

Sabbath School Lesson #13 – Major Themes in 1 and 2 Peter – 17-23 June 2017

Christ would have us learn from 1 and 2 Peter. “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:24). And “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ” (2 Corinthians 2:14). “What a wonderful Saviour!”

Sunday: Suffering, Jesus, and Salvation – The question that is posed on Sunday is: “Why is Jesus, as your Substitute, the Great Hope of salvation? What comfort can you draw from this wonderful truth?” Christ was tempted in all points yet without sin. To have Him as our substitute means we have no reason to fear that when we are tempted, for the battle is His.

The life that we in live the flesh is to be lived by the faith of Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us, and who is so completely our substitute that we can say, ‘It is not I that lives any longer, but Christ liveth in me.’ He is the victory, and our constant assertion that the victory is ours, in His name, is what gives us the constant experience of it.

If you have some habit that you know is opposing the manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit in your life, stop and consider that “ye are not your own,” but that you belong to the Lord; and then allow His full liberty to take possession of His own. Then consider further that Jesus even in sinful flesh is without sin, because He has “power over all flesh;” and He has this power, in order to give eternal life and a its power to you (John 17:2-3). Consider that no temptation, no lust, no envy, no poverty or distress, no inherited tendency, is too strong for Him. Think of yourself, then, as entirely out of the case, as dead, and Jesus Christ as having taken your place; and then think what the result would surely be. That is to “reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). When you have in all seriousness considered thus far, and the truth dawns upon your mind that *it is so*, then you will not be able to refrain from shouting the victory. You will know that you have the victory over the enemy that is even that moment threatening you, and you will find that this resisting the devil, steadfast in the faith, causes him to flee from you. This practical experience has been demonstrated in thousands of cases. It never fails. “Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength” (Isaiah 26:4).

Monday: How Should We Live? – Peter tells us that the “day of the Lord” will come as a thief in the night, “in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10). The Saviour's discourse to His disciples upon the Mount of Olives, gives in answer to their query, “What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matthew 24:3) contains explicit counsel on how we should live. It gives a most impressive admonition. “But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (verses 43-44). In Luke's record we find Him saying, “And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting [the act of feeding to excess; gluttony – perverted appetite], and drunkenness [being overpowered with intoxication so that reason is disordered], and cares of this life, so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth” (Luke 21:34-35).

We are told what will be the attitude of those who are watching and waiting, in harmony with the instruction and admonitions of Christ. Their hearts will not be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life (Luke 21:34). They will “walk honestly, as in the day” (Romans 13:11-14); they will be “sober,” having on “the breastplate of faith and love,” and rejoicing in “the hope of salvation” (1 Thessalonians 5:8). They will manifest “all holy conversation and godliness” (2 Peter 3:11). They will be “exhorting one another,” and so much the more as they “see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). By this manner of life they will be watching and ready for their Lord, though knowing not the hour of His return.

“Ye, brethren,” says Paul, “are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thessalonians 5:4). Though ignorant of the day and the hour, they are ready for it whenever it may arrive, just as the man who watches is ready for the thief. It is the sleeper who is taken unawares, and suffers a loss. The Christian never sleeps, his spiritual life is

ever wakeful and active, for it is the life of God. Many are asleep who know it not. There are multitudes of dreamers in the church as well as in the world. They hear not the voice of the faithful watchmen, crying, "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Romans 13:11-12). Or if they hear the voice, it is with consciousness so dim that they heed it not. Many in church hear truth as in a dream. The watchman's cry mingles pleasantly with the voices of their dreams. The return of their Lord is not with them a theme of final, burning interest.

Tuesday: Hope in the Second Coming – Connected with watchfulness is our hope in the soon coming of Christ even amid what may seem as a "delay." Peter says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:9-11). With the muted step of the thief, the dread day is stealing on with time's swift tread, to come suddenly at an hour when men think not, and take the sleepers unawares. Then there will be an awakening such as never was. Then His appearing will be the theme and the burden of all tongues, and fearful voices will take up the prophet's words, "The great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:17). Then there will be weeping and mourning throughout all the earth, and a prayer-meeting such as never was, when the voices of kings and peasants, of rulers and bondmen, shall blend in invocation to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Revelation 6:16). And then also the voices of those who watched for His appearing will be heard in tones of joy, saying, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isaiah 25:9).

Wednesday: Order in Society and in the Church – Christ came into the world to minister as a servant, and as followers of Him we owe our service. He says in prayers for us, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John 17:18). Our work is the same as His. It is wonderful thought that we are permitted to do a part of the same work that Christ came to do! Now turn to John 18:37, and read His words concerning why He came into the world: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Then since we are sent into the world as He was sent into the world, we owe to the world a perfect testimony, both by word and practice, concerning the truth. Christ, who is the truth, says to His people, "Ye are My witnesses."

Peter says of our duty in society: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises [excellencies] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation [that is, your course of life] honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:9-12). It is for this purpose that Christ has called us to be His servants, that we should show forth His excellencies, and by our good works lead others to glorify Him.

Thursday: The Primacy of Scripture – It is that the Scriptures proceed wholly from Christ. Note: "Now these be the last words of David. David, the son of Jesse, said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue" (2 Samuel 23:1-2). David spoke the word, but by the Spirit of the Lord. Note also: 1 Peter 1:10-11: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." Who was it that testified? It was not the prophets themselves, but the Spirit of Christ that was in the prophets. The prophets did not understand the full import of the things that the Spirit testified through them, but had to study their own writings.