

Sabbath School Lesson #3 – “That They All May Be One” – 13-19 October 2018

Christ prayed to His Father, saying, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20-21). The reader is encouraged to read through the whole Lesson study for this week, as here we will focus on the question posed by the Lesson writer on Sunday section, which is: “What is eternal life according to John 17:3?”

Jesus admonished, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me” (John 14:1). In His final prayer, Jesus said to His Father, “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3). Here Jesus made it abundantly clear that there is only one God, who is His Father. To have eternal life, this leaves no room for anyone else being the true God. His language completely leaves out any necessity for knowing a third Being. There are only two Beings that it is necessary to know, God (the Father), and His only begotten Son. After His resurrection, Christ’s understanding about who God is did not change. He said to Mary, “Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: 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). Babylonian teachings say God is three-in-one, making the Spirit of God (Romans 8:9) into a separate god! John 17:11, 21-23 Jesus spoke of the oneness we can have with Him and His Father, and He left out any mention of the Holy Spirit as a separate third Being in that oneness.

The Father has given us eternal life in Christ. “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.” Many act and talk as if Christ was dead, and irrecoverably dead. Yes, He died; but He rose again, and lives forevermore. Christ is not in Joseph’s new tomb. We have a risen Saviour. What does the death of Christ do for us? – Reconciles us to God. He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Now mark! It is the *death* of Christ that brings us to God; what is it that keeps us there? – It is the life of Christ. We are saved by His life. Now hold these words in your minds: “Being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Why was the life of Christ given? “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Then Christ gave His life that we might have life. Where is that life? And where can we get it? In John 1:4 we read, “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.” He alone has life, and He gives that life to as many as will accept it (John 17:2). Then Christ has the life, and He is the only one who has it, and He is willing to give it to us. Now what is that life? Verse 3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” Has a person who *knows* Christ eternal life? – That is what Scripture says.

Again He says in John 3:36: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. How do we know that we have this life? This is an important question. “We *know* that we have *passed* from *death* unto *life*, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:14-15).

Says one, ‘We know that we will get eternal life by and by.’ Yes, that is true, but there is something better than that; we get it *now*. This is not a mere theory, it is the word of God. Let us illustrate: Here are two men – brothers – to all appearances they are alike. But one is a Christian, and the other is not. We must clarify that a Christian is Christ’s, that is, a person in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells (Romans 8:9). Now the one that is a Christian, although there is nothing in his external appearance to indicate it, has a life that the other has not. He has passed from *death* – state in which the other one is – to life. He has something that the other has not got, and that something is *eternal life*. The words, “No *murderer* hath eternal life abiding in him,” would mean nothing if nobody else had eternal life abiding in Him.

“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*” (1 John 5:10). God cannot lie, and so when we say that the words of God are not so, we make liars of ourselves. Now, according to this scripture, we make God a liar, if we believe not the

record that God gave of His Son. What, then, must we believe in order to clear ourselves of that charge – of not believing this record, thus making God a liar? The next verse explains it: “*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*”

We are to believe that God has given to us eternal life in Christ. As long as we have the Son of God, we have eternal life. By our faith in the word of God we bring Christ into our hearts. Christ is in us by virtue of His own Spirit, not some other separate Being devised in the Babylonian teachings that have crept into our church. “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6).

When Jesus went to Bethany, He said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). We have already read about passing from death unto life; how was that done? – Only by a resurrection. In Christ we have a resurrection to a new life. Note the following: Paul prays that he may know Him and the “*power of His resurrection.*” What is the power of that resurrection? In Ephesians 2:4-7 we read: “But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us [made us alive] together with Christ (by grace ye are saved).” Notice, He *hath* done this, and He “hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” We were dead, we are quickened, and we are raised up to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. We must and can have, the life of Christ to-day; for when He comes, He will change our vile bodies by the same power by which He *has* changed our hearts. The heart must be changed now. It cannot be changed except by the life of Christ coming in and abiding in it. When Christ is in the heart, we can live the life of Christ, and then when He comes, the glory will be revealed. He was Christ when He was here upon earth, although He did not have a retinue of angels and glory visible about Him. He was Christ when He was the Man of Sorrows. When He ascended, the glory was revealed. So with us. Christ must dwell in our hearts now, and when He comes and changes these bodies, then the glory will be revealed.

In Hebrews 5:2 we learn that the work of the high priest was to be one of compassion “on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.” “Wherefore in all things it behoved Him [Christ] 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). What is done by the compassion of Christ? – Strength is given to us. What benefit is the compassion of Christ to us? – He knows the strength we need, He knows what we need, when we need it, and how we need it. So the work of Christ as priest is for one thing – to deliver us from sin. What is the power of Christ’s priesthood? – He is made priest, “not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an *endless life*” (Hebrews 7:16). That is the power by which Christ delivers you and me from sin this day, and this hour, and every moment that we believe in Him.

No one could take life away from Christ. The wicked had no power to kill Him. He laid His life down. But God raised Him up, “having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:24). He had power in His life that defied death. He laid down, and took death upon Himself, that He might show His power over death. He defied death, He entered right into the realms of death – the grave – to show that He had power over it. Christ laid down His life; and when His Father raised Him, He took life up again. Why was it that death could not hold Him? – Because He was sinless. Sin had spent all its force on Him, and had not marred Him in the least. It had not made a single blot upon His character. His was a sinless life, and therefore the grave could have no power over Him. It is that same life which we have when we believe on the Son of God. Give your sins to the Lord, and take that sinless life in their place. The life of Christ is divine power. In the time of temptation the victory is won beforehand. When Christ is abiding in us, we are justified by faith, and we have His life abiding in us. But in that life He gained the victory over all sin, so the victory is ours before the temptation comes. When Satan comes with his temptation, he has no power, for we have the life of Christ, and that in us wards him off every time. Oh, the glory of the thought, that there is life in Christ, and that we may have it!

The just shall live by faith, because Christ truly lives in them. “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).