

Sabbath School Lesson #5 – Extreme Heat – 23-29 July 2022

Christ was without sin yet He paid the law's penalty for our sake. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand" (Isaiah 53:10). The severity of the law's penalty is seen in the cross. We have many illustrations of God's displeasure with sin – of His purpose and power to vindicate the law by executing the penalty. The branding of Cain (Genesis 4), the flood (Genesis 6), the burning of Sodom (Genesis 19), the captivity of Israel (Jeremiah 20), the smiting of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), the fearful death of Herod (Acts 12) – these instances attest to the declaration that God punishes transgression. But they rather affect, so far as we can see, the temporal and physical well-being of men. They are suggestions, hints, examples to those who afterward shall live ungodly, proofs that the threatenings of spiritual and eternal undoing shall likewise be faithfully visited. But in the cross we see more than this. Christ passed beyond the horrors of temporal suffering, and became a curse, an offering for sin. Wrath to the uttermost came upon Him when it pleased the Lord to bruise Him and put Him to grief. The severity of the law's penalty is here shown as nowhere else, and the impenitent sinner can read his doom in the cross, as he shall himself feel it if Christ be not his Saviour. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). "Our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29). Let us learn the meaning of these words from the cross, and may the lesson hasten our escape. Christ was without sin. He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Let every sinner see the grace and love of God in the cross and glorify His name for these. Let them lead you to constant and hearty repentance. But see also the terror of the Lord – rigour and righteousness and certainty of His law – and be persuaded and persuade others to flee from the wrath to come.

Sunday: Abraham in the Crucible – In Genesis 22, why did God ask Abraham to offer this sacrifice? If God knows everything, what was the point? The inspired writings say, "The sacrifice required of Abraham was not alone for his good nor for succeeding generations; it was also for the instruction of the sinless intelligences of heaven and other worlds. The field on which the plan of redemption is wrought out is the lesson book of the universe. Because Abraham had shown a lack of faith, Satan had accused him before angels and God. God desired to prove the loyalty of His servant before all heaven, to demonstrate that nothing less than perfect obedience can be accepted, and to open more fully before them the plan of salvation" {EP 96.3}. "The trial brought upon Adam involved no suffering; but the command to Abraham demanded the most agonizing sacrifice. All heaven beheld with wonder and admiration Abraham's unflinching obedience. All heaven applauded his fidelity. Satan's accusations were shown to be false. God's covenant testified that obedience will be rewarded" {EP 96.4}. "When the command was given Abraham to offer his son, all heavenly beings with intense earnestness watched each step in the fulfillment of this command. Light was shed upon the mystery of redemption, and even the angels understood more clearly the wonderful provision that God had made for man's salvation. See 1 Peter 1:12" {EP 97.1}.

Monday: Wayward Israel – Having read Hosea 2:14–23, what does this passage reveal about God? Israel, the bride, had become unfaithful. But God did not break His covenant, which is everlasting, nor did He cast off the unfaithful bride. He begs her to come back. O nothing is humiliating than a man to beg for reconciliation with one who has wilfully turned away from him, despising his love, publicly putting him to shame; yet that is just what the Lord did. Read the third chapter of Jeremiah, and the whole of the book of Hosea. He says: "Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed My voice, saith the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion" (Jeremiah 3:12-14).

Tuesday: Surviving Through Worship – Going through a trial? Follow the steps that Job used. How might they help you, as well? God is "the God of patience and consolation."

He is “the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). He takes upon Himself all the reproaches that fall upon men. “The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on Me” (Romans 15:3). We read of Israel, “In all their affliction He was afflicted” (Isaiah 63:9). The words of Christ are, “Thou hast known My reproach, and My shame, and My dishonour.” “Reproach hath broken My heart” (Psalm 69:19-20). Yet in all this there was no impatience, no murmuring. Therefore, as He has already borne the burdens of the world in the flesh, He is fully able to bear ours in our flesh, without complaining; so that we may be “strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness” (Colossians 1:11). This lesson is taught throughout Scriptures: “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4). In the book of Job this is made manifest. “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (James 5:11). In the writings of Moses it is as clearly set forth. Christ says: “Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not the writings, how shall ye believe My words?” (John 5:46-47). If the Gospel given by Moses is neglected, it will be of no use to read the Gospel given by John, because the gospel cannot be divided. The Gospel of Christ, like Himself, is one.

Wednesday: Surviving Through Hope – What can you learn from Paul that can help you keep from falling into self-pity amid your own struggles? “We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us” (2 Corinthians 1:8-10). Brought down to the verge of death, so that all hope seemed lost, Paul was delivered from death by trusting in God, who raises the dead. God sometimes allows His most faithful ones to suffer deep affliction, that they may more perfectly learn that their life and strength are in God alone. Paul suffered, but he was kept alive. He experienced what everyone may experience now – the power of the resurrection.

Thursday: Extreme Heat – How does going through extreme heat of trials work in us patience? Most people think that tribulation works impatience. That is a great mistake. It is true that even common petty trials that are not worthy to be listed in the same catalogue with tribulations are often followed by impatience; but they never beget impatience. They simply reveal the impatience that already exists. Many people think to excuse their irritability by pleading strong provocation. If other people were not so exasperating, they would not become impatient. Wrong. If other people did not cross them, they doubtless would not manifest impatience. A fierce dog may say the same; it will not show its teeth unless provoked. But its nature is none the less fierce. Circumstances and associations do not make us impatient and wicked. They may tend to draw it out; but they cannot make us manifest that which we do not have. Tribulation works patience only in those who, being justified by faith, have peace with God (Romans 5:1-5). Nothing but tribulation can work patience; there is no other way that patience can be developed, except by trials; the fiercer the trials, the more the patience. How does tribulation work patience? It does so only in those who are justified by faith in Christ. Tribulation works endurance only when we learn how not to endure it. We endure the burden which tribulation imposes upon us only by throwing it off. “Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things” (Matthew 6:25-32). “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (1 Peter 5:6-7). “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved” (Psalm 55:22). “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). The justified man knows that he has not the strength to endure trials without being irritated; the load will prove too galling for him. He bears it by casting it upon Christ. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).