

Sabbath School Lesson #8 – The Sabbath and the End – 13-19 May 2023

Christ would have us know that He is the mystery of the Gospel that is preached. This is indicated by the apostle when he says that to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ is “to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9). Elsewhere the apostle says that this mystery “is Christ in you the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:25-27). Thus, the Gospel is the making known of Christ in men. Or rather, the Gospel is Christ in men, and the preaching of it is the making known to men of the possibility of Christ dwelling in them. And this agrees with the statement of the angel, that they should call the name of Jesus Emmanuel, “which, being interpreted, is God with us” (Matthew 1:23); and, with the statement by the apostle that the mystery of God is God manifest in the flesh. When the angels made known to the shepherds the birth of Jesus, it was the announcement that God had come to men in the flesh; and when it was said that this good news should be to all people, it was revealed that the mystery of God dwelling in human flesh was to be declared to all men, and repeated in all who should believe Him.

Sunday: The Judgment, Creation, and Accountability – How are the judgment, the commandments of God, and worship linked? Of all the commandments, it is the Sabbath that points us back to creation and to the Creator. The Bible says it is “God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9). Who created all things? God. How? “by Jesus Christ.” God made the world, by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). Source of creation is the Father; the means of creation is His Son. “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Corinthians 8:6). Only the Father and Son were involved in creation. The Father created through His Son, just as He later spoke His commandments at Sinai through His Son. As all things were created through Jesus, for which the Sabbath points to, He could say, “the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day” (Matthew 12:8). The Sabbath points to the Creator, whom we should worship. All honour given to Jesus goes to the Father. All the worship that goes to the Father is through Jesus. “And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11). The One God, the Father, who created all things by His Son, says, “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which sent Him” (John 5:23). “And again when He bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He saith, And let the angels of God worship Him” (Hebrews 1:6). When Christ receives worship, for through Him and by Him God created all things, for which creation the Sabbath points to, He does not so receive for His own glory, for He said, “I seek not Mine own glory” (John 8:50).

Monday: The Sabbath and Creation – How is the Sabbath commandment hinted at in Revelation 14:6, 7, and why is it important to our end-time message? The first angel calls all to worship God who “made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Revelation 14:7). The call to worship specifically refers to the fourth Commandment, the Sabbath (see Exodus 20:8-11). The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. “All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens” (Psalm 96:5). “To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things ... Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: . . . I am the Lord; and there is none else” (Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18). Says the psalmist: “Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves ... O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Psalms 100:3; 95:6). And the holy beings who worship God in heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things” (Revelation 4:11). Sabbath keeping is a sign of loyalty to God, for God says, “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” (Ezekiel 20:20). And the reason given is: “For in six days the Lord

made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed” (Exodus 31:17). Sabbath keeping is important for by it shall the world “discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not” (Malachi 3:18).

Tuesday: A Not-So-Subtle Deception – With a not-so-subtle deception of evolutionists in countering creation account, a fitting question is: “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” (Job 38:2). The theory of evolution is very generally accepted in the religious world in place of the Bible account. As it has, according to this notion, been reserved for wise scientists of modern times to get at the real truth about the methods of creation, very naturally Moses is not held in good repute. Yet the One who made the world, the Creator Himself, “made known His ways unto Moses” and told him what to write. But so poor an opinion do many hold of Moses that the fact that the Ten Commandments, written on tables by the finger of God, were committed to him to preserve, leads many to lightly regard the Sabbath and the law of God. Moses was familiar with the ways of critics. “This man,” the people contemptuously called him, while he was communing with God in the mount. But as he was “very meek, above all men which were upon the face of the earth,” he minded none of these things. God called him “My servant,” and “the man of God.” And He said He would not talk with Moses as with the ordinary prophet, but “face to face.” What shallow folly for vain men, whatever their powers of observation, to affect a superiority over Moses and regard him as a recorder merely of unintelligent tradition. Moses was so eminent a Christian that he was a type of Christ Himself. When God promised the Messiah He said to Moses, “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth” (Deuteronomy 18:18). As Moses spoke God’s words, so Jesus spoke not His own words but the words of the Father. Christ was faithful even as Moses was faithful (Hebrews 3). Those who refused to receive Jesus would not receive the testimony of His meek prophet Moses: “Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me” (John 5:46).

Wednesday: Creation, the Sabbath, and the End Time – The Lesson writer asks, Do we worship the Creator or the beast? The question partly relates to the mark of the beast. Revelation points to the beast and her mark. “In chapter 13 (verses 1-10) is described another beast, ‘like unto a leopard,’ to which the dragon gave ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority.’ This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman empire” {GC 439.1}. The third angel warns that no man should receive the Mark of the Beast “in his forehead, or in his hand” (Revelation 14:9). The ‘mark’ of the beast (papacy) is her symbol of authority, power to substitute Sunday for Saturday observance as the Sabbath. Sunday is not yet the mark until Sunday Law. We do well to remember this prophecy: “The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error The Sabbath, of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. ... but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless” {18LtMs, Lt 242, 1903, par. 13}. Our ‘Fundamental Principles’ in force in 1903 when this was written, have long been accounted as error; changed to ‘Fundamental Beliefs’ in 1980. The true God was removed, as a result, Sabbath-keeping by those who do not worship the true God, depends on their human power, which, without God, is worthless.

Thursday: The Sabbath and Eternal Rest – How can we perfectly keep the Sabbath? Perfect Sabbath rest is only by the Spirit of Christ in us (Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6). Only those who are spiritual can truly keep the Sabbath. So long as Adam was led by the Spirit, he enjoyed perfect Sabbath rest; but as soon as he sinned, he lost the rest. But although the curse upon the earth causes weariness of body, the Sabbath remains from Eden, the pledge and seal of spiritual rest. The abstaining from all secular work and our own pleasure on the seventh day – from everything by which we could personally profit – is simply in recognition of the Lord as our Creator and upholder of all things – the one by whose power we live. Sabbath keeping involves rest from our own work on the seventh day, but he who does no more than this does not keep the Sabbath of the Lord. As the Sabbath was the seal of a perfect creation, so it is the seal of a perfect new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).