

Sabbath School Lesson #11 – Deuteronomy *in the Later Writings* – 4-10 Dec 2021

Christ would have us remember the God of our fathers. “Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day” (Deuteronomy 10:15). The children of Israel were reminded that they are beloved for their fathers’ sakes. God is declared to be the God of Israel. Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, immediately after the healing of the lame man, said to the people, “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus” (Acts 3:13). God is identified as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God desires to be remembered, and so we read His words, “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed” (Exodus 31:13, 16-17). God is the God of Israel. True, He is the God of the gentiles also, but only as they accept Him, and become Israel through the righteousness by faith. But all Israel must keep the Sabbath. It is the sign of their connection with God.

Sunday: The Book of the Law – Today, the Word of God is so easy of access that men have come to regard it as a common thing, and often show it scant reverence. When Josiah, the son of Amon, became king of Judah, at the age of eight, the people had been much corrupted by heathenism of Baal worship that they had actually lost sight of the Scriptures. Jeremiah did not begin to prophesy till “in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign” (Jeremiah 1:2), only twenty-one years before the beginning of the Babylonian captivity. Judah had no excuse for Baal worship, for in Josiah’s reign, by the time Jeremiah began to prophesy, Scriptures were plentiful, nearly all the prophets had finished their labours and passed away leaving behind their testimonies of Jehovah. The testimonies of Moses – and the writings of Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah, and others principal prophets – were in the hands of the people. This is a fact that should by no means be overlooked, for it is most important. Reformation has long been called for in our Church – and we have no excuse for sustaining “all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof” (Ezekiel 9:4), for we have the writings of the leading Adventist Pioneers to steer us back to Jehovah. The testimonies of Ellen White – and the writings of James White (1821-1881), JH Waggoner (1820-1889), Merritt E Cornell (1827-1893), Uriah Smith (1832-1903), EJ Waggoner (1855-1916), Stephen N Haskell (1833-1922), John N Loughborough (1832-1924), and other leading Adventist pioneers – are in the hands of the people today.

In his eighteenth year, Josiah instructed Hilkiyah, the high priest, who was father to Jeremiah the prophet, to apply the temple contributions to restoration of the sacred building. This work was put in hand and, in the course of it, an important discovery was made. The book of the law, which God had directed should be kept with the ark of the covenant, was brought to light. Hilkiyah, the priest, showed the book to Shaphan, the scribe, who read it himself, and then took it to Josiah. “And Shaphan read it before the king” (2 Kings 22:10).

When the book was read the king and the elders saw how far they had departed from the truth, they began to put down the idolatrous worship – the chariots of the sun and the altars dedicated to sun-worship were destroyed, together with the emblems of deities associated with the central sun-worship. Prominent among our Seventh-day Adventist Church General Conference presidents who pleaded for a reform was Elder Robert H Pierson (1966-1979). Totally devoted, he did his best. He wanted the church to recover the 1888 new covenant message, but then came the Palmdale Conference 23-30 April 1976 and he was persuaded instead to yield his support to the Australian ‘new theology’ as the path to revival. The soul-stirring 1973-74 Annual Council Appeals that he inspired became history. The worldliness he decried in his 1978 ‘An Earnest Appeal to Church Leaders’ is now rampant. And the ‘new theology’ preached by many ministers is not new covenant truth, but disguised old covenant.

New theology is disguised old covenant, for it says that it is impossible to keep God’s law fully, even for a Christian filled with the Holy Spirit. The faith of Christ is still not understood, for people are rooted in the old covenant. The faith of Christ must bring the righteousness of God, because the possession of that faith is the possession of the Lord Himself. This faith is

dealt to every man, even as Christ gave Himself to every man. Do you ask what then can prevent every man from being saved? The answer is, Nothing, except the fact that all men will not keep the faith. If all would keep all that God gives them, Christ, all would be saved.

Monday: The Heaven of Heavens – In his prayer at the dedication of the temple, Solomon said, “But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built!” (2 Chronicles 6:18). In this question there is no implied doubt of the fact that God dwells on the earth with men. On the contrary, the words that follow the question show most clearly that God does dwell on earth. For if the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain God, it is manifest that He must also dwell on the earth. The point made by Solomon is that no one spot on earth can be God’s dwelling-place, since even the heavens are not sufficient to contain Him. Nothing less than the whole universe is sufficient. Therefore the Lord does indeed dwell with men on the earth, as He has from the beginning. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Isaiah 57:15). No place can be found or mentioned where God is not. “Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me” (Psalm 139:7-10). The only place where God does not dwell is in the hearts of proud, rebellious, stubborn men. And even there He stands at the door and knocks for admittance (Revelation 3:20). Pride and rebellion usurped God’s rightful place in the hearts of men, so that now He stands as a suppliant, pleading for admission to His rightful kingdom. His pleading is not evidence of weakness, but of forbearance and love; for “the longsuffering of our God is salvation” (2 Peter 3:15). And it is the pursuance of the object for which Christ “ascended up far above all heavens,” namely, “that He might fill all things” (Ephesians 4:10). God’s purposes will all be fulfilled at last. God will ultimately fill all things, even every heart. What then are those who stubbornly resist Him, and proudly determine that He shall not dwell with them? What will be their portion? – simply non-existence. It is evident that when the time comes that God fills all things, whoever absolutely refuse to allow Him to fill them must be blotted from the universe.

Tuesday: Deuteronomy in Jeremiah – To-day God is watching His people. We see in the current pandemic and methods of the world to deal with it, the leaders of our Church are in union with the State to enforce disregarding the principle of body-temple and liberty of conscience. This should wake us up. God would have us come to our senses. He wants us to seek for the meaning of the situation among us, that we may no longer put our trust in men, that we may not tread in the footsteps of Israel, and say, “The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord are we” (Jeremiah 7:4), when we are not this at all. When we reach the mark of our high calling in Christ, the protecting arm of God will be with us. We shall have a covert from the storm. We have many lessons to learn. May God help us to learn them.

Wednesday: What Does the Lord Require? – “What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord’s thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day” (Deuteronomy 10:12-15). Read these words thoughtfully, and consider how great are the privileges of the people whom the Lord chose to serve Him.

Thursday: Daniel’s Prayer – Daniel was a man “greatly beloved” of Heaven. He prayed, “We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments” (Daniel 9:5). Daniel did not seek to excuse himself or his people before God; but in humility and contrition of soul he confessed the full extent and demerit of their transgressions, and vindicated God’s dealings as just toward a nation that had set at naught His requirements and would not profit by His entreaties. There is great need today of such sincere heart-felt repentance and confession. If we do not humbly acknowledge our guilt, we fall far short of the first condition of acceptance.