

Sabbath School Lesson #13 – The End of God’s Mission – 23-29 December 2023

Christ would have us know that the end of God’s mission will culminate in all things being dissolved. Peter says, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?” (2 Peter 3:11-12).

Sunday: Revelation: God’s Last-Day Mission – Read Revelation 1:4-5. Who is referred to as “Him which is, and which was, and which is to come”? The Lesson writer here tells the truth, it is the Father; indeed, one reliable commentary on verse 4 is found in the book by Uriah Smith, and it says: “The Source of Blessing: ‘From him which is, and which was, and which is to come,’ or is to be, – an expression which signifies complete eternity, past and future, and can be applicable to God the Father only. This language, we believe, is never applied to Christ. He is spoken of as another person, in distinction from the Being thus described” {1897 UrS, DAR 357.3}. Who is referred to as “the seven Spirits”? Whilst the Lesson writer says, “the Holy Spirit” “is named” here, this is in the falsehood of proving a trinity of “all Three Members of the Godhead,” as the Lesson writer puts it. The premise of the Lesson writer is that the Godhead is made up of three Beings, and this assumes that the Holy Spirit is a separate Being from Christ. But fortunately, we have the testimony of the apostles. Peter understood the Holy Spirit to be “the Spirit of Christ which was in” the prophets of old (1 Peter 1:11), and if the “Spirit of Christ” then it is not a separate Being but the “Spirit of Christ,” and the very antithesis of the false trinity teaching. With a false concept of the Holy Spirit, many professed Christians are not Christians at all, for “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9). Satan has led almost the entire Seventh-day Adventist Church into believing a lie that the Holy Spirit is not the Spirit of Christ! But none can ever be saved in falsehood. To us, the Holy Spirit is Christ Himself, for “the Lord is that Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17), who after His resurrection, Christ, “the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45) and sent back into our hearts: “God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts” (Galatians 4:6), and for these reasons, let us have Christ, as Ellen White says, “It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” {Lt66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par. 18}. The “seven Spirits” is symbolic of the Spirit of Christ present in each of “the seven churches which are in Asia” (verse 4); symbolic of the “seven eyes” of Christ the “Stone” – “For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day” (Zechariah 3:9); symbolic of the “seven eyes” of Christ the “Lamb,” which is why John says, “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth” (Revelation 5:6); notice, it is the Lamb, Christ, that has “seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God,” even as Isaiah did prophecy that the Spirit of Jehovah, the Father of our Lord, shall rest upon Christ: “And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:2).

Monday: The Three Angel’s Messages – Why is it significant to understand the three angels’ messages, especially the first message? The first angel calls out with a loud voice, “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 God we are to fear and worship is the Creator; “God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9); He is the Father, who created all things through His Son. The first angel calls us to worship One God. This One God is whom the apostles and their company praised and prayed to: “And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is” (Acts 4:24). The wording they used here reminds us of the Sabbath. This One God is whom His Son Jesus Christ praised: “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that

Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Luke 10:21). The God that the first angel calls us to worship is not 'a unity of three coeternal persons.' Your understanding of God is going to impact on who you worship. The three angels' messages are to correct worship. If you do not get it right with the first angel, as who to worship, then no need to go to the second and third angels' messages. Only the first angel tells you who to worship. The first angel calls us to worship the One God who created through His Son. The trinity doctrine calls us to worship 'a unity of three coeternal' gods that "made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Thus, the trinity doctrine destroys the angels' messages.

Tuesday: The Final Crisis – In preparation for the final crisis, we read Revelation 14:12, what two characteristics do we find, why are they important? Patience and faith. It is by faith and patience we inherit the promises of God; so Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, exhorts to patient endurance, without slothfulness, that the promises may be obtained (Hebrews 6:12). We read a brief description of those who are prepared for the Lord when He comes: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). On the effects of patience, we read: "Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing" (James 1:4). The patience of the saints calls for allowing that patience to do its perfect work in us, resulting in perfection, which perfection is the keeping of the commandments of God. This perfection is only in Christ. He alone, of all those who have trod this earth, fully kept the law. But He gave Himself for us, so that we may also have the perfect keeping of the law in us if we can only say in truth, that "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). We must "live by the faith of the Son of God" to overcome in the final crisis, but what does it exactly mean to live by the faith of Jesus? The faith of Jesus cannot exist outside Himself; thus He must live in us if we may live by His faith. Christ Himself living in us; "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27); God with us; God manifest in the flesh now, to-day in our flesh, by the faith of Jesus Christ — this and this only is living faith. For "every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:2-4). Therefore, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Wednesday: Success in Mission – The Lesson writer asks and answers well: "What is success in mission? We might be tempted to think that it is many baptisms, big churches, and rapid growth rates." Indeed, Ellen White tells us: "Success does not depend upon strength or numbers. God can deliver by few as well as by many. A large church is not necessarily a strong church. Some of its members may be cherishing selfishness, pride, or unbelief; some may be dishonest, others corrupt in heart and life. All these are a source of weakness to the church. They bring the frown of God upon his people, and the great adversary will work through them to advance his own cause" {ST June 30, 1881, par. 20}.

Thursday: Mission Complete – Read Revelation 21:4, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," what is your motivation for doing mission? If it is self-centred to escape to paradise, it will not constitute 'mission complete.' We need to come to "the knowledge of the Son of God ... unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ... grow up into Him in all things" (Ephesians 4:13-15), that only "the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Corinthians 5:14), and that "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isaiah 53:11). "Then Jesus looked upon His redeemed saints; their countenances were radiant with glory; and as He fixed His loving eyes upon them, He said, with His rich, musical voice, "I behold the travail of My soul, and am satisfied. This rich glory is yours to enjoy eternally. Your sorrows are ended. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." I saw the redeemed host bow and cast their glittering crowns at the feet of Jesus, and then, as His lovely hand raised them up, they touched their golden harps and filled all heaven with their rich music and songs to the Lamb" – Ellen White {EW 288.1}.