

Sabbath School Lesson #1 – Crisis in Heaven – 26 Dec 2015-1 Jan 2016

Christ and Him crucified is what explains how the ‘crisis in heaven’ ended. Christ is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the earth to save us. It was thus the angel “cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb” (Revelation 7:10). Verses 9-14 is the fulfillment of the blessing of Abraham (Genesis 12-13) that comes on all nations through the cross of Christ; we see an innumerable company that have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, which is the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, of an innumerable seed: “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). To be Christ’s, and hence Abraham’s seed, we must have the Spirit of Christ. Satan, continuing the crisis he began in heaven, seeks to imbue souls with the spirit of antichrist.

We will not repeat the exegesis given in this week’s Lesson about Lucifer and the crisis he began in heaven, we focus on how Satan continues that war on earth, obscuring that the Son of God came to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). In 1 John 4:1-3 we find the following warning and declaration: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; 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.” This is the way that the crisis in heaven is continued on earth.

Again in 2 John 7 we find a similar statement: “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.” “Antichrist” means, “opposed to Christ.” The great antichrist is Satan himself, for he is the instigator and abettor of everything that has ever come up in opposition to God and Christ. The Bible gives the first opposition to the Son of God: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:7-9).

Michael is the Archangel (Jude 9), that is, the Chief or Prince of the angels; and the Archangel is Christ, for it is the voice of the Archangel that will be heard at the last great day, when the dead shall be raised (1 Thessalonians 4:16); and Christ declared (John 5:26-29) that His own voice would be the one that should penetrate the graves, and call forth the dead. Therefore this war in heaven was between Christ and His angels on one side, and Satan and his angels on the other side. It was the beginning of the great controversy, which has been going on till the present time. When Christ was on earth He again met the devil in person, and again vanquished him; but still the warfare is kept up; Satan still opposes Christ by seeking to blind the minds of men so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may not shine unto them (2 Corinthians 4:3-4); this contest will cease with the destruction of Satan.

In 1 John 4:1-3, John does not speak of antichrist himself, but of the “spirit of antichrist;” that is, not of Satan in person, but of the doctrines, which he disseminates in order to blind the minds of them that believe not. This spirit of antichrist is declared to be a denial that Jesus is come in the flesh. Our first business is to inquire what it is to deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. One method of denying that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is to deny the entire narrative contained in the gospels, to say that the whole thing is a fabrication, and that there never was such a person as Jesus Christ. Another way is to deny that “the Lord is that Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17) who lives in us; to deny: “God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts” (Galatians 4:6); to heed “doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1) that teach that someone else, not Christ, lives in us. This class are brought to view in Matthew 7:21-23. This spirit of antichrist is the most insidious; none can overcome sin without Christ in them.

In the first chapter of John we have undoubted reference to Christ, under the title of “the Word.” “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” In the fourteenth verses we read of Him: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of

grace and truth." Grace means favour. Therefore the statement is that the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of favour. That is the same as saying that Christ came in the flesh as an exhibition of the favour of God to man. And in harmony with this are the words of Paul, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15); He was "full of grace;" and so the apostle declares that the grace of God brings salvation (Titus 2:11). Now go back again to the statement that when Christ was made flesh and dwelt among us, He was full of favour. This favour was the favour of God, for His fullness was the fullness of God (Colossians 1:19; 2:9), and God was manifest in Him, reconciling the world to Himself. Now we read in Psalms 30:5 that "in His favour is life." Jesus Christ was made flesh and dwelt among us full of favour, in order to give life to men doomed to death; and this conclusion is strengthened by the statement, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

Christ's sole object in coming to this earth was to give life to those who otherwise would not have had it: John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The obvious conclusion is that if He had not come, all men would have perished, and that although He has come, and none will have life except those who believe in Him. And this conclusion is stated in so many words, in John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

1 John 5:10-12: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." If you deny Christ is literal Son of God, saying 'Father and Son' are role-play titles (as in *Adventist Review*, 31 Oct 1996), "He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22)!

Most Christians are spiritually weak because they deny Christ is their Comforter, for they believe someone else, who has never come in the flesh, lives in them. We confess Christ is come in our flesh, God's law is in Christ, and it is Christ who obeys God's law in us: "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19); victory is in whoever confess Christ is come in our flesh.

Our attention is directed to man in His first dominion, crowned with glory and honour. As we look, we see Him descend, and as we continue to gaze, with our eyes fixed on the place where He descended, "we see Jesus" (Hebrews 2:9). Where do we see Him? – just where man fell. Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10), and the only way to find a thing that is lost, is to go where it is; the only way to pick up one who has fallen, and who cannot help himself, is to go to the very place where he fell. If we would see Jesus, we must go where there are fallen men. Wherever there are fallen men, there we may see Jesus; but we are fallen men, therefore we may see Jesus in us. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:8-9). Spirit of antichrist denies Christ is come in the flesh; true Christians confess Christ. Confessing that Christ dwells in us is the only thing that effectively enables us to carry the assurance of the gospel to others.

Already, "the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). Because Christ "has come in the flesh" (1 John 4:3), He bears the sins of all flesh; not that He will take them, *He has them*. They are on Him as soon as they are committed. Our part is simply to confess Him, – to confess that He is come in the flesh – in our flesh. He bears our sins. He bears the curse on the cross; we confess Him crucified in our flesh, – and so that we are crucified with Him (Galatians 2:20). We only have to believe in our heart and continue believing – that God has raised Him from the dead, to know that He dwells in us with the resurrection power. It is a blessing to believe the true gospel, and it is a blessed privilege to proclaim it to fallen men!

We cannot overcome sin in spirit of antichrist that says someone else, not Christ, lives in us. Christ, "author and finisher" (Hebrews 12:2) of our salvation (Acts 4:12) "will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5), for He "was made a quickening Spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45), and hence "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts" (Galatians 4:6).