

Sabbath School Lesson #6 – He Died for Us – 29 October-4 November 2022

Christ died for us. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14-15). The serpent was lifted to be looked at. Those who looked were healed. Even so with Christ. “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). In the world to come the servants of the Lord “shall see His face,” and they will not be drawn away to themselves. The light of His countenance will be their glory and it is in that same light that they will be brought to that glorious state.

Sunday: “From the Foundation of the World” – How could Christ be considered “slain from the foundation of the world” and how could Abraham (John 8:56), David (Psalm 118:21-24) rejoice in the day of salvation, and be saved by Christ’s blood, hundreds of years before it was shed? Because God’s promise made it real before it took place. He “quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were” (Romans 4:17). A thing which God has promised is just as sure as though it had actually taken place. There was not the slightest possibility that Christ should not suffer, after He had once been promised; and that Christ should redeem men by His blood “was foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:20). Since He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, it follows, as a matter of course, that those who lived in the first year of the world could derive the same benefit from His sacrifice that we can. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out” (Romans 11:33). “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15).

Monday: A Preface to the Cross – Why is it that the disciples did not understand what Christ told them plainly about His own sufferings and death? It is evident why two of them, at least, did not understand. “And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire” (Mark 10:35). Recounting the request which they and their mother made to the Lord, show that the reason why they did not hear and understand was that they were absorbed in thoughts of self. So were others. In those days, and in the presence of those men, the words of the Lord were fulfilled, and they were ignorant of that which had been opened as clear as the daylight before their eyes, and so missed the blessing. In these days, and in our presence, the words of the Lord are being fulfilled no less than then. It behoves us to be purged of that darkness of self, and be filled with the life of the Son of God, the light of men, that we may see, and understand the history which God is making in the world, and know that it is the fulfilment of His prophecy, step by step, as surely as that from the road to Jerusalem to the cross and the resurrection. Of the attitude of wakeful, faithful believers, the apostle says, “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thessalonians 5:4).

Tuesday: “‘It Is Finished!’ ” – In John 19:1-30, what is the crucial message to us in Jesus’ statement, “‘It is finished’ ”? When everything had been accomplished, that the Scriptures had said should be done to Jesus, “He said, It is finished; and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.” In those words, “It is finished,” there is a world of meaning. It was not simply that His sufferings were finished; not that He was now at liberty; no, there was in it no thought of Himself. The work of God was finished in Him for the redemption of the world. The new creation was prepared for all, and nothing could deprive them of it. The cross of Christ is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18), and that power is creative power (Romans 1:20). The cross creates. In Christ all things are to be restored as they were in the beginning, when everything that God had made was “very good,” and man – perfect man – had dominion over all. The work of God was finished from the beginning of the creation (Hebrews 4:3), and therefore the rest was ready. The proof of this is seen in the fact that “God did rest the seventh day from all His works” (verse 4). Finished work necessarily brings Sabbath – rest. In Christ creation is renewed, so that He offers rest to all who will come to Him (Matthew 11:28). He gives the same rest that God gave man in the beginning, and the sign of it is the same. The Sabbath of the Lord is the sign and seal of the cross of Christ.

Wednesday: He Died for Us – What can you say to the universalist who believes that because Christ died for us then we are saved by His death? Christ did not die for man so that all must be saved for whom he died; but that they may be saved. His death makes our salvation possible but not necessary. Because He died for us God can forgive us without infringing on His infinite justice (Romans 3:24-26). In Romans 5:10, the apostle says; “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” The fact that Christ died for man does not at all insure his salvation. He must be reconciled to God by the death of His Son, and if thus reconciled (which is a voluntary work), and not otherwise, he may be saved by His life; that is, by the intercession of Christ as a priest. The offering of Christ conformed strictly to the types. “For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” (Hebrews 13:11-12). He shed His blood without the gate, but as a priest He is set down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. It is the blood that atones; the blood cleanses; but it is the priest who presents that blood before the shekinah who makes the atonement. In this is seen the harmony with Romans 5:10; reconciled to God by the death of His Son, which death makes salvation possible to the applicant; saved by His life, or priesthood, whereby the atonement is made, by which salvation is positive, fixed, certain. Not all for whom Christ died will be saved; but all for whom atonement is made, whose sins are blotted out, will be saved.

Thursday: The Meaning of the Cross – The Lesson writer says: “Christ did not die just the natural death that every human being has to face. He died the second death, so that all those who accept Him will never have to experience it for themselves.” Did Christ die the second death? What is “second death”? The phrase “second death” occurs four times: Revelation 2:11; 20:6; 20:14; and 21:8. Two of these occurrences (20:14 and 21:8) provide the definition, and the other two (2:11 and 20:6) provide the application. “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (Revelation 20:14); “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). Second death = “the lake of fire” or “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.” We are told: “Satan and evil angels shall have their part in that “lake of fire” which “is the second death” Galatians 5:21; Revelation 20:14” {PP 461.1}. Who will not die the second death? First, them that overcome: “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Revelation 2:11) – Christ says, “I have overcome the world” (John 16:33); Christ did not die the second death, for He says “I have overcome the world.” Second, them that be in first resurrection: “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6) – Paul says of Christ, “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming” (1 Corinthians 15:21-23); thus, it follows then, “Christ the firstfruits” of the “blessed and holy” “that hath part in the first resurrection,” “the second death hath no power.” That the second death had “no power” unto “Christ the firstfruits” is attested further by the fact that “God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it” (Acts 2:24). Satan, not Christ, die second death: “Satan bore not only the weight and punishment of his own sins, but also of the sins of the redeemed host, which had been placed upon him; and he must also suffer for the ruin of souls which he had caused” {EW 294.2}. “When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty. The scapegoat was sent away into a land not inhabited, never to come again into the congregation of Israel. So will Satan be forever banished from the presence of God and His people, and he will be blotted from existence in the final destruction of sin and sinners” {GC 422.2}. The Lesson writer is wrong!