

## Sabbath School Lesson #10 – The Fires of Hell – 26 November-2 December 2022

**C**hrist would have us “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). The Catholic Church believes in immortal soul that after death ascends either to Paradise or goes to Purgatory or descends to Hell. It is a very striking sign of the Rome-ward tendency of the times, that there is a growing practice within our Seventh-day Adventist Church to conduct funerals, especially of affluent noble members, in a Rome style of Requiems. Some of these funeral services, within Adventism, are openly called Requiem Mass, just as they are in Catholicism. A Requiem, also known as Mass for the dead, is a Mass in the Catholic Church offered for the repose of the dead soul from Hell or Purgatory to Paradise. It is usually, but not necessarily, celebrated in the context of a funeral. Further, there is also in Adventism a creeping practice of investiture for the dead. For example, on 27 Nov 2020, a renown pastor and Pathfinder Director in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK conducted a posthumous investiture for a dead man, investing the dead member with a Master Guide title, and read the Charge to the dead man in the coffin: “I charge that by the grace of God you [the dead] endeavour every day to cherish these high principles and to live them out in your [the dead’s] words and actions, that by so doing you [the dead] may prove to be a true servant of God and a friend to man. If for any reason whatsoever you [the dead] lose sight of these ideals and do not care to cherish and practice them in your [the dead’s] daily life, you [the dead] are honour bound to return the insignia to the conference making the award. May God keep you [the dead] true to Him and to the worthy ideals of the Pathfinder Club.” It is error to suppose the dead could pledge to keep the Pathfinder law, for the dead know nothing (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6). What is the root of this error in Adventism? We know the belief in the consciousness of the dead is a Catholic doctrine, but few Adventists know that the root of these errors is the trinity. The Catholic Church states that the trinity is the foundation of their faith from which all the rest of their teachings flow. She states: “The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church” (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, 1977). Catholicism understands clearly that the trinity they worship forms the basis of all other false doctrines. Their Requiem services, praying for the dead, is based on the trinity. Our Seventh-day Adventist pioneers rejected the trinity doctrine, and they classed the trinity with other errors of Catholicism. James White had this to say: “As fundamental errors, we might class with this counterfeit sabbath other errors which Protestants have brought away from the Catholic church, such as sprinkling for baptism, the trinity, the consciousness of the dead and eternal life in misery” (J White, RH, 12 September 1854, Par 8). The trinity doctrine did not become official doctrine of our Church until 1980, after it had been first placed in our SDA Yearbook in 1931. Our fundamental principles had been settled back in the 1840s by our Adventist pioneers. It is backsliding that led our Church to adopt the trinity doctrine. The practice of Requiems and posthumous investitures highlight the errors that flow from the false worship of the trinity.

**Sunday: Immortal Worms?** – How do you understand the text “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:48)? “Their worm dieth not,” is evidently a figurative expression, denoting the successful and effectual means of their punishment. All, therefore, which the passage in Mark teaches is that these means will not fail, but continue unabatingly till their complete consumption or destruction is effected. Whatever their worm denotes, it is something which devours and wastes, and so must eventually terminate the existence of that upon which it preys. This idea is carried out more fully and forcibly in the additional clause, “and the fire is not quenched.” If the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched, the dead must be utterly consumed. An unquenchable fire is invariably used in the Bible to denote a fire which cannot be arrested or put out, until it utterly consumes that upon which it preys (see Ezekiel 20:45-48; Jeremiah 17:27; Isaiah 34:8-10; Matthew 3:12).

**Monday: The Fires of Hell** – Does the fact that the wicked are to go into “everlasting” fire, prove that they will live and be tormented to all eternity? “Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 17). For wickedness of the cities, God rained down fire from heaven upon them, and their fate –

“suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” – is given as an example to other evil-doers. They not still burning. Turn to 2 Peter 2:6: “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.” The cities upon which fire fell were turned to ashes. And Jeremiah shows that, instead of it requiring an eternity for eternal fire to accomplish its work, it takes but a short time. He says: “For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her” (Lamentations 4:6). Now if the cities were “overthrown,” and turned to ashes, then the fire must have long ago ceased to burn. And this is the case, for the waters of the Dead Sea now roll where those cities once stood. The “eternal fire” in that case did not burn to all eternity. If that was so in one instance, it is in another and the fires of hell.

**Tuesday: The Saints in Purgatory** – Are saints in Purgatory? Scripture says: “The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything” (Ecclesiastes 9:5); “Put not your trust in princes nor in the son of man in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Ps 146:3-4). These two texts are sufficient to settle any question on dead souls being in purgatory. If the Scriptures were believed, there could never be any prayers to help souls out of purgatory. Of all the faithful souls of old, the apostle says that they have not received the promise, “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Hebrews 11:40). When the Lord descends, and the last trump sounds, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living changed, and together all will meet the Lord, and ascend with Him to heaven. “And so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18).

**Wednesday: A Paradise With Disembodied Souls** – How does Scripture refute the idea that souls praise God in Paradise? Where and what is paradise? Paul plainly intimates (2 Corinthians 12:2-4), that it is in, or corresponds to, the third heaven. We can identify it still more closely. In Revelation 2:7 we learn that the tree of life is “in the midst of the paradise of God.” In Revelation 22:1-2, we learn further that the tree of life is on either side of their river of life. Then the river of life must also be in Paradise. From this same passage we also learn that the river of life proceeds from the throne of God, thus showing that the throne of God is in Paradise. Those in the presence of God praise God. We do not find that the Scriptures anywhere address the dead as conscious intelligent hearers; but of them it declares that “the dead praise not the Lord” (Psalm 115:17), and they “know not anything” (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

**Thursday: The Biblical View** – How does the soul get immortality? “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:11-12). God the Father is the supreme source of all life in the universe. That God is the fountain and source of immortality is plain from the statement of Paul. He speaks thus of God the Father: “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting; Amen” (1 Timothy 6:16). This text is designed to teach that the self-existent God is the only One, of Himself, possesses this wonderful nature. When Christ proceeded out of His Father (Prov. 8:22-25), the Father ordained that Christ should have the same life original that is in God His Father; hence: “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. ‘He that hath the Son hath life.’ 1 John 5:12. The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life” {DA 530.3}. It is clear in the Bible the source of the “life, original, unborrowed, underived” that is in Christ: “For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26). In other words, the Father has immortality (“life, original, unborrowed, underived”) in Himself; and the Father in turn has given that same life to His Son. This life, “immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God” {1SM 296.2}, Christ has in Himself by inheritance (Hebrews 1:4) from His Father who possessed and brought Him forth (Proverbs 8:22-25; John 8:42). Adventists who believe in the trinity deny the literal Sonship of Christ, they have “another Jesus” (2 Corinthians 11:4) and have a false hope of life, for God has put that life only in His literal Son, and he who has no true Son has no life. By stressing that only those who have the Son have eternal life (1 John 5:11-12), John disproves the trinity doctrine that teach that the Sonship of Christ is metaphorical, for otherwise life is metaphorical as well.