

Sabbath School Lesson #11 – The Impending Conflict – 8-14 June 2024

Christ would have us be anchored in the truth to face the impending conflict. What is truth? That is the question that Pilate asked Jesus (John 18:38). Unfortunately, like too many others, he did not wait to receive an answer. But we may hear the answer in Christ's prayer for His disciples: "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). But Christ Himself is the Word, and He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). He is made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). So being sanctified through the truth is being sanctified through Christ, as He again says of His disciples: "I sanctify Myself, that they also might be truly sanctified" (John 17:19). Christ is the Word; He is the truth; and He sanctifies all who believe Him. The Bible is also the Word of God, because the Spirit of Christ was in the men who wrote (1 Peter 1:10-11), testifying through them, and because the Scriptures testify of Christ (John 5:39). It is the truth, and it sanctifies, because Christ is in the Word, and believers find Him there. When Moses by the Spirit said that the Word is not far off, that we should need some one to go to heaven and bring it down, or to the deep and bring it up, that we might do it (Deuteronomy 30:11-14), he meant Christ, as we learn from Paul (Romans 10:6-7). Christ cannot be separated from the Inspired Word. With these facts in mind, we may form a more correct idea of what it is to believe the truth and to be sanctified by it. It is a very common thing for people to get the idea that "the truth" consists in certain facts or points of doctrine, which have been set forth in the church manual by "the church." Accordingly some men will hold to one set of ideas as "the truth," and others to still different ones, just as they may regard one or another denomination as "the church." The ancient Jews "limited the Holy One of Israel" (Psalm 78:41); and that is just what is done by those who hold such narrow views of "the truth." The truth does not consist in a few points of doctrine, nor in anything that can be formulated by man, but in "all the fulness of God" (Colossians 1:19; 2:9), which divinity is in Christ. It consists in "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4), for all Scripture is profitable, and there is enough of it to make men perfect, "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:17). Only those will be lost who "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:10). Truth itself must be loved and received. It is not our ideas of truth that will save us, but the truth as it is in Jesus. Not our thoughts but God's thoughts are the truth. We have no business to think anything different from what God's Word says. It is to direct our thoughts. And since Christ cannot be divided, and partly believed and partly rejected, but must be accepted as a whole, so we must not expect to find sanctification in accepting some things that are true, and rejecting others. He who is satisfied with anything less than the whole truth, will at last find himself with no truth at all. Only those in the truth, in Christ, will withstand the impending conflict.

Sunday: Revelation's Final Conflict – The seventh-day Sabbath is so foundational a symbol of God as Creator that it goes back to Eden itself. Thus, to seek to usurp it, as Rome did (see Dan. 7:25), is to seek to usurp the authority of God at the most foundational level possible, God as Creator. How does this truth help us see why it will be such a controverted point in the last days? "The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God" {GC 605.2}. The seal of God is settling in the Father's law (Isaiah 8:16, 20; Psalm 55:22; Eph 4:14; Col 1:23) and the Sabbath is sign of that seal (Eze 20:12; Mat 3:18). To emphasise, the Sabbath is not the seal of God, "But the seal of the living God is placed upon those who conscientiously keep the Sabbath of the Lord" (RH July 13, 1897, par. 6).

Monday: The Coming Crisis – How quickly now do you allow, if at all, economic considerations to compromise your Sabbath keeping? Many Adventists have head

knowledge of the truth, but their actions show lack of power. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:5). Take for example, the vaccine in the recent crisis, many Adventists took the vaccines to keep their jobs or to be able to travel and not because they believed vaccines to be healthy. These same economic considerations will be taken by many at Sunday Law as to whether they keep the Sabbath. As Sunday Law approaches, that is, "as the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition" {GC 608.2}. It is not that people will "abandon their position" at Sunday Law, but when the "storm approaches", and Sunday Law will only reveal that the professed Adventists had already abandoned their position, for they had head knowledge without power. They will have no power to resist enormous satanic pressure, for "power belongeth unto God" (Psalm 62:11), yet they have no true God. The Bible says, "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" (Jeremiah 12:5). Vaccine mandates was the setting of the footmen, the health test in Daniel 1. Out of "ten thousand captives" (2 Kings 24:14) in Babylon, only Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah refused Babylonian vaccines. To "run with the footmen" is to decide on vaccines, and to "contend with the horses" is to decide on the mark of the beast. The "land of peace, wherein" people have trusted include our Church that have not told members that life is in the Son of God who dwells in our body temple that must not be defiled by drugs/vaccines, "land of peace" include the State system people have come to trust, and now if both the Church and the State have "wearied" people with vaccine mandates, how will such people "do in the swelling of Jordan" when much satanic strife and turmoil comes at Sunday Law?!

Tuesday: Identifying the Beast: Part 1 – What is the mark of the beast? 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}. The third angel warns man not to receive the Mark of the Beast "in his forehead, or in his hand" (Revelation 14:9). The beast is the papacy. Its mark is Sunday worship, for "the Church of God [Catholic] has thought it well to transfer the celebration and observance of the Sabbath to Sunday!" (Catechism of the Council of Trent, 2nd Eng edtn, 1937, p 402). The forehead represents the mind, and the hand is a symbol of work. "On the hand" and "between the eyes" are consistent symbols in Scripture for a person's thoughts and actions (Exodus 13:16; Deuteronomy 6:8; 11:18). A person will receive the mark of the beast in his forehead by choosing to believe that Sunday is a holy day in spite of Bible truth. A person will be marked in the right hand by working on Sabbath or by outwardly keeping Sunday laws for other reasons – such as jobs. Sunday keeper will not receive the mark until Sunday Law.

Wednesday: Identifying the Beast: Part 2 – However hard it is now to see something like this happening, look at how quickly our world can change. What should these changes tell us about how quickly end-time events can come upon us? We saw how quickly the global pandemic changed our world and restricted freedoms. Increased natural calamities will quickly bring Sunday Law. Religious powers seeking to legislate a Sunday Law will not only ignore and despise the Sabbath, but they will "point to calamities on land and sea – to the storms of wind, the floods, the earthquakes, the destruction by fire – as judgments indicating God's displeasure because Sunday is not sacredly observed. These calamities will increase more and more, one disaster will follow close upon the heels of another; and those who make void the law of God will point to the few who are keeping the Sabbath of the fourth commandment as the ones who are bringing wrath upon the world. This falsehood is Satan's device that he may ensnare the unwary" (Signs of the Times, January 17, 1884, Par. 12).

Thursday: The Beast From the Earth – Think about the political instability in America today. How might that one day lead to the fulfillment of this prophecy? As the USA is the lamb-like beast (Revelation 13:11) and it is to pass a law enforcing Sunday, forcing all to worship the leopard-like beast (Revelation 13:2, 12), we do well to consider USA situation.