

Sabbath School Lesson #7 – The Problem of Evil – 8-14 February 2025

Christ would have us know that the problem of evil will soon have an end. We have something better to look forward to than life on this old worn-out, sin-cursed earth. Patience a little longer; a few more trials, a few more tears, a few more temptations, and a few more victories, and the earth that has waxed old like a garment, as a vesture shall be changed (Psalm 102:26). “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:4). “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:9-10, 13). “As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.” “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth” (Isaiah 65:22, 17). “And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 66:22-23). “And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them” (Isaiah 65:21). “The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose” (Isaiah 35:1). “Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree” (Isaiah 55:13). “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together and a little child shall lead them. And the cow shall eat straw like the ox. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:6-9). Notice the real things that are to be upon the new earth. There will be blossoms, straw, trees, vineyards, fruit, animals, houses, and a place of worship. But the best of all, God Himself will be there, and the literal Son of God will be the light thereof. Oh, the joy of being accounted a child of God! If we are His children now, we shall be His children then. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!” (1 John 3:1).

Sunday: “How Long, O Lord?” – This is the question many ask when suffering in this evil world. “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters” (1 Peter 4:15). When you are inclined to feel intolerant toward others, stop and ask yourself how long the Lord has tolerated you; and consider whether you had not better devote your energies first to setting yourself right in His sight, before attempting to make other people set themselves right in your sight. And then ask yourself if you cannot love your fellow instead of regarding him with a feeling of tolerance, seeing that God, through all your own perverseness and sinfulness, has loved you. How long will the Lord tolerate you as you worship the modern Baal? In 1 Kings 18:17-39, is the Elijah’s experience at Carmel when the church was worshipping Baal. In Adventism today, we are in our Carmel experience. The lesson which was taught that day at Carmel is to be taught again “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17), and the soul-stirring inquiry which was then made is to be repeated, “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.” And each one is answering the question by the choice which he is daily making, and soon the decree will go forth, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: ... and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still” (Rev. 22:11). Oh, that everyone would say in his heart and life, “The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God.”

Monday: “There Are Many Things We Do Not Know” – This is very true of most professed Christians even among Adventists who wear the cloak of Christianity yet know little about it! “Christianity — how many there are who do not know what it is! It is not something put on the outside. It is a life inwrought with the life of Jesus. It means that we are wearing the robe of Christ’s righteousness. In regard to the world, Christians will say, We will not dabble in politics. They will say decidedly, We are pilgrims and strangers; our citizenship is above. They will not be seen choosing company for amusement. They will say, We have ceased to be infatuated by childish things. We are strangers and pilgrims, looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” – Ellen White {TM 131.1}. If you are an Adventist, can I ask you a very timely question? Who are Seventh-day Adventists? What distinguishes an SDA from other Christians? Do we know anymore? A professional

SDA Surfer who believes that Jesus is coming soon? Do you really think anyone will take him seriously? He totally knows that Jesus is his Lord and Saviour? Is there any example where Jesus called His disciples to take up their surfboard and follow Him? An SDA Makeup Artist? How can she tell people that the makeup and jewellery must come off when she is putting it on them? An SDA Triathlete? Spiritual, physical, and competitiveness? An SDA female Elder or Pastor? An SDA Fashion Designer? Who designs women's trousers and miniskirts? An SDA female Elder, who earns her living from being a makeup artist, who wears women's trousers, who puts on makeups, who on Sabbath leads in worship prayer whilst standing instead of kneeling, who joins her congregation to eat potluck lunch of flesh meats, and then goes home to watch triathletes on TV? God is raising up a small group of His faithful children. Their constant spiritual battle is to keep self fully subdued by continual surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is my prayer that you are one of these faithful souls by the grace of God. "The grace of Jesus Christ be with your spirit" (Philemon 1:25).

Tuesday: The Skeptical Theist – Read Psalm 73. The prophet David thought things were very unequally and unjustly divided. He saw that the wicked were as a rule in better circumstances than the righteous; and in contemplating this, he came very near making shipwreck of this faith (see verses 2-12). As he contrasted his condition with theirs, he concluded that the service of the Lord did not pay (verses 13-14). How many people we have heard reason in the same way. 'If God is just,' they say, 'why does He allow Mr A, who is a humble, devoted Christian, to suffer so much of poverty and sickness, while Mr B, his blasphemous neighbour, has an abundance of everything, with nothing to trouble him?' It is short-sighted reasoning, as David himself found out, although not from his own reasoning as to what God ought to do. In verses 16-20, we find a striking confirmation of the final utter extinction of the wicked. Their present security is only apparent, not real; they are in slippery places, and are to be cast down to destruction. As in a moment they are to be brought into desolation. More than this, when the Lord arises to take vengeance on His adversaries, they are to be as a dream when one awakes from sleep – vanished into nothingness. And as elsewhere expressed, they are to be "as the early dew that passeth away" (Hosea 13:3). All this David found out when he went into the sanctuary of the Lord (Psalm 73:17). Let us then, go in with him, and see for ourselves what is there taught concerning the fate of the wicked.

Wednesday: The Freewill Defense – Are few chosen to be saved? In Matthew 20:1-16 and 22:1-14, it is apparent that those who are not chosen are those who themselves do not choose to accept the terms of salvation. That is the whole of the matter. Election means choice. The free choice is given to all. "Choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19). "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:13). Whoever chooses salvation, that is, whoever elects to be saved, is one of the elect. The non-elect are, of course, lost, but it is of their own choice. Of those who are lost, the Spirit of God says, "For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices" (Proverbs 1:29-31). Thus, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling an election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). All men are called of God's own free grace; but the call avails nothing if men do not choose to accept it.

Thursday: Love and Evil? – What do you say to those who question God creating us with free will? Freedom to do right implies freedom to do wrong. If a man were made so that he could not do wrong, he would have no freedom at all, not even to do right. He would be less than the brutes. There is no virtue in forced obedience, nor would there be any virtue in doing that which is right if it were impossible to do wrong. Moreover, there could be no pleasure or satisfaction in the professed friendship of two persons if one associated with the other just because he could not avoid it. The joy of the Lord in the companionship of His people is that they of their own free-will choose Him above all others. The very ones who rail against God for not preventing the ills that He foresees, would be the very first to charge Him with cruelty if He did arbitrarily interfere with their freedom and make them do that which they do not choose. Such a course would make everybody unhappy and discontented. The wisest thing for us to do is to stop trying to fathom the ways of the Almighty, and accept the fact that whatever the Lord does is right. "As for God, His way is perfect" (Psalm 18:30).