

## Sabbath School Lesson #7 – Blessed Are Those Who Believe – 9-15 November 2024

**C**hrist would have us believe without seeing. “Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29). It is a common saying that ‘seeing is believing.’ But like many of the sayings among men, it is not true. The fact is, that very many things which may be clearly seen are not believed. In the things of God, believing is seeing. The things which are invisible, are clearly seen by faith. Not because the person who believes imagines that he sees them, but because they are there as real things, and his faith reveals them. Those who say that they must see a thing before they can believe it, should learn a lesson from the case of Thomas. He would not believe that Christ had risen. He said, “Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.” A few days afterward he had the privilege of doing that very thing, and he cried out, “My Lord and my God.” Then Jesus said unto him, “Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” He believed, but his belief brought no blessing with it. Let us not deprive ourselves of the blessings by demanding demonstration instead of simple evidence. We do well to note that the theme of John is that Jesus is the Son of God. This is what John calls his audience to believe. In John 1:34, John the Baptist bears witness that Jesus is the Son of God. In John 11:27 Martha believes He is the Son of God. In John 19:7, the Jews cry out to Pontius Pilate “Crucify Him” based on the charge that Jesus “made Himself the Son of God.” Towards the end of the Gospel of John, in John 20:31, the author declares that the purpose for writing it was “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (John 20:31). Sadly, the official position of our Seventh-day Adventist Church is contrary to the Gospel of John: “Christ was the Son of God before He was born of a woman. ... We are dealing with a metaphorical use of the word son. The Son is not the natural, literal Son of the Father” (Adventist World, November 2015). Denial of truth is antichrist (1 John 2:22). The truth is, “God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God” {8T 268.3}. “All the children of God are embraced in the Sonship of Christ” {Ms 67, 1907}. “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12) – a metaphorical son will give a metaphorical eternal life. To deny Christ’s Sonship is to deny God’s Fatherhood and to charge Him with lying He who said to Christ, “Thou art My beloved Son” (Mark 1:11). And “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” (1 John 2:22).

**Sunday: Harking Back to Abraham** – Read John 8:56. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad.” When and how did Abraham see Jesus? He believed the Gospel. And this gospel was preached from the very beginning. Abel believed it, and by his faith he “offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous” (Hebrews 11:4). Noah believed it, and so “became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (verse 7). Likewise, “the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Galatians 3:8). This was when Abraham had no child, when there was no human possibility that he ever could have one, yet “he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). Peter also declared that the prophets saw the day of Christ: “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days” (Acts 3:24). And not only did the prophets foretell of these days, but they enjoyed them, not simply in anticipation, but in reality. Jesus said to the Jews, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.” And the prophet David said of the same day, – the day of salvation: “I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:21-24). How could they rejoice in the day of salvation, and be saved by Christ’s blood, before it was shed? God’s promise made it real before it took place. He “quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were” (Romans

4:17). A thing which God has promised is as sure as though it had taken place. There was no slightest possibility that Christ should not suffer, after He had once been promised; Christ should redeem men by His blood “was foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:20). Then, since He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, it follows, as a matter of course, that those who lived in the first year of the world could derive the same benefit from His sacrifice that we can. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out” (Romans 11:33). “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15).

**Monday: The Witness of Mary** – Read John 12:1-3. What was the significance of Mary’s actions here? How was this a witness to who Jesus really was? It is possible that Mary did not understand the full significance of what she had done; but she did that which her love prompted her to do, and God in His own wisdom ordained her reward. But what a contrast was presented in the mean and selfish spirit of His disciples! That which had been bestowed upon Jesus they characterised as a “waste”! As we are told elsewhere, it was the traitor Judas who first whispered the idea among the disciples, not on account of his love for the poor, but because the money would have been put in the bag which he carried; but the suggestion met with prompt sympathy from the rest. They had been constantly with Jesus, which Mary had not. They had been chosen to the highest positions; they were the foremost in point of privileges and honour; but Mary was foremost of anointing Christ for His burial and they lost it. Mary sought not for honour and renown, but she gained it; for the Saviour said, “Whosoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her” (Matthew 26:13). And with it is also told the story of meanness ingratitude of the disciples. Her love brought her a privilege that might well have been coveted by angels; their selfishness brought them what was just the reverse.

**Tuesday: The Unwitting Witness of Pilate** – Read John 18:38, John 19:4–22. How is Pilate’s verdict connected to the theme of John’s Gospel? The theme of John’s Gospel was “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (John 20:31). Jesus was condemned for being the Son of God, the Jews crying out, “We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God” (John 19:7). “When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid” (verse 8). That Pilate was startled by this is evidence that he was unwittingly a witness that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. “The thought that had once before passed through his mind now took more definite shape, and he questioned if it might not be a divine personage who stood before him, clad in the purple robe of mockery, and crowned with thorns, yet with such a noble bearing that the stanch Roman trembled with awe as he gazed upon him” {3SP 144.3}. Pilate then asked Jesus, “Whence art thou?” But Jesus kept silent. Why? “Jesus had already told Pilate that he was the Messiah, that his kingdom was not of this world; and he had no farther words for a man who so abused the high office of judge as to yield his principles and authority to the demands of a blood-thirsty rabble” {3SP 145.1}.

**Wednesday: The Witness of Thomas** – Read John 20:19–31. What can we learn from the story of Thomas about faith and doubt? What major mistake did Thomas make? Jesus appeared to the disciples; Thomas was not present. The disciples told Thomas about it, but he refused to believe their testimony until he sees Jesus. Jesus came and said to Thomas, “reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side.” After that, Thomas acknowledged that indeed Jesus had resurrected, and it was He. “Jesus accepted his acknowledgment, but gently reproved his unbelief: “Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” The faith of Thomas would have been more pleasing to Christ if he had been willing to believe upon the testimony of his brethren. Should the world now follow the example of Thomas, no one would believe unto salvation; for all who receive Christ must do so through the testimony of others” {DA 807.4}.

**Thursday: Our Witness of Jesus** – What is the witness of Jesus in the Gospel of John? Again and again, as John presents witnesses to Jesus, his point is to bring us to a sweeping conclusion: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (John 20:30-31).