

Sabbath School Lesson #13 – The Ultimate Rest – 18-24 September 2021

Christ would have us have the ultimate rest now. To this end, the apostle Paul reminds us: “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). This has to do with the inheritance, in that “we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17). But let us not put it all off for the future. Go back a couple of verses, – “we speak of the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Corinthians 2:7-8). They might have known it, for read what follows in verse 10: “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” It is something that God reveals to us *now*. We must not put it all off to the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, to the pearly gates, and the walls of jasper. And the only reason why we have not seen these things in the past is simply because the natural man cannot see them. It is a precious thought and we should grasp it, – that everything that Christ has we have now. Like David of old we can say, “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage” (Psalm 16:6). Let us take God at His word, that we may know the meaning of that prayer in Ephesians 1:17-18: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.” If we lack wisdom, let us ask of Him who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given unto us (James 1:5-6).

Sunday: A Vision of the End – In the Revelation we find a vision of the end, in which John saw the new city. This city, the New Jerusalem, the city which God has prepared for those of whom He is not ashamed, because they seek an heavenly country (Hebrews 9:16), is the capital of His dominions. It is the “city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (verse 10), for which Abraham looked. In the twenty-first of Revelation we find a description of those foundations, where we also find that the city will not always remain in heaven, but will descend to this earth with the saints who have reigned in it with Christ for a thousand years after the resurrection. Of the descent of the city we read: “And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write; for these things are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.” In Isaiah 49:17-21 we learn that the believing, righteous ones, the children of the New Jerusalem, constitute the adornment which the city has when it comes down prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. So we see that the saints of God go at once to the New Jerusalem, when Christ comes for them, and then return with it to this earth, when the time has come for the cleansing of the earth from all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and for the renewing of all things as at first.

Monday: The Countdown – What prophecies mark our countdown? In the remarkable discourse concerning the signs of His second coming, our Saviour warned: “Take heed that no man deceive you” (Matthew 24:4). This was given in answer to the question: “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Let us bring home this part of the Lesson. Are there prophecies within Adventism that have been fulfilled and therefore a

powerful countdown? Look at this prophecy: “The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure” {Ellen G White, 1SM 204.2}. This is a countdown! Only to sweep away the structure remains to be fulfilled of this prophecy! Principles of truth have been discarded; our religion has changed; books of new order were written; a system of intellectual philosophy was introduced; and the fundamental principles which our Adventist pioneers believed have been accounted as error!

Tuesday: Marching Orders – Many Seventh-day Adventists believe that our marching orders are found in the fourteenth chapter of Revelation – to spread the message of the three angels. But unless we know the present truth, the truth that is always with us, which is Jesus Christ, for He is the present truth, we will make a shipwreck of our marching orders! Upon Adventists who know the present truth rests the responsibility of making it known to both fellow Adventists and non-Adventists. We, as the servants of Christ, are responsible for carrying out those orders of Christ to save the world. Like the apostle Paul we will labour for the souls, teaching them the truth, even this very truth: “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him” (1 Corinthians 8:6). We preach the truth as it is in Christ. We preach not human, false and unbiblical theology. “We preach not ourselves,” Paul says, “but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (1 Thessalonians 2:4). We will exalt Christ. We will hold aloft the standard of truth until Christ returns or the hand is palsied in death. In carrying out marching orders, our efficiency is of God through Christ. “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament” (2 Corinthians 3:5-6). “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:6-7). This treasure is the glory of God, reflected in Christ, and God having sent the very Spirit of Christ into our hearts (Galatians 4:6), we too reflect the glory of God.

Wednesday: Rest in Peace – Many believe that the bad dead go to hell, and the good go to heaven. Christ represents death as a sleep to His believing children. Awaking Lazarus from death sleep, He said, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead” (John 11:11-14). So are they that die in Christ, their life is hid with Christ in God, and until the last trump shall sound those who die will sleep in Him.

Thursday: Rejoice in the Lord Always – “Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation” are two of the characteristics of the Christian. The Lord has no use for a discouraged man; and it is certain that a gloomy, morose, despondent man cannot be a perfect Christian. This is evident from the exhortation of the apostle, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice” (Philippians 4:4). A man’s rejoicing is the evidence that he has hope, and if he has no hope, he is in a pitiable condition indeed (see 1 Corinthians 15:19). If a man really has hope in God, and in His promises, he must rejoice. If he doubts the fulfilment of these promises, and so fears that he may fail of them, then he does not really hope to receive them; but if he has a well-grounded hope in God, he cannot help rejoicing in the Lord.