

## Sabbath School Lesson #7 – Indestructible Hope – 6-12 August 2022

**C**hrist would have us have the perfect love for God even we go through trails. Perfect love is unselfish and comes from God alone. It appears in man only when the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit. This is what Paul says, “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” (Romans 5:5). Perfect love of God gives indestructible hope.

**Sunday: The Big Picture** – What is the big picture that we should always have in mind when we face trails, and especially as we will go through the time of trouble? Read Isaiah 42:10-17: “Sing unto the Lord a new song and His praise from the end of the earth” etc. This new song is the song of deliverance. Revelation 13 points to the time of trouble, but in the midst of that seeming victory of evil, John saw victory for God’s people. He says: “I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with Him an hundred, forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps; and they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth” (Revelation 14:1-3). In connection with the time of trouble, John sees God’s people singing a new song on Mount Zion. It is the big picture. This is parallel to what we read in the third chapter of Habakkuk. A terrible time is described by the prophet, so terrible that he trembled at the mere vision of it, and prayed that he might be spared from living through the reality. Yet he says: “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls [compare Joel 1:10-20]; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places” (Habakkuk 3:17-19). No trouble can come on the earth that is so great that God’s people cannot sing. It is very common for people to sing when they see no trouble; but it is indeed a new song that is sung when trouble is thickest.

**Monday: Who Our Father Is** – Do you really know who our Father is, do you have true knowledge of Him, or is your understanding of Him based on hearsay and traditions of men? How does the examination of Job helps us to understand God and prevent us from erring in ignorance when we pass through fiery trials? In the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of the Book of Job the Creator Himself recounts the wonders of created nature, which He has made, and demands of Job a definite answer as to his knowledge of them. It is a long and searching examination – a half a hundred questions at least – and Job fails utterly, he cannot answer one. But Job understood his failure, and said, “What shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer; yes, twice; but I will proceed no further.” But, again, from out the whirlwind, the Lord speaks to Job, and questions him further, until at length, overcome with the grandeur of the view of Almighty power and omnipotent wisdom presented to him, Job breaks forth: “I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now Mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repentant in dust and ashes.” Job acknowledges that his previous knowledge of God had been by hearsay, but now he saw and knew Him and the wonder of His works. In his previous ignorance, knowing God only by hearsay, – by criticism and commentary, as it were, – he had uttered many things that he understood not, and had attempted things too wonderful for him, which he knew not. Now, however, he had determined to accept the word of hearsay no longer, but to go to God direct for knowledge and wisdom: “Hear I beseech Thee, and I will speak: I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me.” Then the Lord heard Job, accepted him fully, and blessed him.

**Tuesday: Our Father’s Presence** – Many Adventists focus on future time of trouble, but what of now, are you hesitating because of the difficulties or dangers that lie in the pathway

of obedience to God? Hear the word that He speaks: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.... They that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee" (Isaiah 41:19-13). "The Lord knoweth the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be for ever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied" (Psalm 37:18-19). "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23).

**Wednesday: Our Father's Plans for Us** – How does knowing that all God's thoughts are promises of good to us and are uncountable us help us in times of trouble? Men limit God to their own comprehension of Him. They think to count off what God can and cannot do to help them. Can we count the promises of God? Begin with Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." This statement was made in connection with a specific promise, and shows us that all the thoughts of God to us are promises of good. Good! Now let us see something about the number of His thoughts toward us. Turn to Psalm 40:5, and read: "Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy, thoughts which are to usward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." Turn to read Psalm 139:17-18: "How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand." We cannot count the promises of God to exhaust the list even throughout eternity. One great trouble is, that we do not recognise promises when we see them, just as there are millions of blessings that we never recognise as such, but often call them calamities. Every thought of God to us includes a promise to us.

**Thursday: Our Father's Discipline** – How does knowing our Father's discipline help us to endure trials with hope? How can we ever doubt His care? Let us read and ponder Psalm 90:1-4. "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men" (verse 3). If it seems God consigns men to destruction, it is only because we do not believe the first verse, which declares that He is our dwelling place in all generations. The Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, and hence to eternity He will still encircle us with His life of love. The word rendered "destruction" is in the original "contrite." Read Isaiah 57:15 in connection with Psalm 90:1-3 and note the similarity in thought. Read Jeremiah 44:10, Psalm 34:18; Psalm 51:8, 17. These show that "contrition," brokenness, is a proper rendering of the word translated "destruction." The word "contrition" in the Hebrew means "to break in pieces, to be small, to crush, to grind." Our translators thought turning to dust was the end of the man, and so rendered it "destruction." But His discipline makes new not destruction. It is a blessed truth that God, who in the beginning made man of the dust of the ground, and can turn him back to dust again, not for the purpose of destroying him, but of making a new man of him. The word "return" is to "turn again" which means to "convert." So, the Vulgate carries out the thought completely, in rendering Psalm 90:3, "Ne avertas hominem in humilitatem: et dixisti: Convertimini filii hominum." That is, "And, lest man be turned aside in humiliation, you have said: Be converted, O sons of men." Man was made of dust, but we are all apt to forget our origin, and so, in our self-exaltation take ourselves out of and away from the Lord, who is "lowly" (Matthew 11:29); therefore the Lord, knowing that there is no hope for us away from Him, kindly humbles us into the dust again, saying, 'Come back, be converted, made new.' Can you not see the joy and comfort there is in Psalm 90:3? If it seems turning back to dust is destruction, then that is only because "ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Hebrews 12:5-8). We read, "Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men" (Lamentations 3:32-33). God does not discipline to destroy, but to heal.