

Sabbath School Lesson #1 – The Letter to the Hebrews and to Us – 25-31 Dec 2021

Christ calls us to be patient for the promise. Thus, the apostle says, “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Hebrews 10:36). With so much going on in our world today, the global pandemic, the increasing loss of liberties, we have but very limited time to “have done the will of God” and then to “have need of patience” in order to “receive the promise” of salvation. We recall the words of our Lord, “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). We almost have no time to finish the work and be said to “have done the will of God”, for opportunities are fast closing. Laws are passed rapidly to curtail proclamation of the gospel. “The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones” {CCh 37.2}. “Here are the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12) apply to our very time, but only to those who “have done the will of God” at the close of the third angel’s proclamation. “Ye have need of patience,” says Paul, “that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” “In your patience,” says Christ, “possess ye your souls” (Luke 21:19). “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord” (James 5:7). Paul’s call to be patient is the period when the remnants are *keeping the Commandments of God*, and the faith of Jesus; when the saints are living by faith (Hebrews 10:38-39). And after this period, they will receive “the *end of their faith the salvation of their souls*” (1 Peter 1:9). But only those who do and teach the Commandments.

Sunday: A Glorious Beginning – Unto them, as unto us, Paul says, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?” (Hebrews 2:3-4). Note the words, “began to be spoken.” Christ finished the work that was given Him to do, and the word that He spoke was perfect, but nevertheless He only began it, leaving it to those who heard it to carry it further. Inasmuch as the word only began to be spoke by the Lord, it is evident that the same word, with the same power, must be proclaimed by those to whom He committed it. The word spoken by them that heard is the selfsame word of salvation that Christ proclaimed. The text simply tells the fact, that those who heard the word spoken by Christ, proclaimed it to others. But who have the right to proclaim the Gospel message? Nay, upon whom does the obligation rest to proclaim it? Here is the answer: “And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come” (Revelation 2:17). The word was confirmed to us by them that heard it, and as we hear it we are to confirm it to others. All have not the same talents, nor the same circle of influence; but all who hear are to say, “Come,” each in his place according to his ability. The text in the King James Version says, “God bearing them witness”, but the “them” is inserted, to correct rendering is “God bearing witness with them.” This is what is said in Acts 3:18 of the things which “God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets.” God said to Ezekiel, “Get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with My words unto them” (Ezekiel 3:4). So with those who proclaimed the message that they heard from the Lord; they spoke, but only the words of the Lord. God testified through their mouth. Even so must it be with all who hear, and who obey the injunction, “Let him that heareth say, Come.” God says to His servants, “I have put My words in thy mouth” (Isaiah 51:16). “For He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God” (John 3:34). “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11). If we have indeed heard, and if we are new creatures in Christ, and so ambassadors representing Christ, it is “as though God were intreating by us” (2 Corinthians 5:20). Note they witnessed “with divers miracles.” But let no one long for the power to work miracles, for he will long in vain. He who has such desires thereby shows that he is desirous of vainglory. Selfishness and love of applause is at the bottom of his desire; and from the case of Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:18-23) we learn that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are not bestowed on such. The power is of God, and He uses it only through such as in humility of heart realise that they are nothing. Besides, God has never promised that all His people

should have the gift of working miracles (1 Corinthians 12:8-11). Christ Himself bore witness that there had never risen greater prophet than John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11), yet “John did no miracle” (John 10:41). Of this thing, however, we may be assured, namely, that those in whom the word of God dwells will have the power of the word. When they speak as the oracles of God, the word will have the same power as that by which miracles are performed.

Monday: The Struggle – No doubt that the Christians that Paul wrote to in Hebrews did suffer affliction for accepting the truth (Hebrews 10:32-34; 11:24-26). We often hear about the cross involved in the keeping of the Sabbath. By this is meant the loss of employment, for it is a fact that to very many there seems to be nothing ahead of them but starvation, if they begin to keep the Sabbath of the Lord. How little those who speak of it in that manner realise what the cross is. There is more truth in what they say about the Sabbath and the cross, than they think; but how different! The Apostle Paul said, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14). The cross of Christ, therefore, is something to glory in. Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt (Hebrews 11:26). It is by the cross that the Lord gives to us His life, by which we are saved.

Tuesday: Malaise – “For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Hebrews 12:3). Unless we “consider Him,” Christ, we will faint! “With His stripes we are healed.” Through His suffering, He “obtained eternal redemption for us.” The victory over sin is to be obtained by us through our Lord Jesus Christ. We read the words, “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” (1 Peter 4:1). Peter here refers to the suffering that Christ endured. Christ suffered for sin; we are to arm ourselves with the same mind; and having done that, His sufferings will be borne in us, and they will prove as effectual in us as they were in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. It is no fancy that the sufferings of Christ are to be experienced by men who shall overcome. The Apostle Paul expressed this as his desire, “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death” (Philippians 3:10). And again, “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ” (2 Corinthians 1:5).

Wednesday: Press Together – “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). Although we are exhorted not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, religion does not by any means consist in going to meeting. There are times when all religious services are an abomination to the Lord. When the singing is called noise, and prayer is disgusting to Him. Yet let no one think that this means that there is ever a time when the Lord refuses to listen to a sinner’s plea for pardon, on the ground that he is too sinful to be forgiven, as probation lingers. Far from it (see Isaiah 1:10-20). But the Lord cannot be deceived with honied phrases that mean nothing. Flattery does not tickle His ear. The double-minded man (James 1:8) – who does not know his own mind, but the one who wants the evil even while asking the good – receives nothing from the Lord. Hypocrisy is detestable. The self-righteous Pharisees, whose lives were outwardly models of propriety, but who were hypocrites, were objects of the Lord’s most scathing rebukes, while He most tenderly drew to Himself the publicans and harlots, whose lives were one mass of guilt, and who sincerely longed for something better. As we press together, let us repent of evil ways.

Thursday: These Last Days – Oh that we do not have a portion with the wicked in these the last days, as we see signs of earth’s soon destruction! The wicked shall go to perdition. “We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Hebrews 10:39). We either gain the salvation of our souls by a perseverance in faith, and obtain eternal life by a patient continuance in well-doing (see Romans 2:7)], or we sink back into perdition, which is defined to be utter ruin or destruction. The wicked shall come to an end and be as though they had not been. “For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place and *it* shall not be” (Psalm 37:10). No; there will be neither a sinner nor any *place* for a sinner, after God has executed upon them his just judgments. “They shall be as though they had not been” Obadiah 16).