

Sabbath School Lesson #12 – Receiving an Unshakable Kingdom – 12-18 March 2022

Christ would us live as heirs of the unshakable Kingdom. “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:2). “Those who meet Christ in peace at His coming must in this life walk before Him in humility, meekness, and lowliness of mind. It becomes every human being to walk modestly and circumspectly before God, in harmony with the great testing truths He has given to the world” {GCB April 23, 1901, 420.7}.

Sunday: “You Have Come to Mount Zion” – “We are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, . . . , and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Hebrews 12:22-24). “Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous” (1 John 3:12). Cain and Abel each brought an offering to the Lord. Cain's offering was of the fruit of the ground, and Abel's of the firstlings of the flock, and of the fat thereof. Abel's offering was accepted, while Cain's was rejected; therefore Cain was envious, and slew his brother as they were alone in the field. Then said God to Cain, “Where is Abel thy brother?” “The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground” (Genesis 4:10). What did Abel's blood say to the Lord, as it cried from the ground? It cried for vengeance. A life had been taken, and nothing but life could satisfy the demand of justice. It cried just as does the hire of the labourers who have reaped the fields of the rich, which has been kept back by fraud (James 5:4). All the innocent blood that has been shed on the earth, cries to the Lord for punishment which will be meted out to the violent ones who have shed it; “for, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain” (Isaiah 26:21). But what about “the blood of sprinkling,” to which we have come: what does it speak? It speaks peace and pardon. Christ, like Abel, was put to death because His works were righteous, but His blood calls not for vengeance. On the contrary, that blood is the only means by which even those who shed it can find salvation. It was a most cruel and wicked thing, to crucify “the Lord of glory,” and yet “through the blood of His cross” He reconciles all things to God, “whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Colossians 1:20). What a marvellous thing! that the blood of the slain one procures pardon for the slayer! “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh” (Hebrews 12:25). The blood is the life, and therefore represents Christ Himself. The speaking of the blood is the very voice of Christ Himself. Christ said of those who with wicked hands nailed Him to the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). This therefore is what is said by the sprinkled blood unto which we all have come, and by which we are brought near to God. Even though we ourselves have been guilty of the blood of Christ, by it we have boldness to enter into the holiest, even into the secret place of the Most High (Hebrews 10:19). There the blood brings us, and there the blood cleanses us from all sin. Abel knew of this blood, and of its cleansing power, for “by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous” (Hebrews 11:4). Abel was not by nature any more righteous than Cain was; but even those who were “aforetime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another” (Titus 3:3), are made perfectly righteous through faith in His blood. Being made righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Then they can “offer the sacrifices of righteousness” (Psalm 4:5). It must be remembered that there was no virtue in the offering which Abel brought to the Lord, even though it was a more excellent sacrifice than that of Cain. There is only one sacrifice in the universe, and that is Christ, “who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God.” His blood will purge the conscience from dead works, so that all the works will be wrought in God. He was made a propitiation for sins before the foundation of the world, and faith in His blood, and that alone, without any act whatsoever, makes the believer righteous. But faith works, and the justified one by the same faith through which he receives pardon, can “offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God”

(1 Peter 2:5). “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit” (Psalm 51:17). This is a spirit that acknowledges that self is nothing but dust, and that the Christ of God is everything. The voice of the blood of Christ still speaks to us from heaven, inviting us, pleading with us, to come and receive pardon. But how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?

Monday: You Have Come to God, the Judge of All – What does it mean to you to have come to God, the Judge of all? It will be worth all the world to me if when the time of reckoning comes the avenger cannot find me. The accuser of the brethren comes every day, and here we are before the Judge. “We have come,” says the apostle, “to God the Judge of all” (Hebrews 12:23). The accuser says I am a liar and deceitful, have borne false witness, and have done everything that is evil. This is what you are, he says. Now it would be worth more to me than all the gold that could be piled in the Bank of England, and ten thousand times that, if I could say, “You are mistaken. The one who did all those things is dead, and you are too late. Another man lives here now. Christ liveth in this house. You may bring against Him all the charges you please, for He is able to settle with you for them; but the one you are charging is dead, and you have no case at all.” In order to be able to say that, I must be willing that the Lord should take my life, and all that pertains to it. It will be like taking my life, for my life has been made up of sin. So in the midst of sin and temptation I say, I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20).

Tuesday: Shake the Heavens and the Earth – Those who come up in the special resurrection embrace a limited number of both righteous and wicked (Daniel 12:2; Revelation 1:7). Those who, in this special resurrection, come up to everlasting life (though not then made immortal) are part of the 144,000 because they have died in the third angel’s message; and those who rise to shame and contempt are those who had a part in Christ’s crucifixion. That such a resurrection, embracing these two characters, will take place, the scriptures referred to plainly enough affirm; and the only point where the prophecies make a place for its occurrence is at the time mentioned in Revelation 16:17. This is at the time of the beginning of the seventh plague, when the voice of the Father from the throne utters the solemn words, “It is done”! That this is the voice of God, not of Christ (for that comes later when Christ calls all righteous to life: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17), we are told: “And I saw Jesus rise up in the Holiest, and as He came out we heard the tinkling of bells, and knew our High Priest was coming out. Then we heard the voice of God [referred to in Revelation 16:17] which shook the heavens and earth, and gave the 144,000 the day and hour of Jesus’ coming” {DS March 4, 1846 Par 2}. This voice of the Father shakes both heaven and earth, but speaks deliverance to the people of God (Jeremiah 25:30; Joel 3:16; Hebrews 12:26, 28). Of this time, Ellen White, speaks very clearly, as follows: “That voice shakes the heavens and the earth ... Graves are opened, and ‘many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth ... awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.’ All who have died in the faith of the third angel’s message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God’s covenant of peace with those who have kept His law. ‘They also which pierced Him,’ those that mocked and derided Christ’s dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory, and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient” (*The Great Controversy*, 636-637).

Wednesday: An Unshakable Kingdom – Luke speaks of the time when there shall be upon the earth “distress of nations, the sea and the waves roaring” (Luke 21:26). But the Psalmist points us to the river whose waves are never lashed into fury, and “God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved” (Psalm 46:5). Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews 12:26-28, refers to the same thing: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom *which cannot be moved*,” etc. When the earth is reeling to and fro, men’s hearts are failing them for fear, all things that can be shaken are being shaken and removed, the Christian is pointed to his immovable kingdom, the holy city that will ever remain, where his treasure and hope may safely repose.

Thursday: Let Us Be Grateful – In writing to the Hebrews Paul compares the sacrifices of beasts, and of Christ, and says, “By him, therefore, let us offer the *sacrifice* of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. But to do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased” (Hebrews 13:15-16). Consecration to God, and devotion to His cause, are “such *sacrifices* God is well pleased.”