

Sabbath School Lesson #9 – The Foundation of God’s Government – 25-31 May 2024

Christ would have us understand the link between the sanctuary, God’s law, the Sabbath, and the coming crisis over the mark of the beast. We do well to explore the relevance of the Sabbath to an end-time generation. John says: “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17).

Sunday: The Sanctuary and the Law – Think about the Sabbath, which, at 1,000 miles an hour, comes to us every week without exception. What should that tell us about the importance of the doctrine of Creation? What other doctrine has such a powerful, and reoccurring, reminder? Sadly, the majority of Seventh-day Adventists, Sabbath is kept in human power. Lest you forget, we do well to remember this prophecy: “The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error The Sabbath, of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. ... but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless” {18LtMs, Lt 242, 1903, par. 13}. Our ‘Fundamental Principles’ in force in 1903 when this was written, have long been accounted as error; changed to ‘Fundamental Beliefs’ in 1980. Sabbath-keeping by those who do not worship the true God, depends on human power, which, without God, is worthless. As to the cleansing the sanctuary, this work takes place above and below in human hearts. We are told: “In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin, — from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.” Malachi 3:1-3” {DA 161.1}. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. No man can of himself cast out the evil throned that have taken possession of the heart. Only Christ can cleanse the soul temple. But He will not force an entrance. He comes not into the heart as to the temple of old; but He says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him.” Revelation 3:20. He will come, not for one day merely; for He says, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; ... and they shall be My people.” “He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” 2 Corinthians 6:16; Micah 7:19. His presence will cleanse and sanctify the soul, so that it may be a holy temple unto the Lord, and “an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:21, 22” – EG White {DA 161.2}.

Monday: The Immutability of God’s Law – What are the reasons people often give to argue that we no longer are obligated to keep the Ten Commandments? What do you think

is really behind it? We ought to know that the problem behind it is because our church abandoned the 1888 message by Waggoner and Jones – the message of justification by faith. We are told: “The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure” {10LtMs, Lt 57, 1895, par. 43}. “Christ is pleading for the church in the heavenly courts above, pleading for those for whom He paid the redemption price of His own life blood. Centuries, ages, can never diminish the efficacy of this atoning sacrifice. This message of the gospel of His grace was to be given to the church in clear and distinct lines, that the world should no longer say, Seventh-day Adventists talk the law, the law, but do not preach or believe Christ” {10LtMs, Lt 57, 1895, par. 44}. You may read the 1888 message in two books: Ellet Joseph Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness* (Pacific Press Publishing Company, 1890); and Alonzo Trevier Jones, *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection* (Pacific Press Publishing Company, 1905).

Tuesday: The Sabbath and the Law – Most Seventh-day Adventists have faced the charge of being legalistic, and that charge is usually connected with our keeping the Sabbath. Discuss the Sabbath as a symbol of Redemption and righteousness by faith. Why would obeying God's command to rest lead people to think we are trying to work our way to heaven? Putting aside what others think, we do well, as Seventh-day Adventists, to know that perfect Sabbath rest is only by the Spirit of Christ in us (Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6). Only those who are spiritual can keep the Sabbath. So long as Adam was led by the Spirit, he enjoyed perfect Sabbath rest; but as soon as he sinned, he lost the rest. But although the curse upon the earth causes weariness of body, the Sabbath remains from Eden, the pledge and seal of spiritual rest. The abstaining from all secular work and our own pleasure on the seventh day – from everything by which we could personally profit – is simply in recognition of the Lord as our Creator and upholder of all things – the one by whose power we live. Sabbath keeping involves rest from our own work on the seventh day, but he who does no more than this does not keep the Sabbath of the Lord. As the Sabbath was the seal of a perfect creation, so it is the seal of a perfect new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Wednesday: The Mark of the Beast – What is the mark of the beast and how can we avoid it? Revelation points to the beast and her mark. “In chapter 13 (verses 1-10) is described another beast, ‘like unto a leopard,’ to which the dragon gave ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority.’ This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman empire” {GC 439.1}. The third angel warns that no man should receive the Mark of the Beast “in his forehead, or in his hand” (Revelation 14:9). The ‘mark’ of the beast (papacy) is her symbol of authority, power to substitute Sunday for Saturday observance as the Sabbath. Sunday is not yet the mark until Sunday Law. We can only avoid the mark of the beast if we have the true God. At Sunday Law, without the true God you will have no power to resist enormous satanic pressure, for “power belongeth unto God” (Psalm 62:11); if you worship the trinity (sun-god), the sun-god cannot give power to resist sun-day worship!

Thursday: The Three Angels' Messages – Who does the first angel call us to worship? The first calls us to “worship Him that made heaven, and earth....” (Revelation 14:7) – “Him” refers to the Father whom apostles praised (Acts 4:24), whom Jesus Christ praised (Luke 10:21). If you do not get it right with the first angel, as who to worship, no need to go to the second and third angels' messages. The first calls us to worship the One “God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9). The trinity doctrine calls us to worship “a unity of three coeternal” gods. Thus, the trinity doctrine destroys the three angels' messages.