

Sabbath School Lesson #5 – Children of the Promise – 24-30 April 2021

Christ assures the children of the promise, “Lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). Christ took upon Himself the curse of sin. In order that the blessing might come upon us (Galatians 3:13-14). Although He knew no sin, He was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). He suffered the death to which we were doomed, that we might share His life. And this exchange is made when we come into touch with Him, by confessing that “Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” (1 John 4:2). How much we lose by holding Jesus off as a stranger. When we know that He identifies Himself with us in our own flesh, how precious becomes the Lord’s assurance, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Christ said “I am with you always”, others say He is in heaven and sent the “Holy Spirit” to us. But the Bible teaches that Christ is Omnipresent – 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 Spirit of Christ, and Christ’s omnipresence. “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17). It is the same Spirit that He breathed on His disciples saying, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22), He wants us to receive the same “Spirit of Christ” which was in all the prophets (1 Peter 1:10-11), because “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9); let us have Christ, as EG White says, “It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” {Lt66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par. 18}. Christ ministers physically in heaven, and ministers spiritually in us.

Sunday: Thy Shield – The Lord says: “Behold, I come quickly and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as His work shall be” (Revelation 22:12). “Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him” (Isaiah 40:10). What is this reward that is “with Him”? – It is Himself – His own presence. To Abraham, the father of all the faithful, the Lord said: “I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward” (Genesis 15:1). And the psalmist wrote: “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup; Thou maintainest my lot. The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage” (Psalm 16:5-6). The Lord gives His Holy Spirit, His own omnipresence, to be with His people for ever, so that He says: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” By the Spirit we are made “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17). It is not that we are heirs of His property, but that we are heirs of Himself. He is our portion; He is our reward. Jesus brings His reward with Him, because His coming assures His eternal presence with His people, and it is “with Him that God freely gives us all things” (verse 32). When the heavens and earth shall shake, and be removed, “the Lord will be the hope of His people” (Joel 3:16). We are exhorted to “run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith” (Hebrews 12:1-2). But we are not told to look far away; no; “He is not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:27). Look to Jesus, not as One who “is to come,” but as One “who is.” Our only hope in the coming of the Lord is our personal acquaintance with Him now. If we know Him, and love His presence with us, then we shall “love His appearing.” When Jesus comes, all those to whom His coming is indeed a reward, will say, “Lo, this is our God.” The Lord can never be the eternal reward of any of whom He is not the present reward. Abraham, the father of all the faithful, understood the Lord as his shield and reward.

Monday: The Messianic Promise: Part 1 – In studying this promise, two portions of Scripture must ever be kept in mind. The first is in the words of Jesus: “Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of Me.” “If ye believed Moses, ye would believe Me; for He wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?” (John 5:39, 46-47). The only Scriptures in the days of Christ were the books now known as the Old Testament; these

testify of Him. They were given for no other purpose. The Apostle Paul wrote that they are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:15); and among those writings the books of Moses are specially pointed out by the Lord as revealing Him. He who reads the writings of Moses, and the entire Old Testament, with any other expectation than to find Christ, and the way of life through Him, will utterly fail of understanding them. His reading will be in vain. The other text is 2 Corinthians 1:19-20: "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Sylvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in Him is yea. For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us." No promise of God has ever been given to man except through Christ. Personal faith in Christ is the one thing necessary in order to receive whatever God has promised, God is no respecter of persons: He offers His riches freely to everybody; but no one can have any part in them except as he receives Christ. This is perfectly fair, since Christ is given to all if they will but have Him. With these principles in mind, we read the first account of the promise of God to Abraham. "Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3). At the very outset we may see that this promise to Abraham was a promise in Christ. The Apostle Paul writes: "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached beforehand the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham" (Galatians 3:8-9). From this we learn that when God said that in Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed, He was preaching the Gospel to him. Abraham understood that the blessing that was to come upon the people of the earth through him, could be enjoyed only through faith.

Tuesday: The Messianic Promise: Part 2 – The preaching of the Gospel is the cross of Christ. Thus the Apostle Paul says that he was sent to preach the Gospel, but not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. And then he adds that the preaching of the cross is the power of God to them that are saved (1 Corinthians 1:17-18). And this is but another way of saying that it is the Gospel, for the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Therefore since the preaching of the Gospel is the preaching of the cross of Christ (and there is no salvation by any other means), and God preached the Gospel to Abraham when He said, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," it is very clear that in that promise the cross of Christ was made known to Abraham, and that the promise thus made to Abraham was one that could be gained only through the cross.

Wednesday: A Great and Mighty Nation . . . – When God was about to destroy Sodom, He said: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:17-19). This gives us to understand that the promise was made to Abraham with so much positiveness, because the Lord knew that he would keep His commandments, that he would command his children and offspring to do likewise. Thus the promise to his seed was only to those who should serve the Lord.

Thursday: "Make Your Name Great" – "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3). The Lord saw in Abraham a willingness to serve Him, although all his people were idolaters (Joshua 24:2), and He separated him from them, so that he might not become contaminated by them, but might become the father of a people who should be fit to inherit the earth. If we closely examine this promise, we shall find that it comprehends a great deal. "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," means nothing less than the possession of the whole earth by the descendants of Abraham.