

Sabbath School Lesson #7 – Jesus, *the Anchor of the Soul* – 5-11 February 2022

Christ is the anchor of the soul, for He is both King and Priest. “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Hebrews 6:19-20). Trust in Christ and take courage.

Sunday: Tasting the Goodness of the Word – In reading the fifth chapter of Hebrews, we always stop with wonder and awe over the picture presented in verses 7-9. The thought of the only-begotten Son of God absolutely in the condition of the weakest man in the flesh, so that, oppressed by temptation, and with no power in Himself to resist, He was constrained to cry out with tears of anguish to Him who alone could save Him from threat of destruction, seems to some irreverent, yet it is just the picture that is presented to us by the apostle, and it is the sinner’s comfort; for *He was delivered*, and it was in our flesh, and from our sins, that He was delivered; therefore in Him we have the victory and are free! But great as is this truth, the apostle writes as though he had not yet begun to say the deep and difficult things about Christ. The dullness of his hearers, that is, our dullness, hinders him from giving utterance to all the wonderful things that he had seen in Christ. It is a fact that to the great mass of professed Christians these things are enigmas. These things, which are the very foundation principles of the Gospel, are unknown to thousands of professors in every denomination under heaven. Therefore, it is necessary that they be taught the first principles of their profession. But that is a sad condition of things. For note well, the Christian is in this world “in Christ’s stead” (2 Corinthians 5:20). Christians indeed are chosen as priests of God, to show forth the excellences of God, even as Christ did. Now it is true that there is always more for the Christian to learn, since no one can be a teacher who does not continually keep learning; but it is also true that the teacher must be well grounded in the first principles, else he cannot teach at all. Most people seem to think that a church is simply a company assembled to receive instruction from some man; whereas it is a people called out to be taught of God and to teach other people. The least in the church ought certainly to be familiar with the alphabet of Christian knowledge. This is so self-evident that the apostle’s conclusion in the sixth chapter of Hebrews in the beginning of the test that follows is most natural: “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the power of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them; again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:1-6).

Monday: Impossible to Restore – The sum of verses 4-6 in the sixth of Hebrews is that if one rejects and despises all this power, having once known and tasted it, it is impossible to renew him again to repentance. Of course, since there is no greater power than that which he has rejected. There is no other name under heaven, except that of Christ, by which salvation can be had. If, now, one treads under foot the Son of God, and counts the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing (Hebrews 10:29), it is evident that there is no hope for him. It is simply the question that the apostle had in verses 3-4 of the second of Hebrews, “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?”

Tuesday: No Sacrifice for Sins Left – “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (Hebrews 10:26). How does one grounded in faith get to a point they sin wilfully? Is it possible that one who has gone so far as to be made partaker of the Holy Ghost, and to taste the good Word of God and the power of the world to come, having been fully enlightened, to fall away? Some say it is not, but if it were not, the apostle would not have shown the hopelessness of such a fall. How does one stand? “By faith” (Romans 11:20). The question then: Is it possible for a man to depart from the faith, and thus to fall? We have only to read 1 Timothy 4:1, for an

answer. We are familiar enough with the old saying that the fact that they turned away is an evidence that they were never fully in the faith, but that is easily disproved. Take for example the case of Peter. While on his way to meet Jesus on the water, he sank. Why did he sink? – Because his faith wavered. He doubted. Shall we say that the fact that he began to sink is an evidence that he had not walked on the water by faith? That would be to deny the fact. It is possible for a person to lose the faith by which he stands; “Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear” (Romans 11:20).

Wednesday: Better Things – As the rain waters the earth, so the righteousness of God is poured to all. But unbelief robs men of the blessing. Believing is breaking up the fallow ground. If the ground is not broken up, then the rain runs off without producing any crop. “For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which bears thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burnt. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation” (Hebrews 6:7-9). “The Lord is good unto all; and His tender mercies are over all His works” (Psalm 145:9). See how abundantly, how lavishly, God bestows His gifts. He demonstrates His love to all by “rain on the earth where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein is no man; to satisfy the desolate and waste ground” (Job 38:26-27). He lets the rain fall on the barren rock, and on the wide expanse of ocean. He pours righteousness upon all if they will take it.

Thursday: Jesus, the Anchor of the Soul – What more? “For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself;” this was an oath for the confirmation of the promise, which was in itself immutable. Moreover, the “promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Mechisedec” (Hebrews 6:13, 17-20). Mark two things: First, this oath and promise were given for our sakes. Abraham did not need that God should confirm the promise with an oath, for he had demonstrated to the full that he believed the Lord’s simple word. But God gave the oath so that we might have our faith in His word strengthened. Second, the oath and the promise relate to the forgiveness of sins, and all the blessing which Christ as our High Priest secures for us. They are for our consolation and encouragement when we flee for refuge to Christ. Therefore when we come to Christ for mercy, and grace to help in time of need, we are assured beforehand by the promise of God, backed up by His oath, that we shall have the things for which we ask. How let us stop and think for a moment what this means. The oath of God is really a pledging of His own existence. He swore by Himself. He has thereby declared that His life would be forfeited if His promise should fail. His promises are as enduring as Himself. As God is “from everlasting to everlasting,” so “the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him” (Psalm 90:2; 103:17). The Father and the Son are one; so, in God’s pledging Himself, Christ is pledged. But “in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him: and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16-17). It is “by the word of His power” that all things are upheld (Hebrews 1:3). Upon the existence of God depends the existence of the heavens and the earth. But He has pledged His own existence to the fulfilment of His promises. The existence of the entire universe, depends upon the fulfilment of the promises of God to the believing sinner. If a single sinner, no matter how unworthy, or insignificant, or obscure, should come to the Lord sincerely asking for pardon and holiness, and should fail to receive it, that instant the whole universe would become chaos, and would vanish out of existence. But the sun, moon, and stars still hold their places in heavens, as a proof that God has never failed a single soul that put his trust in Him, and as a pledge that His mercies fail not. His faithfulness, therefore, is in the heavens. If we would let the sun, moon, and stars tell this story to us every time we see them, we should live better lives, and discouragement should be a thing unknown.