

Sabbath School Lesson #12 – Jesus in Jerusalem – 13-19 Jun 2015

Christ was approaching Jerusalem, “and when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it” (Luke 19:41). That Jesus wept was not for Himself, though before Him lay Gethsemane, the scene of approaching agony, and not far distant, Calvary, the place of His crucifixion. Jesus wept for the doomed thousands of Jerusalem. The Lord had honoured Jerusalem; He had “chosen Zion ... for His habitation” (Psalm 132:13). The Lord of Israel always had “compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place” Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:15). The history of the Israelites is recorded in the Bible as a spiritual life of ups and downs. As the Lord led them, “believed they His words; they sang His praise,” but “they soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel” (Psalm 106:12-13). That entire warning message sent to them by the prophets, they often rejected, and killed the prophets. The blood of the lambs sacrificed for their sins, pointing to Christ, had become mere rituals.

The Triumphal Entry – Children sang, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” and Jesus said, “Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?” (Matthew 21:15-16). But in general, “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11). Beholding a rebellious and doomed people, He wept (Luke 19:41). Here Christ beheld a people whose probation was closing, yet for the years of His own preaching and extending mercy to them, their hardened hearts refused their Saviour and Comforter. Jesus wept over Jerusalem. The Majesty of heaven was in tears! It is hard to save souls from the consequence of sin. Hear Him plead: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!” (Luke 13:34).

Before this event in Jerusalem, the triumphant entry, Christ had preached repentance message to His people for about three years. He had gone in and out among His people, “doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil” (Acts 10:38), fulfilling His mission: “to preach good tidings unto the meek; to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” (Luke 4:16-19).

As His personal ministry to His people drew to a close, Christ could not but pass the bitter sentence unto Jerusalem: “Your house is left unto you desolate” (Luke 13:35). As Christ beheld Jerusalem, He “wept over it, Saying, If thou had known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!” Here He paused, loath to utter the irrevocable statement, and then He just had to say it, “but now they are hid from thine eyes” (Luke 19:41-42). Throughout history, the Lord pleaded with His people, and He still pleads with His people today. “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29). But “My Spirit,” says the Lord, “shall not always strive with man” (Genesis 6:3). Human probation is soon closing and Christ will have no choice but to say to the impenitent souls, “Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone” (Hosea 4:17).

Christ wept over Jerusalem, yet many remained impenitent. As they rejected Christ, the guilty and consequences of their sin remained with them. Thus it will be with every soul who is following the same course, as did Jerusalem of old. The Lord declares, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself” (Hosea 13:9). “Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto My words, nor to My law, but rejected it” (Jeremiah 6:19). Christ wept over Jerusalem, for the Jewish nation had rejected Him. The Lord had exhausted every resource, He had no other power to employ to save them, and He declared: “Your house is left unto you desolate” (Luke 13:35).

Lest we cause Christ to weep over us as He did over Jerusalem, let us determine to have Christ our righteousness. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). “Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 9:23-24). Let us receive Christ daily; let the knowledge of the only true God and His only begotten Son occupy our interest.

Cleansing the Temple – At Jerusalem Jesus cleansed the earthly temple, but He now wants also to cleanse your body temple. Paul asks, “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). Lest we forget, health reform is “the right arm” of the third angel’s message. The third angel’s message is the cleansing of the sanctuary, which parallels the cleansing of the lives of God’s people. It is to prepare a people for translation at the second coming of Jesus. Health reform is an essential part of the “fast” which God has appointed for His people in our Day of Atonement. Inherent within health reform is the principle of self-denial – the principle of the cross. A deeper appreciation of the love of God supplies the motivation for the third angel’s message of which health reform is a part. Health reform is not “works” to earn salvation, but give evidence of cooperation with High Priest in His work.

Paul begs us, “We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). Health reform helps us to be reconciled. So “practical” is the “godliness” of our Day of Atonement faith that our long-indulged perverted appetites can be re-educated to enjoy simple, healthful diet. You will not miss your harmful favourites! As Paul would say to that, “Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live *in the flesh* [the flesh where appetite wants to rule] I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). To Paul, “flesh” includes our appetites and sensuality; he said, “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Christ wants the temple cleansed so that He may dwell in us. “The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 7:48; see also Acts 17:24). He asked, “Where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? ... but on this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isaiah 66:1-2). He said, “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Isaiah 57:15). “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). It is in our bodies that the Lord wants to dwell, let us allow Him to cleanse the body temple, it is His true dwelling place.

The Unfaithful – In Luke 20:9-19 we find the vinedressers who rejected Christ. “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him” (John 1:11). He came to His own inheritance, but His own people rejected Him. Jesus set this forth most clearly in the parable of the vineyard which was let out to husbandmen, who killed the heir when he came (Matthew 21:33-44). “He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not” (Isaiah 53:3). Mark this, He not only was despised, but “He is despised and rejected of men.” It is a thing still going on. Multitudes of those who delight to be called by His name are rejecting Him. How? – In rejecting His cross. They are willing that He should suffer, but they are not willing to suffer with Him; and in rejecting the cross, they are rejecting Him.

The Lord’s Supper – In Luke 22:13-20 we find Jesus founding the Lord’s Supper. That last meal that Jesus ate with His disciples illustrates the idea of “substitution,” a shared experience with Him. Jesus did not say to his disciples, I am eating this bread instead of you, nor did He say, I am drinking from this cup instead of you. He ate with them, He drank with them; they ate and drank with Him. Using the clearest illustration possible of intimate oneness He represented His believers as “drinking My blood, eating My body.” “Abide in Me, and I in you,” He pleads. You are branches and I am the Vine (John 15:4-5). “Ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.” In sending His Spirit to dwell with those who believe in Him, Jesus represents Himself as not leaving them orphans, “I will come to you” (14:20, 18). If any opens his heart, “I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). Open your heart, receive His Spirit; you receive Him.

Lest we cause Christ to weep over us – “Today if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:7-12).