

Sabbath School Lesson #7 – Motivated by Hope – 11-17 May 2024

Christ is soon coming. Let us know the Lord and wait for Him. “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation” (Isaiah 25:9). These words, however, will be spoken only by those who know the Lord. There will be an emphasis on “this” and “our;” “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.” For just before this the people who know not God – whether in the world or in the church – will have professed allegiance to another, even to him who “is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14), and whose steadfast aim is to put himself before men in the place of God. It is not enough to know that Christ is coming; we must also be acquainted with Him, so that we may be able to recognise Him when He comes. Do you know the Lord?

Sunday: The Promise of His Return – Why is the Second Coming so important to our faith? Especially because we know that the dead sleep (see lesson 10), why does this teaching take on such importance? Without it, why would we be, as Paul said, in an utterly hopeless situation (see 1 Cor. 15:15–18)? The all-important question is this: why will He come? What necessity is there for it. That His coming is necessary, is evident, since the Lord does nothing in vain. He will not come in all the pomp and splendour of heaven, with all His angels, and with earth-shaking peals of the trumpet, for nothing. The object is plainly stated in this text: “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:3). Take this in connection with the statement to the disciples, recorded in the preceding chapter (verse 36), “Whither I go, thou canst not follow [or, go with] Me now but thou shalt follow Me afterwards,” and we see that no word could make it plainer that only by the second coming of Christ in glory can His disciples be with Him again. It is not only those who chance to be living when He shall come, that He takes to Himself, but the eleven to whom He was talking. They can never be with their Master again, except by His coming again to receive them. Until He comes, they are away from Him. Here is where the comfort comes in. When it is known that none can be with Christ except by His second coming, then everybody who loves the Lord will also love His appearing. That none can be with Christ in any other way, is evident from the whole Bible. The dead are not with Christ, for “the dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence” (Psalm 115:17). “In death there is no remembrance of the Lord” (Psalm 6:5). “The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they anymore a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished” (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6). The Bible tells us that death is an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26). Since it is an enemy, we may know that it does not admit us to heaven. Moreover “death came by sin” (Romans 5:12). If it were true that those who die go to heaven, then it would follow, since death came by sin, that sin admits men to heaven; but that is so palpably false and unscriptural that no one with any respect for the Bible can hold it. Still further: the devil is the one who has the power of death (Hebrews 2:14). Now if death were the way to be with Christ, and the gate of heaven, then we should have the devil as the gatekeeper of heaven! But that is too monstrous for consideration. So, we must accept the common-sense, the Scriptural fact, that death is an enemy, the great enemy, of the human race, and that Christ came to deliver us from it. He came to destroy death, and him that had the power of death. Through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, the power of death, yea, death itself, is destroyed, and Christ's second coming is simply the consummation of Calvary. He comes for the salvation of His people (Isaiah 35:4).

Monday: Anticipating the Time – In Hebrews 9:27-28, what encouragement do these verses give us regarding the coming of Christ? “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:27-28). As it is appointed unto men once to die, so there will be only one more coming of the Lord. That will be His second coming. The judgment is in connection with the second coming of Christ, for we read, that He “shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom” (2 Timothy 4:1). The judgment at the coming of the Lord will include all

nations (Matthew 25:32; Revelation 20:12-13). "Without sin." What does that mean? – It means just what it says. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). He still bears the sins of men, for we may see Him set forth crucified before us (Galatians 3:1). "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" is to be the theme of every Gospel preacher. So long as He bears sins, a guilty man may come and lay all their sins upon Him, and be relieved of the heavy load. So long there is hope for men. But when He comes the second time it will be "without sin." There will be no more sacrifice for sins. His work will have been completed, and pronouncement made (Revelation 22:11-12). It is for the purpose of gathering His saints, He comes: "Gather My saints together unto Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." All who have accepted His sacrifice will then be changed and caught up to meet Him in the air; "and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Tuesday: William Miller and the Bible – Considering William Miller is the cornerstone of the Advent movement and his interpretation of the Bible is highly significant for the student of Adventist History, what did William Miller really believe about God? In 1822, Miller was still learning and back then believed in the trinity. Then, 18 years later, in 1840, and until his death, Miller was a non-trinitarian. Here are the two Miller's confessions in chronology. In 1822, Miller made his first confession, quoted in 1954 by the trinitarian mastermind, LeRoy Froom: "Art. II. I believe in one living and true God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead..." {PFF4 466.3}; also quoted by Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller* (1853) page 77, written by Miller at "Low Hampton, Sept. 5, 1822" {MWM 77.2}. This statement is trinitarian. But it is not the end of the story. Some 18 years later, in 1840, Miller made his second and final confession, quoted in 1840 by Joshua Himes: "I believe in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is a Spirit, omnipresent, omniscient, having all power, creator, preserver, and self-existent. As being holy, just and beneficent, I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, having a body in fashion and form like man, divine in his nature, human in his person, godlike in his character and power. He is a Savior for sinners, a priest to God, a mediator between God and man, and King in Zion. He will be all to his people, God with us forever. The spirit of the Most High is in him, the power of the Most High is given him, the people of the Most High are purchased by him, the glory of the Most High shall be with him, and the kingdom of the Most High is his on earth" {HST May 1, 1840, page 20.15}; written by Miller at "Low Hampton, April 11, 1840" {ibid 21.3}. This statement is non-trinitarian. God is presented as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is presented as Godlike in character and power. Notice, Miller confessed that the Spirit of the Most High dwells in Christ. There is also an emphasis of Christ as the mediator between God and man. LeRoy Froom, the man who introduced the trinity in Adventism, in only quoting Miller's 1822 views, appears to either have been unaware of the latter Miller's 1840 statement or he omitted it for some reason.

Wednesday: The 2,300 Days of Daniel 8:14 – In Daniel 8:14, what specific timetable does Daniel give us regarding the cleansing of the sanctuary? On the sanctuary cleansing, said the angel, "And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." The work of cleansing began at the close of these days in 1844 (see *The Great Controversy*, chapter 24). The cleansing of the sanctuary is the blotting out of the sins of God's people. When that work is finished, the names of those who have not overcome will have been blotted out of "the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27), and that shows that probation ends when the work of cleansing the sanctuary is completed. But the gospel still reaches hearts of sinners; therefore probation is not yet ended, and the work of cleansing the sanctuary is still going on. When this work will be finished, no man can tell. We cannot know that it will be soon. To the close of this work, these words apply: "Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not" (Luke 12:40).

Thursday: The Longest Prophetic Time Line – What significance is 1844 when the 2300 days ended? Since 1844, "We are in the great day of atonement, and the sacred work of Christ for the people of God that is going on at the present time in the heavenly sanctuary should be our constant study. We should teach our children what the typical Day of Atonement signified and that it was a special season of great humiliation and confession of sins before God. The antitypical day of atonement is to be of the same character" {5T 520.1}.