

## Sabbath School Lesson #4 – God Is Passionate and Compassionate – 18-24 Jan 2025

**C**hrist loves us with love passing the love of a nursing mother. “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee” (Isaiah 49:15). Great, however, as is the love of a woman to her sucking child, it was but a feeble representation of that which Christ bestows on us. So closely has He knit His soul with ours “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39). Further, He puts upon us His own raiment, “for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness” (Isiah 61:10). He equips us with His own weapons and armour, bidding us “put on the whole armour of God,” and take “the sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:11-17). He is the Son of a King and heir to the throne of the universe, but He left everything and “became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9), and He calls whosoever will to sit down with Him on His throne. His love to us is wonderful. “Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands” (Isiah 49:16). “I have loved thee with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3). “As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you” (John 15:9). It is the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that fill us with all the fulness of God.

**Sunday: More Than a Mother’s Love** – Read Isiah 49:14-21; Have you gone through afflictions and are ready to conclude that you have no part in the favour of God? You are not the first that have mistaken the dealings of God with His people. “Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, my Lord hath forgotten me.” But was it so? What saith the answer of God? “Can a woman forget her sucking child?” But do you sink down under the apprehension that the evidence of a final desertion is in your experience? Have you lost your conscientious tenderness regarding sin and inclined to forsake God? If so, you have reason indeed to be alarmed. But if your conscience is tenderly alive; if you are resolved to cleave to the Lord; if the language of your heart is, I cannot forsake God, I cannot live without His presence; “though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him” (Job 13:15); then you have reason to hope that He will visit you. It is by these exercises that He still maintains His interest in you. A woman may forget her child, but the Lord will not forget His children; for “behold,” He declares, “I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me.” “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:9). Could the servant of the Lord feel how great the love of God towards him is, truly he would never faint and repine. But here we see and know only in part, and it doth not yet appear what is laid up for the people of God; but they have the Bible filled with hope-inspiring promises to comfort them while they tarry mid sorrow and sin; and the joys and beauties of the land to which they journey are in the Bible portrayed in language too beautiful for any but an inspired penman to utter. Truly God loves His people more than a mother’s love, and He will safely lead them through sorrow and temptation till they reach that home which the Creator of all things will fitly prepare for those who are worthy to receive it.

**Monday: Gut-Wrenching Love** – Read Hosea 11:1-9; how does the imagery in these verses bring to life the way God loves and cares for His people? We can have a glimpse of God’s love in the parable of the vineyard (Matthew 21:3-46; Mark 12:1-12). In the parable, the householder sent his servants to the husbandmen; the Lord sent His prophets to Israel. It was Samuel, and Elijah, and Isaiah, and Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, and many others. But as the husbandmen beat the servants of the owner of the vineyard, so Israel abused the prophets of God. The record is very explicit on this point: “And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling-place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy” (2 Chronicles 36:15-16). God left them without excuse. He sent “betimes” to them, “rising up continually and carefully and sending.” He could not let them go. The language of God’s heart was: “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim?”

Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together” (Hosea 11:8). These are the pleadings of Infinite Love to rebellious and fallen man. He will not yet reject Israel. He has one more evidence of His love; he will bestow that; surely they will yield Him His due then. Then the Lord of the vineyard sends His only begotten Son for the love which He bore to the world (John 3:16). Christ “gave Himself” (Titus 2:14). Heaven or the universe could bestow no more; it bestowed its Maker. He who with the Father created all things, laid aside His glory and came to earth, and endured what man must endure, was tempted, tried, and suffered for man’s sake. “He came unto His own,” but sadly, “His own received Him not.”

**Tuesday: The Compassion of Jesus** – Read Matthew 23:37; how is the compassion of Jesus shown and how does that reflect the love of God? “God is love” (1 John 4:16). Hence all that is Godlike is like love; and all that does the work of God works by love. Love wins – never coerces or drives. There is nothing but love in the Gospel; and therefore the Gospel coerces nobody, and all that does coerce is not of the Gospel. Rebellious Jerusalem was a type of the rebellious world, – of all the wicked who will not walk in God’s way. The Saviour wept over Jerusalem, saying, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matthew 23:37). So, Christ would often have gathered all sinners unto Himself, cleansed of all their sin, but they would not. Christ loved them, and His love was the power He brought to bear upon them; but they were left free to refuse it, as they did. The same power is brought to bear upon sinners even today, but they are as free to turn from it as were the Jews. Anything which interferes with this freedom is not the Gospel, and does not operate in the interests of Christianity.

**Wednesday: A Jealous God?** – Read Deuteronomy 4:24 and 1 Corinthians 13:4; how is God loving and jealous? “In his dealings with the human race, God bears long with the impenitent. He uses his appointed agencies to call men to allegiance, and offers them his full pardon if they will repent. But because God is long-suffering, men presume on his mercy. “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” The patience and long-suffering of God, which should soften and subdue the soul, has an altogether different influence upon the careless and sinful. It leads them to cast off restraint, and strengthens them in resistance. They think that the God who has borne so much from them will not heed their perversity. If we lived in a dispensation of immediate retribution, offenses against God would not occur so often. But though delayed, the punishment is none the less certain. There are limits even to the forbearance of God. The boundary of his long-suffering may be reached, and then he will surely punish. And when he does take up the case of the presumptuous sinner, he will not cease till he has made a full end” {RH August 14, 1900, par. 1}; “Very few realize the sinfulness of sin; they flatter themselves that God is too good to punish the offender. But the cases of Miriam, Aaron, David, and many others show that it is not a safe thing to sin against God in deed, in word, or even in thought. God is a being of infinite love and compassion, but he also declares himself to be a “consuming fire, even a jealous God.” {RH August 14, 1900, par. 2}. The Lord wrought for His people in the past to “make Himself an everlasting name” (Isaiah 63:12, 14); “Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake, that He might make His mighty power to be known” (Psalm 106:8). Doubtless the reason the Lord has not been able to do more through us, is that we would have been uplifted and would have taken a praise to ourselves, and when such a thing as that comes to pass, there is an end to our usefulness. Our God is a jealous God. He will not give His merited praise to another. He inhabits the praises of Israel, and we have no right to rob Him of His dwelling-place in us.

**Thursday: The Significance of Pentecost** – Read Romans 5:5; how is the love of God manifested to us? The reason why hope makes not ashamed is that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). Note that it does not say love for God, but the love of God. What is the love of God? “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments” (1 John 5:3). The Holy Spirit, then, puts into our hearts obedience to the law of God; and it is that which gives us boldness in the day of judgment, and at all other times. It is sin that makes men afraid. When sin is taken away, then fear is gone. “The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion” (Proverbs 28:1).