

Sabbath School Lesson #8 – Choose Life – 13-19 November 2021

Christ would have us choose life. Said Moses, “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). The free choice is given to all. “Choose you this day whom ye will serve” (Joshua 24:13).

Sunday: The Tree of Life – Our first parents sinned and were driven from Eden lest they eat of the tree of life and live sinful forever. Tempting Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, said the serpent, “Is it so, that God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” “Is it possible that God would make so arbitrary and unjust a command?” The object of this speech can be seen at once. It was threefold, namely, to cause her to doubt the goodness of God; to raise himself in her estimation to the same extent that he lowered God; and to make her feel that she was being deprived of her “rights.” Pride and discontent were aroused, which prepared the way for open rebellion. “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Here was a square issue between Satan and God, and Eve had been worked into such a condition of doubt and discontent that she readily sided with Satan. This was the first sermon on the natural immortality of the soul of man. Notice that it was this teaching that caused the fall; consequently the teaching that man is by nature immortal, is responsible for all the evil that has ever come to mankind. “For God doth know,” etc. Satan charged God with deliberately withholding a good thing from Adam and Eve, so that He might keep them in a position inferior to that which their natural talents entitled them to. What was that position? “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof ye shall be like God.” This is what Satan said, a literal translation of the Hebrews. Said Satan, ‘You might as well be like God; He knows this, and has placed this prohibition upon you, so that He may keep you down. Now will you consent to be thus imposed upon? Do not do it; assert your rights and be free.’ Who on earth is unfamiliar with this kind of talk?

Monday: No Middle Ground – We can either live for God or live against God. No middle ground. “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). God clearly says there is either life or death, either blessing or cursing. No middle ground: you are either alive or dead, either blessed or cursed. “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24). No middle ground. You cannot give a little to devil and much to God, either you serve God fully or you are serving the devil and deceived to by a middle ground. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat” (Matthew 7:13). No middle ground, only two gates: either the strait or the wide. But Satan would want us to believe that we can walk in the broad way and yet with Christ. “And five of them were wise, and five were foolish” (Matthew 25:2). For the kingdom of God, you are either a wise virgin or a foolish virgin, no middle ground. “And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Matthew 25:32). When Christ returns, all people, all nations, will be divided into only two groups, no hybrids, either goats or sheep. If you are 99.99% sheep you are a goat. You are either 100% sheep or any less puts you into the goats category. The sooner we understand it the sooner we will seek God in sincerity to be sheep. “And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29). There will be only two groups: those who have done good and those who have done evil. Not goodly evil or evilly good, no middle ground. There will be only two resurrections: either for life or for damnation. No purgatory, no middle ground. Do not wait to take sides until death, decide now and take your side. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16). No middle ground. You can only yield yourself two ways: servants of God or servants of the devil. God does not work in partnership with the devil.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit” (Romans 8:5). We either walk in the spirit or walk in flesh. No fleshly spirit. No middle ground. “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). Many of us are not decided about many things in our spiritual life. If we have things we are not prepared to give up, yet we must, then we are double minded. “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). We are commandment keeping Christians, and we are told that if we offend in one we have offended in all. There are two dangers: some conclude that they cannot keep the whole law and therefore they leave the church. Others remain in the church, but conclude that they are not expected to keep the whole law. No middle ground, you either keep the whole law by the grace of God or nothing. “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:16). The estimation of Jesus cannot be faulted, He who created us and redeemed us knows us very well, and He declares our condition. We cannot be in the middle temperature. We are either cold or hot. If we take the middle ground, He is clear on what He will do, He will spue us out of His mouth. “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still” (Revelation 22:11). Before Christ returns, He will declare two groups of people: the unjust and the holy. We must be both justified and sanctified before Jesus makes that final pronouncement.

Tuesday: Life and Good, Death and Evil, Blessings and Curses – No one can read Galatians 3:10 carefully and thoughtfully without seeing that the curse is transgression of the law. Disobedience to God’s law is itself the curse; for “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin” (Romans 5:12). Sin has death wrapped up in it. Without sin death would be impossible, for “the sting of death is sin” (1 Corinthians 15:56). “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse” – because it is written, “Cursed is every one that *continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*” (Galatians 3:10). They are not cursed because they do the law, but because they do not do it. So, then, we see that being of the works of the law does not mean that one is doing the law. No; “the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). All are under the curse, and he who thinks to get out by his own works, remains there. The curse consists in not continuing in all things that are written in the law; therefore, the blessing means perfect conformity to the law. This is as plain as language can make it. Now turn and read Deuteronomy 11:26-28 and 30:19-20. What does it mean to us? – Have you fully grasped the meaning of all this? Do you see what it means to us? Do you realise what the blessing of the Lord is? It is righteousness, perfect harmony with God’s perfect law. This is the blessing of Abraham, which he obtained by the faith of Christ, and which faith is offered to all men of all nations; it is freedom from sin! “Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves” (Titus 3:5), but by the “works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). Backslider or sinner of the world, whoever you are: you have desired to do right, to ‘live a better life,’ but you have not been able. Well, there is One, and only One, who can live that better life, and that is Christ. He can impart to you the blessing of obedience of righteousness. “He is thy life;” therefore take Him, submit to Him, He will live in you that blessed better life that will make you a blessing.

Wednesday: Not Too Hard for You – Christ our Lord, when here in human flesh, was kept from sinning by the Word of God. “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalms 119:11). “The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it” (Deuteronomy 30:14). “Believe that Jesus means just what He says; take Him at His word, and hang your helpless soul upon Him” (RH, June 23, 1896).

Thursday: A Question of Worship – “Are we worshippers of Jehovah, or of Baal? Of the living God, or of idols?” {5T 173.3} “No outward shrines may be visible; there may be no image for the eye to rest upon, yet we may be practicing idolatry. It is as easy to make an idol of cherished ideas or objects as to fashion gods of wood or stone. Thousands have a false conception of God and his attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshipping the true God as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place?” {5T 173.4}.