

Sabbath School Lesson #11 – The Father, the Son, and the Spirit – 7-13 Dec 2024

Christ said, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). Paul understood this to mean that “God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6). The spirit of Jesus is Jesus Himself (Mark 2:8, 8:12, Luke 23:46). Just like your spirit is who you are, so is Christ’s spirit who He is (1 Corinthians 2:11). When the Bible says that God will send us the spirit of His Son, it means that Jesus Himself will come into our hearts. That is what Jesus said in John 14:20 “I in you”. Paul understood this (see Galatians 2:20).

Sunday: The Heavenly Father – How many Beings were involved in creation? The Lesson writer quotes from Genesis 1:1 and then rewrites it: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). Or: In the beginning the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit created the heavens and the earth.” But the Bible is clear that it is “God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9). Who created all things? God. How? “by Jesus Christ.” God made the world, by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). Source of creation is the Father; the means of creation is His Son. “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him” (1 Corinthians 8:6). Only two Beings were involved in creation, Father and Son. The Lesson writer subtly presupposes the subordination of the Son to His Father is only for this period on earth to eradicate sin: “While here, Jesus submitted His life to the Father, living according to His guidance.” To show the position of the Son of God, Paul quotes from Psalm 45:6-7 in Hebrews 1:8: “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” Not only does the Father call Jesus God, but He also goes on to refer to Himself as the God of Christ Jesus, saying: “God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (verse 9). This harmonises with other Scriptures where the Father is referred to as the God of Jesus (see Matthew 27:46; John 20:17; Revelation 3:12; (Ephesians 1:17). While the Father is called the God of Jesus Christ, Jesus is never called the God of the Father! The Father exalted the Son to the same plateau as Himself, thus making His Son worthy of worship (Hebrews 1:6). It is the Father who is supreme above all, and even after sin is eradicated, the Father will forever be supreme and Christ subordinate to the Father. Paul understood this well, for he wrote: “For he hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:27, 28). These verses clearly show that the Father has put all things under Jesus’ feet, and that He, God, is not under Christ. When sin is eradicated, all things shall be given back to the Father, Jesus will be subject to the Father that God may be all in all. Thus, when Jesus is given the title of “God,” it is in reference to His divine nature and in reference to His relationship to us, His children. However, Christ is not the Father Himself. Ephesians 1:17 agrees with this for the Father is called “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.” While the Father is called the God of Jesus, Jesus is never called the God of the Father.

Monday: Jesus and the Father – In Genesis 1:26, who was talking to who about creating man? Ellen White said, “And I saw that when God said to his Son, Let us make man in our image, Satan was jealous of Jesus” (Spiritual Gifts, volume 1, p 17, 1858); “After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God says to his Son, “Let us make man in our image” (Spiritual Gifts, volume 3, p 33, 1864; Signs of the Times, January 9, 1897; The Spirit of Prophecy, volume 1, p 24, 1870; The Story of Redemption, p 20, 1947); “But when God said to His Son, “Let us make man in our image,” Satan was jealous of Jesus” (Early Writings, p 145, 1882). Repeatedly, from 1858 to 1897, Ellen White equated the “us” and “our” of Genesis 1:26 with two Beings: Father and His Son.

Tuesday: Knowing the Son Is Knowing the Father – How did Jesus declare His Father to humanity? It through Christ that the Father speaks: “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him” (Deuteronomy 18:18). Christ states His teaching objective: “I will declare thy name unto my brethren” (Psalm 22:22; Hebrews 2:12). And by declaring the name of God, Christ declares God Himself. And He does because He is “the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person” (Hebrews 1:3). Therefore, it is that God said of Him, “My Name is in Him” (Exodus 23:21). When He was born in this world, He received the name “Emmanuel,” which means “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). Christ’s presence is God with us. So that when Philip said to Him, “Lord show us the Father, and it suffices us,” He could say, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me” (John 14:5-11).

Wednesday: The Holy Spirit – Who is this ‘third person’ we have heard so much about, and can we find that phrase in the Bible? No, that phrase is not found in the Bible, but Ellen White uses it – so what does it mean? The Bible does reveal that concept, but in other words. Jesus spoke in the ‘third person’ quite often. When He used the phrase, “son of man,” it was then that we can see an application to the concept. Notice, that in most of the 88 times the phrase “son of man” was employed by the prophets of the New Testament, it was mostly Christ speaking of Himself in the grammatical third person, for example: “He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;” “The Son of man shall send forth his angels;” “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels;” “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost” (Matthew 13:37; 13:41; 16:27; 18:11). The Lesson writer quotes Ellen White using the phrase “third person of the Godhead,” but what did she mean by that phrase? You only need to read what the Lesson writer has omitted, where she says: “Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church” – Ellen G White, *The Desire of Ages*, p 671. This much misunderstood statement tells us that the third person of the Godhead is Christ’s own spirit. This, we are told, is the only way to resist and overcome sin. Other statements show plainly who alone can do this: “The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness” – Ellen G White, *The Desire of Ages*, p 324. “Not until the life of Christ becomes a vitalizing power in our lives can we resist the temptations that assail us from within and from without” – Ellen G White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p 130. Thus, according to Ellen White, the “third person of the Godhead” is “the indwelling of Christ”; it is the very “life of Christ”! It is not someone else; it is not a different Being to Christ! To be very sure that the third person or the Holy Spirit, is Christ, Ellen White emphatically says, “The Lord is soon to come. We want that complete and perfect understanding which the Lord alone can give. It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” {9LtMs, Lt 66, 1894, par. 18}.

Thursday: The Prayer of Jesus – Read John 17:1-5. How do you understand the fact Jesus Himself said that “this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent”? Ellen White said, “The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality” {20LtMs, Ms 116, 1905, par. 19}. Notice, here Ellen White expresses two ways in which someone can be God: in infinity (nature) or in personality (identity). God the Father, essentially, is the “only true God” in personality; His Son is not truly God in personality. But both the Father and His Son are truly God in infinity: both possess infinite love from an infinite divine nature. “From eternity there was a complete unity between the Father and the Son. They were two, yet little short of being identical; two in individuality, yet one in spirit, and heart, and character” {YI December 16, 1897, par. 5}. Notice what Ellen White says here, that the Father and Son are not identical (“little short of being identical”) – they are not absolute co-equal in all aspects.