

Sabbath School Lesson #2 – Death in a Sinful World – 1-7 October 2022

Christ came to save us from sin and death. The memory verse reads: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). In reading Romans 5:12-18, it will be noticed that verse 12 begins a proposition that is not completed. Notice that verses 13-17 are parenthetical; we must pass on to verse 18 to find the conclusion. But as the mind would naturally lose the first part of the statement on account of the long parenthesis, the apostle repeats the substance of it, so that we may perceive the force of the conclusion. So, the first part of verse 18 is parallel to verse 12. “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men to condemnation.” And the conclusion is, “even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

Notice what the Lesson writer says and quotes: ‘But when God the Father conferred special honor on Christ and announced that They together would create this world, “Lucifer was envious and jealous of Jesus Christ” (Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption*, p. 14) and plotted against Him.’ In heaven, Lucifer lost war against Christ, he was thrown down on earth, where he continues his plotting against Christ. The plotting of Satan now consists of denying that Christ is the Son of God. “Angels were expelled from heaven ... This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God...” {EG White, TDG 128.2}. Our Church joins Satan’s plotting in denying Christ’s Sonship: “Christ is the eternal Son of God ... We are dealing with metaphorical use of the word ‘son.’ Metaphorical significance: The Son is not the natural, literal Son of the Father” (see *Adventist World*, Nov. 2015, p 42). “He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son” (1 John 2:22). “Christ was the only begotten Son of God, and Lucifer, that glorious angel, got upon a warfare over the matter, until he had to be thrust down to the earth” {25LtMs, Ms 86, 1910, par. 29}. And this warfare was over the fact that Christ is a literal Son of God, over reality and not metaphor.

Sunday: Statements in Tension – (1) In what condition was earth created? “And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day” (Genesis 1:31). (2) Did this include man also? “Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright” (Ecclesiastes 7:29). (3) Did man retain his uprightness? “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). (4) What prohibition had God laid upon the pair in the garden of Eden? “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). (5) Who first partook of this forbidden fruit? “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Genesis 3:6). (6) Was Adam deceived as to the consequences of the act? “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Timothy 2:14). (7) How was Eve deceived? ‘But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3). (8) Who was the serpent? “And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:2). (9) How did he begin his work? “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Genesis 3:1).

Monday: Deceived by the Serpent – In Genesis 3, what does this account teach us about how easy it is to rationalise and justify our sinful choices? The mean cunning of the serpent may be seen in the way that Satan approached Eve. From the fact that while they were talking Eve took of the forbidden fruit, and ate, indicates that when the conversation began they were near the tree. Said the serpent, “Is it so, that God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” ‘Is it possible that God would make so arbitrary and unjust a command?’ The object of this speech can be seen at once. It was threefold, namely, to cause her to doubt the goodness of God; to raise himself in her estimation to the same extent that he lowered God; and to make her feel that she was being deprived of her “rights.”

Pride and discontent were aroused, which prepared the way for open rebellion. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Here was a square issue between Satan and God, and Eve had been worked into such a condition of doubt and discontent that she readily sided with Satan. This was the first sermon on the natural immortality of the soul of man. Notice that it was this teaching that caused the fall; consequently the teaching that man is by nature immortal, is responsible for all the evil that has ever come to mankind. "For God doth know," etc. Here again Satan charged God with deliberately withholding a good thing from Adam and Eve, so that He might keep them in a position inferior to that which their natural talents entitled them to. What was that position? "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof ye shall be like God." This is just what Satan said, and a literal translation of the Hebrews. Said Satan, 'You might as well be like God; He knows this, and has placed this prohibition upon you, so that He may keep you down. Now will you consent to be thus imposed upon? Do not do it; assert your rights and be free.' Eve was deceived. Who on earth is unfamiliar with this kind of talk?

Tuesday: You Will Not Die – What was the magic by which the tempter induced Eve to transgress the express commandment of the Lord? It is all summed up in one sentence, "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). It was the belief of this lie that caused the first sin and all the sins that have followed in its train. It is by the subtlety by which the serpent beguiled Eve, that our minds are in danger of being corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The false prophets and teachers are threatened with punishment by the Lord, because, as He says: "With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life" (Ezekiel 13:22). Paul said: "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). Evidently, in every attempt to beguile men from the truth as it is in Christ, Satan has used the same arts with which he succeeded in deceiving Eve.

Wednesday: Consequences of Sin – Based on Genesis 3:7–19 and Romans 5:12–18, what were the main consequences of sin? How did sin enter into the world? "By one man sin entered into the world." What did sin bring with it? "And death by sin." Upon how many did sentence of death pass? "And so death passed upon all men." Why? "For that all have sinned." What then was the fruit of that first offence? "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." But what else comes just as extensively? "The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." By what means did it come? "By the righteousness of one." How only does righteousness come? "By the obedience of one."

Thursday: The First Gospel Promise – In Genesis 3:15, what hope can be found for all of humanity? When man sinned, he lost enmity with Satan; Christ in His mercy for Adam's entire race, tells Satan: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15). The Seed of the woman is not merely to be delivered from Satan's power, but is to crush his head – to destroy him. But who is the Seed of the woman? – It is Christ, you say. Undoubtedly; but the term is unlimited, and therefore it applies to every child born of a woman, whose faith grasps it. The seed of the woman is also the seed of Abraham; and "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). So it is given to every son of man to crush Satan? Yes; have you never read, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly?" (Romans 16:20). Christ had to become flesh and blood, like the children of men, in order "that He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). He has "authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man" (John 5:27), and to execute the same judgment "this honour have all His saints" (Psalms 149:5-9). Reading Genesis 3:15, what must we always remember in regard to the first gospel promise? As soon as Adam and Eve sinned, the Covenant – the promise of God – was made. "The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall there was given divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this covenant offered pardon and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ" EG White {PP 370.2}.