

Sabbath School Lesson #3 – “All Future Generations” – 10-16 April 2021

Christ would have us learn lesson that He taught to Noah. “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:8). And the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with men, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Genesis 6:3). “The long-suffering of God” (1 Peter 3:20) was abundantly manifested in the time of Noah. Men were recklessly plunging into vice, disregarding the marriage relation, and violating the seventh commandment, and with that every other one, yet the Lord said that He would bear with them one hundred and twenty years. “The long-suffering of God *waited* in the days of Noah.” Waited because God “is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). The antediluvians had the truth brought to them by Noah, “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5). They resisted the striving of the Spirit of God until it finally ceased to strive – the law was entirely obliterated from their hearts, and they had become insensible to all appeals.

Sunday: The Sin Principle – When God made man in His own image, He made him upright (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Not alone in his physical form, but also in his moral nature, he was in the image of God. While Adam continued in this upright, sinless condition, the law of God was in his heart. We know this from Psalm 40:8, where David, speaking for the Messiah, says, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart.” The existence of the law of God in the heart is manifested by the willingness to obey that law; and he who, as was the case with Christ, has the law perfectly formed within his heart, will render perfect obedience to the law. This was the case with our first parents in the garden of Eden. But man fell from his high estate; he sinned against God, and thus marred the perfect copy of the law which had existed in his heart. The tendency of sin is to multiply itself; like the tares sown among the good grain, it will grow without any attention. So the first sin prepared the way for many more, till at last nearly all the world became wholly given up to sin. In Hebrews 3:13 the apostle says that men become “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin;” that is, the more men sin, the less heinous does sin appear to them, until at last evil appears to be only good, and good evil, and they sin without the slightest compunction of conscience. This sin principle is something with which everybody is familiar. Now this progressive love of sin, and the indifference to it, is nothing else than the obliterating of the copy of the law which exists in a more or less perfect state in every heart. This work is not done instantaneously; it takes time for men to so completely obliterate the law from their hearts that they will feel no restraint. But when it is entirely gone, then man is in the condition in which he was just prior to the flood, when “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). So long, however, as any portion remains in his heart, the Spirit is enabled to strive with man, and, by means of that law, to convict of sin; and this is so whether the individual knows anything of the written revelation or does not.

Monday: The Man Noah – “Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:9). The man who walks with God must be a perfect man, for God is perfect, and two cannot walk together except they be agreed (Amos 3:3). The man who walks with God, must forsake his own ways, and adopt the ways of God (Isaiah 55:7-9). David speaks thus of those who walk with God: “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity; they walk in his ways” (Psalms 119:1-3). Then to walk with God is to keep the commandments of God. Those who walk in the way of His commandments, must be perfect, for “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul” (Psalm 19:7). The law of God is the righteousness of God (Isaiah 51:6-7); it is His will (Romans 2:17-18; Psalm 40:8); it is a transcript of His character, a description of the ways of God. All that God requires of men is that they should do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him. And in order that they may know what justice and mercy are, and what they must do to walk with Him, he has described Himself and His way in His law. The life of the man who thus walks with God, is the best sermon that can be preached to the ungodly. Such a life can be lived only by faith, for without faith it is

impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). They who seek righteousness in any other way than by faith, will come short of it. Noah obeyed God by faith and condemned the world.

Tuesday: Covenant With Noah – “But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee” (Genesis 6:18). None should allow themselves to be confused by the term ‘covenant with Noah’ or any other covenant involving God and any person. It is either the promise of God or the promise of the people. From Adam to us today, God has made a one-sided promise to save us. God’ promise is “The Covenant” – the New Covenant, whether given to Adam or to Noah or to us. That God promised to save Noah from the flood is still a one-sided promise of God just as His one-sided promise to bless Abraham. God made a covenant with Abraham, before that He also made a covenant with Noah, and a covenant with Adam.

Wednesday: Sign of the Rainbow – There is a closer connection between the rain and the forgiveness of sins than many realise. When God made a covenant with Noah, that He could no more destroy the world by a flood, He said: “This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set My bow in the cloud.” The rainbow is in a special sense God’s bow, for it is that which encircles His throne. When John, on the Isle of Patmos, saw the throne of God in heaven, he saw that “there was a rainbow round about the throne, insight like unto an emerald.” Ezekiel also saw “visions of God,” he saw “the likeness of a throne, ... As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.” We learn, therefore, that when God sets His bow in the clouds, He puts there His own glory that is about His throne. It is the bow of promise, for He gave His word, and His word is His glory. Thus it was that Jeremiah, on pleading for forgiveness for the people of God, said, “do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory.” For God to break His word would be to make His glorious bow of no effect; and as that is some of the glory of His throne, it would be to disgrace the throne of His glory. We learn from the prophecy that the bow in the cloud, which is the token of the steadfastness of God’s word, not only assures us that there will be no more flood, but that it is an assurance of the mercy of God in the forgiveness of sins. To His people God says: “For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.” Let the cloud of sins be never so thick and threatening, the glory of God’s word of grace shining upon it will bring into full view the bow of promise, and we shall remember that there is forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared. So even the clouds of darkness that overshadow the earth may bear to us a message of comfort.

Thursday: “Only Noah Was Left” – Men in these last days will discount the flood and also discount the coming of the Lord. But the flood was real. Christ used the flood and its time as an illustration of the last days. “As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:26-27). In Hebrews we are informed who the “all” were who were destroyed by the flood. “By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear; prepared an 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). It was the world that was condemned by the preaching of Noah, because they did not believe it; and it was the world that was destroyed by the flood. Peter says that they who scoff at the promise of the coming of the Lord are willingly ignorant of the fact that “by the word of the Lord the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby the world that then was being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:5-7). Those who discount the flood also reject Christ.