

Sabbath Lesson #3 – Jesus *and the Apostles' View of the Bible* – 11-17 April 2020

Christ would have us live by every word that proceeds from God. Christ said to the tempter, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). God's word is food. Jesus said that we should eat His flesh, "for My flesh is meat indeed" (John 6:55). Afterwards He showed that we take His flesh through the word that He speaks (verse 63). Therefore since His flesh is meat indeed, His words are likewise real food. Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jeremiah 15:16). Moses told the children of Israel that God suffered them to hunger, and then fed them with manna, "that He might make them know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deut. 8:3). By the word of the Lord everything came into existence (Ps. 33:6), and by the same word are they still upheld (Heb. 11:3). There is no question but that we live by the food we eat. But all the life there is in the food we eat, is the life that is in the growing plants, and that life comes from the word which said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed after his kind" (Gen. 1:11). Although God has ordained that ordinarily we shall obtain life from His word through the grains which that word causes the earth to bring forth, it is certainly as possible to live *directly* from the word as from the grain, which gets its life-giving power only from the Lord. When Daniel was absolutely destitute of physical strength, he received full strength at once from the words spoken by the angel of God (Dan. 10:17-18).

Sunday: It Is Written – In the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of Colossians occurs this exhortation: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." This text, when rightly understood, solves the problem of Christian living. That there is a power in the word of God, far above that of any other book, cannot be doubted. The Lord through the prophet Jeremiah rebukes the false prophets, who speak their own words instead of the words of God, and says: "What is the chaff to the wheat?" "Is not my word like as a fire? Saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:28-29). And the same prophet thus relates his experience when he was reproached because of the word of the Lord: "Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jeremiah 20:9). The word hidden in the heart protects against sin. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Psalms 119:11). And of the righteous we read that the reason why none of his steps slide, is that "the law of his God is in his heart" (Psalm 37:31). Jesus, when tempted on every point by the devil, His sole reply was, "It is written," followed by a text of Scripture that met the case exactly. A Christian who would stand fast must do the same. There is no other way. This is an illustration of David's words, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (Ps 17:4).

Monday: Jesus and the Law – How did Jesus guard against any possible charge that He was setting aside the law of God? "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17). How long will the law remain unchanged? "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (verse 18). Of what importance, therefore, is the keeping of the law? The teaching of it? "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (verse 19). In what way did Jesus call for a higher standard of righteousness? What is the meaning of being "called the least in the kingdom of heaven"? "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (verse 20).

Tuesday: Jesus and All Scripture – Jesus Christ is the author of all scripture. The word "Scriptures" is a term used to denote inspired writings commonly known as the Old and the New Testament, which together we call the Bible. In Bible times some prophets wrote books, which became part of the Bible. These biblical prophets include such notables as Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Paul, and John. Others, however, such as Enoch, Elijah, and

Elisha, wrote no books of the Bible, yet their messages and ministries are preserved in it. Still, there were prophets like the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9) whose messages have not been preserved in the Bible. And finally, there were prophets who actually wrote books, which have not been preserved. They include Nathan and Gad (1 Chronicles 29:29), Shemaiah (2 Chronicles 12:15), Jasher (Joshua 10:13; 2 Samuel 1:18), Iddo (2 Chronicles 12:15; 9:29), Ahijah (2 Chronicles 9:29), and Jehu (2 Chronicles 20:34). But whether included in the Bible or not, the messages delivered by all categories of prophets were authoritative, inspired by Christ (1 Peter 10-11; 2 Peter 1:21). Ellen G White was also a true prophet. Though her writings are not a part of the Bible, yet like the non-biblical prophets, her messages are nonetheless authoritative and form the broader category of Scriptures.

Moreover, in biblical language, all inspired writings, books of the Old Testament or the epistles that were by then being written to churches, were referred to as Scriptures. Luke referred to the now Old Testament as Scriptures: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27). Peter referred to Paul's epistles as Scriptures even though these by then were not yet formed into the Bible as we know it today: "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:15-16). Ellen G White writings are not compiled into the Bible, but to exclude her writings from the term Scriptures, would not be in keeping with biblical language used by Peter. If you still find it hard to accept the Testimonies as God's Scriptures, you are in danger of equating them to the devil's work. To the doubters, Ellen G White wrote the following: "God is either teaching His church, reproving their wrongs, and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work . . . bears the stamp of God, or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter. The Testimonies are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil" {5T 671.2}. "We must follow the directions given through the Spirit of prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His Word. He has spoken to us through the Testimonies to the church, and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy" {8T 298.1}.

Wednesday: Jesus and the Origin and History of the Bible – Christ is the origin of the Bible, for He inspired it. Peter says: "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired 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. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (1 Peter 1:10-12). Christ was in the prophets. When Peter was preaching Christ in the house of Cornelius, he said, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). And Paul said: "Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the gentiles" (Acts 22:22-23). Both Peter and Paul testified that the accounts of Moses and the prophets is centred in Christ.

Thursday: The Apostles and the Bible – All Bible writers build on Moses, for we have continual reference to the books of Moses in whole or in part. For example, Chronicles, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, states that God led the Jews through Moses – Nehemiah says God spoke through Moses (Neh. 9:13-14). The apostles make references to Moses, and all quote him as authority – Paul quotes him more than any other, and writing to Timothy he commended him for his knowledge of the Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation, which Scriptures were given by inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16). Paul makes special mention of Moses' account of the fall of man, showing that he believed it implicitly.