

## Sabbath School Lesson #8 – Education and Redemption – 14-20 November 2020

**C**hrist would have us live by every word proceeding from God, for “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:5-6). Whatever varies in the slightest degree from the Scripture standard, is wrong. He who adds to His words will be found to be a liar.

**Sunday: In the Image of God** – What is this image? In the beginning, “God said, Let us make man in our image” (Genesis 1:26); this He said not to two other individuals, as we have been deceived, but said He only to His Son, for we are told: “But when God said to his Son, ‘Let us make man in our image’, Satan was jealous of Jesus” (EG White, EW 145.1). He, who created Adam, made him first a bodily FORM and then breathed into the lifeless form the SPIRIT and Adam became a living soul. “There are many issues in our world today in regard to the Creator not being a personal God. God is a being, and man was made in His image. After God created man in His image, the form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it had no vitality. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, breathing, intelligent being” (EG White, 7MR 373.1). Commenting on John 6:63, Ellen White says: “‘It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.’ Christ is not here referring to his doctrine, but to his PERSON, the divinity of his [Christ’s] character” {RH, 5 April 1906, Par 12} [emphasis mine]. The word quickeneth means to be made alive. It is God’s Spirit that gives life and is life. Man consists of a bodily FORM and a SPIRIT. “In the beginning man [a bodily being] was created in the likeness of God [a bodily being] not only in character [the Spirit] but in form and feature [bodily aspect]” {GC 644.3} [emphasis mine]. The Spirit is the non-bodily aspect of an individual whether it is man or God. However, God is divine, and unlike man’s spirit, God can send His Spirit forth resulting in Him being Omnipresent.

**Monday: Jesus as Teacher** – After the resurrection of Christ, Nicodemus became a strong follower of Christ and financed the gospel with all his wealth. Christ had taught Nicodemus lessons that he would later fully understand. One of the lessons Nicodemus was taught was how Christ would continue to be here on earth at the same time in heaven. Christ would bodily be in heaven as our high priest and at the same time be with us on earth by His own Spirit. Christ taught Nicodemus how He would be omnipresent, and we examine that lesson here. The text is John 3:12-13 “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.”

Christ is speaking here, and He is addressing Nicodemus as one standing right before Him – in His immediate presence. These were not words spoken through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – as were many of the other words written by the disciples. These words were a direct report of the words spoken to Nicodemus by Christ – we are told: “Nicodemus related to John the story of that interview, and by his pen it was recorded for the instruction of millions. The truths there taught are as important today as they were on that solemn night in the shadowy mountain, when the Jewish ruler came to learn the way of life from the lowly Teacher of Galilee” (Ellen White, DA 177.2). Christ revealed to Nicodemus his need to be “born again” in order to “see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Christ said to Nicodemus, “The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit” (DA 172.1). “Nicodemus was still perplexed, and Jesus used the wind to illustrate His meaning: ‘The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit’” (DA 172.2). Christ continued to explain to Nicodemus that conversion of the soul is “by an agency as unseen as the wind,” that is, by “the Spirit” (DA 172.3). In other words, Jesus was talking to Nicodemus about the Holy Spirit and his need to be re-born from above. Christ was trying to get Nicodemus to discern “heavenly things” (John 3:12). Christ was trying to get him to go beyond his earthly wisdom

and understanding and to focus on that which is from above, that is, on spiritual truths which “are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). Christ had used “earthly things” (John 3:12) to illustrate the spiritual things He was relating to, and while Nicodemus seemed eager to understand that which he was being taught, he had much difficulties grasping the lesson.

Christ then told Nicodemus: “If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” (John 3:12). By this time Christ had only given Nicodemus “milk,” but knowing he ought to get off “milk” and eat “meat,” Christ gave Nicodemus the “meat” as follows: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (John 3:13). It is not difficult to understand the first part of John 3:13 – that the one who came down from heaven and who has ascended up to heaven is the ‘Son of man’ – Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. But the second part of this verse – “which is in heaven” – needs discernment. How could Christ speaking these words to Nicodemus, and who was physically present with him at that moment, say that He is also in heaven?! The tense that is used in John 3:13 in the word translated as “which is” (in heaven) is the first-person singular present indicative – this means that the word “is” is indicative of the state of the person speaking, at that moment – it indicates where the person speaking “is” right then. Christ was saying, in effect, “although I am standing here speaking to you right now” – “I am in heaven.” That needs discernment. Especially if you understand that the Son of God, who at His earthly birth became “the Son of man”, was at the time of speaking to Nicodemus constrained by humanity, for we are told: “Cumbered with humanity Christ could not be in every place personally” (DA 669.2). How then, could Christ be present and speaking with Nicodemus here on this earth and be in heaven at the same time? The only way Christ could have been in heaven at the same time on earth with Nicodemus was being in heaven by His Spirit and being on earth bodily. This is the lesson Christ sought to teach Nicodemus, that when Christ ascends to heaven, He would be bodily performing His priestly work in heaven while by His own Spirit He would be working here on earth. The essence of the lesson to Nicodemus was this: Christ was ministering to Nicodemus bodily on earth while He was in heaven spiritually, and the reverse would be true after Christ went to heaven bodily. This is why Christ later told His disciples (John 16:7): “Christ said, ‘It is expedient for you that I go away.’ No one could then have any preference because of his location or personal contact with Christ. The Saviour would be accessible to all alike, spiritually, and in this sense he would be nearer to us all than if he had not ascended on high. Now all may be equally favored by beholding Him and reflecting His character. The eye of faith sees Him ever present, in all His goodness, grace, forbearance, courtesy, and love” (Ellen White, HP 337.2).

The lesson Christ taught Nicodemus helps us to understand why the apostles believed that the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of Christ which was in” the prophets (1 Peter 1:11), and “the Lord is that Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17); and helps us understand why Ellen White believed the Holy Spirit in John 14:16-17 “refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter” {14MR 179.3}; “the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, which is sent to all men to give them sufficiency, that through His grace we might be complete in Him” {14MR 84.3}, that “the Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ” {DA 805.3}; “We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” {Lt66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par. 18}.

**Tuesday: Moses and the Prophets** – The Bible is the highest authority and expositor of truth and what is right. “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them .... If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead”(Luke 16:29, 31). If one will not be convinced by the Bible, nothing will convince him.

**Wednesday: Wise Men and Women** – Men and women need the Spirit of Christ to be wise. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

**Thursday: Education in the Early Church** – Christ aboard in His church even when He went to heaven. “Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:26). “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16).