

Sabbath School Lesson #10 – Satan’s Final Deceptions – 27 May-2 June 2023

Christ, in His memorable prayer for His disciples, said, “Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth” (John 17:17). The word of the Lord hidden in the heart will protect us from Satan’s final deceptions and against sin. “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee” (Psalm 119:11). And of the righteous we read that the reason why none of his steps slide, is that “the law of his God is in his heart” (Psalm 37:31). David also says: “Concerning the works of men, by the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer” (Psalm 17:4). The word of the Lord is the seed by which the sinner is born again. We read of the “Father of lights” that “Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (James 1:17-18). And the Apostle Peter says: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1:22-23). While those who are Christ’s are born of His Spirit, the word of God is the seed from which they are developed into new creatures in Christ. The word is “quick,” that is, alive, and the psalmist prays to be quickened, made alive: “This is my comfort in my affliction; for Thy word hath quickened me” (Psalm 119:25, 50). This is stated very plainly by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself in John 6:63: “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” This shows that the power of the Spirit of God dwells in the word of God. With the knowledge that the word of God is the seed by which men are begotten unto a new life, and that the hiding of the word in the heart keeps one from sin, we may easily understand 1 John 3:9: “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.” How simple! There is in the word that divine energy which can transform the mind, and make a new man, “which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Of course the word can do this only for those who receive it in simple faith. But the word does not lose any of its power. If the soul thus born again retains that sacred, powerful word by which he was born again, it will keep him still a new creature. It is as powerful to preserve as to create. Christ’s sole reply to Satan was: “It is written,” followed by a text of Scripture that met the case exactly. A Christian who would stand fast must do the same thing. There is no other way. This is an illustration of David’s words, “By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.”

Sunday: The Way That Seems Right in a Man’s Eyes – Given that “false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect” (Mark 13:22), how shall we avoid seduction? “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). A very reasonable exhortation this, and one that should commend itself to everybody’s good sense; yet few heed it, and many of those who profess to regard it misapply it. How are we to prove all things? By what standard shall we test them? Here is where so many fail. Most people will use their own feelings and impulses as the standard. Their natural likes and dislikes determine what they shall hold fast and what they will reject. What they think to be good, they will follow; but since human judgment is naturally controlled or at least biased by inclination and desire, it is an unsafe guide. “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 16:25). For this reason alone, if for no other, it should be apparent to all that we are not to prove all things by sampling them. A thing may taste good, and yet contain a deadly poison. He who makes it his practice to eat everything he sees, in order to find out if it is good to eat, may have his probation cut short. It is far better to apply well-known tests for poisons, and then to eat only that which is proved to be good. Just as there are tests for physical poisons, which can be applied without subjecting ourselves to the influence of those poisons, so we have an infallible test of truth and error. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20). The Word of God is truth, and whatever is not in harmony with that is of course error. If we become thoroughly familiar with the Word, error will be revealed on its first approach, and we need have nothing to do with it. So every cultural influence must be proved against this standard. But we must

not supposed that we are to prove the Word of God itself, to see whether or not we should hold to it, or to how much we should hold fast. No; that is the standard that is already proved. "The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Psalms 12:6). "Every word of God is pure" (Proverbs 30:5). The Word itself is good; hold it fast, prove all things by it, holding only what the Word declares to be good.

Monday: The Old Lie of Immortality – What examples of modern spiritualism exist in your culture today? Why is firm adherence to the Word of God our only protection? Neglect of our health is spiritualism. "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?" (1 Corinthians 6:19). Neglecting our body's health in pursuit of spiritual life is rooted in the doctrine of immortality of the soul. Adventists who neglect their physical health, are, by their conduct, believers in the false doctrine of immortality of the soul. According to this false doctrine, the soul is the living, acting, thinking part of men, and the body only the poor clay tenement in which it is confined for a time here, till death strikes off its earthly shackles and sets it free to soar away to the eternal realms. It could hardly be possible that such a doctrine should fail to foster in men's minds a contempt for the body which would cause them to treat physical health with neglect. It is a doctrine which makes the body and the soul almost antagonistic, like a prisoner and the shackles by which he is held back from the freedom for which he longs. And therefore to bestow much attention upon the body was to slight the soul and the spiritual interests, while to neglect the body and leave it almost unnoticed in the pursuit of spiritual things, came to be regarded as evidence of the attainment of a high degree of piety.

Tuesday: Babylon: The Center of Sun Worship – Babylon, as known in Adventism, is the centre of sun worship, but her influence reaches everywhere. The Lesson writer says, "Look around at how prevalent Sunday worship is in Christian churches. What should this fact teach us about how pervasive Satan's deceptions are? Again, as with the state of the dead, what is our only safeguard?" But we need not look around other denominations, we only need to look within our very own Seventh-day Adventist Church to see the emerging Sunday worship service. For example, the Bloom Church in Portland in Oregon is a church plant sponsored by the Oregon Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, which changed their worship time to Sunday at 10:30 on 9 April 2023 and they have been worshipping on Sunday ever since, led by an Adventist pastor paid from tithe. In Ezekiel 8:16 we are foretold there is going to be sun worship in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, just before the close of probation, and it is has started in Oregon Conference. But as they have erelong worshipped the sun god, it is natural they now worship on sun day. To know the sun god and avoid sun worship, find and read the booklet "Greater Abominations."

Wednesday: A Call to Faithfulness – In Ezekiel 20:1-20, what is the gist of Ezekiel's message here, and how does the Sabbath fit in with this call to faithfulness? The Lord says, "I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them" (Ezekiel 20:12). In the three angels' message, we are called to be faithful in worshipping He who made heaven and earth (Revelation 14:6-7) and it is the Sabbath that points back to the God we are to worship. Why are many in utter ignorance of God? "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful" (Romans 1:21). The Sabbath is the great memorial of creation (Exodus 20:8-11). If Adventists truly keep the Sabbath as it was given, they cannot dabble into any idolatry; for the Sabbath reveals the power of the word of the Lord to create and to work righteousness.

Thursday: Grace for Obedience – How does grace relate to obedience? We obey by the grace of God in Christ. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted;" "Wherefore, He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Heb. 2:18; 7:25). "He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Philippians 3:21). "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 24-25). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).