

Sabbath School Lesson #8 – Unity in Faith – 17-23 November 2018

Christ would have us settle in the truth that it is only by faith in Him alone that we are saved. This is true in all ages since the fall of man, and will be true until the saints of God have His name in their foreheads, and see Him as He is. “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous” (Hebrews 11:4). By faith Noah built the ark to the saving of his house: “by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Hebrews 11:7). Their faith was in Christ, for it was faith unto salvation, and besides the name of Jesus “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). “Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

Sunday: Salvation in Jesus – This salvation is only in the true Jesus – the literal Son of God, – and not in “another Jesus” (2 Corinthians 11:4). In Genesis 3:6 we see fallen mankind doomed with absolutely no hope. “Sorrow filled heaven, as it was realized that man was lost, and that world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die” {EW 149.2}. But Jesus – the true literal Son of God, – not another Jesus, full of the love of His Father that He inherited, had compassion for the doomed human race: “I saw the lovely Jesus and beheld an expression of sympathy and sorrow upon His countenance. Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father” {EW 149.2}. After pleading with His Father, Jesus “made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that He had been pleading with His Father, and had offered to give His life a ransom, to take the sentence of death upon Himself, that through Him man might find pardon” {EW 149.2}. Talking to angels, “Jesus told them that He would stand between the wrath of His Father and guilty man, that He would bear iniquity and scorn, and but few would receive Him as the Son of God” {EW 149.3}. But many Jews did not receive Him as the Son of God, they denied His Sonship, and sought to kill Him for He had said, “that God was His Father” (John 5:18).

To our trinitarian theologians, whom Christ showed Ezekiel in vision as “ancient men,” the terms ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ are envisaged “in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery,” as role-plays. “Accepting the roles that the plan entitled, ... there was in a sense, a submission on the part of the Son to the Father” (Gordon Jenson, AR 31 Oct 1996); “The sonship of Jesus, however, is not ontological, but functional” (Gerhard Pfandl, BRI 1999); in this role-playing, it makes no difference if “the being we have come to know as God the Father came to die for us, and the one we have come to know as Jesus stayed back in heaven” (Roy Adams, Sabbath School Lesson, 10 April 2008). These theologians ally with Satan to “obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God” {TDG 128.1}; these men “preacheth another Jesus” and by this other ‘Jesus’ many Seventh-day Adventists “receive another spirit” and “another gospel” (2 Corinthians 11:4). It is with great sadness thus the true Jesus says to us, “I am come in My Father’s name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” (John 5:43-44).

Monday: Second Coming of Christ – Christ, speaking of events connected with His coming, said: “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30). Now notice how the coming of Christ will correspond with His departure. When He departed, a cloud received Him out of sight; so the cloud must have been the last thing seen. When He shall come again, the first thing that will be seen will be a white cloud. This will be “the sign of the Son of man in heaven.” Then as it draws nearer, the form of Jesus will be discerned, sitting upon the cloud, and then all His glory will be revealed. He will come as He departed. But whereas only a few saw Him go away, “every eye shall see Him” when He returns. He will come “in the glory of His Father” (Matthew 16:27), accompanied by “all the holy angels” (Matthew 25:31). He will then “sit upon the throne of His glory,” and “a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him” (Psalms 50:3). He shall descend “with a shout, with the voice

of an archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thessalonians 4:16), and "the heavens and the earth shall shake" (Joel 3:16). None will be able to hide from their eyes "the brightness of His coming;" "for as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of man be in His day" (Luke 17:24).

Tuesday: Jesus' Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary – "The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith" (Ellen White, Letter 208, 1906). The trinity doctrine separates the Spirit of Christ from Christ and destroys the ministry of Christ in the sanctuary. Does Christ carry out any ministration here on earth while He is up there in the heavenly temple? Many think that the temple is only up there. But the temple is also on earth, for we are the temple: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16); "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21-22); "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). The High Priest in the earthly temple, in our bodies, is not another spirit, but Christ. 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). The truth is: Christ ministers physically in heaven, and spiritually in us.

"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).

Wednesday: The Sabbath – Perfect Sabbath keeping and perfect Sabbath rest is only ever possible through the indwelling Spirit of Christ in us (Galatians 4:6). Only those who are spiritual can truly keep the Sabbath of the Lord. So long as Adam was led by the Spirit, he enjoyed perfect rest, both of body and soul; but as soon as he sinned, he lost the rest. But although the curse upon the earth causes weariness of body, the Sabbath still remains from Eden, the pledge and seal of spiritual rest. The abstaining from all secular work and our own pleasure on the seventh day – from everything by which we could personally profit – is simply in recognition of the Lord as our Creator and upholder of all things – the one by whose power we live. Sabbath keeping involves rest from our own work on the seventh day, but he who does no more than this does not keep the Sabbath of the Lord. As the Sabbath was the seal of a perfect creation, so it is the seal of a perfect new creation in Christ Jesus.

Thursday: Death and Resurrection – "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26). Those who are dead are in the land of the enemy; God has promised they shall return "to their own border" (Jeremiah 31:15-17); that is the hope of Israel. Paul was seized by the unbelieving Jews because he preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and he said, "For the hope of Israel am I bound with this chain" (Acts 28:20), and to another group of Jews he said, "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead am I called in question" (Acts 23:6). There is no hope for Israel except in the resurrection at the coming of the Lord; but that hope is a "lively hope," to which we are begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3). Christ's resurrection is the surety of the resurrection in general.