

Sabbath School Lesson #4 – Seeing the Goldsmith’s Face – 16-22 July 2022

Christ is seeking to purify us, to refine us like gold, to transform us into His image. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18). Christ purifies us by Himself, not by another Being, for the Spirit of the Lord is Christ, “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (verse 17).

Sunday: “In His Image” – What happened to the image in which we were created, and what is happening to that image now? The facts concerning the creation of man, his fall, God’s purpose to restore him, and the result of this work, are briefly stated in the following scriptures: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.... So God created man in His image” (Genesis 1:26-27). “All have sinned and come short of the glory [character or image] of God” (Romans 3:23). “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of His Son*” (Romans 8:28-29). This is accomplished by “the light of the glorious Gospel [the Gospel of the glory] of Christ who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4). “And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Corinthians 15:49).

While God is restoring you to the image of His Son, He wants you to shine His glory so that others may also be restored to the same image. Surely no one can fail to see that God designs that every one of His people should shine the light of His glory forth to the world, even as the heavens do and as Christ did. “For so hath He commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:47). The glory which God has given to Christ, He has given to us, and for the same purpose that He has it, namely, that we may shine as lights in the world, and thus glorify God. “Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee” (John 17:1). “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit” (John 15:8). “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). Again, read Romans 8: 28-30. God has glorified His Son Jesus, and has given us the same glory that He has given Him. By beholding Him we are conformed to His image, so that we are His brethren, He being the firstborn. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2). The glory that God has given us does not appear to the eyes of the world, even as the glory of Christ did not. Yet those who were enlightened by the Spirit, saw the glory of Christ, “the glory as of the only begotten full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). So the glory which God gives us is now in the form of grace and truth; but when the Lord will come it will shine forth so that all may recognise it as glory. What is the measure of that glory? “Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Ephesians 4:7). When Christ was on the mount of transfiguration, the glory that was in Him as grace and truth shone forth, so that “His face did shine as the sun” (Matthew 17:2). Therefore when He comes, and we appear like Him, “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:43). That is, the glory which God even now gives us, is the glory of the sun. But glory is power, the power of grace, so that the power which God gives us now, not simply to enable us to be saved, but to bring others to salvation, is the power that is manifested in the whole heavens. “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3). “Arise, shine!”

Monday: Faith Amid the Refining Fire – How do you help someone who concludes to reject the truth because of the trials and afflictions connected with that truth? Many do not realise that those trials and afflictions connected with the truth are very prominent means of sanctification; that they make us know ourselves, and will, if rightly improved, enable us to advance in the attainment of every excellence. Let us turn to Scriptures, what do we read? Says Job, “When He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10). Says Isaiah, “By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged” (Isaiah 27:9). See, also, verse 7. Says Paul, “They (our earthly parents) verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure,

but He for our profit, that we might be made partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby;" "We glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Hebrews 12:10-11; Romans 5:3-5). James says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4). God's people have ever been a tried people, and the Scriptures plainly declare "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). And Christ was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isaiah 53:3); "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15); and "for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2). When the bitter cup of suffering was put to Him, He showed that His will was sanctified by using this clear language: "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42).

Tuesday: Jesus' Last Words – How do the parables of Jesus in Matthew 24-25 apply to us today? Back in around 1844, our Adventist pioneers applied these parables to their time. We do well also to consider the parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25. Notice the previous chapter closed with the record of the *smiting* of fellow servants and the beginning of church feasting and amusements. The twenty-fifth chapter, which is but a continuation of the same discourse, says: "*Then* shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom" (verse 1). The question arises, when is this comparison to be made? The text says, "*Then*;" and this is when the "*smiting*" of fellow servants and the "*eating*" begin. What is said of these virgins? – "Five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom *tarried*, they all slumbered and slept" (verses 2-5). Again, back in 1844, Adventist pioneers compared their situation with that described in the above texts. The prophecy said *then* the situation would be thus likened, and it was, as may be seen by their writings of that time. What of us today?

Wednesday: "The Wise" – What is the hope of God's people in the time of trouble? The world is to be taken unexpectedly. Not because they have not been warned, but because, as in the days of Noah and Lot, they disregard the warning until too late (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; Revelation 3:3). Not so with God's people; they are faithful, taking heed to the things they have heard; they watch the signs of the times and discern. Hence, as the apostle says, "ye are not in darkness; ... ye are children of the light" (1 Thessalonians 5:5). An angel said to Daniel, "The wise shall understand, but the wicked shall not" (Daniel 12:10). At the close of the third angel's message, are two distinct gatherings, first, the people of God; and second, the wicked (Revelation 14:14-20). Our Lord's parable of the wheat and tares, shows the same. The prophets have seen the nations mustering together to the battle of the great day of God. When this great day is impending, there is counsel to abide in Christ, before the decree goes forth (see Revelation 13:15-17), before "the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the earth.... It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger" (Zephaniah 2:1-3; Revelation 11:18). There is an importance in the prophet's exhortation, from the fact that the condition of deliverance is earnest prayer. The elect cry day and night (Luke 18:7-8). When the Lord comes He will deliver such (Daniel 12:1). Hope in the Lord's deliverance (Jeremiah 30:5-7; Psalm 91:10).

Thursday: Character and Community – How are we individually and as a community of believers established? Read Ephesians 4:12-13. The gifts of the Spirit must accompany the Spirit. It follows, therefore, that the absence of the gifts of the Spirit in any marked degree in the church, is evidence of the absence of the Spirit, not entirely, of course, but to the extent that God has promised it. The Spirit was to abide with the disciples forever, and therefore the gifts of the Spirit must be manifest in the true church until the second coming of the Lord. The Spirit has already been poured out, it only needs that Christians should ask and accept.