

Sabbath School Lesson #6 – God’s Love of Justice – 1-7 February 2025

Christ would have us be filled with the knowledge of God. “Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 9:23-24). Note well, and remember, that it is the knowledge of God Himself, in which we are to glory. We are not to glory in any knowledge that we possess, even though it be the knowledge of the Bible. While knowledge of the Bible is necessary, when we take pride in such knowledge, or glory in it, we are really glorying in ourselves; and knowledge which leads to that, is not knowledge of God. It is possible for a person to backslide, and to be grievously deceived while diligently studying the Bible. Not because the Bible is at fault, but because self, instead of “the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” {9Lts, Lt 66, 1894, par. 18}, guides the study. “Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth” (1 Corinthians 8:1). “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; ... and have not love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:1-2). That study of the Bible which does not lead to the shedding abroad of the love of God in the heart by the Spirit of Christ given to us (Galatians 4:6), makes us Pharisees, but not Christians.

Sunday: Love and Justice – Read Psalm 85:10; 89:14; How do these texts shed light on God’s concern for justice? There is a strange idea prevalent in the world, and even in the professed Christian world, that justice and mercy are opposite qualities, and that they cannot be manifested in the same person at the same time. The prevalent idea is that justice is harsh and cruel, and that in order to exercise mercy God has to lay aside His justice, and that when He exercises justice He lays aside mercy. This is a most unfortunate idea. It represents God as changeable. But the fact is that He cannot deny Himself, and He changes not. “For I am the Lord, I change not” (Malachi 3:6). “Justice and judgment are the habitation [foundation] of Thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before Thy face” (Psalm 89:14). Both justice and mercy are parts of God’s character; He cannot change; therefore, both the justice and the mercy of the Lord must endure for ever, unchanged. Justice no less than mercy is manifest in the plan of redemption. Thus, we read: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:23-26). Here we are told that God does not lay aside His justice in saving men, but in the very act of redemption He displays His justice. In the tabernacle which the Lord told Moses to build, and the pattern of which He showed him in the mount, the chief article of furniture was the ark. In this ark the tables of the law were placed. The cover of the ark was called the mercy-seat, and upon this cover were the figures of two cherubim, one at each end, facing each other (see Exodus 25:10-21). Of this the Lord said, “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel” (Exodus 25:22). “And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims; and He spake unto him” (Numbers 7:89). From this we learn that as the tabernacle represented the dwelling place of God, corresponding to the temple of God in heaven (see Exodus 25:8; Hebrews 9:23, 24; Psalm 11:4), so the ark represented the throne of God. Thus the law of God forms the foundation of His throne, yet the throne itself is the seat of mercy. In the throne of God “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (Psalm 85:10). His throne is a throne of grace, where we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

Monday: God Is Entirely Good and Righteous – Read Psalm 92:15; What does this teach us about God’s faithfulness and righteousness? “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). And “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19). It is a dangerous to pin faith to man or follow even the best of men; for there is no man that is perfect; such is the perversity of human nature that we naturally tend to follow the poorest instead of the best. Indeed, this is inevitable, for when we follow men, we use only our own strength, and so we cannot lift ourselves above the faults and errors of those whom we follow. Jesus says, “Follow Me,” and this we may safely do, for “there is no unrighteousness in Him” (Psalm 92:15). There is in Him no error to lead us astray; He is the highest, and gives us His own life to lift us to His own level. Thus we can indeed follow Him. When we follow men, our sin increases; but when we follow Christ, it is removed; “for we know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin” (1 John 3:5).

Tuesday: God’s Changeless Character – Read Malachi 3:6; What does this teach us about God’s character? Of Christ, we read that He “went about doing good; and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). Mark the expression, “for God was with Him.” That is given as the reason why Christ went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed. This shows the character of God. God with Him did those works (see John 14:10). He associated with the poor of earth, and ate with publicans and sinners, for “the common people heard Him gladly.” Thus He was illustrating the words of God, “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15). And again: “Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool; where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest? For all those things hath Mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word” (Isaiah 66:1-2). What are we to learn from all this? As “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19); and as Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever, and God says, “I am the Lord, I change not” (Malachi 3:6); therefore God will be the companion of men to-day, just as in Christ He was the companion of poor sinners, provided they will let Him. Of Enoch it is said that he “walked with God” (Genesis 5:24). And they were men of the same nature as the men in this age of the world. The promise of Jesus is, “If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love Him, and make our abode with Him” (John 14:23). And to all those who are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” 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, and will sup with him, and He with Me” (Revelation 3:17, 20).

Wednesday: A Repenting God? – “God’s repentance is not like man’s repentance. “The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that He should repent.” Man’s repentance implies a change of mind. God’s repentance implies a change of circumstances and relations. Man may change his relation to God by complying with the conditions upon which he may be brought into the divine favor, or he may, by his own action, place himself outside the favoring condition; but the Lord is the same “yesterday, and today, and forever.” Hebrews 13:8. Saul’s disobedience changed his relation to God; but the conditions of acceptance with God were unaltered — God’s requirements were still the same, for with Him there “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” James 1:17” – EG White {PP 630.1}.

Thursday: Hold Fast to Love and Justice – Scriptures abound in admonishing us to turn to the Lord: Joel says, “Therefore also now saith the Lord, Turn ye even to Me with all your heart and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning, and rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil.” (Joel 2:12-14). “O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words and turn to the Lord. Say unto Him take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously” (Hosea 14:1-2) (see Hosea 12:6). “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8).