followers of Christ will be subjected to greater trials. First, the "little horn" – the papacy – is represented as making war with the saints, and prevailing against them, until "the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Daniel 7:22). Second, the two-horned beast, whose great work is to make an image to the papal beast, "exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him," – that is, in his presence (Revelation 13:12), – and issues sentence of death against all who refuse to worship the image instead of God (verse 15). Third, the dragon, with whose voice the two-horned beast speaks, is "wroth with the woman," – the church, – going "to make war with the remnant of her seed" (Revelation 12:17). Fourth, "in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Timothy 3:1). "The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty ... While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God" {GC 605}.