

Sabbath School Lesson #5 – The Good News of the Judgment – 22-28 April 2023

Christ would have us proclaim the good news of the judgment, “Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Revelation 14:7). The whole aim of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14, and particularly the good news of the judgment, is to teach men how the righteousness of that holy and perfect law may be fulfilled in men, – by Jesus Christ the righteous One. The judgment will reveal all the works of self, and “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psalm 32:1) in that day. Since it is the law of God that is to be the standard of judgment, it is not strange that Satan should seek to lead men to despise the law, and to continue in sin. And lawlessness is a special mark of the last days in prophecy.

Sunday: The Significance of the Judgment Hour – What is the significance of the first angel proclaiming the everlasting gospel together with the judgement? To show that the gospel is ordained that God may be just and yet the justifier of the unjust who believe in Jesus Christ, who is the embodiment of the gospel. The gospel is declared to be “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16). The gospel had the same effect in the days of John. “And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John” (Luke 7:29). John preached the baptism of repentance, and those who were baptized by him confessed their sins. Thus, they justified God; for it is God who declares that “all have sinned;” and whosoever confesses that he has sinned, thereby declares God’s justice. He confesses that God is just in His sayings and in His judgments, as David said in his confession, “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight; that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest” (Psalm 51:4). But “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). If we justify God, we shall partake of His justness. God has no good thing that is not for His children; and we get His goodness by acknowledging it. If we recognise and acknowledge His power, we receive of that power. If we truly acknowledge the perfect righteousness of His word in every particular, we shall be filled with that righteousness. “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

Monday: God’s Mercy and Judgment – How does the Bible reveal the inseparability of God’s mercy and judgment? “O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; His mercy endureth for ever” (Psalm 136:1). This verse and all twenty-six verses of this psalm are in the same manner as this one: “His mercy endureth for ever.” Most people have the idea that God’s mercy ceases, or at least is held in abeyance, when He executes punishment upon the ungodly. This, however, shows us that such an idea is a mistaken one. In this psalm we are called upon to give thanks “to Him that smote Egypt in their first born; for His mercy endureth for ever.” The fact that He smote the first born in Egypt is given as a proof that God’s mercy endures for ever. He “overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,” not because His mercy failed, but for the reason that His mercy endures for ever. The mercy of God for the Egyptians was just as great as for the Israelites. The Lord sent His servants to Pharaoh, making known the truth which would save him and his people as well as the Israelites. The promise to Abraham, which God was about to fulfil, included the justification of the heathen through faith, saying, “In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Galatians 3:8). This blessing was offered the Pharaoh and his people, and was rejected with scorn and contempt. “I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go,” was the reply of the haughty king. Therefore God, in fulfilling the mercy promised to the fathers, was obliged to destroy the Egyptians. He shook them off, as they were endeavouring to stop Him in His work. His mercy did not change in the least, but the Egyptians refused to have it, and when people refuse to accept mercy, there is nothing left them but destruction. Do not be carried away with the idea that in the preaching of the Gospel mercy is revealed, and justice is revealed in the destruction of the wicked. God’s attributes are not thus divided. Mercy goes hand in hand with judgment. In the Gospel the righteousness, or justice, of God is revealed (Romans 1:16-17). The righteousness of God is revealed in Christ for the remission of sins of all who

have faith in His blood, “that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:25-26). If God were not strictly just, He could never justify the ungodly. There is kindness and everlasting mercy in the justice of the Lord. The repetition of the sentence, “for His mercy endureth for ever,” shows that there is need of the dwelling much on the mercy of the Lord. “I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing” (Psalm 101:1). “The earth, O Lord, is full of Thy mercy; teach me Thy statutes” (Psalm 119:64). In the commandments of the Lord, – the ten commandments, – which are commonly supposed to be the embodiment of stern justice, we learn that the mercy of the Lord endures to thousands of generations. He takes vengeance on them that reject all goodness, but His anger soon ceases in their destruction, while His mercy endures.

Tuesday: A Magnificent Scene – What is the significance to you of this magnificent scene? This is when Christ receives the kingdom of Israel to reign over the true Israelites. It is triumph for you if you are a true Israelite. The throne of David is the only throne promised to Christ; thus, the dominion described in Daniel 7:13, 14, must be the kingdom of Israel. It was declared that His everlasting dominion should be over the house of Jacob, yet the prophet, after telling of the destruction of earthly monarchies, says: “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him” (Daniel 7:27). Therefore it must be that all the saints of God will constitute the people of Israel, over whom Christ shall reign. We have Scripture proof. First, the promise is: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Revelation 3:21). Now the word “Israel” signifies, “one who prevails.” It was given to Jacob after he had wrestled all night with the angel, and had gained the victory. The Lord said to him: “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed” (Genesis 32:28). Therefore an overcomer is an Israelite; the promise is to you who are Israelites; and the promise is that those who are Israelites Christ will grant to sit with Him on His throne. Second, the natural descendants of Abraham were never considered as the true Israel, and heirs according to the promise, unless they were, like him, righteous. When Christ told the Jews that if they believed in Him they should know and the truth should make them free, they said, “We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man” (John 8:33). But Jesus showed them that they were in a worse bondage than any human slavery – the bondage of sin (verse 34); upon insisting that they were Abraham’s children, He replied: “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.” “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (verses 39, 40, 44). It is justification by faith that makes us the true Israelites and fits us for the kingdom. Sadly, to Seventh-day Adventists, it was said: “There is not one in one hundred who understands for himself the Bible truth on this subject that is so necessary to our present and eternal welfare” – EG White {RH September 3, 1889, par. 11}.

Wednesday: A Glimpse of Heaven – In Revelation 4, the beloved apostle is given a glimpse of heaven, and there he saw the 24 elders; who are these 24 elders? The 24 elders are some of those who came out of their graves at the resurrection of Christ, and who were numbered with the illustrious multitude which He led up from the captivity of death’s dark domain when He ascended in triumph on high. Matthew records their resurrection (Matthew 27:52-53), Paul records their ascension (Ephesians 4:8), and John beholds them in heaven (Revelation 5:9-10), performing the sacred duties which they were raised up to accomplish.

Thursday: Jesus Is Worthy – The question is, will you sing that new song the beloved apostle heard all the redeemed sing in heaven? “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Revelation 5:9). “We want you to be in that heaven” {4LtMs, Ms 84, 1886, par. 27}. “Will you have your names registered on the Lamb’s book of life? Then be careful and zealous to repent of every sin. He says, I will not blot out your name from the Book of Life, but I will confess it before My Father and His angels. [Revelation 3:5.]” {4LtMs, Ms 84, 1886, par. 28}.