

## Sabbath School Lesson #1 – Creation and Fall – 29 Sep-5 October 2018

**C**hrist gives us Abraham's promises – "And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:5-6) – for we are Abraham's seed (Galatians 3:29).

Sunday: Love as a Foundation for Unity – The Lesson writer directs us to read 1 John 4:7,8,16 and says "love can exist only in relationship with others." The word 'love' in Greek can be rendered as *Eros* (romantic love) or *Storge* (familial love) or *Philia* (friendship love) or *Agape* (selfless love). *Eros* love is not used in the New Testament. Misapplying 1 John 4:7-12, those who ally with Satan to obscure that Christ is the literal begotten Son of God, use *Eros* mindset to teach that God did not at any point in eternity exist alone before Christ came forth because in order for God to be God and to be love He had to have at least one co-equal, one co-eternal person with whom He bestows love and from whom He receives love. *Eros* mindset describes God in the context of a love that needs someone else in order to be love, and avers that perfect love is possible only between equals. *Eros* mindset reduces God to a selfish God, distorting 1 John 4:8 by mixing *Eros* and *Agape*!

Read 1 John 4:7-12. In the text, John defines the love of God in the giving of His Son to die for us. At the end of verse 8 John defines God as love and then expands this definition into the manifestation of God sending His Son. Consistency of usage in this text point to the fact that the God mentioned in verse 8 is the same God in verses 9-12. This suggests that the God in verse 8 is the Father and that His love is revealed in the giving of His Son to save humanity. *Agape* love is a love that invests value rather than seeks it. God giving His Son to us invests value in us and is indeed *agape*. *Eros* mindset misapplies 1 John 4:8-12 to giving and receiving of love between co-equals and co-eternals, which is not what the text teaches.

*Eros* mindset explains God by mixing *Eros* and *Agape* love. *Eros* is the need to serve one another, but *agape* is the willingness to serve others without reciprocity. *Eros* is the need for equal status, but *agape* is willingness to serve the least worthy. *Eros* seeks equal, but *agape* makes equal. *Eros* mindset asks: if Jesus were begotten in eternity then there would be a time He did not exist and therefore how could He be God? This question only occurs in the domain of *Eros* love that seeks value rather than invests value. *Eros* demands equality of status in all areas yet *agape* does not. *Agape* accepts that in Christ all the fullness of the Godhead dwells (Col 2:9), "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell" (Col 1:19), *Eros* thinks to be 'heir of all things' (Heb 1:2) and thus equal with God 'by inheritance' (Heb 1:4) is robbery on Christ's part, but *agape* thinks 'it not robbery to be equal with God' by 'being in the form of God' (Philippians 2:6). The mixture of *Eros* and *Agape* that teaches that God cannot be love unless Christ is of co-eternal age with God, is contrary to Bible and Spirit of Prophecy that teach: Jesus proceeded out of the Father at a distant past time in our human computation we call eternity. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." (Proverbs 8:22-23). 'And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting"' (Ellen White, PP 34.1).

Christ inherited all that the Father has and is fully divine by inheritance and in that inheritance we are able to hear the loving words of the Father who spoke to His Son (Mat 3:17). The words Father and Son only find meaning through inheritance that *agape* accepts and *Eros* denies. Through the *agape* of 1 John 4:8 we can take hold of the words: "... but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). The Father of Jesus is our Father and the God of Jesus is our God, and all this we possess through Christ the literal Son of God who is the greatest demonstration of *agape* the universe can ever behold. It remains the fact that: 'God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son' (8T

268.3). The *Eros* mindset that teaches that for God to be love Christ must have been of co-eternal existence with God for both to bestow and receive love from each other, is a satanic mindset, for Satan thought perfect love was only possible between equals, and he demanded equality with his Creator, Christ, in order for him to accept that God is love. 'The Father then made known that it was ordained by Himself that Christ, His Son, should be equal with Himself; so that wherever was the presence of His Son, it was as His own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son He had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was His Son to work in union with Himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out His will and His purposes but would do nothing of Himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in Him' (LHU 18.3). 'When God said to His Son, "Let us make man in our image" [Gen 1:26], Satan was jealous of Jesus' (EW 145.1). In this controversy, Satan seeks to distort the *agape* love of God, but when this controversy is ended, all will 'declare that God is love' (Ellen White, GC 678.3).

Monday: The Consequences of the Fall – As a consequence of the fall, man became very wicked that it necessitated the flood. Before the flood, "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth," and "the earth was filled with violence through them;" "and God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." There was not the slightest trace of good left in men; nothing by which the Spirit of God could produce conviction of sin, so that it could not strive with them. The only good that men knew was wickedness. They called evil good, and good evil (see Isaiah 5:20-24). From the flood, and the time just before it, many lessons are drawn for us. We are told that "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man" (Luke 17:26). The wickedness of man will be just as great before the coming of the Lord, as it was in the days before the flood. To many this seems incredible, but if it were not so, God would not destroy the earth. Men will be lovers of their own selves, and utterly indifferent to the welfare of others, except as the welfare of others may contribute to their own selfish gratification. They will be incontinent and fierce, and so, through sensuality, violence will fill the earth as it did in the days of Noah (see 2 Timothy 3:1-7).

Tuesday: Further Disunity and Separation – After the flood, sin increased again – we read "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). Those people had the idea that they could build a city so great and a tower so high that they could defy the judgments of God. They really thought themselves greater than God. The same idea possessed Lucifer (see Isaiah 14:12-14). It is clearly seen that the spirit that was in Lucifer was identical with that which was in the builders of Babel, and the reason for this is that it was Satan himself – Lucifer fallen – who prompted the work. Satan is "the prince of this world" (John 15:30). Satan led men to further disunity and separation after the flood; he is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2).

Wednesday: Abraham, Father of God's People – In Abraham is the clearest evidence of a full knowledge of Christ. The covenant that God made with him was confirmed "in Christ" (Galatians 3:17). It was therefore Abraham's faith in Christ that was "counted unto him for righteousness." Moreover, Abraham's faith was so great that he was called the father of the faithful; and the highest position to which a person can attain is to be a child of Abraham. The most perfect Christians on earth only "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised" (Romans 4:12). This is because Abraham sought Christ's day and was glad (John 8:56). He saw and understood the complete work of Christ, and being justified by faith he rejoiced in hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:1-2).

Thursday: God's Chosen People – In Christ, Jews and Gentiles are God's people. "As He saith also in Osee, I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people; there shall they be called the children of the living God." "God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them." "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him."