

Sabbath School Lesson #9 – No Condemnation – 25 November-1 December 2017

Christ is now our life, in Him we live. Paul says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1). We now come to the conclusion of the whole matter. In the eighth chapter of Romans the epistle reaches its highest point. The seventh presented to us the deplorable condition of the man who has been awakened by the law to a sense of his condition, bound to sin by cords that can be loosened only by death. It closed with a glimpse of the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who alone can set us free from the body of death. This brings us to the state of no condemnation.

There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ, for He receives the curse of the law, that the blessing might come on us. Nothing can come to us while we are in Him, without first passing through Him; but in Him all curses are turned to blessings, and sin is displaced by righteousness. His endless life triumphs over everything that comes against it. We are made “complete in Him.”

The law without Christ is death. The law in Christ is life. His life is the law of God; for out of the heart are the issues of life, and the law of life is in His heart. The law of sin and death works in our members. But the law of the Spirit of life in Christ gives us freedom from this. It is the life in Christ that does this. It does not give us freedom from obedience to the law, for we had that before, and it was bondage, and not freedom. What He gives us freedom from is the transgression of the law.

This is made very plain in Romans 8:3-4. God sent “His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,” “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.” “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” There is no fault to be found with it but with us, because we have transgressed it. Christ is not to change the law in any particular, but to change us in every particular. It is to put the law into our hearts in perfection, in place of the marred and broken copy.

The law is strong enough to condemn, but it is weak, even powerless, with respect to what man needs namely, salvation. It was and is “weak through the flesh.” The law is good, and holy, and just, but man has no strength to perform it. Just as an axe may be of good steel, and very sharp, yet unable to cut down a tree because the arm that has hold of it has no strength, so the law of God could not perform itself. It set forth man’s duty; it remained for him to do it. But he could not, and therefore Christ came to do it in him. What the law could not do, God did for us by His Son.

There is a common idea that “God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh” means that Christ *simulated* sinful flesh; that He did not take upon Himself actual sinful flesh, but only what appeared to be such. But the Scriptures do not teach such a thing. “In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:17). He was “born of a woman, born under the law,” that He might redeem them that were under the law (Galatians 4:4-5). He took the same flesh that all have who are born of woman. A parallel text to Romans 8:3-4 is in 2 Corinthians 5:21. The former says that Christ was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.” The latter says that God “made Him to be sin for us,” although He knew no sin, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

All the comfort that we can get from Christ lies in the knowledge that He was made in all things as we are. Otherwise we should hesitate to tell Him of our weaknesses and failures. The priest who makes sacrifices for sins must be one “who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity” (Hebrews 5:2). This applies perfectly to Christ; “for we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). This is why we may come boldly to the throne of grace for mercy. So perfectly has Christ identified Himself with us, that He even now bears our sufferings. “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” Note that this depends on the preceding statement, “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The things of the Spirit are the commandments of God, because the law is spiritual. The flesh serves the law of sin (see chapter 7, and Galatians 5:19-21, where the works of the flesh are described). But Christ came in the same flesh, to show the power of the Spirit over the flesh. “They that are in the flesh can not please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” No one will claim that the flesh of man is different after his conversion from what it was before. Least of all will the converted man himself say so, for he has continual evidence of its perversity. But if he is really converted,

and the Spirit of Christ dwells in him, he is no more in the power of the flesh. Even so Christ came in the same sinful flesh, yet He was without sin, because He was always led by His Father's Spirit.

The Lesson writer says at the section on Wednesday that the "Holy Spirit" in Romans 8:9 is "called the Spirit of Christ, perhaps in the sense that He is a representative of Christ, and through Him Christ dwells in the believer". But the Bible interprets itself, so we need not say "perhaps". Is the "Holy Spirit" different from "the Spirit of Christ"? Paul says, "the Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9), there is "one Spirit" (Ephesians 4:4), and then says "the Lord is that Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:17).

Only Christ took upon Himself our sinful flesh and overcame sin. To have no condemnation we must have Christ and only Him in our flesh. When you believe on the Son of God you have His life. "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Galatians 3:22). We have His life when we believe on Him. "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:22-24). The holiness or the righteousness of God exists only in one place, in the life of the only begotten Son of God.

Many fellow Seventh-day Adventists are not Christ's because they do not have His own Spirit, they have a different 'holy spirit' in them. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:9). The Holy Spirit is the life of Jesus, and it is Jesus Himself, and only Jesus can save us: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10). The Holy Spirit is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). Christ lives in us: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6).

We ask does Christ carry out any ministration here on earth while He is up there in the heavenly temple? False doctrines teach that there are two High Priests, Jesus in heaven, and another 'holy spirit' in us. But the Bible teaches that Christ is Omnipresent, that is, Christ is the Spirit in us. "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45). In other words, "the last Adam [Jesus Christ] was made [after His resurrection] a quickening Spirit." Christ has given His own Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6). The Holy Spirit is the omnipresence of Christ, not another god. "Now the Lord is that Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:17). Christ ministers physically in heaven, and spiritually in us.

What about Romans 8:26-27? "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." False teachers say this is a different intercessor. The Bible teach that we have One intercessor. The Spirit here is the very same Spirit of Christ, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6), not another intercessor. "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34).

Christ alone, not another, is the intercessor. "While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth. He is withdrawn from the eye of sense, but His parting promise is fulfilled, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' Matthew 28:20. While He delegates His power to inferior ministers, His energizing presence is still with His church" (Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, 166.2). "We have only one channel of approach to God. Our prayers can come to Him through one name only, – that of the Lord Jesus our advocate. His Spirit must inspire our petitions. No strange fire was to be used in the censers that were waved before God in the sanctuary. So the Lord Himself must kindle in our hearts the burning desire, if our prayers are acceptable to Him. The Holy Spirit within must make intercessions for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered" (RH February 9, 1897 Par 10). "The Lord is soon to come. We want that complete and perfect understanding which the Lord alone can give. It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ. If we commune with God, we shall have strength and grace and efficiency" (Ellen White, Letter 66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par 18). Instead of the Holy Spirit being a personality or a manifestation of Christ, false doctrines have made it into a separate god with his own individual personality and Being. The Bible teaches there is only One High Priest. The Divinity of Christ enables Him to minister physically in heaven and simultaneously to minister spiritually on earth in our bodies. "Christ in you, the hope of glory."