

Sabbath School Lesson #7 – Christ’s Victory Over Death – 5-11 November 2022

Christ has won deliverance for us. Thus, John writes: “And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Revelation 1:17-18). “The sting of death is sin” (1 Corinthians 15:56). Christ received the sting, because God “hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). So, the deliverance which Christ has won for “them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:15), is deliverance from sin. Sin is the only thing that can cause fear of death; the deliverance from sin frees from the fear of death. Christ’s power over death, and over him that had the power of death, is but the measure of His power to free the soul from sin. And this deliverance is proclaimed to all. The Spirit of the Lord God was upon Jesus proclaiming to the captives, Liberty (Isaiah 61:1). To every captive soul, He cries, You are free! the prison doors are open. To all the prisoners He says, “Go forth” (Isaiah 42:9). Whoever therefore now remains in bondage is there because He loves bondage more than liberty, or else because he does not believe the message. But the glorious truth which Christ commissions His servants to proclaim is, that Satan’s cruel power is broken, and that all have their liberty. This is true religious liberty, and the only thing that has a right to the name; and this religious liberty is found nowhere else but in Christ.

Sunday: A Sealed Tomb – In Matthew 27:62–66, how did these actions only help provide the world later with more evidence for the resurrection of Jesus? “How must God and his holy angels have looked upon all those preparations to guard the body of the world’s Redeemer! How weak and foolish must those efforts have seemed! The words of the psalmist picture this scene: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.” Roman guards and Roman arms were powerless to confine the Lord of life within the narrow inclosure of the sepulcher. Christ had declared that he had power to lay down his life and to take it up again. The hour of his victory was near” – Ellen G White {3SP 179.2}.

Monday: “He Is Risen!” – What does the resurrection of Christ mean to us? It means, first, our acceptance of the death of Christ for us and our death in Him; and then it means His resurrection and our participation in His resurrection life, as a daily experience. It means that, our interests have been transferred to the heavenly kingdom, and that we have been made to “sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). And so, we are exhorted: “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Jesus sitteth on the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1). It means a victory over the world through our faith in His resurrection life (1 John 5:4), and a final and complete victory over that last enemy which is death. “The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.... Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:52-57). So then, let the word be upon our tongues, and the experience of the life of it in our hearts, “He is risen!”

Tuesday: Many Arose With Him – Have we noticed the use of earthquakes in the death and resurrection of Christ and resurrection of the saints? Lesson points out: An earthquake marked the death of Jesus (Matt. 27:50, 51), and another one marked His resurrection (Matt. 28:2). There will be an earthquake that will mark the special resurrection those who died between 1844 when the third angel’s message begun to be proclaimed and the close of probation. At that time, when there will be “a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done” and then “a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great” (Revelation 16:17-18). Of this time, Ellen White, speaks very clearly, as follows: “That voice shakes the heavens and the earth ... Graves are opened, and ‘many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth ... awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.’ All who have died in

the faith of the third angel's message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God's covenant of peace with those who have kept His law. 'They also which pierced Him,' those that mocked and derided Christ's dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory, and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient" (*The Great Controversy*, 636-637). The prophet Ezekiel tells us of the earthquakes that accompany resurrections: "So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone" (Ezekiel 37:7). This agrees exactly with the description of the resurrection at the coming of Christ. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). So, the resurrection of the saints is accompanied by an earthquake.

Wednesday: Witnesses of the Risen Christ – Even if you have not seen for yourself the resurrected Christ, what other reasons do you have for your faith in Jesus? We have the word of God. It is a very common saying that 'seeing is believing.' But like many of the sayings among men, it is not true. The fact is, that very many things which may be clearly seen are not believed. In the things of God, believing is seeing. The things which are invisible, are clearly seen by faith. Not because the person who believes imagines that he sees them, but because they are there as real things, and his faith reveals them. Those who say that they have to see a thing before they can believe it, should learn a lesson from the case of Thomas. He would not believe that Christ had risen. He said, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." A few days afterward he had the privilege of doing that very thing, and he cried out, "My Lord and my God." Then Jesus said unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." He believed, but his belief brought no blessing with it. Let us not deprive ourselves of the blessing by demanding demonstration instead of simple evidence.

Thursday: "The First Fruits of Those Who Have Died" – In 1 Corinthians 15:20, in what sense did Paul refer to the risen Christ as "the first fruits of them that slept"? It would have accomplished nothing for us that Christ should have died for our sins and been buried, if the work had stopped there. With that alone to look to, we would only be plunged deeper into the darkness and despair of our mortality. But the record does not end in the gloom of the sepulchre, but in the glory of triumph. Christ "was delivered for our offences," but He "was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). To be saved, we must die His death and rise with Him. We are "by nature the children of wrath," walking after the course of this world, "fulfilling the desire of the flesh and of the mind," under the control of "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2, 3), "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3:3). It is not a pleasant picture, but it is a true one; it is what we should see every time we look at ourselves, if our eyes were not blinded. It is an empty life; the fulness comes only in Christ; but it is only when we are conscious of this emptiness in our own selves, that we are partakers of His fulness. The only way any man can get free from the bondage of these sins, which are inherent in the flesh, is to die. He is to die and yet live; to be in the flesh, yet as though out of it. That is the life which Jesus lived, and it can be accomplished only through Him. He was filled with all the fulness of God; He ascended to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God, for the purpose of filling all things; and by His Spirit we, also may "be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:16-19). Death must be followed by burial. It is not fitting that a living man should be buried, nor that a dead man should remain unburied. So, when we die with Christ, "we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12). It is for us to know, here and now, in our own bodies, "what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:19-20).