

Sabbath School Lesson #11 – End-Time Deceptions – 3-9 December 2022

Christ has given us His gospel as the only uplifting force in the world that can successfully combat the power of sin and the devil. Satan fell as lightning from heaven. He is still an angel, though fallen. Sin has robbed him of his original glory, yet the brightness which he still retains far surpasses all human conception of glory. “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their work” (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). What wonder, then, that he deceives men who trust in appearances? By reason of the brightness which he still retains, he will be able to cause many to believe that he is the Christ. The life of Christ cherished in the heart will alone enable us to detect his devices, and to quench his fiery darts. Satan was defeated and cast out of heaven in the beginning, and when Christ came to this earth, He “spoiled principalities and powers,” triumphing over them in Himself” (Colossians 2:15). Therefore, whoever meets the devils with the power of heaven, is sure to triumph over the devils.

Sunday: Mysticism – Are we aware that mysticism is one of the marked signs of the last days? We are told: “Spiritual darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness the people. There are in many churches skepticism and infidelity in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Many, very many, are questioning the verity and truth of the Scriptures. Human reasoning and the imaginings of the human heart are undermining the inspiration of the Word of God, and that which should be received as granted, is surrounded with a cloud of mysticism. Nothing stands out in clear and distinct lines, upon rock bottom. This is one of the marked signs of the last days” {1SM 15.2}. Let us explore the mysticism often placed on our three angels’ message in Revelation 14:6-7. You are familiar with the text. The issue here is worship. Paul preaching at Mars Hill, called his hearers to the worship of the true God, and he says: “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24). But the people at Mars Hill, with their philosophical or mystical understanding of who God was, they could not follow the preaching of Paul. Many today, who claim to preach the message of Revelation 14:6-7 are no different. To them, the words of Jesus apply very well: “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Matthew 11:25). Without mysticism, the word of God is not difficult, for even babes can understand the God that Revelation 14:6-7 calls us to worship when the babes read: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:4). Jesus confirmed the words spoken by Moses when He had a conversation with the Scribe in Mark 12:28-34. Notice that Jesus quote Moses, “Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.” In Revelation 14 we are told to “give honour” to God. This also is what Jesus Himself did, He gave honour to God: “Jesus answered, If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing: it is My Father that honoureth Me; of whom ye say, that He is your God” (John 8:54). But those who apply philosophy to the word of God, like the Greeks at Mars Hill, tend to complicate the words by Moses about one God. They point to the words in Genesis and say the words used for “God” there was “Elohim” and that means plural, so they build a theory of plurality of God. There is no plurality in the word “Elohim,” but majesty. We see this applied to Moses in Exodus 7:1: “And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.” Check it out, but the word used and applied to Moses is Elohim. “I have made thee a Elohim to Pharaoh,” said the LORD to Moses. Moses being called Elohim here is not multiple of Moses, but just singular. Elohim is majesty. Elohim is greatness. This is given in Exodus 11:3: “And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants, and in the sight of the people.” So, greatness is what Elohim meant. God is Majesty, God is Great, that is, Elohim. That understanding the God we are called in Revelation to worship is important, Jesus says it is life eternal. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). This “only true God” plus His Son, is what Paul preached to the Greeks at Mars Hill. We read in Paul’s letters the

God he knew. “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him” (1 Corinthians 8:6).

Monday: Near-Death Experience – Can the dead communicate with the living, and can those who have had near death experience communicate with the dead? The doctrine of natural immortality, first borrowed from the pagan philosophy, and in the darkness of the great apostasy incorporated into the Christian faith, has supplanted the truth, so plainly taught in Scripture, that “the dead know not anything.” Many suppose Saul spoke to dead Samuel (1 Samuel 28). But Saul did not speak to Samuel, because the Bible says that “the living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything” (Ecclesiastes 9:5). Saul consulted a witch, which God had expressly forbidden, and Satan produced an apparition that looked and sounded like Samuel when he was alive. Today, Satan is again producing apparitions of people who have died, as well as other supposed communication with the dead, such as near-death experiences. But the Bible strongly forbids any attempt to communicate with the dead or with the spirit world; doing so via near-death experience, souls are in danger of give ear “to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1).

Tuesday: Reincarnation – Is there a place for the theory of reincarnation in Christianity? The Lesson writer correctly states, ‘In short, there is no place for the idea of reincarnation in the Christian faith.’ But there are many theories even in Adventism that have no place in the Christian faith. The first sermon preached by the devil was the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. From this point we can trace other corrupt doctrines that entered Christianity. The immortality of the soul – transmigration of the soul, and the trinity gods – ‘God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit;’ and that of the spirits of holy men coming and dwelling in men in the millennial state, to convert the world. It is all Paganism from beginning to end.

Wednesday: Necromancy and Ancestor Worship – What do you make of Saul and the witch of Endor in 1 Samuel 28:3-20? We find here Saul practicing necromancy – pretended communication with the dead. It was not Samuel’s immortal soul which appeared on this occasion; because it was an old man covered with a mantle that came up; and immortal souls are not of that age or form, nor clothed in that manner. Again, this old man came up out of the earth, but immortal souls are not down there, the theory is that they up in Heaven. “Necromancy had been forbidden by the Lord, and the sentence of death was pronounced against all who practiced its unholy arts. Saul had commanded that all wizards and those that had familiar spirits should be put to death. But now, in desperation, he had recourse to that which he had condemned as an abomination” {EP 491.1}. As God had forsaken Saul so that He would not answer him by prophets, it is not probable He should now permit this abandoned woman to summon at will the soul of His servant Samuel from the upper sphere. The whole transaction was a piece of Satanic deception played off upon God-forsaken Saul.

Thursday: Personations and Other Appearances – What will be the last deception that Satan will attempt to deceive souls? “As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour’s advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: ‘Christ has come! Christ has come!’ The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying: This is ‘the great power of God.’ Acts 8:10” – EG White {GC 624.2}.